



# The Nor'westener



Serving Concerned Readers in greater Clark Pines, Cottage Grove, Hidden Lake, Holly Park, Lazybrook, Oak Forest, Shady Acres, Timbergrove Court, Timbergrove Manor, Timbergrove Terrace and Woodcrest.

"To Inform"

Community News Since August, 2002

Celebrate Earth Day

April 21, 2009

Online Issue

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## Neighborhood Watch for Timbergrove West February and March Crime Report

From the publicly available HPD Monthly Crime Reports for 2009 for TM-West (Sections 5 - 14). Timbergrove Manor along with the greater Shady Acres, Clark Pines, Lazybrook and Holly Park are in Patrol Beat 2A60. Source HPD monthly crime reports for 2A60 may be accessed at: <http://www.houstontx.gov/police/cs/beatpages/cs2a60.htm> Scroll down on that page to the calendars and select the month for which data is being sought.

2/09/09	Burglary Garage/Carport	6200 Grovewood Ln.	3:05 a.m.*
2/21/09	Burglary Vehicle	1300 Jeannine Dr.	11:00 p.m.* Parked at curb
2/23/09	Burglary Garage/Carport	6200 Queenswood Ln.	7:30 p.m.*
3/05/09	Burglary Home	6000 Pineshade Ln.	6:00 p.m.*
3/08/09	Auto Theft	6400 Cindy Ln.	9:30 p.m.* Parked in Drive
3/09/09	Burglary Vehicle	6400 Pineshade Ln.	3:03 a.m.* Parked in Drive
3/11/09	Burglary Vehicle	6000 Wister Ct.	12:00 midnight Parked in Drive
3/15/09	Burglary Home	6300 Wister Ln.	10:00 p.m.*

\*Indicates the time the incident was reported. The actual time of occurrence may be different.

### Section 5 and 6 Related info

Having watched the ebb and flow of crime around West Timbergrove on some scatter maps that I maintain both month-to-month and on a yearly recap, I've grown used to seeing a bit more activity in any given area for a month, maybe two, but reported crime incidents typically self-correct and balance out across our greater area as the more overall random pattern of crime re-exerts itself.

But a pattern that began in January of this year persists through March. Sections 5 and 6 with some **40% of homes** in TM-West (496 total homes – 320 in Section 6; 176 in section 5) has had **80%** of the crimes in January, **66%** of the crimes in February and **80%** of the crimes in March. A three-month pattern generally focused in one area catches my attention, but it comes (*cont. p.3*)

# City of Houston B. O. P. A. Collection

Batteries, Oil, Paint and Anti-freeze

Celebrate Earth Day Weekend '09 Event

**Saturday**  
**April 25, 2009**  
**10 A.M. through 2 P.M.**

**1822 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street**  
(Lazybrook Baptist Church Parking Lot)

## Materials Accepted

Automotive style (wet cell) batteries, dry cell batteries of all types and especially rechargeable batteries:

Nickel Cadmium, Nickel Metal Hydride and Lithium Ion.

Used motor oil (5-gallon limit per family) and oil filters.

Paint of all types and paint related products.

Antifreeze and other petroleum based auto products,  
but no gasoline.

All liquids are required to be in sealed, non-leaking containers.

The original container with label is preferable.

Repackaged items must be labeled as to contents.

You may collect items from your neighbors and deliver them in one load. Simply be prepared to tell the city workers the number of households' items you are delivering (addresses not needed – just a total household count).

An event made possible through the collective efforts of:  
Timbergrove Manor Civic Club  
Timbergrove Manor Neighborhood Association  
Lazybrook Civic Club

**Neighborhood Watch** (*from p. 1*) with realization this is what has happened – the March crime report itself is three week old data. Sections 5 and 6 may already be almost crime free beginning this month as the random activity shifts, or there may be someone that is comfortable in ‘working’ in sections 5 and 6 occasionally and they may be lingering. The incidents spread from Grovewood on the north to Queenswood on the south and equally disperses east and west between T.C. Jester and Ella. There have been 5 burglaries/homes, 3 burglaries/garages, 2 burglaries/vehicles - 10 of the 13 crimes in TM-West so far in 2009. That total of 13 is not at the pace of a couple past record crime years in which we had 18 or 20 at this point, but is above our best years when we had maybe 8 or 9 through March – but it’s happening mainly in one geographic area. There is no discernable pattern for day-of-the-week and ‘time-reported’ is of little value as the time the crime is reported may come many hours after the incident occurred.

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### **Resources**

Eric Carlson’s web site, which displays monthly reported crime locations within 2A60 on a web-based map is available at <http://www.ericcarlson.net/crimestats/2A60.html> Use the zoom feature located on the left of the map to expand a given area. Click on a crime icon for incident details.

Recommendations to assume a more preventive posture remain unchanged from past reports. Vehicles parked at the curb or in the driveway are simply targets that will be checked out sooner or later. Keep items of even minor value out of vehicle’s interior including minor change in an accessory tray. Wallets, purses, laptops or a briefcase left visible will, sooner or later, almost assuredly seal the deal and elevate you to crime victim status. Park vehicles in a garage if possible, otherwise parking in an area covered by motion detecting lighting can help. Lock your outbuildings and outside-access side garage doors. We each know our ‘hood better than our HPD patrol officers who patrol large territories so simply be observant. If you see a burglary in progress call HPD at **911** and emphasize “crime in progress”! Call **713-884-9191** to report suspicious activity and request an officer to patrol on a more time-available basis. Our HPD Officers at the local Heights storefront 713-803-1151 are not staffed to respond to calls for immediate assistance, but they can be called or visited – 1127 N. Shepherd behind Auto Zone on W. 11<sup>th</sup> – to file many reports or to discuss concerns.

Read the HPD Burglary Prevention pamphlet attached in .pdf format to the cover email. It has many good tips to reduce the possibility of being a home burglary victim.

The monthly PIP meeting with HPD District 2 officers is this Wednesday evening, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7 – 8 p.m. at 1600 State St.. District 2’s Capt. Holloway is typically in attendance along with Lieutenant(s), Sergeant(s) and officers from patrol division, storefronts and special crime enforcement units. There are always opportunities at these meetings to express concerns to HPD command levels who truly control allocation of officers’ workhours. You can interact with officers who actually work in our area and gain perspectives from the comments of others from other neighborhoods. This month’s program is a brief presentation on Animal Cruelty by Trina Brooks of the Harris County D.A.’s office.

### **Jaycee Park Initiative Launched**

There have been a handful of neighbors in Lazybrook and Timbergrove that have, over the years, voiced concerns for improved care, maintenance and improvements that might be made to Jaycee Park to enhance it’s value to our greater community. Most efforts did not get past the 5% conceptual stage, but it appears that a relatively proud and new TM-West neighbor, Ileana

Desalos (section 10), is going to follow-through and contribute to the 95% of sweat equity which can help bring some of the 5% concepts to fruition.

Ileana has been in the idea collection business for Jaycee Park for some weeks now and while she is absolutely still seeking ideas to define the changes that neighbors would like to see and are willing to support, she has already wisely made initial contact and visited with City of Houston Parks representatives to discuss some concepts. You can reach Ileana at [idesalos@yahoo.com](mailto:idesalos@yahoo.com) or by calling 713-868-5086. Ileana is coordinating her efforts with T.M.C.C. in this endeavor, but she readily acknowledges Jaycee Park is a greater community park and welcomes input from greater area neighbors who share in her concerns. Give Ileana a call or email with words of support and/or to share your ideas.

### **Sinclair Elementary to Celebrate 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The following is submitted by Lani Terisa Billingsley, Sinclair Elementary's proficient and long-serving secretary.

"Sinclair is celebrating it's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. We began back in the day when girls could only wear dresses, and little boys always had their shirts tucked in. The most exciting technology was the new black and white T.V., even though there were only a couple of channels and they weren't on 24/7. Children rode bikes or walked to school, in their own neighborhoods and most Mom's were at home baking cookies for the next bake sale at school.

Everything is scheduled for May 21<sup>st</sup>.....We will have a brick garden dedication at 4:30 p.m. Former Sinclair student, Judge David Patronella, will be our guest speaker. Our Central Region Superintendent, Adriana Tamez and other Central Region administrators will be in attendance...along with former and present faculty and staff, former students, and neighborhood supporters. After the brick garden dedication (which has engraved bricks) we will give special school tours, serve anniversary cake and will have on-going computer videos with pictures from Sinclair's past and present...

At 6:30 p.m. we will have a special program in the cafeteria where we will ask everyone to travel through time with us as the children at Sinclair perform songs, dances and skits showing the world through each decade from 1959 – 2009. The program will end with a look at the future.

*I am looking for former students, parents, teachers, staff. I need their old pictures and stories (write them down and send them to me so we can include in our school tours.) They can email me, snail mail me or come down for a visit. We want to preserve our history to share with future Sinclair Superstars. We invite everyone to join us on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Papa John's will have a pizza truck here so if anyone gets hungry, individual pizzas will be available to purchase."*

Contact Terisa by email at: [lbilling@houstonisd.org](mailto:lbilling@houstonisd.org) or snail mail/drop by at 6410 Grovewood Ln.

## Around the Statehouse

With the state legislature displaying even more inertia than normal, very few bills have made it through the legislative process to be placed on the Governor's desk for consideration. That's good in one way – the Leg isn't writing a bunch of new laws impacting our lives – but ultimately there will be a stampede in the closing days of the session when the fate of even several hundred bills will be decided. I've heard the frustrations expressed by a few legislators as they decide how to vote on a proposed bill with nary a comment from the folks back home for guidance. So before the stampede starts and while legislators might have time to consider comments here is one bill you might opt to comment upon.

**HB 783** by Representative Pickett (TX81RHB00783FIL.doc copy attached to the cover email)  
This bill would provide indemnity on a statewide basis to private and public utilities if the utilities permit their easements/routings to be used for recreational purposes.

Who might care: This bill is one for hike, bike and jogging enthusiasts, but might well also be of interest to those with families seeking more safe routings for family outings. This will also be of interest to those who believe developing an efficient, connected series of routings for non-motorized vehicles for business and pleasure is intelligent future planning.

Discussion: Expanding hike and bike trails within an already significantly developed city like Houston presents challenges. Bike lanes can and have been designated along many existing streets, but most people resist biking in those lanes immediately adjacent to motor vehicles and seeing a family out riding in one of those street-side lanes as a relaxed, safe routing is a non-event. Word is that utility easement routings have, to a limited degree, already been implemented as hike/bike trails in Dallas. Utilizing utility easements in combination with the use of abandoned rail line routings (under the existing rails-to-trails program) might ultimately provide for establishing daily-use and recreational hike and bike trails into areas where such access would otherwise be very, very difficult or impossible.

You can track the progress of this or any other House bill with a trip over to the State of Texas House site: <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/Home.aspx> where you will find contact information for House members. A search feature on the home page also provides a feature where bills may be researched by bill number or all bills pertaining to a subject may be searched for by simply entering a key word or phrase etc, etc. This is a gateway page into the legislative process.

An inquiring phone call today reveals this bill has been voted out of House committee and passed the House vote today, April 21<sup>st</sup> and is headed to the appropriate Senate Committee. Many House bills never make it out of the Senate committees so it is to our State Senators we must now voice our comments. <http://www.senate.state.tx.us/> will get you directly to the Senate's home page with links to contact information. For or against the proposed bill, or to discuss/express concerns/reservations, contact the elected folks that work for you at the state level.

In a related aside, the Hike and Bike trail map for Houston, which will reflect existing and proposed new trail routings, is currently being updated. Those interested in gaining increased safe community access to the expanding network of trails within the city might well want to make suggestions to that project. For those interested, the current Houston bike trail map may be found online at: <http://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/bikeways/maps.htm> By clicking on the city bike coordinator's name, Dan Raine, on that page you can send email comments/inquiries.

Communicating and saying "We want a connection trail" will be of little value, but then basic

interest is vital. Most of us are aware of the general routings of utility easements in the area, but a trip to Google or other online maps and satellite imagery might help work out the details of a proposed new trail routing potentially made available through passage of HB 783. For or against, Yours may be the only comment on this bill that your state level elected official receives.

## Lawn and Garden

**Brown Spot:** Some homeowners face a recurring problem with brown spot infecting lawns year-after-year in spring and fall as the days warm and the nights remain cool. Chemical treatments provide some relief in halting the spread, but they frequently require multiple applications and besides the time involved the chemicals can be relatively expensive and have handling precautions to deal with. And in many instances, the next season, here it is again.

Well, sometimes more organic approaches do work and this is one. Relatively healthy soil maintains a relative balance between micro-organisms. Brown spot is an indication that the balance of organisms have gotten out of balance. Using a chemical curative impacts not only the 'bad' organisms, slowing the spread of brown spot, but also the 'good' ones so the soil system simply remains out of balance.

Try applying corn meal (not corn gluten which is a pre-emergent treatment for weeds) to your lawn. You can be a purist and bounce by Wabash Feeds on Washington Ave. and pick up some relatively pricey agricultural corn meal or you can pop by the local grocery and buy a bag of regular cheap old corn meal off the shelf. Some organic gardening purist were doubtful of using plain corn meal, but some informed voices said regular meal would work. The latter certainly seems to have worked in my yard after several years of using the failed chemical approach. The reader can make the call of which type corn meal to use.

Apply at a rate of 10 pounds per thousand square feet of lawn now and then again in a few weeks. If you just "have" to spot chemical spray for brown spot control this spring, favor those sprayed areas with a bit more corn meal. Plan to make a couple applications of corn meal this Fall. You may well see a difference by this Fall, but by next Spring odds are, if you have a generally healthy lawn, you may have a brown spot free yard and you'll have been using a product that is safe to handle. Being 'green' can make sense and cents sometimes.

**Virginia Buttonweed:** This is one of those weeds which if you don't have it, you'll probably see it in your yard sooner or later. This is a spreading stem plant much like St. Augustine with bayonet shaped leaves, small white four-bladed airplane propeller type flowers and stems loaded with green berries as it matures. A bit of research reveals there is still no 'magic bullet' spray for controlling this weed and most products marketed claiming control have had poor field test results. But there is one product that seems to be worth the effort to apply; Fertilome's Weed Free Zone. While it will knock down the buttonweed population it will also stress the St. Augustine grass especially if 1.) applied at rates exceeding instructions, 2.) applied as St. Augustine is going through initial spring green-up or entering fall dormancy or 3.) is applied when daytime temperatures exceed 90 degrees. All this provides a window of a few weeks opportunity to treat buttonweed in the spring and fall. Spring treatment is best, treating the small emerging plants. Treatment of tough mature weeds in the fall is less successful. I recommend spot treatments just to keep the total quantity of weed killer out of the lawn environment, but if dealing with an extensive invasion, treating the entire lawn is an option. Follow the mixing/application/handling instructions carefully and avoid the temptation to apply a little 'extra' to heavily infested areas least you kill the St. Augustine – but it will grow back – slowly - in the Spring.

## From the Katy Prairie Conservancy

Reproduced from the KPC's newsletter:



### Prairie Discovery Tour

*Wet and wild on the Katy Prairie*

Prairie Discovery Tours are your chance to see the Katy Prairie through the eyes of our expert tour guides. KPC's Mary Manor Preserve is home to a pulsing, vibrant wetland. This sun-splashed preserve is alive with the booming croaks of bullfrogs, the awe-inspiring sight of beaver lodges, and the flash of colorful water birds.

Join us on a special tour of the vibrant wildflowers and newly arrived summer migrants dotting our preserve. You can use binoculars and nets to reveal the secrets of this wetland wonder. This is your chance to get out and enjoy the great outdoors — come out while the weather is still pleasant!

**Date:** Saturday, April 25, 2009 from 10 AM to 12 PM  
**Location:** [Mary Manor Preserve](#)  
**What to Bring:** All participants should wear appropriate outdoor clothing, including closed-toe shoes and long pants. A long-sleeve shirt is also recommended.  
**Registration limited and required.** Call 713.523.6135 or e-mail [info@katyprairie.org](mailto:info@katyprairie.org) for details or to register for this event.  
**Cost:** Free!

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