



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

August 25, 2008

Online Issue

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Neighborhood Watch for Timbergrove -West for July 2008

From the publicly available HPD Monthly Crime Report for July 2008 for TM-West (Sections 5 - 14). Timbergrove Manor along with the greater Shady Acres, Clark Pines, Lazybrook and Holly Park areas are in Patrol Beat 2A60 and the July source HPD crime report may be accessed at:

<http://www.houstontx.gov/police/cs/stats2008/jul08/jul082a60.htm>

Historic crime figures for 2A60 may be found at:

<http://www.houstontx.gov/police/cs/beatpages/cs2a60.htm>

7/6/08	Burglary Motor Vehicle	900 Shirkmere Rd.	Vehicle parked in drive – night*
7/7/08	Burglary Motor Vehicle	6000 Wister Ct.	Vehicle parked in drive - day
7/21/08	Burglary Motor Vehicle	2500 Droxford Ln.	Vehicle Parked in drive - night
7/29/08	Burglary Home	6200 Queenswood Ln.	day

*Day/Night indicates the time the incident was reported. The actual time of occurrence may be different.

For those whom might go to the July web site report you will note there is a narcotic violation listed for a block in Timbergrove that is not listed above. A check of the publicly available incident report reveals the violation actually occurred within the business strip center located at Tannehill and Seamist, not within TM's boundaries. It was not a major narcotics bust.

July's incidents bring the 2008 reported criminal incident total to 20 which places us 7 incidents above our lowest crime rate year (2006), but below the other five years in which criminal incidents have been tracked.

Pursuing the concept of neighbors serving as the knowledgeable eyes-and-ears of HPD I'll suggest that those of us who get out and about along our bayous and natural areas keep an eye out for homeless people camping under bridges or in the natural areas. The commendable ongoing work of Eric Ruckstahl of the Bayou Preservation Society has led to a significant decrease in the dense non-native undergrowth in bayou-adjacent areas within much of Patrol Beat 2A60. His work is not only environmentally significant, but it also lowers the probability that homeless camps will be established in those areas. But if anyone should happen to actually note any established living sites in those areas or under the bayou bridges give our Differential Response Team officers over at our local HPD storefront a call (713-803-1151) and provide a firm location for the site. These reports are typically not handled as barn-burning hot-response issues, but the site can be added to the next focused sweep of these

encampments in Central District. These periodic sweeps involve several HPD officers, personnel and equipment (multiple trucks) from Public Works to load and haul all the "living" materials away as well as inmate work team details. Eyes and ears and report neighbors. Information available indicates most all homeless have emotional and/or drug use issues and all have criminal records. Avoid interactions with these folks.

From HPD Officer Carol Trautwein – P.I.P. Meetings

Hello Everyone!

I wanted to remind everyone of two upcoming events in your area.

First, On **Wednesday, August 27, 2008**, at **7 PM** our regular **Central Division P.I.P meeting** will be held. This month we have another great speaker, **Mr. Victor Gonzalez**. Victor is a counselor with Mayor's anti-gang unit. He is an "encyclopedia" of information when it comes to gangs in the City of Houston. I have been to several law enforcement conferences where he has been a featured speaker and he is wonderful! This meeting will be held at the usual spot, **1600 State Street** in the "Mad" Martin hall on the first floor. Please feel free to invite a friend.

Second, **Major Offenders Sgt. Steve Copeland**, will be addressing **Citywide P.I.P. on Tuesday, September 9, 2008, at 7 PM**. This meeting is also held at **1600 State Street**, but it is on the 4th floor of our main building.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call or email me. 713-222-5196
carol.trautwein@cityofhouston.net

Officer Carol Trautwein
Ana Maria Lopez Storefront
713-222-5196

For a map for 1600 State Street simply enter: 1600 State Street houston tx 77007 – into your web browser's search bar and hit return.

National Night Out

National Night Out has been changed from the first Tuesday in August to the **first Tuesday in October, October 7th, 2008, 6 - 9 p.m. for TEXAS residents only**. Now is the time to start planning those parties. Please contact Officer Duffy with your party information at 713-803-1151 or email steven.duffy@cityofhouston.net.

National Night Out is the annual neighborhood event intended to bring neighbors together to help build a very local sense of community by simply getting to know our old and new neighbors a bit better through relaxed social gatherings. This sense of community and relaxed familiarity is very much a crime fighting tool. If your block or part of the neighborhood has not had such a gathering in past years, you might give some thought to organizing such an informal gathering in your yard or driveway this year.

Salford St. Update

Timbergrove West Droxford neighbors Mark and Marilyn Nowlin assumed the responsibility for conducting a successful residents' signature petition drive concerning Salford Street. Marilyn reports the effort culminated in gathering 300 signatures from Timbergrove and Holly Park neighbors. The petition was delivered to City Council members' mailboxes in early June.

The petition wording stated: "We the undersigned protest the proposed opening of Salford Drive by the City of Houston, allowing cut-through traffic into our neighborhoods of Timbergrove Manor, Sec 13 & 14, and Holly Park. We call upon the Mayor and City Council to honor the City's promise to conduct a traffic study, after the development on Minimax is completed, to evaluate the need for opening the street. We also urge our elected officials to be responsive to residents' concerns about the danger that the street opening will cause to the neighborhood."

Marilyn further relays that Council Member Lawrence called to assure the petition would be passed on to PWE's Andy Icken. That conversation also led to a bit more discussion concerning what might be acceptable to residents with Marilyn offering, "She (Lawrence) asked if the round about could be our third choice (the first being leaving Salford closed and the second being the right turn only). I told her I would not make that decision for the neighbors and that I would insist on another meeting for all to voice their opinion. She said we need to get more people to speak at council. She said this issue will not come to a vote with council, so they really can't do anything for us, but that keeping the issue in front of the Mayor will let him know we are not giving up."

Marilyn expressed appreciation for all the support by all that signed the petition and particularly expressed thanks to Ruby McKnight and Zeke Kominczak who gathering Holly Park signatures and to Kurt Lothman, Kellee Durer, Frances Allday and Marilyn's hubby Mark who, along with Marilyn, gathered Timbergrove signatures.

The spate of thefts of Keep Salford Closed yard signs seems to have been short lived and focused on the 24/2500 blocks of Droxford.

Marilyn reports more recently "Nothing much going on right now. Talking to some folks, but getting no feedback. Heard a rumor that Trammell Crow backed out - neighbors too hostile. YES!!!!"

Marilyn and Mark Nowlin deserve a big Tip'O The Hat for putting forth the energy to cause the survey of homeowners to happen. As good leaders do, they pass credit on to all those who stepped up to help. This was and is a critical piece of documentation. It clearly resolves the issue of whether the concerns being voiced over Salford are just those of the few or is a widely shared concern by area stakeholders. It also removes the babble of concerns being voiced in different ways and significantly develops a clear statement of what is desired. Signature petitions carry more weight than individual comments as officials recognize the effort and time that goes into them. Does it offer any guarantees in return? No, but it draws the line in the sand politically and political pressure is the tool opponents of opening Salford are using.

T.M.C.C. Web Site

One of the unexpected challenges faced during the term of the current civic club officer's was getting the TMCC website reestablished. A simple volunteer mix-up led to the old site being dropped from the web and records of the website being lost. A simple casual review of real estate related articles in the local papers has indicated that an increasing number of folks shopping for homes utilize the internet in one way or another. One might suspect that with the recent jump in energy prices that trend has probably increased at least a bit more. Having a neighborhood presence on the web is probably a fairly unrecognized asset TMCC provides for helping to maintain our homes' values.

Click on the link <http://www.timbergrovesmanor.org/> and check out the site representing our 'hood. You'll find email links to communicate with club officers and committee chairs, links to club by-laws, each section's deed restrictions - and now plat maps! - as well as trash and recycling info. and more! Special note might be given to the links to the chat rooms on the site *TimbergroveChat* and *Timberspace*. The original chat room, TimbergroveChat, has some 10% of TM signed up to participate in a forum defined as "Timbergrove Manor Civic Club message center, set up specifically for the residents and members to provide open and frank discussions regarding the business and going's on with the neighborhood

and civic club.” The newer chat room offered with a more modern concept is called Timberspace and is defined as: “Timberspace is our combination virtual town hall meeting, website, and community center.” Got a question or comment about the hood or want to join or start a discussion group on an issue? The format is available. The more openly and widely neighborhood issues are discussed the better it would seem. TMCC obviously encourages just that.

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Idalia Valdez, TMCC Web Site Committee Chair, has done a good job of reestablishing our neighborhood web site. Idalia openly offers she has not the skill to do much in the way of fancy bells and whistles for the site. If anyone has the skill level and desires to help “facelift” the site please contact her through the link provided on the TMCC web site’s home page.

Hummingbird Migration Time

If you have any of the many hummingbird friendly plants in your landscape – salvias, hamelia patens, cupheas etc – then you are probably well aware that the annual hummingbird migration from points north through the area heading south to Mexico and Central America is well underway. Time to dust off the hummer feeder. Ruby-Throats are the most common – male and female both sporting iridescent green back and upper wings with white chests. The male displays a brilliant red throat.

Be prepared to change the fluid in your feeder(s) a couple times per week in our area’s heat. To prep a hummingbird feeder solution simply mix 1/4 cup of white sugar into one cup of boiling water and allow to cool. Avoid using food coloring, it adds no food value. The hummers will be attracted to the brightly colored portions of the feeder. I recommend half-filling an 8 oz. feeder and store the rest in a sealed container in the fridge for replenishment. A clear glass feeder is best to allow us to see any mold that might form or a change in the liquid. If the liquid clouds it has spoiled and may make the little fellows sick so take the feeder out of service until it can be rinsed well - adding some bleach to the water if there are signs of scum or mold - before replenishing/replacing. Positioning the feeder a bit away from the home is generally best. You may get no visitors, then again you may see several at one time blurring around and chattering in their agitated way. Do not worry about leaving the feeder up too long and some hummer not migrating. When the time comes, they will follow nature’s call and beat wings southward. Keep an eye on the feeder though later in the year. If you continue to get a visitor you may have fortunately gotten a hummer that winters over in this area to be your guest. It is said the same birds tend to return to the same yard year-after-year so it may be a multi-year relationship.

Tip: If ants become a problem invading the feeder try placing a bit of sticky tape around the wire used to suspend the feeder. Duct tape or the like works well. Cut a piece an inch or so long. Fold the top 1/4 inch over and use that 1/4 inch portion to stick the tape to the feeder's suspending wire leaving the majority of the sticky portion of the tape exposed. Typically stops the ants for a couple weeks before the tape dries and needs replacing.

Labor Day Holiday Trash Collection Schedule

From the City’s Solid Waste Management Website: <http://www.houstontx.gov/solidwaste/>

Monday, Sept. 1 – Memorial Day No Collection Services, Neighborhood depositories/recycling centers closed.

Tuesday, Sept. 2 – Monday’s garbage collection, curbside recycling and yard waste collected today. First Monday’s and First Tuesday’s heavy trash** collected today. Westpark recycling center reopens today.

Wednesday, Sept. 3 – Tuesday’s garbage, curbside recycling and yard waste and First Wednesday’s heavy trash** collected today. Neighborhood depositories reopen today.

Thursday, Sept. 4 – Regular garbage, yard waste, recycling and heavy trash collection schedules resume today.

**City Code provides that heavy trash (Tree Waste/Junk Waste) may be placed at the curb as early as 6 p.m. on the Friday prior to the week in which the collection day is scheduled.

Curbside Collection Program Recycling Tips

The Houston Chronicle did a write-up on the city's recycling program and some of the information reported was called into question since there was a conflict between portions of what the Chronicle reported and information the city distributed directly to residents. Sharon Balke, T.M.N.A. (Timbergrove East) Recycling Chair made the effort to call contacts in the city recycling program and provides the following in T.M.N.A.'s August newsletter: "The newspaper (Chronicle) was incorrect about recycling certain boxes. The city will NOT accept cereal boxes, tissue boxes, etc. because they have a shiny waxy cover and the wax clogs the paper processing machines."

Chipboard or paperboard style boxes of the type described best go into common household garbage. Clogged machines increases the recycler's costs and that cost will ultimately trickle back down to impact we taxpayers in some manner.

Bit 'O Fun Winners

Neighbors Kurt Lothman, Joe Moravek, Susan Wright, Betty Williams and Carol Hundley won the cloth shopping bags in the July guess-the-number contest and the bags have been delivered. Thanks for participating and the number all were trying to guess: 75.

Written and distributed by your neighbor Ben Crabb, 2502 Haverhill Dr., 713-861-5354, bncrabb@comcast.net To sign up for direct delivery to your email address simply send an email and ask to be added to the distribution.
