PREVENTING PROPERTY CRIMES

As you read in the Winter 2004 BCA newsletter, burglary of a vehicle (BOV) continues to be the most prevalent crime in the northwest area of Austin. The second most prevalent crime is another type of non-violent crime, burglary of a residence. Even though apartment complexes are hit more frequently with both types of burglary than are single family dwellings, burglars appear to be moving more and more into our residential areas. For this reason, the BCA Executive Committee decided that we needed to devote a large portion of this newsletter to property crime prevention.

Printed on the enclosed insert is a vacation check list, with a suspect identification profile on the other side. The identification profile can be used to describe any type of suspect: robbery, burglary, etc. On page 3 is a list of tips for preventing burglary of your home and your vehicle. These suggestions are from the Austin Police Department.

Having a household inventory is crucial in helping the police identify your property when a burglary suspect is apprehended. You should photograph your jewelry and other non-electronic valuables. You should have your electronic equipment engraved with your driver’s license number or otherwise labeled (see below) so that it can be identified if the burglar tries to sell it. Our police liaison for the northwest area, Sr. Officer Mike Dunn, has volunteered to help residents in our area take a household inventory and to assess other ways to improve home security. If you would like to schedule an appointment with Officer Dunn for a household security and inventory assessment, please call him at 974-5553. Working with the Austin Police Dept., we can help prevent property crimes.

Mary M. Tannahill, Editor

Protect Your Property and Car Parts with Labels

Security labels for auto parts and personal property are available from the Texas Action Council on Theft (TACT), a non-profit organization of insurance companies working with law enforcement and concerned citizens to reduce theft in Texas. According to information from TACT, each label is printed with a visible I.D. number such as a driver’s license number or vehicle identification number (VIN). The tamper-proof label is very difficult to remove once it is placed on your personal property or vehicle. Even if the label is removed, it will leave a permanent I.D. number on painted metal or hard plastic surfaces which can be viewed by police with an ultraviolet light. To obtain an order form for labels, call 512-458-8214 or 800-286-9801.
USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

New Non-Emergency number 311

Main Switchboard 974-5000

WebSite www.cityofaustin.org/pole

Northwest Area Command 974-5500

Abandoned Vehicles 280-0075

Auto Theft Info (HEA.T. & VIN etching) 974-5713

Crime Stoppers 472-8477

Graffiti Removal 854-4125

Community Liaison Office 459-1877

Traffic Office 974-5789

Victim Services 974-5037

CITY OF AUSTIN

Main Switchboard 974-2000

WebSite www.cityofaustin.org

Animal Control 972-6060

Dead Animals (Solid Waste Services) 494-9400

Dogs running loose 974-6033

Flooding Complaints 974-3555

Garbage Pickup (Solid Waste Services) 494-9400

Handicapped Curb Ramps 974-6426

Home Chemicals Collection 974-4343

Illegal Dumping 494-9400

Mosquito Infestation 972-5692

Night Watchman Lights Installation 505-7617

Noise Complaints 311

Pothole Complaints or obstructions in roadway 440-8444

School Sidewalk Safety 974-7240

School Zone Light Malfunction 457-4851

Stop Signs 457-4885

Street Light Installation 505-7617

Street Light Repair (Austin Energy) 505-7617

Street and Bridge Repairs 440-8444

Street Signs Down 457-4885

Traffic Signal Malfunction 457-4850

Weeds & Trash on private or city property 972-5600

Watershed Protection Dept. 974-2550

Call to report environmental spills or deliberate dumping

(e.g. dumping of used motor oil, etc.)
Active Construction Projects

- Randalls’ expansion at corner of Mesa Dr. and Spicewood Springs Rd.
- Spicewood Condominiums at corner of Spicewood Springs Rd. and Adirondack Trail
- Children’s Courtyard day care center on Spicewood Springs Rd. east of Mesa Dr.
- New office building at 4700 Spicewood Springs.

“Hooded Burglar” Suspect Arrested

The tenacity of the Austin Police Dept. paid off Feb. 22 with the capture of a suspect who is believed to be the elusive “Hooded Burglar” of northwest Austin. The man arrested in the early morning hours at a home on Greystone Dr. has been identified as Larry McDonald, 48. At the time of his arrest, McDonald was wearing a black hooded sweat shirt, dark pants, and leather gloves.

The “Hooded Burglar” has operated for almost nine years in northwest Austin, entering homes in the early morning hours through unlocked doors and windows, and taking cash and jewelry from his victims. He has been successful in perpetrating these crimes for so long because no one had ever seen his face, and he had never left any fingerprints at the crime scenes.

Tips on Preventing Residential Burglaries

1. Keep garage doors closed and locked.
2. Install deadbolt locks on all exterior doors.
3. Keep all exterior doors and windows locked, especially those with entry into your garage.
4. Secure sliding doors and windows with pin locks, a broom handle, or metal bar.
5. Use proper exterior lighting.
6. Mark your property with an engraver or labels.
7. Leave a light on. If you are going to be gone, attach an interior lamp to a 24-hr timer.
8. Purchase an alarm system.
9. Work together with your neighbors, especially when one of you will be gone.

Tips on Preventing Burglary of a Vehicle

Burglars are currently entering vehicles by breaking a window, which usually does not cause the vehicle alarm system to go off. The best way to prevent a burglary of your vehicle is to not leave anything of value visible in the passenger compartment. Store all valuables in the trunk, out of sight. Call 911 to report any suspicious activity occurring in or around parked vehicles in your neighborhood.

Useful Web Sites & Phone Numbers

- **Austin Police Dept. (APD) crime statistics**
  View crime statistics by census tract or neighborhood association boundary by logging on to: [www.cityofaustin.org/police](http://www.cityofaustin.org/police)

- **Balcones Civic Association**
  Need oak wilt or other information from a recent BCA newsletter? Just log on to [www.main.org/bca](http://www.main.org/bca) and click on “Newsletters.”

- **Travis Central Appraisal District**
  To look up appraisal values for properties near you, log on to [www.traviscad.org](http://www.traviscad.org)

- **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)**
  The FTC’s web site has information on how to report spam e-mail and how to avoid it. Log on to [www.ftc.gov/privacy](http://www.ftc.gov/privacy)

  Another good web site to consult for information on spam avoidance is [http://spam.abuse.net](http://spam.abuse.net)

- **Better Business Bureau of Central Texas**
  Want to know if a service company has treated previous customers fairly or not? Get information about that company from the Central TX Better Business Bureau by calling them at 512-445-2911 or by logging onto their web site at: [www.centraltx.bbb.org](http://www.centraltx.bbb.org)

- **City of Austin Public Information Office**
  Want to find out what is going on in various city agencies or obtain information on upcoming city-wide events? Just log on to the web site for the City of Austin’s monthly bulletin entitled “At Your Doorstep.” You can find it at: [www.ci.austin.tx.us/doorstep/](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/doorstep/)

- **Household Hazardous Waste Facility**
  Citizens of Austin and Travis County can get rid of unwanted chemicals, paint, cleaners, fertilizers, pesticides automotive fluids and pool chemicals by bringing them to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility at 2514 Business Center Dr. in Southeast Austin. It is open from noon to 7 PM on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

  See [www.austinrecycles.com](http://www.austinrecycles.com)
CRIME PREVENTION EVENT: NATIONAL NIGHT OUT Aug. 3

Join your neighbors on Tuesday Aug. 3, 2004 for a block party or other get-together, to help promote crime prevention in your neighborhood. Aug. 3rd is “National Night Out,” which is an annual event designed to promote crime awareness and prevention at a neighborhood level. From 6 to 9 PM on Aug. 3rd, you are urged to turn on your porch light, lock your doors, and spend the evening outside with neighbors, police officers, firefighters, and EMS paramedics. This will be a great opportunity for citizens and law enforcement to partner together against crime. It is also a wonderful chance to meet the firefighters and/or EMS paramedics who respond in our area. Don’t miss this opportunity to meet your neighbors and the public safety personnel who work in our area. Organize a block party now!

If you would like to have a police officer, firefighter, or EMS paramedic attend your neighborhood gathering on Aug. 3, you must send in a registration form to the Austin Police Dept. by July 2, 2004. You can obtain a copy of the form by logging on to the APD web site at: www.ci.austin.tx.us/police/ or by contacting Rosie Salinas of APD at 974-4900 (FAX number: 974-6222). Everyone who completes an application will be notified via mail or e-mail before the event with regard to where to pick up a National Night Out information bag. The bag will contain crime prevention information, posters, party invitations, and items for use at the party.

Help fight crime by participating in National Night Out!

BALCONES CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM
January 1– December 31, 2004

Name(s)__________________________________________________________________________
Address__________________________________________________________________________
Home Phone ___________________________ Work Phone ________________________________
E-Mail ________________________________ FAX ________________________________

Enclosed is my $10 residential dues payment ______
Enclosed is my special donation of $ ________________ to support traffic calming & other projects

What community subjects interest you? ______________________________________________

Would you be interested in helping to address them?

Mail this form and your check to: Balcones Civic Assn., P. O. Box 26864, Austin, TX 78755-0864