

Woodlake Neighborhood Watch Newsletter

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

HOLIDAY GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS!

The Editor and Staff wish you and your family a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

We are grateful to you the reader that this, the 144th edition of the WPOA Neighborhood Watch Newsletter, will continue to present information that is current, relevant and, hopefully, interesting. But, we are always open to suggestions about how we can improve that effort.

If you have a story to tell, an idea or a news article you'd like to share, please contact us either at SpartaSentinel@gmail.com or woodlake.net@gmail.com. We can't promise that everything submitted will get published but we will give all submissions equal consideration.

HOLIDAY and TRAVEL SAFETY TOOLKIT

Help your community prepare for the holidays with the [Ready.gov Holiday and Travel Safety Social Media Toolkit](#). Find holiday safety and preparedness information and graphics you can either copy and paste directly, or customize them to reach your audience on Facebook or your favorite social media.

The main tips for holiday and travel safety include:

1. Stay off the road during and after a winter storm.
2. Keep candles away from flammable materials or consider using flameless candles instead.
3. Keep an eye on food when cooking.
4. Put a winter supply kit in your car.
5. Shop securely online over the holidays.

For more tips, hashtags, promotional content, Twitter and Facebook messages, visit the [Holiday and Travel Safety Toolkit](#).

PHONY DELIVERY MAN TARGETS HOMEOWNER

The Christmas season is a time of joyous celebration and fellowship with family and friends for most people. Unfortunately, for some it is also an opportunity to exploit the generosity and trust of others in order to enrich themselves through crimes like purse snatching, carjacking, armed robbery and home invasion.

On such event, an armed home invasion occurred at a home in Houston.

The publication of this newsletter is unofficial and does not express any opinion, directive, or policy of the Woodlake Property Owners Association members or Board of Directors. The primary purpose of the newsletter is to convey information designed to assist us to reduce or prevent crime in our community. The information presented is available through various public access sources, personal interview, or observation. Your comments as to how we can improve this effort are welcome.

Christmas Tree Safety



Christmas trees account for hundreds of fires each year, according to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA).

Keep your holiday trees well-watered. Dry and neglected trees

can easily catch fire from a short in electrical lights or lit candles, lighters and matches.

Before your tree burns your house down, be fire smart with these USFA tips:

- Place the tree away from heat sources and exits.
- Use only non-flammable decorations.
- Inspect lights for frayed wires or other defects before use.
- Don't leave lights unattended and turn off holiday lights at night. Keep natural tree stands filled with water at all times and don't let your holiday tree dry out.
- If the tree becomes dry, discard it.

Surveillance video showed what appeared to be a UPS deliveryman approach the door with a package and inform the homeowner that a signature was needed. When the homeowner opened his front door, the "deliveryman" forced his way in and was quickly followed by three other men bearing handguns.

During the struggle to protect his wife and children the homeowner was beaten and tased putting him in the hospital with significant neck and head injuries.

The robbers got away with some jewelry and antique collectible firearms.

It's unclear how the robbers obtained a UPS uniform that are reserved for full-time employees, but the delivery service is cooperating with local law enforcement in its investigation. One of its actual delivery drivers may have been previously targeted and robbed of the uniform.

As frightening as such an event seems, there are a couple of relatively simple things most homeowners can do to guard against such an occurrence, according to the [Independent Journal Review](#).

First and foremost, if an unexpected deliveryman appears at the front door,

homeowners should look behind the individual to see if they can spot the big brown UPS truck or the similarly recognizable Fed-Ex or USPS delivery trucks.

One other thing to be aware of is that some delivery companies, like Fed-Ex, have been known to employ commercial rental vans to make deliveries during peak seasons. So, be especially cautious when opening the door to strangers making deliveries. But, as security got tighter, scammers are now trending toward the more lucrative target of cellphone numbers.

2016 RATE of HOME INVASIONS for SPARTA VALLEY DROP

From mid December 2014 to December 15, 2015, there were 55 Residential Burglaries reported in the Sparta Valley area of interest (5 mile radius from the intersection of Cedar Cove and Waterworks Road) equating to a ratio of about .31/1000 residents.

Five were reported within 1 mile of the Woodlake community: 74XX Sparta Road, 54XX Oak Drive (Denmons area), 2XX Salem Drive (Shiloh Terraces), 67XX Fullview (West Cliff), and 4XX Water Works Road.

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Except in November with 8, 7 in June and 6 in January 2015, there was a fairly even distribution of monthly incidents in 2015.

Since mid December last year to date, that ratio dropped by 31%, almost 1/3 (.18/1000 residents) for a total of 31 reported home invasions in the Sparta Valley area with June being the highest month with 6.

Only 3 were incidents reported within 1 mile of the Woodlake community: 38XX Eagle Point North St., and 33XX Eagle Point West Ave. (West Cliff) and one at 2XX Rosemont, in the Denmon's area.

Unlike other crimes of opportunity like Theft, home invasions (Burglary of Residents) do not appear to follow a pattern, certain part of the year, time of day or season. The best defence is not make your home a target for criminals with constant vigilance and good security practices.

WATCH FOR THESE HOLIDAY SCAMS

Scammers are out there trying to trick you into giving up your credit card numbers and personal information. They've got some seriously good tricks and don't give up easily. Before you fire up your browser for an online shopping spree, here are three big scams to watch out for:

1. TOO-GOOD-TO-BE-TRUE COUPONS

A common online scam involves websites that lure you in with coupons for popular items like a new iPad or the hot toy of the season.

These fake coupon sites will ask for lots of personal information, including your credit card information and address. If scammers get these details, they can easily start racking up charges in your name but, don't fall for this scam. Look for red flags, including misspellings and multiple pop-up windows that are dead giveaways for a scam site. Stick to big-name online retailers and use safe payment systems like PayPal, Amazon Payments, Apple Pay or Android Pay.

2. MALICIOUS LINKS

Many legitimate companies deliver great deals straight to your inbox.

Online scammers, however, will target you with fake emails that ask you to click on a link or open an attachment. They might offer what seems like an amazing deal, or maybe even include a tracking link for a package you didn't order.

As a rule, don't click on any email links or open any attachments that seem suspicious. Instead, check with the person who sent the email, or just delete the messages right away.

3. GIFT CARD SCAMS

If the email asks for banking or credit card information for you to get a \$10 or \$25 gift card or a \$100 gift certificate, for example, delete it right away. A legitimate company won't ask for that information.

Some stores do offer gift cards delivered by email or someone can order you an Amazon gift card and have it appear in your inbox instead of your mailbox.

Contact the person to make sure they actually sent it and check if there is a code attached needed at checkout. It won't ask you to supply any identity information, download an attachment or take you to a third-party site.

BELL COUNTY MOST WANTED AS OF: DECEMBER 15, 2016

Trey Perry, from Harker Heights, is a 21 year-old white male with Hazel Eyes and Brown Hair is Wanted For: Burglary of a Habitation. Perry stands 5'9" and weighs 240 lbs.

If you have any information regarding this or other wanted individuals, please call the Bell County Sheriff's Office at 254-933-5400, your local law enforcement, or CRIMESTOPPERS AT 1-800-729-TIPS (Local 526-TIPS)



FROM AUSTIN - The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) has increased the reward for information leading to the arrest of: Monroe Hernandez, 49, of up to \$8,000.



Hernandez, featured in our October 15th issue is Wanted For: Aggravated Sexual Assault and Indecency with a Child.

Hernandez's last known address was in Waco, and he has ties to the area. He is 5 feet 5 inches tall, weighs approximately 180 pounds and has tattoos on his chest, left hand and both legs.

Hernandez may be using an alias.

In 1993, Hernandez was convicted of sexually assaulting a woman in McLennan County. His criminal history also includes possession of cocaine, failure to comply with sex offender registration requirements and multiple DWIs. He subsequently was sentenced to 6 years in TDCJ prison.

In 2001, Hernandez was convicted of Driving While Intoxicated and received a 17-year sentence in TDCJ prison. He was paroled in March 2014.

On September 10, 2014, a Parole Violation warrant for Hernandez's arrest was issued. On April 11, 2016, the Waco Police Department issued an additional warrant for Failure to Comply with Sex Offender Registration Requirements.

For more information or updates in the event of his arrest, see his wanted bulletin at: www.dps.texas.gov/Texas10MostWanted/SexOffenderDetails.aspx?id=338. All tips are guaranteed to be anonymous.

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