

WOODLAKE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER, August 27, 2018

I was in a deep sleep early Monday morning when the energy company text to say that the electric power had been interrupted, that they were working to get power restored and later, asking if my power hadn't been restored to advise them.

Truly, in this heat and heavy demands, I've been expecting more outages. So far, I believe it's the only one in more than 2 years and this time, the least inconvenience we're used to experiencing. Nonetheless, I keep my generator fueled, serviced and tested every 30 days or so just in case.

What did occur to me when I set my cell phone down during my brief wakening, was the huge amount of dependence we – our culture and “modern” society – place on our “Smart Phones” and other electronic devices.

This point became uncomfortably evident while serving as a jury member on a federal case in the Western District Court of Texas, Waco. Jury selection was finished on Monday morning and the attorneys began their opening arguments that afternoon.

No one realized how high a profile and important the case was until we were finally allowed to have lunch and confined to the court house moving about always under supervision of the court security officer. Allowances were made for those who could remember their spouse or boss' phone number, access to the bailiff's or the court clerk's phone to make that call. For the rest of us who can hardly remember their own phone number – too bad!

When I arrived home, late that first evening, to a house without air conditioning and 100 degree temperatures, the emergency repair technician quoted a price of \$300 to-show, plus the minimum charge \$180 per hour labor and parts and suggested I call to schedule an appointment when their office opened the next morning. I followed his recommendation but made a list of the numbers I thought I'd need to make a same-day appointment and coordinate for a neighbor to meet the technician to help him into the house.

Although I was still able to make the appointment It wasn't until late that same day, however, I'd learned that the Tech was reluctant to enter the house without the neighbor, whom he failed to notify. Eventually, I was finally to get the chance to coordinate all the parties to get my A/C repaired.

I had also accomplished a task I'd been putting off you may have already thought of. I'll use the power outage for my explanation. The outage lingered for 14 hours. However, within minutes of being “repaired” another transformer in the community blew its circuits rendering Woodlake without power for another 4 hours.

Imaging that you didn't take the opportunity to charge your smart phone before the power failed, and not having access to a power supply the battery expends shutting off the phone. Unless you've memorized all

your important contacts, borrowing your neighbors' phone is useless. Since my experience in the Western District of Texas, Waco, I've laminated a card with all the important numbers to carry in my wallet. There are probably many more examples out there but knowing your loved ones have phone numbers with them in case their phone is lost, stolen or damaged but are able to borrow someone's to make a call, might give some piece of mind.

'Kissing Bugs', Know Host of Potentially Deadly Chagas Disease, Are Pervasive in Southern States

Chagas is a disease caused by a protozoan parasite that is a deadly infection affecting 8 to 9 million, many animals including dogs.

The parasite, known as *Trypanosoma Cruzi*) is transmitted via "kissing bugs", can cause heart failure and colon complications. It can also be transmitted through blood transfusions, organ transplantations, congenital transmission and eating uncooked food contaminated by feces from infected bugs.

Because there are no consistently effective, readily available treatments to cure Chagas without side effects, avoiding contact with the insect is the best advice.

The disease, common in Mexico and central America, has been showing-up in areas of the southern U.S.



"These blood-sucking bugs get infected by biting an infected animal or person. Once infected, the bugs pass T. Cruzi parasites in their feces. The bugs are found in houses made from materials such as mud, adobe, straw, and palm thatch. During the day, the bugs hide in crevices in the walls and roofs. During the night, when the inhabitants are sleeping, the bugs emerge.

Because they tend to feed on people's faces, triatomine bugs are also known as 'kissing bugs.' After they bite and ingest blood, they defecate on the person. The person can become infected if T. cruzi parasites in the bug feces enter the body through mucous membranes or breaks in the skin. The unsuspecting, sleeping person may accidentally scratch or rub the feces into the bite wound, eyes, or mouth."²

As a nocturnal insect that feeds on blood, kissing bugs are marquis- or football-shaped insects that as adults are comparable in size to a penny. They usually have a subtle band around the edge of the outside "shield" that appears to be stitched with red-orange thread. In the U.S. the highest density is in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, but 28 states have reported having them.

Using safe insect repellents and keeping pets inside at night are common sense tactics that can reduce exposure in endemic areas.