

## Woodlake Property Owners Association Neighborhood Watch Newsletter Father's Day Issue

The publication of this newsletter is unofficial and does not reflect any opinion, directive, or policy of the Woodlake Property Owners Association members or Board of Directors.

The information presented is available through various public access sources, personal interview, or observation. Your comments as to how we can better improve this effort are welcome.

To all you great Dads, Grand Dads, Great-Grand Dads, foster and adopted Dads - "Happy Father's Day!" Having recently lost my Dad I can testify how important it is to spend as much time together you can.

### 1. Bell County Sheriff Tip Line: Wanted <http://www.bellcountytexas.com/cscd/cscdwanted.htm>

There is no change to the suspects wanted in the last issue. If you have any information regarding those 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)**. **ALL CALLS WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.**



The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) has added Mark Anthony Gasaway Jr., 26, to the Texas 10 Most Wanted Sex Offender list, and a \$2,000 cash reward is now offered for information leading to his capture. He has been wanted by the Harris County Sheriff's Office since December 2010 for felony Failure to Register as a Sex Offender. For any information you may have on this fugitive or any other wanted criminal refer to:

<http://www.dps.texas.gov/Texas10MostWanted/SexOffenderDetails.aspx?id=135>  
**All tips can be offered anonymously.**

### 2. Crime Update -

**Killeen** - Police have arrested a man identified as 19-year-old Shane Hicks Jr. He was charged with Aggravated Robbery of a business, giving a false report to a police officer, and evading arrest. Officers responded at 8:13 p.m. on Sunday to the store in the 1600 block of S. Fort Hood Street after someone called in saying the business had been robbed at gunpoint.

A 23-year-old woman, Asinate Leba Marau was arrested Friday, after she admitted to brutally beating her 3-year-old daughter unconscious. It happened at their home in the 2200 block of Cimmaron Drive. Marau said that she punched her daughter several times because she would not stop crying. The toddler suffered life threatening injuries including serious internal brain damage, skull fracture, pulmonary contusion, and seizures.

**Temple** - 21-year-old Edward Waltz was arrested in the 4100 block of West Adams Avenue on Saturday after he was found in possession of a stolen ATV.

**3. Despite "An Alarming Trend"** when violent crime nationwide had a slight up-tick, for the past decade major crime has been trending downward. The statistical blip was attributed to growing economic uncertainty and hundreds of thousands of convicts leaving prison each year. Law enforcement officials began to warn that the country might be headed for a reprise of the crime wave of the late 1980s and early '90s.

It is impossible to identify trends without multiple years of data but, crime statistics for past several years show a continuous national annual 1.4 to 2.1% *drop* in violent and property crime rates respectfully.

Owing to cyclic conditions and community preparedness from heading the warnings, the minor upticks in crime during 2005 and 2006 (2.3 % and 1.9%, respectively, for violent crime) appear to be no

more than minor fluctuations from the historic low crime rate reached in 2000.

Yet simply saying that crime rates have remained relatively stable nationwide hardly explains the great divergence in crime patterns across the country. The average figures mask much more complicated fluctuations between big cities and rural areas and between regions like the Northeast and the South.

The overall drop in homicides, for instance, nationally was a decline of 2.7%, but most of that decrease came from major cities like New York (down 20%) and Los Angeles (down 19% of homicides). Among cities with populations over 1 million, murder rates dropped 9.8%, which contrast sharply to medium-size cities. Those with populations of 100,000 to 249,999 saw a 1.9% rise in murder rates, and a 3.7% increase for cities with 50,000 to 99,999 residents.

What precisely explains why big cities are doing so much better is unclear. It might be that major cities have more sophisticated policing methods and more resources to respond to any fluctuations in crime rates. Regardless, the drop in big-city murder rates has a strong influence on the overall average - so goes the city, so goes the region.

Northeastern cities represented the lion's share of the violent crime decline, with an overall drop of 5.4%. In addition to New York, cities like Boston and Philadelphia saw downturns in their murder rates. Yet murder rates in others, i.e. Newark, N.J., the number of homicides in 2006 and 2007 didn't change.

On average, violent crime in the South went up 0.7 %, concentrated in large metropolitan areas like New Orleans (where homicides increased 29%) and Atlanta (where homicides went up 17%). In these instances, local factors like Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans played a key role, and the increase related to a rise in gang activity and an a major overhaul of narcotics units in Atlanta. It's important to note that during the same time frame other violent crime, like aggravated assault, declined 2%.

Dallas crime statistics report an overall downward trend in crime based on data from 11 years with violent and property crime decreasing.

However, the violent crime rate for Dallas in 2009 was higher than the national rate average by 84.5% and the city's property crime rate was higher than the national rate average by 84.1%. The city's violent crime rate was higher than that for the state's by 61.4% and the city property crime rate in Dallas was higher than the property crime rate in Texas by 39.2%.

Austin crime statistics report an overall upward trend in crime based on data from 11 years with violent crime and property crime rates increasing.

The city violent crime rate for Austin in 2009 was higher than the national violent crime rate average by 21.9% and the city's property crime rate was higher than the national property crime rate average by 106.1%.

In 2009 the city's violent crime rate was higher than the violent crime rate in Texas by 6.6% and the city's property crime rate was higher than the state's property crime rate by 55.8%

Likewise, in San Antonio and Houston the statistics fair similar to Dallas and Austin examples.

In my opinion, the up-trend in crime in these cities is exacerbated by the large influx of Hurricane Katrina "victims", burgeoning economies, and more likely, their sanctuary city status that garners impunity to large populations of illegal immigrants.



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Although the city's violent crime rate was lower than the national crime rate average by 55.1% and the property crime rate less than the national average by 32.4%, Belton crime statistics report an overall upward trend in both violent and property crime based on data from the previous 10 years.

Compared to the state, however, violent crime rate in Belton was lower than the violent crime rate 60.8% yet; the city's property crime rate was higher than the state's property crime rate by only 0.13%

To complicate things even more, this divergence between cities and regions is so widespread that, according to a recent survey by the Police Executive Research Forum, the number of cities reporting an increase in homicides was almost the same as the number reporting a decline.

Nor does the divergence break down into geographic or size categories. Instead, the pattern over the past few years is one of volatility in crimes rates. Many cities go up one year and down the next, some see their rates decline year after year, and others are continuously struggling with high rates.

Unlike in the late 1980s and '90s, when the crack epidemic sent crime rates up across the board, there isn't a consistent remarkable set of national trends. Some of the common factors in these cities are the spread of regional gangs, changes in law enforcement tactics, and funding issues. Therefore, it might be more accurate to attribute the rise in crime to poor policy.

It's possible the stats are lagging because many cities are beginning to see an increase in crime creating an uncertain future. With rising food and oil prices experts suggest a coincidental increase in crime, particularly property crimes. But predicting crime rates is much more difficult than economic forecasting. Reliance on local conditions rather than some common national condition is the experts' best advice.

Texas crime statistics indicate a total upward trend in crime based on data from 10 years when violent crime was increasing along with property crime.

Based on this report, the crime rate in Texas was expected to continue be higher than in 2009 when the state violent crime rate was higher than the national average by 26.9% and the state property crime rate was higher than the national average by 45.3%

The latest data in our state looks encouraging; not too surprising considering that our citizens enjoy a relatively low unemployment rate. Texas experienced a drop in major crime in 2010, according to data compiled by the Texas Department of Public Safety's Uniform Crime Reporting Program.

Violent crime and property crimes both fell compared to the year before. In Texas, the overall crime rate decreased by 6% in 2010. The violent crime rate was down 8.3% in 2010 compared to 2009, and the property crime rate decreased by 5.7 percent.

While the overall crime rate has been down several times over the last decade, this is the first time since 2000 that all seven index crime rates decreased during the same year. Murder was down 7.4%, rape 9.2%, robbery 14.9%, aggravated assault 4.9%, burglary 5.9% larceny/theft 4.9% and motor vehicle theft 12.3%. The total number of juvenile arrests in 2010 dropped 9.3% from 2009, while adult arrests fell 4.6 percent. The number of assaults on police officers in 2010 showed a 6% decrease from 2009.

What can we learn from all this? Experts have maintained that crime rates increase with rising unemployment and poverty rates. In 1991, the murder rate in the U.S. reached a near record 9.8 per 100,000

people. The theory was that a looming generation of so-called superpredators would soon make things even worse. Then, inexplicably, national crime rates began to decrease and continued to drop through boom times and recessions, through peace and war, under Democrats and Republicans. From 1992 to 1997, during a time when the unemployment rate dropped 33%, the country also witnessed a 30% drop in robberies, a 15% drop in auto theft and burglary and a 4% drop in larceny. The data also showed a marked decrease in the national violent crime rate between 2005 and 2010, even as unemployment and poverty have continued to rise.

Nationwide, the crime rate has declined 13.9% between 2005 and 2010. In fact, 2010 was the fourth year in a row crime has declined in the U.S.: 2011 and 2012 will undoubtedly follow the same trend.

If poverty and unemployment cannot explain the dramatic drops in crime rates, what can? Research found that what accounted for those declining incidences of assault, murder and robbery were a combination of local projects, improvements in law enforcement, and urban development.

Coincident with a 14% decrease in nationwide violent crime has been a significant rise in the sale of guns putting to rest the paradigm that "more guns equal more crime". Additional police and improved techniques, changing demographics of an aging population, evolution of the drug trade at both the wholesale and retail levels, plus one more: the steep rise in the number of Americans in prison all share in the decline in the rate of violent and property crime. When lawmakers responded to the crime wave by building prisons and mandating tough sentences, the number of prisoners increased and the number of crimes fell.

As local, state and federal governments face an era of diminished resources, they will need a better understanding of how and why crime rates tumbled. A sour economy need not mean a return to lawless streets, but continued success in fighting crime will require more brains, especially in those neighborhoods where violence is still rampant and public safety is a tattered dream.

A study reported in the *American Economic Review* on the effects of education on crime found that a one-year increase in the average year of schooling completed reduces violent crime by almost 30%.

Consequently, there is no "magic bullet" that would represent a national policy to bring down crime rates in every community. However, there are other options policymakers, law enforcement, and citizens have that may help improve public safety: Adapt proven approaches to reduce crime and recidivism among young people, invest in policies that increase employment and educational attainment, and treatment for those who need it. (*Sources and charts available on request*).

**4. On The Horizon** - Next Issue: *The breaking point for a community may be one fire or it may be one hundred.*

In the upcoming issue I will examine the primary causes of wildfires and what we can do to minimize the threat.

My hope is to consult with the Neighborhood POCs for their input on this year's Neighborhood Night Out, tentatively scheduled for October. This year's event we will try to focus on Crime Prevention, Child Protection, Home Security, Defense Against Terrorism, etc.

As a prelude to this year's NWNO, as I drive around the neighborhood I will be taking notes on common vulnerabilities, and publish my findings in an effort to correct the errors or find a solution to the problem(s).

Have a happy Father's Day.