



Volume 2, Issue 13  
July 15, 2012

## Woodlake Property Owners Association Neighborhood Watch Newsletter Home Safety Edition, Part 1

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 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 better improve this effort are welcome.

### 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.**



**Austin** - Sean Michael **SMITH** has been arrested for a number of offenses since 1993, including criminal mischief, burglary of a habitation, unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, and evading arrest. In 1997, he was charged with assault causing bodily injury - family member after he struck the victim in the face and right jaw. He also twisted the victim's arm behind her back and threw her against a wall, all while verbally abusing her.

In 1998, **SMITH** was charged with theft of property. In 1999, he sexually assaulted a 14-year-old female in Denton County and was subsequently convicted of aggravated sexual assault of a child. In 2004 and 2008, **SMITH** was arrested for failing to comply with his annual duty to register as a sex offender. On January 25, 2010, the Denton County Sheriff's Office issued another warrant for **SMITH**'s arrest for Failure to Register as a Sex Offender.

### 2. Crime Update -

**Temple** - Wednesday evening around 11:05 p.m., police responded to a "7-11" store in the 2700 block of North 23rd Street to a reported robbery. The customer told police she was pushed by a man that took her wallet and cell phone. The suspect fled on foot to a nearby parked car. There were no injuries, no weapon was seen, and police were unable to locate the suspect. If you have any information on this robbery please contact the TPD at 254-298-5500.

- Danielle Ozell Lowe was arrested Wednesday on charges of deadly contact and discharging a firearm inside a habitation. The police found a window at the residence with bullet holes through it but luckily no one had been injured.

- Responding to a domestic fight the police found a woman at a residence in the 700 block of S. 36th St, who had been severely burned. The assault was provoked by an argument between the woman and her sister, Iasha White. The victim alleged that her sister doused her with gasoline and set her on fire. She was rushed to Scott & White Hospital where she is being treated. White may have fled to Moore, OK where she has family. Please contact the TPD at (254) 298-5500 if you have any information regarding Whit's location.

- Monday night police executed a warrant and arrested 28-year-old Danny Saavedra at a home in the 700 block of North 9th St., of felony possession of a drug - 88 pounds of marijuana. The drugs along with \$13,000 in cash were seized during the bust.

**Killeen** - Richard Guy Jensen was arrested on Monday on suspicion of

forcing his way into a Killeen residence and assaulting his ex-girlfriend. The incident took place in the 1500 block of Mulford back on July 7th at around 7:00 p.m. Jensen has since been charged with burglary of a habitation with intent to commit another felony.

**Copperas Cove** - A man has been caught and charged with the murder of Darien P. Brodeur. An altercation between Brodeur and a male suspect occurred in the victim's apartment in the 2000 block of East Highway 190 on Tuesday. The suspect, Cody Dion-Michael Parlato, a 19-year-old Copperas Cove resident was arrested in the 300 block of East Avenue E. later that day shortly after 5:00 p.m.

3. **Local Couple "Soaked" by Shoddy Carpet Installation** - (Well, not really, but...) Returning home after a blissful week in the Caribbean, two home owners were horrified to discover that sometime while they were away, the water heater had sprung a leak which soaked all of the brand-new carpet in two adjacent bedrooms, their office, and a large portion of the living room. Just as horrifying, their insurance company refused to cover the damage! According to them "new carpet can be dried and restored to normal"... (Eeeww!)

Fortunately for them, the installer did such a lousy job of laying the carpet, the dealer had agreed before the incident for the carpet to be replaced at no cost but, the situation is just an example of the multitude of calamities that impact home owners' and occupants' safety, security, and finances.

From the insurers' perspective, being competitive while staying viable without increasing rates is a tough challenge. Last year due to tornadoes and thunderstorms, wildfires, historic flooding and the usual hurricane or two there was a record \$25 billion+ paid-out in loss claims.

The destruction in Joplin, for example, and the casualties caused by natural disasters jar our sensibilities but more people are harmed and more home damaged is caused by common, every day events similar to what happened to my friends.

Home fires in the U.S. occur every 82 seconds and cause more financial damage than earthquakes and floods combined. And, that's just one of the 10 most common hidden dangers that threaten your home. This information will help guide you through some of the things you can do to remove or lessen the impact of some of these threats.

About 40% of home fires start in the kitchen. Cooktops, the most common cause, should never be left unattended when in use and never place combustibles near the cooking surface. I've been guilty of darting to answer the phone, just a few paces away, get distracted and suddenly realize the pot is boiling over. Fortunately, that turned-out more a mess than a danger but the danger existed, none-the-less and I've lost count of the number of hot-pads I've singed during my culinary exercises. Be in the habit of unplugging every appliance when you're finished using it.

If your smoke detectors are more than 10 years old - **REPLACE THEM!** Dead or missing batteries are the leading cause of malfunction; however, even if you've replaced the batteries every 6 to 12 months as you should, most detectors are equipped with an internal battery which powers the processor. It may alert you of a loss of internal battery voltage by constantly "chirping". The only way to quiet them is to hold the test button until there is no more life left in the internal battery. Some places have special disposal instruction for old detectors and batteries.

If you have a summer home in Yankee land, be sure the attic remains well ventilated. Keep it cool by adding insulation and vents in the soffits or gables if necessary. In some climates, a roof that's too warm in the wintertime melts the snow which then collects in the gutter where it will freeze. The ice that forms will dam-up the thaw-flow filling the gutter



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and causing water infiltration under the shingles resulting in leaks and costly repairs.

For us “normal” one-home-for-every-occasion-kind’a-guys, keep those gutters clean and the down spouts clear. A clogged gutter that overflows will cause pooling around the foundation. It’s also a good idea to put splash pans under or add extensions to the down spout to control run-off. In one instance an overflow along a reverse grade resulted in undermining of my foundation. At least I know the French drain works but had I not realized what was happening and made remedies, it might have resulted in an unnecessary and costly foundation repair.

Many of us, as I do, fancy themselves as a “do-it-yourselfers”. But, there are some repairs and improvements that ought left be done by the “Pros”, like electrical wiring. We all know that frequent blown fuses or circuit breaker is a sign of an electrical problem and that bad wiring can cause a short and an electrical fire. Now, I’ll admit to making some upgrades or two still, with all my experience and “training” here are some other tips I’ve learned: flickering lights or a “tingling” sensation when you touch a wall switch or an appliance is also cause for concern. (And I just thought it was TXU messing with me.)

Some new houses have arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCI) but all new homes have ground-fault circuit interrupt/residential-current devices, (GFCI/RCD) installed. GFCI’s are installed on certain outlets on sub-feeds to prevent electrical shock from a short in the circuit or the appliance. While circuit breakers prevent electrical circuits from overheating which can cause the insulation to catch on fire, Arc fault interrupters reduce sparks and arcing at bad connections which can ignite gases or other combustible materials.

Look inside your main “fuse” box to determine which of the two type circuit breakers are installed in your home. Circuit breakers only have one on/off switch. There is no way to test its operation without removing the unit from the power panel. Arc fault interrupter circuit breakers have an on/off switch as well as a test button. The test button is used to make sure the Arc fault interrupter is operating properly and in good condition.

Despite my best efforts to prepare for ‘Ol Man Winter, one of the pipes on the north side of the house froze inside the wall one frigid day last year. A pipe that freezes and cracks just 1/8” can leak as much as 250 gallons of water in one day. That’s a LOT of potential damage.

Though rare, we have had winters that on some days the temperature drop where may pipe freeze; A reality rare enough I don’t know anyone who has separate valves for the outside faucets. If you thought of it (the contractor won’t do it) and had them installed, close them for the winter but leave the spigots open. Otherwise, remove hoses and cover or wrap the outside faucets and insulate all exposed pipes with foam sleeves. Some homes with shallow top soil may have water supply line very close to the surface and vulnerable to damage or freezing. Keeping a spigot inside at a dribble will relieve pressure on the pipes and water that is moving is far less likely to freeze.

Two potential hidden hazards exist in the utility/laundry room: The dryer and the washer.

Keeping the lint cleaned off the filter in the dryer may not be enough to prevent a fire. Tiny particles and fibers maybe collecting around the dryer’s heating element. If possible, brush or vacuum any buildup from around the lint filter often. Hire a professional to clean-out the cabinet every couple of years or so.

An unrestricted gusher of water will flood the room very quickly, not if but WHEN an inlet hose to the washing machine bursts. Because of the stress and strain or dry rot from months in a hot storage bay, a washer hose will likely burst soon after you’ve moved into your new home or it

can deteriorate with age from-the-inside-out with little or no evidence of any loss of integrity.

Replace the rubber hoses every year or one that is steel braided. Check them often for leaks and loose connections. When leaving the house for more than a day or two, turn off the water to the washer.

Creosote, a highly flammable gas suspended in the air by smoke of burning wood, when cools, condenses and collects on the inside of the chimney. Practically every wood source when burned produces creosote but, if you use your fireplace at all, never use pine or cedar, or any soft wood that has a high content of sap or moisture.

You’ll never know when it will happen but a large buildup of creosote and an ignition is a cause of most smoke-stack and chimney fires and explosions.

One case I recall, the home owner who ignored these cautions, saw flames rising out of the top of his chimney. The DIY’er he was, erringly used the nearby hose to direct a stream of water to extinguish the fire. The sudden temperature change caused the mortar between the bricks to crack and leave large gaps through which sparks passed and ignited the wood frame behind it.

By the time the mistake was realized and the fire reported, there wasn’t much the fire department could do to save the house.

Sparks that fly out of the hearth can ignite the carpet, rug or furniture, are also a hazard so keep the screen closed when the fireplace is in use and get your chimney swept annually.

The backyard BBQ grill with a leaky gas-supply hose is fire waiting to happen. The grill being used that is sitting too close to the house or in an enclosed porch is also a hazard. Don’t use your grill within 10’ from the house and keep it clear of any overhead obstructions. Be sure there are no cracks in the gas-line and replace it when necessary.

**4. On The Horizon – “The 29th Annual National Night Out”, Has Been Announced:** This a unique crime/drug prevention event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch, has been scheduled for Tuesday, August 7, 2012; However, Texans will celebrate the event on Tuesday October 2, 2012.

National Nights Out campaigns involve citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, business, neighborhood organizations and local officials from over 15,000 communities from all 50 states, U.S. territories, Canadian cities and military bases worldwide. Over 37 million people participated in last year’s event. Our goal is to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate support for and participation in local anticrime programs, strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships, and send a message to criminals letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

The Woodlake community will again host the duet team of Mike and Angela Mahler of “Wild Horses”, the Sparta Valley Fire Dept., our C.O.P.S. liaison, Sgt. De LaRosa, great food, and more happening from 6 – 8 PM. at the tennis courts. Watch for additional information; hope to see you there!

Next Issue: Part II, Home Safety -Dealing with decisions about home insurance and more information about emergency planning.