

# Woodlake Neighborhood Watch Newsletter

## SUMMER SAFETY SERIES, PART III - SPIDERS, RODENTS & SNAKES... OH MY!!!

Yet another very, very rainy spring in Central Texas.... The relatively warmer winters with several days well above freezing temperatures are a harbinger of larger populations of pests! Critters chasing rodents and digging up your lawn for new roots and grub worms are all part of living among this area's beauty of nature and



the environment.

A mild winter and warmer temperatures also means an abundance of snakes out of hibernation early to eat and mate.

Of the several types of snakes in the area, there are really only 4 that are venomous: Coral snakes, Water Moccasins, Copperheads and of course Rattlesnakes.

It's best, however, to just treat every snake as poisonous, leave them alone, or contact a snake removal company.

There are some things you can do to minimize the chances of one of these uninvited creepy-crawling vermin to sneak in and potentially ruin that backyard gathering:

1. Survey your home, yard, and neighborhood for potential snake, mouse, or rat feeding or harborage areas. Any place that is hospitable to mice, rats, toads, frogs, and geckos, is also highly attractive to snakes, because rodents and anurans are the favorite prey of most snakes. This includes our common rat snakes, hog-nosed snakes, and garter snakes, but also our venomous pit vipers such as copperheads, cottonmouths, and rattlesnakes. Venomous coral snakes, too, favor places where they can find abundant prey (mostly small snakes), and ready-made shelter.

The most likely places where snakes and their prey congregate involve:

- a. The vicinity of, and sometimes within, bird feeders (except for hummingbirds),

- b. Within and around woodpiles and un-racked firewood lying on the ground, around stacks of debris and masonry and rock piles,
- d. Within and around piles of leaves, tree limbs, uncut weeds or grasses, both in the yard, and bordering the yard within 10 feet of the yard perimeter,
- f. Within the confines of thick and impenetrable shrubbery, and
- g. Occupying harborage space in, around, and beneath structures such as fence and foundation voids, mobile homes, homes and/or garages on pier & beam foundations, sheds, dog houses, playhouses, etc.

2. Inspect for, find, and then seal all the ingress/egress ports in your home's exterior: clean up, disinfect, and remove the contaminants left behind by any snake.

3. Then, unless you're properly equipped, have done your research and studied all the technical issues, have applied all the environmental modification and removed any reason for their hanging around, it is best to hire a professional from the local area who knows their habits and habitats, to safely remove/relocate unwanted snakes.

One important precaution is to treat the voids of such stacks with rodenticides, to exterminate the rodents that loiter and feed there before they set up housekeeping regularly (which could be daily, weekly, less or more frequently depending on the climate, weather, and evidence of effectiveness).

## MOST WANTED BELL LAMPASAS COUNTY AS OF: 15 JUNE '16

**Latarian Merritt** is a 23 y/o Black Male from Killeen Wanted For: Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity. Merritt stands 6'3" tall, weighs 175 lbs., with Brown Eyes and Black Hair.



If you have any information regarding these 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 Manuel Raul Maese, to \$8,000 for information leading to his capture. Maese, a Texas 10 Most Wanted Sex Offender and this month's featured fugitive, is a high-risk sex offender wanted for indecent exposure and failure to comply with sex offender registration requirements.

Maese has ties to El Paso and an extensive criminal history in El Paso County, including a

conviction for indecency with a child and six convictions for indecent exposure.

Details: 62 y/o, Hgt:5'9", Wgt:210 lbs.

Maese has an extensive history of working as a commercial truck driver. He has used the alias of Manuel Montalvo in the past and may be known as "Manny."

See bulletin at: [www.dps.texas.gov/Texas10MostWanted/fugitiveDetails.aspx?id=328](http://www.dps.texas.gov/Texas10MostWanted/fugitiveDetails.aspx?id=328).

*Texas Crime Stoppers, which is funded by the Governor's Criminal Justice Division, offers cash rewards to any person who provides information that leads to the arrest of one of the Texas 10 Most Wanted fugitives or sex offenders.*

## CHIP OR STRIP: OPTIONS WILL SOON BE HISTORY

Due to the huge number and cost of installation, the US has lagged behind Europe introducing the chip-enabled credit cards.

The chip's superiority over magnetic strip is acknowledged but, despite that, there are some things you should still be aware of:

These upgraded versions, also called EMV (short for Europay, MasterCard and Visa) are meant to help fight fraud and safeguard your accounts and making it much harder for criminals to steal information.

Each time you use a magnetic strip card, the same data is transmitted to the credit card companies at the time of the sale. However, a new code will be used for each transaction that you make with the EMV card.

Instead of swiping your credit card, insert the card into a reader. Sometimes it seems like it takes longer but glitches like that will improve with time.

For now, only a few card issuers will offer the more secure PIN and chip cards, which will eventually replace the current "chip-and-signature cards".

While chip cards may provide an extra layer of security in person, they're just as vulnerable as the old cards to online fraud. This may create more vulnerability as criminals will have to focus their efforts online. Thus, checking your card statement regularly and following-up with your credit reports is a good idea.

Nonetheless, retailers have an October 1 deadline for making the up-grades but your magnetic strip cards will be accepted and still work for several years and the new EMV cards will still have the strip. (Source: Transunion, 12/03/15, Identity Protection, Personal)



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