

**NORTH CAMPUS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**

**CRIME ALERT** April 11, 2011

Dear Friends,

We have started a revitalized neighborhood watch program in the North Campus Neighborhood which uses block captains to help lower crime rates. I know many of you are very concerned by the dramatic increase in crime that has occurred in our neighborhood over the past months. Last Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, a car was stolen from the parking lot of the Mennonite church at 10 am, and there are still a high number of burglaries and attempted burglaries of homes and cars throughout our neighborhood.

All too frequently, property crimes are preceded by ostensible "door to door salesmen" or knocking on the door of your home late at night. Some neighbors have noticed that groups of people appear to be using our neighborhood as a staging area for illegal activities. Please call 242-COPS if you feel that something is just not right, or that someone is trying to case your home. Of course, call 911 if it is a real emergency. Be sure not to place yourself in any danger, and do not directly confront anyone. But if you are able to take a quick photo (on your phone perhaps) or get a description and a license plate number, it could be very helpful.

**If you are interested in being the block captain of your street, please contact Lindsay Patterson at [lp.bourlatos@yahoo.com](mailto:lp.bourlatos@yahoo.com) to get started.**

The folks on Princeton, between Hannett and Indian School, have been very active in creating a strong neighborhood watch program. They recently wrote a newsletter for their street, but I thought it was so informative and helpful, that I wanted to share it with all of you.

The following letter was written by Patricia Comer on March 29, 2011:

Hello Neighbors!

I am your Block Captain for our newly formed Neighborhood Watch program. I attended the "official" APD block meeting on March 26th. It was a very informative meeting and I will highlight some of the notes that we compiled. But, just minutes before the meeting started, our host Rich Adam noticed some unusual activity. He wrote the following account:

*In an episode that could only have been made for reality TV, we began this morning's meeting with ... an arrest!*

*Just after Crime Prevention Specialist Sandy Martinez-Pino of APD pulled up in front of our house, I noticed that the same vagrant who had come to our door yesterday (and*

*whom I had reported to 242-COPS) was walking down the other side of the street toward Haines. I went out to greet Sandy and told her that that was the fellow I'd reported. Being a watchful officer, she had already noticed him as well, and that "he didn't fit in" in our neighborhood. As soon as our Sgt. Griego drove up, she informed him, and he went looking for the suspect. Little time had passed, so Sgt. Griego caught up with the man about a block and a half down Princeton. When he interrogated the man, it became clear that he was trying not to reveal his identity, so the sergeant called back-up and they finally determined that the man is a convicted burglar. Out on parole! Well, not so much anymore. He's back in, and likely to have a longer visit this time. So the good sergeant came a bit late to our meeting, but joined in very helpfully.*

Crime Prevention Specialist Sandy Martinez-Pino and Sgt. J. J. Griego made a presentation about Neighborhood Watch and related matters, that is, after Sgt. Griego arrested the vagrant! Sandy told us of the important distinction between:

Burglary – you come home and find that someone has broken into your house and stolen your laptop, but no one is on the premises.

Robbery – you come home and catch someone in the act of putting your lap top and some jewelry into a pillow case, and about to flee; OR, you catch this person in the act and he threatens you with a weapon either seen or implied.

These are important distinctions, because in the first case, you simply report the theft to APD through the Telephone Reporting Unit (# 768-2030) or go to the APD Web site and fill out the form. If you do the on-line form, it is essential that you (1) make a printout of the report for future reference AND make sure that you see a Tab # and Case # in the upper-right hand corner of the report before you submit it. Keep a copy of those numbers for future reference. If those numbers do not appear, your report has not been received by APD.

The third way to report a non-violent crime is to go to the substation in the triangle at Central, Girard and Monte Vista, where two retired APD officers take such information daily during normal business hours.

**It is absolutely critical for us to report EVERY theft or act of vandalism, regardless of how minor it may seem at the time** (two cheap, five-year-old plastic chairs stolen off the patio? YES!), because no report means that APD has no incident. It didn't happen. **If they do have that report, they can do a better job of tabulating and mapping crime statistics.**

If you do come across a robber, or see one emerging from your neighbor's home, or witness an act of physical violence (or an accident), or otherwise feel threatened, CALL 911. It is not our job to confront would-be intruders. Calling 911 will trigger a high-priority response.

If a panhandler comes to the door and you turn him away, but do not feel threatened, make the report through 242-COPS.

**Did You Know:** Sandy Martinez said that if there is a "tagging" on your lower curb in front of your house that it is a sign that is placed there by a transient person alerting other transients that you have a "soft touch". I recommend you check your curb if you have transients coming to your door.

### **For Your Safety : Door-to-Door Solicitation Information:**

Addressing the component of safety, I have noticed an unusually large number of door-to-door solicitors recently and contacted the ABQ Treasury office to find out what the criteria is for solicitation.

1. A legitimate business will get a license to sell in ABQ.
2. They will be issued a printed badge with their picture, name, address and name of business.
3. They are required to display the badge when arriving at your door.

For your safety, it is recommended to have a storm or security door that is kept locked between you and the solicitor. Do not let the solicitor enter your door even if they wish to demonstrate their product. Call the police (non-emergency) 242-COPS if the solicitor does not have any visible credentials AFTER they leave your premises. Do not threaten to call the police while they are standing at your door. If it is an emergency, always call 911. These small steps of precaution and a cool head will keep you safe.

There is a third area that do not come under either 911 or 242-COPS, and it includes complaints about trash in a neighbor's yard, or failure to carry out basic maintenance, which falls under the jurisdiction of a different department. In such cases call 311 and ask to be directed to the appropriate unit of city government.

### **Home safety tips from APD's Sandy Martinez:**

- Stand on your front walk and look at the approach to the house; do bushes, trees, other things make it easy for an intruder to hide? If so, trim. Bushes should be no higher than 3 feet.
- Are your outside doors (as well as the door from the garage into the house, if you still use your garage as a garage) solid core, able to withstand serious assault? Do those doors have deadbolt locks?

- If you want to have a light in the driveway or back yard, install one with a motion sensor, so that it will come on only when someone is present, thereby alerting you to the presence of an intruder. Do not use a light that is left on all night long.
- Don't make it easy for someone to approach your house and see in to where you might have a flat-screen TV, a play station or a laptop – the three most commonly stolen items in home burglaries. Put such equipment out of sight when not in use.
- When you plan to be away, tell your block captain, who will notify APD, so that the address is put on a watch list.

The Albuquerque Police web site (<http://www.cabq.gov/police/index.html>) has access to crime statistics under “crime mapping” [graphic representations of the neighborhoods]. We are located in the Southeast Command of APD (I-40 south to the city limits, I-25 east to Eubank), in the North Campus Neighborhood, in Beat 325 (I-40 south to Lomas, I-25 east to San Mateo).

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Again, if we all work together, reporting suspicious incidents, theft, and looking out for one another, we can make a difference for the entire neighborhood. Please talk to your neighbors, get to know them, and create a watch program for your block.

All the best,

Sara Koplik, President NCNA