



# Neighborhood Watch Newsletter

## Lent; Or, Mardi Gras Recovery Day Issue

### IS MARDI GRAS THE PRECEDENT FOR LENT, OR?

Mardi Gras ("Fat Tuesday") marks the end of the Carnival season, which begins on the Epiphany (Three Kings Day) on January 6 and ends on "Fat" Tuesday before Ash Wednesday (Mardi Gras), the last day before lent (a solemn period observed by prayer, repentance, fasting, and moderation).

#### Many Mardi Gras traditions include:

1. Eating King Cake. Normally served on Epiphany, but Louisianans, savor the sweet cake the night before Ash Wednesday. King cakes are often decorated with a toy baby to represent the baby Jesus.
2. Although the holiday is rooted in the Christian calendar, most observances include festive parties, balls, and parades, not worship.
3. Green, representing faith, gold, power and purple, symbolizing justice, the official colors of Mardi Gras, all have roots in Christianity.
4. Mardi Gras is not celebrated as an official church holiday, but is celebrated because the following day starts Lent, the 40-day period of preparation and penitence before Easter.

### ANNUAL SUMMATION FOR CRIMES OF OPPORTUNITY IN SPARTA VALLEY

The following data is a comparison of the rates of Crimes of Opportunity: Robbery, Burglary, Theft (petty and felony combined), Vehicle Theft and Burglary of Vehicle from 2015 and 2016. The data represents the an estimated population density of the Sparta Valley area of concern (5-mile radius centered on the intersection of Cedar Cove Rd. and Water Works Rd.), based on average density per square mile at a 5%/annum growth for Bell County.

**Robbery:** There were a total of 2 incidents of Robbery of an individual reported in 2015; on 10<sup>th</sup> St. in Nollanville and on Setter St. (Bell Co. Sheriff), for a ratio of .11/1000 residents.

In 2016, however, there were 6 total Robbery of individuals reported in the Sparta Valley area for a ratio of .33/1000, which represents a surge of nearly 25% increase in 2016. The nearest incident occurred at the 4000 block of Water Works Rd.

**Burglary:** In 2015 a total of 85 incidents of Burglary were reported in the Sparta Valley area. Four of those incidents occurred in close proximity or within Woodlake: 5300

Terms & Preventative Measures	
<b>Robbery:</b> <i>Def-</i> the crime of taking the property of another, with the intent to permanently deprive the person of that property, by means of force or fear.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit self-confidence. Robbers will avoid someone who will make their 'job' hard. If you show them that you are not afraid of them, they are less likely to rob you.</li> <li>• Only carry the minimum amount of cash you'll need and leave luxury items at home.</li> <li>• Keep defensive items handy, like pepper spray. Keep several pepper spray containers at your home.</li> <li>• Travel in well-lit areas. Avoid traveling at night and be wary of dark alleys, or parking garages.</li> <li>• Traveling in a group may deter would-be robber and the additional people can help or act as witnesses.</li> <li>• Avoid places with fewer authority figures.</li> </ul>
<b>Burglary:</b> <i>Def-</i> the unlawful entry into any structure with the intent to commit any crime, usually theft/ larceny. No physical breaking and entering is required; the offender may simply trespass through an open door.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because nearly 70% of burglars enter your home through a door, install thick, solid wood doors that are hard to kick in.</li> <li>• Install a secondary floor lock, so that after breaking the door window, a burglar cannot reach down to unlock your door and waltz into your home. Install hidden bracing in the doorframe.</li> <li>• Doors and windows are the primary access for burglars, so providing a first-line deterrent like visible (and sturdy) locks is a step toward security.</li> <li>• Make it a habit to lock up every time you go out and keep the doors locked when you're home, especially at night. Doors should have deadbolts and patio/sliding doors need special anti-entry devices to prevent removal from their frames.</li> <li>• Ask the Sheriff's Department to walk the inside and outside of your home, and suggest areas for improvement.</li> <li>• Consider having a home alarm system installed. Check on each company's response time and whether you want the police automatically notified then take the maximum protection you can afford.</li> <li>• Installing security cameras is a good deterrent because burglars do not like to have their image recorded. Even if you can't afford state-of-the-art indoor and/or outdoor security cameras with night vision and a decent hard drive to record a few days worth of video, fake cameras that look genuine can also work as a good deterrent.</li> <li>• Illuminate shadowed part of your home and access points with motion-activated floodlights. If a light flips on, you want a wide viewing area.</li> <li>• In the event that a thief does breach your perimeter security, have your most precious valuables safely secured in a fireproof safe. Bolt the safe to the floor; otherwise a strong burglar could cart it out.</li> </ul>
<b>Theft:</b> <i>Def-</i> taking of another person's property or services without that person's permission or consent with the intent to deprive the rightful owner of it. The word is also used for some crimes such as burglary, embezzlement, larceny, looting, robbery, shoplifting, library theft, and fraud (i.e., obtaining money under false pretenses).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The innumerable means to steal property makes listing the tips for preventing theft, impossible. The best advice is, when you're out and about be aware of your surroundings and environment, stay alert and vigilant which includes keeping your property safe and out of sight. At home, keep locks on all the doors, any and all valuables secured and out of sight at all times. Take the appropriate precautions to protect yours and the identities of your family.</li> </ul>
<b>Vehicle Theft:</b> <i>Def-</i> stealing or attempting to steal a car (or any other motor vehicle).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devices used to lock a part of the vehicle necessary in its operation, such as the wheel, steering wheel or brake pedal.</li> <li>• Immobilizers allow the vehicle to start only if a key containing the correct chip is present in the ignition. These work by locking the steering wheel and disabling the ignition.</li> <li>• Hidden kill switches cut electric current to the ignition coil, fuel pump, or other system to frustrate or slow down a thief.</li> <li>• Deterrents such as car alarm systems, microdot identification tags, warning signs on windows of other deterrents and VIN etching may reduce the resale value of parts or increase risk of resale, usually warn-off a would be thief.</li> </ul>
<b>Burglary of a Vehicle:</b> <i>Def-</i> the unlawful entry into a vehicle with the intent to commit any crime, usually theft/larceny. No physical breaking and entering is required; the offender may simply gain access through an open window or unlocked door.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't leave valuables in your car.</li> <li>• If you must leave valuable items in your car while out and about, place items out of sight before reaching your destination or move them inconspicuously, locked in the trunk or glove compartment. Never open a trunk, fill it full of valuables, close it, and then just walk away.</li> <li>• Take advantage of free home delivery offered by many merchants is one way to protect your purchases while making your shopping far more enjoyable.</li> <li>• Keep your car in good operating condition and always have plenty of gas to get "there and back".</li> <li>• Once home, unload your valuables immediately. Do not store valuables in your car any longer than necessary, and certainly never overnight.</li> <li>• If your trunk can be opened from inside your car without a key, lock this feature when you are not in your car or have it disabled, if possible.</li> <li>• Park in well lit, busy locations or in a garage.</li> <li>• And, never use "hide-a-keys". Thieves know the best places to hide those.</li> </ul>

DenmansLp., 7200 Piping Rock Rd., 4400 Water Works Rd., and at 200 block of Salem Dr. in Shiloh Terrace community equating to a rate of 4.66/1000 residents. By comparison, that represents an approximate 15% reduction to a rate of .24/1000 during the calendar year 2016. There were 2 home invasions last year in the Denmans Lp. community; 1 on the 5400 block and 1 on the 5700 block.

The incidents from both calendar years were evenly distributed with the majority occurring during the month of October in '15 and in November '16.

**Theft:** In 2015 there were 7 thefts reported near or in Woodlake at 4400 Blue Ridge Dr.; 100 Shiloh Terr.; 2 X 5400 Denmans Mtn.; 5500 Denmans Mtn.; 5000 Denmans Lp.; and at 5100 Waterworks Rd., for a total of 118. This equates to a rate of approximately 6.5/1000 residents in the Sparta Valley area. Last year however, a total of 143

theft of property was reported for a ratio of 7.8/1000 or an increase of 13%. The ratio for the number of thefts within 1 mile of Woodlake more than doubled that of the 2015 with 16.

**Vehicle Theft:** Three households in the Denmans Loop community were victims of Vehicle Theft in 2015, for a total of 25 (1.4/1000) within the Sparta Valley area. A combined total of 19 Vehicle Thefts were reported last year for a 1.04/1000 in Sparta Valley. That's an improvement of about 6% fewer than in 2015.

**Burglary of a Vehicle:** During the calendar year, 2015, 147 vehicle burglaries were reported within the Sparta Valley area. The ratio of 8.1/1000 included 7 in the Denmans Loop community and 4 reported in Woodlake.

In 2016 the ratio decreased slightly to 7.2/1000 residents for a total of 132 Vehicle Burglaries.

Four of these incidents were reported having occurred on Blue Ridge Dr., 2 on Woodlake Cir., and 1 was reported on Piping Rock Rd.

*The publication of this newsletter is unofficial and does not express 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 improve this effort are welcome.*



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BELL COUNTY MOST  
WANTED AS OF: MARCH 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2017

#### IDENTITY THEFT REMAINS THREAT TO OUR SECURITY

Identity theft is defined as the unauthorized use or attempted use of existing accounts, or the unauthorized use or attempted use of personal information, to open a new account or for other fraudulent purposes.

Despite effort by credit companies, retailers and preventative software, identity theft continues to plague the world around us.

Theft Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey, presents findings on the prevalence and nature of identity theft from a 2014 report that details the number and percentage of persons age 16 or older who reported at least one incident of identity theft. It describes how the personal information was obtained, financial losses due to identity theft, victim reporting to credit bureaus and police, and the impact of identity theft on victims lives.

The report includes a lifetime prevalence rate for identity theft and information on the preventive actions taken to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft.

- About 7% of persons age 16 or older were victims of identity theft in 2014, similar to findings in 2012.
- The majority of identity theft victims (86%) experienced the fraudulent use of existing account information, such as credit card or bank account information.
- The number of elderly victims of identity theft increased from 2.1 million in 2012 to 2.6 million in 2014.
- About 14% of identity theft victims experienced out-of-pocket losses of \$1 or more. Of these victims, about half suffered losses of less than \$100.
- Half of identity theft victims who were able to resolve any associated problems did so in a day or less.

**Answer these questions honestly.** Let's see how much you really know about what criminals are targeting. Just answer with a simple yes or no.

1. Do you use free Wi-Fi at restaurants, businesses, the library, at work or on the road?
2. Do you carry all your credit cards around with you in your wallet or purse?
3. Do you throw away your important mail or junk mail without thoroughly shredding it?
4. Do you only get your credit report when you are applying for a car, home or other type of loan?
5. Do you have your passwords saved in your browser or phone for sites like Facebook, Amazon, and more?
6. Do you think it's not necessary to secure your home wireless network?
7. Do you use the same password for most of your sites?

These are things we do routinely and without much thought. If you said yes to any of these questions, you're at risk for thieves stealing your identity. Then, it only takes seconds for criminals to start using your personal details or selling them on the Dark Web. This is a huge problem.

A new identity is stolen every two seconds. So, in the time you read this far, about 45 people are having their personal details used to rack up bills, loans, and credit cards without their knowledge, maybe even steal the equity in their home.

**I'd like you to hear from three victims. One hits close to home. It's Mike James, my Technical Director for the Kim Komando Show.**

Mike was purchasing a new home, when out of nowhere he realized someone had opened up five credit cards in his name and charged nearly \$10,000! It actually cost him the house! Mike explains:

"After filling out the police reports, spending countless hours on the phone, talking to nameless reps and disputing every fraudulent activity that the criminals had committed, it took over six months to get my identity restored." Yikes!

**Meet Lara Love and David Jackson.** In eight months, this couple stole the identities of 30 neighbors. To pull it off, they swiped their neighbors' mail. To make matters worse, they also used their neighbors' unsecured Wi-Fi to set up fake accounts and make their fraudulent online purchases.

**William Donaldson did nothing wrong.** He paid his bills on time, secured his Wi-Fi, shred his documents, got an annual credit report but suddenly, he could not qualify for a new department store credit card. As it turns out, his name and personal details were in the hundreds of thousands stolen in a massive data breach. After investigating the matter, he learned that criminals were applying for a home equity loan for almost \$100,000!



Matthew Hering is a 22 y/o B/M Wanted For: Burglary of a Habitation W/Intent to Commit Theft.

Hering stands 5'9" tall, weighs 170 lbs., and has Brown Eyes and Black Hair.

He is known to have lived in Temple.

**FROM AUSTIN** - \$5,000 Reward is being offered for information leading the arrest of: Gilbert Garza.



**Details:** W/M, DOB: 3/7/1957 HI: 5'10", WT: 200lbs. AKA: Mark McBride SMT: May wear glasses  
**WANTED FOR:** Fail to Comply with Sex Offender Reg. Requirements, Parole Violation (Orig. Offense: Indecency w/ Child-Sexual Contact), Probation Violation (Orig. Offense: Indecency-Fondling) CCH: Indecency with a Child - Sexual Contact. LKA: 6401 Devonshire Drive, North Richland Hills, TX.

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