



Topanga Community Police Station Newsletter



Serving the Communities of: Canoga Park,
West Hills, Woodland Hills, and Winnetka

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Topanga Community Relations Office (818) 756-3180

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Captain's Corner

A message from Captain Tom Brascia

I'd like to share with you some of the various tools we at Topanga use to communicate with the communities we serve. First and foremost, Topanga Area now has a website (www.lapdtopangapolice.com) that contains a great deal of useful information from Upcoming Events to Community Alerts. You can also view the bi-monthly newsletter in PDF format from this website. (We will continue to have the print version of our newsletter available).

You can also look for Topanga on Facebook and Twitter (www.facebook.com/lapdtopanga and www.twitter.com/lapdtopanga) in addition to Nixle. These three modes of communication allow us to get information out to the communities we serve in a much more timely manner than in years past. Additionally, we have a Topanga email account (topangapolice@lapd.lacity.org) in which we have begun to communicate with community inquiries. When emailing your Senior Lead Officer, please also send (cc) the email to this Topanga email account. The reason for this is that due to a compressed work schedule, your Senior Lead Officer may be on a stretch of days off or a short vacation, causing a delay in the response to your email. There are numerous officers in the Topanga CRO office who monitor the Topanga email account, and therefore by "cc-ing" this email address, you will receive a more timely response.



Topanga Area Memorial Golf Tournament:

Written By: Officer Todd Jaron

In October 2011, The Topanga Area Station Fund held its first annual Memorial Golf Tournament in memory of one of Topanga's own, Officer Joshua Cullins. Officer Cullins

was killed in Iraq in 2010, serving his country as a United States Marine.

The money raised from the proceeds of the tournament was donated to The Wounded Warrior Project, a scholarship in Josh's name to his former high school in Simi Valley, and to the Topanga Station Fund. Last year's tournament was a tremendous success and all who were involved had a wonderful time. Community members played golf alongside Topanga Officers and City Dignitaries including Captain Brascia and Councilman Zine.

This year's tournament will take place on September 17, 2012, at the Porter Valley Country Club. Golf spaces are limited so if you are interested in playing in the tournament or becoming a sponsor, please contact Officer Jaron or Officer Kincaid in the Topanga Community Relations Office at 818-756-3180.



West Hills Basic Car Area (21A1):

Written By: Senior Lead Officer Dennis Cunningham

Neighborhood Watch Do's & Don'ts *Do...*

- Report suspicious activity immediately to the police.
- Report all crimes to the police.
- Learn what's normal in your neighborhood.
- Take a pro-active stance against crime.
- Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings.
- Encourage others to participate in Neighborhood Watch; Invite new residents to join neighborhood watch.
- Obtain full descriptions and license numbers of suspicious people and their vehicles and report immediately to the police.

Don't...

- Don't take the law into your own hands.
- Don't approach suspicious people.
- Don't stop criminals committing crimes.
- Don't take unnecessary risks to obtain information on suspicious people or crimes.
- Don't hesitate to call police.



Canoga Park Basic Car Area (21A5):

Written By: Senior Lead Officer Alex Padron

Going Postal over your Missing Mail?

Some Do's and Don'ts:

If you have been receiving your neighbor's mail, please:

*Don't open it; don't discard it!

*Do bring it to your neighbor's address or write on the envelope "erroneously-delivered" and the "date"; leave it out for pick up by your postal carrier for "re-delivery."

Your outgoing mail will be safer if you:

*Don't attach it to your mailbox/mail slot. Thieves can easily steal it.

*Don't mail currency.

*Do deposit important mail (e.g., checks) directly into a post office mailbox.

If erroneously delivered or missing mail persists, report it to the USPS, mail service unit: 1-800-275-8777.

If you have not been receiving important first-class mail such as checks, bank statements, or bills, promptly report the problem to the postal inspector: 1-877-876-2455. If you suspect theft or fraud (identity theft, suspicious work-at-home schemes, illegal lottery/sweepstakes, or the use of mail for financial elder abuse, report your concerns to the postal inspection unit.

Remember, good neighbors can be worth their weight in postage. Be a good neighbor!



West Hills (South) Basic Car Area (21A43):

Written By: Senior Lead Officer Sam Sabra

Medical Marijuana Dispensaries are still a concern and are being monitored by Topanga Area Police. Our Captain would like the community to know, that Topanga continues to monitor and take action against the illegal marijuana dispensaries.

Specifically Topanga continues to:

- 1) Take and have taken enforcement action against medical marijuana clinics.
- 2) If there are any crime or disorder issues associated with a clinic, we will take enforcement action.

3) If there are any public complaints associated with a clinic, we will take enforcement action.

4) We routinely monitor the clinics for crime and disorder issues.

5) Our Narcotics Enforcement Detail actively pursues narcotic offenders.

6) Our Narcotics Enforcement Detail actively pursues other criminal offenders associated with Part-1 crime issues.

On another note, during the first week of April, two burglars were arrested by Topanga police officers. These suspects were believed to be gang members from out of the area and possibly "knock, knock" burglars. They had just committed a burglary in Woodland Hills but are believed to be responsible for a recent rash of burglaries in West Hills. Good job Topanga!



West Winnetka & South Canoga Park Basic Car Area (21A57):

Written By: Senior Lead Officer Janet Zumstein

EARTHQUAKE TIPS:

When you feel an earthquake, duck under a desk or sturdy table. Stay away from windows, bookcases, file cabinets, heavy mirrors, hanging plants, and other objects that could fall. Watch out for falling debris, stay under cover until the shaking stops, hold onto your cover and if it moves, move with it. Here are some additional tips for specific locations:

High Rise Buildings - Duck underneath a table if you can, if not move against an interior wall and protect your head with your arms. Do not use the elevators. Do not be surprised if the alarm or sprinkler systems come on. Stay indoors, glass windows can dislodge during a quake and "sail" for hundreds of feet.

Outdoors - Move to a clear area, away from trees, signs, buildings, or electrical wires and poles.

Sidewalk Near Buildings - Duck into a doorway to protect yourself from falling items.

Driving - Pull over to the side of the roadway and stop. Avoid overpasses, power lines, and other hazards. Stay inside your car until the shaking stops.

Crowded Store or Public Place - Do not rush for the exit. Move away from display shelves containing objects that could fall.

Kitchen - Move away from the appliances and overhead cupboards. (What you can do now: take time to anchor your large household items and install security latches on your cupboard doors).



Winnetka Basic Car Area (21A29):

Written By: Senior Lead Officer Jose Maldonado

Over the course of the past few weeks there has been an increase of residential burglaries in the Winnetka / Woodland Hills areas (RD's 2148, 2149, 2159 and 2169).

I would like to alert the public to look out for the "Knock, Knock Burglers". These suspects are members of the "Rolling 30's" street gang who are committing residential burglaries throughout the Valley and other neighborhoods in City of Los Angeles. Their method of operation is to rent a high end vehicle, have a female driver and three to four male passengers. The suspects then drive around neighborhoods looking for an empty drive way indicating there is no one home or watch for people to leave their home.

The suspects then send one suspect to knock on the front door while the other suspects stay in the vehicle. If there is no answer at the front door, the suspect then proceeds around the side gate and into the backyard of the residence. The suspect then looks for an easy way to enter the house (unlocked doors or windows), if not found the suspect then forces entry by kicking or prying open the doors or windows. Once inside the location, the suspect opens the front door so his can buddies enter the residence and remove valuables - the suspects target cash, jewelry, guns and small electronics. The suspects make a rapid raid of the location then escape in the awaiting vehicle. The suspects are armed with weapons and have been known to use tear gas to repel dogs.

We recommend that citizens report all suspicious persons and activity in their neighborhoods immediately by calling 911. (For non-emergencies call: 877- ASK-LAPD or 877- 275-5273).



Woodland Hills (East) Area Basic Car (21A97):

Written By: Senior Lead Officer Sean Dinse

The key person in any Neighborhood Watch group is the Block Captain. This person is an integral component in keeping the block actively involved in crime prevention efforts as well as the important process of information exchange between neighbors. Many Neighborhood Watch groups flourish, but some dwindle while others disappear totally. How successful they are depends on the Block Captain and the support he or she receives from neighbors.

The following is a list of recommended activities for you as a Block Captain. It is not meant to be all-inclusive,

because many Block Captains are creative in their approach.

Periodically monitor the membership of your group. Contact new residents to get them involved and to obtain their support and participation. Update your membership list as needed. Contact your Senior Lead Officer if you have changes to the roster. If you stop serving as a Block Captain and/or if someone takes over, contact our office.

Develop a neighborhood communication system to distribute vital information to neighbors pertaining to criminal activity and other concerns that develop in the area. This can be a periodic newsletter, telephone tree, and/or a one-page notice that can be quickly distributed.

You are encouraged to arrange for your group to meet socially at least twice per year to exchange information and renew relationships as well as to get acquainted with new neighbors. People who communicate regularly will care more about each other and be more willing to keep an eye out for suspicious behavior. The annual National Night Out (NNO) celebration is one example that will bring your neighbors together.

A follow-up Neighborhood Watch program should be conducted every few years or sooner if specific problems are occurring in your neighborhood. This should also be the case if you have several new neighbors. Call the Crime Prevention office to arrange for a presentation.

Encourage neighbors to advise you concerning criminal activity. It is the victim's responsibility to contact the police, however, you can keep a record of break-ins, vandalism, graffiti, and/or any activity that becomes a concern for you and your neighbors. Provide this type of information to neighbors at your next block meeting.

Your position as a Block Captain does not give you any law enforcement authority. You are simply the person who facilitates the unity of the group, distributes information, and coordinates activities. The job you are doing is important and appreciated by the Los Angeles Police Department, but it carries no authority.

Remember: Our recommendation to all citizens who see a crime in progress or notice suspicious activity is to observe and report from a place of safety. We strongly suggest that you not confront an offender unless you are in immediate danger. This applies to you and your neighbors. We do not want anyone to get hurt or injured trying to apprehend an offender or interfering with an incident other than to report the activity to the police.

If you or your neighbors witness a crime in progress or observe suspicious behavior, call 911 (emergency) or 1-877-ASK-LAPD / 1-877-275-5273 (non-emergency).



Woodland Hills (West) Area Basic Car (21A73):

Written By: Senior Lead Officer Brent Rygh

Distraction Burglary Alert!

“Distraction burglaries” are crimes where a crook will distract the victim’s attention and keep them focused on something while another (often unnoticed) crook steals their valuables.

Recently, there have been several of these types of crimes, in which the suspects have posed as tree-trimmers working for the Department of Water and Power (DWP). The suspects in these cases have been targeting senior citizens living in residential homes. Most of these crimes have a similar method: Someone knocks at the door and for some reason they want to enter your home or have you follow them into the rear yard. Their reasons for entry vary widely with claims of tree trimming, gas meter leaks or replacement, wall repairs, lost toys or animals, or anything else that will grab your attention for a couple of minutes. While this person shows you what they will be doing, another unseen accomplice comes inside the home and steals valuables from the master bedroom. The distracting person leaves your home and by the time the crime is discovered, the crooks are long gone.

What makes it so easy for these crooks is that the story is believable. There are valid tree trimming operations to keep tree branches away from power lines, gas meters need replacing, and kid’s toys sometimes come over the wall.

These thieves are very good at holding your attention. Sometimes they even have a child with them to throw off your suspicion. If someone unexpectedly shows up at your home and wants you to come into your back yard with them, think twice – Better yet, call 911.



Senior Lead Officer Contact Information:

SLO Dennis Cunningham, Basic Car 21A1
(Northern portion of West Hills including part of South Chatsworth near the Chatsworth Reservoir)
Office (818) 756-3073 Cell (818) 731-2578
Email 34966@lapd.lacity.org

▪The 21A1 meeting is held on the 2nd Monday of each month at the Topanga Station at 7 PM.

SLO Alex Padron, Basic Car 21A5
(North Canoga Park)
Office (818) 756-3191 Cell (818) 731-2583
Email 32977@lapd.lacity.org

▪The 21A5 meeting is held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Topanga Station at 7 PM.

SLO Jose Maldonado, Basic Car 21A29 (Winnetka)
Office (818) 756-3079 Cell (818) 731-2569
Email 23639@lapd.lacity.org

▪The 21A29 meeting is held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at the Topanga Station at 7 PM.

▪SLO Jose Maldonado holds a Spanish speaking Neighborhood Watch for any residents within the Topanga Police Area on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Topanga Station at 7 PM.

SLO Sam Sabra, Basic Car 21A43
(Southern portion of West Hills)
Office (818) 756-3074 Cell (818) 731-2558
Email 34819@lapd.lacity.org

▪The 21A43/21A1 meeting is held on the 2nd Monday of each month at the Topanga Station at 7 PM.

SLO Janet Zumstein, Basic Car 21A57
(South Canoga Park and Topanga malls)
Office (818) 756-3188 Cell (818) 731-2570
Email 24571@lapd.lacity.org

▪The 21A57 meeting is held every 4th Wednesday of the month at the Topanga Station at 7 PM.

SLO Brent Rygh, Basic Car 21A73
(Woodland Hills, West of Topanga Canyon Boulevard)
Office (818) 756-3075 Cell (818) 731-2581
Email 30450@lapd.lacity.org

▪The 21A73 meeting is held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Topanga Station at 6:30 PM.

SLO Sean Dinse, Basic Car 21A97
(Woodland Hills, East of Topanga Canyon Boulevard)
Office (818) 756-3076 Cell (818) 731-2568
Email 34920@lapd.lacity.org

▪The 21A97 meeting is held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Topanga Station at 6:30 PM.

For crime information in your area go to:

www.crimemapping.com

For arrests go to: www.dailynews.com

Please visit our website at:

www.lapdtopangapolice.com

and contact us via our station email address

(topangapolice@lapd.lacity.org) with any concerns you have.