



Topanga Community Police Station Newsletter

Serving the Communities of: Canoga Park, West Hills, Woodland Hills, and Winnetka
21501 Schoenborn Street, Canoga Park 91304



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Topanga Community Relations Office (818) 756-3180

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Captain's Corner

A message from Captain Tom Brascia

In keeping with the motto for 2012, "Educate, Engage, Enforce," I'd like to touch on the topic of "Educate" in this article.

I believe that best way to prevent crime from occurring is to educate the community and educate the police officers who serve those areas. Twice a month we hold a "Crime Control" meeting and invite community leaders to attend. During these meetings community members have the opportunity to listen to the crimes that have occurred over the past week in the specific areas Topanga services, as well as to be a part of the process of strategizing methods of crime prevention. Community leaders also have the opportunity to share with the Captains, Detectives and Officers in attendance, the concerns they may have for their neighborhood or other information that may be pertinent to crime fighting efforts.

If you are interested in attending a meeting, please contact Sergeant Thomas Mason at (818) 756-3189.



Community Police Advisory Board:

Written by: Officer Todd Jaron

The Topanga Area Community Police Advisory Board (CPAB) is comprised of a group of community volunteers that work in conjunction with Topanga Area Police Officers in order to foster a relationship

to reduce crime, reduce the fear of crime, and improve the quality of life for citizens living within Topanga Division.

These volunteers attend monthly meetings at Topanga Station and advise the Commanding Officer regarding crime, traffic, and quality of life issues. Our goal as a police department is to lift barriers and improve communication between the police and the community. We are consistently looking for a diverse group of citizens to comprise our membership.

If you are interested in attending a CPAB meeting, please contact Officer Jaron at 818-756-3180 or 37789@lapd.lacity.org. Meetings are held at Topanga Station's Community Room on the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30 PM.



West Hills Basic Car Area (21A1):

Written By: Senior Lead Officer Dennis Cunningham

Year to date, the most active reporting district for my basic car has been 2103 (Roscoe to Nordhoff, Topanga Canyon to Fallbrook). Crimes in this area are all property related with the majority of those being auto crimes. If we take a look at the past four weeks we see that this small area accounts for 1/3 of all crimes in Basic Car 21A1 (10 crimes out of 35).

Topanga Canyon Blvd and Roscoe Blvd are two major thoroughfares in the West San Fernando Valley. Additionally, Topanga Canyon on the east side has multiple apartment complexes with

thousands of residents. There is also a very popular park, an elementary school and a large multi-unit business complex. All of these components create a tremendous amount of foot and vehicle traffic into the area from non-residents.

The good news is that a lot of the crimes in this area could have been prevented. The majority of thefts from vehicles were from unlocked vehicles and the vehicles that were locked had valuables left in plain sight (“LOCK IT, HIDE IT, KEEP IT”). Several of the residential burglaries were through open windows and doors. And the thefts were items taken from driveways, yards and open garages.

This neighborhood has its own neighborhood watch that meets the last Thursday of the month at Roscoe and Lena (call 818-756-3073 for details). There is also an area crime blog at www.westhillsalert.com.



Canoga Park Basic Car Area (21A5):

Written By: Senior Lead Officer Alex Padron

I hope this article finds you all well. I want to pass on some very important information; I used to be able to tell you all not to worry too much about suspects breaking into your homes via your front doors because I had not seen that happen in Topanga Area or in our Canoga Park Area since we opened the new station. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case, as we have had a burglary in the area of Gazette Avenue & Fairchild where the suspects, after knocking on the front door a couple of times, proceeded to kick in the front door and ransack the home. A similar burglary occurred on McNulty where the crime was the same, but no one was home. However, at the Gazette burglary location, a 16 year old girl was home at the time of the crime, hiding in fear for her life as she called 911. I cannot tell you how important it is to confront anyone that knocks at your front door - open a side window or speak through the front door, but do not open the front door - just let the person (or suspects) know that there is someone home.

Next, I want to discuss a great Burglary from Motor Vehicle arrest made by Officers Romero and Navarro in the evening hours of February 28th in the Mobile Gas Station at Canoga Avenue & Saticoy Street.

About an hour earlier the officers heard a radio broadcast of two male Hispanics spray painting on Deering Avenue, not too far away from their current location. As they turned into the gas station, the officers noticed two suspects matching the description given by the astute citizen from an hour before. They stopped, detained, and investigated the duo for the vandalism and used the curfew laws as their legal detention as both were minors out after curfew. They contacted the witness and learned that the prior radio call of the vandalism was not complete, what was missed in the translation was that the two suspects were breaking car windows and also entering them to steal items from inside the vehicles on Deering Avenue. The witness was able to ID the suspects and both were subsequently arrested for Burglary from Motor Vehicles. I think that was an awesome job by two young, dedicated and knowledgeable police officers in your area. Please, be a great witness and give us all the details the first time around when you call 911.

Lastly, I have a request to make. Please get to know your neighbors as they are the ones that will be able to call 911 for you when someone is breaking into your home. Get to know the retired folks on the block as they are typically home during the day and most of the residential burglaries happen during the day when we are away at work. Another idea, get to know that insomniac neighbor! During the night is when most of the car burglaries and break-ins occur. These suspects troll the streets late at night when we are all asleep and I am certain someone has seen them but just hasn't put two and two together yet. Please help yourselves and our neighborhood, by keeping your eyes and ears open and stay safe.



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

Written By: Senior Lead Officer Janet Zumstein

We are continuing to have a problem with people leaving valuables in plain sight in their vehicles at shopping centers. Remember to always hide your valuables or leave them at home.

Throughout the Southern California Area GM SUV's (Cadillac, Chevy, GMC) are still being targeted for their 3rd row seats. If you own one of these types of

vehicles, we recommend that you remove the 3rd row seat and secure it in a safe place when not in use. When the 3rd row seat is inside your vehicle we encourage you to lock it to the floor board of your car with a cable type locking device. Also mark and/or engrave your seats with your vehicle license plate number. This way if it is ever stolen and recovered, Detectives can track the owners down and return your property.

I am trying to increase the Neighborhood Watch Program for my area. Please spread the word and encourage your neighbors to attend our monthly meetings held on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm at Topanga Station. A strong Neighborhood Watch program will help prevent crimes in your neighborhood.



West Woodland Hills Basic Car Area (21A73):

Written By: Senior Lead Officer Brent Rygh

While our crime numbers continue to go down every year, one of our highest crime statistics each month is Burglary/Theft from Motor Vehicles. Traditionally, these thefts involve vehicles with valuable property being left in plain sight or the doors left unlocked, but lately we are seeing a different kind of theft targeting 3 types of property. These recent thefts are targeting items installed in the vehicle such as factory navigation systems, third row seats from sports utility vehicles (SUV), and tailgates from the back of pickup trucks. Of these thefts, by far the fastest and easiest is the theft of a pickup truck tailgate.

A pickup tailgate can be removed from most trucks in as little as 5 seconds! While no solution is completely secure, most tailgates can be protected with a very inexpensive tailgate antitheft device. These devices cost approximately \$20.00 and can be installed in minutes, preventing a thief from walking away with your truck tailgate and selling it in a quick online auction. If you go online to YouTube and search "Stolen Tailgate", you can see just how quick and bold these crooks can be.

Certain larger SUV's have a removable third row of seats in the back. Thieves are targeting these vehicles and stealing the seats for a quick buck. One

way to protect yourself from having the seat stolen is to use a cable type bicycle lock. By looping the lock through the frame of the seat and through the mounting bracket on the vehicle floor, you increase the difficulty of stealing your seats, the time it takes to steal them, and greatly improve the chances of the suspects being seen or caught.

Navigation systems are the most difficult to protect, but there are a few things that you can do. Park in well-lit areas and remove any loose items that may attract thieves. Use sun shades in the front windshield so crooks have to get close and cup their hands around their face to get a good look in your car. It's much easier to see/catch a thief when they are walking up to cars and pressing their face to the glass to look close at the vehicle contents.

We love to catch car burglars, but would rather prevent the crime from ever happening.



East Woodland Hills Basic Car Area (21A97):

Written By: Senior Lead Officer Sean Dinse

Senior Lead Officers deal with a variety of complaints that stem from the communities that they oversee. One of those community complaints that SLOs deal with frequently are that of RVs being parked on the city street. I know that in Woodland Hills, I have dealt with a number of complaints involving RVs. Some of these complaints involve RVs being parked in residential areas, stored on the street, persons living in their RVs, narcotic activity, loitering at the park, dumping grey water and sewage in the streets and littering. In a few instances, sex offenders have been identified as some of those occupants living in RVs on a public street.

Unfortunately, the only tools SLOs have to deal with the problem is the use of the parking ordinance not allowing vehicles to park for more than 72 hours in one spot and an ordinance preventing persons from living in their vehicles. The only other tool we have is to put "No Overnight Parking" signs in the areas that RVs congregate. Unfortunately, this is a temporary fix, only pushing the RVs into residential areas or commercial areas where the signs haven't been posted yet.

On the outskirts of Los Angeles, other cities have drafted ordinances preventing RVs from parking in residential streets without a permit. Below is an ordinance that is currently being used by Simi Valley:

4-9.402(a) Simi Valley Municipal Code –No vehicle or combination of vehicles, exceeding 23' long, 7' wide or 8' tall is permitted to park on the highway. Up to 48 hours is permitted for pre/post out-of-town trip preparations. Day to day parking is prohibited. Out-of-town visitors are allowed a 10 day permit, renewable 6 times every year, but no more than 30 consecutive days.

We are hoping to one day have a similar ordinance to assist us with these nuisance issues.



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.

Thank you,
The Topanga Community Relations Office.