



# TOPANGA AREA



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

Volume 2, Issue 2      Topanga Senior Lead Office (818) 756-3070      May 2010  
Sergeant II Desi Ehrlich

## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWS

### Baker to Vegas



On April 16th-17th, 2010, Topanga Division Officers participated in the **26th Annual Baker to Vegas Challenge Cup**. The race is a 120 mile running relay race that started just outside of Baker, California and finished in downtown Las Vegas, Nevada. Teams come from law enforcement agencies around the nation and even other countries such as Canada and Germany.

The race course is a grueling route of 20 sections that takes officers through the desert and mountains in the middle of the night. The longest and hardest section was 8.2 miles all uphill completed by Detective Abbinanti at a 7 minute mile pace in 96 degree weather!

At the end of the race, our fearless leader Captain Sherman led Topanga Division to the finish line. Topanga finished the race 65th overall out of 251 law enforcement teams and as the top team within the Valley Bureau Divisions. Topanga also walked away with a prized mug within our category. Topanga's team started the race at 4 PM and continued trekking through the desert at an estimated 8.25 minute mile for 16 hrs and 30 minutes to finish at 8:30 AM the following day. The participants and support staff all volunteer their time (it's an off-duty event) and money to show pride, camaraderie, and support for police departments worldwide. This is the first year Topanga Division has participated in the event as its own team and a fine example of the dedication and commitment Topanga Division Officers have to be the best.

We couldn't complete this race without the help from our partners at Vista Ford, Galpin Ford, Rivas Printing, and the Southern California Exotic Car Club, and Foot Pursuit. Thank you for all your help!

The prized "Mug" →

Baker to Vegas Team Captain,  
Senior Lead Officer Sean Dinse



### The Captain's Corner

Topanga Area is very fortunate to have assigned some of the finest police officers in the City. Often I am attending awards ceremonies for the officers assigned to Topanga. This month is no exception. I am pleased to announce that Councilman Dennis P. Zine is honoring seven local heroes at his 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Z-Awards for Excellence ceremony. Every year, Councilman Zine recognizes public safety personnel for going above and beyond the call of duty. One of the honorees is Topanga's Senior Lead Officer for Basic Car Area, 21A1, Dennis Cunningham. Senior Lead Officer Cunningham is an exceptional police officer and I am proud that he has earned this prestigious award.

The award ceremony is being held on May 6, 2010, from 11:30 to 2:00pm at the Warner Center Marriott, located at 21850 Oxnard Street in Woodland Hills.



**What is Crime Stoppers?**

Crime Stoppers is a non-profit organization working with the community, law enforcement, and the news media to help solve crimes. The Los Angeles Regional Crime Stoppers includes members from law enforcement agencies, radio, television, newspapers, internet bloggers and community members, all volunteering their efforts to solve crime.

**How Crime Stoppers works...**

People with knowledge about crimes that have occurred can call a hotline, text, or log into the Crime Stoppers website, and provide crime tip information. The tipster's identity is always encrypted and a private code is assigned to the tipster. **If the information leads to an arrest, the tipster is eligible to receive a reward up to \$1,000.**

Call 800-222-TIPS (8477) or visit the website at [www.lacrimestoppers.org](http://www.lacrimestoppers.org) for more information or to submit a tip.

**Fireworks!**

With the summer months coming up fast, we would like to get a head start on fireworks enforcement. If you have neighbors in your area that were using illegal fireworks last year, please let your Senior Lead Officer know the address so we can reach out to them before July 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Distraction or "Gypsy" style crimes**

As the weather starts to warm, one style of crime tends to pop up in the area that is generally referred to as "Gypsy" style crimes. While the exact crime methods vary, most of these situations involve either repair scams, or distractions to get into your home.

*For example:*

You get a knock on your door and the stranger says that he is your new neighbor and just bought the house behind you. He (or She!) says that the back wall is damaged but not to worry, they are having their contractor come fix it at no cost to you. He/she then asks you to go into the back yard to have a look at what they will be doing. While you go to the backyard to inspect the wall, the suspect's partner comes to the front door, sneaks in, and takes the jewelry from your bedroom.

Sometimes these suspects even have children with them to reduce people's suspicion. These crimes tend to target seniors, especially if the senior appears to be home alone.

Be wary of anyone that wants to enter your home or yard if you did not call for them. If you must let a stranger into your home, have a friend or neighbor come over. There is power and safety in numbers.

Repair scams usually involve a large deposit for work to be done. They take the money and never return, or worse they do a little work, then leave you with a mess to repair. Don't pay more than \$1,000 or 10% of the job up front. Check <http://www.cslb.ca.gov/> for more information.

**Who should I call?**

We frequently get calls that start off "It's not really a police matter, but I didn't know who to call". It can be confusing to figure out if you should call the police, parking enforcement, Bureau of Street Services, Building and Safety, Animal Services, graffiti removal, Sanitation, or some other city agency. For all city services (including police dispatch) you can dial 311 to be directed to the correct agency.

**LAPD Gun Buyback**

LAPD is conducting another gun buyback event on May 8<sup>th</sup> at Facey Medical Center parking lot, 11165 Sepulveda Blvd, from 10 AM- 3 PM.

Turn in your guns for gift cards, no questions asked.

For more information call (877) LAPD 247

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**News From Your Senior Lead Officers**

This segment contains some activity in Topanga Division, but it is not intended to reflect all of the crimes in your area.

**The most current updates for your neighborhood can be found at [www.lapdonline.org](http://www.lapdonline.org).**

**Neighborhood Watch Block Clubs**

If you are reading this newsletter, then you probably already know that Neighborhood Watch is an effective tool in reducing crime and making our neighborhoods safer. Each of our Senior Lead Officers (SLO) are looking to expand their Neighborhood Watch by recruiting new Block Captains and establishing Block Clubs. Block Clubs are smaller meetings that focus on a specific area. Your SLO can attend a Block Club meeting for your area to discuss your neighborhood's specific problems, but we need your help to set up and schedule these meetings. Contact your SLO for more details.

**From A43 West Hills (South) /Sam Sabra:**

Recently the Topanga Property Crimes Detail, Narcotics Enforcement Detail, and Probation Dept conducted a probation check of an individual in West Hills. As a result of the probation check, two males were arrested.

Narcotics were discovered and seized. A stolen motorcycle hidden under a tarp in the backyard was also discovered and seized. One of the males was booked for a probation violation and the other for a stolen motorcycle. These arrests were a great example of divisional teamwork along with teaming up with the probation dept.

**From A73 Woodland Hills (West) / Brent Rygh:**

Recently, we have seen a spike in crimes in the neighborhood surrounding El Camino High School. Complaints from the neighborhood include people smoking marijuana in vehicles, truancy, reckless driving, and various disturbances with kids “hanging out” in the streets around the school. This escalated to several street robberies after school with suspects punching students and taking their property (phones, music players, etc). Some members from the local Canoga Park Alabama street gang put up graffiti tagging and assaulted a student at the rear of the school. While these suspects have already been arrested, we are asking for your help in reporting any suspicious activity in the area around El Camino High School. LAPD and School Police have stepped up patrols around the school, and are conducting some task force operations sweeping the area for truancy. **If you see suspicious activity around the school, please call LAPD dispatch at (877) 275-5273.**

**From A29 Winnetka / Jose Maldonado:**

Please be on the lookout for door to door sales people. There have been several reports of burglaries, in which the suspect knocks on the front door. If there is no response at the front door, the suspect goes to the back yard and forces entry into the house. Many times with the resident still inside the house.

Best thing to do: Answer the door but keep the door locked and closed. Tell the person you are not interested in what is or she is selling, call the police and report a possible burglary suspect. Another reminder—please lock your side gates that lead into your back yards.

**From A1 West Hills (North) / Dennis Cunningham**

The Topanga Area has been experiencing a growing number of Residential Burglaries occurring during the daytime hours. Many of these burglars have been seen by witnesses who did not realize anything was going on. A common tactic that has been seen is burglars parking in the driveway of the victims homes. It would appear that the burglars had legitimate business at the home. Don't take anything for granted if a vehicle looks suspicious to you then get a license plate number and note the description of the vehicle and the suspects. After a burglary occurs, Officers will canvass the area for witnesses. This is when your suspicion will be rewarded. Your notes may make the difference in stopping the burglaries occurring in our communities.

**From A57 Canoga Park (South) & Topanga Malls / Janet Zumstein:**

Here are tips on prevention of theft from motor vehicles: No matter where your car is parked, always lock it. Don't leave items visible from outside of the car. This includes items tucked under the seat and items “hidden” beneath a jacket or blanket. Don't leave any of the following in your parked car: cell phones, IPODs, GPS devices, backpacks, packages, bags, boxes or anything else of value. Try not leaving mounts or holders for some of the above items in your vehicle. To a thief, an empty IPOD or GPS holder means these items may be in the glove box or center console of your car. Vehicle break-ins by thieves hoping to find valuables is rarely random. It's much easier for them to walk through a parking lot or parking structure and find items left in **plain sight** in a vehicle. Before leaving your vehicle, take that extra moment to make sure that items are not left in plain sight but secured **out of sight**.

**From A5 Canoga Park / Alexis “Alex” Padron:**

During a recent SLO Summit it was confirmed that one of your main concerns was the never ending graffiti in our area. Please be reminded that the \$1000.00 reward from Councilman's Zine office is still valid if your call leads to the arrest and conviction of the vandal. Please keep your eyes open and be very prompt about reporting it to police and Zine's office. Who doesn't need \$1000.00?

In that vein two hard working officer's Briano & De Jesus were in the area of Bryant Street & Independence Avenue when they noticed a wanted graffiti suspect from a call for service earlier in the day. The officer's discovered that he was still in possession of spray paint and arrested the 16 year old juvenile. Be safe.

**From A97 Woodland Hills (East) / Sean Dinse**

About 25% of the calls to our office recently are in some way related to marijuana and/or the dispensaries that distribute it. If a particular dispensary is causing problems in your area, please let me know in as much detail as possible who, what, where, and when the activity is taking place. Many young adults take their marijuana to quiet side streets in your neighborhoods. Please call dispatch when you see this activity. If you can safely get license plate numbers, it will help me to track down the suspects and reduce the problems in your area.

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Need help with quality of life issues? Get to know your Senior Lead Officer. They are invaluable!! **The Senior Lead Officers' main office number is (818) 756-3070.** Following is information about the areas they cover, the monthly community Neighborhood Watch meetings they conduct, and, of course their contact information.

**SLO Dennis Cunningham, Basic Car 21A1**

*(Covering the North part 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 / 21A43 Basic Car meeting will be held every 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month at 7 PM at Topanga Station.

**SLO Sam Sabra, Basic Car 21A43**

*(Covering the South part of West Hills)*

**Office (818) 756-3074 Cell (818) 731-2558**

**Email 34819@lapd.lacity.org**

The 21A43 / 21A1 meeting is held every 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month at Topanga Station at 7 PM.

**SLO Brent Rygh, Basic Car 21A73**

*(Covering Woodland Hills - West of Topanga Canyon)*

**Office (818) 756-3075 Cell (818) 731-2581**

**Email 30450@lapd.lacity.org**

The 21A73 /21A97 meeting will be on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month at the Topanga Station at 6:30 PM.

**SLO Charles "Sean" Dinse, Basic Car 21A97**

*(Woodland Hills - East of Topanga Canyon)*

**Office (818) 756-3076 Cell (818) 731-2568**

**Email 34920@lapd.lacity.org**

The 21A97 / 21A73 meeting will be on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month at the Topanga Station at 6:30 PM.

**SLO Janet Zumstein, Basic Car 21A57**

*(Covering South Canoga Park and Topanga malls)*

**Office (818) 756-3188 Cell (818) 731-2570**

**Email 24571@lapd.lacity.org**

The 21A57 Basic Car meeting will be held every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month, at the Topanga Station at 7 PM.

**SLO Alexis "Alex" Padron, Basic Car 21A5** *(Covering North Canoga Park)*

**Office (818) 756-3191 Cell (818) 731-2583**

**Email 32977@lapd.lacity.org**

The 21A5 Basic Car meeting is held every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at Topanga Station at 7 PM.

**SLO Jose Maldonado, Basic Car 21A29**

*(Covering Winnetka)*

**Office (818) 756-3079 Cell (818) 731-2569**

**Email 23639@lapd.lacity.org**

The 21A29 Basic Car meeting is held every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 7 PM at the Topanga Station.

**NEW~SPANISH SPEAKING ONLY Neighborhood Watch Meeting!** SLO Jose Maldonado will now hold a Spanish speaking only Neighborhood Watch for any residents within the Topanga Police Area every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month at Topanga Station at 7 PM.



**Upcoming Events/  
Dates to Remember!!!**

**5/8 – LAPD Anonymous Gun Buy-back**

**5/31 - Canoga Park Memorial Day Event**

**PLEASE...Sign up for E-policing and Nixle!**

E-policing keeps you abreast of the latest crime alerts in your community, allows you to look up crime activity in your neighborhood, and much more at the LAPD web site [www.lapdonline.org](http://www.lapdonline.org) or [www.lapdcrimemaps.org](http://www.lapdcrimemaps.org)

Nixle provides email updates and/or text messages to your cell phone on police activity in the area.

[www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com)

Both these services are completely free and your information is never shared with others.

**Important Numbers to keep:**

<b>Topanga Front Desk</b>	<b>(818) 756-4800</b>
<b>TDD/TTY</b>	<b>(818) 756-5899</b>
<b>Comm. Relations Office</b>	<b>(818) 756-3180</b>
<b>Senior Lead Office</b>	<b>(818) 756-3070</b>

<b>Detective Desk</b>	<b>(818) 756-4820</b>
<b>Vice Office</b>	<b>(818) 756-4840</b>
<b>Emergency</b>	<b>911</b>
<b>Non-Emergency Dispatch</b>	<b>(877) 275-5273</b>
	<b>(877) ASK-LAPD</b>

***All other city services, please call 311***

***Neighborhood Watch works! Become a part of your area's Neighborhood Watch program and help reduce the crime in your area. Contact your Senior Lead Officer to help set up a new "Block Club" for your specific neighborhood.***