



# TOPANGA AREA



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

Volume 2, Issue 8 Topanga Senior Lead Office (818) 756-3070 November 2010  
Sergeant II Thomas Mason

## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWS



As we enter Autumn, many changes are upon us, such as Daylight Savings time and the Holidays.

Here at Topanga, there has been much going on...read on to find out more about "A PLACE ABOVE!"



### A Note From Your Captain:

I would like to introduce myself to the community members of Topanga Area. My name is Tom Brascia and I am Topanga's new Area Commanding Officer. However, before doing so, I must thank and congratulate my predecessor, Captain John Sherman (now Commander John Sherman) who leaves Topanga Area after so many successes with the community and outstanding successes in crime reduction. I assume a command that I am excited to take over, to work with the community, and to continue to build on the previous years' successes. I have been with the Department for 32 years and recently was assigned as the Commanding Officer of Internal Affairs Criminal Investigation Division. My background includes assignments in Metropolitan Division, Force Investigation Division, and various detective/patrol divisions.

I come to a command that has an outstanding leadership team in place with my counterpart, Captain Ivan Minsal in command of patrol functions and Lieutenant Dave Storaker in command of detective functions. Their leadership permeates downward to the

street cops and detectives who have made Topanga the success that it is.

We will have a team that you as a community member can rely on to continue to pursue the Department's goal to reduce crime and make the community safe for your family, friends and businesses.

As you may have noted, on the Newsletter, Sergeant Desi Ehrlich's name has been replaced by Sergeant Thomas Mason. This change was recently made and Sergeant Ehrlich remains at Topanga Area as a patrol assistant watch commander. Sergeant Mason comes from the patrol side and has 22 years of experience. We would like to thank Sergeant Ehrlich for his time and dedication to the Community Relations Office and give a warm welcome to Sergeant Mason.



### Topanga Bids Farewell to their Beloved Captain...

As many of you are aware, Captain John A. Sherman received a promotion from the Chief of Police to the rank of Commander. He was assigned as the Assistant Commanding Officer, Operations Central Bureau as of October 10, 2010. Captain Sherman spent nearly six years in the western San Fernando Valley as the Area Commanding Officer of West Valley and Topanga. His crime fighting efforts, community outreach, and dedication were paramount in the successes that Topanga has had in the past two years. Captain Sherman spent countless hours ensuring the men and women of Topanga made it "a place above." He also made it a TOP goal that the community was well served. He will be missed by many and as he said himself, "I will always have a place in my heart for Topanga. She was a command that I am so very proud of and this is one place I truly will miss and don't want to

leave, but we must go on and I know the command I have left will take great care of her.” *We say good luck and best wishes to Commander John A. Sherman in his new command and please know Topanga Area will always have a place in her heart for you!*

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**Recent news in my area:**

This segment contains some activity in Topanga, but it is not intended to reflect all of the crimes in your area. **The most current updates for your neighborhood can be found on [www.lapdonline.org](http://www.lapdonline.org).**

**LAPD Electricity Theft Recognition/Safety Awareness** . . . The following information has been drafted to assist the public in identifying theft of electricity incidents commonly associated with illegal marijuana grows.

Indoor marijuana grow locations are more prevalent than ever. Theft of electricity occurs frequently at these locations creating potential safety hazards due to electrical shock or possible fire. Observations of the following are excellent indicators of possible tampering with electric meters or services:

- The cover on the electric meter may be destroyed or there may be a hole in the meter cover with something inserted to stop the operation.
- There may be extra electric wires other than the wires in the electric service mast connected at the roof line. These wires may run visibly over the roof exposed into the panel or off to another portion of the property.
- On the inside wall where the electric service is located, you may see that a patch of the drywall or plaster has been cut out all together, to connect irregular wiring.
- Inside commercial buildings or houses, you may see exposed electrical wires or cables draped or strung throughout the various rooms.

**Safety Recommendations:** Should any of the above conditions or any suspicious electrical work be observed, do NOT handle the electrical wiring until someone qualified can insure it is safe to do so. This includes handling switches or electrical equipment that may be plugged in. Theft of Utilities from the LADWP may be punishable under California State Penal Code 498.

Please contact the Topanga Narcotics Enforcement Detail at (818) 756-4850 or call 911 if it is an emergency.

You may also contact the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to have a representative inspect wiring for theft and safety issues. LADWP Revenue Security Unit (Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., phone number: (818) 771-2212).

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While on patrol, Sergeant Marty Fentress was in the area of Saticoy Street and Owensmouth Avenue when he noticed a green Honda Accord driving erratically on Saticoy Street. When Sergeant Fentress conducted his u-turn to stop the vehicle, the suspect quickly pulled to the curb on Owensmouth Avenue north of Saticoy Avenue and took off running eastbound behind an apartment complex. Topanga Area Patrol, SLOs and Property Crime Units responded to the perimeter request for the stolen vehicle. The perimeter was up in no time and moments later citizens started calling in with the reports of the suspect running through their backyards. The suspect was then apprehended inside the perimeter. What a great job by both officers and citizens. This is a perfect example of the community and police working together to apprehend criminals.

On October 6, 2010, Topanga Narcotic officers were conducting an investigation at a problematic residence given to them by a Topanga Senior Lead Officer. While conducting a check of the residence in plain clothes, the narcotic officers observed a juvenile male walk out of the location smoking a cigarette. The officers stopped the juvenile as he appeared to be too young to be smoking. While conducting their investigation and a search of the suspect, the officers found heroin and various prescription pills on his person. The juvenile was arrested and taken to juvenile hall. Great overall teamwork by your Topanga Officers in making our Topanga neighborhoods safe!

Topanga Officers Robert Tamate and Cesar Larios were conducting patrol in the area of Sherman Way and Topanga Canyon Boulevard when they observed an 18 year old male sitting behind the Bank of America near the ATM machines. These officers had recently seen a “Wanted” flyer for a suspect who was committing robberies on people using ATMs in the area. Tamate and Larios detained the individual and recovered a replica pistol. The suspect confessed to similar robberies in the area. Great observation!

The Topanga Vice Unit often receives information via the Los Angeles Regional Crime Stoppers website. The “tips,” often provided by anonymous citizens, have resulted in several arrests. One such tip regarding a gambling machine inside a Topanga Area carwash occurred, thus resulting in an arrest and seizure of

evidence. The vice officers conducted an undercover operation at the carwash and discovered that the machine, a push-coin type device, did in fact qualify as a gambling device. The vice unit, conducted a follow-up to the business the next day and cited the manager for possession of the device. The machine was bolted to the floor and required the assistance of the fire department to extricate it. The very next week, vice officers located another gambling device, inside a Salvadoran restaurant. The device was similar to the one found in the carwash. Area business owners are reminded that it is **illegal** to possess gambling devices. If the game involves “chance” or “luck,” and your reward is money or something of value, then you have a gambling machine and are subject to being cited.



Need help with quality of life issues? Know your Senior Lead Officer (SLO), they are invaluable!!  
**The Senior Lead Officers' main office number is (818) 756-3070.**

#### **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 will be held every 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month at Topanga Station at 7 PM at Topanga Station.

#### **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 held 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 held 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 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month at the Topanga Station at 7 PM.

**PLEASE NOTE...THERE WILL BE NO MEETING IN NOVEMBER FOR CAR 21A57.**

#### **SLO 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.

#### **There is now a SPANISH SPEAKING 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!!!**

**11/16 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Topanga Area Police Station Town Hall Meeting - (7 PM – 9 PM)**

**11/19 – Topanga Boosters Celebrating Topanga at the Woodland Hills Hilton – (5:30 PM ) Entertainment and Food...Cost: \$55 a ticket!**

**11/20 – Children's Day (9AM – 4PM)  
FREE ADMISSION at Woodley Park, 6350 Woodley Avenue, Van Nuys, CA**

**PLEASE...Sign up for E-policing!** E-policing keeps you abreast of the latest crime news in your community.

[www.lapdonline.org](http://www.lapdonline.org) or [www.lapdcrimemaps.org](http://www.lapdcrimemaps.org) allows you to look up crime activity in your neighborhood, and much more at the LAPD web site. **Remember to sign up for Nixle at [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com)**

# ***2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Topanga Area Police Station Town Hall Meeting***



## ***Town Hall Meeting***

**Our Theme: Learning to Combat Identity Theft**  
***"Harden the Target, Soften the Blow"***

Come join the Topanga Area Police Station and concerned Community members to discuss this year's "Hot Topics." Learn how to protect yourself against identity theft. ***"Harden the Target, Soften the Blow."*** Be proactive neighbors and community members. We look forward to seeing you there!



### **Highlights:**

- \*Identity Theft Protection
- \*Holiday Tips
- \*Question & Answer Session with Officers and Detectives
- \*Meet your Command Staff

**Location: West Valley Christian Church**  
**22450 Sherman Way**  
**West Hills, CA 91304**

Any Questions Contact: Topanga Senior Lead Office (818) 756-3070

**Date: Tuesday 11/16/2010**  
**Time: 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

