

# Westcreek Neighborhood ASSOCIATION

September, 2002 — Published Quarterly for our Westcreek Neighbors

Log on at [www.westcreek.na.org](http://www.westcreek.na.org)

## CRIME IN WESTCREEK: WILL YOU BE A FIGHTER? OR A VICTIM?

We've heard from many Westcreek residents that crime, both petty and major, is a problem. The focus of this newsletter is to show you how avoid becoming a victim of crime. Now is the time for you to DO SOMETHING about it!

The Chief of Police, Stanley L. Knee, will be our guest speaker at the September 17 WNA Quarterly Meeting, held specifically for Westcreek residents to voice their concerns about crime in our neighborhood. Chief Knee will share his thoughts on crime in Austin and what individual neighborhoods can do to best prevent criminal activity. **The Chief has requested that if you have specific questions or concerns, to please send them to him before the meeting so that he can research the latest information to provide the best answer.** Email Chief Knee at: [stanley.knee@ci.austin.tx.us](mailto:stanley.knee@ci.austin.tx.us)



Chief Stanley L. Knee

The mailing address:  
Chief of Police  
Stanley L. Knee,  
P. O. Box 1088,  
Austin, Texas 78767.  
If you want to phone  
in your question, it is  
best if you call Sally  
Muir, Assistant to  
Chief Knee, phone  
974-5022.

Accompanying  
Chief Knee will be  
Assistant Chief Rudy Landeros, the senior police officer for our section of the City, plus our own District Representative, Officer Alma Murray.

**Your WNA Quarterly Meeting will be held at the Will Hampton Library at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 17th.**

As always, a door prize will be awarded. We do hope you will be able to attend this special meeting. We believe it could make our entire neighborhood a safer place to live.



**National Night Out:**  
Look inside for our photo montage and see if you can spot your neighbors!

### QUESTIONS WE'VE ASKED — BUT WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

Aug. 10, 2002

Dear Chief Knee,

We appreciate so much that you are taking time from your busy schedule to speak at our Quarterly Meeting next month. I hope these questions give you a sense of the concerns of our neighborhood.

1. What steps can be taken to reduce speeding on Brush Country? Is there anything more the Neighborhood Association can do to assist in this effort?
2. What will be the impact of overuse/abuse of the Amber Alert system that is going into operation nationwide? Will people come to ignore it?
3. How often do APD patrol cars pass through Westcreek?
4. From the trash we've found, it's apparent at least one unoccupied lot is being used by transients and/or drug abusers. What would you recommend neighbors do to prevent this use by transients?
5. Do you believe home security systems deter criminals? In your opinion, are systems worth the expense?
6. What can Westcreek residents do that will have the most impact on preventing home burglaries?

**Ben Coughran**

President, Westcreek Neighborhood Association

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How to activate Neighborhood Watch in your corner of Westcreek

## Want to reduce crime? How about eliminate it?

A few facts about Neighborhood Watch programs: they've proven effective in **reducing and eliminating crimes** in residential communities. Here are two examples: after implementing Neighborhood Watch programs, Lakewood, Colorado had a 77 percent drop in burglaries and Cypress, California burglaries went down by 52 percent and thefts by 45 percent. Those are some pretty big numbers, folks.

The WNA has updated the Neighborhood Watch signs here in Westcreek, but it is up to you, as individual residents, to take the final step and organize your specific area for Neighborhood Watch.

A watch region can consist of a single block, a cul-de-sac or a much larger area. But the most important elements are **organization and communication**. Marking your property, implementing home security recommendations, and training on how to be observant, help each other and work with law enforcement complete the parts for an effective Watch organization.

Here's what you need to do to organize Neighborhood Watch in your area:

1. Have a person or group committed to starting a Neighborhood Watch
2. Establish a planning committee to begin the program
3. Do publicity for the initial Neighborhood Watch meeting
4. Have a meeting agenda to keep things on track
5. Arrange a place to meet
6. Provide a map of the area in which you're establishing the Watch, covered with spaces for names, addresses and phone numbers of all homes in that area.

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“One of the single most important things...to prevent crime in Westcreek: Get to know your neighbors; communicate what you see and hear. Become a support system for one another!”

— *Officer Alma Murray, APD District Representative for Westcreek*

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If the area you are organizing is large, you will need to find volunteers to serve as block captains to cover smaller parts of the area, like one street. You'll also want to invite the police department's crime prevention education officer to come to your first meeting to provide training. Call our district representative, Officer Alma Murray, at 974-8242 for the name of a crime prevention officer. Be prepared to discuss crime issues for your area at the meeting. Westcreek crime statistics are available on the Austin Police Department's web site <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/police/>.

# Stop Graffiti!

## Getting it removed helps reduce crime

You've most likely noticed that our signs around the neighborhood have had their share of graffiti sprayed all over them. Most have been harmless...teenage kids with nothing better to do. But did you know that this practice can end up being an invitation for gang activity? That's right: gangs. Here in Westcreek. So we ask all of our WNA neighbors to please be vigilant about reporting graffiti IMMEDIATELY to the City of Austin's Graffiti Hotline, so it is removed. The faster it comes off, the less likely it will be to reappear. And the less likely gang activity will appear. The City's Graffiti Hotline is 854-4125.



## STRANGER DANGER — THE VIDEO

The mission of the Austin Police Department is to make Austin the safest city in America. So the Austin Police Department has created a video to educate and raise awareness about child safety issues. To schedule a presentation for a school, church, or civic organization, please call the Austin Police Department Office of Community Liaison at (512) 459-1877.

## Speeders...slow down!

School's in session, and now is the time to slow down on our neighborhood streets. Watch for the children walking and playing. And how about this idea? We all know our streets are used as cut-through for other neighbors going to and from work and the soccer games. If each and every one of us drove exactly the speed limit, those vehicles behind us will have to slow down as well! Remember, one of the topics we're presenting to Chief Knee is speeding in Westcreek. We've had numerous complaints about motorists speeding down Brush County, Fair Valley and Yellow Rose Trail; around curves, even cars doing "donuts"! If you have suggestions on how to slow people down, make sure you come to the Quarterly Meeting to be heard. And please report ALL speeders in our neighborhood immediately to 3-1-1. They are a danger to all of us, and our children.



## NNO: Start Fighting Crime with Your Neighbors!

That's always the theme of National Night Out. This year plenty of neighbors showed up to block parties and strutted their crime-fighting stuff. The Austin Police Dept., the Austin Fire Dept. and several constables made the rounds along with the residents, allowing both kids and adults the treat of blowing the fire engine siren and plastering police badges all over themselves. And let's not forget the food. There was plenty shared and plenty eaten! Thanks to all the Westcreek neighbors who participated.





# STOP HIM BEFORE HE STOPS YOU!



The Austin Police Dept., through the "Auto Theft Interdiction Project", provides FREE VIN-number etching to your vehicle. The etching is a permanent theft deterrent device, applied to all the window glass of your vehicle, and may result in 15% reduction in your auto insurance. As a result of the etchings, thieves will think twice about stealing it, because they have to replace every piece of glass, and this costs them time and money...enough to make them move on to other targets. We've highlighted the VIN-etching locations closest to Westcreek. You can also log on to the APD website: [www.ci.austin.tx.us/police/](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/police/). Click on "divisions", then on "auto theft interdiction" for more information.

## City of Austin - Vehicle Identification Number Etching Program Schedule (in the event of rain, the event will be cancelled)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
September 14	10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Fort Branch Apartments, 5800 Techni Center Drive
September 17	11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.	Convenient Foot Mart, 6701 Loyola Lane
<b>September 19</b>	<b>5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>First State Bank, 5501 Hwy. 290 West</b>
September 21	10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Target, 6405 South I-35
<b>October 4</b>	<b>9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Wal-Mart, 5017 Hwy. 290 West</b>
October 10	9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Old Post Office Bldg., 300 East 9th Street

# Stuff You Should Know. And Keep Handy, Too.

We're publishing this handy "tip page" of all the things you need to know (and do) to keep you, your family and your possessions safer. Please keep it handy, and USE IT!

## Crime Prevention Tips for Car Safety and Vehicle Theft

### Ten simple steps that will keep your car YOUR car.

1. Remove key from ignition.
2. Lock your car.
3. Roll up windows completely.
4. NEVER hide a spare key on the vehicle.
5. Do not leave valuables in open sight. Place in trunk.
6. Park as close as possible to an open business.
7. If you have a garage, use it and lock the garage door. If you have no garage, always park in the driveway and not on the street.
8. Don't leave your registration in the vehicle (any important identification papers or credit cards should NEVER be left in the glove compartment).
9. Register your car with APD's H.E.A.T. (Help End Auto Theft) program (see other side).
10. Have your windows etched with your vehicle identification number (VIN etching normally costs about \$600 at the car dealership — APD Auto Interdiction Unit does this free! See other side for accompanying schedule.)

### Ten crime prevention tips for your home.

1. Check the exterior perimeter of your home and make sure you have adequate lighting, and your home's windows and doorway entrance are not obstructed by trees or vegetation.
2. Keep doors and windows locked.
3. Make sure every external door has a sturdy, well installed deadbolt lock.
4. Use a reinforcing metal strike plate with the deadbolt lock. (The strike plate should be anchored in the studs of the building so that the door cannot be kicked in.)
5. Install secondary locks on sliding glass doors. This will prevent a burglar from lifting and sliding it off the tracks.

6. Always keep the garage closed and locked.
7. When you move to a new house or apartment, always rekey the locks.
8. Don't leave a key under a doormat, mailbox or at any location outside your house.
9. Do not carry an identification tag on your key ring. This could allow a would-be burglar to easily identify your home.
10. If you can afford it, have a burglar alarm system installed in your home.

## When should I call 3-1-1?

Call 3-1-1 to report incidents and situations that are **non-emergencies, non-life threatening, or not currently in progress**. Use 311 to request information from the police department.

Typical 311 calls include:

- Property crimes that are no longer in progress and the offender is no longer on the scene ( for example, vandalism, theft, graffiti, stolen autos, and garage burglaries). The reports will be taken over the phone. **If you think there is evidence left at the scene, tell the 311 operator so they can send a crime technician to check it out.**
- Animal control problems.
- Illegally-parked vehicles or vehicles blocking alleys or driveways.
- Telephone numbers, addresses, and hours of operation the Police Department's divisions or programs.

## When you're not sure what number to call, dial 9-1-1.

The 311 system was implemented in order to free up the Patrol Officers for emergency calls (9-1-1) which include:

- Fire and medical emergencies.
- All violent crimes such as homicides, robberies, and sexual assaults.
- Domestic violence.
- Home or business intruders.
- Gunshots or person with a gun.
- Property crimes that are still in progress or where the offender is still on the scene.
- Vehicle accidents involving injury, major property damage, or serious traffic tie-ups.

# THREE BEAUTIFUL YARDS: FIVE PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT WESTCREEK

We love people who love Westcreek! The pride of our neighborhood is truly reflected in the yards and homes of these good residents. These three households show us just how much Westcreek residents care about their homes and surroundings. The Westcreek Enhancement Committee will select one more Yard of the Month winner in September,

along with a special Holiday Season winner in December.

All our Yard of the Month winners receive \$50.00 in cash, courtesy of Gary Rossman from Century 21, Ripley, plus a \$25.00 gift card from Randalls.



**Barry and Gail McAtee**  
June Yard of the Month — 6315 Steer Trail



**LaVerne Ely**  
July Yard of the Month — 4604 Langtry Lane

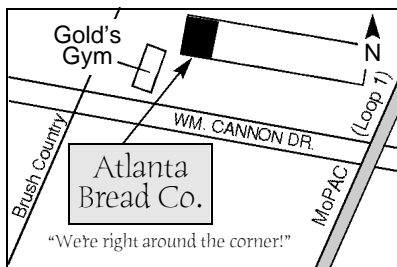


**Doug and Anne Huber**  
August Yard of the Month — 6024 Morning Dew Drive

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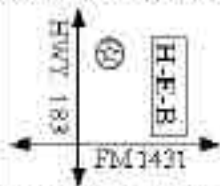
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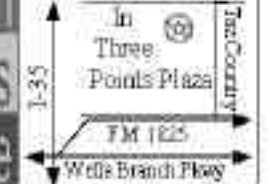


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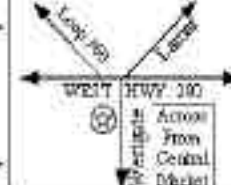
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### CRIME WATCH SIGN PROJECT — SHOW THAT YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT FIGHTING CRIME

In July, The Westcreek Neighborhood Association purchased 15 new Crime Watch signs to replace old rusted ones and to add some new locations. So far 8 signs have been replaced and three new ones have been added throughout the neighborhood. If you have a candidate location for one of the remaining signs, contact Ben Coughran: phone 892-5364; or email at [bcoughra@ev1.net](mailto:bcoughra@ev1.net).

## CRIME WATCH WINDOW DECALS



Your WNA has purchased Crime Watch window decals to further awareness that the Westcreek neighborhood is vigilant about fighting crime. **DECALS WILL BE FREE to each WNA member attending the Sept. 17th quarterly meeting.** Thereafter, the decals can be purchased through WNA.

## WNA PICNIC COMING UP!

**REMINDER:** The 3rd Annual WNA Picnic is scheduled on **October 5, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.**

Yes, all you UT football fans, we're aware of the home game that day. We can move the time to later (3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.). We'd like you to have your football and let you eat, too! So if we need to change the time, please contact Ben Coughran: phone 892-5364; email at [bcoughra@ev1.net](mailto:bcoughra@ev1.net).

The Picnic will be a potluck affair. We provide the soft drinks, hamburgers, hot dogs and all the trimmings. You bring your favorite side dish or dessert. See you there!



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