

SOMMERALL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

NEWS BULLETIN

2010 ANNUAL MEETING:

The annual meeting of the Association was held Thursday, 01/21/10, at Holmsley Elementary School. A special meeting was held to increase future assessments to offset the costs of additional patrol and security (see related article) and was approved by a 2/3 vote of those present and by proxy. The 2010 assessment (due the end of this year) will be \$308. Retiring President Ted Havely was presented a plaque in appreciation of his 17 years of service to the Association. The Board appreciates those members that ran for the open positions on the Board and welcomes new member, Tom Maxwell. Thanks to all those that attended and participated in the meeting. We hope you're enjoying your days of leisure, Ted!!!

2009 ANNUAL ASSESSMENTS:

Assessments for 2009 were due in January so if you did not receive your assessment statement or have not submitted payment then please contact SCS Management at 281-463-1777 to get your account current.

SHOA HAS A NEW WEBSITE!!!

Be sure to visit our new website at www.sommerall.org. It's been up and running for a couple of months. As it's still in its infancy, we welcome your suggestions, ideas, articles, and contributions, especially to the "Important Contact Information" page. Additionally, the easiest way to contact the Board is thru the "Contact HOA" page. Be sure to visit it periodically for updated articles and events. The website was developed and is managed by Sommerall resident Bill Friend of Captivating Productions. Captivating Productions offers a full range of web site development & photography (such as Senior Portraits & Weddings) services. For further details of services offered or to book a portrait session, visit www.captivatingproductions.com or call Bill at 832-295-0598.

MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR TOM MAXWELL:

As a new & first time director on our Board, I want to encourage everyone to provide your ideas & suggestions. What I have found in the Board is a group of directors that really care as much about our entire subdivision as we do about each of our own homes. Our goal is to form a working relationship with each of you so we can preserve the values of our homes & make our neighborhood a safe, attractive, & friendly place to live. We really need your help & suggestions so please contact us anytime using the form provided on the new website. Please remember that we are not paid officials like our city, county, & state officials. We are simply good neighbors like you who are willing to donate time to manage some of the day to day activities that affect all of us. We value your ideas and your input. Please don't hesitate to let us know your thoughts.

PATROL & SECURITY:

Since December of last year, the Board has been working with several entities & has added additional patrol in our community. This is in addition to the contract patrol we have had with the Harris County Sheriff's Office for the last 5 years. Crime prevention requires the active cooperation of all members of the community, and it starts with each person, family, and home. It takes all of us being vigilant, responsible, and constantly aware of our surroundings to make & keep the community safe. We need everyone to become involved & be energized in their efforts to protect themselves, their family, and their hard-earned property. See the related articles for auto & home burglary prevention techniques. Remember, in emergency situations (any situation that requires immediate assistance or attention from law enforcement, fire department, or ambulance) call 9-1-1. Visit www.911.org for more info. For non-emergency dispatch with the Harris County Sheriff's Office, call 713-221-6000.

Crime Statistic: According to a December 31st, 2009 Houston Chronicle news article, homicides in the unincorporated areas of Harris County have seen an annual increase over the last 3 years: 62 in 2007, 69 in 2008, & 86 in 2009. During these same 3 years, homicides inside of Houston's city limits have declined for the third consecutive year: 351 in 2007, 295 in 2008, & 281 in 2009.

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS:

The Board of Directors meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:00pm at SCS Management's office at 7170 Cherry Park Dr. The meetings are open to all property owners and residents and all are welcome to attend. If you would like to the address the Board, please call SCS at 281-463-1777 to be placed on the meeting agenda.

REVISED / UPDATED EXTERIOR PAINT PALETTE:

The Board is currently working on "modernizing" our exterior paint color palette. We hope to have it complete & available from SCS Management by early summer when a lot of you will be getting outdoors to spruce up your property. Remember, as we are a deed restricted community, any architectural change to the exterior of your property requires the approval of our Architectural Review Committee PRIOR to commencing work. Our Architectural Guidelines and Architectural Review Application are available on our website and from SCS.

Home care tip for removing mildew: Bleach alone does not remove mildew as it does not kill it; all it does is changes the color of the mildew. Consider adding bleach to a liquid product called Jomax. It's inexpensive and available at most hardware or paint stores. The mixture can be easily applied with an inexpensive 1-3 gallon pump up sprayer. For stubborn areas, use an old broom or hard bristle brush. Rinse afterwards with water, especially if any of it gets on plants, patio furniture, etc.

SPRING HAS SPRUNG!

It looks like our cooler than normal winter is behind us & soon we'll be complaining about the heat and humidity. Our lawns suffered this past winter & need some attention. If you haven't started cleaning up your yard & preparing it for summer then you are a little behind the recommended schedule. Experts such as Randy Lemon of KTRH tells us that we should have already mowed our laws (one setting lower than normal) and applied fertilizer & a pre-emergent herbicide. The experts DO NOT recommend using Weed and Feed products. Randy recommends using a combination of a 3-1-2 fertilizer & a separate pre-emergent herbicide such a Barricade to control weeds. See Randy's web site at <http://www.ktrh.com/pages/gardenline2.html> for more details. Down towards the bottom on the left of this webpage you'll see Randy's lawn fertilization schedule. Let's all get our lawns in shape for the summer & help make Sommerall the prettiest neighborhood in the area.

THOSE PESKY DEED RESTRICTIONS:

Let's face it, those pesky deed restrictions are a real pain. After all, a man's or woman's home is his/her castle, right? While we hope that everyone in Sommerall is a good neighbor, it doesn't always work that way. This is when enforcement of the deed restrictions becomes necessary. Please feel confident that the Board of Directors spends much more time & Association money on deed restrictions than it would like, but it is something that needs to be done to protect the value of our properties. A letter about an issue is not a personal attack, even if it may seem that way. Be assured that we're not trying to make your life difficult or embarrass you as we know that most of you are great neighbors. Sometimes we all make mistakes and sometimes we may catch you having a bad day when you forgot to put the trash cans away. Sometimes we may be pointing out the obvious and you already had plans to remedy a particular situation. If you receive a notice of non-compliance, please resolve the issue and that will be the end of it. Consider it just a friendly reminder from one neighbor to another. If you have an issue then please contact SCS Management via phone or mail, email the Board via our website, or attend the monthly Board meeting in person. We hope you won't complain just to complain, but if you feel you have been unjustly notified, please let us know. We are not an irrational and impersonal entity. We are homeowners just like you who want to maintain the neighborhood for the good of all. If money is tight and you need a little extra time to resolve an issue, let us know. We will work with you! But please don't ignore the issue. It will not get better with time. Each time the Association sends you a notice, we incur a charge. Each time our attorney needs to send you a letter, we incur a much larger charge. These charges must be charged back to you, the homeowner. The Association is obligated to recover these costs by whatever means necessary up to and including lawsuits and liens against your property. We ask that everyone be good neighbors and keep your property cleaned up, well groomed, and in a good state of repair. By doing so, you will be maintaining the value of your property and the value of all of Sommerall.

The most common deed restriction violation issues encountered are:

- 1) Storing trash cans in view in front of the house.
- 2) Lawn maintenance. Please keep your yard clean, mowed, edged, weeded, and watered.
- 3) Storing of boats, trailers, non-running vehicles, commercial vehicles and machinery in plain view.
- 4) Mold and Mildew on the bricks/siding. See above for a simple and inexpensive remedy.
- 5) Repairs - falling rain gutters, damaged windows and screens, weathered front doors, rotting siding and trim, fading paint.
- 6) Unauthorized & non-compliant modifications or additions to the home or property. Don't waste your time & money - get approval first!

AUTO BURGLARY PREVENTION TECHNIQUES:

According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, in 2008 in the state of Texas: 85,353 vehicles were stolen and 231,211 thefts from motor vehicles occurred. The top 5 stolen vehicles were: (1) Ford pickup, (2) Chevy pickup, (3) Dodge pickup, (4) Honda Civic, and (5) Honda Accord. Almost half of all the vehicles stolen had the keys left inside the vehicle.

*** Hide your belongings & valuables out of view. Items in the open (cell phone, GPS unit, radar detector, iPod, CD's, etc.) make your car a bigger target.

*** Take your keys & secure the vehicle. Roll up all the windows & lock the doors.

*** Never leave your car open or running unattended.

*** Try to park in well-lit areas. Consider mounting a battery or solar-powered, motion-activated flood light to the front of your garage to illuminate your driveway. Thieves do not like witnesses.

REDUCING THE OPPORTUNITY REDUCES THE PROBABILITY!!!

According to the Harris County Sheriff's Office, in the state of Texas, "it is against the law to leave your keys in the ignition when leaving your vehicle. This can result in a fine, and your insurance company may refuse to pay a loss claim that resulted from a thief having easy access."

HOME BURGLARY PREVENTION TECHNIQUES:

Your home is considered a sanctuary where you can relax & feel safe. It is the environment where you have the most control over who can get close to you or your family. Protecting your home & family from criminal intrusion should be high on your list of priorities.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, "a burglary is reported every 15 seconds in the United States. Household burglary is defined as 'unlawful entry or attempted entry of a residence.' This crime usually, but not always, involves theft. Of all the major criminal offenses, residential burglary is the most common." The majority of home burglaries occur during the daytime when most people are away or at work. The summer months of July & August have the most burglaries with February having the fewest. Burglaries are most often committed by young males under 25 years of age looking for items that are small, expensive, & can easily be converted into cash. Although home burglaries may seem random in occurrence, they actually involve a simple selection process: choose an unoccupied home with the easiest access, the greatest amount of cover, and with the best escape routes. Most residential crimes occur because the opportunity to commit them existed!!!

Following some simple, common-sense steps can reduce the opportunity/possibility that your home will be targeted:

Keep a current inventory (description, serial #'s, etc.) of all your valuables with pictures or video. Give a copy of the pictures or video to your insurance company. Engrave valuables with your driver's license number.

GET INVOLVED -- Know who belongs in the neighborhood. Report suspicious persons to local law enforcement. Be alert in protecting not only your home but your neighbors as well. Don't tell a stranger that your neighbor is not at home. Don't volunteer any personal information about your neighbor. Never leave notes on your door that reveal your home is not occupied. Help keep your neighborhood clean.

DOORS & WINDOWS -- All exterior doors should be of solid core or metal construction and should be equipped with a good quality deadbolt lock. Outside hinges should be pinned. Install a peephole. Open and unattended garage doors are an open invitation into your home. Windows have latches and not locks so consider installing secondary locking devices. Draw curtains or blinds at night to prevent viewing from the street.

EXTERIOR & LANDSCAPE -- Install lighting in areas around doors, walkways, & driveways high & out of reach. Trim shrubbery & trees so doors & windows are visible from the street. Don't let a thief use a tree to reach a 2nd floor window. Do not leave ladders or tools outside as they can assist a person in gaining entry. Lock your fence gate. Keep your house street number clearly visible from the street or at the curb.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -- Before moving into a home, change the locks on all exterior doors & change the code to your garage door opener. Never leave a house key in an obvious place such as a mailbox or under plants or a doormat. If someone knocks on your door, let them know there's someone home even if you don't want to talk to them. Acknowledge all callers through locked doors. When traveling, keep your home looking lived-in by having the grass cut, mail & newspapers picked up, and lights turned on & off (consider an inexpensive timer). Help your neighbors with this and they'll help you.

Visit the Houston Police Department's website at www.houstontx.gov/police for more crime prevention tips such as: A Parent's Guide to Child Safety, Back to School Safety, Child Car Safety Seats, Cyber Safety, Holiday Safety, Identity Theft Prevention, Senior Citizens Crime Prevention, Sexual Assault Prevention, and Summer Safety for Kids.