

## Highlights of 21 February 2007 Fontana Neighborhood Watch Meeting

Our meeting was convened at 7:00 pm at the Clubhouse. It consisted of a briefing describing the NHW program presented by Diana Edwards, Albemarle County Police Community Coordinator and Officer Darrell Byers, Neighborhood Resource Coordinator; Fontana's crime status for the past year, and a question and answer period. Fontana was represented by 10 residents.

The goal of the NHW program is to reduce crime through public awareness based on regular communication throughout a community. The Fontana NHW doesn't get involved in responding to possible incidents of crime. It fosters communications vertically from individual residents, through block captains, the NHW Coordinator (me) and Diana and back down the chain to residents.

### Main Points.

Treviso Lane needs a Block Captain. Without a Block Captain, residents have no direct point of contact with the NHW program and may not get information to protect them and their families from criminal activity. Contact me for details.

Fontana had **29 reports for service\*** in calendar year '06; 19 were due to alarm malfunctions (AM), a contractor vehicle was stolen and a house broken into on Via Florence. There were three AMs on Appian Way, two on Aviano along with a case of non-neighborhood related fraud and a single suspicious circumstance. Capri had an item taken from a vehicle. Fontana Ct. had an AM and Fontana Dr. had 5 AM and a case of larceny- cash taken from an auto. Montalcino had 1 AM, 1 case of auto theft, a case of non-neighborhood related fraud, on case of larceny from a vehicle and a single suspicious circumstance. Olympia Dr. had 1 AM and Treviso had 3 AM.

Officer Byers stated there are normally 8-12 police on duty for the entire county of 300 mi<sup>2</sup> with a population of more than 90,000. A call to 911 may not bring a patrol car, but it will register the incident. Over time this could result in more frequent patrols. Ofr. Byers recommends we lock our vehicles and avoid leaving tempting items in plain view in our vehicles. He's available for one-on-one consultation with homeowners on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). He also discussed the Police' willingness to increase patrols for residents who will be away from their homes for extended periods. I recommend our fellow neighbors be our first line of defense for keeping an eye out on our property in our absence and avoiding setting patterns that could mark a residence as an easy target.

Be aware of contractors as home building continues in and around the neighborhood and as contractors begin work on the walking trails.

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\* A Report of Service involves serious incidents requiring an officer to make a written. In contrast, a Report of Call is made for incidents of lesser seriousness that do not involve criminality.

Call 911 whenever you're confronted with something you feel uncomfortable with. If it's a non-emergency, 911 will quickly sort that out and provide you the advice you need, or you can dial 977-9041 for non-emergency police assistance. By calling the department the issue will get official attention at the county level and be recognized for statistical purposes.

Wilton Farms management has really cracked down on the illegal/unsafe activity that brought it into disrepute; they have a 70% occupancy as a result in evictions and a visit there (I was there this morning) reveals it to be much more of a family apartment complex than was the case last spring. Ofr. Byers attributes this, in part, to Wilton Farm's participation in the Crime Free Multi-Housing program- a counterpart to NHW for apartment residents. Meanwhile Avemore, which does not participate in that program, has had an upsurge of drug and gun-related domestic incidents in the past six months.

Goals for the next four months: We're now at the point where our Block Captains must more actively seek to bring residents on our streets into the program by allowing email or telephone contact to spread the word on incidents potentially affecting our community. We can only pass information along if we can contact you.

Next meeting. I'd like to have our next meeting around Memorial Day (28 May) and gear toward child safety. Diana and Darrell said they could present a program to kids to make them aware of dangers that could better prepare them for the summer. I'm open to your ideas.

Respectfully yours

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