

WLP Civic Association Board Members

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Website: www.wlpca.org
Directors: Marj Elhardt, Mike Ginzel, Pat Holmes, Mary McDaniel, Darryl Shields, and Barbara Staley

Vice President: Fisher Trigg
Treasurer: Michael Paneral
Newsletter: Anna Dean
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DEAR NEIGHBORS:

Have we come to the end of the long dark tunnel that we, and the world, have been traveling for over a year? We see a bright light ahead, and we're saying "YES!"

In June, the WLPCA board held its first indoor in-person meeting in over a year. All of us were happy to see each other in real time, real person, mask free, and remember how much more effective we are when we aren't trying to communicate through layers of cloth or a virtual screen! In that meeting, we made the official decision to hold an in-person **National Night Out** next fall. It's too soon for details, but please plan to join us on West Lane in early **October**, where we have met for the last few years thanks to our gracious neighbors in **Berkeley Place**.

As people resume more normal lives, criminals are taking advantage of renewed shopping and dining, targeting the high-end centers that surround us. There have been multiple incidents of patrons followed from the River Oaks District and the Galleria by armed thieves who robbed them when they arrived home, seriously injuring some victims. Purse grabbing has become an epidemic as well, often at gas stations and in parking lots when victims are preoccupied with packages or filling gas tanks. The WLPCA urges you to stay on guard and aware of your surroundings every time you are out.

Since our last newsletter, we have experienced more crime here in our own neighborhood, too. Sneaky thieves have broken into parked cars to steal visible items for a long time, but now they're getting bolder, as you will read on page 3. We hope everyone will secure their homes and cars, and make West Lane Place as uninviting to crime as possible by following the basic **crime prevention** steps Director, **Barbara Staley**, suggests. Barbara extensively researched crime avoidance, and she has condensed her findings in an article that appears on our website and in an abbreviated form on page 3.

With crime rising all around us, we are seeking more **volunteers to join the Crime Watch** patrol to keep an eye on the neighborhood. Please see **Announcements**, page 4, for how to sign up.

At long last, with this newsletter, we present the **WLPCA Membership Directory** that has kept Director, **Darryl Shields**, busy during lockdown. It is full of good information. We hope you'll use your directory often to stay in touch with your neighbors and the WLPCA board.

All the best,

Gilda Bayegan
President-WLPCA

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New Directories enclosed!

This newsletter is published and delivered to you
by the **West Lane Place Civic Association**

The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) of each article, and not necessarily those of the WLPCA.

Please contact Phyllis Maddox concerning any problems you may experience receiving your newsletter.

We thank all of you who responded quickly with your votes to unanimously approve the 2021/2022 WLPCA Board of Directors. Three new members join the board starting July 1. All three have lived in West Lane Place and have been active in the civic association for many years, so you may know them already.

Vice President, Fisher Trigg



Fisher, has lived in Houston since 1962, West Lane Place since 1972, and has been involved in the WLPCA since its inception. Rumor has it that Fisher was one of the neighbors who formed the civic association! He lives on Bash Place with his wife, Cynthia, who most of you know served as treasurer of the WLPCA for several years and who organized many of our annual meetings.

Director, Marj Elhardt



Marj has lived on Mid Lane since 1969 and has served the Civic Association in various positions including director, secretary, president, past president, membership chair, and newsletter editor for much of the last 23 years. Most recently, she has volunteered as webmaster for the wlpca.org website. You can often find Marj and her husband, Chris, working in their yard, walking in the neighborhood; or, you might catch Chris patrolling the streets on his motorcycle!

Director, Mary McDaniel



West Lane Place, Land of Giants

by Gilda Bayegan, Mid Lane



One morning in early June, these large snakey creatures, above, appeared on the new sprouts of our tangelo, a tree struggling to survive last winter's freeze. Rather than destroy the alarming-looking creatures, research quickly led to their identity - **Giant Swallowtail Caterpillars**, the larval stage of one of **America's largest and most striking butterflies**.

Since our spindly tangelo tree could not survive their feast, we moved the caterpillars to a healthy lemon tree.

Here's one that developed into a chrysalis:



that we hope will thrive and become a butterfly like this:



Giant Swallowtail Butterfly (stock photo)

Jeff Cummins, Butterfly Rearing Coordinator at the **HMNS Cockerell Butterfly Center** said citrus is scarce in Houston after our terrible February freeze, and Giant Swallowtail butterflies are desperate for host plants to nurture their caterpillars. To help them, **he suggests we plant Rue or "Herb of Grace,"** an alternative host plant that's available in nurseries.

Mary and her husband, Marion, have lived on Hackberry Lane since 2001. Mary organized distribution of the West Lane Place News for many years, and Marion has served both as vice president and legal counsel for the WLPCA. In addition to her volunteer work for the WLPCA, Mary donates her services as an interior designer to **New Hope Housing, Inc.**, which provides affordable housing in Houston.

Since our last newsletter, we have experienced more crime in our area, unfortunately. We are aware of **two crimes involving vehicles** in West Lane Place. The **first was the theft of tools from the truck of a lawn maintenance worker**. A thief or thieves broke into his truck to steal equipment while it was parked on the street in front of the house where he was working. This sort of crime has become common in Houston, so it's no surprise that it happened here. But what may surprise you is that this incident occurred in bright daylight while the owner was in plain sight of his truck. The perpetrator(s) were completely unconcerned about being seen!

The **second incident involving a vehicle in West Lane Place** occurred when a homeowner discovered one morning that his **car wouldn't operate because it had been stripped of its catalytic converter** overnight, a crime that has become common across the US. The theft occurred in his driveway not far from the front door. We have been told that thieves work together in pairs pretending to change a tire while they sneak under the car and remove the catalytic converter. This theft cost our neighbor \$2500 to replace the part plus immeasurable inconvenience and outrage for the intrusion.

In addition to these incidents that occurred within our neighborhood, we have been told of **two additional incidents involving vehicles that WLP neighbors suffered outside the neighborhood**. One Mid Lane neighbor reported that she was the **victim of a purse grab** as she got into her car in a grocery store parking lot. She says a man jumped from the car beside her, opened the passenger door, took her purse, and was gone before she knew it. She lost her wallet, car keys, and cell phone. By the time she was able to report the crime, her credit card already had been used.

Another Mid Lane neighbor escaped a similar theft in a grocery store parking lot. She reports that when she got into her car after shopping, she noticed another car backing into the space next to hers. That car had dark tinted windows, and she could see a young man getting out of the back seat, watching her. Because she had already locked the doors of her car, he was unable to get into her car and she was spared. Her advice is, **"Watch cars that have papers tags and tinted windows... especially when they are backing into a space!"** We are grateful that neither of our neighbors was hurt during these incidents!

In nearby **heavily patrolled River Oaks, a home was invaded while occupied**. Some details are missing from the story, but it was reported that around **4:00 pm Monday, June 21**, two men at the door of a home on **Brentwood** presented themselves as **tree trimmers for CentrePoint**. While a member of the household staff escorted one man to the backyard, the other man entered the home. A second member of the homeowners' staff

saw the man inside the home and asked him to leave, then the staff member left the house and the thief immediately returned inside the home. These two thieves were able to remove a safe from the house as well as other valuables, but thankfully, no one was hurt.

As you can see in these reports, criminals are getting bolder. Please keep these incidents in mind and take every precaution to protect yourselves from crime. We hope you never become a victim! WLP

DIY Crime Prevention

by Barbara Staley, West Lane

Over the past several years, incidents of all kinds of crime have occurred more and more often throughout our country. While there are many theories of why this is happening, the surge is undeniable. Some cities have recorded double and triple criminal activity since 2020. **As of June, 2021, homicides within Houston city limits have increased by 35% over 2020.** Some large neighborhoods in Houston can afford to hire patrol officers to help manage this criminal activity. In our smaller neighborhood, concerned citizens volunteer to drive through West Lane Place to spot suspicious activity, but we have no paid patrol.

The more crime we face, the more we need to know how to protect ourselves, our homes, families and neighbors. Here are some tips that we should follow every day:

Check your rear view mirror frequently. If you suspect you're being followed, **DRIVE AWAY FROM HOME** preferably to a fire station or a busy public area. This is especially important to remember when returning from upscale eateries and shops in our area.

Update your alarm systems with 4G or 5G cellular transmitters.

Make sure your **exterior cameras operate efficiently.**

Stay inside your locked car until your garage door closes and you know you are secure.

Plan in advance with your family how to respond to a robbery.

Have your home inspected for security. (This might also reduce your insurance rates!)

REPORT EVERY INCIDENT OF CRIME TO HPD!

For more information, as well as **links to websites with helpful crime notifications**, please visit my expanded article on our website, **www.wlpca.org**,

and **please always be vigilant!**

Recycling, Heavy Trash, and Tree & Limb Pick-up Schedule for WLP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

JULY

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27		29	30	31

AUGUST

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	J	26	27	28
29	30	31				

SEPTEMBER

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21		23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

OCTOBER

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	J	28	29	30
31						

 = Tree waste; **J** = Junk waste pick up

Weekly household trash pick up on Mondays. NOTE: Recycling is every other Monday, on highlighted days in boxes. Please have your bins out on the curb by 7 am and in by 10 pm.

“Tree Waste” is defined as “clean wood waste such as tree limbs, branches, and stumps (lumber, furniture, and treated wood will NOT be accepted.)”

“Junk Waste” is defined as “items such as furniture, appliances, and other bulky material.”

ISO Crime Watch Volunteers. Our Crime Watch program is shorthanded and needs volunteers to drive around West Lane Place on the lookout for trouble. This is a program designed to **reduce crime through awareness**. It is not a program in which volunteers confront any suspicious person.

Despite recent increases, we’re among the safest neighborhoods in Houston according to law enforcement officers, for which they attribute much credit to our Crime Watch program. But, **we must have volunteers to continue the program.**

If you are interested in participating, **contact Security Chair, Mohammad Bayegan, mohawk@msn.com**, for information.

Julius Melcher Station Under Investigation. As you may have seen in the news, our post office on Timmons, **Julius Melcher**, is one of three postal stations in District 7 that **Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher** has asked the Postmaster General to investigate. Ms. Fletcher requested the investigation because her office received numerous complaints from constituents about lost and mishandled mail. To compound the problem, the *Houston Chronicle* reported that the North Houston Distribution Center, through which all Houston mail is processed, had the most delayed mail in the U.S.

Crude Ambition. Director **Pat Holmes’** new novel, *Crude Ambition*, is available now on Amazon! It is a thriller that takes place in Houston, and revolves around lawyers and the oil and gas industry. Pat asks if you like the book, please leave a review on **Amazon** or **Goodreads** since good reviews will drive its success. Best of luck, Pat!

Noise noise noise. A neighbor on Lana Lane asks everyone in West Lane Place to think about what their neighbors hear when **lawn mowers and leaf blowers operate at sensitive hours**, like early weekend mornings, and late in the day. He says he must listen to leaf blowers from dawn to dark and it’s making him crazy. So if you can reschedule your lawn crew for a more civilized hour, he would appreciate your courtesy.

Private Security. Are you interested in engaging private security for West Lane Place? Contact Kyle E. at **midlanecommons@gmail.com** to explore the possibilities.

Directories!! After many hours of hard labor, Director **Darryl Shields** has unveiled his master work, the new improved, super dooper **West Lane Place Civic Association Membership Directory** that you’ll find delivered with this newsletter. **Good job, Darryl**, Thank you for figuring it all out. Now that you have Darryl’s phone number and email address, you can call or write to let him know how much you love the directory!