

Empty It, Lock It, and Garage It

At our last Board meeting a resident informed us her car was stolen from her driveway. Other residents followed up with details from other auto thefts and recent vandalism in our Del Prado community. This is upsetting and makes me think about what are our defenses to combat this illegal activity.

Theft and vandalism leaves us with more than just a loss of a possession. It is an invasion of privacy and a shaken sense of security. Criminals aren't normally brilliant people and most crimes can be deterred with diligence on our part. We can make our environment less vulnerable and inconvenient for criminal activity. What can we do?

Increase our awareness.

- Pay attention to your surroundings and who belongs and who doesn't.
- Report anyone whose actions are suspicious.
- Don't ignore car alarms. The car that was stolen alarm went off and no one responded to the noise.

Empty it, Lock it, Garage it

- Vandalism has occurred when there have been items left on the car seats. The perpetrators broke the windows of the cars to grab items on the inside. Luckily the items stolen weren't valuable, but that didn't stop the perpetrators. Don't leave anything visible inside the car and keep your car locked. And finally, use your garage to keep your car out of sight and the mind of the criminal. Can't get your car in the garage??? Stay tuned for details on a Del Prado wide garage sale on April 8.

Report it

- *Call the police. Call the police. Call the police.* I can't say that enough. When we activate the authorities it increases the security in our area. Criminals will get the idea that we are not passive about illegal activity.
- **Nextdoor.com.** Use this site to report *any* illegal activity. It's an immediate pipeline to 70+ of your neighbors. It's easy to sign up and you're doing yourself and your neighbors a favor by using this communication.

Security Cameras

- Digital home security systems are effective, assessable, and inexpensive. Prices range from \$99 - \$150 for a worthy system that monitors your home exterior and is controlled from your smart phone. These systems are sold on-line or at our local hardware warehouse.

Our best defense is to be proactive. We're a neighborhood of 169 homes and the more we are aware and take action to prevent this illegal activity, the safer our community will be. We can outsmart the criminal.

Lita Starr, President, Del Prado Townhome Association, (805) 216-7307, lcstarr75@gmail.com

February 2017