



**Special Bulletin from the
Southmoor Park East Homeowners
Association to SPEHA Residents
February 19, 2009**

Dear Neighbors:

This is a special neighborhood alert to Southmoor Park East residents of a recent upsurge in property crimes in our neighborhood. This sudden increase in burglaries and vehicle break-ins comes only a few weeks after Denver Police Department District 3 reported, on January 28 at the SPEHA Annual Meeting, that our neighborhood enjoyed a substantial downturn in these types of crimes in 2008, with burglaries falling from 11 incidents in 2007 to only 4 in 2008. Unfortunately, we are writing this special bulletin to inform you that there have already been two burglaries and three vehicle break-ins in the past two weeks alone.

There were two daytime burglaries on South Pontiac Way on the same day. One burglary occurred between 10 & 11 AM. The burglars were actually seen by a neighbor before the crime but the three people believed to be involved did not appear particularly suspicious to the neighbor at the time. The descriptions of the suspects are: one Hispanic male, in his early 20s with a crew cut and medium build, one female with dark hair and a third unidentified person who was driving the relatively new silver/grey Chevrolet car, with dark tinted windows and only a dealership tag on the front (green and yellow dealer promotional plate) where the license plate ordinarily goes. The temporary tag may have come from a rental car sales outlet like Budget Auto Sales.

In the first burglary, the criminals got in the back yard and then kicked in the back door. They appear to have used gloves during the burglary, stealing electronics and jewelry. They parked their vehicle two houses down from the home that was to be burglarized and, in hindsight, appeared to be sitting in the car

waiting for the homeowner to leave the house. In the second burglary, it is believed that the same criminals entered the home through a basement window and took silver flatware and other small items.

The vehicle break-ins occurred on East Ithaca, South Oneida and South Magnolia. Like the burglaries, the break-ins followed a familiar pattern—valuables were visible from outside the vehicle, a small window was broken to unlock the door and the cash, electronics or other valuables were absconded.

We cannot prevent criminals from entering our neighborhood in search of easy mark. And admittedly, if they are intent on committing a crime in our neighborhood, they may attempt one no matter how diligent we are and irrespective of whatever preventative measures we may take. But that does not mean that we should not be diligent neighbors looking out for each other's homes and property and that we should not take steps to make our homes less attractive targets to criminals. So please take a minute to remind yourself of the steps you can take to make all of our homes and property more secure.

Prevent any unauthorized access to your back yard. Even the most brazen daytime burglar will not break in the front of your house where cars and pedestrians are constantly passing by. They need concealed access. Always lock the gate to your back yard with a sturdy lock. Most gates are set up to permit you to lock the gate to the outside merely by throwing the bolt deeply into the wooden post—no separate lock required. And make sure it is not easy to get in your back yard another way.

Do not leave valuables in plain sight. Criminals are opportunists—when you make it easy for them, they will take the opportunity, even if that means that they have to break a window or bust a lock.

Be a snoopy neighbor. Old TV sitcom stereotypes aside, we need each other's help to prevent crime. No one is home all the time, and

it is when you are not home or not in your car that criminals will try to steal your property. If you see something suspicious, call the neighbor, call the police or just go outside to make it obvious that you are watching what is going on. Your neighbors will be grateful for it, even if the suspicious person is really their favorite uncle or long lost friend. They will be glad to know that you are looking out for them and they will be more likely to look out for you.

Use anti-crime tools. Get a burglar alarm and use it, monitored or not. If your block is not certified for the Neighborhood Watch program, it should be. Get your neighbors to sign up and the Denver Police Department will put up the Neighborhood Watch signs on your block. Put motion detectors on your outside lighting. Move lights higher so that they cannot be easily removed or turned off by a clever burglar.

Get on the SPEHA broadcast e-mail list so that you can receive timely notice from bulletins like this one concerning crime and safety issues and other important neighborhood issues. SPEHA cannot afford to spend the money for printing and delivery of every neighborhood event. Moreover, even when the SPEHA Board does decide to incur the expense of sending out a paper notice, the paper version usually arrives long after the e-mail version was received. We now have e-mail addresses for around 300 of the 630 homes in the neighborhood. That means that only half of the neighbors will get most of the information put out by the SPEHA Board. Sign up for the SPEHA broadcast e-mail list ASAP—we do not give anyone else access to or use of the list for any purpose, no matter how benevolent or noble we may believe it to be. Your privacy is our first concern. If you don't get a copy of this bulletin by e-mail, contact Bob Finkelmeier, 3972 S. Olive Street, Rfinkelmeier@speha.org, right away and give him your e-mail address.

We all know that economic conditions are very difficult nowadays and that, with such conditions, property crimes often increase as more people become desperate for sustenance. We cannot change those global circumstances ourselves but we can work a little harder to protect our property by the use of common sense and the exercise of real diligence. We are all

much stronger when we work together, as the whole neighborhood becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

Lee Terry, President

Homeowners Dues Notices

Notices for homeowners' association dues were mailed to all SPEHA homeowners in January. Dues for 2009 are still \$25 per household. Thank you for paying your dues on time and keeping our neighborhood strong and vital. Remember too that there is now a 10% per annum late fee on delinquent dues. All payments should go to the SPEHA Bank address.

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