

The



# Connection Newsletter

Winter 2008 Edition

## **Holiday Decorating Contest!**

Hey neighbors, there will be a holiday decorating contest this year with prizes awarded to the best homes. Homes will be judged the week of December 15<sup>th</sup>. So deck the halls and your house with Holiday cheer.

## **Calling All Volunteers!**

The board recognizes that everyone is busy and has little time to spare, however, more volunteers are needed to assist with all aspects of the board. Given the lack of current volunteers and time constraints on the current board, we have investigated if it might make sense to have a professionally managed company take over operations. The positives of this is that there may be less need for the neighbors to get involved, the cons as identified by talking with several other associations and our attorney who specializes in HOA's is that in our current form, we are much more responsive and involved than other HOA's that are professionally managed. Also a con is the fact that this would represent an additional expense not currently accounted for in our budget. By the boards' estimate in talking with professional management companies, assuming all other expenses remained the same, dues would have to go up by \$100 dollars per YEAR per home to cover this. There are many positions to be filled but none more important than architectural committee which helps keep our neighborhood looking good. Other positions include:

- Architectural Committee
- Social Committee
- Landscape workgroup
- Lighting workgroup
- Any other committee you would like to start that you feel would benefit the neighborhood.

Please lend a hand to your neighborhood



## **Residents "Chill" at the National Night Out Against Crime Ice Cream Social**

**By Bill Dorner, Neighborhood Crime Watch Coordinator**

The Annual National Night Out Against Crime 2008 (NNO) was held on Tuesday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, and was once again a rousing success. By popular demand, the Twin Creeks Crime Watch Committee observed NNO by throwing an Ice Cream Social sponsored entirely by the

Homeowners' Association. More than 100 Twin Creeks residents attended the event, enjoying all-you-can-eat Schwan's ice cream and socializing with one another.

The Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department was on hand to greet neighbors and answer questions. As always, the event successfully built community spirit while sending a message to criminals that they are unwelcome in Twin Creeks. Special thanks to Peg Zike and MaryLaura Ricker for their leadership with the Ice Cream Social this year!

## **Fall 2008 Crime Watch Update**

**By Bill Dorner**

[crimewatch@twincreekshoa.com](mailto:crimewatch@twincreekshoa.com)

Greetings! I'm Bill Dorner, your Crime Watch Neighborhood Coordinator.

We are fortunate to live in a great community. One reason Brookstone and Fieldstone shine is that we have excellent community spirit. This goes a long way towards deterring crime in Twin Creeks. It is vital that we communicate with one another and look out for one another. I'm proud that on my block, neighbors won't ignore suspicious behavior or an open garage door late at night. We know one another by name and we help one another out as needed. If that's not the case on your block, don't be satisfied—take it upon yourself to meet your neighbors and talk to them. Make the first move to introduce yourself. Only then can we build a stronger community.

Regrettably, this summer we have seen our worst wave of crime ever. We have had at least four home burglaries or attempted burglaries, at least two thefts from parked cars, and at least two vandalism incidents (broken windows). It is troubling to consider that criminals are targeting our neighborhood. You can read about most of these incidents at the website: [www.twincreekshoa.com](http://www.twincreekshoa.com)

What can we do to fight back? First, we must use common sense. I cannot overstress the fact that we are responsible to avoid behaviors that make us vulnerable to crime. If you leave valuables in your parked car, they will be stolen. If you leave your car unlocked and parked outside your garage, it will be ransacked (whether or not you have left valuables inside). If you leave your garage door open and unattended, your possessions may disappear. If you leave your home unlocked, even when you are home, you may have unwelcome criminal visitors. If you leave expensive possessions in your home within plain sight from your windows, burglars may break in and steal them. If you fail to maintain your coach lights or leave your porch lights on at night, criminals may case out your home unseen and without worries. Below are some tips which may have discouraged or prevented most of the crimes that occurred in our community this summer. Follow these tips as often as you possibly can:

- Park in the garage
- If you must park outside, lock your car doors
- Don't leave anything in your parked car that you want to keep (laptop, cell phone, wallet, purse, keys, auto title, garage door opener, iPod)
- Lock your house, front door and back, whether you are home or not
- Keep all exterior light bulbs maintained—florescent bulbs last much longer
- Leave your porch lights on at night, front and back
- If you don't have an alarm system, consider investing in one

Besides exercising good judgment, such as the tips above, we can help prevent crime by being more aware of what is happening in our neighborhood. Whenever I speak with the IMPD community relations officers, they stress this point. If you see suspicious activity, call 911 and report it to the police. They are here to serve and

they want to protect us, so don't hesitate to call the police when appropriate. If in doubt, go ahead and dial 911. Also, keep an eye out for one another. Talk to your neighbors, take a stroll or sit on the front porch. See and be seen in the community, so that crooks know we are here and we are watching. If there is an unfamiliar vehicle, consider jotting down its license number and description. That might lead to a break in a future criminal case.

Brookstone and Fieldstone remain terrific communities. Let's all do our part to keep it that way by avoiding mistakes that attract criminals to our neighborhood and instead making the effort to deter crime and look out for one another. Thanks!

## [The Treasurer's Report](#)

Greetings Fellow Homeowners,

By now all homeowners should have received the 2009 annual Association fee letter. As a reminder the Association fee is due by January 1, 2009. Would you please help your Association stay on track financially by sending in the annual fee before the 1<sup>st</sup> of January.

Just like many other organizations and individuals these days, the Association Board has the challenging task of keeping expenses in line with income. 2008 has been an especially difficult year and, although all the numbers are not in yet, it looks like expenses will exceed income. So in an effort to balance the budget in 2009, your Association Board is now in the process of reviewing proposals from four landscape companies, including our current one, in hopes of getting the best quality work at the best possible price. Holding the line on landscape costs will help a great deal as the majority of the budget goes to cover these expenses. But the Board also needs to think about other ways to reduce expenses. If you have any thoughts or suggestions, please feel free to let us know.

The type of budget and expenses we have been talking about so far is usually referred to as a yearly operating budget. That is they are expenses that occur every year such as electricity, water, insurance and mowing the lawn. The other type of budget the Association Board must also manage is a budget for long term capital improvements. These are expenses that occur only once every few years such as the replacement or repair of playground equipment or the replacement of signage. If you take a look at the 2009 Budget that was included with your annual Association fee letter, you will see a line item entitled "Reserve Fund Contribution" Saving a portion of the income from annual dues and putting it into a reserve fund is how these long term capital improvements get funded.

Accurately anticipating these big ticket items and making sure the money is there when needed is an even more challenging task. So the Association Board recently engaged the services of the consulting firm of Reserve Specialists, Inc. to assist in the analysis of the Association's reserve fund and long term capital needs. This analysis produced a report with a tremendous amount of data for the Board to review and at the moment we are just beginning that process. As a reminder, please know that all Board members are homeowners who serve on a strictly volunteer basis. Therefore it may take a few months to complete this review and begin the process of putting these long term capital improvements in priority order. And perhaps an even greater task will be to ensure that sufficient funds will be available to coincide with the needed improvements.

As always, if you have any thoughts, questions, comments or suggestions you want to share please feel free to let us know. As treasurer I can be contacted by email at [treasurer@twincreekshoa.com](mailto:treasurer@twincreekshoa.com). Other board member emails are listed on the website [www.twincreekshoa.com](http://www.twincreekshoa.com) .where you can also find the date and time of the next meeting (open to all Association members). The Association voice mail number is 317.592.9516 and the mailing address is P.O. 68734 Indianapolis, IN 46268-0734

Looking forward to hearing from you,  
Russ Kushigian  
Treasurer