

A Scary Did-You-Know...

What Can Happen with Your Smart Phone

Geotagging and smartphones—a cyberstalking scenario that’s been sounding alarms for quite some time. Many are already aware and have taken appropriate action. For those who are unaware, heads up!

Exactly what is geotagging? If you are in the habit of taking photos with your smartphone and posting those photos online, you may be giving away your family’s current location. Embedded in those photos, not visible to the naked eye, are what are called geotags. Geotags identify the longitude and latitude coordinates as well as other detailed information about where you are located that can easily be uncovered with software readily available on the internet.

Parents and grandparents, your privacy and the safety of your kids or grandkids are at stake. Each time you post a photo online from a GPS capable smartphone, your private information is privy worldwide.

Let’s say you take pics of your kids with your

smartphone, in your home, and then post those pics on Facebook. Once they are posted, a cyberstalker can determine your exact location—*within 15 feet of where you took the pic*. If that pic is of your kids, whether they are at home, at school, swimming in the pool, or playing in the park, the offending cyberstalker knows exactly where they are.

While this is certainly scary, for most smartphones, geotagging can easily be disabled. Best advice...

Turn It Off

There are a variety of ways to turn geotagging off on virtually every smartphone.

But, the methods do vary among smartphone brands and model numbers. It is recommended that you

consult your owners’ manual for the manufacturers’ description of how to disable “location” and then *do it!* ■



Reminder...

Our Quarterly Assessments

It is important for us all to remember that paying our quarterly \$31.50 dues assessment on time helps us avoid late payment fees. For the current quarter, assessments are due April 1st. Accounts with remaining balances after April 20th will incur a late fee of \$20.

If you are behind on assessments and are having financial difficulties, please address the situation quickly. Contact BHC OA’s management company, Pinnacle Texas, 512-795-8461, www.pinnacletexas.com, to arrange a payment plan that will help you get back on track.

Ways to make payments include having your bank account automatically drafted each quarter (ACH form required), online at www.pinnacletexas.com—Homeowner Information Portal, by using your bank’s bill pay service, or by paper check. Paper checks should be made payable to BHC Owners Association.

Regardless of the payment

method you choose, please always use your homeowner account number so your payment will be credited correctly. The homeowner account number is printed on your coupon, on your statements, and is a 13-digit number beginning with 740. If you

don’t know your account number, contact Pinnacle Texas.

Further information on paying assessments is available to you on Pinnacle’s website. Again, that’s www.pinnacletexas.com. ■

About Barking Dogs

In recent months, your Association has received a flood of complaints about barking dogs. There is an answer to the problem.

Dog owners. Please be *responsible*. Take measures to ensure that your pet does not cause strife between you and your neighbors due to constant barking—*know* your pet’s behavior.

Important to note. It has occurred in Block House Creek that a neighbor subjected to the constant barking of

another neighbor’s dog, despite numerous resolution attempts, took the situation to small claims court—and *won*. You can keep that from happening to you by being a conscientious, caring, and responsible pet owner.

Residents unable to resolve with your neighbor: your best course of action is to contact the Williamson County Sheriff’s Dept. 512-943-1389. ■



Guidelines for Us All...

Keeping Ourselves and Our Property Safe

There are a number of steps we can all take to protect our families, our possessions, and our neighborhood. By implementing these suggestions, we are all taking steps toward generating effective Block Watch programs.

- Get acquainted with your neighbors. Exchange names, house numbers, and phone numbers.
- Be sure your address number can be readily seen from the street. If the cement block numbers have faded, it’s a quick fix to paint a fresh coat of black over the numbers with a small art brush.
- Keep an inventory of your possessions.
- Have emergency numbers readily available.
- Report a crime in progress by calling 911. If possible, continue to observe the subject and obtain a description as well as the mode and direction of travel. DO NOT confront the suspect(s).
- When assistance arrives, identify yourself as a Block House Creek Block Watch participant.
- Give your neighbors your business and emergency phone numbers where you can be reached in the event an emergency situation arises.

- Give your residence and neighborhood maximum visibility by keeping shrubbery neatly trimmed.
- Use exterior lighting, especially at doors, and keep those lights on all night. Dusk to dawn automatic exterior lighting fixtures are available at local home improvement stores at a variety of price levels.
- Remain current on suspicious activities that may have occurred within Block House Creek via the Association’s website, www.blockhousecreek.org, Facebook and e-blasts.
- Attend BHC OA’s National Night Out. It’s a great opportunity, not only to get acquainted, but to initiate some of the objectives of Block Watch. Your Association will announce the date and locations as the event nears. ■



If a Block Watch Program has never been discussed in your area, consider volunteering to lead the formation effort and to serve as an area Block Watch Captain!

BLOCK HOUSE CREEK OWNERS ASSOCIATION • WWW.BLOCKHOUSECREEK.ORG



- *Third Annual Cook-Off*
- *April 7th Easter Egg Hunt*
- *2012—What’s in Store for You!*
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Leander, Texas 78641
705 House Creek Drive



FIRST QUARTER • 2012

BHC OA’s Third Annual BBQ Cook-Off!

Smoking Out Crime in Block House Creek!

Back for it’s third year, Block House Creek’s Annual BBQ Cook-Off, Smoking Out Crime in Block House Creek, is ready for your calendar—May 5th, 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Tumlinson Park! An itemized schedule of events will soon be available on your website, www.blockhousecreek.org, “News” header.

Not only will you enjoy the aromas of brisket, ribs, chicken, and Chef’s Choice, new on the menu this year—BEANS! For those who wish to compete in any or all categories, we need to hear from you soon... www.blockhousecreek.org, “Contact” header. Who else do we need to hear from? Those of you with a desire to judge! Board Members Ursula Logan and Pam Phillips will be anxiously awaiting your contact via website e-mail or on the Association’s Facebook page.

Chefs! Don’t delay! There’s a limit to the number of teams able to show off their skills and registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Once you have made your desire to show off your talents known, Pam will immediately e-mail a registration form for you to complete and return by e-mail. Through a separate e-mail transmission, you will receive event specifics, schedules for setting up, serving judges, and the official Rules and Regulations.

Residents who are not competing and would like

to assist in early morning set-up or throughout the day should also advise event organizers via the website.

Again on the agenda is the popular People’s Choice, which offers participating residents the opportunity to choose their own winners among all categories.

New this year, for the really brave, is a jalapeno eating contest!

For those who need a snack, they’ll be available, too. For kids, again on location will be their favorite activities—bouncy houses, hamster balls, Kona Ice, face painters, cotton candy, and more. For the enjoyment of all, live music courtesy of the band The Gin Mill Hymns, www.theginmillshymns.com.

So what awaits winners? More than public recognition for their expertise. First, second, and third place prizes will be awarded in all categories. For a first place winner, that’s \$150. For a second place winner, \$100. For a third place winner, \$50.

Since its’ inception, Smoking Out Crime in Block House Creek has remained a fantastic way to unite residents, make new friends, and share the concept of safety throughout our community. We hope to see you there. Your Association extends special thanks to the Maintenance and Safety and Recreation Committees for their hard work in ensuring the success of this extremely popular event. ■



B L O C K H O U S E C R E E K O W N E R S A S S O C I A T I O N

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This newsletter is a service of
Block House Creek Owners Association.

www.blockhousecreek.org



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Unless someone like you cares a whole, awful lot, things aren't going to get better. They're NOT!

Dr. Seuss, The Lorax

As you peruse this issue of your newsletter, you will quickly notice an overall theme, crime prevention, a focus intended to support the theme of the BHC OA Barbeque Cook-Off—*Smoking Out Crime in Block House Creek*. Our goal is to provide the kind of information that will help **you** protect **our** community, **your** property, **your** street, and **your** loved ones. The Smoke-Off will help you put in place some of the elements inherent in a Block Watch Program as you make new friends and enjoy the camaraderie of this neighborhood event. We hope to see **you** and **your family** at the Cook-Off, where we'll be *Smoking Out Crime in Block House Creek!*

Kudos from CAI

December 9, 2011 was an exciting day for BHC Owners Association. At an awards banquet that evening, the Austin Chapter of the Community Association Institute (CAI) acknowledged your Association for Excellence in Community Spirit! It was with great pride that BHC representatives accepted the award—because we were accepting it on behalf of all of the many community volunteers who made it possible. We hope that if you haven't already made the decision, you will decide today to volunteer and participate in our 2012 spirit events. Building a sense of community builds a safer community for us all. Let us know you want to help—we'll find the perfect spot for you.

Annual Meeting

Although our Annual Meeting is a few months away, it's not too early to let us know that you want to be a member of the Nominating Committee or wish to be a candidate for the Board of Directors. Ask anyone who has served. Volunteering your time and talents is a genuinely rewarding experience. The 2012 Annual Meeting is tentatively scheduled for September, but we want to hear from you now!

On a Personal Note

I know firsthand how challenging it can be to squeeze in some volunteer time for another cause, event, or function. Many of us are stretched to the limit with family, work, and just general life demands. I deal with the challenge of balancing those demands every day; some days I am more successful than others. My volunteer participation with BHC OA has benefited me in ways I never expected. I have made amazing friendships. I can proudly say that Don and I are instilling a sense of community responsibility in our children. Our girls are learning that they can accomplish anything they set their bright young minds to. They are learning that we should not expect others to do for us, that we should, instead, be willing and prepared to do for others. Our community is not static; it is dynamic. BHC is developing and improving every day through the efforts and new ideas from residents. I encourage you to become an active member of Block House Creek, helping to grow and influence this awesome community.

*Those who say it cannot be done
should not interrupt the person doing it.*

Chinese Proverb

Uloga

President
Block House Creek Owners Association

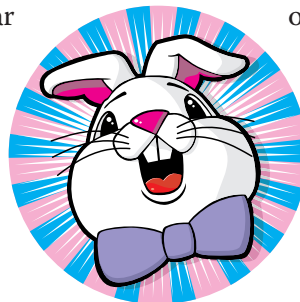
Coming April 7th...

BHC OA's Annual Easter Egg Hunt

One of your Association's extremely popular annual events among kids and parents alike is near! Mark your calendar for April 7th, 10:00 AM to noon, for 2012's Easter Egg Hunt, Tumlinson Park. Kids will want to be sure and bring their baskets and plan to participate according to age groups:

- Ages 0-2, 10:00 AM;
- Ages 3-5, 10:20 AM;
- Ages 6-8 10:40 AM;
- Ages 9 and up, 11:00 AM.

The Easter Bunny will once again be welcoming kids and giving parents an opportunity to get fantastic photographs



of their little ones perched on his lap, baskets in hand, smiling from ear to ear! Near the Pavilion, a petting zoo will be open for kids who may be awaiting the hunting opportunity appropriate for their age group or who may be all done counting the eggs in their basket and checking to see if they might become a lucky winner! Throughout the event, Kona Ice will be serving cool refreshments.

What a fun day! Plan now to introduce your kids to the Easter Bunny at Tumlinson Park on April 7th! And, by all means, don't forget to bring those baskets! ■

In the Months to Come...

What's in Store for You!

Your Board of Directors, Recreation Committee, and Maintenance and Safety Committee have been hard at work planning the Year 2012. This issue alerts you to the quickly approaching Barbeque Cook-Off and Easter Egg Hunt. Be watching your newsletter, www.blockhousecreek.org, and Facebook for details on future events, including the popular Babysitting Clinic, Music on the Green, July 4th Festival, Kids Dance Clinic, that all-important Annual Meeting, Teen Night Out, Harvest

Fest, and, during the holiday season, the Outdoor Decorating Contest and Third Annual Light Up the Night!

If you are not yet signed on to receive e-blasts that not only give you instant access to details on each and every event but share additional types of information important to you, it's easy. Simply visit the website's home page where you can directly add your e-mail address to the distribution list. ■



YARD of the MONTH!

While the rain we have recently enjoyed was a welcome relief, we cannot deny the probability that another long, hot summer awaits us. During the peak of last year's drought and the need for water rationing, your Maintenance and Safety Committee felt it imperative to discontinue the last few months of the Yard of the Month program. We cannot yet determine whether such a decision will be imperative for 2012, but it does remain a possibility.

Be watching your website, www.blockhousecreek.org, and our Facebook page for updates related to the status of the Yard of the Month Program. And

remember, those updates will come directly to you if you are on our e-blast distribution list.

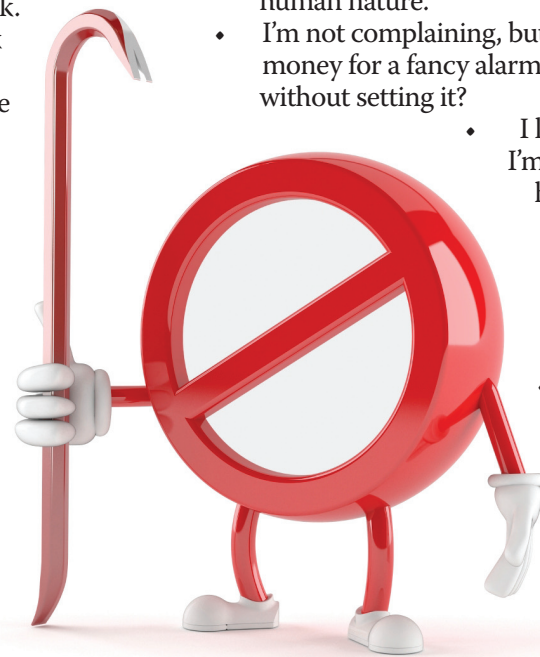
As we thank you for your understanding, we do encourage that you continue to maintain your yard by mowing, edging, and keeping control of the fast growing weeds the recent rains have generated. We also encourage you to lend a helping hand by mowing for a neighbor who may not have the tools, the ability, or the funds to hire it done. You can make your wish to help BHC OA residents maintain their property via the website, home page. ■

From Renowned Expert Jim H. Burns...

Things Your Burglar Won't Tell You

Provided for you here is valuable information made available to the general public by 105 convicted burglars in a number of states who agreed to be interviewed. Things your burglar won't tell you...

- Of course I look familiar. I was here just last week cleaning your carpets, painting your shutters, or delivering your new refrigerator.
- Hey, thanks for letting me use the bathroom when I was working in your yard last week. While I was in there, I unlatched the back window to make my return a little easier.
- Love those flowers. That tells me you have taste... and taste means there are nice things inside. Those yard toys your kids leave out always make me wonder what type of gaming system they have.
- Yes, I really do look for newspapers piled up on the driveway. And I might leave a pizza flyer in your front door to see how long it takes you to remove it.
- If your yard is full of weeds, maybe full of downed limbs, I have my ways to tell if you're there and just don't care or if you're gone and just don't know.
- If decorative glass is part of your front entrance, don't let your alarm company install the control pad where I can see if it's set. That makes it too easy.
- A good security company alarms the window over the sink and the windows on the second floor, which often access the master bedroom—and your jewelry. Is the alarm on? It's not a bad idea to put motion detectors up there, too.
- It's raining, you're fumbling with your umbrella, and, you forget to lock your door—understandable. But understand this: I don't take a day off simply because of bad weather.
- I always knock first. If you answer, I'll ask for directions somewhere or offer to clean your gutters. Don't take me up on it.
- Do you really think I won't look in your sock drawer? I always check dresser drawers, the bedside table, and the medicine cabinet.
- Here's a helpful hint: I almost never go into kids' rooms.
- You're right. I won't have enough time to break into that safe where you keep your valuables. But if it's not bolted down, I'll take it with me.
- A loud TV or radio can be a better deterrent than the best alarm system.
- If you're reluctant to leave your TV on while you're out of town, you can buy a \$35 device that works on a timer and simulates the flickering glow of a real television. Find it at www.faketv.com.



- Sometimes, I carry a clipboard. Sometimes, I dress like a lawn guy and carry a rake. I do my best to never, ever look like a crook.
- The two things I hate most: loud dogs and nosy neighbors.
- I'll break a window to get in, even if it makes a little noise. If your neighbor hears one loud sound, he'll stop what he's doing and wait to hear it again. If he doesn't hear it again, he'll just go back to what he was doing. It's human nature.
- I'm not complaining, but why would you pay all that money for a fancy alarm system and leave your house without setting it?
 - I love looking in your windows. I'm looking for signs that you're home, *and* for flat screen TVs or gaming systems I'd like. I'll drive or walk through your neighborhood at night, before you close the blinds, just to pick my targets.
 - Avoid announcing your vacation on your Facebook page. It's easier than you think to look up your address.
 - To you, leaving that window open just a crack during the day is a way to let in a little fresh air. To me, it's an invitation.
- If you don't answer when I knock, I'll try the door. Occasionally, I hit the jackpot and walk right in.

In response to questions about pepper spray, police officers recommend a can of wasp spray instead. Although pepper spray is painful, it doesn't work on everyone. Wasp spray can shoot up to twenty feet away and is much more accurate. With pepper spray, the intruder must get too close and could be overpowering. The wasp spray temporarily blinds an attacker until able to receive an antidote.

Additional tips include putting your keys beside your bed at night. Should you hear a noise outside your home or sounds that suggest break-in, press the panic button on your keys. The horn will continue to sound until either you turn it off or the car battery dies. Also remember to carry your keys while walking to your car in a parking lot. If you are suspicious of a person or an activity, press that panic button. ■

Special thanks for sharing to Security Consultant Chris McGoey and Richard T. Wright, Criminology Professor, University of Missouri, who interviewed convicted burglars for his book "Burglars on the Job".