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## College Heights Estates Association Newsletter

December 2006

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Dear Neighbors,

Happy Holidays to you and your families. In April, I announced that Lisa Holt had joined the CHEA Board and had volunteered to coordinate a Neighborhood Watch Program for our Community. In August we notified you of the CHEA email alert system regarding criminal activity in our immediate and surrounding areas. Following below is a status report about Neighborhood Watch from Lisa.

*Bill DeWitt, President*

As we find ourselves suddenly in the midst of the holiday season, our neophyte Neighborhood Watch participation has yielded some noteworthy success stories worth sharing. For those neighbors not yet included in our expanding e-mail tree, you will be pleased to know that two crimes have been solved by the police, thanks to calls initiated by “nosey neighbors.” Two suspects linked to at least one theft of UPS packages were apprehended after a neighbor on Eversfield Drive reported a suspicious person sighting on October 16th. On November 10th, three suspects were captured while breaking into a home on Calverton Drive after a neighbor alerted the police about suspicious door knockers in our community. Timely responses by law enforcement, prompted by community involvement in each case, resulted in on-scene arrests by the police.

The “rest of the story” lies within our ability to quickly share this information with each other during or soon after a noteworthy event. Empowering each other with information serves a greater purpose beyond the obvious. Circulating news about incidents that may prompt a constructive community reaction captures the essence of what Neighborhood Watch is all about. Neighborhood Watch is not a strict doctrine that demands actions and compliance behaviors from a community. Rather, the evolving character of the program in our community may simply be the sharing of timely incident information, the dissemination of safety tips, and the creation of a point of contact who is a regular liaison with the local police department. Our police representatives are Major Kevin Davis and his District I police officers. District I created a Community Specialist position which has afforded me immediate access to a “real person” who is available to address community concerns, quell rumors, and realize timely results. Major Davis also has two Neighborhood Watch citizen volunteers on his staff. They are working with CHEA to custom-fit our unique needs into the broader Neighborhood Watch concept.

Please contact me to assure that you receive future CHE Neighborhood Watch e-mail bulletins. As our Program expands to adapt to the wonderful character of our great neighborhood, I will be looking for Block Captains and, of course, your great ideas! In the meantime, those interested should e-mail me at [balloongirl@msn.com](mailto:balloongirl@msn.com) with your Name, Street Address, Contact Telephone Number(s), and E-Mail Address.

*Lisa Holt*

## LETTER FROM MAJOR KEVIN DAVIS

Prince George's County Police  
(301) 699-2626

The Holiday Season is upon us, and tales of charity and goodwill are often interrupted with crime reports that make us wonder about what kind of world our children and grandchildren are due to inherit from us. As we are challenged to reconcile the occasional sensational events that dominate the news from those routine acts of kindness that often go unreported, it often helps to look back on the successes that we've enjoyed right here in District I during 2006. While societal, economic, and educational obstacles that contribute to crime remain to be conquered, the diverse communities that populate District I's 36 square miles have enjoyed a far better year than the previous one. The following year-to-date District I crime statistics offer encouragement for an even better 2007:

- Homicides are **down** 44.7%
- Robberies are **down** 11.8%
- Thefts are **down** 15.4%
- Rapes are **down** 15.4%
- Burglaries are **down** 10%
- Stolen Cars are **down** 17.9%

Prior to assuming command of District I, I was under the steadfast opinion that enhanced and concentrated enforcement by patrol officers and detectives could alone produce crime reductions. I was, however, missing the larger picture. The key to realizing *sustainable* crime reductions lies within the willingness of communities and neighborhoods to get involved and partner with the police. The importance of Neighborhood Watch cannot go understated. Yet, I've learned, the essence of Neighborhood Watch is not so easily defined. I offer no tidy explanations, nor magical formulas. What does *your community* want Neighborhood Watch to be? Discuss it, shape it, and allow it to evolve to fit the needs of College Heights Estates. But most importantly, don't ignore the necessity for it. In spite of the relative safety enjoyed by the residents of CHE, your preparedness to overcome inevitable bumps in the road is dependent on relationships, however informal, with the police department and its sister government agencies.

Lisa Holt has become the CHE voice with the police department. I applaud her enthusiasm, and admire her dedication to the human principals that guide any meaningful police-community partnership. I encourage your support in this worthwhile endeavor, as there is nothing more contagious than success. The strides already made by CHE will undoubtedly inspire growing interest and community involvement. The renaissance of District I's Neighborhood Watch program is encouraging and a big part of our 2007 game plan.

I end this holiday greeting by asking each one of you to tell a young person in your life about the Prince George's County Police Department. As our agency continues to grow at an unprecedented pace, we need to ensure that the record *quantity* of new police officers is surpassed only by the *quality* of our pool of applicants. It is a little known fact that the PGPD is the 32<sup>nd</sup> largest police department in the nation. That's quite a figure considering that there are more than 18,000 police departments across the United States. Tell a quality young person that the County Police Department is looking for them at [www.goprincegeorgescounty.com](http://www.goprincegeorgescounty.com) Better yet, tell that very same person that you would be honored to bestow upon him or her the responsibility to protect your neighborhood and your family.

Have a safe and happy Holiday Season. I look forward to seeing you at community celebrations in the months to come!

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### University Park Women's Club (UPWC) 2006 Holiday Candlelight House Tour

The following homes will be featured on this year's tour to be held on December 15th, 2006, from 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 pm:

3909 Calverton Drive—Kasischke Residence  
4323 Van Buren Street—Morgan Residence  
7103 College Heights Drive—Harman Residence  
6713 Queens Chapel Road—Nestler Residence  
6711 Wells Parkway—Horan Residence  
4212 Woodberry Street—Freeman Residence  
4215 Woodberry Street—Essex Residence

Paul Yde and Sarah Elder, who live at 6909 Forest Hill Drive, will host local artisans who will display their works for sale (from 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.). A portion of the proceeds benefit the UPWC. Please feel free to drop by.

Tickets (\$12.00) can be purchased at any of the homes the evening of the event OR in advance by calling Jean Bourne-Pirovic at 301-520-8420. The Holiday House Tour is the UPWC's largest fundraiser of the year and is always a community favorite....so get in the Spirit and help support University Park and College Heights Estates!  
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

### Safety Habits

Warming up unattended vehicles is an invitation to car thieves who can walk or drive up to a garage or driveway and drive off with your vehicle. Leaving a vehicle unattended with keys in the ignition is a violation subject to a \$70.00 ticket and one point to a driving record. While shopping, do not leave valuables and packages in plain site in your vehicle. Park in well-lit areas. Have your key in hand when heading to your vehicle.

## THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who attended CHEAFest on October 15, 2006. More than 60 adults and children came to the corner of Hunter Lane and Remington Court to enjoy each other's company. People got to meet their neighbors and the kids enjoyed the Moonbounce. Chris and Andrew Blunck did chef duty again this year and turned out terrific hotdogs and perfectly done hamburgers. Eva and Tony

Duckett kindly donated their corner, along with extra chairs and emergency bathroom assistance. Prince George's County Police officers joined in the festivities for the first time this year.

Thanks to the College Heights Association Board for their support of this fun event and our special thanks to CHEAFest board members and organizers: Chris Blunck, Selma Clayman, Lisa Holt and Bev Silverberg.

A survey was distributed to attendees and Jean Lee collected data cards. Twenty-five people filled out the cards and we discovered some interesting facts. The survey and the answers follow:

College Heights Estates Association Survey: Please take a moment to answer these five questions, thanks.

1. How many years have you lived in College Heights Estates?

Answers: Ranged from 1 week to 50 years  
3=less than 6 months; 5=1 year; 7=2-9 years; 5=14-22 years; 5=25-50 years

2. Are you a member of CHEA? Y\_\_N\_\_

Answers: 6 no; 19 yes

3. Is this your 1st CHEA event? Y\_\_N\_\_

Answers: 11 yes; 14 no

4. Are you getting CHEA mail? Y\_\_N\_\_

Answers: 22 yes; 3 no

5. Would you like to get involved?

Most respondents gave names and emails.

## STREET SIGN REPLACEMENT

New blank signs are being made now by one of our CHEA neighbors, David Furlong. Ron Browning will paint them and have them ready for lettering and installation in the spring. If you know of signs needing replacement, contact Ron Browning directly. His contact information is at the end of this Newsletter.

## 2006 LEAF and SNOW REMOVAL

CHE is scheduled for leaf pick up on December 14<sup>th</sup>. CHEA has been working with the County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) to ensure better leaf collection service.

We have been assured that there will be another pick up this year. Leaves that have been raked and placed at the roadside will be vacuumed. Please make sure that tree limbs, branches, rocks and other debris are kept out of the leaf piles because they can damage the leaf vacuuming equipment. During snow or ice storms, vacuum leaf collection is suspended. Crews must wait until the leaves are dry enough for the equipment to work properly. For leaf collection information call 301-499-8576.

Last year snow removal in CHE was done in a reliable manner. There was a “dry run” of neighborhoods in October. CHEA has worked with DPW&T to assure timely snow removal, and we will monitor snow removal and identify streets that have not been cleared within 24 hours of the snow fall. If your street has not been plowed within 24 hours, please email [beverly.silverberg@gmail.com](mailto:beverly.silverberg@gmail.com) with your street name. It would help DPW&T if you could provide Bev with information about the condition your street (e.g., *passable* on single lane, *bare pavement* where at least 75% of lane surface shows, or *completed* where there is bare pavement on all travel and turning lanes.)

## **ILLEGAL SIGN POSTING**

If there are illegal signs posted on public property (e.g., on telephone poles), you may remove them or call DPW&T at (301) 883-5710 for removal. If you believe signs on private property violate laws or ordinances, call (301) 883-5710 for assistance.

## **ILLEGAL DUMPING**

This is a growing problem in our county and is handled by the Prince George’s County Police which has officers and cadets permanently assigned to this program. Report any illegal dumping including any license plate number, if possible. Do NOT confront the individual. Use the following numbers:  
County Police non-emergency (301) 333-4000  
County Environmental Crimes Task Force (301) 772-4402  
County Police District I (301) 699-2630

## **STREET LIGHTS**

Upon request, the county will conduct a needs study for installing street lighting in developed areas. The study will address the cost of installing any recommended lighting, as well as whether the county

or individual residents will pay for the lighting. Requesting a study is not a commitment to pay for any subsequent lighting installation. If you would like your address/street to be reviewed, email your name and information to Anne Scott, at [jtsads@aol.com](mailto:jtsads@aol.com).

## **DAMAGED/DEAD TREES**

Trees offer significant benefits to our environment, neighborhood, and homes. Recent storms have damaged many older trees. There is a growing concern among residents that an increasing number of dead or dying older trees are evident in our community. It is an owner’s responsibility to provide for the safety of trees on his or her property.

### **TREE HAZARD CHECKLIST**

Are there dead branches in our tree?  
Are there cracks or splits in the trunk or where the branches are attached?  
Are there detached branches hanging in our tree?  
Have adjacent trees fallen or died?  
Does our tree have cavities along the trunk?  
If you answer yes to any of these questions, you have work to do.

### **MANAGING TREE HAZARDS**

Prune your trees by removing defective branches.  
Cable and/or brace the tree to provide physical support for weak branches and stems.  
Provide routine care in the form of water, fertilizer (in some cases), and mulch.  
Remove hazardous trees immediately.

### **LIABILITY OF FALLING TREES**

A common misconception is that insurance coverage determines liability. According to experts, *Tree Law* is more likely to be found in case law made by the courts. Individual cases on falling trees focus on such factors as 1) whether the tree was in such poor condition that it gave the owner some notice of a potential for causing damage/injury, or 2) whether the owner was given some notice that damage/injury could have been foreseen. The fundamental issue in such cases is generally focused on determining whether or not negligence is involved. Negligence is doing something that a person of ordinary prudence would not do, or failure to do something that a person of ordinary prudence would do under similar circumstances.

## CHEA BOARD MEMBERS

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