



Dear Neighbors,

I start with a joyous Happy New Year to all of you. I do not mind that the page has turned on 2022 and look forward to a happy, productive and safe 2023.

SAFETY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

My main topic is to talk to you about ways to improve safety in the neighborhood. We have been and remain a quiet corner of the Olympic Division but we are certainly not immune to crime; there have been burglaries, thefts from and of cars, including catalytic converters, porch pirates and more. I appreciate that the victims of these crimes often let me know what has happened to them and I fully sympathize with their sense of outrage, feelings of vulnerability and loss.

What can be done? Of course, call our Police. If the crime is in progress or there is an emergency, call 911. Then file a report. Use <https://www.lapdonline.org/file-a-police-report/> for those that can be filed on line. Others may require a call to (877) ASK-LAPD. I realize that it is sometimes difficult to get through to an officer, but do it. Posting on Next Door or other social media may alert your neighbors and allow you to vent your anguish but it does not inform the police. Officers and patrol cars are deployed based on the best estimates of where they will be most effective, to the ‘hot spots’ if you will. The smaller number of incidents in our area means we are already not swarming with patrols; omitting to report moves us in the wrong direction.

When the Police have been called, we expect a response that I acknowledge may not be particularly quick. I’d like to review some of the affecting factors. Obviously, responses are not scheduled in the order received: the highest priority is assigned to situations in progress or immediate danger – the 911 calls. For stable situations, the police will come, but not necessarily right away. It also helps to inform our Senior Lead Officer who is responsible for our area. That’s Joe Pelayo, at (213) 793-0709 or 31762@lapd.online. He will respond when he is on duty.

Other factors affect response. The number of officers is low, about 600 less than authorized (9700). Somewhere – usually somewhere else thankfully – there will soon be another of the extreme events that taint, perhaps unfairly, all police departments. The high school seniors who should form the next classes of recruits have lived their entire lives in at atmosphere of police distrust: is it a wonder that recruiting is difficult?

I note that several of our newly elected City Council members, including Mr. Soto-Martinez, ran on a promise to “Defund The Police.” If such legislation passes, count on worsening response.

I also note that everything I have said so far is “after the fact;” those of us with rural roots call it “locking the barn door after the horse has fled.”

WORKING TOGETHER

So the question is: **WHAT CAN WE DO?** The best answer is for everyone to come out and work

with their neighbors to “harden the target.” There are no guarantees but working together to make crimes less successful, more difficult, and more likely to lead to arrests will help.

Neighborhood Watch is one of the potentially more powerful tools we can use. I’ve heard some Watches have members who patrol their neighborhoods evenings. Even those of us who drive around a few blocks of the neighborhood as we come home from work makes a difference. Assistance and training to set-up and run a Neighborhood Watch is available. There is more to it than posting signs and occasionally looking out your window: knowing your neighbors and what is normal at the houses around you is a big plus.

I suggest letting your neighbors know if you will be away for a few days: they will pick up deliveries and dropped flyers, put one of their trash barrels in front or take them in after pick up, park a car in your driveway: that is, make the house look actively occupied. Asking a neighbor to take in packages delivered when you’re at work may thwart the porch pirates. House alarms are no good if they are not set! Even a short trip may be enough opportunity for someone.

And if you see something that doesn’t look right, call 911. Calling your neighbor is good, but if they are on a plane over Iowa or something, they won’t get the message until much too late. Say firmly that you suspect a burglary in progress; the operator will transfer you to the front desk of our Division if no crime is occurring. People following the package delivery or going from house to house may be actively looking for an opportunity to commit a crime. Call it in; if you’re wrong, an apology is better than a burglary.

Our cars are vulnerable parked on the streets, as many of us have found to our sorrow. We can learn which belong to our neighbors and note those that do not belong. We can look for people looking inside as they move from car to car. That merits a 911 call. There are Tik-tock videos on how to steal some models – older Kia and Hyundai among others – so make it harder. A “Club” type steering lock makes it clear that stealing the car will require more than opening the door and hot-wiring the ignition with a USB stick. Especially for cars that are high off the ground, a bit of extra welding will secure the catalytic converters, potentially saving you \$1000. Recognize that there is no proportionality in crime: a \$250 window broken to steal \$2 worth of meter change or a bag of old clothes? It happens all the time. Leave nothing visible in the car, make sure it is locked and the alarm is set.

I recognize that this stuff requires time, effort and commitment but it makes us a stronger, more vibrant and safer community. I hope everyone commits to help.

SHORT TAKES

Some of our residents have moved away and their houses are occupied by new neighbors. They’re not on the email list so if you could print off a copy of this letter and give it to them, it will help. Thank you.

In 2020, I visited each residence in our neighborhood, had the chance to meet and speak with you, collected the \$20 dues (more than 80% contributed) and information. I hope to do it again this spring. We need to revitalize our Board and hold elections; I’d appreciate your help.

I see construction fences at 215 S Wilton Pl (the 1907 Churchill house, protected under the Mills Act), but don’t know if remediation is proceeding. No news about the demolished house at 250 N Wilton.

Issues that could use a couple of residents to work on.

1. Heavy vehicles using Wilton Pl. West Traffic's interest in greater enforcement is low but can be stimulated; contact with the companies helps.
2. Lighting on N. Wilton Pl. A Lighting District needs to be created, support developed among the residents and the City chivied into doing it.
3. Cut-through traffic (I prefer 'rat run') on Wilton Dr. No one has yet been injured by the careless, speeding drivers who try to beat the light at 2nd but we need a plan to control it.
4. If you missed Brian Curran's column in the January *Larchmont Chronicle* on the need to develop protective covenants for Ridgewood Place, I posted it on the RWNA web site (www.ridgewoodwilton.com). We need people working on a plan.

Our Olympic L.A.P.D. Division is sponsoring a neighborhood clean-up event this Saturday in parts of Korea-town. It's a great way to improve life in the City, meet other committed people and help strengthen our community. Begins at 10:00 am at 540 S Normandie. See you there!

The hour-long programs of free music offered at the Art Museum under the name *Sundays Live* has moved to St. James church (Wilshire at St. Andrews) and renamed as *Great Music at St. James*. Still free, 6:00 pm Sundays. Programs and performers at <https://stjla.org/> If I have missed something, let me know and we will help you put together a group to work on it.

Thanks for reading. Let me know how you react to my suggestions and how you will work with all of us to make this the community we want it to be.

Sincerely,

Bob