



# Olde Vineyard Homeowners' Association, Inc.

13 AUG 2010

## Information Bulletin

The following news article from the July 22, 2010 Clinton News highlights the need to secure your personal yard equipment to prevent theft. The article, titled "Keep Yard Valuables Locked Away, Out of Sight," written by Ruth Ingram, is reproduced below:

If your Weed Eater is stolen from the yard or chain saw lifted from the carport, you're going to see red. Such neighborhood crimes stick in the craws of Clinton police Sgt. Steve Menotti and his coworkers. That's because the thieves should never have had the chance to grab and run.

"Knowing that they (homeowners) know better, it's frustrating," said Menotti, who frequently patrols city neighborhoods. "It's especially frustrating when we get there," he said of when officers arrive at a crime victim's home. "The anger that they have with their stuff being stolen is projected on us." Summer is the season when police see a rise in what Chief Don Byington calls "crimes of opportunity." In short, homeowners sometimes leave tools, lawn equipment, fishing gear and other summer staples in their yards or in an unlocked garage or open carport, giving thieves ample opportunity to take them. "People make themselves an easy target," Byington said. "Thieves target things they can load up quickly in the back of a truck."

Some thieves act on the spur of the moment. They may not plan to take your belongings, but see an easy opportunity while driving by, Menotti said. "The quickest theft is the best," Menotti said of thieves' mentality. "People are getting out and doing their early Saturday morning mowing. They may roll their mower into their garage and go get some water to drink, and come back outside and their mower is missing." Lawn mowers, he said, "are a big commodity now. People are stealing them and starting their own lawn businesses. It won't take 30 seconds to grab someone's push mower out of a carport and put it in a truck."

Former Clinton Park North Homeowners Association president Bill Barnett said he's lucky. He's never been the victim of such property crimes. "I'm guilty of leaving stuff out. I've left my garage door open," said Barnett, Clinton's Ward 3 alderman. "I've had some neighbors, though, who had stuff that vanished." He serves as treasurer of the homeowners' association and said that the association occasionally invites a police officer to speak about safeguarding their property. "He let us know what we need to watch for, and what we need to do," Barnett said. Law officers say that homeowners can easily make it tougher for their property to be picked off. "One of the advantages we have in Clinton is that our citizens call the police when they see something suspicious, or a suspicious vehicle," Byington said. "That's a big deterrent. But you have others who work and just aren't there to watch." What's best, Menotti said, is to always lock away valuables, especially those that can be seen from the street. If four-wheelers, watercraft and boats are connected to a trailer hitch with a good locking mechanism, he said, thieves likely will think twice about taking the time to get through the lock.

"A lot of people just don't have storage for their equipment, but if they can at least disguise it or hide it, it will help," Menotti said. "It will make it uncomfortable for a thief who does not want to walk through your yard or through a neighbor's yard." He also cautions fishermen about leaving equipment in their boats after a long day on the lake. "They might not steal your boat, but they can reach in and grab what you've got in it," Menotti said. Small items that are stolen - tools, leaf blowers and such - likely will never be recovered, Menotti said. He suggests recording serial numbers or vehicle identification numbers on mowers, all-terrain vehicles and other large equipment that must be kept outdoors. "It helps immensely if the items are pawned," he said. "A lot of stuff, like fishing equipment, is really hard to ID unless there's some type etching or mark on it." Menotti warns that the more experienced thieves "who creep around at night" will take more time than an inexperienced thief. "The common thief will be hard to deter, even if you lock it up," he said.



## Other issues being discussed by your neighbors:

A City of Clinton ordinance prohibits using the city streets for primary parking. The Board would like to remind all Homeowners that repeated violations will result in those vehicles receiving a citation by the police. Parking on the street is a safety factor as well as being unsightly. Should there be a fire or other incident in a neighborhood, cars parked on the street could be an impediment to public safety. Please respect your neighbors and refrain from parking on the street at night. The police do conduct routine checks on the neighborhood and will ticket illegally parked vehicles.

While most residents keep their yards very nicely mowed and trimmed, (and this is one of the things which makes our neighborhood beautiful), a few residents routinely allow their grass to grow over sidewalks and curbs. The subdivision covenants require grass to be cut, and a City of Clinton ordinance requires maintaining grass at a height that is similar to the lawns in the adjacent area and neighborhood. The city will issue citations for excessive grass growth. Again, please respect your neighbors and neighborhood. Help keep Olde Vineyard the nicest place to live in Clinton.

## National Night out scheduled for 14 Sept 2010

On a lighter note, the City of Clinton will celebrate National Neighborhood Night Out on September 14, 2010 to emphasize crime prevention. Your Olde Vineyard Homeowners Association will again host a gathering and will invite city officials to stop by for a visit. We will announce the time and place in the next few weeks. We hope you will be able to join your neighbors in this annual get-acquainted opportunity.

Thanks,

Jerry Ellis  
President, Home Owner's Association