

DeKalb County Police

Field Operation Division - District I
1960 W. Exchange Place, Tucker, Georgia 30084



Community Meeting Announcement

Wednesday, August 5, 2009

6:30 p.m.

Location will be announced via e-mail on Monday, August 3, 2009

Residents of Briarcliff Road and Henderson Mill Road area are invited to attend an upcoming Community Meeting.

This Community Meeting has been organized to address the recent Home Invasion incident that occurred on Briarcliff Road.

We are inviting those who reside in the area to attend this meeting to obtain information directly from the DeKalb County Police Department. We are asking that questions are limited to the aforementioned incident. DeKalb Police representatives are scheduled to attend to address your concerns.

Re-cap of police community meeting 8/5-Home Invasion -Briarcliff 7/27 by Jannean Bello, Empire Square neighborhood

Dear neighbors,

Tonight I attended a community meeting at Shallowford Presby. Church called by Dekalb County Police – Center Precinct (our precinct). This was an informational meeting in response to the recent home invasion - 4400 block of Briarcliff Rd. at 1:30 pm on July 27. Policemen and detectives from both Center and North precincts were present and some spoke along with Major Higgins of Center precinct, Janean Hightower, Neighborhood Watch coordinator, and the detective investigating the invasion. Also Dekalb commissioner, Jeff Rader and Congressman Kevin Levitas were present. The homeowner victim - elderly man- was present as well.

The homeowner answered knock at his door, black male - glasses and goatee standing at his door, very neatly dressed, khaki pants, tucked in white tee shirt, white shoes, brown fedora hat, 35-40 yrs. old, heavysset, 6'2" carrying either a large white envelope or paperwork. There was just small talk and the homeowner at some point just had a "gut" feeling all was not quite right...(note: police say...TRUST YOUR GUT reaction!). The man, who appears to have simply

walked up to the door, forced his way past the elderly homeowner, stole some personal effects and took keys to homeowner's 1979 Lincoln. Note: car was recovered in a location farther from this invasion, not in our area at all, fingerprints were taken. Perpetrator has not been found.

Police are calling this a random act of violence - one individual involved.

Series of questions from audience - Police responses: they come when called, prioritizing as needed depending on public endangerment. They arrest but are very frustrated by a judicial system which releases criminals back to the streets. Police cars are sent from closest area, cars are not parked at precinct office unless it is end/beginning of shift...officers are on the road, answering calls as they come via 911 dispatch center. Closest available car takes the call. **Notice everything**...who is walking by, what car is cruising, circling, lingering, get descriptions, license plate #'s. This elderly man had a very clear, detailed description to give to police.

What I learned in particular:

- police noted heavy bushes/ trees near the doors of this man's home, easy to hide/linger and not be seen by passersby/neighbors.
- Call 911
- Much police time is taken by answering home alarm systems which are false alarms 99.7 % of the time.
- If you do have an alarm company, local monitoring is key and hardwired alarms with backup batteries are best.
- If you are home alone, do **not** ignore bell or knock - be sure whoever stands outside your door knows someone is home ...play recorded fierce dog barks, deep male voices calling out, or if you are female, call out "Frank, are you getting the door"?! , turn a light switch on/ off. When you are gone in the daytime, leave a radio/TV playing loudly enough to be heard. If criminal thinks no one is home, **that** is when a door is bashed in quickly and entered...they do not normally want anyone to be home! Some of these suggestions sound sort of amusing, but police are dead serious about all of this.
- Do not open the door to strangers,rather talk thru the door or window if you must, and it does not hurt to have a phone in your hand that is seen.
- When outside, carry your cell phone or home portable phoneif busy and involved or work is noisy, lock your doors and put the house key in pocket.

- I am glad that for the most part, our houses face one another, that we can often see one another's driveways, curbs, backyards and that we have an actual neighborhood rather than a lined up homes facing a busy road as you see on Briarcliff Rd.
- Trust your intuition.