

WEST END NEIGHBORS in the NEWS

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Christina Daly/Herald

AFTER A STRING OF HOME BURGLARIES in the West End, some residents have expressed interest in starting a Neighborhood Watch program.

Residents interested in Neighborhood Watch

After Juan Tobo of Farmingdale was arrested and charged with burglarizing three West End homes last month, one neighbor at the Oct. 27 West End Neighbors Civic Association meeting on suggested forming a Neighborhood Watch program.

"On many of the blocks we don't even know who our neighbors are anymore," she said. "There's been a lot of movement."

For Lt. Bruce Meyer of the Long Beach Police Department, this was the first time he had heard someone express interest in the community-based program, in which neighbors organize and have block captains who relay information on suspicious activities or crimes to police. The city's Neighborhood Watch program was cancelled back in the 1980s dues to lack of state funding, he said.

"Residents were organized and instructed on what suspicious activities to report to the police, methods of making their home more secure and their streets safer," Meyer said of the program that was started during a crime-ridden time in Long Beach's history.

Meyer cited stricter laws, computer track-

ing of crimes, improved investigative techniques, active community policing and changing demographics as reasons why the department hasn't brought back the program.

Meyer said that he doesn't know if there is a need to have a structured program like a Neighborhood Watch, but said police are ready to assist any neighborhood group that would like to organize a block association.

"I think the people feel comfortable reaching out to the police department, reaching out directly to the officer that has the beat," Meyer said. "I think we have good communication with the public."

Long Beach residents interested in starting a Neighborhood Watch program can contact the LBPD's Community Resource Unit at 431-1800.

Comments about this story? JKellard@liherald.com or (516) 569-4000 ext. 213.

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November 5, 2009 – LONG BEACH HERALD

Man charged in West End burglaries

By ARIELLA MONTI

The arrest of a man for driving while intoxicated led Long Beach police to connect the suspect with a string of burglaries in the West End. Juan Tobo, 36, of Farmingdale, was being investigated as a suspect in the burglaries, which took place between Oct. 14 and Oct. 24, when detectives discovered that he had been arrested on Oct. 24 by Nassau County police for drunken driving, Lt. Bruce Meyer explained.

Tobo was in possession of stolen jewelry when he was arrested by county police. He was rearrested by Long Beach police and charged with burglary on Oct. 24.

"We have had no burglaries reported in the West End, in the West Holm area or in Long Beach, for that matter, since his incarceration," said Detective Jim Canner, who added that the police department's Street Crime Unit will continue to patrol the area.

According to Meyer, Tobo attempted to rob one home on West Broadway and burglarized three on Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Arizona avenues, stealing jewelry and laptop computers. Canner explained that Tobo would enter a house by cutting a window screen and then exit through a door or window. Three of the four incidents took place in the middle of the night, and the other occurred during the day.

Canner reported the arrest at the Oct. 26 West End Civic Association meeting and one attendee said that many of her neighbors expressed an interest in starting a Neighborhood Watch program.

"There was a very active program years ago," Canner told the resident. "I'll try to find out how we can get it going again." He also said that the department would start a database of homes that are vacant during the winter months and report that information to neighborhood police officers.

Civic-minded resolutions

Community groups have goals for 2010

By ARIELLA MONTI

Long Beach residents aren't just making New Year's resolutions to lose weight or earn more money in 2010. The city is rich with active civic associations, new and old, all of which have goals they want to accomplish in the coming year.

West End Neighbors Civic Association

One of the most vocal and long-standing civic associations, West End Neighbors wants to foster a stronger working relationship with the City of Long Beach and its departments, said association Secretary Karen McInnis.

The West End has more than 2,200 households and the group looks to increase membership, as well as meeting attendance, and give residents more opportunities to become involved in the organization.

"Any member that has paid their 2009 dues is eligible to join a committee," McInnis said.

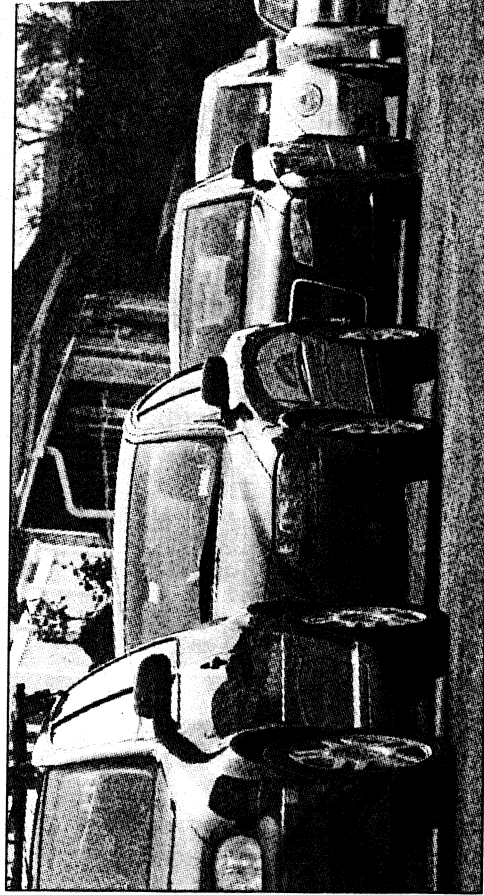
The group is looking to start a Neighborhood Watch program this year, and have been meeting with Richard DePalma of the Long Beach Police Department to get the watch started.

The program involves a block captain who acts as a liaison between the association and the neighborhood, in an effort to look out for any suspicious activities or crimes, in an effort to make their streets safer.

"We'd like to continue to open up dialog with

our block captains to see how we can better assist our neighbors," McInnis said.

The association also plans to start a fundraising committee and update its bylaws.



Claudio Papapietro/t

THE WEST END CIVIC ASSOCIATION is working with the Long Beach Police Department to start a Neighborhood Watch program in an effort to make their streets safer.