

Safety/Security – April 2023

Residents/Owners: Please share with renters and contractors – we all live in this community.

Bottom Line Up Front:

- Respect Stop/Yield Signs
- Parking Lot Charges Begin April 1
- CAC – personal security measures – property crimes hitting closer to home
- VBCCO – BoD elections March 23.

Respect Stop/Yield Signs: I read this morning that a local 2-year-old lost their life after being run over by a driver failing to stop and yield to pedestrians while making a right turn on red. Croatan is at high risk for this type of incident – we have few sidewalks, children play in streets, we have many bicyclists, dog walkers, skateboarders, and pedestrians. I have received many reports of, and have personally observed, this happening. Speedy cornering or blown stop signs have also been observed at Croatan and Christine into Bushnell, Ft. Raleigh and Bushnell, along Virginia Dare intersections with Secotan, Surfside, Twilight, and Vanderbilt, at Vanderbilt and Twilight, and along Vanderbilt and South Atlantic. Holy Formula One Batman – that’s everywhere! Please ratchet the speed back a notch. **We love our children.** I have asked our security patrol officers to watch for such aggressive driving.

Croatan Parking Lot: Charges for parking in the Croatan lot (south end of Vanderbilt Ave) began April 1. Those parking after 10:00 AM will incur a \$3 VB-Resident (\$7 non-VB resident) fee. There is no reentry provision, so if you leave and return, you will be charged again.

I spoke with Parking Management regarding the newly installed gates in the Croatan parking lot. The “Party Line” is that the city intends to employ an attendant-free enterprise resource model IT system to record (via camera) cars entering and leaving the lot. Payment will be via a cellphone-based parking application, kiosk, or other account. Resident rates will be determined through the address of the credit/debit card used to secure the account. A recent visit to the lot shows that cameras have been put into place and a number of sign posts have been erected along the entry/exit corridor. What signs will reflect is a guess, but I expect they will say “No Parking Any Time.”

On a ridiculous note, I wrote to VB311 to get the rusted, faded, and askew “VB Parking” sign at the lot replaced and received a notification within 72 hours that the work order had been completed. Their solution was to remove the sign. I am waiting to see if a new sign is mounted.

Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC) Lots of physical and personal security information was promulgated at the March 14 CAC meeting. Here are the highlights:

- There has been a cluster of larcenies from vehicles as well as vehicle thefts in the North Birdneck area, between Barbaton and Linkhorn Bay apartments, including Marabou Court. It can’t be said enough – lock your vehicles and take valuables (**especially firearms**) inside with you.

- Outgoing mail has been reported stolen from home mailboxes recently in the Rudee Heights, Cavalier, Bay Colony, and North End neighborhoods. Thieves are “washing” checks with acetone and rewriting them payable to themselves or a co-conspirator for large amounts (e.g., thousands). Thieves are also ordering new checks with the stolen account numbers and having them sent to new addresses (usually, post office boxes).
 - If you place outgoing mail in your mailbox, do not to use the notification flag as that telegraphs the presence of mail to thieves. A safer alternative is to take outgoing mail into the post office. **DO NOT** use the large blue drop boxes outside the Post Office either because those have also been broken into as well (most recently at the Seapines Post Office at 320 33rd Street).
 - Checks written in ballpoint ink are susceptible to “washing.” If you do write checks, recommend using **Uniball Gel Pens** (often carrying a “fraud prevention” label), as the ink permeates the paper.
- Bike theft is on the rise and thieves are using both bolt cutters and hack saws to defeat locks. No easy solution here – just keep an eye on your ride.
- Teams of highly skilled pickpockets have been working the Hilltop area. A common tactic is for one to distract the target while the other rifles a purse or picks a pocket. Do not leave purses unattended in shopping carts – they have been stolen or rifled without the victim being any wiser.
 - Another tactic is for one perpetrator to appear to pick something up from the ground (possibly as the victim in loading packages into his/her car) and ask if it belongs to the intended victim and while distracted, a cohort steals executes the theft. If happens quickly! Always be on guard.
 - If you are good-hearted and want to help a panhandler (not advisable), keep a small bill separate from a wallet or purse. Letting them see a stash of cash paints you as a target. Don’t be so naïve as to think that they’re not passing your vehicle information by phone to compatriots plying nearby parking lots.
- As mentioned in previous notes, social media comments and casually spoken threats to/about schools and school officials are on the rise nation-wide. Schools, police, and prosecutors can no longer accept “I was just joking,” as an excuse. Students are being charged and expelled. Parents should emphasize to their children that “idle chatter” can have life-altering consequences.

The April CAC meeting will be held on **Wednesday April 12 at 7:00 PM** in the conference room of the VB Volunteer Rescue Squad (Building #14) at 720 Virginia Beach Blvd (aka: 17th Street) (east (butterfly garden) side of building). All are welcome.

Virginia Beach Council of Civic Organizations (VBCCO): An election to reconstitute the Board of Directors was conducted on March 23. The newly elected President is Rick Boyles (Thalia Civic League). Corresponding Secretary is Buddy Wall (Princess Anne Plaza Civic League). Other civic leagues represented in the BoD ranks include Cypress Point, Resort Beach, Pembroke Meadows, Witchduck, Ocean Park, and Lake Smith Terrace. The website (www.vbcco.org) is still being re-established but there is a “Contact Us” portal. I am still awaiting word of the next meeting date and location

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