

## EARA Crime summary Jan 2014

You probably know that there has been a long-term decline in homicide and violent crime over the past 20-25 years. The rate of decrease has slowed down in the last few years. Commentators have correlated it to many things, including the removal of lead from gasoline and paint (even moderate childhood lead exposure decreases IQ and reading scores) but the reality is that many factors contribute to crime rates. A few cities, such as Oakland, have more homicides (decreased in 2013 but still very high). LA County and the San Gabriel Valley continue to report lower crime rates even with high unemployment. Almost all crimes have declined over the past five years, although there is month-to-month variation. Pasadena and Altadena have more violent crimes per capita than Glendale or South Pasadena. If you go to the Pasadena Police Department web site, <http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/police/> you see crime statistics/resources on the right hand side. If you click on this and then on crime statistics, you can get monthly crime figures going back to 2004. Those figures are displayed by service area and council district (we are part of service area 2 and council district 1). Over the years, council district 3 has the most crime; the number of total crimes per month in council district 1 has been decreasing. It was 50-60 most months before 2009, now it is often in the 30s, although it fluctuates and there may be a few crimes not included.

If you open the preliminary monthly statistical report for December 2013, 12- Dec 2013 and go to page 4, you see a graph of the annual totals of various crimes. You will see that theft is the largest category, followed by vehicle burglary and residential burglary. Our EARA area has had 10 residential and 18 vehicle burglaries in the last six months. In recent years, we have averaged 20-25 residential burglaries and 30-40 vehicle burglaries each year. You can reconstruct that data from Crimemapping.com. Crimemapping has several extra features, such as trend analysis and detailed reports. If you use them, you see that January had several commercial burglaries along North Fair Oaks and vehicle break-ins along North Arroyo Blvd and Rose Bowl Drive and you can also see a persistent trend for more crimes on Saturdays. However, 80% of residential burglaries come during the work week when people are away at work or in many cases when a person rushes off on a “quick errand” and isn’t careful about locking up. Almost twice as many crimes occur on Saturday as on Sunday. You may have heard or about a “dog door burglary” in December on North Madison Ave, not in our neighborhood, where thieves entered through a dog door and stole many things, including an urn of ashes. Those thieves were arrested.

Crimemapping draws a circle around a specific address; you can see that there are many more crimes east of Lincoln than in our EARA neighborhood. With some effort, one can construct a table like this.

| EARA Area Crimes     | 7/25/2013- | 1/24/2014 |   |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|---|
| Theft/larceny        | 21         | Assault   | 7 |
| Residential burglary | 10         | Robbery   | 4 |
| Vehicle Break-in     | 18         | Car Theft | 2 |
| Vandalism            | 11         |           |   |

There is still too much crime; there is too much speeding at night along North Arroyo Blvd. We can protect ourselves and reduce our risk of becoming crime victims.

Most residential burglars enter through windows or a back door. Often people have secured only the front of the house. Locked gates or other barriers to backyard access are very helpful- yes, thieves can climb over them, but they generally move on to another target. Vehicle break ins generally fall into two categories- someone leaves a **visible target** in the car, such as a brief case, computer, etc or they have driven to a site such as the Arroyo where the driver put cell phone, briefcase, bags of purchases, etc into the trunk. When they return the trunk has been forced open. **People are watching you**- don't put something into the trunk and then walk away. If you must hide purchases or valuables in the trunk, do so before stopping at your final destination. **Always lock your home**, even if you will be back in ten minutes. Turn on your alarm system if you have one. We continue to have some burglaries of unlocked homes. Don't let strangers into your house.

Know your neighbors and their general schedule. Tell them when you will be out of town. You can also tell the police department when you are away for an extended period. Call the police if something unusual is happening across the street. Walking and especially walking with your dog is a good thing. Many burglaries are not carefully planned- if thieves see lots of sidewalk traffic, they generally go to another area. They rarely attempt to enter a house if they hear a dog barking.

We can have a better neighborhood and better life if we work together. Welcome new neighbors. You can help them and vice versa, not only in preventing break-ins, but also when an earthquake or other disaster comes. Have food and water stored for your family and all pets. The police department is here to help us, let them and the EARA know about persistent problems.

Bob Snodgrass, EARA