

HTML Preview



The Sierra at Jack London Square Owners Association

Read the articles below to find out what is happening around our building!

9/20/2007

Dear *Recipient Name*,

This newsletter will be distributed at least quarterly to all owners who have given management an active email address.

Garage Break-Ins

Over the past couple of months, there have been several incidents where resident vehicles have been either broken into or in one case stolen. About a month ago one Sierra resident had their vehicle stolen which was parked in front of our building along 3rd street. Most recently, this has happened to vehicles parked outside of the building along 3rd and 4th streets, but there have also been a string of break-ins the parking garage as well. A couple of months ago at least 9 storage lockers were broken into. At least 3 owners of motorcycles who keep them in the garage have reported that someone has tried to steal parts off of or completely steal their motor bikes. In the past year, we have also had reports of driver side windows and windshields broken, with stereos and clothing taken from the vehicle. Several owners have also reported that their locked bicycles have also been taken from the garage

The frequency with which these incidents are occurring seem to have increased as of the past few months. The Sierra Owners' Association has contacted the police on several occasions. We encourage all owners who have items broken into or stolen to contact the Oakland Police Department directly. Their non-emergency number is (510) 777-3333.

Please be aware that while there is a guard on the premises 24 hours a day, the property is not 100% secure. The guards cannot control if another resident or guests of residents let others through the various pedestrian or vehicle entrances either intentionally or unintentionally. Please be on the look out those you see entering the building that do not look familiar or may look lost. If you have a question on someone that entered the building behind you without using a garage door opener or fob key, please report it to the front desk.

Steps that the association has taken since to help reduce these incidents since they first occurred include:

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Elevators Tiled

The Association has replaced the carpeting in the two elevators on the north side of the building with tile. The carpeting in recent months has absorbed taken a large amount of wear and tear and needed to be replaced. By replacing the carpeting with tile this will improve the aesthetics as well as make it much easier for the janitorial crew to clean and maintain. [top](#)

Owner Caused Damage/ Common Area Storage

Several areas around the building have been victim to owner caused damage. If all residents can keep the following things in mind, this will help to cut down on association maintenance costs:

1. If you own a pet, please clean up after it. Besides

1. Temporarily hiring an additional security guard 7 days/week during the hours of 10pm-6am whose main responsibility will be to monitor the 3 garage levels.
2. Shortening the length of time the vehicle entrance gates are open. (Once they are fully open they now start to close after 5 seconds.)
3. Neighborhood Watch program. The first meeting is set for September 25 at 7pm in the lobby. The meeting will be facilitated by Brenda Ivy the Oakland Police Department Neighborhood Watch coordinator.

Additional Items that the Association is looking into include:

1. Adding additional and/or brighter lighting in some of the darker areas of the garage.
2. Changing the front desk's responsibilities during the evening/early morning hours (10am-6pm) to be primarily on patrol around the building.
3. Reactivating fob readers in the parking garage leading to the lobby areas.
4. Adding video camera signage around the building.
5. Updating/adding video cameras.

In addition to what's been mentioned above, there are specific steps that the residents of The Sierra can take (yes, one person can make a difference) to help reduce the frequency of these incidents. Some are very simple steps and others take more time and effort but are vitally important. Even though there is a cleaning crew and 24-hour front desk staff, they cannot possibly be everywhere at every moment.

First and foremost, as residents you must make a conscious effort to be involved. Most people lead busy lives but this is your home and your neighborhood. The more residents that get involved, the more likely we are to send a message to both the police department and to would-be criminals, that we will not allow this to happen in our neighborhood. Here are specific things you can do to help make your building and your neighborhood safer.

Daily Awareness:

1. Do not allow anyone into the building that you do not know. While this may sound difficult, it can be easier than you think. If you are approaching the security door on the sidewalk to enter (or exit) the building and there is someone you do not know approaching or standing near the door, you can continue to walk and go to another door. This way you're not letting them in or confronting them.
2. If you are approaching a garage door to enter the garage in your car, and you see someone you don't know standing near the door, go around the block and come

being a requirement of the Association's CC&R, this is also just common courtesy to your fellow neighbors. On more than one occasion, urine has been found in the 3rd level courtyards, elevators, and lobby areas. Also, dog feces has been found in the tree planters and sidewalks surrounding our building. Please help keep our building looking and smelling it's best by cleaning up after your pets.

2. You may have noticed that the elevator sign holders have been removed from the elevators. This is because they were continually being damaged by an owner in our building and our maintenance crew could not keep up with constantly repairing and replacing the parts that were being torn off. We have also seen graffiti in the media room bathroom and a couple of the garbage shoot rooms. Again, please help keep the Sierra looking nice and not add unnecessary costs to the association by damaging your own property.
3. Cardboard is commonly found in the trash shoots. When cardboard boxes are shoved down the shoots, they expand on their way down and often lodge themselves in the middle of the shoot. Not only does this block the shoot for owners who try to use the shoot

back. If they are still there, pull up to the gate without opening it and wait a moment for them to go away. If they continue to stand there, enter the building and be sure to wait for the door to close behind you before letting the door out of site in your rearview mirror. If they come in behind you, do not get out of your car. Pull back out and call the front desk guard or the police non-emergency number (510) 777-3333.

3. Every time you pull into or out of the garage, especially at night, you should watch the door close behind you before you pull away from it.
4. If you haven't already, it's a good idea to program The Sierra front desk number into your mobile phone. That number is 510-285-3515.
5. If anyone calls you from the front door and you are not expecting them, do not buzz them in (not for newspapers or pizza or anything else). The front desk staff can handle that situation.
6. If you see or hear anyone or anything suspicious in or around the building, call or notify the front desk immediately, or call the police non-emergency number (510) 777-3333.
7. If you see small trash in or around the building, pick it up and throw it in a trash bin. If you see graffiti or large or messy trash that needs to be cleaned up, notify the front desk. The same applies to any homeless people or their possessions around the building. These situations need to be cleaned up as quickly as possible to help deter similar activity. Of course, it should go without saying, that you should pick up after your pet and not leave any trash or cigarettes laying around the building.
8. Do not leave valuables in your storage locker. Anything that is visible and appears to be valuable will only tempt a criminal to break in and take it.
9. If you have a particularly valuable bicycle, it may want to consider not storing it in the garage. Any bicycles that are stored in the garage should be securely locked.
10. If and when you do experience or witness a crime, it is extremely important that you immediately notify the police department by calling 911 if it is a situation requiring emergency response, or the number noted above for non-emergencies. The police department does track these calls and reports, and will allocate more energy to areas that are reporting more problems. As it has been said, "the squeaky wheel gets oiled first."

Community Involvement:

1. Come to the Neighborhood Watch group meeting here at The Sierra, on Tuesday, September 25 at 7:00pm. This will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about what we can do to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in our neighborhood. A representative from the Oakland

afterwards, it also traps the garbage smell in the shoot, which travels back up the shoot and out to each floor. In addition, it also takes the janitorial crew time to unclog the shoots and clean out the mess. The time lost here could be used cleaning other parts of the building that need more attention.

4. If you have a balcony, make sure you are keeping the drain in your balcony free of debris. Clogged drains lead to standing water, which is an excellent breeding ground for mosquitos. If you do have standing water on your balcony, please push it towards and down the drain, not off of the balcony where it will likely land on your downstairs neighbor!
5. Please remove any items that you are storing in the common area. This includes all areas of the garage, *including your parking stalls*, and the areas around the storage cages. Any items found stored in these areas are in violation of the association's CC&Rs and may be removed without warning.

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Eighth Floor Conference Room

The eighth floor conference room is now complete! The board of directors hired Ethan Allen to add some furniture, art work, and put together a decorated look for the room. We will be having a 'grand opening' on Thursday, October

Police Department will be here to discuss crime prevention techniques including home and personal security.

2. Attend the quarterly HOA Board meetings. Keeping in touch with your neighbors is the first step in taking a unified stand against crime. Near the beginning of each meeting is a Homeowner's Forum. This is an excellent opportunity to interact and share ideas with your neighbors and the Board.
3. Make time for the neighborhood meetings. The Jack London District Association (JLDA) hosts a bi-monthly Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council meeting. September's meeting will held Thursday, September 27, at the Buttercup Restaurant (229 Broadway), at 6:30pm. At this meeting you can learn how you can make a positive change in the community, meet your neighbors and hear from our Oakland Police Department community representatives and police officers. For more information, visit the JLDA website at: <http://www.jlda.org>.
4. Join a Committee. A clean building and neighborhood is less likely to attract the criminal element than a dirty one. The Cleaning and Janitorial Committee has focused on taking care of simple things like erasing graffiti quickly and picking up trash in and around the building perimeter. Many residents have noticed that it has really made a difference. Not only does it make for a more pleasant environment for the residents but it also helps discourage crime. While the janitorial crew is here seven days a week, there will always be things that they miss or that happen in between their shifts. To find out more or to join this committee or start another committee contact: Erik @ erik@sierrajacklondon.org.

While none of these suggestions are singularly guaranteed to stop crime in our building and neighborhood, if we all make an effort, it should help a great deal. If you have any other helpful ideas on how we can make our building and neighborhood safer, please attend a meeting, talk to one of the board members, or email Erik with your suggestions.

With the goal of trying to keep the assessments as low as possible while still maintaining a high standard at the Sierra, the Association is attempting to make the changes to the items that will most cost effective first. To the extent that each resident in the building can assist one another and work with the front desk staff when something suspicious is seen, that will help to further keep the association's costs down while improving the overall safety and security of the community.

Condominium Insurance [top](#)

If you haven't already purchased a condominium owners insurance policy, this might be the time look into it. There have been several incidents over the past year or two where owners unknowingly caused major water damage to neighboring units, by dishwashers, refrigerators, and sinks leaking. The

4 at 7pm to commeerate the opening of the room. Food and beverages (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) will be served. This conference room will be available to all residents similar to the business center above the front concierge desk. It will be based on a first-come, first served basis and is also available by reservation through the front desk. [top](#)

Towing Signs

About 2 months ago towing signs were placed at all of the garage exits and entrances, both on the exterior and interior of the buidling. The reason for this is that the state of California requires private property to post these signs at all entrances and exits prior to being able to tow vehilces from the property. The Association is responsible for towing vehilces anywhere other than a parking space. All parking spaces are assigned to individual owners so the assocition does not have the authority to tow vehilces from parking spaces. The individual owner would need to contact the towing company listed on the towing sign to have a vehilce towed from their space. Please be aware that if you do call the towing company, you will be responsible for signing for the tow. The front desk and owners association do not accept responsibility for any tows initiated by other owners. If you do choose to have another vehilce towed, please alert the front desk as the towed owner will likely seek them out to find out where their vehilce may have gone. Likewise, if you suspect that your vehicle may have been towed, please contact the towing company,

Association's insurance policy does not cover the loss of personal property, fixtures in the unit, loss of use, or personal liability. In addition, the association's insurance carries a \$10,000 deductible which is the responsibility of the unit owner making the claim. Lastly, if none of those are enough reason to get the insurance, it is also a requirement in the Association's CC&Rs (Article 11.3) that each owner shall maintain property insurance on their unit for the coverage mentioned above.

Late Fee Change [top](#)

At the Board of Directors meeting on August 28, 2007, the board approved a change to the late fee the association charges when assessments become delinquent. Assessment payments are due on the 1st of the month. In the past, the Association charged \$10 for payments not received after 30 days due.

- ***Starting with the billing that will go out at the end of September, the late fee will change to 10% after 30 days due.***

The reason for this change is that the association has seen a dramatic increase in the number of delinquent assessments since the beginning of the year. When the assessments are not paid on time, the association cannot pay its bills for utilities, vendors, and services. Rather than special assess all owners (including those that are paying on time), the difference for what is owed to the Association, the board is hoping that this increase in late fees will motivate those owners who are not paying on time.

Board of Directors Meetings Moved to Quarterly Basis [top](#)

At the Board of Directors meeting held on June 19th, 2007, the Board voted to hold the board meetings on a quarterly basis. This will start with the next meeting held on Tuesday, October 23, 2007. The Board feels that as the building has gotten older, there have been fewer items on the agenda and therefore less of a need to hold the board meetings on a monthly basis. The board always reserves the right hold meetings sooner than on a quarterly basis with four days notice to the homeowners should one need to be held sooner than quarterly. The meeting will continue to be held on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm in the lobby. The following dates have been scheduled for the next year:

- October 23, 2007 (Anticipated that the 2008 Budget will be discussed and approved.)
- January 22, 2008 (Annual election held immediately before the board meeting.)
- April 22, 2008
- July 22, 2008
- October 28, 2008 (Budget for 2009 discussed/approved.)

If you have any feedback on this or are intested helping or contributing to this eNewsletter, please contact Erik Olson at erik@sierrajacklondon.org

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