



# Paradise Valley Police Department **CRIME PREVENTION BULLETIN**

**February 2019**

*The Paradise Valley Police Department is providing this bulletin to keep residents informed on joint successes collaborating with our community.*

## **OUR MISSION:**

*Provide high-quality police services to our community, reduce crime and the fear of crime, and by working with all citizens, to preserve life, protect property, promote individual responsibility and encourage community involvement.*

## **Questions?**

**Steven McGhee**

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## **Hoot of an Alarm Call**

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Written by Trudy Thompson Rice (V67) - Paradise Valley Police Volunteer

Edited by Steven McGhee (#194) - Paradise Valley Police Officer

The Town of Paradise Valley homeowner got a message from his security monitoring company that there was motion inside his home. Not good. Nobody was supposed to be there and he was out of town. He called the Town's Police Department, the Dispatcher put out the call and officers quickly responded with their customary caution.

Two officers are always sent on each alarm call. Officer Plotnik was one of the officers that responded to this call. Her 16 years in law enforcement had taught her to be especially careful when approaching a call like this one. Her caution this day was well-founded, but

not for the reason you might think. The perpetrator was caught in the act—all 6 inches and all 7 ounces of his fine self. The little brown and gray cactus wren had come in through an open



fireplace flue, and he was almost as panicked as the vacationing homeowner. Officer Plotnik is a self-confessed animal lover, and she quickly took control of the situation. "The little bird was so scared, and he was causing such havoc with the security system as he flew around the house, trying to find a way out. We had to figure out how to help him without hurting him, so I found a lightweight towel and gently tossed it over him. It subdued him enough that we could gently remove him to the yard,

and he could fly free again," she said.

Another Town officer responded to a similar call involving an owl—a big owl—in a house. The motion detector had alerted the homeowner that there was a problem inside. "And there was—a big feathered problem that wasn't real happy about being in a house in the first place, much less having to listen to the shrill alarm that his frantic movement was setting off," the officer said.

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## Hoot of an Alarm Call

Officer Plotnik and her colleagues all have stories about false alarms— remind her to tell you about the Mother’s Day bouquet and balloon— but she is quick to point out the enormous benefit of properly used security systems to everyone’s safety.

The Town’s Alarm Analyst, Kim Stiteler, also agrees. “We encourage homeowners to get home security systems and use them,” she said. “A good system, used properly, makes your home and community safer.”

New technology like video doorbell systems have given homeowners the ability to self monitor their home’s security while they are away. The systems use cameras that are activated by motion, and when someone rings the doorbell, they provide homeowners a way to “answer” the door by speaking through the remote system, while not actually being at home through internet connections.

Kim said, “We’re seeing more and more of the home automation sys-

tems that allow homeowners to monitor their homes remotely. Another benefit of these systems is that they capture video of the activity that can be shared with law enforcement and neighbors immediately.”

Officer Plotnik shared these safety tips:

- ◇ Invest in a good system with video retention and learn to use it.
- ◇ Teach your family members, visitors and employees to use it properly.
- ◇ Make it a habit to use your system regularly to know it is functioning.
- ◇ Change all passwords regularly.
- ◇ Have an alarm technician visit yearly.
- ◇ Make it a routine to check all doors and windows at night, once everyone is in for the evening.
- ◇ Do you have a double door that opens out? Lock all its locks—“not just the one in the middle!” she said.
- ◇ Keep your garage door secured, as well as the door leading from the house to the garage.

- ◇ Post notices on your windows and in your yard that you have a security system. Update all old signage.
- ◇ Advise the Town’s Police Department when you are out of town with a Vacation Watch. The Police Department will check accessible doors and windows to your home when they are available while you are away.

And about that Mother’s Day bouquet and balloon: “When air conditioners come on, they blow balloons, and balloons dancing around or even moving ever so slightly will set off motion detectors,” said the officer. “If you have balloons, pets or even an owl in your house, you can still use your alarm. Just set it to the ‘stay’ mode. That activates everything but the motion detector, and your home is secure,” she said.



## Citizen Safety Forum

### Presentations:

Active Shooter Situations, Burglary Protection & More

### Keynote Speakers:

Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery &

Paradise Valley Police Chief Peter Wingert

Tuesday, March 19th at 5:30PM

Paradise Valley United Methodist Church

4455 E. Lincoln Dr. Paradise Valley, Arizona 85253

Reserve Your Spot Today:

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### Paradise Valley Police Station

6433 E Lincoln Dr.

Paradise Valley, Arizona 85253

Dispatch Center: (480)948-7410

Emergency Calls: 911



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