

Published July 6th, 2011

Squeaky Wheel Gets BART Crime Reports Published

By Cathy Tyson



Brian Waters Photo Cathy Tyson

Orinda resident Brian Waters must have the worst luck ever. For a fellow who estimates he parks in the BART parking lot, "maybe five times a year," he had all of his tires slashed on one occasion and months later his car was stolen. It was never recovered. He was concerned that crimes that occur on BART property aren't reported in the local print media. Through his diligence a system is now in place to publicly report BART crimes. "Mission accomplished," said Waters.

"Even though the BART station and parking lot fall under the jurisdiction of BART Police rather than Orinda Police, since the BART facilities fall within the boundaries of Orinda, and are utilized by many of our local citizens, from a public safety and awareness standpoint it is important for our citizens to be aware of criminal activities that occur there just as it is to be aware of criminal activities that occur in other areas of our community," said Waters. "If I hadn't twice been the victim of crimes at Orinda BART, I would have never thought about the lack of coverage of criminal activities at BART in our local news media."

After approximately two weeks of discussion with the City Manager, Orinda Police and BART police, crimes that occur on BART property will be included on the City's website, www.cityoforinda.com.

Calling the system "safe and reliable" BART Chief of Police Kenton Rainey said every day BART moves 350,000 people through four counties and 26 cities within the Bay Area. "Although we have police patrols and CCTV security cameras that monitor activity in and around our properties, the real strength in how we ensure public safety is through riders who utilize the system. We encourage all of our passengers to be our eyes and ears when they are traveling on our transit system in order to better ensure public safety."

Especially with regard to cars in the parking lot, Chief Rainey recommends not leaving any valuables in plain sight, calling this, "an attractive and easy target for a would-be criminal."

BART Crime Analyst Officer Ken Dam searched several categories and found, "Lafayette and Orinda BART did not have that many cases in the month of June 2011. It is a good thing."

A quick peek at the City of Orinda website lists crime statistics for May 2011 - four incidents of petty theft at the Orinda BART station. In June, Orinda had two unusual crimes in the parking lot. Catalytic converters were stolen from two Toyota 4-runners fifteen minutes apart - at 10:15 and 10:30 in the morning on June 14. The only item listed prior to press time at the Lafayette station shows miscellaneous items stolen from a 2002 Saturn at 6:00 p.m. on June 17.

Having just received this request, Lafayette Police Chief Mike Hubbard is looking into reporting BART crimes.

Reach the reporter at: cathy@lamorindaweekly.com

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA