



# Watch Works

Charles County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Troy Berry  
March 2015

## Tax Time "BEWARE"

Most paid tax return preparers provide honest and professional service, but there are some who engage in fraud and other illegal activities. Some promoters may charge unreasonable amounts for preparing legitimate returns that could have been prepared for free by the IRS or IRS sponsored Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Partners. In other situations, identity theft is involved. Taxpayers should be wary of any of the following:

- Fictitious claims for refunds or rebates based on excess or withheld Social Security benefits.
- Claims that Treasury Form 1080 can be used
- to transfer funds from the Social Security Administration to the IRS enabling a payout from the IRS.
- Unfamiliar for –profit tax services teaming up with local churches.
- Home-made flyers and brochures implying credits or refunds are available without proof of eligibility.
- Offers of free money with no documentation required.
- Promises of refunds for "Low Income-No Documents Tax Returns."
- Claims for the expired Economic Recovery

Credit Program or Recovery Rebate Credit.

- Advice on claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit based on exaggerated reports of self-employment income.

In some cases, non-existent Social Security refunds or rebates have been the bait used by the con artists. Promoters of these scams often prey upon low income individuals and the elderly.

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

## Dates to Remember

**March 8:** Daylight Saving Time begins

**March 17:** St. Patrick's Day

**March 20:** Spring begins

**March 29:** Palm Sunday



## Home Security

Your home is most vulnerable to burglars when it is unoccupied or inadequately secured. Take precautions to help protect your home and family.

- Use automatic timers to turn lights and music on.
- Install outdoor lights with motion detectors. Keep your home's exterior well lit to eliminate hiding places.
- Keep hedges trimmed to eliminate hiding places.
- Maintain your yard regularly.
- Stop mail and newspaper delivery when out of town.
- Keep garage doors closed and locked, even when at home.
- Never leave a message on your answering ma-

chine telling callers you are away.

To get a free home security survey, call the Charles County Sheriff's Office, Community Organizer and arrange a date and time. 301-932-3090 Suggestions will be made to make your home safer from burglars.



## Bullying Doesn't Hurt Anyone



Kids will be kids. Words don't hurt, it's not like they are being hit or anything. Have you ever heard any of these statements? Truth is, the pain and embarrassment of being bullied can cause:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Aggression
- Low self-esteem

Which could lead to Suicide.

Bullying can no longer be swept under the rug as a normal part of growing up. It can destroy young lives, not just those of the victims, but those of the bullies, too. It is an indicator of lack of respect by the person doing the bullying for his victim and can cause irreparable damage to a victim's self-esteem.

The child who bullies has problems, too. His or her behavior may result from

poverty; family violence; discrimination; sexual abuse; abuse of alcohol, drugs, and other substances; excessive discipline at home; media violence; and academic failure. So how do we interrupt the cycle of bullying? When introduced at an early age and continued throughout school, conflict management works. The use of conflict management over many years shows that children in a conflict can learn to view themselves as equals and have mutual respect.

Possible warning signs that your child is being bullied:

- Numerous lost belongings.
- Frequent injuries or damage to clothes or property.
- Spends time primarily with younger students

(may indicate a problem with peers).

- Avoids recess.
- Arrives to school late or just at the starting bell.
- Appears to be alone most of the time at school.
- Somatic complaints (i.e., headaches, stomach-aches, etc.).

It's time to stop the bullying. If it's your child that's doing the bullying, talk to them, show them what damage they can do to another person. Show them the consequences.

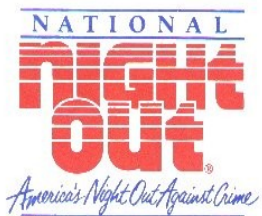
If your child is being bullied, talk to someone and work to get the bullying stopped. Get your child some help so that they don't become one of the statistics.

## National Night Out

I know it's early to talk about National Night Out but it's never too early to start planning your celebration. National Night Out is always the first Tuesday in August which will be August 4th 2015. Charles County has a large turnout of

neighborhoods for NNO. It is something we all believe in, "giving crime and criminals a going away party" and taking back our neighborhoods. So get outside on NNO and meet your neighbors. Have a conversation and some fun

together. Some neighborhoods have large celebrations and others have ice cream socials or a flashlight stroll around the neighborhood. Join in this year and enjoy your neighborhood. Make it a great place to live.





## A WORD FROM YOUR COMMUNITY ORGANIZER: Connie Gray 301-932-3080

March is finally here. Spring begins this month. Have you noticed people seem to be a little happier. They know that great weather and sunny days are ahead.

Most people take their vacations in the summer so it won't be long before they are hanging out at the beach. Soon backyard BBQ's and family gatherings

will take up your weekends. When you get out and start getting your yard ready for the spring, say hello to a new neighbor. It might be all you need to break the ice.



## Walking Is Great Exercise, But

The new year brings resolutions, and lots of promises to lose weight and get healthy. Walking is great exercise, gets you out of the house and is free. With new walking and bike trails, it's easier to find a place to walk.

There is no technique or tip or weapon to guarantee you won't be attacked. If you have been attacked, and you are reading this, you did the right thing. Whatever you did allowed you to survive. You Won. The bad guys have surprise on their side and even the best, martial arts expert can become a target.

- **Walk in high pedestrian traffic areas:** Bad guys don't want witnesses. Being in view of a well-traveled vehicular street is good, but having people on the path with you is even better.
- **Open Areas:** Paths lined with bushes and trees are pleasant for walking, but afford many hiding places for

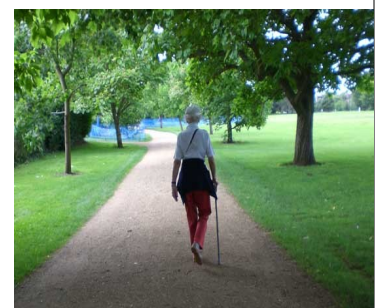
the bad guys and places they can take you to finish their crimes out of view.

- **Deterrents:** Strangers aren't out to attack YOU. It is nothing personal, they are just looking for a target of opportunity. Your goal, therefore, is to look like somebody who will be too much trouble to mess with. They also want to make you their victim without attracting attention from others.
- **Attitude:** Keep your head up and striding purposefully. Look aware of your surroundings and be aware of them. Headphones may give the impression that you are less aware.
- **Companions:** Walking with a friend or group reduces your chance of attack significantly.
- Walking with a dog: Even a little ankle-biter, will greatly reduce the

chance of attack. Obey all licensing, leash, and ordinances in the jurisdiction you are walking through.

- **Stick:** Why mess with somebody with a walking/hiking stick when there are lots of people without one?
- **Alarm:** A brightly colored personal body alarm can be a deterrent when visibly worn. Bad guys don't want to attract attention. A whistle is also a good signal device.
- **Pepper spray:** Carrying this in your hand visibly displayed may be a deterrent.

Don't walk or run when it is dark outside. Enjoy yourself, but use some common sense. If the place you are at makes you feel uneasy, go somewhere else. There are many county parks and trails. Check them out on the Charles County website.





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Sheriff's Office**

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