



# Watch Works

Charles County  
Sheriff's Office

Troy Berry, Sheriff  
December 2014

## Christmas Memories

What does Christmas mean to you? What does Christmas smell like? Taste like? Are your fondest memories from when you were a child? Maybe you don't celebrate Christmas.

I believe Christmas is a time to spend with the ones you love. A time of reflection. A time of thanks. I do think my fondest memories were when I was a child. The anticipation and excitement. We always got fruit (tangerines, oranges) in our stockings. I think these just helped fill up the stockings, but I can taste them even now. Peanut brittle, coconut bon-bons and gum drops would all be mixed together in the bottom. Dolls, trains and trucks along with wrapping paper would fill the floor of our living room and the sound of record players, radios and games would fill the morning air while Mom cooked the "Best Breakfast Ever."

Other family members and their families would arrive to help cook a big dinner. Oh, how good the house smelled! Turkey, ham, sweet potatoes etc. It was a do-over of Thanksgiving. As we got older we realized how tired Mom must have been, but she never let on.

I hope you have some special memories of your own. Getting the Christmas tree, or sending out Christmas cards. Decorating the house and putting on your new Christmas clothes for church. Share them with your children and grandchildren. Start new traditions or help pass on the old ones. Everyone is so busy these days, working and keeping up with the house and bills. Running your children to school events, sport events or to their friend's houses. Christmas should be a time to sit back and relax. Be thankful for what you have. Reflect on the things you

accomplished throughout the year and plan for the new year.

Show your children how good it feels to give during the holidays.

You can:

- Take dog food, cat food, and kitty litter to the animal shelter. They can also use old towels and blankets.
- Donate new toys to "Toys for Tots" or one of the many charities.
- Collect food for the food bank.
- Help an elderly neighbor decorate their home.

It doesn't take much, but the memories last a lifetime.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

## Dates to Remember

**December 16:** Hanukkah

**December 21:** Winter begins

**December 25:** Christmas

**December 31:** New Year's Eve



## There's a New Sheriff in Town

Sheriff Troy Berry was sworn in as Sheriff of Charles County on December 2, 2014, at a ceremony at the Greater Waldorf Jaycees Community Center. Sheriff Berry is not new to the Charles County Sheriff's Office, as he has been employed as a sworn police officer here for over 22 years. After graduating

from the Southern Maryland Criminal Justice Academy, Sheriff Berry began his career as an officer in the Patrol Division. He has also served as a detective in the Criminal Investigations Division, an investigator in the Internal Affairs Unit, and commander of the Office of Professional Responsibility.

Sheriff Berry is committed to the citizens of our great county and is excited about the opportunity to lead the Charles County Sheriff's Office. When he is not at work, he especially loves spending time with his wife and their daughter.



## Holiday Decoration Safety Tips



### Lights:

Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety. Identify these by the label from an independent testing laboratory.

Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Discard damaged sets or repair them before using. Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house, walls or other firm support to protect from wind damage. Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord. Turn off all lights on trees and other decorations when you go to bed or leave the house. Lights could short and start a fire.

### Trees:

Many artificial trees are fire resistant. If you buy one, look for a statement specifying this protection.

A fresh tree will stay green longer and be less of a fire hazard than a dry tree. To check for freshness, remember:

- A fresh tree is green.
- Fresh needles are hard to pull from branches.
- When bent between your fingers, fresh needles do not break.
- The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin.
- When the trunk of a tree is bounced on the ground, a shower of falling needles shows that the tree is too dry.

Place tree away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources. Heated rooms dry trees out rapidly, creating fire hazards. Cut off about two inches of the trunk to expose fresh wood for better wa-

ter absorption. Trim away branches as necessary to set tree trunk in the base of a sturdy, water holding stand with wide spread feet. Keep the stand filled with water while the tree is indoors.

Keep matches, lighters, and candles out of the reach of children.

Never burn candles near evergreens. Burning evergreens in a fireplace can also be hazardous. When dry, greens burn like tinder. Flames can flare out of control, and send sparks flying into a room, or up the chimney to ignite creosote deposits.

Plan for safety. Remember, there is no substitute for common sense. Look for and eliminate potential danger spots near candles, fireplaces, trees, and/or electrical connections.

Information obtained from: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.



## Citizens Advisory Council

Twice a year the Charles County Sheriff's Office holds a meeting with the Citizens Advisory Council. The room is divided into four sections so that each group, District 1 (La Plata area to Cobb Island), District 2, (Indian Head, Bryans

Road area), and Districts 3 and 4 (Waldorf, East and West) are able to sit with the officers and their commanders from their specific area. These citizens let us know if there are problems in their neighborhoods. They let us know how they

think we are doing, and what is important to them in the areas of crime and safety. If you would like to be a member of this council, please contact Connie Gray, Community Organizer so that we may add you to our mailing list.



## A word from your Community Organizer: Connie Gray.....301-932-3080

I love Christmas time. The sights, the sounds and the smells. Pies in the oven and Christmas music playing is what I call a good day. 2015 is just around the corner. I want to thank everyone that supported the Sheriff's Office by attending meetings, arranging National Night Out celebrations and helping with

different fund raisers and charity events. I look forward to working with you in the New Year. I am thankful that I can call many of you my friends.

I hope you have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Surround yourselves with love ones and celebrate

all the good things from a year past. Bring in the New Year with family and friends. Stay warm and be safe.



## Crimes Against Seniors

According to the Consumer Law Center, Inc. (CLC), Americans lose an estimated \$40 billion each year to the fraudulent sale of goods and services over the telephone. The elderly are frequent targets of telemarketing frauds and sweepstakes scams. Studies conducted by CLC reveal that "fraudulent telemarketers direct anywhere from 56 percent to nearly 80 percent of their calls at older customers. One sweepstakes-related scam detailed on CBS's 60 minutes reportedly bilked seniors in 24 states out of an estimated \$5 billion."

Emelina answered her phone last week and heard a young woman crying and pleading for help. The girl said she was Emelina's granddaughter Erin and was in trouble. She begged Emelina not to tell anyone that she was in jail and needed Emelina to send

money. By now Emelina is shaking and crying, thinking her granddaughter was not only in trouble but also hurt. She agreed to do whatever was needed. The girl's "lawyer" then took the phone and gave specific instructions on how to send two payments of \$900 to cover a fine. Emelina enlisted the aid of her sister, Gert, and the two went to a Western Union to send the money. Gert, however, stopped and wouldn't let Emelina out of the car. "You aren't going to do this," she told Emelina. "We are going to the police station." They met with a Police Officer who helped her discover Erin's begs for help were a scam. No money was sent. Her granddaughter was not harmed or in trouble. Still shaken, Emelina tells her story to warn others of the scam. "I'm ashamed I fell for it," she said, noting the scam artists target the most

vulnerable.

A son was reviewing his mother's checking account and noticed a lot of donations being made to a particular charity. His mother had been contacted multiple times, many more than once a month, asking her to make more contributions. "Persistence" of callers trying to get more money is one "red flag."

Don't give personal information. This includes date of birth, Social Security number, credit card numbers, particularly the three-digit security number on the back of your card to anyone, especially if you didn't initiate the phone call.

If you are not sure, ask a friend or a relative for their help. Talk to someone you can trust.





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