



New Westminster Police

# THE COMMUNITY BEAT

## Crime Prevention in our Successful Community

### Why people volunteer

BY SERGEANT GARY WEISHAAR, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION



► **Our police service** has numerous reasons why we, as staff, are extremely proud of our organization. We serve a city that is deep and rich in heritage. It is the oldest city west of Thunder Bay, Ontario and our Royal City is currently celebrating its 150th anniversary.

The New Westminster Police Service hired its first constable way back in 1873. As the oldest police

Now, in 2009, the New Westminster Police Service has grown greatly in staff and employs some of the most advanced technologies, training and equipment. These are all tools of the trade that allow us to best serve our community and its citizens. These noted bits of history and our current standard of policing are great sources of pride for us. However, an area that shines as perhaps the brightest beacon for us is our police service core of volunteers.

As a New Westminster police officer, I have had the pleasure and honour of knowing and working with dozens upon dozens of police volunteers. I can still remember working at events in the early eighties with our volunteers in crime prevention. I recall the enthusiasm and friendship they brought to our team as we worked towards our common goal of community safety and education.

As our police service has grown, so too has our volunteer base. We currently have as part of our team 137 volunteers. Our volunteer programs vary – from our Victims Assistance Unit to crime prevention programs such as Crime Watch, Bicycle Squad, Speed Watch, and Graffiti Eradication Team. Our Victims Assistance Unit and Crime Prevention coordinators are the overseers to these programs and leaders to our volunteers.

Our volunteers have dedicated hundreds upon hundreds of hours to our police services community program initiatives. Indeed, two of our volunteers

► *Cont'd next page*

People make a difference, especially those who get involved in the community and the programs that help make our city a desirable place to live, work and play. ◀ **Deputy Chief, David Jones, 2009**

force in western Canada, we had humble beginnings in staffing levels and equipment. New Westminster Police Constable Jonathan Morey, constable #0001, would be amazed at the changes and advancements that his little one horse, one constable police department has evolved to since his days of policing at the latter half of the wild west era. Constable Morey had few fellow police officers with whom to share ideas and strategies for combating crime or implementing the earliest versions of crime prevention. Indeed, this was the year that Prime Minister John A. MacDonald created the North West Mounted Police, the predecessor to the RCMP, to bring law and order to the territories.



**contents**

CFMH 2

Sign up 2

Parking garage 3

Calling the police 4

Block Watch 6

Who is at the door? 8

are currently running neck and neck with volunteer hours of 241 and 228 respectively. That is an amazing amount of hours that they give to our community. I can't imagine how many hours in total they will have provided to our citizens by the end of 2009!

To those not familiar with volunteers and what motivates them to commit so much time to our community, you may ask yourself, "Why do people volunteer?" There is no quick, one size fits all answer to this. The reasons vary but there are some common themes:

- Personal growth
- Giving back to the community
- Friendship and team building
- Sense of achievement
- Recognition of dedicated service
- Learning new skills

What keeps a volunteer enthused, happy and productive?

- Strong leadership
- Clearly defined goals
- Relevant training
- Suitable equipment
- Support from staff and management
- Recognition from the organization and community

To keep our volunteers keen and productive, we must continue to provide them with the tools and support as we always have and always will. Our program coordinators are the driving force that continue to ensure that this 'Win-Win' relationship continues to thrive. However, let us not forget the greatest recipient of this 'Win-Win' is our community. It's all about the people.

# Crime Free Corner



## CFMH Safety Meetings

► **Thanks to everyone** who organized or participated in their Safety Meetings.

- Dunwood Place – 901 Colborne Street
- North Parkside Towers – 820 6th Street
- Royal Ridge Apartments – 315 Agnes Street
- Tiffany Place – 1115 4th Avenue
- London Square – 1206 A London Street
- Crown Manor – 430 9th Street
- McBride Place – 431 Ginger Drive
- South Parkside Tower – 525 9th Street

To see a list and pictures of our member buildings visit our website at [www.nwpolice.org](http://www.nwpolice.org).

### Calling all Managers and Owners

If you are interested in attending CFMH Manager's Meetings contact Shelley Cole @ 604-529-2528 or [crimefree@nwpolice.org](mailto:crimefree@nwpolice.org)

## Sign up!



► **Many multi-housing buildings** have difficulty with individuals who gain access to their building because they follow a resident into the lobby or call residents on the intercom hoping someone will let them in. Therefore New Westminister Police has created signs to address this issue. If you are a member of our Block Watch or Crime Free Multi-Housing Programs, these signs are provided free of charge.

### So sign up!

Contact us at **604-529-2446** to get your signs today!

# Your garage is a target

► **One of the easiest ways** for thieves to gain entry into your secure parking area is through the overhead garage door. So you may be wondering how a secure parking area becomes vulnerable to thieves. Here are two examples:

- You are running late, so you rush into your vehicle and speed out of the parkade and on your way after the overhead door opens
- It is late and you just arrived home and you drive in after the garage door opens right to your parking stall and rush to your apartment



Thieves do not need special tools to break in to the secure parking area. They are, however, gaining access through parking garage doors being theft unattended.

Do not assume that your parkade will not be broken into. Any parkade can be a target, especially if you ignore the rule of “stop, watch & wait for the gate” by leaving the parkade gate unattended while it is open. If you are leaving your parking garage door unattended, you may be risking the safety of your building.



He who does not prevent a crime when he can, encourages it.

◀ Roman Philosopher, Mid-1st Century AD

## **Steps Property Management can do:**

- **Signage:** Throughout the parking area, place signage available through the New Westminster Police Crime Prevention Unit such as “Wait for the Gate” and post notices in elevators and laundry rooms or near mailboxes reminding residents to look out and report suspicious activity.
- **Keep detailed and accurate Incident Reports:** By recording any incidents of auto crime on your property, you may be able to establish a pattern of when the crimes are occurring (day or night / days of the week) and areas of where the crimes are being committed.

## **Steps Residents can do:**

- Remove visible contents from your vehicle
- Invest in an anti-theft device: visible ones help with deterrence
- Always stop & wait for the gate to close behind you

... Ask the expert ...

## Calling the police

► **Anyone who has ever** called the police – whether it has been an emergency or not – has likely experienced the following: *What is your address? Where did this occur? When did this happen? Can you describe them? What time did you park it there? Can we get your date of birth? What direction have they gone? How long ago did this happen? Are there any weapons? Is anyone injured? Can we have your name, address, and phone number? Can you describe the damage?* Calling the police can be a hectic, confusing, and time-consuming process. It is however critical and necessary in order for call-takers, dispatchers, and police to do their jobs properly.

Nowadays, police call centers – especially in large urban areas such as the Lower Mainland – are incredibly busy. There is a constant flow of information between the call center and the general public, as well as the police officers on the road who respond to the calls for service. It is a 24/7 and 365-days-a-year operation. There is no longer any predicting when or where it might be busy within any given jurisdiction, or what types of calls a center will be dealing with, from literally one second to the next. Questioning people who call the police is critical to what we do and it impacts how and when police respond to calls.

Questioning allows call-takers to determine if in fact a criminal offence has occurred, where it occurred (some people will wait until they get home to New Westminster even though they may have been in Vancouver when they were victimized... this necessitates us referring them to the Vancouver Police as offences have to be reported in the jurisdiction where the crime occurred), and when. Determinations are made on potential avenues of investigation (for example: does video surveillance exist of the suspect) versus the creation of an “information file” only, where an officer is not assigned and never attends at the scene.

One of the most important roles personnel in any police call center perform through questioning is prioritization. This is a process whereby calls are

ranked in order of urgency. Police resources are applied to the call with the hope of bringing a successful resolution to the matter through attendance or investigation. The seriousness of the call will determine how many, if any, police are sent. The more accurate and detailed the information provided by the caller then, the more accurately the call can be prioritized and the resources can be applied. A call like a break-and-enter that occurred over the weekend while the home owner was away will require one officer and can be attended to within a few hours. A break-and-enter where the suspect was just seen in the house and is running from the scene may ideally take up to six officers – this many officers allows for proper scene containment and possibly a successful track and apprehension of a suspect using a police service dog.

Information from a caller is measured against available police resources, proximity of the police to the call, time delays (sometimes even serious calls are reported hours after the event), environmental considerations, potentially confirming or contradictory information coming from other witnesses to the same incident, and risk to the public (including suspects). Calls are incredibly fluid and dynamic. Factors related to any given call can change from second to second: suspect/victim locations, direction of travel can change. Levels of violence can escalate or de-escalate. Environmental conditions such as lighting or weather conditions can affect descriptions of things or the ability of the police to locate people or places. Other witnesses can provide information that is sometimes more or less relevant to the same call which would necessitate the call-taker going over or re-confirming answers to questions that may have already been asked and/or putting someone on hold for a period of time while more pertinent information is obtained. Sometimes, a single caller may be the only source of information about the event that the police have; through apathy or assumptions that others will call – police might only get one complaint about a serious crime – making that person’s information even more important and critical to a successful outcome to the call.



“What is your address? Where did this occur? When did this happen? Can you describe them? What time did you park it there? Can we get your date of birth? What direction have they gone? How long ago did this happen? Are there any weapons? Is anyone injured? Can we have your name, address, and number? Can you describe the damage? What direction have they gone?”

ARTICLE BY GEORGE RAITT,  
COMMUNICATIONS OPERATOR,  
NEW WESTMINSTER POLICE

At other times, callers may be variously affected by drug/alcohol consumption, language barriers, and unfamiliarity with the area, and/or stress, which can make it very difficult to get accurate information.

It is during times such as these that call-takers may use a variety of deliberate call-taking techniques. Short and abrupt information will garner the most critical information in the quickest amount of time in order to update the dispatcher and officers attending the call. Sometimes, officers are literally a short distance away and we want to avoid situations where we might be driving by the incident and/or suspects while they are still at the scene or perhaps trying to avoid the police by leaving. Open ended questions elicit longer and more detailed accounts of what is going on that will aid police later in the investigation. The line of questioning changes from second to second or minute to minute depending on the needs of police as they approach the scene. Call-takers and dispatchers are extremely experienced with this and are often

Even for the less serious types of calls that don't require immediate police attendance or even police attendance at all, the same process exists – minus the urgency. In these situations, later crime analysis through detailed reporting can establish crime trends that the police service can dedicate resources to at a later time. A good example of this is theft from vehicles where the victim vehicles were jacked up and their tires stolen. Normally, call-takers would only take an 'information report' that the victim would use to deal with ICBC. However, it became such a problem, and thanks to detailed original reporting, the police service was able to analyze trends and locations and take measures to combat the problem.

One issue that persistently comes up is people's willingness to provide their personal information to the police. As you can tell from this article, without the people coming forward to assist us as witnesses, it would be very difficult to investigate crimes and apprehend suspects and do our jobs properly. Personal information is obtained for both urgent and non-urgent calls for a few reasons: so police can follow-up at a later time to aid in their investigation; so if a complainant calls in with additional information or enquiries about their report, their identity can be verified; in frequent cases, we can contact people when they don't know they have been the victim of an offence – maybe their car or wallet was stolen and been recovered by police before the victim even knows they have been victimized. Updated police records from previous reports allow us to track them down and facilitate the return of their property; in some instances police have difficulty gaining entry to buildings and calling the complainant back is useful to assist us in that endeavor; in some cases, this information is used to provide recognition to members of the public for their assistance to the police.

There is a lot that goes into call-taking, dispatching, and policing. We absolutely need the citizens in the community to work with us in order for us to bring them the best possible service. There is a method to our madness and rhyme to our reason. We appreciate people taking the time to bear with us and be excellent witnesses for us and for the victims. Without you we couldn't be as successful as we are at this job. Every bit helps. I hope this article sheds some light on some of what we do and why we do it. Thank you.



New Westminster has seen a reduction in crime statistics over the past 10 years, with total criminal code offences declining by over 24% from 1998 to 2007.

◀ Chief Constable Lorne Zapotichny, 2009

NEW WESTMINSTER	2007	2008	% Chg
POPULATION	61,671	63,745	3
TOTAL CRIMINAL CODE	7,280	6,555	-10
CRIME RATE	118	103	-13
<i>BC Crime Rate</i>	105	96	-9
PERSONS (Violent)	898	862	-4
<i>Homicide</i>	2	0	-100
<i>Sex Offences</i>	44	29	-34
<i>Non-Sexual Assaults</i>	696	677	-3
PROPERTY	3,350	2,792	-17
<i>Total Break &amp; Enter</i>	684	597	-13
<i>B&amp;E Residential</i>	302	319	6
<i>M/V Thefts</i>	484	342	-29
<i>Thefts*</i>	1,809	1,535	-15
<i>Theft from M/V</i>	815	704	-14
OTHER CRIMES	3,032	2,901	-4
<i>Vandalism**</i>	956	929	-3

\* Includes Bicycle Theft, TFA, Shoplifting and Other Theft

\*\* Includes Mischief and Property Damage <>\$5000

anticipating the officer's requirements before they get to the call. Not only is this information useful to the police, but we also liaise with other first responders such as the fire department or ambulance and queue them up to assist us and members of the general public.



# Block Watch BLOGG

## 7th Avenue 2008 Block Party

**Sept. 13, 2008** was the date for the second annual Block Watch Party on 7th Ave (between 2nd and 4th Streets). Our party last fall included a great buffet feast, music, lots of mingling and even an outdoor full screen movie for the children!

Thank you to New West Block Watch for donating an "outdoor" prize (LED flashlight) which added some excitement! And a big thank you to our Block Watch Coordinators and the NWPS staff who keep us on track with our Block Watch Program. We are looking forward to our next gathering....



SUBMITTED BY HEIDI CLARKSON,  
7TH AVE. RESIDENT

### New buildings join Block Watch

935 Ewen Avenue                      720 Hamilton Street

### Block Watch Safety Meetings

Thanks to all who organized or participated in their Safety Meetings.

#### Residential


300 Block Ash Street  
300 Block 8th Street  
729 3rd Avenue  
300 Block Durham Street  
100 Block Harvey Street  
1300 Naniamo Street  
100 Block Ovens Street  
500 Block Richmond Street  
800-900 Block Jackson Crescent  
800 Block Cherry Street  
800 Block Chestnut Street  
300 Block East 8th Avenue  
00 Seymour Court  
62-81 Kwantlen Street &  
69-81 Miner Street

#### Apartment/Townhouses/Condos


Queens Avenue Co-op –  
136 10th Street  
New Westminster Housing Co-op –  
265 10th Street  
The Lido – 2/3/5 Renaissance Square  
Palace Quay – 72 Jamieson Court  
The Courtyards – 737 Hamilton Street  
Peppertree – 320 Royal Avenue

If you have not had your Safety Meeting this year and would like to set one up, get in contact with the New Westminster Block Watch office.





**NWPS Volunteer**



**Block Watch Captain**  
Bruce BALLINGALL  
Expires: 2010/05/31

## Block Captain Identification

If you haven't received your Block Captain Identification card, contact the Block Watch Office and make an appointment.

## Durham Street Annual Block Party



**Glenbrook North Residents' Association** had their 10th annual neighbourhood garage sale, and this year it returned on Saturday, June 13th. Every year the Association donates their garage sale proceeds to Monarch Place, a transition house for women and children in the New Westminster area. One of the participants in the garage sale was Marya McLellan who is also one of our Block Captains, along with Angela Codrington, for Durham Street. Durham Street Block Watch had their annual Block Party after their neighbourhood garage sale. They had good weather, a great potluck feast and a fantastic turnout! Not only did most of their Block Watch group attend their Block Party, but also a few neighbours from surrounding streets attended and showed interest in joining Block Watch. This is what Marya had to say about the event: "43 neighbours attended but there were even more as some of the kids brought friends. We finally ended at 8pm with everyone attending agreeing that it had been a great success."

Special thanks to Marya McLellan and Angela Codrington for organizing this event and making it a success!

### Dear members,

We would be very interested in hearing from you! If you have pictures or stories that relate to Block Watch or Crime Free Programs (i.e. gatherings, meetings, how the programs have helped you or someone in your neighbourhood) and would like to see them published in your newsletter, please submit them, or for more details contact:

**Bruce Ballingall**

tel: 604.529.2411

[bballingall@nwpolice.org](mailto:bballingall@nwpolice.org)

**Shelley Cole, NWPS**

tel: 604.529.2528

[scole@nwpolice.org](mailto:scole@nwpolice.org)

**Jennifer Sanford, NWPS**

tel: 604.529.2494

[jsanford@nwpolice.org](mailto:jsanford@nwpolice.org)

**Crime Free Multi-Housing**

[crimefree@nwpolice.org](mailto:crimefree@nwpolice.org)

604-529-2446

**Block Watch**

[blockwatch@nwpolice.org](mailto:blockwatch@nwpolice.org)

604-529-2446

**New Westminster Police Services**

555 Columbia Street

New Westminster, BC V3L 1B2

---

It is easier to prevent bad habits than to break them. ◀ Benjamin Franklin

# Knock ... knock. Who's there?

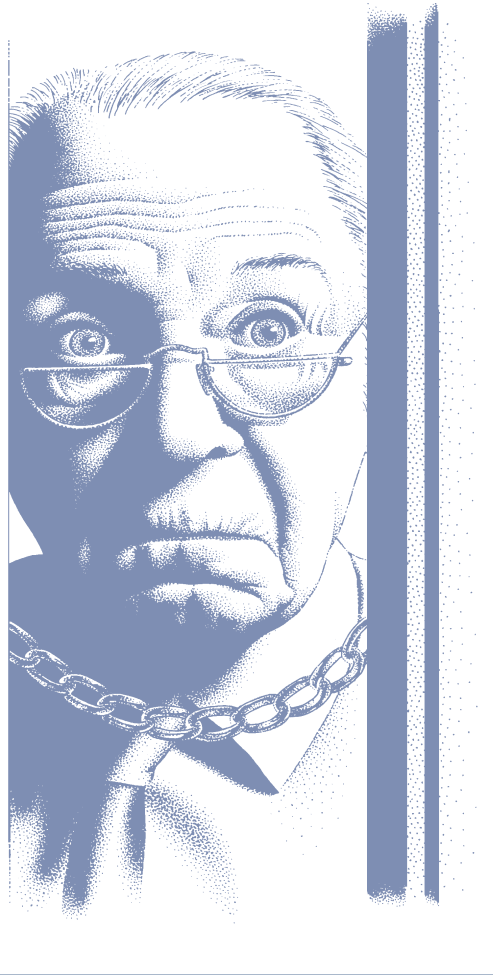
## Do you know who is at your door?

► **Strangers at your door** can be scary for some people, especially if you are home alone or if it is late at night. A stranger can be a potential thief wanting to know if your home is empty. In fact, knocking on doors is a common tactic for burglars. This helps them ensure that the house is empty, there are no barking dogs and now they can find a weak point to enter your home. There are different strategies that thieves use to see if anyone is at home. Here are some examples:

- Asking to use the telephone
- Asking for directions
- Asking for donations
- Conducting a survey
- Impersonating sales representatives, officials, trades people and others

A door bell or knock should not go unanswered. Leaving your door unanswered gives the impression that no one is at home and may actually encourage a thief to enter the house. An empty house is a temptation to a thief. When someone does knock or ring your door bell, try to find out who is there by using your eye viewer or a window to check who it is and then simply ask, "Who's there?" This does not require you to open your secured door, but does let the stranger know that someone is home. It is important that everyone in your family learn this safety approach, especially children.

When you are home alone you can give the impression that there are other people at home with you. You could simply say or yell, "I'll get it!" or pretend to call the name of another family member. Other options include saying, "We are not interested!" If you are expecting a sales representative, official, tradesperson or any other profes-



**There is never any reason to let a stranger in or to give personal information at the door. You control the security of your home and who comes in to it.**

sional, verify that they are legitimate by checking their identification and/or calling the business they are representing. Business cards may be easily replicated so don't be fooled by this type of identification. Be sure to verify an individual's identity and if you feel uncomfortable listen to your inner voice. There is never any reason to let a stranger in or to give personal information at the door. You control the security of your home and who comes in to it.

Knowing and talking about these strategies is very important and it will aid in your and your family's safety and peace of mind.