

# MPNA News

## The Melrose Park Neighbors Association

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Volume 2 – Number 95

From MPNA President – Andy Rudin

Wednesday, May 12, 2010

### From the Cheltenham Police Department

The information about Crime Prevention Tips comes from the Cheltenham Police Department. They wanted me to send this information to you. If you wish to discuss any of this with the Police, come to **Community Conversation with the Cheltenham Police** presented by the Friends of the Elkins Park Free Library, its 3rd Community Conversation event, on Wednesday, May 19th, 7:30 p.m., 563 East Church Road, Elkins Park. The Cheltenham Police Department will discuss crime prevention, followed by a question and answer period. This is an opportunity for the community to connect with the Police Department. FREE. Information: 215-635-5000.

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### Crime Prevention Tips

It is important to be aware a crime can occur pretty much anywhere, anticipating the location, time, and taking action to reduce the chance of it happening, are what good crime prevention is all about. Crime prevention is key to stopping the ability and opportunity for a criminal. The use of instinct, knowledge, common sense, and awareness can make you a tough target.

#### The Basic Rules

- \* Stay alert. TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS. If something doesn't seem right call the Police
- \* Immediately report suspicious persons or activity in your neighborhood.
- \* Keep your mind on your surroundings, who's in front of you and who's behind you. Don't get distracted.
- \* Don't be an easy target for a criminal.

#### Personal Protection

- \* Make yourself a "tough target."
- \* Don't think that it can't happen to you.
- \* Should you resist? Everyone and every situation are different.
- \* Always be aware of your surroundings.
- \* If being followed or stalked, call 911 or drive directly to a police station.

#### If You're Attacked

- \* Keep your head. Stay as calm as possible and evaluate your options and resources.
- \* It may be more advisable to submit than to resist and risk severe injury or death. You will have to make this decision based on the circumstances. But, don't resist if the attacker has a weapon.

\* Keep assessing the situation as it is happening. If one strategy doesn't work, try another. Possible options include negotiating, stalling for time, distracting the assailant and fleeing to a safe place, verbal assertiveness, screaming, and physical resistance.

\* You may be able to turn the attacker off with unusual behavior such as throwing up, acting crazy, or stating you have a sexually transmitted disease.

### **After a Sexual Assault**

\* Go to a safe place and call the police.

\* The sooner you report the crime, the greater the chances your attacker will be caught.

\* DO NOT shower, bathe, douche, or destroy any clothing you were wearing. Do not disturb any physical evidence.

\* Go to a hospital emergency room for medical care.

\* Call someone to be with you. You should not be alone. Contact a rape treatment or crisis center to help you deal with the consequences of the assault.

### **While Driving**

\* Keep your car in good condition with the gas tank at least half full.

\* Park in well-lighted areas and lock your doors, no matter how long you'll be gone.

\* Put valuables out of sight or in the trunk.

\* Check front and rear seats, and floorboards before entering your car.

\* Drive with all doors locked and windows rolled up.

\* Never pick up hitchhikers. If your car breaks down, put the hood up, lock the doors, turn on the flashers, and move to the passenger seat. Do not leave your car. If someone stops to help, roll down the window slightly and ask them to call the police or a tow truck.

\* When parking or returning to your vehicle, carry your keys and be aware of your surroundings.

\* Consider investing in a cellular telephone.

### **Public Transportation**

\* Try to use well-lighted and frequently used stops.

\* Try to sit near the driver or conductor.

\* Avoid sitting near exits. An attacker can reach in and grab a purse or jewelry as the bus or subway pulls away.

\* Be alert to who gets off the bus or subway with you. If you feel uncomfortable, walk directly to a place where there are other people.

### **In Elevators**

\* Look in the elevator before getting in.

\* Stand near the controls.

\* Get off if someone suspicious enters. If you're worried about someone who is waiting for the elevator with you, pretend you forgot something and don't get on.

\* If you're attacked, hit the alarm and as many floor buttons as possible.

### **Home and Neighborhood**

\* Good locks, simple precautions, neighborhood awareness, and common sense can help prevent most property crimes.

### **Locks, Doors, and Windows**

\* Install and use good deadbolt locks in your doors (about half of all burglars enter through unlocked doors and windows).

- \* Secure sliding glass doors with locks or a rigid wooden dowel wedged in the track.
- \* Lock double-hung windows by sliding a bolt or nail into a hole drilled at a downward angle through the top of each sash and into the frame.

### **Outside**

- \* Trim back shrubbery hiding doors or windows. Cut back tree limbs that could help a thief climb to second story windows.
- \* Make sure all porches, entrances, and yards are well lighted.
- \* Maintain the neighborhood. Dark alleys, litter, and rundown areas attract criminals.

#### **Key Sense**

- \* Do not hide house keys in mail boxes, planters, or under doormats.
- \* Do not put personal identification on key rings.
- \* Leave only your ignition key with mechanics or parking attendants.
- \* If you lose the keys to your home or move into a new home, change the locks immediately.

### **Answering the Door**

- \* Install a peephole or viewer in all entry doors so you can see who is outside without opening the door.
- \* Do not trust door chains. They can be easily broken.
- \* Don't open the door to anyone you don't know. Insist service personnel verify their identity before allowing them in.

### **Answering the Telephone**

- \* Don't give any information to "wrong number" callers.
- \* Check references of any person calling about a survey or credit check before offering information.
- \* Hang up immediately on threatening or harassing calls.

### **Going Away**

- \* Make your home appear occupied when you go out.
  - \* Tell a trusted friend you are going away and ask them to keep an eye on things.
  - \* Leave lights on and the radio playing.
  - \* Keep your garage door closed and locked.
  - \* Use timing devices to turn inside lights on and off.
  - \* If you will be gone several days, arrange to have the mail and papers stopped or picked up.
- Half of all home burglaries occur during the day when alert neighbors could spot and report the thieves.

### **Things You and Your Neighbors Can Do**

- \* Be a good neighbor and keep an eye on things in your area.
- \* Work with public agencies and other neighborhood-based or community-wide organizations, on solving common problems.
- \* Make sure that all the youth in the neighborhood have positive ways to spend their spare time, through organized recreation, tutoring programs, part-time work, and volunteer opportunities.
- \* Set up a Neighborhood Watch or a community patrol working with police. It doesn't have to be a formal group, just be alert and immediately report things that don't seem right. No one knows your neighborhood better than you.
- \* Make sure your streets and homes are well lighted.

- \* Build a partnership with police, focused on solving problems instead of reacting to crises. Make it possible for neighbors to report suspicious activity or crimes without fear of retaliation. Call our anonymous Tips Line @ (215) 885-1600 ext. 777 to report crime information.
- \* Take advantage of "safety in numbers" to hold rallies, marches, and other group activities to show you're determined to drive out crime and drugs.
- \* Clean up the neighborhood! Involve everyone; teens, children, and senior citizens. Graffiti, litter, abandoned cars, and run-down buildings tell criminals that you don't care about where you live or each other. Call the Police Department and ask for help in cleaning up your area.
- \* Ask local officials to use new ways to get criminals out of your building or neighborhood. These include enforcing anti-noise laws, housing codes, health and fire codes, anti-nuisance laws, and drug-free clauses in rental leases.

## **GUN SAFETY**

Gun Safety is the responsibility of every adult, whether or not you own a firearm. As an adult, you are responsible for properly securing your firearm. If another person is injured as a result of your negligence in properly securing a gun, you can be charged with a crime or be held civilly liable. Contact the Cheltenham Police Department for a free gun lock.

### **What your children need to know**

Children should know that guns are not toys, that guns are dangerous and can hurt people. If they see or find a gun (even if they think the gun looks like a toy), they should follow these three steps to safety:

1. They should not touch or handle the gun.
2. They should get away from the gun quickly, leave the area.
3. They should immediately tell a trusted adult (parent, guardian, teacher or police officer) about the gun.

### **Theft from Auto incidents**

In the past year, there has been an increase of **Theft from Auto** incidents in the Tri-County Area and throughout Cheltenham Township. In the majority of these cases the vehicles were **unlocked**, and in some cases, valuables were left in plain view inside of the vehicles.

Here are some tips to improve your chances of being a victim of a Theft from Auto Incident:

- Don't leave valuables in plain view inside of your car
- Lock your car, even in your driveway
- Set your car alarm
- Park in well lit areas ;
- Don't leave keys or your garage remote in your vehicle
- Remove your GPS or Satellite Radio
- Don't leave change in your console
- If you have a garage or access to a garage, use it.

Help the Cheltenham Police combat Theft from Auto Incidents by:

- Calling 9-1-1 to alert Police of a crime in progress
- Immediately reporting suspicious persons or activities to Police
- Make it hard on criminals by locking your car and removing valuables

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**If you are the victim of a Theft from Auto Incident, file a Police report.**

It is difficult for the Police Department to analyze crime trends and patterns without having an accurate picture of what crimes are occurring in our Township. If you are a victim of a theft from auto incident, please notify the Cheltenham Police Department as soon as possible. Once an incident is discovered, try to avoid touching the vehicle until the responding Police Officer has an opportunity to inspect the vehicle for any evidence left behind by the thief.

**“Anonymous Tip Line”**

The Cheltenham Police Department has an “Anonymous Tip Line” in place so that residents can anonymously report suspicions on drug and criminal activities. There are two anonymous methods available for reporting these activities to Police. You can leave a voice message by contacting (215) 885-1600 ext. 777, or you can log onto the Cheltenham Township Web Page at [www.cheltenhamtownship.org](http://www.cheltenhamtownship.org) anonymous tip link is at the top of the page.

The Cheltenham Police Department needs the public’s help in identifying problems, so we can help to improve the quality of life in our community.

To check on current Neighborhood Alerts in your area without providing your e-mail address, please click on to the appropriate link.

**Cheltenham Police Information**

\* If you have an emergency call 9-1-1.

\* Check the Police Department's Neighborhood Alerts page @

[www.cheltenhamtownship.org/police/neighborhood\\_alerts\\_program.htm](http://www.cheltenhamtownship.org/police/neighborhood_alerts_program.htm)

for crime information for your area

If you have any further questions or need additional information contact Community Policing Sgt. John Slavin at 215 885-1600 ext 482 or email me at [JohnSlavin@cheltenham-township.org](mailto:JohnSlavin@cheltenham-township.org)

**Crime Prevention Links:**

- FBI
- U.S. Department of Justice
- McGruff
- Crime Prevention Association of Michigan
- West Michigan Crime Prevention Association
- Federal Trade Commission Fraud/Con Webpage

**The Elkins Park Library May Book Sale**

The Friends of the Elkins Park Free Library holds its next Used Book sale on Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., 563 East Church Road, Elkins Park. Sale includes books, CDs, audiotapes, records,

videos, software, games, giftware and more. 15,000+ items in all. Too many specials to itemize. FREE.

Information: 215-635-5000.

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## **This Newsletter**

If you have any suggestions for items for this newsletter, feel free to email them to me at [andrewrudin@earthlink.net](mailto:andrewrudin@earthlink.net)

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## **MPNA memberships**

Membership in MPNA helps pay for plantings, signage, and many other things. Annual dues are \$10 per individual, \$20 per household. Send your contribution to MPNA Board member Jim Muldoon, 106 Parkview Road, Cheltenham, PA 19012. The membership cycle is the calendar year. MPNA

## **MPNA Board**

Members of the MPNA Board are Andrew Rudin, Phil Kates, Michael Shectman, Jim Muldoon and Albert Fried-Cassorla. If you are interested in helping out with MPNA, please email me at [andrewrudin@earthlink.net](mailto:andrewrudin@earthlink.net). This newsletter is available or will be soon on our website – [www.melroseparkneighbors.org](http://www.melroseparkneighbors.org)

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