

Western District View

Western District Police-Community Relations Council
8273 Telegraph Road, Odenton, Maryland 21113

January 2010

Open Forum, January 13th The next meeting of the Western District Police-Community Relations Council will be on Wednesday, January 13, 2010, in the Meeting Room at the Western District Station, starting at 7:00 p.m. This will be an open forum, with no guest speaker, to give time for members and residents to catch up on things with the District Commander. If you have community or neighborhood concerns, this will be an ideal time to discuss them with Captain Flemings.

We still have an opening for Vice-President and will seek nominations to fill that in a special election during the meeting. Following that, we will have the induction of officers for 2010.

February Meeting – Internet Security At our following meeting, on February 10th, a representative from the county police will discuss Internet security, outlining measures you should take to protect your computer and avoid having your computer programs or your identity stolen through Internet scams, spyware or hackers. If you use a computer, you need to know this information.

Membership Renewal It's time to renew membership for 2010. If you joined the Council in September 2009 or later, you're covered for 2010. Dues are \$5.00 per individual, household or association. A membership renewal form is included with this newsletter. It can be brought to the meeting or mailed to the Western District PCRC 8295 Telegraph Road, Odenton, MD 21113. If at all possible, provide an email address to save us copying and postage costs.

Holiday Buffet Wrap-Up The 18th annual buffet on December 9th was a success. As I have said before, all we do is provide the venue for the buffet. It is the support from the community that makes it a success. This year, we had cash, food and door prize donations from a total of 70 private individuals (32), community organizations (10), churches (5) and area businesses (23).

I do want to give special thanks to Howard Dillard and Elwood Myers for the Wednesday morning setup and Thursday morning cleanup, Linda Reese for the Wednesday morning setup and Wednesday night cleanup, Moose Miller for the Wednesday night cleanup, and to Art Lisowsky and Keith Mull for their help on rounding up donors in Hanover and collecting their donations Wednesday morning. Without their help, we could not have done it.

Laptop Security According to the FBI, a laptop computer is stolen every 53 seconds and 97% of those stolen are never recovered. Here are some tips that may help protect yours.

- When traveling, don't use a laptop carrying case; it's a dead giveaway as to what's inside. Instead, use a briefcase or regular piece of luggage and retrofit it with padding as needed.
- The use of visual deterrents may help scare thieves away from your computer. Engrave your driver's license number on the case and affix an Operation Identification sticker. There are companies that sell security plates that attach to your laptop, complete with barcodes and printed warnings that the laptop is constantly monitored.
- Consider getting laptop insurance. Policies start at \$200 a year.
- Install tracking software on your computer. These services cost about \$45 a year. Once the software is installed, your computer can be remotely tracked. Some tracking services even remotely erase your hard drive if you report an unrecoverable theft.
- Consider investing in an alarm system. Some sound a 110dB alarm (that's loud) if a stainless steel cable is cut or activated by a motion detector.
- Encrypt your data. That way, even if your laptop is stolen, nobody else will be able to read the data that resides on it – and that data is, in most cases, far more valuable than the computer itself.

Disabled Police Officers Assistance Foundation On December 15, 2009, the Disabled Police Officers Assistance Foundation was conducting telephone solicitations in the area, seeking pledges ranging from \$100 down to \$50. The caller said that the organization was based in Niceville, Florida, but was unable to identify any work being done in this area.

According to their website, this organization also does business under the names of Disabled Police Officers Counseling Center and Disabled Police Officers Charitable Fund. Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org) gives the organization 0 stars out of a possible 4, reporting that only 18.2% of its revenue goes to program expenses, while 78.8% goes to fundraising. Its president, Terry Morrison, receives \$49,277 from the Counseling Center and its affiliates, while Vice-President Lorna Morrison receives \$39,247. The Better Business Bureau lists it as Disabled Police Officers of America, at the same Florida address, and reports that the organization has not responded to BBB's request for information or has declined to be evaluated. A report on another part of the organization, in Carson City, NV, has expired.

The Washington (state) Secretary of State reported that for 2008, the Counseling Center used 12% of its revenue for program services. On December 10, 2009, the Oregon Attorney General listed both the Disabled Police Officers of America and the Disabled Police Officers Counseling Center as among the 20 worst charities in Oregon, based on the low percentage of their revenue that went to actual services (14.65% and 14.75%, respectively). The website masschiefs.org reported that in 2003, the center used 11% of

its funds for program services; in 2004, it was 14%. In January 2008, the Somerset, MA, police chief warned residents against donating to the Assistance Foundation after learning that in 2006, the organization spent 97.7% of its revenue on “functional services,” including \$500,000 of the \$627,054 it raised on fund raising. The head of the organization acknowledged that they spent \$25,000 on helping disabled officers but was unable to tell the chief if any officers in Massachusetts were helped.

Under Vermont law, fundraisers in that state must report to the state Attorney General how much they raised and how much of that went to the charity. As of December 3, 2009, the Disabled Police Officers Assistance Foundation had raised \$13,545, with 10% of that going to the charity. The California Attorney General reported that of \$53,077 collected there, 15% went to the organization. And neither of these factor in administrative expenses and staff compensation within the organization itself.

According to the Maryland Secretary of State, in 2008, the Disabled Police Officers Counseling Center raised \$562,134, but only \$65,922 (13%) went to program services. The Disabled Police Officers of America, also headed by Terry Morrison in Niceville, FL, raised \$951,895 and 98% of that went to fundraising and management expenses.

If you want to donate to a charity, do it locally or to a national organization that you know and trust. The best tactic to deal with telephone solicitors is to either simply say no and hang up, or tell them to mail you information, but refuse to make a pledge over the phone. Never make a pledge over the phone unless you are absolutely certain it's an organization you know and want to support.

Some Final Words

I again want to thank all those who helped make the buffet a success.

On another note, if you would like to serve as Vice-President for the next year, please make yourself available at the January meeting. The duties are not great – fill in for me when necessary and attend the quarterly Executive Board meetings in Millersville.

I hope all had a good Christmas and look forward to a healthy and enjoyable New Year.

Dave Daughters
President
410-672-5703
dlldaugh@aol.com