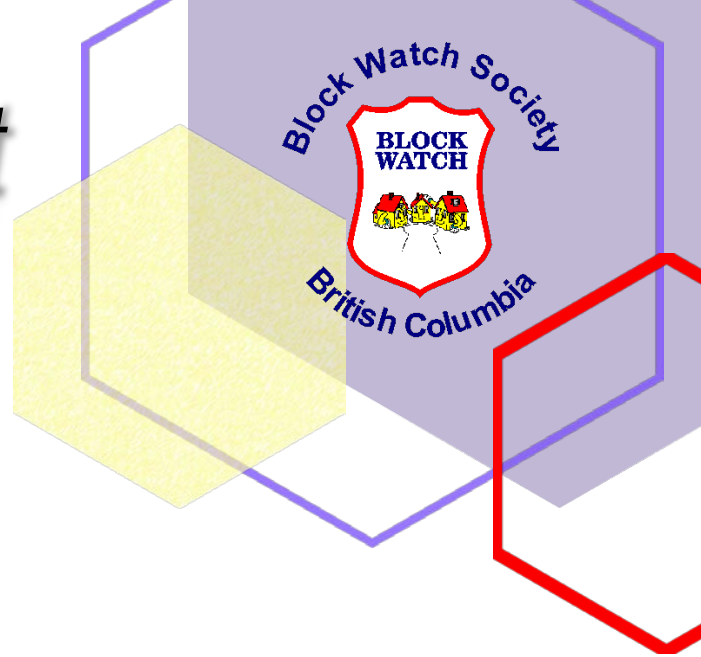


Block Watch Beat

Spring 2020

A Newsletter for B.C. Block Watch Groups



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Spring Break ----- | 1 |
| Lighting ----- | 1 |
| Fraud Prevention Month ----- | 2 |
| Stale Block Watch Groups ----- | 3, 4 |
| Community Grants ----- | 4 |
| Spotlight on Cst. Romi Mattu ----- | 5 |
| Broken Windows Theory ----- | 5, 6 |

Spring Break Home Security

By Kimberly Kelley, Victoria Police Department

Will you be away this spring break? Remember to add these tips to your pre-vacation checklist.

One of the benefits of belonging to a Block Watch group is you have a better chance of having a trusting relationship with one or more of your neighbours. You have put in the effort, now leaving your home is the ultimate proof of Block Watch's success. Investing in basic home security combined with neighbourhood crime prevention strategies, you can rest assured your home will look less

appealing to a burglar while you are away.

- Tell a neighbour your travel dates and ask them to keep an eye on your home and give them a way to contact you as well.
- Arrange for a house sitter to stay in your home, or have someone regularly check on your house.
- Make arrangements to have your yard work done (ie. snow removal), so that your regular maintenance looks consistent.

- Postpone newspaper and mail delivery.
- Set up a timer for your lights and TV.
- Set your house alarm (if you have one).
- Ask a neighbour to park in your driveway.
- Lock up valuables and important documents in a safe or bank deposit box.
- Ensure your home and vehicle insurance are both up to date.
- Filter your social media activity. Do not advertise that you are away and your home is empty.

Lighting

Areas that are well lit generally make people feel safer and deter crime because criminals do not want to be seen. Below are some crime prevention tips regarding general lighting around your homes.

- Improving lighting around your home that will make it less of a target for crime and disorder.
- Consider adding light fixtures to illuminate parking areas, driveways and the rear of your homes.
- Illuminating areas during hours of darkness will deter people

gathering or give them places to hide in the shadows.

- "Dusk to Dawn" bulbs have a sensor built in and give a good low-level lighting around your home during dark hours.
- These security bulbs can be used in common "screw in" fixtures and can be left switched on and go off automatically.
- Motion activated outdoor security lighting fixtures can also alert you to activity around the perimeter of your home.
- Use LED bulbs as they use less energy, are long lasting and are

higher quality, producing bright white light.

- LED lights work well with exterior camera security systems if you have them around your home, to increase visibility.
- Check all bulbs around your premises regularly to ensure they are working and are clean and free from debris.
- Ensure entryways, main walkways, back alleys, parking areas and corners of buildings are well lit.
- Make sure trees and shrubs are not blocking light fixtures.

March is Fraud Prevention Month

By Regan Borisenko
Vernon RCMP



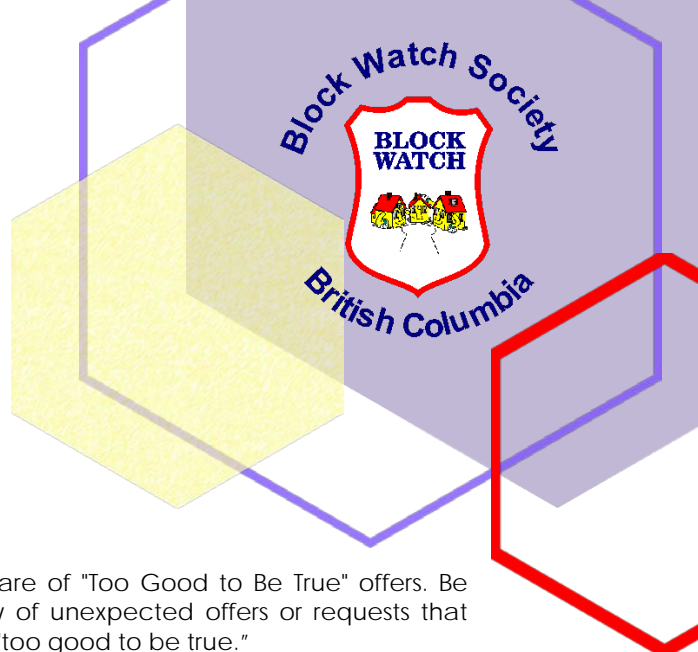
March is Fraud Prevention Month and both the RCMP and the Block Watch Society want to prevent our Crime Prevention Groups from becoming victims of fraud by helping them to **"Recognize it - Report it - Stop it!"** Fraudsters rely on some basic techniques to be successful.

Fraud techniques to watch out for:

- Professional-looking marketing materials
- Believable answers for your tough questions
- Impersonate government agencies, legitimate businesses, websites, charities and causes
- Pretend to be your ordinary supplier
- Hide the true details in the fine print
- Prey on areas of vulnerability, including those needing help with loans or finding employment
- Ask for fees in advance of promised services
- Threaten legal action to collect on alleged contracts
- Falsely claim affiliation with reliable sources, such as legitimate news sites to support their products or services
- Exchange victim lists with other fraudsters

Best Defence:

- Keep personal information confidential. Do not give out personal information (including credit card number) over the phone, through email or over the Internet unless you initiated the contact and know who you're dealing with.
- Keep your personal information safe. An identity thief may pick through your garbage or recycling bins, so be sure to shred receipts, copies of credit applications, insurance forms, etc.
- Protect your PIN and passwords. Do not reveal your PIN or passwords to anyone, including employees of your bank or credit union, family members and friends.



- Beware of "Too Good to Be True" offers. Be wary of unexpected offers or requests that are "too good to be true."
- Contact the authorities. If you suspect you are a victim of fraud, contact your bank and the Police immediately.
- Develop good password habits; change them often and use unique ones that are hard to guess.
- Ensure the website address makes sense. Is the name in the address or is it someone/thing else.
- Consider a low-limit credit card to use for online purchases.

Visit the Competition Bureau for more information and prevention tips on the Competition Bureau fraud prevention page at:
<http://www.competitionbureau.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/eng/02595.html>

RCMP Fraud Campaign News releases, scams and fraud:
<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/scams-fraudes/index-eng.htm>

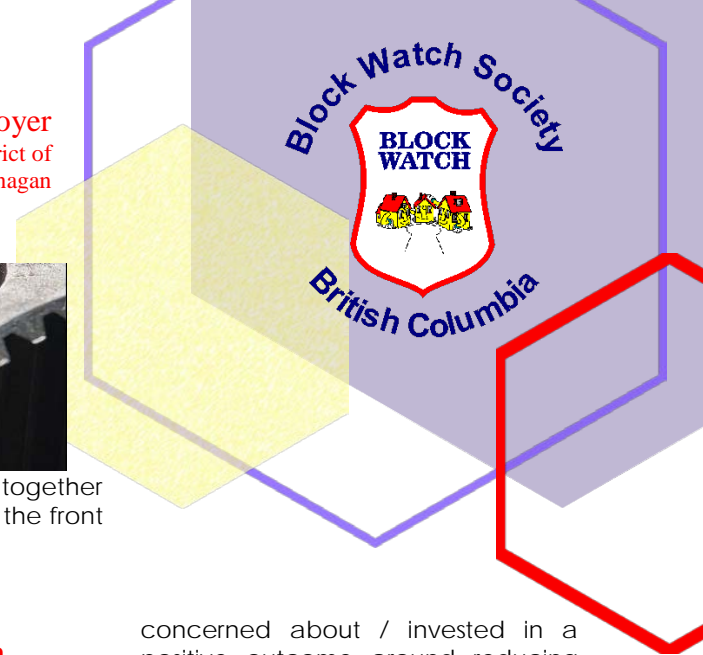
Better Business Bureau's Top 10 Scams
<http://www.bbb.org/vancouver-island/news-centre/news-releases/2017/02/top-10-scams-2017/>

Here is another easy to follow website that describes quite a few scams happening today:
<https://heimdalsecurity.com/blog/top-online-scams/>



How to Manage Stale Block Watch Groups

By Mike Moyer
Regional District of
North Okanagan



As coordinators, we always want to have successful Block Watches, but there will be times when one or more of your Block Watches stop engaging or communicating.

The BC Block Watch Society's mission is to provide leadership on effective and cost-efficient ways to prevent and reduce crime. It does this by concentrating on two activities: supporting crime prevention practices (eyes and ears), and building /sharing practical knowledge (resources).

This article is not intended to dictate what must be done, nor is it intended to instruct individuals to dismantle a stale/faltering Block Watch. It is meant to be one source of inspiration for those looking for options, so I will outline a few ideas that could be effective and helpful in this kind of situation.

Most Block Watches start because a neighbour or group of individuals or households have concerns about direct or indirect crime happening in their area. These concerns force the neighbourhood to come together to discuss how a Block Watch could help increase or support their sense of safety in their own homes and communities. Due to the resulting proactive work, crime incidents may decrease, and some groups begin to find it less necessary to have a consistently engaging group, which results in interest in the program dropping off. To help stop successful Block Watches from dropping off, and increase the chances of newly formed Block Watches of

succeeding, I have put together several points for success at the front end.

Remember: It's a Community Problem

Block Watches can address all types of crime, but their primary focus is typically residential B&E's and other crimes around homes in the neighbourhood. This is not the Block Watch coordinator's sole problem to fix. It is essential to recruit robust, diverse and dedicated individuals (Captain and Co-Captains) who are willing to lead the neighbourhood or group for the long haul. People who are living with the issues on a daily and yearly basis are usually more engaged compared to outsiders.

It's all about the People

The first step in keeping a successful group moving forward is to identify natural leaders or the persons most

concerned about / invested in a positive outcome around reducing crime in the neighbourhood and organize a meeting of these individuals to discuss safety. Inviting local policing representatives to a neighbourhood meeting to discuss community safety is always a good start. An active communication network is essential, and it should be organized to pass along timely information about crime and security to residents. Local police may have resourcing available to provide training on recognizing and reporting suspicious activity, and on appropriate home and neighbourhood security measures.

Relationships

Relationships are the building blocks for all community organizing activities. Why? Because the relationships we have with our Block Watch captains, and the communities we serve are the means for achieving safety. Safe communities don't work in isolation: we need to be working together! Our relationships form the foundation of an organized effort for positive change. We need lots of people to contribute their ideas, take a stand, and get the work done. Regardless of whether you might have followed the textbook logistics on setting up your Block Watch, the



chances are that at some point, they will still fall off or go stale due to a reduction in local issues or a change in the neighbourhood and Watch dynamics. Now what?

Here are a few suggestions:

Understanding Volunteer Job Description

This step is incredibly important – not only to ensure the person with the right skills is selected to get the job done. But also to increase the chances that the volunteer(s) will be satisfied in their role (role fit is crucial to job satisfaction and Block Watch continuity). This doesn't mean the first person to step forward, and the volunteer will be the right person for the role. With your captains, go over your plans and strategies and review your expectations. Ensure you identify the skills & resources that are needed for that to happen, and proceed from there.

Use Your Social Network

One of the best ways to keep people engaged is to develop a platform for people to communicate promptly. In this age, a significant percentage of people use some form of social media like Facebook, Instagram or Twitter to communicate. Individual Facebook pages or groups can be set up as long as it doesn't use the BC Block Watch logo or name, and the privacy settings are adjusted to ensure that nobody from outside of the Watch has access to the page or information. It is always suggested to review the BC Block Watch social media policy and obtain prior written permission before initiating any

measures that involve social media, or the use of the logo.

Regular Communication

Volunteers, like employees, come to your Block Watch groups with a passion for the cause & interest in neighbourhood safety. They, like every other human being, have preconceived ideas and expectations about their roles and your group. Keep your volunteers happy and engaged; it's essential to communicate regularly and ensure all communication is useful. This may take the form of email, mail-outs or newsletters. Most importantly, groups should understand that this is not a one-way form of communicating, and good communication can come from anybody at any time.

Make It Enjoyable

Fun is the secret ingredient to keeping volunteers engaged. Sure, it's essential to know groups are professional and serious about safety. Still, it's (perhaps even equally as) necessary to create an environment in which the group will have fun and enjoy belonging to a more significant cause.

One of the ways to achieve this is to create an environment where volunteers can quickly develop personal, emotional, and professional connections. This connection not only helps keep a neighbourhood safe but helps form a real sense of community. Every neighbourhood and group are different and have their own set of dynamics. It is crucial to seek out-of-the-box solutions when groups wane or stop communicating. The bottom line, though, is that if a group fails to

deliver consistently, and attempts to revive it are unsuccessful, you (as the coordinator) have the right to attend and remove their Block Watch signs and disseminate them to another location.



Community Grants are Back!

Last year, the BC Block Watch Society awarded 46 Community Grants at \$150 each to Block Watch groups all across the province, thereby helping neighbour resiliency and educating on crime prevention.

If you are a certified Block Watch group and you have a plan for spending some money on community building and crime prevention, then you would qualify, too!

Some examples:

- Block Watch Block Party (with a crime prevention theme)
- Bike safety "rodeo"
- Crime Prevention community talk
- Beautification initiative (landscaping, murals, maintenance, etc...)

By Gabriel Pelletier, Surrey RCMP

And don't forget:

- Event must be inclusive of neighbourhood and neighbours
- Organizers of the event MUST submit a report of their event
- Grants are issued to awarded neighbourhoods AFTER receiving report of the event

Apply starting April 1st with the form on our website, BlockWatch.com.

SPOTLIGHT on a Coordinator:

Cst. Romi Mattu

Submitted by
Leah Marlay, VPD

Looking back on my career with pride, I wish to announce my retirement and



Leah Marlay and Cst. Romi Mattu

offer my deepest gratitude for being afforded the opportunity to work with all the Vancouver Block Watch groups as well as the members of the Block Watch Society of BC. The Block Watch community is a dedicated group of individuals who support one another; a group of strangers, coming together to make their shared neighbourhood a better place. It's a good place for a police officer to finish their career; it's a positive energy which I will take with me as I venture towards the next chapter in my life.

In my personal time, I volunteer with Habitat for Humanity as a Team Leader and have completed numerous international house building projects across the globe. I am the proud mother to two adult sons and enjoy a good life with my husband, Roger, and

our dog, Bo. I will also continue on as a Block Watch Captain in my own condo complex in Richmond.

It is anticipated that my replacement, Constable Stephanie Cullingworth, will arrive in the next couple of months. Cst. Cullingworth will be a great fit and I am sure you will all enjoy working with her.

What will my retirement life look like...? I'm not sure, but I'm excited to find out!

Broken Windows Theory: Kelling's Legacy to Block Watch and BC

By Gabriel Pelletier, Surrey RCMP

On May 15th, 2019 George Kelling passed away at 83 years old. He left what he admitted was a mixed legacy with his signature crime prevention contribution to the world, widely known as Broken Windows Theory.

The 1982 article, *Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety*, which Kelling co-authored with James Wilson, fuelled different crime prevention and preventative policing strategies in several big cities in the United States throughout the 80's and is recognized for success in the 1990's.

The theory in a nutshell is the idea that one broken window, left unfixed, can literally be an invitation to more vandalism, mischief, theft and even leading to major crime.

One obvious positive effect from this theory that is surely evident to anyone reading this, is its influence on every city, every strata and every business improvement association that encounters vandalism. It is a theory that supports the common-sense principle that any damage must immediately be repaired rather than left to stand as a sore thumb.

However, Broken Windows faces criticism that it is an incomplete theory – that there are more important factors that contribute to drops in crime. Kelling himself would agree in this regard: that not only are all good ideas are worth sharing, but especially when good ideas work well together.

In fact, basic training for BC municipal Block Watch Coordinators includes CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) which combines Broken Windows theory with a host of compatible best practices that we use to advise

captains about neighbourhood safety. In this training, Broken Windows is explained under the principle of good management – that a property must be managed well so that damage to property is repaired in good time.

Another, darker critique that was leveled against Broken Windows Theory includes the charge that it gave police officers reason to over-policing lower-class communities and minority races in the inner city. The charge was that windows would be fixed but also that any sign of crime and social disorder should also be swept under the rug.

On the one hand this criticism undoubtedly has examples in Canadian cities, but cultural and structural changes over time have been good for improving trust in police forces in Canada. Also, even if this were true, not implementing Broken Windows theory for fear of being accused of racial and class intimidation would be grossly unwarranted.

Legacy in BC

Kelling's legacy for Block Watch and BC communities can be seen in our cities' beautification plans, progressive urban planning, and incorporating CPTED at all levels of development.

Broken Windows is an especially successful theory when we keep it simple. The imagery of a broken window is a metaphor for all types of crime but it is most useful for us in Block Watch to think of it literally as damaged property.

It is reassuring to know that some further crime can be prevented by promptly fixing a damaged fence, and for that probability, we have George Kelling to thank.

Source for original article in The Atlantic Magazine, March 1982.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/>



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- Kimberly Kelley – Victoria PD
- Romi Mattu – Vancouver PD
- Roy Morgan – Regional District of Central Okanagan
- Mike Moyer – Regional District of North Okanagan
- Gabriel Pelletier – Surrey RCMP

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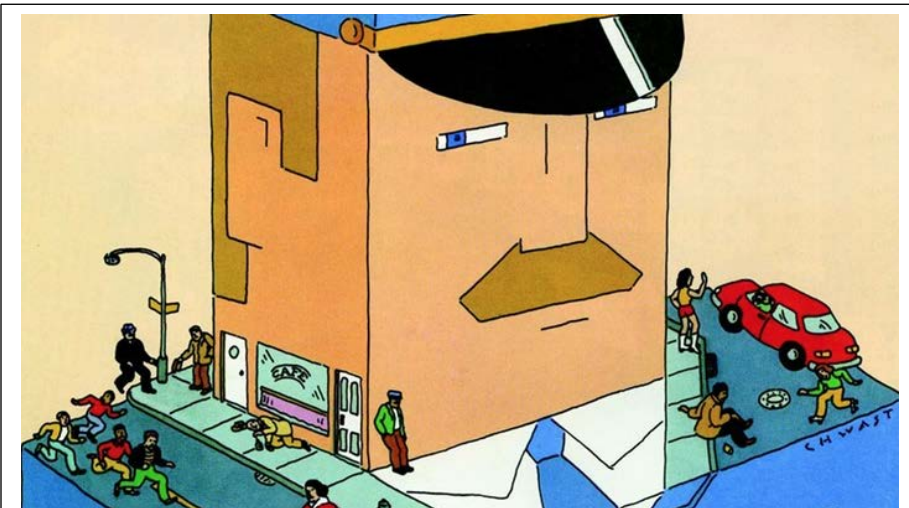
www.blockwatch.com

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Twitter: [@bcblockwatch](https://twitter.com/bcblockwatch)

Facebook: [@bcblockwatch](https://www.facebook.com/bcblockwatch)



Original artwork from The Atlantic magazine, March 1982 issue

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