

Crime Watch gets lesson in identification

By ELIZABETH ANDERSON
Post Correspondent

JACKSON TWP. — That was rude.

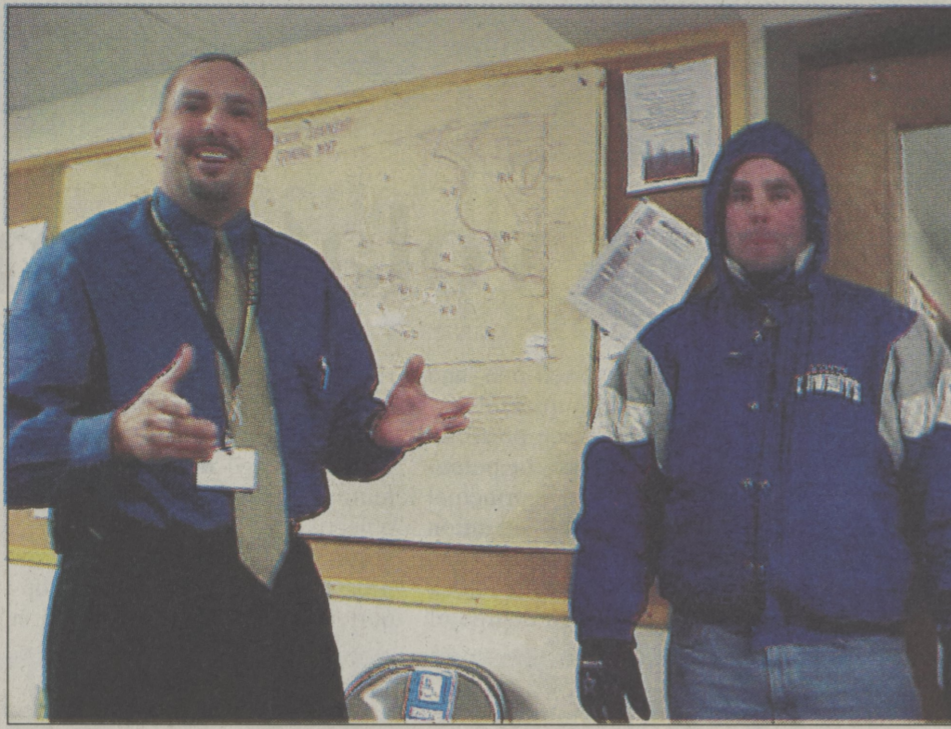
Charles Balogh of the Luzerne County's District Attorney's Office had just begun his presentation to the Jackson Township Crime Watch on preventing the opportunity for a burglary, when a man in a blue jacket pushed swiftly out the door of the meeting room, rattling the glass pane noisily behind him. Most of the 30 or so residents present glanced his way for a few seconds, wondering why he had left so suddenly. Surely, he wasn't bored yet. The Crime Watch citizens quickly settled back in to listen. Who was that anyway?

A moment later a woman in the back stood and said, "My purse has been stolen."

Okay, it was just a hoax; a test revealing the descriptive powers of the Jackson Township residents to be pretty good — even if their reaction could have used a little help.

"Everyone just stood there like, ok, this is a normal guy," laughed Balogh. "This is how fast things happen and you are witnessing it. You've got to remember as much as you can," Balogh advised. "He was in and out in less than 10 seconds. Sometimes that's how fast things happen."

When Tim Bernick, a worker for the Jackson Township road department, was called back in, Balogh noted that no one had noticed he had gloves on but complemented the gentleman who recognized the Dallas Cowboys jacket.



"He was in and out in less than 10 seconds. Sometimes that's how fast things happen."

Charles Balogh
Crime Watch advisor
Luzerne County
District Attorney's Office

The average burglary takes about six minutes and surprisingly takes place between the hours of 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. according to "James," a career burglar, seen on a video provided by Balogh. Future crime watch meetings will feature other special presentations concerning crime and how to prevent it.

Of the three ingredients of a crime — desire, ability and opportunity, only the opportunity for a crime can be prevented and this is where extra pairs of eyes and ears for law enforcement come in. Balogh cautioned crime watch volunteers against confronting possible criminals. "We normally don't want you to have a confrontation with any-

Crime Prevention Awareness Specialist Charles Balogh of the District Attorney's office, left, reviews the description Jackson Township residents gave of "criminal" Tim Bernick. Bernick, who works for the township's road department, graciously volunteered to steal an audience member's purse at last week's Crime Watch meeting to test the residents' description taking skills.

POST PHOTO/
ELIZABETH ANDERSON

one. What we want is for you to report in as much detail as possible."

"The best crime prevention device ever invented, anyone know?" asked Balogh. "Actually, and you might be surprised about this, it's a good neighbor." House alarms and indoor pet dogs run a close second.

"They say only half of the people report crime," added Balogh, reporting that some people do not report suspicious activity or persons because of fear of embarrassment.

The Jackson Township Crime Watch meets regularly on the fourth Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the township municipal building. The next meeting will be March 28.

Blood

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monwealth Telephone. Hoffman retired after 10 years of service to the council and will be replaced by Chris Hoffman of CTE.

"I was pleased working with them. I think we were productive and increased a little bit over the years," said Hoffman. "Most recently, because of 9-11, we saw a change in the dedication of people to donate and it was nice to see the patriotism involved."

Irem Temple Country Club, the Meadow's Nursing Home and the Dallas United Methodist Church were recent sites for blood drives. "These were very successful and we're grateful for the response," said Laurie Popson, a Dallas resident who is the Blood Services Coordinator for the Wyoming Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross. "We are always looking for new volunteers. I worked with some wonderful people through my involvement with the Dallas School District and I hope they will consider volunteering for us when their students go off to college and their PTO days are over."

Research has shown that eight out of 10 people will need a blood product at some point in their lives but only 5 percent of eligible donors actually donate.

Eight out of 10 people will need blood at some point, but only 5 percent donate.

That means that 5 percent of the population is supporting the needs of 80 percent. The need is constant and it is the mission of the American Red Cross to make sure that they are ready to ship whatever is needed.

Several blood collections are scheduled for March in the Back Mountain. Lake-Lehman and Dallas high schools will be conducting drives that are open only to their eligible students. These collections are planned and organized by members of the student body. Open community collections will be held at College Misericordia in Dallas on March 13 and at Penn State Wilkes-Barre Campus in Lehman on April 3. In addition, the Shavertown United Methodist Church is in the planning stage of an upcoming community collection.

For more information or to sign up, call Laurie Popson at 823-7161, ext. 340.

Susquehanna U Choir to perform at St. Paul's

The internationally known Susquehanna University Choir of Selinsgrove, Pa., will perform at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, March 17 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Dallas. The concert is open to the public and a free will offering will be taken. A reception will be held in the church social hall following the performance.

Corrections

A story in the February 28 issue concerning the Lake-Lehman Band Sponsors contained misleading financial figures. The article stated over \$3 million had been put aside for the athletic fieldhouse on the high school remodeling and construction project. No specific figure has been established.

A district court brief in the February 21 issue incorrectly stated that Crystal Visnecki, 27, of Noxen, would face a court trial on a charge of drug possession. The court report indicates she faces trial on possession of drug paraphernalia and a charge of drug possession was dismissed.

Sheetz manager charged with stealing over \$7,000

Says she threw money in Courtdale trash bin

A theft charge against Michelle Marie Hufford, 31, of 214 Prospect St., Wilkes-Barre, was held over to county court after a preliminary hearing before District Justice James Tup-

per. According to arrest papers: Hufford, the daytime manager of the Sheetz convenience store in Trucksville, was seen on the store's security camera taking \$7,170 from the store safe.

Sheetz district manager Patricia Emilio told police that Hufford, after closing out three registers for the second time during

her daytime shift on January 12, placed the money in a bag and put it in the safe. Two hours later, Hufford went back to the safe, removed the money, used the telephone and put the bag of money in her purse.

Police questioned Hufford, who waived her right to a preliminary hearing and admitted to taking the money, and told

police in a written statement that she threw the bag of money into a garbage container at a car wash on Courtdale Ave. in Courtdale.

No Sheetz representative could be reached for comment.

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