



# Block Watch Quarterly

Oct-Dec 2006

## Social Networking Websites

### Wildlife in Neighborhoods

Did you know that our very own N Foote St Block Watch was right in the middle of the raccoon invasion this summer? The issues that draw neighbors together can vary widely, and this was one of them. From working with neighbors to develop better habits about food & garbage storage, mourning the loss of pets and preparing for the arrival of the National Geographic film crew, they faced many challenges together.

Their captain suggested that I put a few resources in this newsletter about living with wildlife to help other neighborhoods who may be facing similar issues. This material was taken from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife website – <http://wdfw.wa.gov>. They are also the best resource for dealing with wildlife issues. Their phone number is 902-2200.

To prevent conflict with raccoons, they advise:

- Don't feed raccoons.
- Don't give raccoons access to garbage.
- Feed dogs and cats indoors.
- Keep pets indoors at night.
- Prevent raccoons from entering pet doors.
- Put food in secure compost containers and clean up barbecue areas.
- Eliminate access to denning sites.

The website also includes important information about the legalities of trapping, releasing or killing wildlife, as well as health concerns related to raccoons, other animals and birds.

Congratulations to the N Foote St Block Watch for working together to resolve this issue!

***Have you and your family sat down to discuss the risks and rules regarding social networking sites such as [myspace.com](http://myspace.com), [facebook.com](http://facebook.com) and [xanga.com](http://xanga.com)?*** Although these places can offer opportunities for socializing and creativity, they are also prime territory for people who intend harm.

Parents should talk to their kids about the risks online, keep the computer in a busy part of the house, visit websites and chat rooms with their children and establish clear rules about internet usage. Those rules should include never giving out personal information, giving parents access to all accounts, never agreeing to meet face-to-face with a person met online, never opening emails or visiting links that are unfamiliar and always reporting incidents that make them uncomfortable.

If a child does report a suspicious encounter online, be supportive. Pass on the report to law enforcement and the Cyber Tip Line – [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com). This website is managed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

It is a good idea to sit down with your children to develop and implement an "Acceptable Use Policy" for the family. This can be a valuable tool for setting up expectations and consequences for misuse.

Parents should also learn about and use computer security features and profile restrictions to protect their children. Visit [www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org), [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org) and your internet provider's website for more information.

### **LOCK THOSE CARS!!**

Although vehicle break-ins have declined this year, more than half are as the result of unsecured locks & windows. Especially with the holiday season approaching, remember to lock up and keep valuables out of sight.

## Officer Profile

### Halloween Safety Tips

- For optimum safety, consider participating in an organized event in a neighborhood, at a church or in a local shopping center
- Avoid costumes that block visibility and hamper movement
- Get an early start—try to complete trick-or-treating activities before dark
- Walk in a group and accompanied by at least one adult with a cell phone
- Only go to houses with the porch light on or, better yet, only to homes where the residents are known
- Wear reflective items and carry a flashlight if out after dark
- Stay on the sidewalk and obey traffic laws
- Parents—please check treats for evidence of tampering and discard any with open wrappers.

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Detective Ryan Hirotaka has been with OPD since 1997. In that time, Detective Hirotaka has been involved in many aspects of the department. Currently, he is assigned to the Detective division where he primarily investigates property crimes. While he will enjoy working with the Patrol Division again next year because of the wide variety of calls and situations, he also liked being a part of the Traffic Unit which gave him a chance to interact with volunteers and remind people about the importance of safe driving habits. He participates in a county-wide child passenger restraint team that checks car seats for free at events all around the county. In the future, he is looking forward to becoming a Field Training Officer and being promoted to Sergeant.

Detective Hirotaka has the following message for our Block Watch Groups:

“The Block Watch program works. I can tell you from personal experience that 3 vehicle prowler suspects from Tacoma were caught in the act last summer as a result of neighbors who observed a suspicious vehicle in their neighborhood and called 9-1-1. If we did not hear from the neighbors, the suspects would not have been apprehended.”



Detective Hirotaka & friend at the Thurston County Big Brothers/Big Sisters Back to School shopping event. Detective Hirotaka is Vice President of the Olympia Cops and Kids Foundation.