

▶ January 2010

## Block Watcher

An optimist stays up until midnight to see the new year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.

~Bill Vaughan



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### CRIME SUMMARY for 2009

Incident	2008	2009	Change
Auto Thefts	216	150	30% decrease
Residential Burglary	677	669	1% decrease
Theft	2578	2685	4% increase
Vehicle Prowls	1226	1019	17% decrease

The above numbers show that there has been an overall decrease in crime that can often times be preventable from 2008 to 2009. Keeping your porch light on, locking your doors, not keeping valuables in your car and keeping your valuables locked up around your house seemed to pay off in the past year. Keep up the good work and lets see if we can see another decrease in crime this year.

### CREDIT REPORT

It is the beginning of a new year so what better way to start off the new year than by running a credit report on yourself? The law requires that the major consumer reporting companies give you a free credit report once a year if you ask for it. So please visit [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) to order your free copy or contact any of the three companies below.

Equifax: 1-800-525-6285

Experian: 1-888-397-3742

Trans Union: 1-800-680-7289

Please visit [www.ftc.gov/idtheft](http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft) for more information.



*Did you know?*

- You can look up crime statistics for your neighborhood by going to the Police Department's website at [www.cob.org/police](http://www.cob.org/police) and clicking on the neighborhood crime statistic link on the right hand side?



## Another Scam to Watch For.....

A company called supportonclick.com is calling people directly asking to help fix your computer and make it "run faster." The scam involves people taking a call from a person working at a foreign call centre (most people are saying they sound East Indian). The caller claims to belong to a software support company that has been requested by Microsoft to fix problems on your computer.

According to various reports, "The offender confirms the victim's computer has sent error messages to Microsoft regarding problems with their Windows Explorer. The offender will then direct the victim through a process on their computer ultimately giving the offender remote access to the computer to download Trojans or gain access to personal information. Once the offender has gained access, they will then give or sell the victim software in order to prevent this problem in the future. The victim, instead of downloading anti-virus software, will unknowingly be installing a virus on their computer which may be used to gather credit card data"

Please remember to never give out personal information over the phone. Any legitimate company that you do business with already has that information! Also remember, that Microsoft will never call and solicit this type of business.

## Bellingham Municipal Codes– So What really is the Law Anyway?

If you have kids, keep this law in mind! Does your child's toy have compressed air/gas or spring?

### 10.30.010 - Discharging Firearms

- A. It is unlawful to discharge a firearm within the City, except at indoor rifle ranges operated in accordance with the provisions of Section 17.20.070 of this code.
- B. As used in this chapter, "firearm" means a weapon or device from which a projectile may be fired by an explosive such as gunpowder.
- C. It is unlawful to shoot, or otherwise cause the discharge of, a projectile from a bow, sling shot, BB gun or other device from which a projectile may be discharged by compressed air or gas, or spring power, unless such projectile is aimed at an inanimate target and does not strike a person, bird, or animal, or land on public or private property other than property whose owner has given express permission for the discharge of the projectile on such property.
- D. **Target**, for purposes of this chapter, shall mean a device specially designed for shooting or target practice, and which is of sufficient size and design to stop the movement of projectiles aimed at it.
- E. **Projectile**, as used in this chapter, means an arrow, rock, BB or other solid object which is capable of striking and causing injury to a person, bird or animal if discharged from a device described in subsection C.

## Emergency Preparedness

Water! Water! Water! Make sure to store one gallon of water per person per day in your house. Three days worth of water is the most common recommendation but I think after watching events unfold with Hurricane Katrina it doesn't hurt to have a few more days than that. If you chose to store water out of the tap, make sure the bottles have never held a toxic substance. Soda bottles work well. Just remember to replace the water every 6 months. If you chose to purchase water, remember they have an expiration date as well! You may also want to consider buying water purifying tablets to have on hand just in case. They can be found in many outdoors/camping type stores.

