

InForce

A quarterly publication of the Berks County Sheriff's Department

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Fall 2013

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"Making a Difference"

A Message from Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht

A new scam which appears to have originated in Florida has been growing across the country and has made its way to Reading. Phone fraudsters telephone random individuals using the threat of arrest warrants to pressure people into forking over hundreds and even thousands of dollars. The callers use a sophisticated method of impersonation to convince people to wire money through Western Union or register a prepaid credit card online. By manipulating caller ID to make the number appear to come from the Berks County Sheriff's Department, the callers tell potential



victims they have an outstanding warrant for an unpaid debt or need to pay a fine for some minor infraction. The recipient of the call believes he or she is talking to a Deputy from this department. If the recipient calls back to verify the information using the same phone, the call is routed not to this Department, but to the fraudster's phone. The callers will continue to harass

recipients and threaten arrest if the amount requested is not immediately paid.

The Sheriff's Department does not notify people about arrest warrants by phone and never accepts money to clear them. If you believe you have been targeted, do not provide the caller with any personal or financial information and do not wire money or authorize payment in any other manner. Do not respond with payment information even if the caller knows details about a court case, current or past debts, or any other information that oftentimes is obtained about a person through public records.

The Pennsylvania State Police is investigating, but it's very difficult to track down these types of scams. Wire transfers and prepaid cards are untraceable, and manipulated phone numbers are tough to track down. There really is very little recourse for those who have been victimized and, unfortunately, the best law enforcement can usually do is make people aware.

If you have been contacted by someone you believe to be fraudulently representing him or herself as a Deputy in this department, and need verification that no warrant for your arrest exists, use a work phone or a friend's phone to call the department's Warrants Division (610-478-6240 ext. 3250). Also report the fraud to the Pennsylvania State Police who are currently investigating this crime. Should the calls continue, advise the caller that you have reported the matter to the State Police.

Features

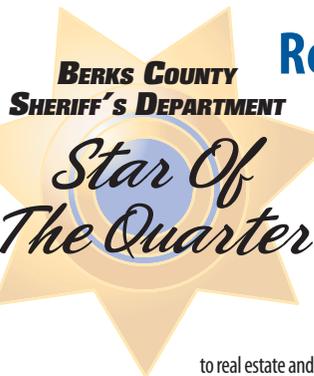
Berks County Sheriff's Department and US Marshals conduct sex offender compliance checks
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Rebecca Oxenreider

BERKS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Star Of The Quarter

Becky Oxenreider, a civilian with the Berks County Sheriff's Department, is the Assistant Real Estate Administrator in the Department's Civil Division. Becky began with the Department in September, 2001 and worked as support staff in civil services, protection from abuse, and personal property departments of the Civil Division. Her early background with the Sheriff's Department prepared her for her current responsibilities which include all matters relative

to real estate and tax services.

The Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure give mortgage holders and judgment lien creditors the right to seek relief for unpaid mortgages and liens. It's Becky's responsibility to oversee the processing and services of those documents as well as the processing and services of civil lawsuits and any Order of the Court that requires personal service by a Deputy.

As a result of a recent extended leave of absence in the Civil Division, Becky jumped in to assume additional duties to keep the Civil Division running smoothly. Becky's supervisor, Jen DeFrees, says Becky's work ethic and dedication to her job is demonstrated every day and that filling the leave of absence without complaint or need for recognition is just one example of that commitment.

When not at work, Becky spends time as an involved committee member of the Maranatha Baptist Church where she sings with the choir and teaches first through third graders in various Christian clubs. She also enjoys reading, working in her vegetable garden and spending time with her niece and nephews. She takes piano lessons because she enjoys playing duets with her sister and spends as much time as she can with her three horses, Cylent, Alley Cat and Eddie.



- October 7 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- October 12 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- October 19 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- October 31 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

- Western Berks Fire Department, 111 Stitzer Ave., Wernersville
- Governor Mifflin High School, 101 South Waverly Street, Shillington
- Queen City Diner, 100 Lancaster Avenue, Reading
- Fairgrounds Square Mall, 3050 North Fifth Street Highway, Reading

Spotlight on Civil Division

The Civil Division of the Berks County Sheriff's Department serves an integral role in the ability of the Sheriff's Department to perform the functions required by law. Staffed with 12 civilians and 1 Deputy, it's the "Grand Central Station" of the department. Imagine a spider with eight legs, each of which services a different division of the Department. The Civil Division is the body of that spider that not only services each division, but is also responsible for advertising and conducting the public sale and transfer of real property (real estate) and personal property by Orders of the Court.

Jen DeFrees, Real Estate Administrator, oversees each function of the Civil Division by the authority given to the Sheriff's Department through the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure. Her title is somewhat misleading, as she does more than ensure the smooth sale and transfer of real and personal property following an owner's mortgage default, failure to pay property taxes, or a money judgment. Her department is also charged with all civil processes and services (notices to individuals) for Sheriff sale, tax sale, civil lawsuits, protection from abuse orders, domestic relations orders, evictions, wage garnishments, or any Order of the Court which requires personal service by Deputy. The Civil Division's civilian employees work diligently behind the scenes to ensure the accuracy in the preparation of, on average, 65,000 civil process services each year.

... back to the body of the spider... About two-thirds of those spider legs are connected to civil processes; the remainder deals with what many may more commonly associate with a law enforcement department, such as logistically coordinating the extradition of prisoners here and throughout the United States, managing transports of adult and juvenile detainees to and from court, organizing the records of individuals processed through the Booking Division and assigning arrest warrants to deputies.



Civil Division (Counter Front L to R): Rebecca Oxenreider, Assistant Real Estate Administrator; Sue Artz, Transports; Jen DeFrees, Real Estate Administrator; Barbara Kodash, Warrants Clerk; Brenda Hein, Fiscal Officer; Norma Alicea, Central Booking Clerk; Denise Baez, Real Estate Clerk (Back row L to R): Jeremy Smith, PFA Clerk and Firearms Clerk; Deputy Ron Uczynski, Firearms Licensing; Mike Siatkowski, Civil Service Clerk; Aaron Yeager (Explorer, summer intern); Matt Raudenbush, Personal Property Clerk; Royal Furer, Civil Service Clerk

Civil Division employees are also most often the public's first contact. They provide the answers to questions and give direction on department-related matters, either by telephone or in person. The department's fiscal officer and the Deputy in charge of the License to Carry office round out the responsibilities that fall under the Civil Division.

Each Division in the Berks County Sheriff's Department touches at least one other Division in functional operations; however, the Civil Division's web provides the connections needed for the entire Department to run smoothly and efficiently.

Jen DeFrees, Real Estate Administrator, attended Kutztown University and began working in the County's Tax Claim office in 1991. She transferred to the Berks County Sheriff's Department in 2006 as the Assistant Real Estate Administrator and was appointed to Real Estate Administrator by Sheriff Weaknecht a year later. Jen spearheaded the development of a computer program to streamline the services of civil processes thus making the operations in her department more cost efficient. Her future plans for a more fully automated office include the development of a program for e-filing and the creation of a "real time" program to track the service of legal documents.



Sheriff's Department First Tier Option in Appeal of Revoked License to Carry

The Berks County Sheriff's Department issues licenses for the concealed carry of firearms. On average, fewer than 100 of the entire number of license holders (over 50,000 in Berks County) are revoked each year. Immediate revocations occur if the license holder is charged with a crime labeled as a misdemeanor of the first degree or all felony crimes. A Protection from Abuse Order is also a reason for license revocation. Disposition of those matters must occur in favor of the individual charged before a license can be reinstated. For an individual charged with a less serious crime, the Sheriff has the right to revoke a license to carry permit based on the character of the individual charged. Rather than waiting approximately three months for the Court to hear the appeal, an individual can now choose to have the decision reviewed by Sheriff Weaknecht at what's called a "Deprivation Hearing." A Deprivation Hearing before the Sheriff is a more immediate way to present evidence in an attempt to reverse a decision to revoke. There is no disadvantage to choosing a Deprivation Hearing as the result of that hearing is not a factor in a continued appeal to reinstate a license.

Checking in on Sex Offenders

The Berks County Sheriff's Department recently partnered with the U.S. Marshal Task Force to complete a five week compliance check of registered sex offenders in Berks County. The U.S. Marshal Sex Offender Investigation Bureau in Philadelphia approved funding for the compliance check initiative which began August 5.

Sheriff and Task Force deputies visited over 250 registered addresses to verify compliance. The names of any registered offenders not residing where indicated on the registry were turned over to the U.S. Marshal Sex Offender Investigation Bureau for further investigation.



Thank You

The Berks County Sheriff's Department, with Deputy Andrew Rushton and his family, express deep appreciation to everyone who attended the August 17 fundraiser or made a contribution in the Department's efforts to raise money to help Andrew offset the cost of treatment in his continued fight against brain cancer. Approximately 300 people attended the fundraiser held at Victor Emmanuel's restaurant in Reading.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- Russo's • Attorney Alan Sodomsy • 6th Street Deli • Scala's
- Mimmo's • Sunshine Blue Skies • 3 Minute Car Wash
- Fox Movie Theater • Marvel Ranch • The Goldsmiths
- The Carriage House • Diamond Barbers • Anthony's Barbers
- Sign-a-Rama • White Star Tours • Rhoads Limos • Olive Garden
- Red Lobster • Plaza Azteca • Flannagan's Pub
- Friendly's Shillington • Old Country Buffet • Texas Roadhouse
- Outback • Scott's Car Wash • Sam's Club • Longhorn Steakhouse
- Giant • Stein Flowers • Willow Hollow Golf Course • Image Clean
- Firestone • Pa Deputy Sheriffs' Association • Ugly Oyster • Good Eatz
- Some Things Looming • Raylon • Tastefully Simple • IMAX
- Sherwin Williams • French Italian Bakery

PENNSYLVANIA'S MEGAN'S LAW requires the state to create and maintain a registry of anyone living, working, or attending school who has either been convicted of or has plead guilty to a sexual crime within Pennsylvania or any other state.

LAW and ORDER

FOCUS

2013 International Police Vehicle Design Contest



Berks County Sheriff's Vehicle Design Voted **BEST** in Category

BEST FORD POLICE INTERCEPTOR

Berks County Sheriff's Department
Reading, PA

The Berks County Sheriff's Department believes that "Sustainability" is one of the most important factors to consider in choice of design, color and graphics because members of the community must be able to immediately identify the department from other law enforcement agencies as they perform the same, yet different, functions within the community. A police car can be from any borough, township or city, but Berks County's "Sheriff cars" are sustainable images.

JUDGES' COMMENTS:

The blue-and-gold color scheme stands out and we like the safety strip on the back bumper. The combination is perfect; follows the lines of the car. The star and flag are nice additions.

Law and Order, a monthly magazine publication for law enforcement management, holds an annual International Police Vehicle Design Contest. The 2013 design contest was judged primarily on vehicle safety, identification, and integrity, and the Berks County Sheriff's vehicle design was voted BEST Ford Police Interceptor.

To view the grand prize winner and all first place winners, log onto www.lawandordermag.com.

Exploring...

We are over half way through the second year of Exploring with new and returning members of the Explorer program. Four of our young Explorers are being featured in this newsletter for accomplishments related to law enforcement outside of the Department's Explorer program itself. Explorer Steven Piech and Explorer Tyler Shriver were accepted into a week-long U.S. Marshal's National Exploring Leadership Academy in Washington DC. Explorer Aaron Yeager has been busy this summer working to help fill a vacancy in the Sheriff's Department, and Explorer Xavier Martinez performed a stunning act of heroism by saving the life of a friend who had slipped under the water and was drowning. As an Explorer, Martinez received CPR training in May and found himself using the skills he learned as an Explorer to save a life only two months later. We congratulate all of our Explorers for continuing to excel in the Explorer program and look forward to the end-of-the-year banquet when Explorers will be individually recognized for their dedication and contributions throughout the year.



Young men and women between the ages of 14 and 20 interested in law enforcement can contact tkwitkowski@thecountyofberks.com for information on joining the Explorer Post in January, 2014.

Explorer Xavier Martinez Saves a Friend's Life



A few friends were invited to attend a pool party on July 5. About eight of us were playing basketball in the shallow 4 foot end and then decided to move to the 9 foot deep end. There are dips on the pool floor from 4 to 6 feet and from 6 to 9 feet. We were all yelling, laughing and having fun when we noticed our friend Ifedapo (Ife) at the bottom of the pool. We did not know Ife could not swim and thought he was seeing how long he could hold his breath. My friends thought he was joking, but I watched him and he was not moving. I dove in, grabbed him, and swam to the surface. Ife is 6' 2" and 187 lbs. so I had help from my friends to get him out. Once he was out, I checked his pulse and his chest. He was not breathing and had no pulse. I immediately told someone to call 9-1-1 and I began doing CPR. I gave him about 30-40 chest thrusts and about 10-15 breaths. Ife then spit out water, his chest was rising up and down, and he had a pulse. I did 5 more thrusts and 2 breaths just to be safe. He finally opened his eyes and went into shock. I stayed with him until the EMTs arrived and took over. - **Xavier Martinez**

Explorer Steps In To Fill Department Void



For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to help and protect people. At the age of 14, I became a Jr. firefighter for my local fire company. After spending two years responding to vehicle accidents, fires, and special rescues, I decided to join the US Civil Air Patrol. The C.A.P. program gave me a lot of leadership experience and

military training. After 18 months, I was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant and soon after became the Deputy Commander of my squadron. I was put in charge of training 25 cadets (Drill and Ceremonies, uniform inspections, performing interviews for staff positions, and giving physical training tests) and keeping professionalism at a high level. While in this program I decided I wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement. In January of 2013, I joined the Berks County Sheriff's Department Post 027. During the past nine months, I have learned what it takes to be a police officer and have received hands-on training in handcuffing, searching, physical training, history of law enforcement, and instruction in civil and criminal law.

This past June, I also received an opportunity to work at the Sheriff's Department for the summer. I've done administrative duties for the department, assisted the Booking Division, and filled in wherever needed to help lighten the load for others who needed to cover a medical leave of absence in the Civil Division. It has been a fulfilling experience, and I am thankful for this opportunity that the department has given me. - **Aaron Yeager**

Second Year BCSD Explorers Accepted Into Week-Long National Exploring Leadership Academy in Washington DC



My week in Washington D.C. was a rewarding experience. I have learned many new leadership skills that I have brought back with the intention of sharing with my Explorer Post and hopefully

incorporate a whole new level of leadership and learning within our program. I have also learned great skills that I can use in my daily life that can and will make me a better person. On my first full day there, we did team building with fellow Explorers from various Explorer Posts across the nation which included many intriguing activities, like looking for clues that would help us achieve the goal of completing an obstacle course. The next day I had the great opportunity to lay a wreath at The Tomb of The Unknown Soldiers. After that I got to have dinner with high ranking officers from the United States Army, it was such a great honor to do so. The rest of the week I toured the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) headquarters in DC, Secret Service, ATF (Alcohol Tobacco & Firearms), and we went to go see The USMC Silent Drill Team. Overall, my experience with the U.S. Marshal's Service was phenomenal! I definitely would recommend this to any other Explorer to attend this once in a lifetime experience. - **Steven Piech**



It was an amazing experience to be accepted into and attend the 2013 U.S. Marshals Academy. The week-long program expanded my knowledge of law enforcement. Every day was a new ad-

venture for me and 29 other Explorers from all around the nation. We all worked as a team to make it through the challenges during the week. One challenge was the obstacle course on the second day of the trip. Teams of Explorers on the ground were tasked with holding Explorers up in the air. It was a fun team building experience for everybody. We also participated in many activities, including touring an armory of the Secret Service. We also got to see the K-9 teams during a demonstration and were treated to an E.V.O.C. (emergency vehicle obstacle course). The Secret Service was the most exciting stop, and I enjoyed seeing Director Stacia Hylton, one of the most amazing people I have ever met. Although the Secret Service was the most exciting stop to me, the most memorable experience and privilege was to be able to be part of a wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Many thanks to the advisors for a very successful week. - **Tyler Shriver**

Safety Tips



Changes in the weather and the end of daylight savings time makes driving in the fall season unpredictable. To be safe and aware on the roads this fall, follow these guidelines:

- **Watch out for leaves:** Be sure to watch for patches of wet leaves on the road; once leaves become wet, they can present slippery and dangerous driving conditions. Dry leaves can also present a problem to your vehicle. Avoid parking your vehicle near leaf piles to prevent fires that could start from your vehicle's catalytic converter.
- **Stay alert on the road:** The end of daylight savings time means reduced visibility on the roads, which can create unfamiliar driving conditions. Even on familiar roads, it's important that motorists use additional caution and adjust their driving habits to watch for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists and other roadway users who will be less visible, especially during the first week of the change.

- **Check your tire pressure:** With frequent weather and temperature changes, tires can expand and contract, causing them to lose air pressure. Make sure tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread.
- **Avoid sun glare:** With the change in time, you may need to adjust to the different morning or late afternoon glare from the sun. The glare can cause reflections off car windows and hoods and decrease your visibility. Keep your car windshields clean and have a good pair of sunglasses readily available to counter daytime glare. Consider lenses with anti-reflective coating to reduce glare when night driving can't be avoided.
- **Plan ahead for wet conditions:** Fall often brings rainfall, which can decrease visibility and cause hydroplaning. Make sure your windshield wipers are in good working condition. If driving on a road with excess water, slow down and avoid sudden movements with the steering wheel or brake pedal. If you feel like you're floating, steer straight and gently release the gas pedal until you feel the tires make contact with the road surface. In an especially heavy downpour, you may want to pull off the road until it's safe to continue.



Project Lifesaver

Project Lifesaver offers caregivers peace of mind in the event a loved one with autism, Down syndrome or Alzheimer's disease ever wanders away or otherwise becomes lost

An at-risk individual wears a personalized wristband that emits a tracking signal. Berks County Sheriff deputies who are trained to use the Project Lifesaver equipment are dispatched to the last known location of the missing individual to pinpoint his or her whereabouts using a mobile locator tracking system. Using radio technology (which in today's world of high-tech gadgets may seem antiquated) provides a reliable, practical, and potentially life-saving method of tracking and locating missing persons registered with the program. Search times can be reduced from hours or days to mere minutes.

For more information on Project Lifesaver, contact Captain Eric Seidel at the Berks County Sheriff's Department at 610-478-6240 ext. 3214.

Most Wanted



Vaughn Xenel Winfield
DOB 5/30/1982
732 Chestnut Street,
Reading, PA 19602
Charges: Endangering Welfare of Children



Thomas Vannote
DOB 10/29/1965
1036 Port Clinton Avenue,
Hamburg, PA 19526
Charges: P.V. – Retail Theft F3



Hector Arroyo-Medina
DOB 2/13/1994
821 Chestnut Street,
Reading, PA 19602
Charges: Terroristic Threats with intent to terrorize another



Brandon Obrien
DOB 7/10/1984
1607 North 9th Street,
Reading, PA 19604
Charges: Theft by Unlawful Taking



Luis Manuel Hernandez
DOB 1/6/1955
1156 Buttonwood Street,
Reading, PA 19604
Charges: Indecent Assault

If you have information that can help apprehend any of the fugitives in this publication, call the Berks County Sheriff's Department Fugitive Tip Line at 610-478-6390 or Crime Alert Berks at 1-877-373-9913.

All your information will be kept confidential.



PAGS Call To Action **UPDATE**

Sponsored by Alecia Pagerly, wife of deceased Deputy Kyle Pagerly, the "Pags Call to Action" fitness challenge began in April at Corps Fitness in Wyomissing. Law enforcement and firefighters were invited to participate in the three month challenge which included strenuous workouts, oftentimes wearing all gear and equipment regularly used on the job. Alecia says Kyle's commitment to fitness in order to perform the duties of his job as a deputy sheriff and firefighter prompted the idea, and she hopes to offer the challenge again in the future.

Left Photo: The crew of the "Pags Call to Action Challenge" looking sharp in their respective uniforms.

Right Photo: Members of the Berks County Sheriff's Department who persevered until the end. . . (L-R) Melissa Seidel, Matt Mendenhall, Mike Jackson, Mike Moorman, (Chris Kaag, owner of Corps Fitness, seated), Chris Gorel, Ed Winters, Phil Bentz and Ken Rice

"An amazing group of men and women from different departments in Berks County, including Wyomissing, Reading, the Sheriff's Department, Spring Township, Cumru Township, Birdsboro and Shillington. This challenge brought together people who might not have known each other and made them work together as a cohesive unit. It doesn't matter what their rank or department, they all suffered equally and developed a respect for everyone, which will be apparent in their jobs along with the physical gains they've made. Corps Fitness is truly proud to have hosted this great group and to have made lasting relationships in and outside of Bldg 7 . . ." Chris Kaag, owner, Corps Fitness

Eagle Scouts Recognized



Sheriff Eric Weaknecht with Eagle Scout, Colby Scheffler

Sheriff Weaknecht extended his personal congratulations to Colby Scheffler and Joshua Peters, both recent graduates of Hamburg High School, who were formally awarded the rank of Eagle Scout. Sheriff Weaknecht attended Colby's Eagle Court of Honor on Sunday, April 14 and Joshua's Eagle Court of Honor on Sunday, May 19 during separate ceremonies held at St. Johns Evangelical Church in Hamburg. Both Eagle Scouts began scouting while elementary students and crossed over into Boy Scouts of Troop 184. Colby earned 21 merit badges and designed and landscaped an area in the Hamburg Park as his Eagle Project. Joshua's Eagle project involved designing, making, and installing a sign commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Appalachian Trail by the trail at the Hamburg Water Shed. Joshua earned 22 merit badges. Colby, 18, plans to join the Marine Corp., and Joshua, 18, is interested in the ROTC program at Wilkes University where he plans to major in criminology.

Keeping Score with Spring Township Fire Department

The Berks County Sheriff's Department and the Spring Township Fire Department come together at least twice a year for bragging rights on who can eat the most and who can play the hardest. The Sheriff's Department remains undefeated in the rib eating contest held each June at the Texas Roadhouse in Wyomissing. In July, the Sheriff's Department repaired the damage from last year's embarrassing loss to Spring Township at this year's softball challenge held at the Fightin' Phils Stadium. The 17-0 win over Spring Township ties the two departments at one win each. Both annual events are in honor of Kyle Pagerly who was killed in the line of duty in June, 2011. Any proceeds raised support the Kyle Pagerly Memorial Fund.

