

THE PROSECUTOR'S PROGRESS

AN UPDATE FROM THE VIRGINIA BEACH COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2 SPRING 2018

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY



School is out for summer and that means our children have a lot more free time. It's a great opportunity for you to talk to them about safety, especially if your children are old enough to stay at home during the day while you go to work. First and foremost, talk to your children about visitors. It is best that they don't answer the door for anyone, unless you have previously arranged for a family member or close friend to show up at a particular time. The same goes

for phone calls. Children should not answer the home phone, but if they do, they should not tell the caller that their parents are not home. Doors should be locked at all times. If a package is delivered, encourage your child to leave it on the doorstep until an adult returns home. Make sure you check in with your children often, and consider a scheduled time for you to check in via phone or a visit home. Lastly, make sure your children know where to go if they should need help. Tell them which neighbors they should trust if they have a concern or an emergency. Leave a list of important phone numbers and make sure they are comfortable calling 911 in an emergency.

If your children have a cell phone, set guidelines for its use. Enable location settings if you would like to be able to track their location throughout the day, but make sure those settings are disabled for certain social media apps and chats. As always, talk to your children about the dangers involved with sharing photos and exchanging messages with people they encounter online.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer, and thank you for working with me to keep children and our community safe.

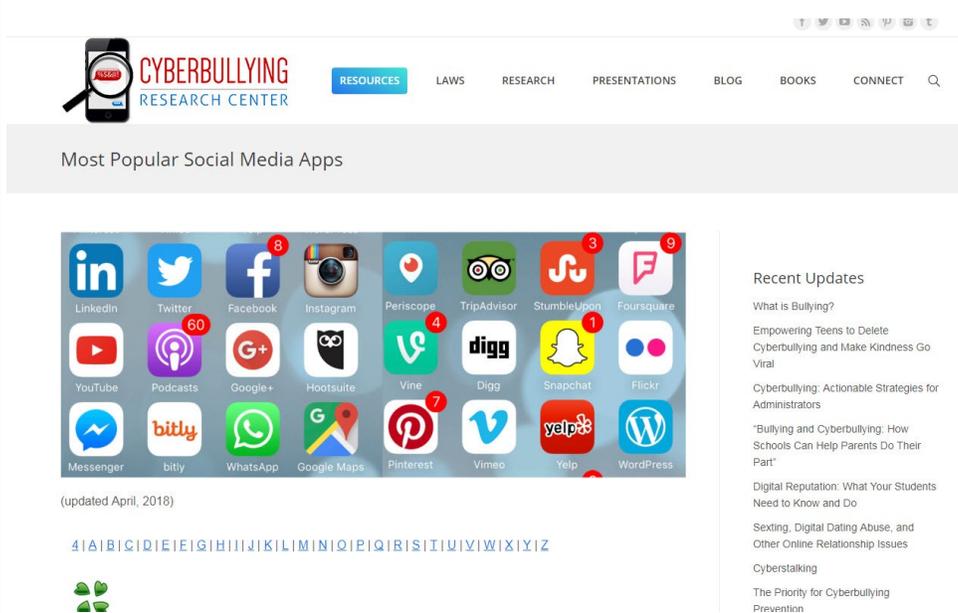
Sincerely,
Colin Stolle

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Message from the Commonwealth's Attorney:*
- *How Parents Can Outsmart their Kids: Staying Aware of New App Alerts*
- *Featured Cases of the Quarter*
- *Consumer Corner: Fake Phone Support Scam*
- *Consumer Corner: Jury Duty Scam: STILL Happening in our City!*

RESOURCE FOR PARENTS: KEEPING UP WITH SOCIAL MEDIA APPS

Popular social media apps are constantly changing and being developed. This presents a challenge for parents as they attempt to monitor what their children are doing online. There are resources that can help you. A website, <https://cyberbullying.org/>, maintains a list of apps children and teens are using, along with what (if anything) should concern parents about each app. From the main site, on the menu bar across the top of the screen, parents should click the tab that says “resources” and from the drop-down menu, click on “most popular social media apps.” The screen should then look like this, with an alphabetized list below:



Under the tab (from menu bar across the top of the screen) labeled “connect”, parents can click the “report cyberbullying” option. A list of contact information for each app is listed. For example, if you have an issue with inappropriate or criminal conduct on Instagram, you can learn how to report the abuse, block the abuser,

address the abuse, contact law enforcement, and more. This site also provides stats, facts, legal updates, games, quizzes, activities, and more.

Parents should continue to follow basic online safety rules: know the passwords to your child’s devices and accounts, allow social media use only in central areas of the home, monitor the device regularly, and talk to your children about their online activity. Make sure your children know the consequences (criminal, with their school, and social) of making poor choices online.

Any threat of school violence will be taken seriously, whether or not there is any intention to carry out the threat. The production, possession, and distribution of child pornography can land teens in prison. And lastly, cyberbullying is not going to be tolerated in Virginia Beach. There are plenty of safe, fun ways for teens to chat online, so please encourage your children to do just that. Remember the role you, as a parent, play in protecting your teen from becoming a victim or from getting in trouble at school or with the law. Remember that we all play a role in keeping Virginia Beach safe!

FEATURED CASES OF THE QUARTER

Commonwealth v. Maurice Boney Jr.



Charges: First Degree Murder, Use of Firearm, Conspiracy

Sentence: 40 Years

Facts: On December 4, 2016, Maurice Boney and juvenile Nicholas Cates left Cates' home in the middle of the night to "take a life." They drove to Champion Court and saw Christine Bender, who was not known to them, outside her home smoking a cigarette. Cates said, "She's the one." He then motioned for Bender to come to his car, asked to borrow a lighter, then shot her several times in the back with a gun provided by Boney. Boney confessed to his involvement in the murder.

Commonwealth v. Matthew McMeans



Charges: Forcible Sodomy – Victim Under Age 13 (3 counts), Aggravated Sexual Battery – Victim Under Age 13 (2 counts), Rape – Victim Under Age 13, Object Sexual Penetration, and Use Computer to Commit Sex Offense w/Minor

Sentence: 32 Years

Facts: On May 25, 2015, McMeans went to the home of a minor under age 13 and knocked on her window. He had the victim lean her body out the window and engaged in sexual contact with her. In June and July, McMeans took her out of her bedroom window to a vacant house and engaged in sexual contact with her. He also contacted the minor on Snap Chat and convinced her to come to his home, where more sexual contact occurred. On July 4, 2016, McMeans saw the victim at a party and engaged in sexual contact with her. Finally on January 27, 2017, McMeans contacted her via Facebook in an attempt to solicit nude photos from her. The victim reported the incidents to a family member who called police.

Commonwealth v. Ethan Jovan Torres



Charges: Second Degree Murder, Attempted Robbery, Use of a Firearm

Sentence: 33 Years

Facts: On January 17, 2017, the victim, Sidea Griffin, made plans with her boyfriend to go to the movies. On the way to the movies, her boyfriend agreed to meet Ethan Torres for a marijuana deal. Torres got into Griffin's boyfriend's car and attempted to rob Griffin's boyfriend at gunpoint. Her boyfriend told Torres to get out of the car, and Torres pointed the gun at Griffin. Eventually Torres left the car. As Griffin's boyfriend drove away, Torres pointed the gun at the moving car. He then fired once, shattering the window and hitting Griffin in the shoulder. She later died at the hospital. The murder weapon was later found in Torres' home. He urinated on his hands in the police interview room when detectives told him they would be performing a primer residue test on his hands. He eventually admitted shooting the victim.

Commonwealth v. David Arthur Costa



Charges: Aggravated Malicious Wounding, Malicious Wounding

Sentence: 24 Years

Facts: On April 8, 2017, the victim was working as an Uber driver, entering I-264W at the oceanfront. He unintentionally began tail-gating a car driven by Jennifer Costa with her husband David Costa in the passenger seat. The Costas aggressively drove up behind the victim, so he took the first exit he came upon. The Costas stopped behind him. David Costa jumped out and began yelling at and attacking the victim. He stabbed the victim in the chest. Eventually the victim got out of his car, and Jennifer Costa ran over him, twice. She also hit the victim's car. The victim was able to get a picture of the Costas' license plate and police apprehended them shortly thereafter. The victim survived but has permanent injury to his legs and a scar on his chest from the stab wound.

For more details on these cases and other Commonwealth's Attorney's Office news, visit: www.vbgov.com/oca.



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**TOGETHER, WE CAN
KEEP VIRGINIA
BEACH SAFE!**

The Office of the
Commonwealth's Attorney is
dedicated to serving our
community.

To request the Office's
assistance at your community
event, please e-mail Public
Information Officer
Macie Allen at
mpallen@vbgov.com.



The Consumer Corner

Fake Support Scams

Most businesses, especially those involving technology or electronics, have a support line for customers to call for help when something goes wrong. Typically a customer can look up a phone number online or get help on the web through a chat window. Con artists have created fake customer support numbers and posted them online. Scammers fool frustrated and unsuspecting customers into granting them access to their devices or purchasing unnecessary products and services.

Here's how the scam works:

The customer is having trouble with a product or online account. When they search for a number and find one they believe to be legitimate, a "customer service representative" answers and offers to assist with the problem. Beware! Thieves are posing as legitimate customer service reps.

In one version of the scam, the person will tell you that your account has been hacked, and they can prove it if you give them access to your computer or device. This makes you vulnerable to identity theft. Scammers can also install malware on your computer that can steal your personal information or record your passwords.

In another version of the scam, the person attempts to sell the customer some kind of product such as software or a service. This does not fix the problem, but can be very costly.

How should you avoid falling victim to this scam?

- When you search for support phone numbers, make sure you double check the URL of the website you're using to look it up. Check your receipt, bill, or warranty info for a tech support number if possible.
- Never give a stranger remote access.
- Don't pay for products or services you aren't sure you need. If it doesn't feel right to you, don't pay for it.
- If you've fallen victim to this scam, file a report with the Better Business Bureau by visiting: www.bbb.org/scamtracker.

The Jury Duty Scam: Still a Threat to Our Community

The jury duty scam is still happening right here in our city. Scammers call victims and tell them they've missed jury duty and must pay a fine to avoid arrest. Sometimes they even use the names of real sheriff's deputies, judges, or court personnel. This is a scam! Law enforcement will never call and ask you for money over the phone. If court personnel contact you to find out why you missed jury duty, it will usually be through the mail, and they will never demand payment to avoid arrest. If you're concerned that you may have missed jury duty, call the jury office directly at 757-385-4589. Report this scam to police immediately, and please share this information with your friends and family.