

OUR VIEW

In giving, be sure not to get taken

Black Friday has given way to Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday, and it's no surprise that charities are getting in on the action with "Giving Tuesday" — after all those shopping holidays, a global day dedicated to giving back to the community.

Along with ubiquitous hashtags on social media of #GivingTuesday and #unselfie (a play on "unselfish" and "selfie"), however, there also lurked the danger of scams capitalizing on the movement and preying on people's generosity.

"It's important to think not just with our hearts, but also with our heads this time of year," Attorney General Peter F. Kilmartin said in a prepared statement Tuesday. "The generosity of many Rhode Islanders enables others to have a happy holiday season, but it is important to double check the cause before handing over a contribution."

To do that, the attorney general's office recommends the following steps:

- ◆ Verify the legitimacy of the organization. Several websites, including www.charitynavigator.org, www.give.org and www.guidestar.org provide helpful information regarding numerous charities. These websites can be a useful starting point for consumers looking to research companies prior to making a donation.
- ◆ Find out how your donation will be used and what percentage of the funds will be used for programming and how much will be spent on administrative costs.
- ◆ Be careful of charities with names that sound impressive or resemble those of other organizations. Some scam artists use names similar to those

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How much do you expect to spend on holiday shopping this year, compared to last year? How do you feel financially, compared to this time last year?

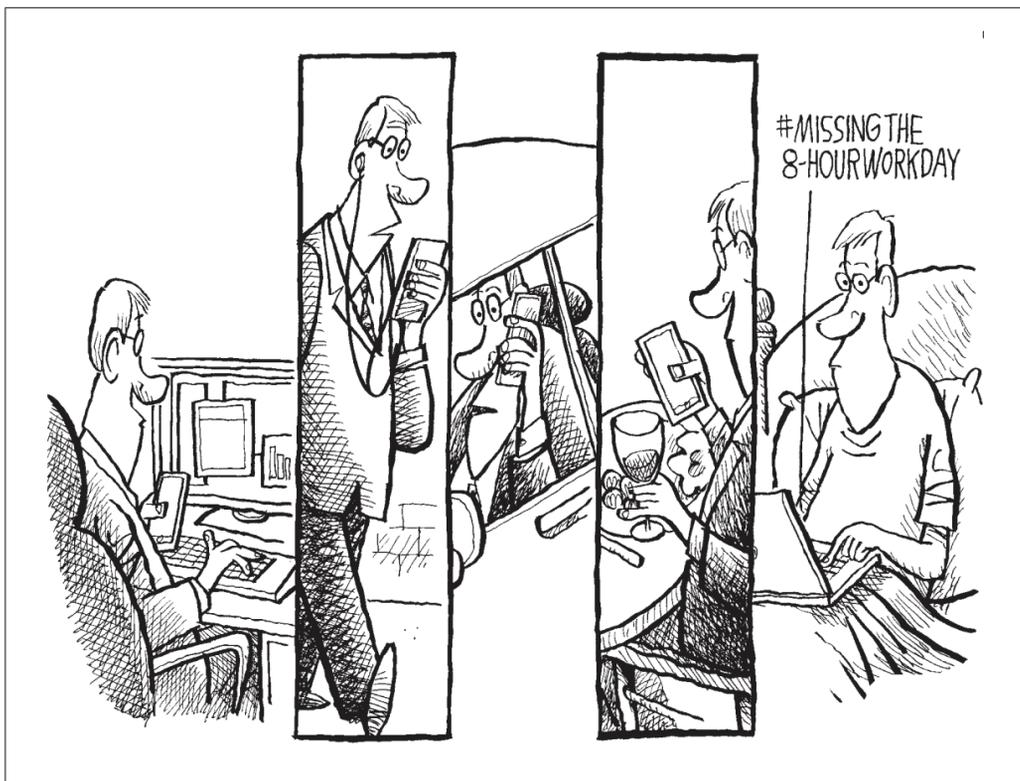
Take our online polls by going to www.NewportRI.com and clicking on 'Poll Questions.'

of reputable organizations to confuse donors.

- ◆ Do not pay bills or invoices you receive from charities unless you know you have already made a commitment to support them.
- ◆ Never send cash. Always contribute by check or credit card. Donate directly to the charity.
- ◆ Remember to ask for a receipt and a statement that the contribution is tax deductible.
- ◆ If solicited in person, ask to see identification for both the solicitor and the charity.

During the holiday season, we regularly encourage readers to help others who are less fortunate by making donations to local charitable organizations, and there are plenty of charities — and a lot of need — in our communities.

We hope sharing these tips from the attorney general's office will help make sure those donations go to the right place.



Jeff Stahl | Universal Uclick

GUEST VIEW

P.S. The kids are watching

School bus safety is an important concern for bicyclists, too

By Bari Freeman

"We want to be part of the solution."
Hank Myers
manager of First Student, Newport

School buses have unique safety challenges, requiring the utmost attention to the road, the vehicle and their precious cargo. With an average 35-foot length, there are visibility and blind spot challenges at every moment of the drive. Stopping, starting, standing, passing and turning, our bus drivers need to be aware of what is happening inside and outside their bus. Safety is the most important aspect of school bus driving, and our drivers take it seriously.

Newport has unique challenges as well: narrow, winding streets in historic neighborhoods, distracted vacation drivers on unfamiliar roads, cyclists riding the wrong way or inadequately illuminated. Not so unique are the phone-fixated and/or impatient motorists putting everyone at risk. With three pedestrian deaths in the past year, we have a wake-up call to take more action to improve safety on our roads.

When Bike Newport suggested a conversation about road sharing with the district's bus drivers, Hank Myers was keen to get started. The local manager of First Student, Newport's school bus company, Hank manages 16 bus drivers who service the district's three schools. "Great idea," Hank said. "Let's do it." Let's be a partner in the effort to improve safety on our roads.

Fresh off the Monday morning run, we gathered at the First Student bus depot on Halsey Street. We discussed rules of the road, bicyclist rights and responsibilities, and bicycle-related ordinances. We reviewed bike lanes, shared lanes and state passing laws. We shared horror stories and agreed that there are good and bad cyclists and good and bad motorists.

Together we considered the value of bicycling in a town as small and scenic as Newport, where local travel is mostly under two miles — easily walkable and bikeable. We acknowledged that bicycling inherently reduces traffic congestion and improves health, economy, quality of life and quality of place.

We agreed on a few first steps together. We've already begun to share information: documentation of road rules and recommendations, and helpful videos on road-sharing safety. We'll ask the local media to assist by printing



Employees of First Student are working with Bike Newport to encourage bicyclists to obey school bus safety laws. Meeting recently at the school bus depot on Halsey Street are, from left, Hank Myers, First Student manager; Ray Simas, driver; Bob Elliott, driver; Melissa Wicks, safety coordinator; Bari Freeman, Bike Newport; Harvey Chapman, driver; Paul Nobile, driver; Butch Malarchik, driver; and Cindy Boiani, driver.

daily or weekly reminders to cyclists, motorists and pedestrians about safe road behaviors. Together we'll develop joint messages — like today's message to bicyclists about the importance of correct bike behaviors near school buses. Here it is:

According to state and local laws, bicycles are vehicles and must abide by all vehicular traffic laws.

Bicyclists: When you see a stopped school bus with safety lights on, you are required to stop before reaching the vehicle and remain standing until the bus lights are no longer operating. Also, please do not ever pass a school bus on the right side. When children are entering and exiting the bus, everyone is put at risk.

If following the law isn't enough, consider this added incentive, as conveyed by our friends at Bike Portland in Oregon:

"While you sit out the delay, it may give you time to wonder about the intent of the school bus law. After all it's meant to keep children safe as they cross the street or congregate around the bus. Despite the personal inconvenience of waiting, the letter of the law may be important here because as a living, breathing distraction in the landscape,

you are probably being observed by some of the kids on the bus. These are the future cyclists of America and you, standing by, are serving as a role model. It isn't often you are given the opportunity to do the right thing so easily and impress a very impressionable audience at the same time. Maybe it's worth a couple minutes of standing still."

We at Bike Newport and First Student agree. Safety is always worth the time.

Throughout our meeting, there was a stoic gentleman at the back of the room who refused to crack a smile, no matter my eye-to-eye attention and attempted wit. He was one tough customer. But at the end of our session, he came forward, took off his glasses and delivered a bigger smile than I'd hoped for. It seems we are all indeed in this together. Thanks to Harvey, Hank Myers, and all the First Student bus drivers for being part of the solution.

Let's get out there and be role models. Safety first.

Bari Freeman is executive director of Bike Newport, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve, encourage and facilitate bicycling in and around Newport.

AROUND THE U.S.

Relic of a revolution yours for \$500,000?

On Dec. 11, an Apple-1 computer that co-founder Steve Jobs sold out of his parents' Los Altos, Calif., garage in 1976 hits the auction block. Christie's auction officials expect the bidding to reach more than \$500,000. The computer's original price tag: \$600.

We imagine this news will send millions of Americans scurrying into the garage or spelunking in the basement for computerized treasures from the time when the primitive portable computers and monster-sized cellphones roamed the Earth.

This is the same treasure-hunt impulse that drives comic book collectors on the never-ending quest for, say, the first edition of the Superman comic, or a perfectly preserved 1967 Chevrolet Corvette hidden under a tarp in a barn in Indiana.

The only difference: You can still leaf through that Superman comic, though its pages would be brittle and you could endanger a million-dollar investment. You can still hop in the bucket seat of a vintage Corvette and floor it. For that matter, a vintage typewriter can still turn out a Pulitzer Prize-winning manuscript.

The Apple-1 may be "fully operational," as the auctioneers promise, but we'd guess that loading iOS 8 would take until ... never.

Still, the appeal here is this machine's provenance: Documents show it was sold by Jobs himself, then 21, from his parents' garage. You can imagine the Apple guru pitching the machine to his neighbor, businessman Charles Ricketts, as "insanely great," one of his favorite phrases. Ricketts even kept his original canceled check. Nice touch there.

for decades — one of only a few hundred produced — is astonishing. Like most Americans, we harbor little nostalgia for electronic devices that we've tossed away when the next shiny device distracts us. Who lusts after, say, an ancient Radio Shack TRS-80 computer (affectionately known as the Trash 80 to a generation of reporters who endured its infuriating quirks) or one of those hulking videocassette recorders which begat DVRs which begat streaming video?

But, after spending a lifetime in front of a keyboard and a blinking screen — often blissfully — we can understand why the Henry Ford organization recently paid \$905,000 at auction for another Apple-1. The Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Mich., is a perfect place to stash an electronic fossil behind glass so visitors can goggle at the astonishing pace of change. The computer will be on display near the "Your Place in Time" exhibits, which holds such technological artifacts as a Weltron eight-track player from 1970, a Pong video game by Atari from 1975, a Sony Discman from 1985 and a Nintendo Game Boy and game cartridges from 1989.

Sorry, antique hunters, but none of those is likely to bring \$500,000 at auction.

The Apple-1 will, because it helped create "the Big Bang moment" of personal computing. Andrew McVinish, Christie's director of decorative arts, tells us. It reminds us of something rare and precious: a moment when a couple of guys in a garage launched a new era with a bold idea and boundless enthusiasm.

◆ Chicago Tribune

AROUND NEW ENGLAND

Hagel became a victim of wayward foreign policy

On most any other day, the resignation of the secretary of defense would have commanded headlines and dominated the national conversation. But with the nation's attention focused on Ferguson, Mo., the departure of Chuck Hagel was just another news story.

That's unfortunate, because Hagel's resignation — under pressure, and after months of obvious friction with President Barack Obama — points to just how confused U.S. foreign policy has become during the current administration.

Is the U.S. committed to supporting the independence of Iraq or not? Supporting

the Kurds? Stopping Iran from developing nuclear weapons? Ending the murderous regime in Syria? Stopping Russia's subversion of Ukrainian sovereignty?

Set aside personal views and ask yourself: Is there a clear U.S. policy on any of those issues?

We have given up trying to read this president, whose foreign-policy pronouncements and actions can hardly be deciphered, never mind reconciled. Hagel may be gone, but this wasn't about any failure on his part.

◆ The Telegram & Gazette of Worcester (Mass.)

SOMETHING TO SAY?

We welcome our readers' views. Our letters policy follows:

- ◆ Each letter must bear the writer's full name, full address and telephone number (for verification purposes only). We will not publish a letter unless a phone number is provided.
- ◆ We correct errors of spelling and punctuation, and edit letters to conform to Daily News style. We may condense letters for brevity.
- ◆ Letters must be no more than 450 words. Proposed guest view columns must be no more than 750 words.
- ◆ We will run no more than two letters per author per month.

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