

Speaker tells area women how to avoid being a victim

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"Be a Tough Target!"

That's the title of Detective J.J. Bittenbinder's book, and his message to his Barrington audience.

The Barrington Junior Women's Club recently hosted Bittenbinder, a nationally known personal security expert with 27 years police experience. BJWC committee member Lisa Pagano arranged the program, assisted by co-chairs Terri Colby-Moore and Nancy Linden.

Bittenbinder, well known for his television appearances, drew a large crowd of BJWC members as well as area residents.

Bittenbinder's goal is to teach people to avoid becoming victims. Trust your instincts, stay alert, walk assertively and always have a simple escape plan. Deny privacy, draw attention and take action are Bittenbinder's guidelines for avoiding trouble. These also apply if you are a victim.

- Most important - Never let yourself be taken anywhere.
- Yelling "fire!" draws more attention than "help!" Children should yell "stranger!"
- Get away any way you can. Remember, the thumb is the weakest part of a grip, and articles of clothing can be torn to allow escape.

Additional safety tips:

- The best weapon to carry is pepper spray; keep doors locked while driving; and always keep your cellular phone nearby for emergency calls.

Area residents learned much in just over an hour, and shared valued lessons:

"Pepper spray - I'm going to buy it. I will talk to my kids more, and I want to read his book," said Michelle Heider.

"I have seen him before. I wanted to ask him about what to do when home alone with the kids and someone comes to the door." (Bittenbinder: "Talk through the door only. Call 911 if emergency situation.") "He is great...he should do his talk everywhere," Janet Sheridan commented.

Women from Barrington and surrounding communities are invited to join BJWC. Call (847) 622-3838 for information. Bittenbinder can be contacted for appearances at (773) 665-2751.

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Page: 1

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