

# Wise choices can help grads fulfill their potential

**THIS IS THE FIRST** of a series of columns by city of Oneonta Police Chief Dennis Naylor about issues involving police departments and public safety.

**W**ith the end of the school year in sight, the senior high school students have reached a tremendous milestone in their lives; a milestone in which endless possibilities and opportunities exist.

For some, graduation from high school equates to a transition to college, for others it means service to our country, and for others it means entry into the workforce. Regardless of which option is selected, life will be a

new adventure for this year's graduating class.

As all of these possibilities lie ahead, history has shown us that for some unfortunate graduates, tragedy may lie in wait. A year has not gone by where we haven't learned about a young adult whose life has ended far too early because of a car crash, an unintended alcohol or

drug overdose, or some other preventable incident. If it's predictable, it's preventable, so let's do everything we can to prevent further tragedies.

In law enforcement, our foremost goal is to keep the public safe, and many times this includes keeping people safe from themselves. If you are reading this article, then you can help us to achieve this goal. Remind the young adults who you know that

motor vehicle accidents claim thousands of lives every year.

The causation factors for many deadly car crashes are speed, alcohol, driver distraction, and a lack of seatbelts. As much as this is an exciting time in the lives of the graduating class, they still have to remember that they are not invincible. A car crash can be very unforgiving, so let's think about ways to put the odds in your favor as much as possible as you travel.

When driving, focus on the task at hand which is operating the vehicle. Texting, talking on the phone, and goofing around with friends in the car can cause enough of a distraction to create a serious accident. Waiting until you are at your destination to do those things significantly reduces your chances of getting into an accident.

Speed limits exist for safety reasons, so please obey them. And even if you are traveling within the speed limit, wear a seatbelt. The two seconds that it takes to put on a seatbelt can be the difference between life and death if an accident were to occur — even a low-speed accident.

Lastly, it goes without saying that drinking underage is illegal and, more importantly, drinking and driving can easily be deadly. The horrific images that occur in fatal motor vehicle accidents would be a sufficient means to deter anyone from drinking and driving.

If you are a parent and you're hosting a party to celebrate a graduate's success, don't serve alcohol to those younger than 21. It's against the law and more importantly it can have tragic consequences. Many times, adults feel that they can better monitor their kids and their kid's friends if they drink with them. Inevitably, someone can slip through the cracks and hurt themselves or someone else as a result.

When law enforcement officers arrest someone for driving while intoxicated, we ask the arrestee where they had last been drinking. If it's determined that a parent served someone underage, that parent can be charged with unlawfully dealing with a child, which is a crime. That parent may also hold responsibility for civil lawsuits that could result. The bottom line is that it's just not worth it.

As law enforcement officers, we see the things that the rest of society does not. If we can keep people from becoming statistics, then we have done our jobs well.

I wish the graduating class of 2013 a great future and great success. Personally, I've found that success comes from a combination of hard work, good choices, and a little bit of luck. We can't control the luck, but we can control our work ethic and the choices we make. Seniors, work hard and make wise choices and you can accomplish anything you want.

Best of luck to the class of 2013!

## CHIEF'S CORNER



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# Crime prevention starts with you

**I**n this day and age, it is my belief that as an evolved law enforcement agency, our responsibility is not only to respond to crimes but also to work towards reducing future criminal acts through methods of deterrence and community education.

The primary ingredient for a crime to occur is an "opportunity." Most crimes are not well-planned and are generally opportunistic in nature. Obviously we can't control when an offender may cross our paths, but we can limit their ability

to commit a crime by improving our awareness and practicing sound crime prevention techniques.

Criminals prefer to commit crimes that are quick, not easily detected, or ones in which there will

be limited resistance offered. This is accomplished by selecting "soft" targets. Examples of soft targets would be unlocked cars containing valuables in plain sight, a person flashing cash as he or she leaves an ATM, a person walking alone late at night, or anything else that screams "easy prey."

The community at large is made

up of hard-working, law-abiding citizens, but because there are predators among us, we really need to be alert and harden the targets that criminals would exploit. When you exit your vehicle, lock the doors and roll up the windows. It is never a good idea to leave valuables in sight because they provide temptation to would-be thieves. At home, lock your doors at night and when you are away. Install motion detector lights, and cut away overgrown shrubbery that would hide a person's movement. These simple acts pay big dividends in crime prevention.

As you leave an ATM, be aware of who's around you. Quickly place your cash in your pocket and show an image of awareness to your surroundings because again, opportunistic criminals prey on the weak and oblivious. Developing high levels of awareness is so important because it creates the ability to observe the world around you, to orient yourself to a threat, to formulate a decision, and of course to respond and act.

The technologies of smartphones and iPads have made life easier in some ways, but inversely they have caused many people to function in extremely low states of awareness to their environment. We all know people who are so heavily glued to the screen of their phone or iPad that they wouldn't see a freight train coming if it were heading straight toward them. This is obviously not a good means of crime prevention or personal safety.

Additionally, we all know someone who uses social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to post everything they're doing along with everywhere they're going. Telling the world where you are lets people also know where you are not. If a person posts that they are visiting family in California, it is easy to assume that they are not at their home in Oneonta, thereby creating an opportunity for a property crime. Even if a person limits their posts to their "friends," the information can easily be shared by a friend to a non-friend, negating the security offered by privacy settings.

It's equally important to realize that the people who you may casually "befriend" on Facebook or who follow you on Twitter may in fact be people who have more of an interest in you (or your family) than you do in them, so beware of that. The truth is that social media have helped stalkers commit their crimes more than most people realize.

We in law enforcement do our absolute best to create public safety but no law enforcement agency can guarantee safety for any person. Safety and crime prevention start on an individual level and the best thing that anyone can do to minimize their chances of victimization is to be aware, to limit opportunities as much as possible, and to educate themselves. Please visit our website at [www.oneonta.ny.us/police](http://www.oneonta.ny.us/police) for additional crime prevention strategies or call us with any questions. Be alert and stay safe!

**DENNIS NAYOR** is chief of the Oneonta Police Department.

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# Heeding basics leads to success

**I**n everything there are fundamentals, also known as "the basics" that establish the core elements for achieving a set of goals. In law enforcement, promoting public safety and enforcing the laws are our primary goals, and we rely on

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basic, fundamental skills to achieve them. These skills are learned early in an officer's career, and the police academy is where it all happens.

Police academy training is designed to instill a new officer with the knowledge of how to communicate with people, operate an emergency

vehicle, effect an arrest, interview a suspect, write a report, apply the law, investigate a crime, and protect the public, among other things. The academy also instills the proper decorum and military bearing that one would expect of a law enforcement officer. In those six months of training, a tremendous amount is learned, and all of that forms the basis of our ability to protect and serve.

As officers progress within the police profession, many pursue advanced trainings to not only broaden their base of knowledge but also to develop niche skills specific to their interests. Some paths pursued are that of crime scene technician, accident reconstructionist, police instructor, narcotics investigator, SWAT operator, K-9 officer, task force operative, traffic officer, etc.

All of these support functions are valuable assets to any police agency, but they do not outweigh the importance of basic police training. Day in and day out, the diligent patrol officer employs the rudimentary skills of the trade learned in the police academy to achieve noteworthy results. Whether in tactically responding to the unknown, being observant to anomalies in their surroundings, or

utilizing good verbal communication, the patrol officer uses the basics every day to keep the community safe.

For police administrators, our job is to ensure that we not only create specialization within our agencies, but that we make sure that all members always maintain a grasp on the basics. To highlight the importance of this, let's look at a few examples:

During the 1970s, serial murderer David Berkowitz was on the loose and terrorizing New York City. After one of the murders, an eyewitness provided police with information about a possible suspect that she thought may have been involved in the crimes. In her description, she advised the detectives that officers had been out writing parking tickets to vehicles parked on her street earlier that day. Through police researching the parking tickets issued, the killer was identified and arrested. Again, basic police work, i.e. enforcing parking violations, is what broke that case.

In 1996 a man named Eric Rudolph was wanted by the FBI for his role in the bombing of the Olympic Park in Atlanta, along with other terrorist acts. This man evaded capture for many years, until a rookie police officer on patrol in the early-morning hours of his shift found him going through a supermarket dumpster. Mr. Rudolph, who offered a false name at the time of arrest, was taken into custody and identified as one of America's most-wanted fugitives. Again, basic observation skills and follow-up by a new officer ended a five-year multi-agency manhunt.

Most recently, a state police sergeant assigned to the perimeter detail in the hunt for escaped murderer David Sweat observed a man jogging up a desolate road in Constable. The sergeant, alert and aware to his surroundings, advised the man to stop. The man did not comply, and upon further observation, the sergeant realized that it was Sweat, one of America's most-wanted fugitives. The sergeant, who was alone, stopped the fugitive and ended the extensive three-week manhunt.

All of those examples highlight the importance of foundational basics. I think that many times people forsake the basics in pursuit of advanced technologies or trendy theories to accomplish a task. More often than not, though, the basics matter most. In keeping with this topic, please consider the ways in which you, too, can employ "the basics" to a larger degree in whatever you do. Success is said to be the byproduct of doing ordinary things in an extra-ordinary manner, so consider sticking to the basics and watch as positive results follow.

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

# Positive attitude can shape our lives

The law enforcement profession is unique for many reasons, but perhaps one of the most distinctive characteristics is that it provides a front-row seat to see situations unfold in real-time, devoid of any filters or enhancements. When you respond to people's worst moments each and every day, you gain a perspective of life that many never see and it is in this capacity that we gain a deeper understanding of the human condition.

It's clear that by no fault of their own, some people find themselves with significantly more disadvantages than opportunities. For some, achieving a quality education, job, housing or lifestyle can be a continual struggle. No person chooses the environment, socio-economic bracket, family or conditions into which he or she is born. The challenge therefore becomes how to create positive outcomes and a more-level playing field when negative or challenging outside factors and influences exist.

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With that being said, the three qualities that I have found to be the great equalizers that can outweigh inherent negatives are a person's character, work ethic and attitude. These are all qualities that are within a person's control and can be developed. In many ways, achieving success comes from these

qualities more than from those factors outside of one's control. Essentially, our successes or our failures largely depend upon us and our actions.

Character is often developed through life experience and we all have the power to choose how we want to behave. Since one's thoughts and subsequently one's actions define one's character, it is extremely valuable to develop a posi-

tive mindset. The core values taught in school — honesty, respect, integrity, compassion, teamwork, etc. — are characteristics that not only breed success, but they also keep one out of the criminal justice system. It's difficult to behave in a criminal manner when one adheres to the above principles.

In law enforcement, we encounter people who feel that their life has spiraled out of control. Due to a chain of events, these people may be unemployed and may have significant difficulty in finding a job. However, those with a strong work ethic, those who work hard at whatever job they can find, knowing that it will help them to achieve their long-range goals, are more likely to find success.

This single quality of having a strong work ethic often makes a big difference as to whether a person will be defined by a bad circumstance or whether he or she will achieve a positive result.

Attitude is something that we can all choose. And while the circumstances we encounter may largely be out of our control, the ways in which we react to them is our choice. When we investigate cases of road rage, assault, or various other issues involving anger, we do not typically encounter someone with a positive attitude. Even though we all have bad days from time to time, there are some people whose attitudes are rarely positive, and they seldom have a good day. Those with positive attitudes work well with others, are pleasant to be around and make better choices. They are not defined by the circumstances that they encounter and they roll with the punches of life.

Consider this: How many times have we all witnessed people with a positive character, strong work ethic and a positive attitude do extremely well in life, regardless of their particular circumstances or misfortunes? Conversely, my profession has exposed me to innumerable individuals who have had poor character, poor work ethic, and/or a poor attitude despite coming from affluence or an excellent home environment. The fact that they had successful families and financial support was simply not enough to garner them a bright future.

Now more than ever, our world needs positive role models to help develop the attributes described above. The positive societal changes that we need for a better world require everyone's help, so please do what you can from your personal platform as parents, teachers, big brothers, big sisters, neighbors, friends, coaches, etc., to fill this void. For those who are struggling, know that through hard work, a positive attitude and strong character, you can overcome even the most challenging of obstacles. When we improve as individuals, our communities and our world becomes a better place.

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

## Looking at root causes reduces risk

Police work is a profession that by its very nature is laden with liability. Every day, officers are required to effect arrests, operate emergency vehicles, quell disturbances, restrain people and save lives, all while appropriately applying the law, and upholding the Constitution. As anyone would therefore expect, a forward-thinking police administration must engage in a great deal of risk management to ensure that liability is minimized as the safety of their community is maintained.

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The foundation of risk management lies in the development of sound policies, procedures and practices. Consequently, it demands a high level of diligence toward hiring and retention so that those carrying out the mission of the department are highly suited for the job. Additionally, it requires continual training and professional development to ensure that the job is done correctly at all times.

When problems occur with anything, there is always the proximate cause that is readily seen as having created the problem, but there is also a root cause that is frequently overlooked. For example, if someone gets into a motor vehicle accident when it's snowing, the proximate cause of the accident could be

described as "poor road conditions." The root cause, however, is actually the true reason that the accident occurred; i.e. the driver had bald tires and was speeding.

It's always easy to look simply at the proximate cause because that factor is most quickly noticed. Looking into the root cause of a problem requires thought, and that thought is necessary if correction and evolution are to occur. The adage "if it's predictable, it's preventable" is a component of risk management that always rings in my ears. This equates to learning from the mistakes of others so that history does not repeat itself.

Every day, people become crime victims. Since this can be predicted, we look at root causes of victimization and try to prevent it by the ways in which we utilize resources, investigate crimes and educate our community. Every year, police officers lose their lives in keeping their communities safe. Since we can predict that may happen, we focus on ways to provide the best training and tools so that the officers remain safe while carrying out their duties. Every year, lives are lost to motor vehicle accidents; therefore we continually work toward increasing traffic safety through data analysis, education and appropriate enforcement. These are all components of proper risk management.

In this day and age, lawsuits are frequently filed because people fail to prevent that which is predictable. Risk management in no way eradicates all liability or potential problems, but rather, it's a tool to form appropriate and sound decisions for the ways in which we police. Proper risk management therefore creates the framework in which forethought occurs so that potential consequences are considered in advance of a problem and the best decisions are made with those potential consequences in mind.

In law enforcement administration, the goal is to pre-define and recognize potential root causes and eliminate them through quality training, sound policies and best practices. As I follow the national

news, I see things occurring on the world stage that are disturbing. I use this information to make sure that we at the Oneonta Police Department are doing all we can to make this corner of the world a great place in which to live. To me, this philosophy of professional services and quality policing, coupled with the employment of the principles of risk management, is the only way to conduct business in the 21st century.

Please take a moment and consider the ways in which you can utilize the concepts of risk management in your life, too. While doing so, look past potential proximate causes of problems and try to consider potential root causes that can be addressed ahead of time. This is not just limited to crime prevention, but consider it in terms of lifestyle, finances, your occupation, etc. As the old saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

# Many police good deeds go unnoticed

On Dec. 11, I convened the Oneonta Police Department's year-end meeting, which all staff attend. The objective of this meeting was to establish the department's goals for the upcoming year and to spotlight some of the most notable cases that we investigated.

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Some of these cases were narcotics investigations in which drug dealers were arrested and removed from our streets. Other cases involved detailed investigations in which wanted felons were located, arrested and appropriately charged. Other cases were highlighted because they involved the arrest of offenders who caused significant harm or injury to their victims.

Regardless of the type of case, justice for many victims truly hinges upon the degree of effort put forth by any investigating officer. One such case that I discussed was an investigation into a stolen iPad. In addition to the monetary worth of the iPad, this particular one also had a tremendous sentimental value to the owner because it contained irreplaceable family photographs.

For 10 days, officer Tara Gregory investigated lead after lead in an attempt to identify a suspect and locate the device. With very little to

go on, there was a strong justification to closing the case based upon the exhaustion of all viable leads. The efforts that officer Gregory put forth, however, were equal to those that one would be put into an investigation if it had been her own property that was stolen.

The result was that the stolen iPad was recovered alongside the railroad tracks where it had been disposed of 10 days earlier, and the perpetrator was identified and arrested. Amazingly, the iPad powered on and the owners were given an unanticipated surprise when it was returned to them with their family photos intact.

I share this particular story because it is a clear illustration of the efforts police officers put forward to serve their communities. Stories like this are far from rare and are truly reflective of what 99.5 percent of law enforcement officers do each and every day. Whether it's treating a victim with compassion, reaching into their own pocket to give money to a person down on their luck, or placing themselves into harm's way to protect another, law enforcement officers do it every day without a second thought.

Many of these benevolent acts go unnoticed and generally do not make it into the national media, nor will they become the theme of a cinematic production. They do, however, make people feel better, and to me, that is what truly matters most.

The efforts as described above occur in part because police leaders today work diligently to develop solid police departments, hire the right people, and provide excellent training to develop their staff. The inherent dangers are infinite, but the overwhelming majority of law enforcement officers choose this profession because helping others is a reward worth the risk.

In a time where so much negative attention has been focused toward law enforcement, please take a moment to consider that many officers lose their lives or suffer disabling injuries in pursuit of making this world a better place. The assassination of two uniformed NYPD officers last month in conjunction with the many line-of-duty deaths that occur every year is a poignant example of this fact. As fellow officers, we deeply mourn their losses, knowing they died doing what we do and such a fate could be ours.

As a society, we all take comfort in knowing that no matter what occurs during our most terrifying moments, we can dial 911, and the police will respond. Regardless of the level of danger or type of situation, a uniformed officer will heroically go into that disaster and make things right. For this, we should all be grateful.

So regardless of all the risks, the challenges, and the sometimes-impossible obstacles that confront us, I am extremely proud to be a part of this noble profession. My department and I look forward to serving and protecting this community in 2015, and sincerely wish everyone a safe, happy and peaceful new year.

Dennis Naylor is chief of police for the city of Oneonta.

# Plan what you'll do in emergencies

There is a very interesting show on television titled: "What Would You Do?" The host, John Quinones, with the assistance of actors and actresses, conducts a series of social experiments in public places in which hidden cameras capture the ways in which unknowing everyday people respond to various scripted scenarios that are acted out in front of them.

These scenarios range from instances of bullying, parents publicly humiliating a child, people shoplifting and vandalizing property, people asking for help, and many other situations along those lines. The premise of the show is to see how people will react when they are confronted with a situation that requires attention, but that does not directly involve them.

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As the cameras roll, you'll see a variety of responses to the scripted situations. Some people purposely ignore what is occurring, some people share their outrage or concern with a friend but do not intercede, and some stand up for the victim and get directly involved to address the situation.

At the end, Mr. Quinones and his camera crew reveal themselves and advise the people that the scenario was not real and that the parties involved are all actors and actresses. After the unknowing participants breathe a sigh of relief, Mr. Quinones interviews them to see why they reacted in whatever manner they did. In the end, the experience causes the people to consider why they chose to get involved, or stand by. It also makes the viewer consider how he or she would have reacted if they themselves were confronted with the same situation.

In law enforcement, police officers

go into the unknown all of the time, so one of the best ways we can adequately prepare for that is by mentally rehearsing responses to the various scenarios to which we may respond. Considering how we would react to any scenario in advance of the incident makes it more likely that we will have a better ability of successfully stabilizing the situation when the actual incident occurs.

It's for this reason that we also participate in a lot of scenario-based trainings in order to appropriately develop correct responses. There are infinite scenarios that could play out, so the ability to be creative is not only abundant, but extremely important.

All of us, whether civilian or law enforcement, can certainly put the odds in our favor by this type of role play, mental rehearsal and scenario-based trainings, but in reality we can never truly know how we will respond to any given situation until confronted by it.

Recently, three friends were on a train in France when a gunman opened fire. All three responded by taking the gunman down and saving the life of every person on that train. Recently a Louisiana State Trooper was shot and killed by a subject he tried to help. A citizen in that area responded to the scene, tackled the shooter, and got him handcuffed while awaiting the police.

Both cases show an instant reaction to a horrific situation. If you would have asked any of the people involved what they would have done in those situations ahead of time, they may not have been able to answer with certainty.

In a world in which we continually learn of active shootings, random acts of violence and horrific crimes perpetrated against others, it is fair to say that it may only be a matter of time before any one of us is confronted with a "what would you do" scenario. As much as we may never know exactly what we will do in a high-stress situation, we can put the odds in our favor by considering some basics and having a general plan in advance.

Know your strengths, your weaknesses, your capabilities and your limitations. Consider a plan of survival, along with areas of cover and escape routes and always make a conscious effort to remain calm. Crisis incidents often unfold in split seconds, so the more you think of potential situations in advance allows for clearer thinking and less time spent in shock of the surreal nature of what is occurring.

As always, stay safe and contact us at the Oneonta Police Department if we can be of any assistance to you or your family.

**DENNIS NAYOR** is police chief of the city of Oneonta.

# Help our young people avoid trouble

In law enforcement, we often see young adults repeatedly make the same mistakes over and over. Drinking and driving, drug experimentation, alcohol poisoning, preventable accidents, etc. — the names and faces change, but the mistakes we see stay the same.

True wisdom is the result of life experience, but sometimes wisdom can be achieved, and negative experiences avoided, through proper guidance. Science concludes that the human brain is still developing until a person is 23 to 25 years old. Therefore, it can be deduced that guidance and education can certainly aid young

adults in making sound choices.

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With that said, here are some positive things that occur locally to provide such guidance to our younger generation. The Oneonta Police Department teaches the DARE program (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) to children in the

fifth and sixth grades. The primary purpose of DARE is to educate children and help them to form the ability to make good choices and decisions as they go through life.

The new DARE model teaches children to "Define" problems, "Assess" choices, "Respond" with a choice, and to "Evaluate" the decision made. This model doesn't just apply to drug experimentation but to decision-making in general. It's an accepted fact that people will make mistakes because that's part of life, but the mistakes can be significantly decreased if sound decision-making skills in relation to consequences are taught at a young age.

Locally, another tremendous resource to help guide our youth is the Oneonta Boys and Girls Club. This organization, headquartered on River Street in the city of Oneonta, has for 60 years been providing a safe place for kids to learn and develop. The club is open to all children and teens ages 6-16, and provides after-school and evening activities.

Kids can engage in sports such as basketball, archery, wrestling and boxing. They can also gain wisdom from the mentoring that is part of the club. Additionally, children can receive support on schoolwork, and learn arts and crafts while there. The Boys and Girls Club welcomes everyone from this area and is a great place for children to learn and grow. For more information about the club, go to [www.oneontaboysandgirlsclub.com](http://www.oneontaboysandgirlsclub.com)

At the college level, we hope that young adults have developed the strong decision-making skills needed for the challenges and peer pressures that present themselves at that age. To assist, we at the OPD have created a "Good Neighbor Brochure." The brochure outlines the importance of good behavior while attending college and clarifies the Police Department's, along with the community's, expectations.

All students at both local colleges receive these brochures either in their orientation packet or electronically through email. If students follow the advice provided in the brochures, they will significantly minimize the chance for getting into trouble. Additionally, we present in-person to fraternities, sororities, and incoming students at orientation so that we can answer questions and provide valuable information to help safely guide them through their formative years of college.

As adults, we owe it to the new generation of kids, teens and young adults to provide proper guidance to assist them in making good choices. Daily, I see firsthand the cost of mistakes that some make and I know that proper guidance and mentoring would've minimized some of those mistakes.

As you read this column, please consider if you are in the position to provide guidance to someone who needs it. Whether you are a parent, coach, teacher, big brother, big sister, friend, etc., you are in a position to do a lot of good. Please think of ways to help mentor and guide someone because when you do, you will not only be helping one individual, but you'll be doing a service to our community as a whole. When this happens, we all benefit.

*Dennis Naylor is the police chief of the city of Oneonta.*



# DARE program works for many

By Sgt. Dennis R. Naylor

## GUEST COMMENTARY

A recent letter-writer stated that the DARE, or Drug Abuse Resistance Education, program is completely ineffective and counterproductive.

As the DARE officer for the city of Oneonta Police Department, I would like to comment on the inaccuracy of such a claim.

The DARE program, which was started in 1983 by the Los Angeles Police Department with the assistance of the Los Angeles Unified School District, is an extensively researched and principle-based drug and violence prevention program.

The discussions, lessons and classroom activities are realistic and cover significant topics associated with adolescence. Some of these topics include factual information about illegal and harmful drug usage; how to make healthy choices and decisions; dealing with peer pressure; finding alternatives to drugs and violence; understanding consequences; and how to be in charge of one's own life. Classes are conducted in an active and cooperative-based learning environment, allowing the children to be involved, to think and to develop self-confidence.

DARE also creates an excellent forum for discussing issues and concerns that are not often covered in the standard academic setting.

Additionally, DARE provides the various school districts with an additional resource for dealing with issues such as bullying or personal

safety.

DARE has been funded, evaluated and researched by the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, whose mission is to improve the health and health care of all Americans.

The DARE curriculum is taught by a uniformed police officer, who not only serves as a facilitator but also as a role model for the children. DARE allows the children to develop respect for authority and to establish a sense of trust with a law-enforcement official.

DARE also serves as an excellent form of community policing, in that it involves school officials, the police department, children, parents and community members.

Results of an ongoing longitudinal study conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation include the following: More students who graduated from DARE decided against using illegal drugs; more students found drugs socially inappropriate and believed that fewer peers used drugs; fewer students reported an intent to use inhalants; and more students learned how to refuse drugs if offered.

Furthermore, a National Medical Association Study conducted in April 2002 revealed that DARE graduates were five times less likely to smoke than non-DARE graduates.

It is understood that not all children who participate in the DARE

program will make good choices all the time. It is also understood that various research studies can be conducted or manipulated so that the results meet a desired criteria, as is the case with various studies that indicate that DARE is ineffective.

The letter-writer claimed that DARE does not address the issue of social norms, which is incorrect. The DARE curriculum has been revised as recently as last year and includes information from studies conducted by the University of Michigan in 2002. These studies illustrate to the children that most people in their peer groups do not drink alcohol or use tobacco products, thereby reinforcing positive social norms.

The DARE program does not claim to be the perfect solution to our nation's drug problems, but it certainly provides children with the tools needed to make good decisions in life, along with the ability to understand the harmful effects associated with using drugs and engaging in violence.

The DARE program has always earned high praise in that it exemplifies the commitment of the police to create a better future for our youth. Anyone who would like to learn more about the program can contact me at the Oneonta Police Department or visit [www.dare.com](http://www.dare.com) for additional information.

*Naylor is DARE instructor for the Oneonta Police Department.*

# Police work requires unique personal skills

**I**t may come as no surprise to hear that police work is a unique profession, unlike any other. It's deeply rooted in American culture, it's glamorized in the movies more often than any other profession, it's enmeshed into every high-profile incident that occurs around the world, and in many ways is exciting and adventurous.

For these reasons, many people are drawn to it, but the truth of the matter is that it takes a very special type of person to be part of this business. As a police chief, it is therefore my responsibility to sort out the properly suited from the improperly suited and only hire those who will serve in an honorable manner. To me, being part of law enforcement is a career that only a select few have earned.

The men and women of law enforcement

need to be a lot of things: They need to be physically, morally and emotionally fit. They need to be quick-thinking, creative, observant, intelligent and well-spoken. They need to give direction, but also take direction. They need to emotionally connect to others, yet remain detached. They need to be even-tempered during times of

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emotion turmoil and remain professional and courteous during times of verbal and physical assaults. They must respond toward danger while others flee and must continuously react with sound judgment.

Officers work long hours, holidays and weekends, and regularly miss family events. They work under a zero-acceptance rate for failure and if they perform their jobs well, they must accept that it will generally go unnoticed. As you can see, there are few people capable of meeting these standards, yet the allure to apply still exists for many.

Law enforcement officers are called upon whenever someone has been victimized, traumatized or violated in some way. If every reader were to think of the worst thing that could possibly happen to them, the images would be different, but the common theme is that each person would dial 911 and ask for help. The reality for law enforcement is that we respond to people's worst moments and as a coping and survival mechanism we are a bit different; oftentimes more skeptical, guarded, vigilant, and as a result, sometimes even isolated from society.

Officers routinely go into unknown situations multiple times per day, and to stay safe, must remain guarded and alert. Sometimes an officer is perceived as cold, when he or she is simply trying to determine whether the person with whom he or she is dealing is friend or foe. Sometimes they have to raise their voice to be heard, because if they didn't, they'd be ignored by the quarreling parties.

Other times an officer is required to use force to control a violent and dangerous person who is intent on causing harm to himself or others. And other times, an officer may appear skeptical of what he or she is told, due in part to the fact that officers are often lied to on a daily basis. Even with all of this, most officers truly love their jobs and would sacrifice their lives to save that of a stranger's.

When you have contact with an officer, please bear in mind the above to create a better perspective. If, however, you are not satisfied with an officer's response to your situation, then by all means please contact the agency of that officer and ask to speak to a supervisor to discuss the situation or file a complaint.

In law enforcement administration, we realize that a bad experience with an officer, coupled with a traumatic event to begin with, is not good, and we as chiefs, sheriffs and commanders want to know about it so that we can properly address the situation and take corrective action. Likewise, if you are pleased with how the officer treated you, then please let him or her know this because it would mean a lot to them. Remember to also contact their supervisors and advise them, too, because supervisors very much like to hear about a positive experience between an officer and a citizen.

Open communication is a vital component to strong police-community relations and we welcome questions, comments and concerns to improve our product. I sincerely hope that this column helped to better describe the law enforcement profession. If, after reading this, you believe that you have what it takes, then sign up for the next civil service examination.

DENNIS NAYOR is the police chief of the city of Oneonta.

# What it's like to be the chief of police

People sometimes ask me to describe what it's like to be the chief of police, so I'll use this column to provide some insight.

My broad-based response to such an inquiry is this: "It's an incredible honor to serve in such an important leadership role. However, there is far more responsibility, hard work and pressures that go with the position than most people could possibly imagine."

**DENNIS NAYOR**



FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

Leading a progressive police department at this time in history requires constant diligence toward professionalism, an extensive knowledge of best practices, a diplomatic and collaborative mindset, and compassion toward those you serve. Since there is a zero percent acceptance rate for failure of any kind in policing, it is my foremost duty to continually create the framework necessary for the department's success and to provide support for my staff so that the mission of the department can be accomplished.

Each day, I begin by meeting with my lieutenant to review our agendas and discuss relevant departmental items. Following this meeting, I speak with various support and supervisory staff to receive updates, briefings and pertinent information. I then complete certain daily responsibilities such as reviewing reports, responding to emails, returning phone calls and so forth.

As the day progresses, additional items come to my attention, which I will either address personally or forward to the appropriate person for follow-up. Much of my job requires collaboration with my staff and other departments, therefore being able to coordinate our efforts, with others is a key ingredient for success.

As all of the above is being done, I will generally have phone calls coming in, staff seeking my advice or approval on various items, and the daily operations of the department underway. Since I also maintain a very liberal open-door policy, officers and other department staff will stop by my office throughout the day to speak with me regarding countless topics.

When the work day ends, my day doesn't because being a police chief is a 24-hour-a-day job. When I'm at home or away from the office, I will still be receiving emails and phone calls, making decisions and planning for the next day.

In addition to my daily routine, being the chief of police requires me to engage in constant strategic planning for the department's long-term goals. This can be in terms of procuring capital assets through the budgetary process, establishing training goals, succession planning, event planning, community program planning and policy development.

When success occurs, it's a direct result of the strategic thinking that occurs well in advance of the accomplishment. For example, although the department received its distinction of accreditation in 2014, the process to reach that goal began 2½ years earlier.

Sometimes a major event or incident will occur, requiring my full attention. The above tasks must still get done, but I must quickly reorganize and triage priorities. To do this, strong organizational skills and a high degree of flexibility become essential. When someone asks if my job is fun, I advise that person that leadership positions are not meant to be fun, but rather they are meant to be rewarding.

To that, the answer is always "yes!" For example, a tremendous amount of hard work goes into creating a professional and well-trained police department. When a member of the community approaches me to compliment the efforts of my staff for the job they have done or for the way in which they were treated, I take pride in knowing that our commitment to professionalism can be attributed to that result.

Performing my job well requires an understanding of the needs of the community, an understanding of the challenges that each position within the department faces, and a strong focus toward collaboration for the delivery of quality police services. Being a leader entails caring about people, self-sacrifice, and hard work.

I often think, "If I were a member of the community and not the chief of police, or even a member of law enforcement for that matter, what would I expect from the police who serve me?" As chief, that level of service is exactly what I strive to provide. The challenges and stresses associated with this profession will be ever-present, but knowing that we at the Oneonta Police Department are making a positive difference for this community makes everything worthwhile.

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

# We must do more to prevent bullying in schools

**A**s a new school year commences, the routine for most children and teens remains quite similar to when I attended school several decades ago. This includes back-to-school shopping, anticipation of new classes and teachers, and the excitement of getting reacquainted with friends.

Unfortunately, for many, another part of the routine includes the fear of being the target of bullies. What's most unfortunate is that although we as a civilized society have made tremendous strides in sciences and technologies, we have yet to find a way to end this highly destructive problem, and until we do, we must not rest.

**DENNIS NAYOR**



When I used to teach the DARE program throughout the Otsego County schools, I incorporated an instructional segment to specifically address bullying because I noticed that it was occurring in each and every school. Students in my classes would

ask (through anonymous notes in the DARE question box) about how they could deal with a bullying situation.

The bullying ran the gamut between physical abuse to being teased for skin color, religion, ethnicity, the type of clothes one wore, how one looked, etc. The common theme was that the criticisms were for things that were beyond one's control.

Nowadays, bullying is even worse. It not only takes in all of the above, but adds the cyber component. Kids now suffer from nasty commentary or inappropriate pictures via social media. No longer does the bullying end when the school day does; it continues 24/7 through posts, emails and texts.

The saying "sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me" is a fallacy. Far too often we learn of a young person who commits suicide to escape the torment of bullies. We owe it to our society to not ignore this issue and we must do more to prevent further tragedies.

Some basic solutions start at home. If you're reading this and you have children or teenagers, please talk to them about the strength of their words so that they understand the true power that they have when they tease others. Let them know that it's OK to be different and to accept diversity in others. People will differ from one another in ideas, but everyone should still be treated with respect.

Likewise, let your kids know that they can come to you if they are being bullied so you can help them work through it. Some children may not open up about being bullied because of fear or shame, so if you're a parent or school official, be aware of the signs: Is a child or teenager becoming withdrawn? Are their grades suffering? Do they get sick more often? Do they create ways to avoid school? Do they come home with injuries? Have you noticed an increase in aggressive behavior? Any change can be indicative of a problem and should never be ignored.

Advise your kids that there is a difference between tattling and "telling." It is not tattling or snitching if your child informs an adult when they see somebody being hurt or teased. Informing an adult of such activity is a way of standing up for a victim and is brave and honorable. Sometimes kids are bullied because they are shy.

If your child is popular and confident, teach him or her to befriend new or shy students so that they can help that person develop confidence. Everyone needs help getting started out, and sometimes friendship or a kind word can make a huge difference.

Lastly, make sure your kids know that, if they're fortunate enough to have nice clothes or a nice house, that it is not OK to make fun of someone who is less fortunate. Teach your kids that money is not what defines a person and to never use that as a reason to tease others.

When we look at the multitude and magnitude of tragic events that have occurred around our world, one must wonder if the perpetrators were once bullied and made to feel hurt or alone. Did anger and resentment build up, which later evolved into acts of evil? One never really knows how badly someone may be scarred as a result of being bullied.

If anyone reading this would like more information on this topic, or would like to discuss any specific situations, please contact us at the Oneonta Police Department so we can help. In the meantime, we hope for a safe, productive and bully-free school year for everyone.

**DENNIS NAYOR** is chief of the Oneonta Police Department.

# Hang up on confidence scams

**T**here's an adage that states: "If it's too good to be true, it probably is."

I believe this to be a very accurate statement and one that may be truer today than ever before. In our modern society we are forced to continually be on guard from the barrage of scams, schemes and fraudulent enterprises that exist solely to take our hard-earned money from us. Every year, countless numbers of honest people are cunningly duped out of millions of dollars by fraud cleverly disguised as a free cruise, a winning sweepstakes or a special limited-time offer.

The terms con game and con man both have the prefixes of "con," which

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is an abbreviation for the word "confidence." The reason that people lose money in con games and to con men is that the games and the fraudster cleverly gain the target's confidence. Through smooth talk, friendly rapport and the promise of easy money, people are made to feel foolish if they

do not partake in the enticement. At the end of the day, however, the target is out some money and the con man is a bit wealthier.

Nowadays, the cons don't just happen in person; they happen over the phone, online, and through the mail. Many of the cons do not even originate in this country, but rather thousands of miles away behind a keyboard or bank of telephones somewhere overseas. When someone falls prey to an international-based scam, our ability to locate, arrest, and prosecute the offender is extremely difficult.

We've seen numerous instances where a person contacts us because he's wired money to an unknown person as payment or a down-payment, only to find that the item does not arrive because it never existed in the first place. When we try to trace where the money went, we often find that it's outside of the United States. With resources limited for all branches of law enforcement, it's highly unlikely that we can be successful in getting the victim's money back for them.

Most unfortunate is the fact that the targets of many of these scams are often those who have the most limited resources and who can least afford to lose what little money they have. The elderly, those on fixed incomes, and young adults just starting out become frequent victims. Again, the salespeople behind the schemes are good at what they do and take advantage of those who need money and who believe in the sales pitch they're given. It's not hopeless, however, because we can fight back and avoid victimization by engaging in some basic safety measures.

Don't give out personal information to anyone who cold-calls you. Some scams involve a person generically calling, claiming that he is a representative from "your credit card company." He may further advise that you are eligible for a special offer and that he needs to confirm some basic information. If someone calls you, the bottom line is that you do not give him any personal information.

Next, in our era of digital, wireless and electronic technology you must safeguard all of your personal information. This includes your birth date, Social Security number, credit card numbers, etc. Identity theft is a way that you can become part of a scam without even knowing it until your credit has been negatively affected or you find that money is missing from your bank accounts. Check your accounts frequently and review your credit report at least once per year. Look for discrepancies and report them immediately.

It's not rude to hang up on telemarketers; it's rude for them to call. Don't feel the need to be polite; simply state you're not interested and end the conversation. Salespeople are taught to never accept "No" for an answer, so hanging up is oftentimes the best solution. As soon as possible, get your phone numbers entered into the national "Do Not Call Registry" to prevent further solicitation.

When companies send you special offers, it's never with your best interests at heart, so be mindful of that and don't feel pressure to "act now." If you have an elderly parent or know a young adult, help them make wise decisions to avoid the pitfalls set by con artists. You work hard for your money, so do not let anyone deceitfully take it from you. And as always, if you have doubts or questions about whether something is a scheme, please contact us at 432.1111 and we will be happy to investigate.

DENNIS NAYOR is the city of Oneonta chief of police.

# Juvenile justice is an important local issue

A major consideration for any police agency is the importance it places on juvenile justice, both in terms of juvenile-victim treatment and juvenile-offender processing.

Juveniles are obviously in highly developmental stages of their lives and may indeed make mistakes along their way into adulthood. The family court act realizes this and provides for differences in the ways in which offenses committed by juveniles (those younger than 16), as opposed to those committed by adults, are adjudicated.

The theory behind this is to create a means that holds juveniles accountable for their

actions, but that does so in a way that will not destroy their chances for future success. Likewise, there are times when juveniles become the unfortunate victims of criminal activity. When this happens, it is crucial that law enforcement has a thorough understanding of how to properly deal with that occurrence in order to minimize further trauma and to assist the victim in moving forward

from the victimization.

Here at the Oneonta Police Department, not only are all patrol officers trained in the proper ways to address juvenile offenders and

juvenile victims, but we also have a detective dedicated specifically to handling juvenile matters when they occur. We do this because nowadays there are significantly more issues involving juveniles than ever before. The juveniles of today are exposed to incidents of cyber-bullying, sexting, early exposure to drugs and alcohol, and an overall desensitization toward violence at higher rates than previous generations. For these reasons, we need to be proactive.

When we look for causes, we can clearly correlate technology to some of the issues. For instance, bullying has always been an issue of concern. However, now it doesn't end when the school day ends and may in fact continue 24/7 via social media such as Facebook or Twitter. The Internet also allows predators to have a readily available means for locating their victims even if they are separated by hundreds or thousands of miles.

Because of smartphone technology, we now have terminologies such as "sexting." This term refers to the sending of sexually explicit pictures, usually of oneself, via text messages. Teens who are frequently involved in this act often regret it when a photo intended for one person is forwarded to unintended recipients. We as police often get involved, knowing that in worst-case scenarios, this type of act has resulted in suicides or other serious consequences.

The juveniles of today represent the future of society, so we have to enlist the help of others outside of law enforcement to address the issues. Parents can assist by teaching their children about the dangers online. Parents can also monitor who their child/teen "friends" on Facebook along with what information is being shared.

An explanation of the repercussions of what could happen from sending explicit photos, engaging in cyber-bullying or friending the wrong person can have profound benefits. Educators, coaches and other community leaders can be cognizant of what occurs in their presence and address issues of concern when they happen. Ignoring instances of bullying or cyber-based offenses is not an option.

In speaking with Oneonta PD juvenile detective Jennifer Torres about the emerging issues, she advises that the juvenile-type case loads are continually increasing and that overall, children and teens are growing up much faster these days. At the recent statewide Juvenile Officers Conference in Syracuse, Torres observed that the trends she sees in Oneonta are similar statewide.

Because of her experience and knowledge about contemporary juvenile justice issues, Torres was selected as a regional representative for five upstate New York counties to assist other police departments in dealing with current juvenile issues. Obviously this is extremely beneficial to have such a strong resource for our community within the ranks of the Oneonta Police Department and it will help ensure that the best juvenile justice practices occur.

For example, the Oneonta Police Department has already begun to explore the benefits of restorative justice for juvenile offenders. The idea behind this approach is to ensure that the victims of crime receive justice, that the offender repairs damages caused, and that the offender takes ownership of his or her behavior. Ultimately, it is hoped that future criminal actions can be avoided by utilizing this method.

Juvenile justice is a significant topic, perhaps now more than ever. Technologies, availability of drugs, and high rates of violence will continue to affect juveniles. We at the Oneonta Police Department will continue to do our best to remain proactive while engaging in the best practices available to deal with this issue.

*Dennis Naylor is the police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

DENNIS NAYOR



FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

# Self-control is key to avoid jail time

In law enforcement, there are obviously many things that contribute to the perpetration of criminal acts. One of the most significant contributing factors is a lack of, or loss of, self-control. One of the truest statements that I have ever heard is that the "prisons are full of people who simply could not control their emotions."

Moments of rage, jealousy, greed, lust, vengeance, consumption, frustration, etc., often form the foundations for criminal acts. Even a momentary lapse in judgment can have life-changing effects. To put this into context, consider how often you hear on the news about a person who is charged with a crime, only to further learn that the individual is a well-respected and upstanding member of his or her community. Chances are that most people hear these stories and think that "getting arrested" would never happen to them, but the reality is that it can happen to anyone.

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FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

As I've often stated, it's well-established that there are people on this planet who are simply human predators. Regard for others and reverence for life are not tenets to which these individuals subscribe. These people eventually end up in prison, and as a result, our society is a bit safer.

There are other people who are not violent predators but are simply repeat offenders who have demonstrated that they will not follow societal rules and therefore usually end up in prison, too.

Lastly, there are those who are responsible individuals who have established themselves as contributing members of society, yet end up in prison for an act that nobody would have expected. This last group of people can be anyone who loses self-control or control of his or her emotions.

Some examples of this last group that we in law enforcement often see are as follows: The person who exchanges words with another, and then proceeds to escalate a "war of words" into a serious physical assault; the person who has access to another's property or money and decides to steal it; the person who over-consumes alcohol, then operates a motor vehicle; the person who engages in any act of rage based upon jealousy, vengeance or frustration; or the person with addictive behavior who gives in to addiction (drugs, drinking, gambling, etc.) and as a result gets into legal trouble. These are things that responsible people would normally not do, but a lapse in judgment or self-control can easily change that.

Conflict resolution training is a great way to minimize issues that could otherwise develop from rage or frustration. Many situations that turn violent could be avoided if one of the parties had instead worked toward diffusing the situation. Additionally, taking time to consider consequences before one acts can be a huge element in avoiding becoming an arrest statistic.

If you're drinking, plan for a ride home. If you see something of value, don't take it; the costs of a defamed reputation, prison sentence and attorney bills are much greater. If emotions of jealousy or anger are driving you to commit a criminal act, take time to cool off or speak to a friend or counselor for support and advice before you act. If you or someone you know suffers from addictive tendencies, seek counseling and/or treatment.

If those reading this column remember one thing from it, I hope it would be to realize how important it is to stay in control of your emotions, especially during the times when it is most difficult. Anger and temptation can affect everyone; it's human nature. Those who have a moment of weakness and give in to it can easily find themselves in trouble.

Think before you act and consider possible consequences. Keep in mind, too, that when someone is arrested, it could very well be the result of an instance of poor judgment and does not necessarily define the person. The longer one works in law enforcement, the easier it is to see that there are predators, habitual repeat offenders, and then there are those who simply make mistakes. We hope the last group learns from those mistakes.

*Dennis Naylor is the police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

# Symptoms of mental illness hard to diagnose

**W**e can usually tell when someone is sick by certain telltale signs, including sneezing, coughing, runny nose and things of that nature. These symptoms demonstrate to the world that the person is physically ill.

We've all had the common cold at one time, so we can sympathize with what he or she is experiencing. When someone has a psychological disorder, however, and is mentally ill, the symptoms are not always so clear and we may not have any clue as to what the person might be experiencing.

A couple of months ago, the topic of mental illness was the focus of a Daily Star news article, and we at the Oneonta Police

Department commented about how pervasive the problem has become. We talked about the fact that our involvement with individuals suffering from mental illness has skyrocketed over the last few years and that members of this department are engaging in advanced training to better address these situations.

As it stands now, one in four American adults live with mental illness and in 2013, the Oneonta Police Department addressed mental health issues with people ranging in age from 13 to 88.

The statistics speak for themselves, and a way to reduce mental illness while also properly treating those who suffer from it must be found. Since a means to accomplish this task has not yet been achieved, we in law enforcement are obligated to fill in the gaps.

The New York State Mental Hygiene Law states that if a person is deemed to be a danger to themselves or others, law enforcement has a duty to take that person into custody and transport him or her to a crisis hospital for a psychological evaluation.

This standard for evaluation does not cover all aspects of mental illness and there are many individuals who need help out who don't get it because they do not fit into the above criteria. These people unfortunately slip through the cracks and may struggle just to function in society. Frequently, these individuals end up in the

into the above criteria. These people unfortunately slip through the cracks and may struggle just to function in society. Frequently, these individuals end up in the criminal justice system for unlawful actions that are rooted in mental illness.

Sometimes the illnesses can be controlled with medicines, and the individual who was suffering can then function normally. However, if he or she stops taking the required medication, their underlying issues often manifest and we as police might be called to intervene. If the involved person is deemed to pose a danger, we will take him or her into custody for evaluation.

Unfortunately, this process all too often becomes a revolving door in which the individual is taken into custody, transported, evaluated, cleared and subsequently released, but not cured. As a result, we, the police, find that we're called to repeatedly intervene for the same person.

Whether the mental illness is caused from chemical imbalances, traumatic events, mental deterioration, injury, or a myriad of other causes, those who suffer from mental illness do not wish to suffer any more than someone with a cold wants to be sick. Those with mental illness may have reasoning skills that are not always consistent with the rest of society's, and their reality and thought processes may differ. Because of this, it is often the families of those who are mentally ill who are most significantly affected in terms of coping with the disease.

Although a solution to this societal concern is not readily available, there are things that we as a community can do to help. First is to understand that everyone is battling with their own problems in one regard or another and sometimes those problems are exacerbated by mental illness. Be patient and understand that everyone does not have the same ability to process information and rationalize as one may expect.

If someone appears to be mentally unstable, do not argue with the person or engage them in confrontation; simply try to de-escalate the situation. Don't stare or look down upon someone who is disheveled or unkempt; regardless of a person's mental situation, everyone needs to be treated with dignity.

Lastly, if someone is acting in a bizarre or threatening manner, call the police. Unfortunately, sometimes those suffering from mental illness can be violent or unpredictable, and the best course of action is to ask law enforcement to investigate. A fine line is sometimes all that separates the mentally well from the mentally ill, so we must always value our health while we have it.

To learn more about mental illness, please visit the National Alliance for Mental Illness website at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org).

DENNIS NAVOR is the police chief of the city of Oneonta.



DENNIS NAVOR



# Knowledge, instruction keys to safety

**A**s police officers, we see victimization occur on a level that most other segments of society never see. When we are called to help those who have been injured or violated in some way, we respond, conduct an investigation and do our best to ensure that the perpetrator(s) can be held accountable through the criminal justice system.

Ideally, we want the victim to receive justice and, most importantly, to feel safe again. However, even after we've done our part, we know that some of those who have been victimized will still feel vulnerable.

To lessen that vulnerability, some will seek out means to protect themselves in the future. The primary methods sought to achieve this are self-defense training or purchasing an instrument for personal self-protection such as a firearm, pepper spray, etc., which we will explore in this column.

I believe that everyone should learn how to properly defend themselves, because there are people among us who have no apprehension about causing harm

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NAYOR**



FROM THE  
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to others. Sometimes it's just a matter of being in the wrong place at the wrong time to be a potential crime victim.

The crime-victim triangle illustrates that for a crime to occur, three things need to happen: there must be an offender, a victim and an opportunity. If all three exist, a crime can occur. A proactive means to prevent this is

to remove the opportunity for victimization. This may equate to maintaining a higher level of awareness, avoiding crime-prone locations, or having the ability to properly defend oneself if in the wrong place at the wrong time.

To properly defend oneself, training must occur from a qualified instructor. This training must encompass realistic techniques that are rooted in gross motor skills and contain a high degree of functionality and versatility. Finally, these skills must be cultivated to the point at which a response to an attack is completely reflexive in nature.

Additionally, appropriate self-defense training should contain a reality-based component so that the mindset needed to deal with the physiological responses that occur during an assault, robbery or other confrontation is duplicated. Unfortunately, all systems of self-defense are not created equally, so the time spent researching a self-defense system and a qualified teacher who can meet all of these requirements is time well-spent.

Some people feel that purchasing a firearm is the appropriate means for self-defense. As we all know, gun ownership is an extremely controversial topic, so I will not use my guest column to foster any political debate, but instead to simply discuss some considerations pertaining to gun ownership.

First of all, for a citizen to legally possess a handgun, he or she must meet certain legal requirements. In addition, people need to understand that all confrontations do not reach the threshold in which a firearm and deadly physical force may be utilized. So simply owning a firearm may not always provide for a means of self-defense that will be legally justified.

Another consideration to keep in mind is that gun ownership requires a tremendous amount of responsibility. This relates to appropriate training, home storage and carry safeguarding. If the choice is made for gun ownership as a means of self-defense, whether a long gun or handgun, then careful planning must occur so that it is properly secured and never wrongfully accessed by a family member, guest or other non-authorized person.

Another important consideration relates to properly being able to retain the firearm if it is carried on one's person so that it is properly secured and does not end up in the hands of an assailant. Lastly, consideration must be given to the thought that a firearm, pepper spray or any other protective device may not always be accessible when needed. Thinking that it will be is simply not correct.

The bottom line is that anybody can be a victim, but if we put the odds in our favor, we lessen the chances of that occurring. To lessen your odds of victimization engage in awareness with your surroundings. Avoid places that are prone to violence or criminal activity, and consider the ways in which you would defend yourself or your loved ones, should the need arise.

Whatever the means utilized, take the time to thoroughly understand the law as it pertains to self-defense, seek out quality instruction and think realistically.

*Dennis Naylor is the police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

# Help is out there for victims of domestic violence

October is the time of year when most people think about the beginning of autumn, football games, baseball layoffs, hunting season and Halloween-related events. What most people don't know is that October is also Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Domestic violence, defined as a pattern of behavior used to establish power and control over another person through fear and intimidation, often including the threat or use

of violence, negatively impacts millions of individuals and families every year. Often, the abuse remains a dark secret maintained by those affected.

When people hear the term "domestic violence," they often associate it with those in the low-income, uneducated or substance-abuse demographic. As a veteran law enforcement officer, I can tell you that this is far from the truth. Incidents of domestic violence span across all levels

of education, income and social class. It also transcends age, race, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

In my experience in working with victims of domestic violence, I can share that some of the victims are people one would never consider to be victims due to the outside image they present. I can also share that some of the perpetrators involved in domestic violence are people that no one would ever consider to be "that type of person" for the same reason. With one-in-four women and one-in-five men experiencing victimization from their partners in their lifetime, there's a good chance that everyone reading this article knows a victim of domestic violence.

Domestic violence often remains a tightly kept family secret because of feelings of shame, fear and intimidation, and as a result many victims endure the abuse for years. Some victims are dependent upon the abuser for financial support, some are convinced that nobody will believe their report of abuse, others develop low self-esteem and learn to accept the abuse, others don't want to risk ruining the family's image, some feel that the abuse will worsen if reported, and others simply don't know where to go for help. As a police officer, I have responded to dozens and dozens of domestic violence incidents and the common theme was that the victims were aware that their relationship was unhealthy, but leaving it was extremely difficult for them.

As a community, we can help by acknowledging that domestic violence is a societal problem that has many warning signs. Do you know anyone who shows fear around his or her partner? Do you see unexplained injuries on anyone you know? Do these individuals create excuses for the cause of the injury that do not make sense? Do you know anyone who has a partner who exhibits extreme jealousy or anger? Do you know anyone who is required to have constant contact with his or her partner throughout the day? Do you know anyone whose finances and appearance are strictly controlled by his or her partner? Do you know anyone who is kept isolated from family and friends? If the answer to any of the above questions is "yes," then domestic violence may be a part of that person's life.

Statistics show that a victim of domestic violence makes at least seven attempts to leave an abusive relationship before finally succeeding. The first step, either leaving the relationship and/or seeking help, is the most difficult because of fear. Once that first step is overcome, the rest of the process becomes much easier.

If you're reading this and are a victim of domestic violence, know that you are not alone. A tremendous resource that exists in Otsego County is the Violence Intervention Program of Opportunities for Otsego. VIP is a nonprofit, community-action program that provides advocates who help victims of abuse and violence transition to a safe and healthy lifestyle, free from abuse and oppression.

The advocates are trained professionals who provide confidential counseling, develop suitable options for each unique situation and provide safe housing. Additionally, VIP advocates assist victims in gaining orders of protection from their abusers through family court while coordinating with law enforce-

ment. Readers, please take some time this month to pay closer attention to those around you and look for the warning signs. Offer assistance if warranted and provide the support that some desperately need. If you're a victim of domestic violence, please call us anytime at the Oneonta Police Department at 432-1111 so that we can assist you in regaining the safe and healthy life you deserve. To learn more about domestic violence, please visit [www.vipofotsego.org](http://www.vipofotsego.org), or for immediate assistance, call VIP's 24-hour hotline at 432-4855 and ask to speak to an advocate.

DENNIS NAYOR is chief of the Oneonta Police Department.

## CHIEF'S CORNER



DENNIS NAYOR

# Personal responsibility is all too rare

**R**ecently, in a meeting with some young adults from our community, I was asked if I had noticed any specific crime trends occurring in our region.

My initial response was that I really had not noticed any new trends as of late; overall, the Uniform Crime Report Statistics which I compile monthly remain relatively consistent. Sometimes I'll see a decrease in one crime type or an increase in another, which helps me better direct the police department's resources, but overall things are within expected ranges.

The conversation moved on to another topic; however, I was still thinking about this question. As I thought about it, I realized that I had in fact been noticing an emerging trend. The trend however wasn't in regards to an increase in a specific crime-type or crime pattern, but rather a societal trend that I could readily observe as a member of law enforcement.

I then explained that there was a disturbing trend which had become quite observable, and that trend is an overwhelming increase in the failure for many people to accept responsibility for their actions. Obviously this is not something completely new, but more and more this trend has become the norm versus the exception.

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Nowadays when I learn that an individual has taken full responsibility for their actions, I am rather stunned. Unfortunately, it seems that more people are quicker to deny responsibility, threaten legal action, tell you who they know of influence, or simply blame someone or something outside of their own actions for something which they knowingly did. In law enforcement, we have many instances in which someone is confronted with video evidence of themselves involved in a criminal act, yet they still deny responsibility.

Clearly this problem does not only occur on the local level, but we also frequently see it on the global stage. We observe celebrities, those in positions of power and authority, sports figures, world leaders, and so forth claim successes, but blame others for mistakes, wrong doings, or criminal activities.

We have become a "quick-fix" society where many avenues exist to make it very easy to reduce and deflect responsibilities for one's actions, to the point that it has become a standard practice. This practice is not acceptable, and we really need to place a greater emphasis on personal responsibility if there is to be a safer environment and a better world in which to live.

Our mission in law enforcement is to promote safety within the communities that we serve, but until personal responsibility is ingrained on a broader basis, upholding our mission will continue to be an uphill battle. You see, we as police are often called to fix problems that have been years in the making. Those who call us expect that, within a short time, we can fix everything, but we can't.

Part of the issue is that not only has a problem developed over a long period, but many times people we encounter have never taken responsibility for their actions, so creating positive change is quite difficult. Some of those whom we encounter have been enabled to deny accountability and responsibility through the support of others. That support may be an effort to help that person get out of trouble, but unfortunately their actions reinforce denial and create more serious problems in the future for our society and the person who they are trying to help.

We are all human and we are all susceptible to making mistakes. It's a fact of life. Owning up to those mistakes and accepting the consequences of one's actions is important for growth and development. Blaming others or finding ways to shirk responsibility simply compound the problems which we all must live with.

Law enforcement, even with all of our advanced technology and training, simply can not create a better society alone. We all have a social responsibility to help create higher levels of personal responsibility to bring about positive change. As we look ahead to the new year, let's all make this an endeavor worth pursuing. I wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season and a great new year ahead.

DENNIS NAYOR is the city of Oneonta chief of police.

# Police want to help collegians and residents

In another week or so, the population of the city of Oneonta will drastically increase as the new and returning college students will call Oneonta home for the next 10 months.

In many ways, the community will become more alive with a renewed energy and vibrancy. As the chief of police in a

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college town, I also know that with each new school year, there are concerns that we expect to address in order to maintain a good quality of life for our year-round residents. With that said, another year of trying to strike a harmonious balance for all involved begins.

Over the course of my career, I've learned that the vast majority of students who attend our

colleges are good people who do not get into trouble. This overwhelming majority will graduate with great memories of their time spent here in Oneonta.

There is a small percentage of students who are equally good people, but who simply make a mistake along their way. This group comprises those who may commit a minor violation of law but then learn from their mistake and do not have any other missteps.

The smallest segment of the student body, however, is composed of those individuals who have an adverse effect on the quality of life of others through their actions. This segment receives the most attention from this department because their behavior negatively affects others.

To help ensure that all incoming and returning students start off on the right foot in terms of our expectations, a "Good Neighbor Brochure" was created by this department several years ago. This brochure is electronically delivered to all students to warn them of the pitfalls

of certain actions. They may include parties, underage drinking, public fighting, littering, vandalism, noise violations, etc. Included in the brochure is a description of the possible consequences for such actions.

In addition, students are advised during their orientations of what is expected of them while attending college. They are advised that incidents and arrests that occur off-campus will be forwarded to their respective college administrations for adjudication there as well as in Oneonta City Court. The goal is to provide the knowledge so that the students understand that there are consequences for poor behavior.

Sometimes I hear community members state that there has been a series of violations occurring in their neighborhood such as noise, parties, vandalism, etc., but the resident was reluctant to call the police because he or she didn't want to be a bother.

My response is always the same: call us! We want to know about problems when they are occurring so that we can address them. That is our job and what we are trained to do. Although we try hard to dedicate our coverage to as many places as possible, specifically the known "hot spots," it's obvious that we can't be everywhere at once. When something is occurring that requires police attention, please call us and know that we will respond.

As in years past, we will continue to utilize as many resources as possible to maintain safety and a good quality of life for everyone. This includes our downtown surveillance system, mobile patrols, foot patrols, bicycle patrols and directed patrols in areas with high volumes of activity.

This year, in addition to presenting our expectations to certain fraternities, sororities and college groups in person, I have made a welcoming video for the students that also clearly outlines behavioral expectations. All students will receive a copy of this video via email and in this way, all students will get the same message directly from me. Anyone wishing to view the video can also visit the Oneonta Police Department's website at [oneonta.ny.us/police](http://oneonta.ny.us/police) and go to the publications page to click on the link. On that page is also a copy of the "Good Neighbor Brochure." If one feels that a student or students who are residing in a residential neighborhood could benefit from that information, it can be printed and re-disseminated as a gentle reminder.

The bottom line is that we at the Oneonta Police Department want the citizens of this community to enjoy their quality of life year-round, and we want the college students to have a good experience as residents of our community as well. We applaud the majority of students who are good neighbors and we look forward to helping to make this a great year ahead for everyone.

*Dennis Naylor is chief of police for the city of Oneonta.*

# Take steps to keep Halloween safe for all

In about two-and-a-half weeks, another Halloween will be upon us and along with this comes creative costumes, a fun parade, and of course, trick-or-treating. Children have always looked forward to this long-standing tradition and we at the Oneonta Police Department want to make sure that it is not only an enjoyable

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time, but a safe time as well for everyone. Therefore let's consider some things that we can all do to make sure that this year's Halloween turns out great. Obviously costumes are the quintessential part of everyone's Halloween so parents; please make sure that the costumes selected for your children are safe as well as unique. The costumes should not obstruct breathing or vision, they should not impede mobility, and they should include some type of reflective component if worn at night. Making sure that your children can breathe, see, be seen, and move properly is even more important than how the costume looks.

As we all know, the second key ingredient for Halloween is trick-

or-treating. With this in mind, drivers must pay extra close attention for eager trick-or-treaters who may dart out into the roadway. Traveling a bit slower and covering the brake while driving in the downtown and residential neighborhoods is extremely appreciated.

It is recommended that children be escorted from house to house by a responsible adult. This will help ensure that children do not wander into traffic and that they only go to locations which are pre-approved. Additionally, parents or guardians should also be there to verify that children do not enter a stranger's home, even if invited to do so. Although the majority of society would not cause harm to a child, we live in a world where there are those who would. Taking extra precautions to make sure that this does not happen is always advisable.

From a safety point of view, it is also highly recommended that parents inspect all candy which their trick-or-treater receives before it is consumed. Any candy that is not properly sealed, or which is loose, or which looks to be tampered with in any way, should be discarded. Again, it is important to take proper precautions to prevent victimization. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

As much as children enjoy Halloween for the innocence of the day, we know that some young adults use the day as an excuse to commits acts of vandalism, disorderly conduct, or general public disruption. We at the Oneonta Police Department take this very seriously and take a zero tolerance position towards this type of behavior. If readers see individuals throwing eggs, damaging property, or engaging in any behavior that is disturbing or suspicious, I ask that you call us so that we can respond and investigate. Criminal-based and disorderly behavior is never acceptable, regardless of the day.

If you are hosting a Halloween party, please remember that noise travels, so take that into account to prevent neighboring residents from being disturbed. If alcohol is served, it must be verified that those drinking are at least 21 years of age. If you do consume alcohol, please do not drink and drive; there are taxis, buses or other means of transportation available so that you do not put yourself or others at risk.

I hope that the topics listed in this column served as good reminders for everyone. We know that we all look forward to seeing the amusing ghost, goblin and assortment of other imaginative costumes on display. So as a community, let's all do our part to make sure that this Halloween is not only an entertaining day, but a safe day for all.

*Dennis Naylor is the city of Oneonta chief of police.*

# Drinking and driving isn't worth the risk

**W**ith the holiday season now in full swing, many people will be enjoying holiday parties, family get-togethers, gift-giving and receiving, and overall cheer. In many cases, the festivities will also include the indulgences of a drink or two. As a way to help ensure that this holiday season stays not only enjoyable but safe, too, I have one important reminder: Please don't drink and drive!

Every year, thousands of Americans are involved in motor vehicle accidents resulting from drinking and driving. Many of these accidents involve personal injury, property damage and sometimes fatalities. The results of this singular action are lost and shattered

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lives, arrests and hefty legal bills. Below explains just how the incident can possibly unfold from a patrol officer's perspective:

An officer is on patrol and observes a vehicle committing a traffic violation. The officer (or deputy or trooper) initiates a traffic stop upon the vehicle.

Upon approaching the vehicle, the law

enforcement officer will ask to see the license, registration and insurance card of the operator. It is at that point that the officer may notice the smell of an alcoholic beverage emanating from the breath of the vehicle operator. The officer may also notice other indicators of alcohol consumption such as slurred speech, poor motor skill coordination, and/or an inability to follow instructions.

At this point the officer will investigate further to see if the operator is driving while impaired or intoxicated. This will include asking the operator to perform a series of standardized field sobriety tests. These specific tests have been given judicial notice by the courts

and provide important information for the officer to determine whether the driver is impaired or intoxicated. The operator may also be asked to provide a breath sample into a pre-screening device at the time of the stop. This pre-screening test is articulated in state statute, and a refusal is a violation of the state Vehicle and Traffic Law.

If there is probable cause to believe that the operator is driving while intoxicated, the officer will place that operator under arrest and transport him or her back to the police station. At the station, the operator may be given another opportunity to perform the field sobriety tests, and will also be given the opportunity to submit to a breath test.

The breath test is administered via the utilization of a scientific instrument specifically designed to determine the alcohol content of a person's blood. This is the legally recognized test, which is different than the pre-screening test as mentioned above. If the arrestee refuses this test, his or her driver's license may be suspended or revoked, regardless of whether the person is found guilty of driving while intoxicated. If it's determined that the suspect is in fact intoxicated, he or she will be charged, processed and then either held until sober, released on bail, released without bail, or held for arraignment, depending upon specific case factors.

The above is all assuming that no accident occurred. An accident, especially one resulting in personal injury, would significantly compound the situation. In the end, the arrestee can expect to spend thousands of dollars on attorney fees and court fines in addition to increased insurance rates, points on a driver's license, and a criminal record.

Many people do not consider all of the above when they operate a motor vehicle after consuming alcohol because if they did, they would wisely choose another means of transportation. Ironically, those arrested for driving while intoxicated are often within a short distance from their home. The driver thinks that he or she will be OK since it is only a short distance to travel, but many accidents occur within a close proximity to one's home.

In closing, driving while intoxicated risks the life of the vehicle operator, his or her passengers, and all those with whom they share the road. The consequences are severe and will have long-lasting effects on all involved. So please, drink responsibly and plan to have a designated driver or an alternate means of transportation. Let's all do our part to make this holiday season not only enjoyable, but safe as well. Best wishes for a great holiday season and a happy and healthy new year ahead!

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

# Stay alert, aware to remain safe

Police work exposes law enforcement to reality in the most unfiltered manner possible. We see situations as they truly are, in the most raw and unedited form. On a daily basis we are witnesses to scams, victimization, acts of violence and multiple

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instances of deception. This is a double-edged sword; although it makes us somewhat cynical, it also makes us aware and more alert than most to our surroundings.

As our world continues to become more violent and less certain, I see the knowledge gained through this profession as a gift.

It would be impossible for me to condense an entire career's insight into a single column, but I thought I could at least share one of the most important tools that I have learned to help keep people safe and better navigate our world. That tool is "awareness," and although it is a relatively simple concept, it is a tremendous asset in self-preservation.

As seen recently, there have been horrific acts of terrorism, foreign and domestic, occurring at alarming rates throughout our world. Law enforcement works hard to develop intelligence to thwart those acts; sometimes we are successful, but sometimes we come up short. When citizens can look at situations in a skeptical manner, they may see something that will provide the intelligence that we in law enforcement need to stop a violent or terroristic act.

After the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the phrase "If you see something, say something" was coined. This phrase speaks to being vigilant toward things that seem odd or suspicious and then reporting those suspicions to authorities so that we can investigate.

We in law enforcement value the fact that sometimes the best intelligence information comes from members of the community we serve, and when citizens are aware, they can help us prevent crime. For instance if it's 80 degrees outside and someone is walking around with a winter coat on, you could easily say that doesn't fit with the situation. Can it be that the person is cold or feels like dressing that way? Yes, that absolutely could be the case. However, noticing things that stand out help you connect it to other things which also seem odd. For instance in the scenario above, is the person looking around nervously? Does he or she appear to be concealing something under the jacket? Does the person refuse to make eye contact? Again you start with a basic situation in which something seems out of place and then you see where it leads.

Sometimes being aware can be less subtle and more direct. For example, if you are aware of your surroundings and overhear someone speaking of blowing up a building, hurting someone, or committing a criminal act, you can call the police and we can investigate. Simply by being aware, you are not only more apt to be a source of intelligence for law enforcement, but it can also improve upon your own safety.

If you are in a public place and you witness people running or moving quickly, you may be able to have enough time to get out of harm's way if in fact there is a problem. If you are alert, criminals will notice that, too, and may not see you as an easy target. Remember, most criminals are opportunists, and if you limit their opportunity to commit a crime by being alert, you've accomplished your mission.

As much as I wish that I could condense the knowledge gained from a law enforcement career into a single column, I can't. I can simply remind people to be aware as they go about their activities. Look for things that seem out of place, don't ignore what you see, and trust your intuition. You can also teach your children these skills by making it a game. See how much detail they can remember of a person that walks past them. See if they can recite the license plate of a vehicle that passes by.

There are many ways to improve awareness, but the most important aspect is to simply make a conscious effort to be alert toward your surroundings. Whether it's an attempt at committing a theft, an attempt to commit an act of violence, or an attempt to commit an act of terrorism, they can all be mitigated by awareness and forwarding that information on to law enforcement. Remember, stay safe, stay aware, and if you see something, say something!

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

# Real-life police work isn't like TV

I frequently remark about the evolution of the law enforcement profession as I have observed it during my time as a member of service. As a result of this evolution, I fully believe that a progressive law enforcement administrator needs to be current on changing laws, best practices, the newest technologies and emerging trends.

Additionally, it's equally important for a police administrator to realize that a broader knowledge of the law enforcement profession is assumed by society, perhaps now more than ever before. This is a direct result of police efforts toward transparency, citizen ride-along programs, citizen police academies, news media, social media, video recording technologies, department websites and, of course, television and movies.

The creators of law enforcement-based TV shows and movies have some excellent consultants on board because in many ways, they accurately depict certain aspects

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of the profession. Some productions do a better job than others, but suffice it to say, a person with little to no law enforcement knowledge can gain a general insight as to how police function based upon Hollywood's interpretation.

The caveat, however, is that the film industry is geared toward entertainment, and because of that, there are a lot of aspects portrayed that are misrepresented. The misrepresentations sometimes create societal expectations that are grounded in entertainment as opposed to reality. This column will look at some of those distortions.

Without a doubt, the first one that comes to mind is based upon forensic evidence and investigations. It is completely true that we in law enforcement have a tremendous ability to solve crimes and identify perpetrators through DNA, latent fingerprints, shoe impressions, tool marks, ballistic evidence and computer technologies, to name a few.

Television and movies, however, incorrectly portray a quick analysis with immediate results in just about all cases. Collecting usable evidence, delivering that evidence to the crime lab for analysis and receiving word on the lab's findings take time and, unfortunately, all crimes relying strictly on forensic evidence can not be instantly solved as on TV.

Many shows and movies frequently depict investigations in which unlimited resources are at the disposal of the investigating agency. In reality, many law enforcement agencies work with limited resources and high volume, thereby reducing the ability to focus singularly on one particular investigation. Although the best efforts are put forth, the end result is not always an arrest and successful conviction in a timely manner.

The film industry also depicts non-stop action and scenes that leave you on the edge of your seat. In reality, good police work involves a lot of preventative patrols, case follow-ups, community policing and tedious paperwork. If the mundane tasks that officers perform daily were part of a TV show or movie, you can bet that the ratings for that show would not be very high.

Hollywood often shows gunfights, car chases and violent encounters with an element of glamour. There is nothing glamorous about any of the above, and in reality, sadly many law enforcement officers are killed each year by those methods. At the end of TV shows and movies, the "good guy" usually wins and the "bad guy" is sent to prison. As much as we would always like this to be the case, it simply is not always true.

So the takeaway from this is: Continue to enjoy the movies and TV shows that Hollywood creates, but bear in mind that they are not always representative of reality. I happen to be a fan of "Law and Order," "Blue Bloods" and police movies, but I know that they are entertainment, plain and simple. Knowing that there is a difference between Hollywood productions and reality will help to keep expectations in line with actual law enforcement capabilities.

*Dennis Naylor is chief of police for the city of Oneonta.*



# You don't need a badge to help others

Over the next few weeks, my detective division will be conducting background investigations for individuals who want to become Oneonta's newest police officers. As police chief, my focus will always be to select the person I feel will be able to uphold our mission, keep the community safe, and serve in an honorable and ethical manner.

During the process of interviewing police officer candidates, one question that is commonly asked is, "Why do you want to be a police officer?" The response is generally something to the effect of "because I want to help others" or "I want to serve my community."

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Many candidates seem sincere; however, the reality is that only a select few candidates will be chosen to wear the uniform and become a sworn officer. Those who are not hired may feel a sense of dejection and disappointment, but if a person's true goal is to serve the community, then there are many ways this can be

accomplished without carrying a badge and gun.

For me personally, becoming a police officer was a calling directly in line with my values, and a profession to which I felt well-suited. As an idealist, I saw police work as a platform to do good things, and although my ranks and duties have changed over the years, my platform to accomplish positive things has remained the same.

For those who do not meet the rigorous requirements to become an officer, I want them to realize that there are endless other ways in which they can be of service to their communities and that doing good can be accomplished by

anyone in any profession if that is truly their intent.

In law enforcement, we rely on many people, departments and agencies to support us in our mission. We are collaborators, and although we have a lot of authority, we can never do our job without the assistance of others. Oftentimes we rely on the fire department, emergency medical services, the Department of Social Services, the departments of public works, code enforcement, engineering, purchasing, finance and a multitude of others just to get things done.

Without these entities, it would be impossible for us to serve our communities to the best of our abilities. Think about it: we need roads maintained so that we can respond quickly to calls for service; we need financing to purchase appropriate equipment, and we need other agencies to assist us with situations that exceed our jurisdictions or expertise. The list of those that support our mission is lengthy and the partnerships we form are crucial to our ability to serve and protect.

As much as the above examples are specific to a law-enforcement function, every job out there can serve as a platform to do great things. A delivery driver who gets merchandise to its intended location is often overlooked, but could you imagine what would happen if you went to the store or your mailbox and the expected items weren't there because the driver did not make the effort to get to his or her destination on time? What if you are trying to see a medical professional for an ailment and the receptionist works extra hard to fit you in? I would say that person has been of great service!

Can you imagine how much trouble we would be in as a society if we didn't have hardworking educators, medical professionals, laborers, mechanics, business owners, electricians, plumbers, custodial workers, caregivers or various support and customer service staff to help us when we need them? Every career provides a person with an opportunity to help others and make the community a better place.

In my last article, I wrote that we are living in times that are volatile and uncertain. The stresses that people face daily are ever-increasing, and sometimes people simply need a bright spot in their day. Think about what role you can play in utilizing your occupation as a platform to help others and serve your community. The ripple effect of your actions can be more positive than you realize and the amount of good that a person does is not measured simply by his or her job type, job title, or level of authority, but rather by how much care one puts forth in whatever the profession happens to be.

**DENNIS NAYOR** is the police chief of the city of Oneonta.

# Take care if you own a firearm

The gun debate is a controversial topic in which there exist two very opposing perspectives between the staunch Second Amendment supporters and the anti-gun lobbyists.

My monthly column is a mechanism for me to provide important information while remaining neutral toward matters of debate. As such, I will not take a side on this subject, but rather outline some key points regarding gun ownership that may be overlooked. For those who own firearms, whether a long gun or handgun, and for those who are considering ownership, this column is written with you in mind.

First, if one makes the decision to own a pistol or handgun, then there are important considerations that must be taken into account in addition to simply obtaining the requisite pistol permit: Does the gun owner have the proper training and understanding regarding how their handgun functions? Does he or she know how to properly maintain, store, carry, and retain the handgun?

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of taking a human life? If we set constitutional rights aside for a moment, the bottom line is this: if the prospective owner of a handgun can't properly answer these questions, then reconsideration to ownership should occur.

Some gun owners or prospective gun owners feel that owning a gun will provide them with the means to defend themselves or their families. Does he or she clearly understand the laws in regard to the use of deadly physical force? Has consideration been given toward the ramifications of actually firing the gun in conjunction with the possibility

When we train new police officers, we cover all of the above in great depth. Possessing any firearm is a huge responsibility and one mistake or lapse in judgment can have devastating effects. Although part of obtaining a pistol permit requires attendance at a safety course, it needs to be understood that training must be ongoing.

Not only does one need to cultivate a level of knowledge, but he or she must also maintain that knowledge in order to remain proficient. In-service police officers go through firearms training at least once or twice every year for the duration of their careers. This training covers changes in laws, review of departmental policies, and significant range time to test and improve proficiency.

Even if a gun owner has the proper training as described above, but is careless in regard to proper storage, he or she creates a significant risk of the firearm getting into the hands of the wrong person or someone who is not properly trained. Properly securing a firearm (handguns and long guns) means that it is never accessible to anyone other than the owner. This can be done by utilizing a locked safe and a trigger lock, while keeping the ammunition in a separate location. Storing a loaded firearm in a closet, drawer or "hidden" area without a lock is unacceptable and dangerous.

If one has been granted a permit for concealed carry, then much thought must be given to the way in which the handgun is carried. The holster should be a retention holster, providing a level of security from the firearm accidentally falling out or from an attempted removal of the gun by another person. Many holsters on the market are sold for comfort, quick draw or economy, and may not address the issue of security.

The time spent in researching a quality holster will be well-spent. Placing a loaded firearm in the small of one's back, a purse, or in one's pocket as the movies portray is an accident waiting to happen. Even if the holster is one of quality, those who carry a handgun on their person should also be trained in proper weapon-retention techniques by a qualified instructor.

Last, but certainly not least, is the legal, ethical, moral and psychological effects of deploying any firearm. As much as the right to defend oneself or a third party exists, any action will almost certainly open a criminal investigation and legal proceedings in which the results can be criminal sentences and/or civil judgments. Even if the actions are determined to be legally justified, one must also consider the psychological impacts of injuring another or taking the life of another, along with the resulting legal proceedings.

The above are all things that we understand from a law enforcement perspective, but it's equally important for those who are not in law enforcement to understand, too. Whether owning a gun is for protection, hunting or recreational shooting, it is a big responsibility that must be taken seriously. Understand the laws, prepare yourself with knowledge, and contact us at the Oneonta Police Department with any questions.

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

# Make good use of the time you have

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend a 20-year college reunion. College reunions are special events because they provide the opportunity to see old friends, relive memories, and visit the setting in which one's career aspirations were shaped. Perhaps most importantly, however, is the fact that reunions inspire the ability to reflect on the passage of time. In this column, I will share some of what struck me the most 20 years later.

Upon college graduation, I think that it's very fair to say that everyone has high hopes and aspirations for a bright future in which all things are possible and life's prospects are limitless. In one's youth, time is often viewed as an endless resource, when in reality there are no guarantees about how much time any of us will actually have.

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one could have imagined. In that time frame, much will inevitably occur and significant changes will always take place. The only certainty is the fact that we will never know in advance what our lifespan will be or what obstacles we will encounter along our journey.

In seeing my fellow alumni, I observed that many transitioned very well into adulthood and the real world, post-graduation. Some pursued executive-level careers, some traveled, and some raised families. Within all of that, the single common denominator for everyone, however, was the passage of time. In considering this, it reaffirmed the importance of using our time wisely to pursue endeavors that will positively impact others and improve our world in the time that we have.

On any given day we are exposed to a multitude of news stories about violence, hunger, disease, war, corruption, poverty and crime. As the world continues to face more challenges and less certainty, we definitely need people to help make positive changes. Unfortunately, people don't always realize the ways in which they can effect change from their particular platform, so it can be very easy to get overwhelmed by societal challenges. The truth is that change happens over time and with action; small action leads to bigger action and the scales eventually tip toward the direction of positive momentum.

As a law enforcement official, it can be trying to witness societal problems up-close and on a daily basis. The challenges our world faces are significant, but I know that our focus and energy have to be applied to finding solutions rather than just lamenting or complaining. We all have a responsibility to pave the way for future generations sooner than later.

Whether volunteering one's time to a worthy cause, mentoring a young person, or engaging in a service-oriented profession; all of this will make a difference. As a veteran law-enforcement officer, I know that the ripple effect from this type of mindset and from taking positive actions would be remarkable.

While complaining about what we don't like is easy to do, it is simply not productive. Making changes and making a difference always requires effort, but it's something that can be substantially rewarding. Consider what you can do in the time you have and in the place you are to make positive contributions to your community and beyond.

At the Oneonta Police Department, our goal is to "make a difference every day," because when you break everything down, that is what it's all about; making a difference in the lives of others. To me this is the most worthwhile of endeavors and one that will always stand true during the passage of time.

**DENNIS NAYOR** is police chief of the city of Oneonta.

# We must appreciate members of armed forces

**A**s Memorial Day is almost upon us, I would like to dedicate this column to all of those who have served, and to those who are serving our country in the armed forces. Some of these individuals have made the ultimate sacrifice in losing their lives,

some have lost limbs or suffered crippling injuries, and others have seen and experienced things that will forever torment them.

What's often overlooked, however, is the fact that their service is the reason that we have freedom in this country, and it is therefore my distinct honor through this column to provide our

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FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

servicemen and servicewomen with the recognition that they deserve.

The fact that we live in a country in which we are afforded "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" is something that must never be taken for granted. As we view the global stage, it's clear to see that there are many places in the world in which oppression, violence and inequity are the only guarantees.

When I drive through Oneonta, I see people jogging, couples taking walks, children playing and people enjoying these priceless liberties. As I witness these things, I enjoy an extreme sense of pride in knowing that we as a police department are creating the safety for our residents to enjoy their lives.

The bigger picture, however, is the fact that our military personnel have ensured that we are a free country so that we can do our job on the local front. The saying "freedom isn't free" is extremely accurate, and our way of life in the USA is built directly upon military sacrifice. A trip to Washington to visit the World War II Memorial, Vietnam Memorial and Korean War Memorial will clearly illustrate this point.

The overwhelming majority of servicemen and servicewomen are extremely proud, yet very quiet about their service for our country. Many of them show their pride simply by flying an American flag, wearing a hat or shirt that represents their respective branch of service, or by other modest acts of patriotism that are readily visible. Those who have seen the atrocities of war, and those who were part of elite military units, will probably never speak about all that they have done, but trust that they have done a lot.

In contrast to the above, however, there are scoundrels among us who have never served but would like for people to think that they did. These people are some of the worst thieves because they are guilty of committing "stolen valor." With the internet, we can readily find examples of people who have put on military uniforms adorned with ribbons and citations that were never earned so that they can get a free meal, a better seat on an airplane, or some other undeserved recognition.

Frequently these people are exposed when someone who has served notices that certain things are inconsistent with the appropriate wearing of their uniforms or the placement of their ribbons. When questioned, their stories generally don't add up, and they are exposed that way. Fortunately, however, these people are the anomalies and most people we will see in a uniform or who speak of their time in the armed services will be legitimate and very deserving of our thanks.

I look toward the service with much regard not only for the reasons mentioned above, but because the standards that they set are the standards that we try extremely hard in law enforcement to emulate. When we hire people with a military background, they oftentimes make great officers because of the bearing, discipline and sense of purpose instilled in them through the service. As a result, these men and women also usually have an easy time transitioning into our paramilitary organizations.

When celebrating Memorial Day, please remember to think of the true reason that it is a national holiday. It can be easy to lose oneself in the barbecuing and social aspects of the day, but it's about much more than that. The best way that we can honor our servicemen and servicewomen is to consider their sacrifices, be grateful for the freedoms we enjoy, and always remember that freedom is not free.

And most importantly, if you see members of the military, whether active or retired, please thank them for their service; they will definitely appreciate it. To all of the readers who have served or who are currently serving, we at the Oneonta PD sincerely thank you for your service.

# Police help deal with elder abuse

In many places and cultures around the world, the elders of society are often revered and treated with exceptionally high levels of admiration and respect. They are seen as those who have accumulated a lifetime of knowledge and are therefore treated as the most valued members of society for the wisdom which they possess.

In our society, things are unfortunately not always that way. Conversely, the elderly are not only treated without deference at times, but they may be looked upon by some as an inconvenience or a nuisance. What's even worse is the fact that, far too often, the elderly become victims of abuse solely because of their physical and mental frailty.

**DENNIS NAYOR**



**FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK**

It is for this reason that law enforcement and social service agencies across the country regularly investigate cases of elder abuse and neglect. This column will focus on what can be done to address this problem.

The reality is this: similar to children, the elderly can often be dependent upon

others for basic care, some to higher degrees than others. When people are dependent upon others for their basic needs, they become vulnerable.

The expectation and hope is always that caregivers will be people of good moral character who will treat the person for whom they are caring properly, but this is not always the case. As law enforcement officers, it therefore becomes our job to do whatever we can to correct situations in which abuse is occurring.

Much like child abuse, elder abuse can take many forms. It can be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation or neglect. It can be perpetrated by family members, paid caregivers, or anyone who may

have contact with the victim. This abuse can often go unnoticed or unreported for a variety of reasons.

In some cases, the victim may lack the faculties to fully understand what is happening or to report the act. In other cases, the victim may feel too scared or intimidated to speak of the abuse, or the victim may lack the ability to contact someone who can help.

In many cases, the signs and symptoms of abuse may be visible to a discerning eye. It can be unexplained injuries or bruising, an apparent fear displayed by the victim when the abuser is nearby, or a malnourished or unkempt appearance. There could also be more-subtle telltale signs of abuse such as unexplained withdrawal or depression. In cases of exploitation, signs can be that items of value are suddenly missing or unaccounted for such as jewelry, money or other items of worth.

When signs are observed or when a reasonable suspicion exists that elder abuse may be occurring, the best course of action is to document what is observed and speak to the victim about your concerns. If everything points toward abuse or victimization, then please contact the police.

As law enforcement officers, we will try to obtain specific information that would support the allegation. Depending upon the circumstances, we may coordinate with Adult Protective Services that can assist in the investigation. Collaboratively, we will work to determine if abuse is in fact occurring and, if so, by whom. In addition to bringing the perpetrator(s) to justice, we will work to find a positive means of care-giving for the victim so that the victimization will not continue.

It's very important to remember that the elderly were once young, productive members of society. With aging, a lack of independence can easily occur, but that in no way should ever be an invitation for victimization. Whether the mistreatment is occurring at the hands of a family member or a non-family member entrusted to the victim's care, we in law enforcement want to know.

At the start of our lives, we are all dependent upon others for care, and toward the latter stages of our lives, we are also very likely to be dependent upon others. If you suspect abuse or are a victim of abuse, please contact the Oneonta Police Department or your local law enforcement agency for help.

As much as anyone, the elderly have certainly earned the right to be safe and to enjoy their golden years in life. With a little bit of luck, we will all be there someday, too.

*DENNIS NAYOR is police chief of the city*

# Technology has helped police do their jobs

It is said that the only constant is change, and we in law enforcement understand this adage better than most. When I started my career more than 20 years ago, I never could have imagined the changes that would take place in the span of only two decades.

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**FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK**

From the methods by which we operate, to the technologies we utilize, to the laws we enforce, the profession is vastly different than it was when I started. This column will highlight some of the changes that I have witnessed.

To begin with, traffic tickets, parking tickets and accident reports were always handwritten. As a patrol officer, I dreaded the times when I was required to write parking tickets in the rain and snow because the tickets would tear or smudge and my pen would often stop writing from being wet or cold. Now, the officers use electronic parking ticket writers that simply scan the bar code information from the vehicle registration, and with the push of a few buttons, the parking ticket is created.

The old days of handwriting accident reports and traffic tickets are also a thing of the past. All of the patrol cars are equipped with in-car computers and bar code scanners. These computers allow the officer the ability to create electronic copies of tickets and reports, which makes their job easier and much more efficient.

In the booking process, one of the major components involves taking fingerprints of the arrestee. I can't count how many times during my patrol days that I rolled ink onto a pane of glass to take the fingerprints of the accused. Frequently the arrestees were intoxicated or belligerent, making for a messy and challenging process.

We now utilize a system called Livescan in which the arrestee's fingerprints are digitally captured by a sophisticated software system that requires no ink. Within an hour, the arresting officer will receive notification from the state if the arrestee is wanted elsewhere or if he or she has been untruthful about their identity. This tool is an amazing evolution to the antiquated ink cards.

When I attended the police academy, the classroom portion of the academy focused on the basic topics such as penal law, vehicle and traffic law, report writing, criminal investigations, community policing, domestic violence, etc.

Now, recruits not only learn about these subjects, but they also receive training in such topics as terrorism, computer crimes, identity theft, human trafficking and active shooters, among others. This change in curriculum is clearly reflective of the times.

New laws now exist to keep up with technologies as they protect society. Some examples of such laws include: Unlawful surveillance, identity theft, texting while driving, and various cybercrime statutes. Sex offender registry laws, domestic violence-related laws, and child-specific laws have also been enacted to protect those who are most vulnerable. This is positive progress.

Investigations have changed as well. Cybercrimes create a scenario whereby crime locations are everywhere and, in a sense, nowhere at the same time. With computers, offenders can easily live in one state and commit crimes against a victim in another. As a result, it is now more important than ever that strong partnerships exist between law enforcement agencies to track down offenders.

When I was a new officer, we had policies to follow, but nowhere near the amount that guide our operations today. As an accredited police agency we not only have a vast multitude of policies under which we perform, but we have 133 state standards that regulate how we store evidence, hire, train, investigate complaints, keep records, equip officers and conduct all operations.

At my last training conference, we discussed the emerging technologies of drones. We discussed their abilities, the laws regulating them, and public safety concerns. I never thought that I would be learning about drones as they relate to law enforcement, but I was clearly mistaken.

With the many changes, the weapons systems we utilize are now better-suited for the threats we encounter. Our body armor is thinner and lighter, our flashlights are smaller and brighter, our tools are more varied, and our in-service training is drastically more frequent and comprehensive. We embrace technology, and use it to improve how we do our jobs.

It is assured that more changes will occur as the future unfolds, so we at the Oneonta Police Department will continue to be ready to evolve with the newest laws, technologies and methods of operating to properly serve our community.

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

# Be aware of the hazards of holiday season

With the holiday season now fully upon us, it's an important time to review some valuable safety tips as they relate to travel, shopping, parties and overall crime prevention. I think we can all agree that the excitement of the season

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has the distinct ability to distract us from being fully aware, but unfortunately, this can be costly.

Full awareness is necessary to not only avoid hazards as they present themselves but also to prevent the predators that are among us from capitalizing on any lapse in attention. Please consider the following as you go about enjoy-

ing the festivities in the weeks to come.

It's well-known that the holiday season involves travel to visit family and friends, shop and attend events. There is more traffic on the roads during this time of year than any other time, so please remember to remain alert. Allow extra stopping distance in bad weather, control your speeds in congested areas of traffic, and by all means do not allow yourself to get distracted by texts, emails and phone calls.

The split-second that one's eyes are not on the road could be the time needed to take evasive action to avoid a collision. Pedestrians, including small children, may dart in front of you as you are at shopping malls or bustling downtowns, so be extra vigilant and drive defensively.

As you travel to various destinations, remember to let someone know where you're going and when you expect to arrive. It's always helpful to make sure that someone knows your itinerary so they can look for you if you don't get to your destination or return when expected. Letting someone know your route of travel can be very important if you were to break down, run off the road, hit a deer, or run out of gas. Having adequate gas in the tank and good tires on your car can lower the chances of some such mishaps.

As you go about your shopping, remember not to flash cash. As much as the stores are filled with other holiday shoppers, they may also contain thieves, pickpockets and other criminals. Pay attention to your surroundings and make note of anyone who you think might be watching you or your family.

If you are shopping with children, remember to keep an eye on them. As much as it's easy to get distracted, it's not something that you can afford to do. It only takes few seconds for a child to wander off or be taken. If your instincts make you feel uneasy about a person or situation, ask to speak to a member of the store's security. An ounce of prevention is always worth a pound of cure.

When going to multiple shopping destinations, remember to lock your purchases in your trunk each time. Nothing invites an opportunist thief to break into your car like shopping bags left in plain view. Items of value should never be left for the public to see and the time spent securing them in your trunk will be time well-spent. Additionally, make note of where you park. When possible, park in places that are well-lighted and easily viewed by the public.

This is the time of year where holiday parties and gatherings are plentiful. Often, alcohol is part of the celebration, so please remember to drink responsibly. This not only includes monitoring how much you drink, but it also means planning how you will travel. Every year at this time, we read about a tragedy in which motorists kill themselves or someone else because they drove while intoxicated. Let's do all we can to prevent this: plan for a designated driver, have a taxi phone number, or call a sober friend. Nothing is as tragic as that which is preventable, so please don't drink and drive.

Last but certainly not least is the fact that we are now in an era in which random acts of extreme violence are common. The violence that used to be reserved for the battlefield now occurs in restaurants, movie theaters, public transportation, shopping malls and every other place once thought to be safe.

As the recent terrorist attack in Paris has reminded us, violence can take place anywhere and at any time, so be aware. Times have changed, so with that our mindset must change, too, and "if you see something, say something." Please call us at the Oneonta Police Department with any questions and have a safe and happy holiday season!

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*



**ONEONTA POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
*For Immediate Release*

Chief Dennis R. Naylor of the City of Oneonta Police Department is extremely proud to announce that today, December 18<sup>th</sup> 2014, the Oneonta Police Department was formally awarded the esteemed status of “New York State fully-accredited police agency” by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. This tremendous achievement is the culmination of 2 ½ years of hard work and devotion spent towards advancing the operations and administration of the Oneonta Police Department in order to best serve the citizens of Oneonta.

Earning this status means that the City of Oneonta Police Department meets or exceeds the best practices for law enforcement and has successfully passed the rigors of the state accreditation council’s requirements. These requirements include, but are not limited to; compliance with 133 required state standards in specific areas such as training, recruitment, hiring practices, discipline, promotions, evidence collection and storage, uniform standards, vehicle operation, rules of conduct, record keeping, use of force, fiscal management, internal investigations, crime scene processing, public relations, communications, victim rights, and many others.

Statistically, fewer than 30% of police departments statewide have achieved this distinction and less than 8% of police agencies the size of the Oneonta Police Department can claim this honor. As a member of the New York State assessment team appropriately stated upon completion of the formal assessment, this distinction places the Oneonta PD amongst the “elite” of law enforcement agencies.

This accomplishment was a team effort by the entire Department, beginning in April of 2012. Gaining accreditation consisted of; acceptance into the accreditation program, building the infrastructure to support accreditation with updated police equipment & vehicles, implementation of sound policies & procedures, building the required standards into practice, demonstrating compliance for a specified period of time, and passing a rigorous three day, on-site inspection. The on-site inspection is a very formal process which is conducted by an assessment team with extensive backgrounds in law enforcement and knowledge of best practices. The assessment team spends three days on-site, reviewing every policy and standard and verifying through supporting documentation that the standards are followed as written. Additionally, team members



randomly interview officers regarding policies and procedures, inspect uniforms and appearances, ride-along with officers to witness how they perform their duties, and further verify that the agency is upholding all of the principles set forth by state accreditation.

The New York State Accreditation program, which began in 1989, has received national recognition to the point that many other state's law enforcement accreditation programs were modeled after this particular program. The wide-ranging goal for state accreditation is to "provide law enforcement agencies with a mechanism with which to evaluate and improve the overall effectiveness of their agency and the performance of their staff, while giving formal recognition to agencies that meet or exceed general expectations of quality in the law enforcement field." Additionally, accreditation ensures that police agencies are effective, that they work together with other criminal justice agencies, and that they promote public confidence through the manner in which they perform their duties.

As much as this is a major historical achievement for the City of Oneonta Police Department, we will still continue to evolve and progress as an agency. This includes staying current with emerging trends, utilizing best practices, exploring new technologies to enhance our capabilities, and further developing all members through continual in-service training. As a state accredited police agency, the Oneonta Police Department will always look for the best ways to serve our community while staying true to the noble ideals of the law enforcement profession.

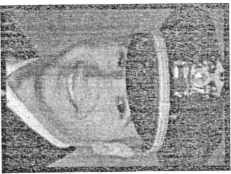
To learn more about the New York State Accreditation program go to [www.criminaljustice.ny.gov](http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov)

*"It is the mission of the Oneonta Police Department to provide professional services with integrity and dedication, to preserve life, to enforce the law, and to work in partnership with the community to enhance the quality of life in the City of Oneonta."*

# Misconceptions persist about police work

**O**ftentimes I hear inaccuracies regarding the police profession, so in this article I will do my best

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FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

to clarify some of the common misconceptions: Some believe that police officers are required to read Miranda warnings whenever an arrest is made. To the contrary, if an officer is making an arrest in which no interrogation will occur, or if the accused is simply cited in a non-custodial arrest (i.e. ticketed and released at the scene for a minor offense) then the Miranda warning is not required. If a suspect

is actually taken into police custody and interrogated as a suspect in a crime, then the Miranda warnings are necessary.

I've heard people say that police officers must have the same level of legal knowledge as lawyers. As flattering as this is, it simply is not true. Attorneys attend three years of law school and must pass the bar exam to practice law. As police officers, we have a strong working knowledge of many laws and we're trained in how to properly apply them to the situations we encounter. There are many finer points and legal nuances that change from time to time that lawyers understand to a much higher degree. It is for this reason that we consult lawyers to verify appropriate charges or courses of action whenever there is doubt.

When people see officers in uniform, the piece of

equipment that stands out most vividly is a firearm, and therefore it may be assumed that it's their most important tool. In all actuality, every tool that an officer carries is equally important based upon the need at the time. Flashlights, pepper spray, TASERS, gloves, handcuffs, etc., each serve a very useful function. However, the most important tool that is used with the most regularity is an officer's portable radio. The radio allows the officer to receive and relay pertinent information very quickly, and when an officer is in trouble and needs help, no other tool is more valuable.

Some assume that police officers do not experience fear as they perform their duties. This is a fallacy, because we go into the unknown all the time and fear is a normal reaction. We rely on our training and draw strength and

confidence from that preparation in order to effectively perform our jobs. As officers, we are sworn to uphold the laws and protect our communities, so as much as fear is a natural reaction to the dangers we face, we make it serve us rather than control us.

Some people assume that, as police officers, we control the criminal justice system in terms of how the process plays out from beginning to end, when in reality we are simply one of four components that comprise the system. The prosecution, courts and corrections make up the other components that control the final disposition of a case.

restitution, parole assignments, etc.

Some think that investigations can easily be solved by fingerprints, DNA or other forensic evidence. Sometimes DNA evidence is not available; sometimes fingerprints are smudged or unreadable; sometimes crime scenes have been compromised unknowingly by victims, friends or family, thereby destroying evidence before police arrive. These are just a few reasons why forensics are not a panacea.

Last, but not least: Many people think that police and doughnuts go together, as evidenced by the frequent jokes surrounding the topic. The fact is that police work involves long hours and officers must remain alert at all times. For this reason, coffee has long been a staple for those in law enforcement. As many can understand, a sweet pastry (such as a

doughnut) sometimes goes very well with that cup of coffee and hence the police-and-doughnut relationship was formed!

I tried to incorporate some humor with that last clarification, but in all seriousness, police work is a profession that is sometimes misunderstood, oftentimes underappreciated, and always dangerous. National Police Week just occurred, and sadly, more names were added this year to the memorial wall in Washington, D.C., for officers who made the ultimate sacrifice and were killed in the line of duty.

If you have the opportunity to thank an officer for his or her service, please do so: it will make their day! In the meantime, please call us at the Oneonta Police Department for any questions or concerns that we can clarify.

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

## Remembering September 11<sup>th</sup>

By Dennis R. Naylor

It was 15 years ago yesterday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, that our way of life as Americans was forever changed. On that day, terrorists hijacked commercial airliners and crashed them directly into the World Trade Center buildings, the Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania violently killing 3,000 innocent people and seriously injuring over 6000 others. As a nation, we watched in horror as the news coverage displayed video of the planes hitting the Twin Towers, which subsequently collapsed right before our eyes.

Just like everyone, I personally remember exactly where I was when I learned of the attacks. I had worked a 4 pm to midnight shift the night before at the police department and was still asleep when my phone rang. When I answered, it was my brother on the other end who was frantically telling me that our nation was under attack. He was telling me that planes were crashing into buildings in New York City and that Washington D.C. was under attack too. I couldn't comprehend what he was saying so I got up and turned on the news, subsequently staring at the TV in disbelief at what I was seeing. I remained glued to the news coverage for the days, weeks and months to follow, knowing that our world would never be the same.

In 2001, I had about six years of service as a police officer and had become quite used to seeing acts of violence and witnessing things that just didn't make sense. As much as I thought that I was getting hardened to the realities of the world from my profession, I can honestly say that nothing could prepare me or anyone else for what was happening. When I went into work later that day on September 11th, I learned that the Oneonta Police Department was in the midst of making arrangements to send a team of officers down to Ground Zero to assist in the rescue and recovery efforts. Subsequently, several of our officers spent about two weeks in New York City working with the NYPD and law enforcement from around the country to assist in any way they could. As Americans we all wanted to help but unfortunately nothing we did seemed to be enough.

In the years that followed, our country worked hard to heal and rebuild. Patriotism soared, American flags flew on more porches than ever before, and there was a sense of unity in our nation. We all watched as many young men and women joined the military to serve our country and protect our freedoms and way of life from those who wanted to destroy it. It was highly observable that the efforts to work together and rebuild were strong.

So here we are 15 years later. The World Trade Center has been rebuilt and lasting monuments have been erected to forever remember the victims of the attack; in so many ways however, our world is clearly a much different place. In our post 9/11 world, extreme violence has become so commonplace that many people have become numb towards it, and the unity that our nation experienced after the attack seems to have significantly dissolved.

As a society, we owe it to those who lost their lives on that fateful day to remember the tragedy that occurred and to continually work towards building a better world. Today's generation of

teens and young adults were just children when the attacks occurred so it is the responsibility of all those who vividly remember that time to explain what occurred. We must also work harder towards creating peace and unity. The divisiveness that exists in our country between races, religions, and various groups and cultures is only continuing to destroy the fabric of our society which we have worked so hard to rebuild. As the anniversary of the vicious attacks on our country has just passed, I ask that everyone please consider what it is that they can do in their individual capacities to work towards creating a more peaceful co-existence. Not only will this make our country a better place, but it will honor all of those who tragically lost their lives due to intolerance and hatred on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

# Conferences help with best practices

**M**aintaining a highly trained police organization is definitely no easy task, but without a doubt it is an essential endeavor for any police administrator in this day and age.

At the Oneonta PD, the department attends upwards of 2,000 hours of in-service training annually, which ensures that our community receives the most professional policing available. As chief, I am no exception to that rule and I, too, must make sure that I am continually training in order to lead the department in the best way possible.

**DENNIS NAYOR**



**FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK**

One of the fundamental ways in which I stay informed of best practices, new trends and current technologies is to attend some of the major police conferences, such as the one I attended last month, hosted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP).

The IACP conference is the largest conference for police leaders in the world. On average,

there are 10,000 to 12,000 police chiefs from the United States and abroad who are in attendance. Chiefs from the largest cities to the smallest villages attend, all in order to improve their agency. To accommodate such a large group, the conference is spread throughout a huge convention center over a five-day period in one of four major cities throughout the country; specifically Philadelphia, Orlando, Chicago or San Diego.

This year, the conference was held in San Diego and as usual did not disappoint. As chiefs, we are able to attend educational tracks in general sessions, leadership, global perspectives, legal issues, public information, technology or small agency tracks, to name a few. I choose among the various tracks to find sessions that are most relevant to the needs of our community.

Some of the courses I took included topics in de-escalation and minimizing the use

of force, saving lives and reducing liability, body-worn camera updates, leadership in police organizations, mental health challenges in law enforcement, social media in law enforcement and proactive personnel management. In addition to the educational sessions that are always highly informative, there are assemblies and critical-issues forums I also attended that covered important current topics in the policing profession.

At the opening and general assemblies, trends and vision for the future of the policing profession were outlined to the several thousand chiefs in attendance. At the critical issues forum, the chiefs from the major cities who have experienced extreme violence and/or terrorist attacks over the past year spoke about each particular incident and discussed the lessons learned.

This forum included the chiefs from San Bernardino, California, and Orlando, Florida, along with the superintendents of Chicago PD and the Louisiana State Police. Also included in the forum were the heads of the Belgian Federal Police and the French National Police. The forum was moderated by CNN correspondent Deborah Feyerick. All of those leaders dealt with extreme acts of violence in which many lives were lost. The type of incidents could, unfortunately, occur anywhere, so it was very valuable to hear first-hand perspectives.

This year, FBI Director James Comey also addressed us and discussed relevant national and international incidents along with the challenges of law enforcement in our country. United States Attorney General Loretta Lynch also addressed my colleagues and me, thanking us for the extraordinary job that we do and outlining challenges ahead. She discussed the importance of maintaining positive community relations and partnerships within our communities to most effectively perform our jobs. The comments made by the FBI director and attorney general were as true for small agencies as they are for large agencies across our country and I was pleased to know that we at the Oneonta PD adhere to those philosophies.

Although Oneonta isn't a major metropolitan city, it is susceptible to the same global issues as anywhere else, and the national problems that we read and hear about could easily become ours. As chief of police, it is therefore my highest duty to make sure that I am doing all I can to keep the Oneonta Police Department in the mainstream of professional 21st century policing while providing the best measures of safety for our community. This community deserves no less and I am proud to represent the Oneonta Police Department with the many other chiefs from across this nation whose goals are safe communities, professional departments and a better world.

*DENNIS NAYOR is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

# President made good points at conference

**T**wo weeks ago, I attended the 122nd annual International Association of Chiefs of Police Conference in Chicago. The conference was a gathering of about 14,000 of the world's law enforcement leaders, convened over a four-day period to find the best ways to provide the highest levels of police services as we safeguard our respective communities.

As chiefs, we all face similar challenges.

Therefore, the conference becomes an extremely proactive means to find solutions to the multitude of issues before us.

The conference is composed of scores of educational sessions as well as specific educational tracks taught by experts in their particular fields. Attendees can

concentrate on leadership, legal issues, technology, small agency issues, wellness or a combination of all. The educational sessions cover all of the contemporary policing topics, ranging from terrorism to community policing, and everything in between.

The conference has tremendous value in that as attendees, we choose the educational track or sessions that cover the topics most specific to the needs of our communities. I personally attended sessions on body cameras, predictive policing, employee morale, active shooters and critical-incident management, among others.

Another extremely valuable aspect of the conference is that as chiefs, we are all reminded that the majority of law enforcement issues are universal coast-to-coast. Issues relating to budgets, personnel matters, crime trends, technology and social trends are all very similar. The scale of the problem changes between large city and small city, but the relevant issues remain consistently the same.

In the second general assembly, the president of the United States, Barack Obama, addressed all attendees. Regardless of one's political views or party affiliation, his points were well-stated. He first paid respect to NYPD Officer Randolph Holder, who was killed in the line of duty one week earlier. He acknowledged the very difficult work that is done by police and thanked us for doing a job in which we risk our lives so that others don't have to.

The president stated that as a result of what we do, the homicide and violent crime rate has dropped by almost 50 percent over the last 20 years. President Obama also clarified that he "rejects any narrative which tries to divide the police with the communities they serve" and said that "law enforcement often becomes the scapegoat for broader failures of the criminal justice system and society."

Some of these issues to which he was referring include unemployment, mental illness, lenient laws, drug addiction and homelessness, to name but a few. The president stated that progress comes when everyone works together and that society must partner with law enforcement to tackle the hard problems.

The president outlined three goals that he has in relation to America's law enforcement. He wants to make sure that we have the resources to get our jobs done, to reform the criminal justice system in order to make it "smarter and fairer," and to make gun-safety reforms so that officers in the field are safer. The president also emphasized how important it is for law enforcement to build trust with their communities, and for the communities to give the benefit of the doubt to the police. The president stated that there are "countless incidents of effective police work that rarely make it on the evening news."

I think I speak for all attendees when I say that we all appreciated the fact that the president of the United States acknowledged the difficult challenges that we in law enforcement face while recognizing how much good work we do on a daily basis to keep others safe. I do firmly agree that we still have much work ahead of us, and as FBI Director James Comey appropriately stated earlier in the conference, it is important for both the communities we serve to see how difficult our job is and likewise, for the police to see the challenges that some of those who we serve face.

When both sides have a better understanding of each other's challenges, he said, the police-community relationships across the nation will vastly improve. I completely agree with this philosophy and feel very proud to know that the men and women of the Oneonta Police Department work hard to uphold our mission of "providing professional services with integrity and dedication, to preserve life, to enforce the law, and to work in partnership with the community to enhance the quality of life in the City of Oneonta."

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

**DENNIS  
NAYOR**



**FROM THE  
CHIEF'S DESK**

# We must work collaboratively to better our communities

As another year is winding down and a new year is fast approaching, it is the perfect time for everyone to consider possible resolutions and ways in which we can aspire to create a brighter future.

As a society that has become divided by politics and besieged by addictions, misplaced priorities, and high levels of uncertainty, we can all use this time to evaluate the ways in which we can improve both our individual and our col-

lective circumstances.

Oftentimes it can be easy to feel helpless to change those things that seem insurmountable, but I believe that positive shifts can definitely occur by each of us through our actions, regardless of how small they may seem in the grand scheme of things.

It is fair to say that after the past year and a half of campaigning leading up to the

subsequent presidential election, there has been much more division than unification in our nation. The anger and violence perpetrated by Americans against fellow Americans in the name of politics is extremely counterproductive to our existence. As a society that unfortunately has many problems in need of solutions, it's now more important than ever for people to find ways to work collaboratively to bring about improvement. As Abraham Lincoln eloquently stated, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Hence, when we are united in our efforts we can only succeed; however when we are at odds, we will certainly fail.

Addiction is something that we in law enforcement are confronted with regularly and it is something that affects so many segments of our communities in an extremely negative way. Those who suffer from addictions would most certainly like to be free of the chains that control them, but the challenges are real, and the obstacles very difficult to overcome. Societally we can clearly

see the effects of addiction in terms of crime, illness and dysfunction. Those suffering from addictions must continue to look toward avenues for recovery through treatment programs, while we as a society must focus on ways to help get those people to the help that they need. Ignoring the problem is not a choice.

As I have stated in other columns, we are clearly one of the most advanced societies in terms of technologies, education and medical advancements but if we can't make sure that all people have food, shelter, jobs and equality then maybe we are not as advanced as we would like to believe. The above issues can be seen in big cities, rural areas and everywhere in between. We have a great community here in Oneonta, but we are certainly not insulated from these global issues either. We must all focus our efforts on making these problems our priorities to solve. Creating new technology is great, but if people can't meet their basic needs, then we clearly must realign our efforts to solve that problem.

As we see and read daily, these are very uncertain times in which we are living. The extreme and random acts of violence that has become commonplace is unacceptable. In law enforcement, we are exposed to this daily and the violence that is perpetrated upon one another must end. The many places that we used to consider to be safe have all been tainted by violence, so therefore we all have a responsibility to stop this from continuing. As police, it is specifically our duty to maintain public safety; however each and every citizen plays a key role as well. This can be achieved through one's positive acts of promoting peace or by alerting us to potential problems so that we can thwart a pending violent act.

In as much as we are faced with significant challenges ahead, we also possess great abilities to meet them. We are in fact an evolved nation that has the capabilities of making things better. To do this, however, our focus and priority must be on working collaboratively on the problems we face. As this year is ending, we see where we have been; now we have to focus on where we are going. I believe that when everyone realizes that their efforts can definitely have an impact upon our overall success, we will see good things happen.

As always, if we at the Oneonta Police Department can be of any assistance in any way with these efforts, then please let us know.

With that, I want to wish everyone a great holiday season and a safe, healthy, and prosperous new year ahead.

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

DENNIS  
NAYOR



FROM THE  
CHIEF'S DESK

# Mission statement guides OPD's actions

Any organization whose goal is to provide high-quality service must always have a clearly articulated mission statement and a well-defined set of core values to guide the way. Whether it's a for-profit corporation or a public service agency, a clear vision is required. The mission statement and core values of the Oneonta Police Department provide our direction, and will be the focus for this column.

Our mission statement reads as follows: "It is the mission of the Oneonta Police Department to provide professional service with integrity and dedication, to preserve life, to enforce the law and to work in partnership with the community to enhance the quality of life in the City of Oneonta."

This statement is boldly displayed in our main hallway so that all members of the department are reminded on a daily basis about our charge. As we continue to evolve, this statement keeps us focused on our priorities.

In addition to a clear mission statement, the Oneonta Police Department also has a set of established core values that are conspicuously posted in our building as well. The values of honor, loyalty, courage, pride



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and integrity emboss our walls and are the principles that I believe to be some of the most valuable for law enforcement. To follow, I will explain what each of these values means to me and how they relate to 21st century policing.

Honor to me is synonymous with the oath of office we swear to uphold when we choose to be police officers. It entails being intrinsically motivated to do the right thing always. It's a characteristic that at the highest levels serves as the best guide to an officer's decisions and actions. It is our moral compass.

Loyalty to me means being loyal to solid principles and beliefs. The misnomer is that loyalty refers being loyal simply to others, but the truth is that all people are capable of succumbing to human nature and making poor choices. When one is loyal to principles versus people, then he or she need not ever worry about being swayed by the decisions, choices or pressures made by others

because their principles of right versus wrong will always light the correct path for personal actions.

Courage in policing is essential because the calls that we respond to are sometimes dangerous. We go into the unknown all the time and do not have a bit of apprehension would be insane. It takes courage to respond, knowing that you may be up against a situation that could easily cause serious injury or death. Courage, to me, also takes on another meaning. I believe courage also means having the ability to stand up for what you know is right, especially when it is easier to look the other way or simply go along with the status quo. Courage is needed to report suspected wrongdoing by a fellow officer, to be honest when a mistake is made, or to make a decision that is necessary even though it may entail personal costs such as being ostracized.

Pride is important because it involves having a sense of purpose and a true belief in the value of whatever it is you are doing. This is where details become noticed and workmanship stands out. For law enforcement, pride includes having a professional and polished appearance, going out of

your way to help a victim, and representing the policing profession in a positive light at all times. We can always see when someone has a sense of pride in their job because their product is always a much higher quality than those who lack that characteristic.

Last but certainly not least is integrity. When the core values were mounted on our walls, I had the word integrity mounted over the door that leads to the garage bays where the patrol cars are parked. My rationale was to create a constant reminder of what is most important for us as officers as we begin each tour of duty. Honesty, fairness and compassion are the most important character qualities that an officer needs, and maintaining a high level of integrity will ensure that those qualities always stand out.

In a day and age where quality is sometimes overlooked for quantity and personal character takes a back seat to popularity, I am proud to know that we understand the difference. As we carry out our mission of public service to this community, our mission statement and core values will continue to light our way.

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*



## **Integrity is Utmost Quality for Police**

### **By Dennis R. Naylor**

Last month, I attended the police academy graduation ceremony for two of my officers who had just completed their basic police training. The ceremony was marked by polished recruits, proud families, and distinguished guests, all of whom were in attendance to witness the huge milestone which was achieved by the graduating class. A highlight of any graduation is always the keynote speech whose remarks are designed to inspire and positively impact those in attendance. As expected, the commentary made at this graduation provided that message.

This year's remarks focused on the importance of integrity. As the graduating recruits listened attentively to the speech, I was hopeful that they would all truly grasp the significance of what was being said because after all of the pomp and circumstance has ended, integrity must be at the forefront of everything they do. It's not enough for someone to simply understand what is being said, but rather such an important topic must be internalized as part of a person's lifestyle. For instance, someone can watch a Rocky movie and be immediately inspired to start training hard. Oftentimes, this motivation fades and the urge to be like the movie character fades too. Those who stick with it however know that no matter what, they will not stray from the path of hard work because the reward is worth the sacrifice. As true as this is for someone who wants to be like Rocky, it is equally true for someone who knows the importance of staying loyal to their core values.

When tough choices must be made, the only thing that will govern proper decision making is a strong set of internal core values. The law enforcement career is one in which much power is vested in every sworn member. Because of this, integrity is utterly essential at all times. When confronted with situations in which unpopular decisions must be made, or when temptation appears, it is an officer's loyalty toward the principles of integrity that will serve as the only thing to properly guide him or her. Those who take an oath to protect and serve must be willing to accept the fact that sometimes they will lose friends or become unpopular for the sake of integrity. It's easy to go with the flow and be everyone's friend, but doing what's right will not always allow for that. Whether it's to report internal wrong-doing, or in telling a friend that you will not circumvent the law for them, or in holding yourself to the highest standards possible, integrity is needed. There is simply no substitute for this and those that stray from doing what's right not only tarnish the image of every officer, but ultimately pay a hefty price for their choice.

The law enforcement field today is significantly more challenging than ever before. The expectations for what we must know and achieve daily in our roles is ever increasing, and the scrutiny is wide and vast. Survival in the law enforcement profession does not simply require sound tactics, but it requires a strong moral compass. As administrators, we work hard to find that type of solid character when we hire new officers so that we can develop the tactical aspect, knowing that the inherent positive character of the officer is already developed.

In 2011, I addressed the graduating police academy class and advised them of the following: Everyday, strive to uphold the ideals of this noble profession, reminding them that their actions represent every law enforcement officer who wears, has worn, or will wear the uniform. Treat people with dignity and compassion. Carry stickers for children. Make honesty and integrity your backbone. Your reputation will precede you so be very conscious of the choices you make. Maintain interests and friends outside of law enforcement. Understand that the public interactions that you have may take only a few minutes, but

they may resonate with that person for a lifetime. Try to leave work at work. As police officers you are not above the law and will be held to the highest standards. And lastly, making a difference is not measured by the amount of arrests you make or the number of tickets you write, but rather how you treat others.

To the most recent police academy graduates, I congratulate you on your accomplishment and wish you the best of luck. Rely on your academy training to remain safe and put integrity in all you do; those are the ingredients for a successful law enforcement career.

## **1829 Principles Still Guide Police**

### **By Dennis R. Naylor**

In the year 1829, a British Statesman by the name of Sir Robert Peel established the London Metropolitan Police Department. Peel, commonly referred to as the father of modern policing, subsequently established nine fundamental principles to guide the direction of his newly formed Department and the actions of the constables who were employed there. As you'll see below, the principles which he established almost two hundred years ago are just as true today as they were back then.

Principle 1: "The basic mission for which the police exist is to prevent crime and disorder."

Principle 2: "The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions."

Principle 3: "Police must secure the willing cooperation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public."

Principle 4: "The degree of cooperation of the public that can be secured diminishes proportionately to the necessity of the use of physical force."

Principle 5: "Police seek and preserve public favor not by catering to public opinion but by constantly demonstrating absolute impartial service to the law."

Principle 6: "Police use physical force to the extent necessary to secure observance of the law or to restore order only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient."

Principle 7: "Police at all times should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being the only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence."

Principle 8: "Police should always direct their action strictly towards their functions and never appear to usurp the powers of the judiciary."

Principle 9: The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it."

As we have grown into a society with advanced technologies, complex challenges, and ever increasing violence, the policing profession has had to evolve to maintain pace. Our training has transformed, the tools we use have vastly improved, and the manuals that guide our actions have become exponentially larger. In spite of all of this evolution, the principles as outlined above are just as important. These principles are so important for policing that the Oneonta PD proudly displays a four foot by five foot rendition of those principles conspicuously in our multi-purpose room as a daily reminder to all.

Of the nine principles, one of the most important concepts in my opinion is articulated in principle number seven. The concept which states "the police are the public and the public are the police" could not be any truer. Safety, peace, and quality of life will never be achieved if an "us versus them" mentality exists on either side. Agencies such as ours which employ a strong community policing

philosophy strive for mutual cooperation to accomplish our mission because we know that success happens when we all work together. If we break down the word community, we see the word "unity." Whenever we as the police join forces with all citizens on a united front to combat crime and create public safety, great things will follow.

As extremely disturbing and tragic events continue to unfold in our nation on an all-to-regular basis, I see an even greater need to embrace the philosophies of community policing and Sir Robert Peel's Principles. As one of the most advanced societies on the planet, I believe that our technologies and scientific achievements are all meaningless if we can not find ways to work together towards the same common end.

As I continue to lead the Oneonta Police Department, I will always be looking for better ways to improve the services to the citizens we serve. Policies will continue to be developed and modified to reflect best practices, consistent training will be a mainstay, hiring standards will remain stringent, and ethics will be our backbone. We will stay true to the foundational principles that Sir Robert Peel coined almost two centuries ago in the hopes that we can continue to be a positive influence within our community.

## **Addiction Can Lead to Crime, But Recovery Also Possible**

**By Dennis R. Naylor**

One mechanism which fuels a portion of the crimes which we in law enforcement investigate is that of addiction. The effects of alcoholism, drug addiction, and gambling addiction are enormous and their consequences wreak havoc not only upon the lives of the addicted and their families, but also upon society. This article will focus on these addictions and provide insight regarding where to turn for help.

Alcohol is the most widely consumed and socially accepted drug and although it's regulated, it's still significantly abused. Marketing and advertisement companies make billions of dollars annually by promoting its consumption; hence it is a staple at most parties and social occasions. Television commercials show alcohol in the context of people laughing and having a great time, with the overall image equating to fun. What the advertisements fail to show are the countless lives that are ruined from over consumption. Whether by alcoholism as a disease or over consumption on a single occasion, lives can be destroyed by alcohol. As police, we see this frequently when we make arrests for driving while intoxicated, sex offenses, or other conduct which would not have otherwise been committed if alcohol was not a factor. In as much as alcohol can be a compliment to a special occasion such as for a toast, it can also be a huge liability as outlined above.

As of late, we have heard much information in the way of drug addiction, particularly with the national increase in heroin and opioid related deaths. The information has shown that there are many people across our nation who have become addicted to drugs. Whether the addiction began as a result of an injury requiring painkillers or via experimentation with recreational drugs, the results are the same and range from physical illness, to criminal acts, to objectionable social behavior. The overall commonality is that the quality of life for the addicted person suffers significantly and oftentimes their lives take a negative downward spiral. Part of this spiral can include loss of employment, distance from family and friends, and the need to commit criminal acts to maintain the habit. Until we as a society can get a better handle on drug addiction, we will continue to see more of these tragic effects.

The third type of addiction that I want to cover is gambling addiction. Gambling addiction can be hard to understand because the person who suffers from it may not show outward signs of disease simply because the addiction is not substance-based. These people however suffer a quality of life that is completely compromised by their constant need to gamble. People with a gambling addiction can easily destroy their lives, lose their possessions, and ruin their credit in a very short amount of time. With the convenience of daily state sponsored lotteries and legalized gaming accessible everywhere, along with the allure of quick wealth, it's easy to see how enticing gambling can become. Unfortunately, those who become addicted quickly lose the entertainment value and wager monies which they can not afford to lose in order to chase losses or achieve that euphoric feeling of winning.

Nowadays, the stigma surrounding addictions is much less than in the past and the reality is that many people either suffer from an addiction or know someone who does. People are also learning that addiction is no longer considered a moral issue, but rather a health issue regarding the brain and brain chemicals. Those with addictions simply react to outside stimuli or substances in a way that those who do not suffer from addictions react. The chemicals in the brain create not only a dependency towards the addiction but also a euphoric feeling that the user needs to continually replicate. Because of these neurological factors, the ability to curb the addiction is often outside the control of the person, despite their best efforts to change their behavior themselves.

Fortunately, help is available. In our community we have several organizations that provide pathways towards recovery. LEAF (Leatherstocking Education on Alcoholism/Addiction Foundation) is an organization located at 80 Water Street which specializes in prevention, information, and referrals. They can be reached at 432.0090. The Turning Point is located at 22 Elm Street and focuses on addiction recovery and can be contacted at 267.4435. Lastly, Addiction Recovery Services is located at 242 Main Street and focuses on treatment. They can be reached at 431.1030. If you or someone you know is affected by addiction, please use these resources and know that recovery is definitely possible.

## **Child Abuse Can Occur in Several Forms**

### **By Dennis R. Naylor**

One of the most heart-wrenching components which we deal with in law enforcement occurs when we respond to instances of child abuse and neglect. As police officers we accept the fact that we are exposed to varying degrees of pain, suffering, and tragedy on a daily basis. In order to properly function and perform our duties, we do our best to develop a thick skin and remain somewhat detached as we assist victims. When it comes to cases of child abuse however, this becomes much more challenging.

Child abuse takes many forms. It can be physical abuse, emotional abuse, and / or sexual abuse. In either situation, the effects will have a long-lasting impact on the life of a child so we do our best to look hard at situations in which this may be occurring. When we receive a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, we are trained to look for certain things. We look for physical signs of abuse such as bruising, scars, malnourishment, extreme fear, social withdrawal, etc. We also conduct interviews of those who may be involved or who may have direct knowledge. If we feel that abuse of any kind is occurring we will notify Child Protective Services who will assign a case worker to work collaboratively with us as we investigate the incident.

In cases of suspected long-term emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or in cases where outwards signs may not be readily available, we conduct forensic interviews of the child victim. These interviews are conducted in a safe and dedicated location known as a Child Advocacy Center (CAC) and by trained members of law enforcement who have specialized knowledge concerning the proper techniques for interviewing child victims. The objective of these interviews is not only to determine if abuse is occurring, but also to make certain that further traumatization of the child does not occur through the investigative process. The ultimate goal is to seek justice for the victim and to make sure that the abuse ends. Depending on the circumstances, sometimes this includes the removal of the child from the home in which the abuse is occurring.

Sadly, many instances of abuse go unnoticed or unreported and as a result, the victimization continues. Oftentimes the ripple effect becomes long-term psychological problems, addiction, and a continuation of abuse towards others. When we witness adults who continually break the law or commit violent acts, we realize that the behavior is likely rooted in the prior victimization of the offender, but unfortunately at that point the damage has been done. Clearly this is no longer an individual problem, but a societal one.

Another form of child abuse which society is realizing much more frequently involves human-trafficking. This occurs for the purposes of sexual exploitation, labor, or other illegal purposes. Through the use of fear, coercion, and psychological manipulation the victims oftentimes are stuck in this captivity, essentially being deprived of their life. At every major police conference that I attend, the topic of human trafficking is discussed, so it is highly relevant.

As law enforcement officers, we (along with school employees, medical personnel, social service workers, day care providers, etc.) are mandated reporters. This means that we are required by New York State Social Service Law to report instances of suspected child abuse. Most mandated reporters report to us as police, and we as police report to Child Protective Services. This however does not preclude anyone who suspects child abuse from contacting the authorities.

I strongly feel that the driving force behind what we do in law enforcement is to protect people and help victims. Child victims are truly the most innocent of victims and need our help the most. If you suspect a child of being abused, please contact us at the Oneonta Police Department or your local law enforcement agency to investigate. If you would like more information on this topic please visit the New York State Office of Children and Family Services webpage at [www.ocfs.ny.gov](http://www.ocfs.ny.gov) and click on the link that indicates "Report and Prevent Child Abuse." You can also call toll free at 800-342-3720. We all have a duty to protect those who can't protect themselves and sometimes the life of a child may depend on it.



# Exercise responsibility while using technology

Sometimes the advancements and conveniences that we rely on daily may actually be more of a burden than an improvement to our existence. This column will focus on a few examples as seen from a law enforcement perspective. I am confident that many of you who read this column will likely have made many of the same observations.

Social media tools such as a Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have tremendous value for a variety of reasons. For many, they provide a mechanism to stay in touch with friends and family and serve as a great resource for narrowing the physical distance that may otherwise exist. As tools, they also provide a way to chronologically record events while providing an excellent means of instant communication. It is for these reasons that we at the Oneonta Police Department regularly utilize social media to connect with our community. There are times, however,

where the social media tools that we use can become more of a negative influence than a positive one. We have all observed instances in which people

## DENNIS NAYOR



## FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

also see instances of cruelty lying and other forms of cruelty that occur with the stroke of a few computer keys. As individuals, we need to take a moment to realize that the tools that were intended for good purposes can easily be used with negligence and malice.

Smartphone devices are owned by millions of Americans. These

become key-board warriors and use their choice of social media to attack or insult one another.

Sometimes the insults turn into threats, and then we, as police, are contacted. We

tools allow us to stay connected with everyone, to take photos of everything, and to do just about anything. The problem is that so many people are glued to their phones more so than they are to their environment and real life becomes less important than what is on their device. Every day, I witness people completely ignorant to what is occurring around them, essentially trading personal safety and awareness for the conveniences that their phones provide. When the tasks at hand such as driving, not walking into traffic, or being in tune with one's surroundings ceases to exist, then there is an issue.

In keeping with smartphone technology, let's discuss the new app called Pokemon Go. This app allows the user to try to locate virtual creatures that appear to be in the user's actual environment. The goal is to capture these creatures in order to advance levels, which is accomplished via sophisticated

technology pairing with the GPS capabilities in the user's phone.

Two weeks ago, I witnessed groups of people stumbling in and out of traffic on Main Street in the early evening while staring at their phones. Upon investigation, it was discovered that all parties in the groups were playing Pokemon Go and as a result were completely oblivious to their environment.

What's worse is that there have been incidents reported nationally where players have committed acts of trespass because the game led them to restricted locations and the users ignored the fact that the property should not have been accessed. Other instances have shown cases where predators have used the game to locate and lure their victims under the false pretense of playing the game.

The common theme, it seems, is that the more we advance with technologies and scientific capabilities, the more we may be setting ourselves up for problems.

From a safety point of view, I think it's important to remember that the tools and inventions that we use should be complements to our lives rather than unnecessary complications. If basic fundamental concepts such as safety decrease and instances of criminality increase, then I'd say that we need to reassess.

I am certain that new technology, social media platforms, apps and technologies will continue to be developed at a rapid pace. We will continue to have more abilities because of these tools and will have increasingly more things accessible at our fingertips. As would be expected, many of us will embrace these conveniences as they come along. As we do, my recommendation is that we all occasionally take a step back and remember to make sure that as an unintended consequence, we never lose sight of our personal safety or awareness along the way.

*Dennis Naylor is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

# Police protect and defend animals, too

A significant part of what we do in law enforcement involves helping those who are unable to help themselves. Assisting victims and the abused occurs daily, and sometimes that assistance is not simply limited to humans; sometimes the abused are animals that need our help, too.

Throughout the country, police officers respond to numerous cases of animal cruelty and neglect. Cases may range from instances of malnutrition or unsanitary conditions to distinct instances of physical abuse and torture. As officers, the oath we take to serve and protect extends to our four-legged friends as well, and this column will discuss some of what we do when we get these types of calls for service.

When we respond to a call indicating that an animal may be the subject of abuse, we respond and look into the circumstances. We check to see if the animal is overly timid or aggressive. We check to see if the animal appears sick, gaunt or neglected in any way. We also check for signs of visible injuries,

such as wounds or a limp. If any of these factors exist, we will investigate further by interviewing witnesses, neighbors and, of course, the suspect.

The section for animal cruelty as defined by section 353 of the New York state Agriculture and Markets Law makes it a crime to abuse, injure, torture or neglect an animal, whether it's wild or domesticated.

If we can prove that this has occurred, and can identify a suspect, we will make an arrest.

**DENNIS NAYOR**



FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

Cases of neglect may range from a single occurrence to a patterned course of conduct. In either event, we will investigate the facts and make a determination based upon the evidence. There is obviously a situational difference between the person whose dog sneaks out of the house and winds up in the cold, as opposed to the person who intentionally leaves his or her dog outside on a sub-zero-degree night.

There is also a difference between an incident in which a dog is barking because the owner is late arriving home to provide care, as opposed to an incident in which a person has not fed or cared for the dog in a week. In every case, we will let the evidence tell the story, which will subsequently dictate our actions.

In terms of torture, the national news has shown us numerous examples whereby people breed animals (often-times dogs and roosters) specifically for fighting. These people make the animals explicitly aggressive so that they can be matched up against other animals for gambling purposes. In the end, both animals suffer or die.

I have read articles that describe cases in which people have placed small animals in microwaves, set live animals on fire or committed other despicable acts of cruelty. Not surprisingly, studies have found a very strong correlation between animal abusers and violent criminals. With that said, there are many reasons why we in law enforcement need to know when animal abuse is occurring so that we can properly investigate and take appropriate action.

Recently on Yahoo news, I read a story about a father and son who were out for a motorcycle ride in Arkansas when they came upon a crate on the side of the road. Inside the crate was a dog that had been left abandoned for quite some time. The dog, who desperately tried to chew his way out of the crate, was significantly malnourished and desperately in need of medical treatment.

The father and son got the dog fed and brought it to a vet, who was able to provide the much-needed treatment that was required. The story had a happy ending because the family adopted the dog and she is now doing very well. Unfortunately, we know that all situations involving animal cruelty do not end so well.

If you are not capable of caring for your animal, we request that you put it up for adoption and don't simply abandon or abuse it. The Susquehanna Animal Shelter is an excellent local resource and should definitely be utilized as such. Representatives from the shelter can be contacted at 547-8111 or online at [info@thesas.org](mailto:info@thesas.org) to answer questions and discuss options.

If you know of a case where an animal is being abused, please contact us and we will investigate. We may never understand why some people do atrocious things, but rest assured that we in law enforcement will continue to be the voice for all victims, human or otherwise.

*DENNIS NAYOR is police chief of the city of Oneonta.*

#### **D. Naylor's remarks to graduating basic police academy class**

1. Everyday, strive to uphold the ideals of this noble profession. Your actions represent not only you and your respective agency, but represent every law enforcement officer who wears, will wear, or who has ever worn the uniform. Conduct yourself with this in mind.
2. Treat people with dignity and compassion. A homeless person or those with mental health issues are not necessarily criminals. They should never be treated as such simply because of their misfortunes.
3. Carry stickers for children because they are the ones who will look up to you
4. Make honesty and integrity your backbone. Without that, nothing else matters
5. Your reputation will precede you so be very conscious of the choices you make. Avoid temptation and remember how hard you worked to become a member of this profession.
6. Maintain interests and friends that are outside of law enforcement. Family, friends, and faith will keep you from becoming cynical and bitter and will help you to better interact with the public you serve.
7. Understand that the interactions that you have with those you encounter may only last a few minutes, but the manner in which you treat people will resonate with them forever.
8. Try to leave work at work and do not allow the negative aspects of the profession and the tragedies that you'll see ruin you.
9. As police officers you are not above the law and you will be held to the highest standards. Accept and embrace fact because with great authority comes great responsibility.
10. Making a difference is not determined by the numbers of tickets that you write or the number of arrest you make. Issuing warnings and demonstrating a sense of understanding for the plight of others will sometimes do more good than anything else.

# What it has meant to be police chief

**A**s most readers are now aware, I will be retiring from the Oneonta Police Department later this month to assume the role of director of research, development and training for the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police. As much as I am excited about this new opportunity, my departure from the department where

## DENNIS NAYOR



### FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

I began my career as a rookie officer over 21 years ago is quite bittersweet. This guest column will highlight some of what it has meant to serve the city of Oneonta and why I have chosen this time to retire.

For as long as I can remember, I always wanted to be a police officer. I saw police work as the noblest of professions, in which the ideals strongly aligned with my beliefs. To me, the police were not only the guardians of society who kept everyone safe, but they were friendly, smart, physically fit, courteous, kind and respected by all. To me, the police were exactly what Norman Rockwell depicted in his iconic painting "The Runaway," and that is what I wanted to emulate.

After I graduated from the police academy, I was so proud to be realizing my dream as Oneonta's newest and youngest, officer. I spent the majority of my patrol years working the evening and midnight shifts, which were extremely busy. In a short time, I learned a lot; I learned the challenges associated with dealing with people who were angry, violent, intoxicated or mentally ill, but most importantly, I learned that people are generally respectful to you when you are respectful to them. To me, this became one of the most valuable lessons of my career.

After seven years of working patrol, I earned the opportunity to become the department's Drug Abuse Resistance Education officer. That assignment was great because it allowed me to teach fifth- and sixth-grade students throughout the county about ways to make good choices

alcohol. In that role, I felt that I was making a difference while positively promoting the ideals of the policing profession. To this day, I still have young adults approach me to say that they remember me from when I taught them DARE. That always makes me smile.

A year and a half later, I was promoted to sergeant. As a sergeant, I was not only on the front lines with the officers, but I was a bridge to the police administration. In many ways, the sergeant is the most important rank within any police agency because it is that person who sees to it that the department's mission is achieved. It is for that reason that the success of a police department often rests on the shoulders of the patrol sergeant. Through the years spent as the midnight sergeant, I truly learned the importance of providing leadership and inspiring teamwork.

In my subsequent promotion to lieutenant, I quickly became skilled in the tasks required for police administration. That knowledge, combined with the advanced training that I received through the FBI National Academy, became the foundation for becoming the chief of police. As the chief, I knew that I was given an incredible platform to make the ideals of the profession come alive, so I worked tirelessly to create the type of department that I would want serving me if I were not chief, but rather a citizen within the community. I also worked very hard to create the type of department that I would want to work for if I were a member and not the chief. To know that both goals have been realized is a tremendous source of pride, and one that is difficult to put into words.

Many people were shocked when the news broke that I was retiring. The reality is that the average tenure for a progressive police chief in this era is between three and seven years. That time span is due to the continual pressures, enormous responsibility, ever-increasing challenges, and the fact that there is a zero acceptance rate for failure. Knowing that the safety of a community and the success of the department rests with you is not

and hence, the saying "heavy is the head that wears the crown" is highly appropriate.

When I took the helm as chief almost five years ago, there were many things which required my attention and needed to be accomplished immediately. Neither this community nor the department itself could wait until I got around to leisurely getting things done, so it was a full-speed-ahead pace all the way. The department needed a positive cultural shift; equipment and tools needed to be upgraded, vehicles needed to be replaced, building improvements needed to be made, training needed to be increased, and most importantly, respect needed to be regained within the community. The community also needed a police department it could trust and feel safe with. As a team, we currently accomplish all of those goals, and in the process we earned the distinction of becoming a New York state fully accredited police agency, which is something that many doubted we could ever achieve.

For the sports enthusiasts out there, I always wanted to retire on a high note like Sandy Koufax, Jim Brown or Georges St. Pierre. To me, this is that time; I have lived my childhood dream, I have accomplished everything that I ever set out to do; the police department is in a really good place, and the community is in good hands.

The challenges for the policing profession will continue, and the only way to appropriately meet those challenges is through proper preparation, continual training, consistent collaboration, strong leadership and trust-building. As I move on from the Oneonta Police Department, I will forever look back with tremendous pride to have been a police officer and to have remained loyal to my principles and ideals throughout my career. Serving this community has been an amazing honor and one that I will always treasure. If along the way I have helped people to realize that police officers can be like Norman Rockwell's depiction in "The Runaway," and that the ideals to which I subscribe do exist, then I can retire knowing that I have made a difference.

*Dennis Naylor is police chief*