



*The Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office is dedicated to the preservation of public safety by providing innovative and progressive service in partnership with the community.*

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Laurie R. Smith, Sheriff

COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

## Message From the Sheriff

As you all know tragedy has struck our department and the community we serve. On March 9, 2008, Deputy James Council was on patrol traveling on Stevens Canyon Road in Cupertino. Around 10:25 A.M., for reasons still unknown, his vehicle crossed the centerline colliding three bicyclists. The California Highway Patrol is investigating the accident at this time and we all are waiting to for their findings. As a family we must remain strong but not loose site of the fact that two lives were lost and many more have been affected by this tragic accident. This accident has bee hard on us all and I strongly encourage those of you that have been touched by this accident and are having difficulties dealing with it, please take full advantage of the resources we can provide. Please stay strong and keep Deputy Council, his family, and the friends and relatives of Mathew Peterson and Kristanna Gough in your hearts and prayers.



Sheriff's Headquarters



### This Issue:

On April 10, 2008, the Santa Clara Chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving will be honoring the 2007 recipients of the prestigious 23152 Pin. The recipients from the Sheriff's Office are as follows:

Please join me in congratulating theses deputies for their hard work and efforts in removing impaired drivers from our roadways.

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## S.E.R.T. Participates in Regional SWAT Competition

By: Deputy Kyle Benner

**"Don't tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results."**

*George S. Patton  
1885-1945*



Eight members of the Sheriff's Emergency Response Team recently participated in a unique training exercise called Urban Shield. The event was hosted by the Alameda County Sheriff's Office and took place throughout Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Mateo Counties with agencies from within those counties assisting. The event was designed to test the physical, mental and tactical abilities of the teams participating over a 50-hour period. Urban Shield started at 0500 hours on Saturday the 29<sup>th</sup> of September and ended on Monday the 1<sup>st</sup> of October at 0800 hours. The teams completed twenty-two events including: a 20 mile hike within the Ohlone Wilderness, a 150 foot rappel, a terrorist attack at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, and an active shooter on the U.C Berkley Campus, just to name a few. To make these events more difficult, most participants only slept an average of one hour over the entire event. The teams were evaluated on their tactics, the use of resources, marksmanship, and pre-operation planning. The entire event was a huge success and was finished off by a large banquet at the Alameda County Fairgrounds.

## S.E.R.T. Team Gives Back

By: Sergeant Drew Vasquez



On Saturday the 15th of December, SERT went to the Valley Medical Center Pediatrics Unit and presented toys to the children that are currently hospitalized there. Lt. Havig (the Tactical Commander) coordinated the program with SERT as a way to give back to the community. Each team member volunteered to bring at least two wrapped toys to the hospital for the children. The team members embraced the program and the majority of the team even brought extra gifts for the hospitalized children's siblings. Deputy Kevin Rumley dressed as Santa Claus to present the toys to the children. The event was a huge success and the gifts were appreciated by hospital staff as well. Every team member was touched by what they observed. Deputy Mark Lehman said it best, "It really puts things into perspective, sometimes we forget how lucky we are."





# The Lighter Side of Police Work

## Isn't it tough to run in those shoes?

From Fairfield, Connecticut, comes the story of Bozo Gary Harper who was trying to break into a car at 12:30 the one morning. The pounding coming from the driveway woke up the homeowner who took a look outside and couldn't believe what he saw. Our Bozo, dressed in a full clown suit, complete with a pink and black flowered dress and giant clown shoes, was attempting to break into his car. The homeowner shouted at him and he ran off. The cops were called, and not surprisingly, they had no trouble catching up to the Bozo. It's tough to run in a dress and clown shoes.

**“There is no defense against adverse fortune which is so effectual as an habitual sense of humor.”**

**Thomas W.  
Higginson  
1824-1863**

## Up on the roof top?

No, it wasn't Santa Claus. It was a would-be burglar in Alice Springs, Australia, who got trapped in a chimney there. Staff at the Grapeview Hotel heard the man moaning when they opened the business at 8:30 AM on December 28.

“He was like a grub in a cocoon when we found him,” said Alice Springs fire station officer Mark James. “When we finally got the suspect out he was really wedged in there.”

The unidentified man, believed to have been trying to break into the hotel bar to get alcohol, had been stuck on the smoke shelf, with his knees jammed tightly into his chest. “He was that wedged ... it was a life and death situation,” James said.

“He was pretty embarrassed and ashamed so he didn't say much when we got him out, he was obviously feeling sore and sorry for himself.”

When firefighters showed up, some of the hotel staff had made their way to the roof and were talking with the man. “As they had walked through the building they'd heard noises, moaning and calling for help,” said Mr. James.

“They were on the roof talking to him through the walls, and he told them that he'd tried to get in about midnight last night.” This meant that the man had been stuck in the chimney for more than 10 hours!

## Public Mailbox

To Sheriff Laurie Smith:

I have spent a fair amount of time with a number of your Deputies that work the E9 [Mt. Hamilton Area] Beat for several years now. Among them Brian Randall, Devin Fontana, William Oberst and Gabe Gonzalez.

While I live on the eastside beat area I happen to have a ranch toward the end of Kincaid road. Both beats bring me in constant contact with these good fellows and I wanted to let you know just how helpful they all have been in supporting both my efforts to "modify" the criminal activities in the backcountry as well as supporting myself and my wife when we lost our son at age 19 this summer. Brian stands out for special praise for being there for us when Tyler died. Brian went far beyond what might be expected of him throughout our ordeal and has been a constant support as I attempt to regain my bearing and go on with my life.

I have had contact with Devin (Fontana) several times in the backcountry as he and the MET went about their business and his comments have been useful as well. Oberst, as well, has been pointing out what to look for when I am sitting on various mountaintops in the early morning and late into the evening.

Gabe, a very enthusiastic deputy, has taken on the backcountry with little or no experience with the backcountry people or that beats special challenges. Yet, I am only hearing good reports about him.

*Regards, Tony Logan*

Sheriff Laurie Smith,

I am writing you in regards to the great experience I had with Deputy Jim Helms. On Saturday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, Deputy Helms came by my house to help me with installing a new infant seat into my car. He had installed the car seat and also showed me how to do it myself. He provided me safety tips around the car seat itself and the hazards of having loose items in my car, should I be involved in an accident. He was very professional and I felt like he took his time to make sure I understood how to install the seat and the safety tips he had mentioned.

I will be giving birth to my first child anytime, and now feel very confident he will be safe in his car seat when we do bring him home. I think that this is a great program you have and want to thank Deputy Helms for all of his help.

Thank You,  
*Debra Tilney*

**“All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.”**

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
1929-1968**

## Public Mailbox (Continued)

Dear Sheriff Smith:

I would like to take this opportunity to commend both Sergeant Spagnola #1642 and Norton Lewis for their commendable professionalism they demonstrated on Tuesday, October 30, 2007. Myself and six other retired S/O personnel went to the S/O Range located off of Malech Road to qualify under HR 218. Upon our arrival at the range, Range Master Lewis greeted all of us in a warm and friendly manner. He then went over the range safety rules in a comprehensive manner. Both Range Masters guided us through the qualification course. Although retired, we were all treated like VIP's. Range Master Lewis assisted us with the cleaning of our weapons and then made sure we all had fresh ammo before leaving the range. The range just keeps getting better and better thanks to the professional ranger staff. The two of them make the range a fun and safe place to shoot.

Sincerely,  
*Bud C. Smith #1231 (retired)*

**“A man can be as great as he wants to be. If you believe in yourself and have the courage, the determination, the dedication, the competitive drive and if you are willing to sacrifice the little things in life and pay the price for the things that are worthwhile, it can be done.”**

**Vince Lombardi  
1913-1970**

Dear Sheriff Smith,

I am writing to commend Deputy Roggia and Sergeant Nixon for excellent service. My girlfriend and I were riding our horses at Mt. Madonna this past weekend. We locked her purse in the tack locker inside of our horse trailer. When we returned from our ride we found the someone had broken into the trailer and had stolen the purse containing cash, credit cards, driver's license keys—the works.

Deputy Roggia and Sergeant Nixon responded. They were both very professional and thorough. They were good natured and showed an appropriate degree of good humor which helped greatly to comfort my girlfriend who was naturally distraught. I think they went above and beyond the call of duty.

Additionally, your deputies combed the area looking for possible clues and even dusted the trailer for prints. They immediately provided phone numbers for us to call to cancel our credit cards. They helped us scour the surrounding foliage in hopes that the purse had been discarded. They invited us to alert them if any activity occurred on the cards and left numbers for us to contact them. Their performance was professional and above all, courteous. On the scale of crime in the county, this incident was minor. But your staff understood the importance that it was to us. We are confident that you must be proud of your troops.

Yours Truly,

*Tim Palmer and Brenda Mancebo*

## A Very Busy Month for our Reserve Deputies

By: R/ Deputy Frank Dutra

So far this month, our Reserves are working more hours than ever before during this time of year.

They have committed themselves to working at the Vallco Shopping mall every Friday and Sunday night during the month of December along with our Youth Cadets. Mall management has expressed their gratitude and the shopkeepers have also been very appreciative of the uniformed presence in the mall. The Reserve Deputies are taking care of the Vallco incidents leaving the patrol deputies to do bigger and better things.

The Reserve Division will also be supplementing the patrol divisions efforts with the AVOID the 13 campaign this year. Eight of our Reserves have just completed a DUI refresher and update class presented by Deputy Chad Oberlander. Sergeant Cobble has organized the recently trained reserves into the REDD Team (Reserve Enforcement: Drunk Driving). It is the goal of the team to take 10 – 15 DUI drivers off the road this month alone. Any DUI arrests made during the upcoming AVOID the 13 campaign will count towards our department total.

The Reserve Division has been staffing a Burglary Suppression detail in South County for Sgt. Waldherr. For this detail, reserves were assigned to an unmarked vehicle looking for suspicious vehicle in the Green Valley area. The deputies have been successful in their preventative efforts. If that isn't enough, they've also entered our historic patrol car in the Morgan Hill Christmas Lights parade, assisted the Marijuana Eradication Team on a clean up this month and they are also committed to doing an ABC Decoy operation along with our Youth Cadets monthly.

Finally it is with a heavy heart that we bid farewell to one of our long-time Reserve Deputies. After 23 years Deputy Steve Oster #9040 is retiring. Below is Steve's resignation letter to Sergeant Cobble. I am sure you all will join us in wishing him good luck in his future endeavors.

*Gentlemen, I think it has come time for me to ride off into the Sunset. This month marks 23 years with the S.O. Reserve Division; while it is not easy to move on, I have come to the conclusion that since I no longer can offer much to the unit, due to my work/consulting time and family time demands, it is appropriate to do so. I had hoped to do more this month, but most of the needs for volunteer time are on weekends and that is the only time I have right now for family.*

*With two sons including one who will be a teenager next March, it is very important, much more important than my personal ambitions and activities, to do everything I can to guide and help them to become good citizens when I pass the baton to them.*

*It has been a pleasure and honor to work with you these many years.*

*Best Regards,  
Steve Oster #9040*

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**Upcoming Events:**

**Save the date for the annual DSA Basketball Game versus the San Francisco 49ers and Oakland Raiders. The game is scheduled for March 29, 2008 and will be held in the Independence High School Gym.**

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**Save the date for the upcoming Sheriff's Office Retirement Dinner, scheduled for Friday, April 11, 2008. The dinner will be held at the Silver Creek Country Club in the Evergreen area of San Jose.**

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**The Sheriff's Office Newsletter was created to ensure that employees and retirees have a source of information within the agency. Your letters regarding personal and professional matters, to include public safety matters are welcomed by the 15th of every month. We would like to hear from retirees as well. Suggestions for improvements or ideas should be referred to Sergeant Don Morrissey at (408) 808-4905.**