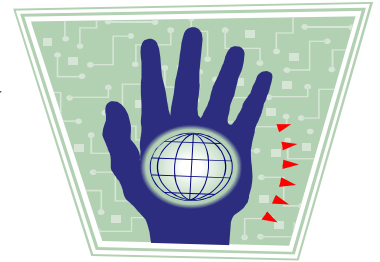


# The Community Advisor

## Change of Name

I have been thinking about this Newsletter and its name and believe the name of Civic League Advisor was not appropriate. It was designed to be an informative tool between the Sheriff's Office and our Community at large. I hope that nobody objects to me changing the name. I have received a lot of inquires as to how to get on the mailing list for our Newsletters, so the Sheriff decided to make it more accessible to our citizens. The Community Advisor will be available soon on our website at [www.portsmouthva.gov/psa](http://www.portsmouthva.gov/psa). We will have a link leading to it for all who are interested in reading it. For any information or ideas for our newsletter, please contact Lt. Karin Johnson at 393-5461 or at [johnsonke@portsmouthva.gov](mailto:johnsonke@portsmouthva.gov).



### Community

**People with common background: a group of people with a common background or with shared interests within society.**

## Goodbye to Col. Charles Burris



Charles Burris

The Portsmouth Sheriff's Office is sad to announce the final retirement of Col. Charles Burris due to a medical condition. Charles Burris has an astounding long list of public service. As a young man he served in the U.S. Air Force and then for many years until the early 1980's as a 1st Sgt. in the Virginia Army National Guard while working as a police officer. He retired from the Portsmouth Police Department in 1991 and started working as the Director of Training for the Portsmouth Sheriff's Office until 2002. At that point he joined the Homeland Security Corporation, which is a subcontractor for T.S.A. based in Nashville, Tennessee. After a couple of years he was looking to get back to Virginia and to his family. So he applied with the Newport News Police Department. He had to go to their Law Enforcement Academy and shortly afterward he had to leave due to the age limitations of the NNPD. Not ready to stay home yet he decided to try the Chesapeake Police Department and was hired. Charles Burris graduated from the Chesapeake Law Enforcement Academy top of his class, which is incredible because of the tough physical demands of the training and the fact that the majority of his classmates were in their early 20's. After winning the election in November of 2005, Sheriff Watson asked Charles Burris to be his Undersheriff and he accepted. It has been a good two years and we will all miss Col. Burris a lot and wish him well. He truly deserves some quiet time with his loved ones and some relaxation. Col. John Gomoke will take over as Undersheriff for our City and hopes to serve our citizens as admirably as Col. Charles Burris has.



## Mopeds and Scooters

The Virginian Pilot had an article in the newspaper on June 11th that has caused some concern in the law enforcement community. With the rising gas prices and groceries most people are looking to save where they can. The story in the Virginian Pilot told of an increase in sales of mopeds and scooters. Consumers are buying those devices to commute to and from work. However, the article was not very informative about the laws and restrictions that apply to those vehicles. We have all seen children riding scooters/mopeds on the streets without helmets, other children in back of the vehicle, and speeding through the neighborhoods. Not only are most of them breaking the law, they are also a hindrance on street traffic and hard to see by drivers of SUVs or trucks. Here is some insight on these issues.

A moped is described as a conveyance that is either a bicycle-like device with pedals and a helper motor that is rated at no more than two brake horsepower and that produces speeds up to a maximum of 30 miles per hour of a motorcycle with an engine displacement of 50 cubic centimeters or less and a maximum speed of less than 30 miles per hour. ***For the purposes of Chapter 8 (§ 46.2-800 et seq.) of this title, a moped shall be a vehicle while operated on a highway.*** Meaning you have to follow the rules, speed limits, and all laws as any automobile on our streets. If you cannot operate your vehicle under these conditions you have to stay off the streets or risk a ticket, or injury. ***You may also want to look at §46.2-808; §46.2-909; §46.2-676.***

**In the Commonwealth of Virginia you do not have to register your moped with the DMV.**

### Any person operating a Moped....

- Must be 16 years of age or older.
- Must be able to obtain a license.
- Must have a valid form of I.D. that includes your name, address and date of birth.
- Must wear a helmet.
- Must have eye protection.
- May not wear earphones in both ears.
- May only carry passengers if the moped is designed to carry them.
- Must follow all the rules of the road as other cars and trucks.

### A Moped....

- Must have a brake that will allow the vehicle to skid.
- Must have a sticker on it from the dealer that states the driver has to be 16 years of age, the maximum horsepower of the moped and the maximum speed the moped may be ridden.
- Must have white lights in front and red lights in rear if driven at night.
- Must not exceed 30 miles per hour.

### Any person operating a Motor Scooter....

- Must wear a helmet.
- Must have eye protection.
- Must have white lights in front and red lights in rear if driven at night.
- Must not wear ear phones in both ears.
- May not carry passengers.
- Must follow all the rules of the road as other cars and trucks.

### A Motor Scooter....

- Must have a brake that will allow the vehicle to skid.
- Must have a sticker on it from the dealer that states the driver has to be 16 years of age, the maximum horsepower of the moped/motor scooter and the maximum speed the moped/motor scooter may be ridden.
- Must have white lights in front and red lights in rear if driven at night.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL THE PORTSMOUTH POLICE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC TRAFFIC UNIT**

**757-393.8013**

## Portsmouth School Buses

The Portsmouth Sheriff's Office operates a car wash at the City Compound located at Frederick Boulevard. The Work Center Inmates are servicing police, city, and sheriff's office vehicles. It was brought to the Sheriff's attention that some Portsmouth School Bus drivers were embarrassed to go on school trips such as Museums, etc. with the children because their buses were the dirtiest in the whole Hampton Roads Area. Some of the drivers stated that they live in apartments or just do not have the facilities to clean the buses, other than sweeping them or cleaning the windows. They also addressed the issue with the School Board but without result. Sheriff Watson told them he would set aside every Wednesday to have the buses washed at the Compound and that the cost of equipment and soap would be absorbed by the Sheriff's Office. They are lining up Wednesday morning by the dozens. Now Portsmouth School Bus Drivers and children will feel better parking next to Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, and Norfolk, because their buses are as bright a yellow as the ones from the other cities.



## Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch



The Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics, the largest grassroots fundraising program benefiting Special Olympics, began in 1981 when Wichita, Kansas Police Chief Richard LaMunyon saw an urgent need to raise funds for and increase awareness of Special Olympics.

The idea for the Torch Run was to provide local law enforcement officers with an opportunity to volunteer with Special Olympics in the communities where the officers lived and worked. After three years of successful runs in Kansas, Chief LaMunyon presented his idea to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which endorsed Special Olympics as its official charity through the Torch Run.

Today, all 50 states and over 40 countries have their own versions of the Torch Run. In Virginia, the first Torch Run was organized in 1986 when relays were run from Northern Virginia, Harrisonburg, and Tidewater to Richmond to the University of Richmond, site of the SOVA Summer Games. Today, the Torch Run has grown into the most important fundraising effort of Special Olympics Virginia. Since its inception, the the Virginia Law Enforcement Torch Run has contributed more than \$5.1 million to Special Olympics athletes in Virginia. Currently, the VA Torch Run is recognized as one of the top ten fundraising Torch Run Programs in the World. Along with being the premier fundraising event for SOVA, it is also the most visible event in Special Olympics.

The VA Torch Run involves more that 4,000 law enforcement officers from over 300 agencies who take part in a 2,000 mile, 8 day torch relay to pass the Special Olympics "Flame of Hope" across Virginia. All of the relays will converge in Richmond in June for the lighting of the cauldron during the SOVA Summer Games Opening Ceremonies.

This years Torch Run for Portsmouth was on June 5. The Portsmouth Police Department and the Portsmouth Sheriff Office participated in the event. For more information on the Special Olympics visit: [www.specialolympicsva.org](http://www.specialolympicsva.org).



## Our new Satellite Office

The Portsmouth Sheriff's Office has a new satellite office located at 4406 West Norfolk Road. This office houses the Internal Affairs Division, Crime Prevention, Senior Watch, and the Community Enforcement Unit (CEU). The office will be occupied throughout the day and various hours at night. The shopping center owner graciously donated the shop space to the Sheriff's Office after a Hunters Point Civic League Meeting. At the civic league meeting the citizens expressed concerns about the crime in the neighborhood and the element hanging around the shopping center and suggested that a N.E.A.T. office would be welcomed. Sheriff Watson was at the meeting and immediately sprang into action as he always does and contacted the owner of the property. Mr. Baraki embraced the idea and thought that it was a win-win situation for all involved. Our Sheriff himself with the help of two off-duty deputies and an inmate work crew framed in the office space, sheet rocked and painted the walls to get it ready. The office will also be a stop for the Police Department as well, as they commute through the area and are always welcome to use the facilities as needed. The Hunters Point and River Point neighborhoods are delighted with Mr. Baraki as he shows enormous willingness to work with the community. He has improved the lighting, landscape and overall appearance of the shopping center and attends some of their meetings to keep up to date with their needs and concerns.



*“ Coming together  
is a beginning.*

*Keeping together  
is progress.*

*Working together  
is success.”*

*~Henry Ford*

## Refuse to be a Victim

A couple of months ago the Neighborhood Impact Officer of Cavalier Manor asked Sheriff Watson if our Department could provide a demonstration of defensive tactics for the seniors in his community. Bill Watson responded by sending two Defensive Tactics Instructors of the Portsmouth Sheriff's Office Training Academy to teach a few simple ways on how to stay safe. Since then 1st. Sgt. B. Wilson and Master Deputy L. Williams have designed a lesson that is interesting, humorous, easy to remember, and not physically demanding for seniors, children, and citizens to follow to prevent becoming a victim of a crime. In using tools such as just good common sense, keys, books, a CD, or a pen, items which most of us carry with us on a daily basis we can defend ourselves and are no longer easy prey for criminals. Please keep in mind that this presentation of defensive tactics will not make you a “RAMBO” or “TERMINATOR”, but it will make you more aware of your surroundings and you will no longer feel helpless. This is an invitation to all citizens, especially seniors, to educate themselves in this matter. If you are interested in this illustration of self defense, contact Lt. K. Johnson at 393-5461 to make arrangements for the instructors to visit your neighborhood or church gathering. As always, we are here to serve you.



## Career Days

Right before the big summer break for the children most schools or organizations will incorporate a career day. A lot of public safety agencies as well as different branches of the military are participating in these events. This includes the Portsmouth Sheriff's Office. We are looking to educate children and teenagers in the role and daily life of public service, with the aim to portray the image of law enforcement officers as a positive one and to be seen as their friend and helper. It is hard to believe, but some kids are actually scared of people in uniform and think that law enforcement officers are the bad guys. The children always ask a bounty of questions, get to sit on horses, motorcycles, see the inside of police vehicles, and fire engines. All of us there had a lot of fun doing it, including the teachers. It is always a joy for the deputies to take part in these events, because the rewards of hugs and smiles follow them home. Last but not least the idea that we may have influenced a child's decision to be good at home or wanting to be an officer/fire fighter one day gives everybody a warm feeling of satisfaction. So far this year deputies have visited the YMCA, Victory Elementary, D.A.C. Center, and a Career Day for the City designed for honor role students. With this I would like to share some pictures with you of these truly fun filled occasions.



## Crime Statistics in the Cradock Neighborhood

Many of you may have read the article in the Virginian Pilot that listed the crime statistics of Portsmouth. Sheriff Watson is very proud to announce that although crime is up 16% in our City, the Cradock neighborhood crime rate has dropped by 46%. This would not have been possible without the Portsmouth Police Departments willingness to work together with the Sheriff's Office Community Enforcement Unit (CEU) and the awareness of the citizens of Cradock. It turned out to be a great partnership for our City and the benefit is a safer neighborhood. According to the Sheriff, the CEU will move throughout Portsmouth and cooperate with the PPD and other neighborhoods. However we can not give timelines as to where and when they will come and go, because it would challenge the effectiveness of the Unit. It must be a great disappointment for those who apposed this program. We can all be pleased with the fact that Portsmouth is the only City in the Commonwealth of Virginia that has such a pilot program with a merged effort between the Police Department and Sheriff's Office.

## Are you prepared in case of a disaster?

The Portsmouth Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) may be able to provide some insight on this issue. CERT is a training program that prepares you to help yourself, your family and your neighbors in the event of a disaster. During an incident, emergency services personnel may not be able to reach everyone right away. They may be overwhelmed or delayed. By getting training in CERT, you will have skills to help emergency responders save lives and protect property. That is when CERT members can assist others by applying the basic response and organizational skills they learned during their training. These skills may help save and sustain lives following a disaster until professional help arrives. These valuable skills will also help with daily emergencies and promote safe actions at home, work, at school or anywhere you may travel.

CERT training teaches you to;

- Identify and anticipate hazards within your community.
- Learn how to prepare yourself for disaster.
- Reduce fire hazards in your home and workplace.
- Extinguish small fires.
- Assist emergency responders.
- Conduct light search and rescues.
- Develop safe techniques for debris removal and victim extrication.
- Set up treatment areas.
- Apply basic medical techniques.



For more information on how to get started in your community contact the Portsmouth Citizens Corps and the Local Emergency Planning Committee. For information on future classes you may contact the Administrative Coordinator Ms. Susan Branche at 393-8123 or 393-8122; e-mail [branches@portsmouthva.gov](mailto:branches@portsmouthva.gov).



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**We are on the web!**  
**[www.portsmouthva.gov/ps](http://www.portsmouthva.gov/ps)**