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## The Guardian

Henderson County Sheriff's Office Newsletter



*SWAT between Woodland Tracking training exercises*

March 2017

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### Message from the Sheriff

Phew! What a firestorm was generated by my message in the February Guardian. I took issue with violent protestors and those who disregard the rule of law by destroying property and trampling on the rights of others. I wrongly assumed that the fact that I referred to violence and the disregard for the rule of law would make it clear that I was not referring to those who protest peacefully and with respect. That, however, was not the case. There were those who voiced their displeasure with what they thought I said, and who they thought I was talking about, without understanding the motives of my heart. My true intention was to find unity around what we all hold true and sacred in this great nation. I have received many letters and much consternation from citizens of Henderson County and other regions of the US who rebuked me for speaking against the peaceful protestors who practice their first amendment rights on a regular basis. I have said repeatedly as a sheriff, particularly one who fully values and believes in our Constitution, I not only support their right to protest, but I am sworn to protect it! I never said or meant to imply that the protests in our county were anything other than peaceful.

I did meet with several very respectful and kind local citizens who protest regularly in our county, and we had friendly dialogue. I did concede that I should have avoided anything that made an assumption about the intentions of those with whom I disagree. I hope I will always be willing to see and admit my mistakes. As someone whose heart and motives are often called into question by many who do not know the complexities and inherent responsibilities of my job, nor know me personally, I will make every effort to avoid speaking about what is in the hearts of others. I believe we all need to revisit that concept if we want to have productive and fruitful debate.

As your sheriff, I am committed to the safety, security and peace of all citizens. I carry out my duties without regard to race, religion, gender, creed, economic status or politics. That has never changed. It is still my hope that we can unite around what makes us great and keeps us free and let the time-proven process of our constitutional republic continue to ensure our survival as a free people.

The bottom line and my last word on the matter is this: My newsletter message is my way to communicate with those citizens who elect to receive it and who desire to know my heart and my vision for Henderson County. I don't adjust it for politics. Neither should anyone else.

It is my honor and privilege to serve as your elected Sheriff. The citizens of Henderson County make the choice on who their elected office holders will be. Communicating to citizens my stand on issues allows them to make an informed choice when they vote. I will continue to serve to the best of my ability as long as the majority of voters support me as Sheriff. That is what makes the Office of the Sheriff, one of the oldest law enforcement entities in this nation, so unique. It is, and should continue to be, the most liberty-centric and community responsive law enforcement organization the people have.



God bless and stay safe.

Sheriff Charles S. McDonald

## Upcoming Events

### Emergency Preparedness Class - 2 opportunities to attend!

Julie Kidd, Evidence Custodian, will be offering emergency preparedness classes in March. There are two dates to choose from:

[Monday, March 13th from 6-8pm](#)

[Tuesday, March 14th from 2-4pm](#)

- To attend you must RSVP to Julie Kidd by emailing [jkidd@hendersoncountync.org](mailto:jkidd@hendersoncountync.org) (Facebook RSVP does not ensure your spot)
- Seating will be limited to 30 students per session
- Participants are encouraged to bring a bagged lunch or snack

Learn how to make an emergency plan, build an emergency preparedness kit and stay informed.

### Kindergarten Readiness Rally

[Thursday, March 16th from 4-7pm at the Blue Ridge Mall](#)

Henderson County Public Schools, Western Carolina Community Action, Smart Start of Henderson County and the Children and Family Resource Center will be hosting an event to prepare children (and their parents) for Kindergarten before registration begins. In addition to local non-profits, School Resource Deputies will be at the event to meet students. For more information visit the [HCPS website](#).



*Photo from the 2016  
Readiness Rally*

### Civil Sale

[Wednesday, March 29th at 10am](#) on the courthouse steps of the Henderson County Courthouse located at 200 North Grove Street

For more information about the upcoming Civil Sale visit:  
<http://www.hendersoncountync.org/sheriff/civilsale.html>

## **National Poison Prevention Week Pill Collection Event**

Henderson County Sheriff's Office School Resource Deputies in partnership with Ingles Markets are conducting a community pill collection event.

[Friday, March 24, 2017 from 9am-12noon](#)

Ingles Store - 3643 Howard Gap Rd. (located at the intersection of Howard Gap and Hwy 64)

Sergeant Ricky Bishop and his team of School Resource Deputies are working to help fight prescription drug abuse outside of the classroom. The Henderson County drug disposal program has surpassed 4,561 pounds of medications collected through the permanent collection box and various drug take back events in the community. The program was implemented by Sheriff Charles McDonald in 2013.

This pill drop coincides with National Poison Prevention Week (March 19-25).

If you cannot make it to this event, the Sheriff's Office provides a medication drop box available in their lobby located at 100 North Grove Street. This service is available during public business hours (Monday-Friday 8am-5pm). They are unable to accept sharps/needles/epi-pens or radioactive chemotherapy drugs.

## **Edneyville/Bat Cave/Gerton Town Hall Meeting**

Sheriff McDonald and his staff will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting in the Edneyville community on [Thursday, March 30, 2017 from 6pm-8pm](#) at the Edneyville Community Center located at 15 Ida Rogers Rd. Henderson County Parks and Recreation is partnering with the Sheriff's Office to bring important information to Edneyville and the northeastern portions of Henderson County.

- Learn about events and programs provided by the agency
- Ask questions
- Meet Sheriff McDonald, HCSO deputies and members of the VIP Program

This meeting is free and open to public. Crime data presented will focus on the Edneyville, Bat Cave and Gerton communities.

## **Etowah/Horseshoe Town Hall Meeting**

The next community meeting in Sheriff McDonald's Town Hall series will take place in the Etowah community on [Tuesday, April 25, 2017 from 6pm-8pm](#) at

the Etowah Lions Club building located at 447 Etowah School Road. The Sheriff's Office is partnering with the Etowah Lions Club to disseminate information and crime prevention tips to our Etowah and Horseshoe residents.

Crime data presented will focus on the Etowah and Horseshoe communities, however anyone is welcome to attend.

## **Hometown Heroes**

**Each month we would like to celebrate a few of the achievements and victories of our employees.**

On February 14, 2017, Deputy Ben Hawkins responded to a report of a female attempting to jump off the overpass at Highway 25 and Interstate 26.

When Hawkins arrived, he saw two State Highway Patrol troopers and two medical transport units attempting to secure the distraught female. One trooper held the woman's arm above the guardrail and Hawkins joined the second trooper holding her feet below the guardrail to prevent her from jumping. Hawkins and other responders were able to pull the female under the guardrail



to safety. Deputy Chris Beard secured the female in his patrol vehicle as units began to clear the scene. Beard got into the back of the patrol car and was able to calm the female down so that she could communicate where she had parked her car and other information. Hawkins and Beard located her vehicle and identification, made contact with her family, arranged for IVC (involuntary commitment) papers and transported her to a local hospital. Both Hawkins and Beard showed great compassion as they worked alongside the NC State Highway Patrol and medical units to bring the situation to a safe end. On February 28, 2017, Deputy Hawkins was presented with a Lifesaving Award and Deputy Beard was presented with a Merit Award for their professional and compassionate response to the incident.



School Resource Deputies Jimmy Nitsche and Corporal Blankenship were given an 'attaboy' for the assistance they provided students of Franklin High School after the students' cell phones were stolen from the locker room at a local high school. Highlands Police Chief wrote in to compliment East Henderson administrators and HCSO deputies on their immediate attention and quick resolution. The phones and suspect were located within a day and the stolen phones were returned to their owners.

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Congratulations to Deputy Robert Pace and K9 Maik for being awarded an excellence award from the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA). Deputy Pace and Maik were the winners of the Case of the Fourth Quarter for 2016 for USPCA Region II in recognition of outstanding performance in the detection and prevention of crime.

On December 21, 2016, Deputy Pace and K9 Maik were called to a residence to assist with the execution of a narcotic search warrant. The team began an article search in the area surrounding the residence. A behavior change in Maik alerted Deputy Pace that the K9 had picked up on a scent from a distance away. Pace allowed Maik to continue working the wooded area until Maik laid down on a concealed black trash bag approximately 100-200 yards away from the residence where the search warrant was being conducted. Pace recognized Maik's actions to be an alert to the presence of narcotics. Deputy Pace conducted a search of the bag and located 640 grams of marijuana, 22 grams of MDMA, 10.6 grams of cocaine, 79 oxycodone as well as four handguns. This quantity of narcotics and illegal firearms would have gone undetected without the teamwork of Deputy Pace and K9 Maik.



Deputy Pace and Maik were nominated for this award by Sgt. Brandon Gilmore with the Waynesville Police Department. Sgt. Gilmore has provided ongoing training and support to the members of the Henderson County Sheriff's Office K9 team. We thank Chief Bill Hollingsed and Sgt. Brandon Gilmore for their valued partnership as we continue to grow the size and capabilities of our HCSO K9 team.



A local pastor and his wife brought goodies by the Sheriff's Office to thank our staff with special recognition for Deputy Brittain, Deputy Hoots and Deputy Payne. These three deputies had the difficult task of informing them their son had been killed in a motor vehicle accident. The appreciative parents said all three deputies showed such compassion and professionalism and that they would be forever grateful.

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A citizen wrote in this month to compliment Animal Enforcement deputies on a job well done. Cpl. Griggs, Deputy Lanning and Deputy Stepp were responding to a dangerous dog in the citizen's neighborhood. From his window, the citizen looked on as the deputies climbed a fence, captured the aggressive dog with a catch pole and safely maneuvered the dog into a crate for transportation. The letter went on to say, 'Watching the three officers working together, and for all appearances, with a "just doing our job" attitude, I was grateful to be living in a community that provides security and protection so well.'

## Self Defense

Students from Apple Valley Middle School's Girl's PE classes received important and potentially life saving training this month from local female LEOs. Officer Drake and Anita Lockhart from the Hendersonville Police Department and Cpl. Cantwell, Deputy Levi and Deputy Michalek from the Henderson County Sheriff's Office provided self defense instruction to 400 6th, 7th and 8th grade girls! Thank you to Apple Valley and PE teachers Angela Conner and Tracy Rhymer for facilitating this training for their students.



## STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

The following strategies are mostly common sense and do not require extensive preparation to implement. Taking preventative measures, staying alert and trusting your instincts can substantially reduce your risk of being victimized.

## **AT HOME**

- \* Make sure all windows and doors in your home can be locked securely. Deadbolt locks on doors are preferable. Locks are only effective if you get into the habit of using them every time.
- \* Invest in good outdoor lighting around entrances, corners and driveways/parking areas. Motion detector lighting and ground lights along walkways are also encouraged.
- \* Before opening the door, confirm the identification of the visitor. Check and verify the identification of any sales or service person before letting him or her in.
- \* If you live in an apartment, avoid being in the laundry room or garage by yourself, especially at night.
- \* If you come home alone and find a door or window open or signs of forced entry, don't go in. Call 911 and wait for assistance.

## **WHILE WALKING**

- \* Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you. Avoid putting ear buds in both ears so that you can be more aware.
- \* Stay in well-lighted areas as much as possible.
- \* Walk confidently at a steady pace on the side of the street facing traffic.
- \* Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys.
- \* If you are in trouble, attract help any way you can. Scream and yell for help.
- \* If you feel you're being followed, walk into a store or business.
- \* Try to exercise/run with a partner. Stay in populated areas and vary running routes and times to avoid predictability.
- \* Carry your cell phone with you and keep it charged.

## **WHILE DRIVING**

- \* Keep your car in good working order and don't let the gas tank fall below a quarter tank of gas.
- \* Park in well-lighted areas and ALWAYS lock the doors, even if you'll only be gone a short time. Secure valuables in the trunk and out of sight to prevent car break-ins.
- \* Try to have your keys in hand before you arrive at your vehicle. This provides you with a device that can be used for defense and allows for quicker access once you arrive at the vehicle.
- \* When you return to your vehicle, visually scan the car and check the front and rear seats and floor before getting in.
- \* Drive with all the doors locked.



\* Never pick up hitchhikers.

\* If you think you are being followed, instead of going home make a few extra turns, but only if you are familiar with the area you are in. If you are convinced you are being followed, drive to the nearest police or fire station or drive to an open gas station or other business where you can safely call the police.

\* If you become stranded on the highway, consider staying in your vehicle, turning on the four-way flashers and waiting for police or road service to arrive. If you plan on changing a flat tire, try to reach a safe and well-lighted area before changing it. If you are interrupted during the changing process, pick up your tools and get back in your vehicle.



Thank you to the HCSO deputies and HPD officers who continue to educate girls and women on crime prevention tips and methods of defending themselves should the need arise.

## Recent Events

### Church Security Class

More than 50 people representing eleven different organizations attended February's Church Security class. Organizations and churches of any size can take simple steps to make their sites more secure and their members better equipped to respond to emergency situations, whether it be a weather emergency, suspicious package, active shooter, or any number of other threats. Remember that once the first steps are taken in creating a plan/building a security team, church members need to be made aware and the steps need to be put into practice. If you file the plan away and never re-visit it, it won't be effective.



One resource from FEMA on developing Emergency Operation Plans can be found on the [FEMA website](#).

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## Mills River Town Hall

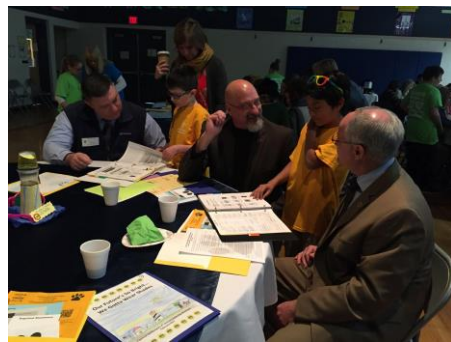
Sheriff McDonald's first community town hall of the year was held in Mills River on February 9th. A great turn out kicked off the series as the Sheriff and his staff covered crime reduction statistics and outlined tips and programs to help residents contribute to their own safety. Thank you to the community of Mills River, Mills River Town Council and Town Manager Jeff Wells for hosting the meeting.



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## Leadership Showcase

Students from Sugarloaf Elementary invited Sheriff McDonald, Chief Deputy Brown, Major Stout and other local leaders to attend their 4th annual leadership showcase. Guests watched presentations, looked through leadership notebooks, toured the school and participated in breakout sessions. Throughout the entire morning, students exhibited impressive leadership skills as they took on roles as emcees, tour guides, greeters and gave presentations. Congratulations to Sugarloaf for being named as a 'Leader in Me Lighthouse School'. This accreditation is awarded by FranklinCovey to honor the attainment of a well-rounded leadership model.



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## Vision Henderson County

The Sheriff's Office welcomed Vision Henderson County for a presentation and tour. Vision is a leadership program that develops community leaders and provides them with an in-depth view of Henderson County. With the Office of Sheriff covering a variety of responsibilities that include patrol, detention, communications, civil process, court security (and much more), Sheriff McDonald and his staff were happy to



educate about our agency and the responsibilities held by the public we serve. We hope to continue to work alongside these and other civic minded people as we build partnerships to enhance our community's safety and quality of life.

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### **Good citizenship**

Girl Scout Troop 2931 visited our Sheriff's Office earlier this week. These Daisies and Brownies have been learning about respect for authority. They had the opportunity to learn about how they can be good citizens from Cpl. Cox. Following their visit they all made thank you cards and sent them to the Sheriff's Office.



### **Stand T.A.L.L.**

Thank a Local Lawman (Stand T.A.L.L.) provided local law enforcement with a sweet surprise on Valentine's Day. Read the Times-News article for more information on this pro-law enforcement non-profit organization. We are thankful to have a community of citizens who support law enforcement and emergency services in Henderson County.



### **Board of Realtors**

Sheriff McDonald had the opportunity to speak to the Board of Realtors about safety and resources provided by the Sheriff's Office.

A great reminder for individuals selling their house: be sure to rid your home of any unused or expired medications before you have an open house or begin having showings. Current medications should be locked up and secured before potential buyers tour the home. Unused medications can be disposed of at the Sheriff's Office any Monday-Friday from 8am-5pm.



## Sheriff's Citizens Academy

The Sheriff's Citizens Academy that began in January is continuing to receive informative presentations each Tuesday evening. Some of the topics during the month of February have included Civil Process, Criminal Investigations, Forensics, Warrant Division, Patrol Equipment, Use of Force and a demonstration of the VirTra Firearms Simulator. A big thank you to SCA Director Barry Brown for facilitating such a great 2017 line up!

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## Community Education

Dispatcher Tim Putnam spoke to a group at Carolina Village and shared information on resources the Sheriff's Office offers. One of these programs is Reassurance Program which allows residents who live alone to call in every morning to verify their well being with 911 Center staff. Other resources covered included [Smart 911](#), [Nixle](#) and Text to 911.

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## Head Start

Cpl. Cantwell visited the King Creek Head Start program to teach kids about being a deputy. Thank you to teachers Jessica Westberg and Sandra Gonzales for allowing us to visit. The students had a great time and even had Cpl. Cantwell wear a police hat.





## EOD Demonstration

On 3/1/17, the Henderson County Sheriff's Office Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) team provided a demonstration to students from all over the state who are part of the North Carolina Justice Academy's Specialized Explosives and Hazardous Materials Instructor Course.



[Read more on the HCSO Facebook page](#)

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