



On Patrol

Real stories from officers in the field

Compiled by Lt. Ken Didion



Lightning Strikes—Suffolk County

ECOs Vernon Fonda and Jason Curinga were checking fishermen at a popular spot in Shoreham as a thunderstorm approached. The officers had separated in order to complete their checks before the storm arrived. ECO Fonda was talking with a fisherman when a person ran toward him screaming for help. ECO Fonda ran to where he saw a woman lying on the ground. The woman's family members said she had been standing in the water when lightning struck nearby. A quick check revealed that the woman was not breathing and did not have a pulse. Officer Fonda immediately began CPR and the woman began to breathe on her own. When ECO Curinga arrived to assist, the woman lost her pulse and ceased breathing again. ECO Fonda resumed CPR, assisted by an EMT who had just arrived. The two rescuers revived the woman, and she was transported by helicopter to Stony Brook Hospital.

Water Rescue—Orleans County

Mr. Roger Maruna and his wife were enjoying a June outing on their boat with their two grandsons on Lake Ontario. Mr. Maruna was towing the boys on an inner tube when they fell off and began drifting away from the boat. Mr. Maruna dove into the water to help them. The boys were wearing personal flotation devices (PFDs), but Maruna was not. They all drifted away from the boat, leaving Mrs. Maruna at the helm. The water temperature was 63° F. with three foot waves. Mrs. Maruna was not familiar with the operation of the boat and soon lost sight of all three victims. Mrs. Maruna contacted the Orleans County Sheriff's Dispatch by cell phone, and they determined her location by GPS coordinates received from her phone. ECO Kevin Lawson was contacted and he and Lt. Chris Bourke from the Sheriff's office headed out in a DEC patrol boat. They located the Maruna boat and began a search of the area assisted by two civilian boats that had responded to the scene. The two boys were located and pulled aboard one of the civilian boats. Mr. Maruna was found and rescued by ECO Lawson and Lt. Bourke. Mr. Maruna had been in the cold water for more than 40 minutes. He was rushed to shore

and flown to Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester in serious condition. All three were treated for the effects of hypothermia and later released. The quick actions of ECO Lawson and Lt. Bourke averted potentially tragic consequences.

Accidental Bust—Hamilton County

ECO Peter Buswell assisted Hamilton County Sheriff's Deputy Corey Hutchins with a motorcycle accident just south of Speculator. A female passenger had fallen off the back of a motorcycle driven by a Northville resident. Upon arriving at the scene, ECO Buswell was informed that shortly after the accident, the motorcycle driver was approached by a passerby who had stopped to offer help. The good samaritan explained that when he approached the accident, the driver had walked off the road—leaving his passenger bleeding on the pavement! The witness saw the driver placing items by the base of a tree and emptying his pockets. ECO Buswell searched the area. His search produced a large bag of marijuana, a digital scale, a quantity of powdered cocaine, and crack cocaine. The driver of the motorcycle was taken into custody and charged with three felonies and a misdemeanor. He was remanded to the Hamilton County Jail. The woman was transported to the hospital, treated, and released.

Ask the ECO

Q: Is it environmentally safe to dump construction debris in the backyard? My neighbor's backyard is filled with all kinds of garbage, and I am worried that rodents may be living there and might come over into my yard.

A: There would be no violation of the NYS Environmental Conservation Law if your neighbors deposit construction debris or garbage that has been generated on their own property. If they bring any waste materials from off-site however, it would be a violation of law and can be reported by calling our toll-free number at **1-877-457-5680**. Generally, construction debris does not contain any harmful chemicals.