

Carl Heilman II



*Real stories from Conservation Officers
and Forest Rangers in the field*

Contributed by ECO Lt. Ken Didion
and Forest Ranger Lt. Chris Liebelt

Paint the Town—Cayuga County

Forest Ranger Bob Rogers responded to a complaint regarding the dumping of waste paint and solvents in the Town of Summerhill. More than 100 containers of various sizes had been dumped along a rural road. Ranger Rogers contacted ECO Investigator Jim Boylan and the pair visited the scene with an oil spill engineer. The evidence led Investigator Boylan to a store in Cortland where he reviewed surveillance tapes and observed a person taking boxes similar to the ones found at the dump site. The person was identified and interviewed. She said she had recently given a large quantity of old paint to a local couple. Boylan located the couple and they denied any involvement in the dumping. However, after continued questioning, they confessed to throwing the paint out along the road. Both pled guilty to misdemeanor endangering public health, safety or the environment and will pay clean up costs of approximately \$5,000.

Too Early for Bass—Rensselaer County

While patrolling the Lansingburgh Reservoir, ECO Scott Daly observed two fishermen in a small rowboat. He watched as one angler landed a small bass and kept it. A short time later, the two fishermen rowed to shore. When ECO Daly came out of hiding and approached them, one of the fisherman blurted out, "I threw it, uh, them, back!" ECO Daly replied, "Threw what back, the bass you caught? Let's see what's in that cooler." When the fisherman opened the cooler, he revealed an alarming 24 bass he had caught out of season. The fishermen told ECO Daly that he was going to use the bass to stock a friend's pond. Both men were issued several tickets.

Lobster Lifters—Suffolk County

ECO Nathaniel Meade received a call from the Smithtown Bay Constables requesting assistance with a complaint from two local lobstermen who had observed three fishermen raiding their lobster pots on Long Island Sound. The three men were quickly located and apprehended at the town boat ramp in Stony Brook. They were found to be in possession of 155 short lobsters, several of which were females with eggs. The three men were each issued four tickets for taking undersized lobsters, possessing lobsters in spawn, removing eggs from the lobsters, and taking lobsters without a permit. Their vessel was seized as evidence, and the men face penalties as high as \$10,000 each.

Underage? Think Twice—Warren County

In May, forest rangers issued more than 40 tickets to people under the age of 21 for numerous violations. Most of the tickets stemmed from underage "partiers" setting up shop on state lands and included tickets for illegal possession of alcohol on state land, unlawful possession of marijuana, disorderly conduct, and failure to maintain neat and orderly campsites. Weekend patrols at several campsites were planned to coincide with prom season and the first "warm weekend." Rangers—the lead law enforcement detail for all state land and campsites—targeted patrols for areas which historically attract illegal use. Lieutenant John Solan, Forest Rangers Mike Bodnar, Werner Schwab, Tony Goetke, Chuck Kabrehl and Suzanne Heare contributed to the effort. DEC rangers have a zero tolerance policy for underage alcohol and drug use on state land.