

Good evening friends and family of class members, members of the City Council, Chief McDonnell and the members of the Newport Beach Police Department.

First let me express my thanks to my classmates for asking me to speak on their behalf it is always a privilege to have the opportunity to speak for a group that you think highly of.

This past 12 weeks has been quite an experience for me as I am quite sure it has for others in Class 3. I think I was probably like many citizens who live in our community. I knew the job of the police was to enforce the laws. And as long as it was the other guy, that was ok with me. However, I wasn't very happy when that enforcement hit too close to "home" and I had to pay that fine on a traffic ticket and attend traffic school in order to keep my insurance rates affordable. Translation: the less contact with the police...the better. That attitude has dramatically shifted in the last several months.

One of the things we did very early on in the Academy was the Car Stops. I remember Officer Halpin lecturing us, prior to the actual simulation, on the precautions that each officer must take during what I always believed to be pretty routine for the police. "Don't just look, he said, "you have to recognize what you are looking at." Well, during my stop I recognized a Thomas Guide, some Kleenex, some gum wrappers, and just about everything in that car that was **NOT** planted for the purpose of the demonstration!! Finally, utilizing some not-so subtle hints from Officer Halpin, I recognized the gun that was in the hand of one of the passengers posing to be unconscious in the back seat. My response..."oh!!!! She has a gun!" Needless to say that was **NOT** the response he was looking for. Afterwards, Officer Halpin called me back over to the squad car and asked, "in retrospect, what I thought I could have done better?" We had a **VERY** long talk about the gun. A conversation very similar to the ones I have with my students when their performance has not met my expectations. **BUT**, when my students make mistakes, their lives do not hang in the balance.

I learned more than just humility from that experience. I learned nothing these men and women do as police officers can be approached as a matter of routine. For the first time I started to understand what it takes to do their job and live to be able to talk about with people like myself. I wish I had time to share with you all of the learning experiences that I have been fortunate enough to have while attending this Academy. It has truly been an enlightening 12 weeks.

As I told my classmates at our first session, I decided to apply to the Citizen's Police Academy because a friend, who's thoughts I value, showed me the little gold shield awarded to him upon graduation from the Irvine Police Citizen's Academy which he carries in his pocket. After hearing him say how much it meant to him, I called and asked if Newport Beach Police offered a similar program. I can now say to my friend something I couldn't say to him then, "I understand how you feel about that shield."

I find it interesting now to be driving somewhere in town and see that familiar white car with Newport Beach Police Department on the door and have the urge to wave or if they are stopped somewhere, pulling up beside them and asking "how is it goin'?" Having experienced the ride along, and the attitudes some hold toward law enforcement, I know what a difference it would make if everyone in our community shared similar feelings about the Officer Yearingtons, the Officer Halpins, and all of the others of the Newport Beach Police Department, who's primary concern is to keep us all safe and in the process, often place their own safety at risk.

As a citizen I want to thank all of the men and women of the Newport Beach Police Department for being who you are. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to participate in this Academy. And most of all, thank you for making me part of what you do.

Good night.