



# Stearns County Sheriff's Office

Steve Soyka—Sheriff

Dan Miller—Chief Deputy

**The Front Row** *"A front row seat to the greatest show on Earth..."* July 2021: Volume 5, Issue 14

## Bad Decisions

Each decision we make in life comes with consequences. Sometimes those consequences are good and sometimes they are not. Like Newton's 3<sup>rd</sup> law, minus the equal and opposite part. Sometimes bad decisions result in a cascade of negative consequences. One such tale of bad decisions happened on the evening of Wednesday, June 30<sup>th</sup>, in Lynden Township. At about 6:30 p.m. **Deputy Darren Ringness** and **Sgt. John Niemi** responded to a report of a rollover crash in the 21000 block of Franklin Road. It quickly became apparent that this wasn't going to be a typical crash. The communications staff were obtaining information from the caller that went from odd to potentially dangerous. The 911 caller said the driver was out of the car and was refusing medical attention saying he wasn't hurt, but was obviously bleeding. A bit concerning was that the driver came out of his car with a shotgun. The caller continued to provide information to the dispatcher and said that the driver was acting "weird". The caller also said the driver appeared to be very nervous, smoking cigarettes, and kept putting down and picking up the shotgun. After several minutes, and before deputies arrived on scene, the driver took off running into the woods with the shotgun. As you can imagine this unusual activity tends to make everyone a bit wary. Sgt. Niemi and Deputy Ringness arrived in the area and after a fair amount of time searching, were unable to locate the driver. The crash scene was investigated and the 2000 Ford Crown Victoria was towed away. Sgt. Niemi and Deputy Ringness cleared the call around 8:30 p.m. To paraphrase the Looney Tunes cartoon characters, "That ain't all there is folks". Approximately 45 minutes later, the Communications Center received a 911 call from an off duty Big Lake PD Officer. The officer was on Co. Rd. 75 near Artic Cat when he saw a male walking on the road carrying a shotgun. Finding this odd he called 911. I should insert here that the officer was nursing an injury that would have prevented him from taking any direct action. The officer continued to provide valuable information and Deputies Ringness, **Zach Milne** and **Garett Okerstrom**, and **Sgt. Ken Friday** responded to the area. As the Big Lake Officer continued to watch the male, he ran across the bridge, over Interstate 94, and onto the westbound entrance ramp. He continued down the ramp and started running westbound alongside the interstate. Deputy Ringness and Deputy Okerstrom were the first to arrive in the area and located the driver walking on the shoulder of westbound Interstate 94. They made contact with the male and gave him commands to drop the shotgun he was carrying. Thankfully, he complied. A short time later, they were able to have him back away from the gun and took him in to custody. While speaking with the male it was confirmed that he was the driver in the crash and that he was showing signs of impairment. He was taken to the hospital where a blood sample was obtained. He was later booked into the jail on a DWI charge pending toxicology results. And how did all of this start? A little

alcohol, a little marijuana, and a decision to drive to a friend's house to shoot his shotgun. One of the things missing here was a valid driver's license. The driver was identified as Ryley Olsen, 27, of St. Cloud. I haven't read Mr. Olsen's statement, but it is probably safe to speculate that the drugs and alcohol played into the crash and the absence of a driver's license perhaps led to a sense of panic and a degradation of decision-making skills. As we say repeatedly folks, if you are going to drink, best not to drive, and especially not without a license.



**Flipped Crown Victoria**



**Loaded Shotgun**

# A Little of This & That

I think we will call this the Lake Edition. I am on vacation this week and next so this edition of “The Front Row” was written lakeside. The weather has been good. The fishing has not. That being said, I must admit that my fishing skills are subpar. Not much going on in the sports world that I follow. The **Twins** still sound like the Twins. The **Wild** are making some moves, but we really have to see what that will look like after the expansion draft. It’s probably time to start ramping up the yearly overestimating of the **Vikings** ability machine. Training camp starts in a few weeks.

Speaking of overestimating skill level -- **Deputy Adam Fettig** and **FTO Paul Breth** responded to a single-vehicle crash on Sunday, June 27th at Kramer Rd. and Stearns-Meeker St. in Luxemburg Twp. The car, 1984 Chevrolet Monte Carlo, was in the ditch and damaged. The driver was found on scene and admitted that he had been doing “burnouts” and “donuts” in the area. He lost control of the car and ended up in the ditch. The driver and his passenger were not injured during the demonstration. The driver was issued a citation.



Monte Carlo



Bucky's Bar Damaged Door

Another crash on June 27<sup>th</sup> may have been caused by excitement and distraction. **Deputy Andrew Gravdahl** responded to a car that had struck **Bucky's Bar** in Elrosa. The car, a Lincoln MKZ, had been left in gear and ran into the door area of the bar and into the front left bumper of a parked car. Turns out the driver had stopped to let his dog out, who apparently was in urgent need of some room to roam and the driver forgot to put his vehicle in park. Being a cat person, I don't imagine I'll ever have this problem.



Parked Cars

On June 30th we had another report of a driver demonstrating his skill level and testing the rubber thickness of their tires. This was in the Holdingford High School parking lot. The caller reported a group of kids in the parking lot behind the school and saw a white Dodge pickup doing “donuts”. By the time a deputy got to the school the truck and driver were gone. Video might be able to help us identify the driver.

In a continuation of the “What in the World is Going On” theme, **Deputy Dennis Heinen** responded to a fire in the middle of the intersection on July 1st at Co. Rd. 3 and Co. Rd. 155 in Avon Twp. The caller reported coming across this fire at 2:15 a.m. Deputy Heinen arrived on scene and found a tire on fire. He used his extinguisher to knock down the flames and **Avon Fire Department** took care of the rest. Seems like an odd way to spend one's time on an early Thursday morning.



Fire on Co. Rd. 3



## Welcome Aboard!

*The Stearns County Sheriff's Office  
staff would like to congratulate the following.*

**Kari Theisen, Promoted to Sergeant-Corrections, June 25**

**Steven Polack, Promoted to Sergeant-Corrections, July 2**

