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Sheriff sends a message to residents and visitors of Gilchrist County

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *HardisonInk.com* does not publish letters to the editor. The following, however, is a message from Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz. It is published as it was sent. It arrived via email on Sunday morning (Aug. 27, 2017).



Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz

Dear Fellow Citizens,

As your Sheriff, your neighbor, and your friend I wanted to write this letter to address several issues we, at the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office, have been dealing with of late, as well as some Constitutional issues related to those events that I value tremendously. As many of you are aware, we have had a couple of unfortunate criminal events here in our small community, one of which has left a man dead and most recently, one leaving a man in critical condition and on life support. In each of these cases it appears that the motive behind the criminal conduct of the perpetrators was to rob the victims of money and or valuables in order to obtain drugs. In both cases, the victims were able to access a lawfully owned firearm and defend their lives and property from violent attacks.

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While I value all human life, in both of these terrible incidents it was only because of the availability and proficiency with a handgun that the victims in these cases are alive. I am a staunch supporter of the *Constitution of the United States* and of the State of Florida, and I have defended them my entire professional career. Since becoming your Sheriff, we at the GCSO have proudly offered concealed weapon courses to the public. I strongly support the public's right to keep and bear arms in a lawful manner and have witnessed firsthand the difference it can make in the outcome of life threatening events. I encourage all of our citizens to take advantage of the courses offered if you feel so inclined.

As I have mentioned, but for the ownership, accessibility, training, and proficiency with a firearm, these victims may not be with us today. They exercised their lawful right to defend themselves from people whose minds and actions were being influenced by the drugs they sought to obtain. The scourge of drugs does not discriminate based on someone's race, finances, religion, or age. Drugs destroy lives, plain and simple. At the GCSO we have a very strong anti-drug philosophy which we zealously enforce because we see first-hand and on a daily basis the devastation that drug addiction has on addicts and their families, as well as the community as a whole. We will continue to work tirelessly and diligently to enforce the drug laws, and vigorously prosecute those who break the law.

As your Sheriff, I am also equally committed to helping those members of our community who are struggling with and need help with substance abuse and addiction. While unfortunately they are limited, there are resources available to assist with substance abuse and anyone can stop by the lobby of the GCSO around the clock to pick up literature which can direct you to the help you need. Additionally, and also available at the GCSO, is literature on ways to speak to your children about the dangers of drugs before it becomes a problem.

The GCSO partnered with the Gilchrist County School District and brought back the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program to our school system. This program allows us to teach and warn our children of the dangers of illegal drugs. We also partner with the Tri-County Anti Drug Coalition in efforts to look for ways to educate our citizens and to help provide information that you can go to receive different types of help as it pertains to drug addiction.

In closing let me say that the safety of all citizens of Gilchrist County is my first and foremost priority. Our entire mission statement as well as the daily execution of our duties is carried out with those priorities in place. I ask each of you to assist us with this mission by being cognizant of family, friends, neighbors, or even strangers that may need assistance with drug abuse. I also encourage each of you to report illegal drug use and any other illegal activities to the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office. The life you save, in the long run, may just be your own or that of someone you love.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Sheriff. I am honored and humbled by the trust you have placed in me. I will work daily to make our community safe and drug free so we can all raise our families in peace and be able to sleep safely at night.

God Bless,

Robert "Bobby" Schultz
Sheriff of Gilchrist County