

Letter to the editor;

On Thursday, July 8, 2004, patrol deputies were called to the Home Depot on Bell Creek Road to investigate several suspicious individuals trying to pass counterfeit checks. The first responding deputy arrived and located a vehicle on the lot that was occupied by the three suspects. As the deputy initiated contact with the suspects, one of them fled from the vehicle on foot.

The suspect was located nearly two hours later on a road in the adjacent neighborhood and was taken into custody without incident. All three suspects were arrested and charged with offenses related to check fraud. All suspects were from a Maryland suburb of Washington, D.C. and were traveling in a stolen vehicle.

During this operation, on one of the hottest days of the year, our officers benefited from acts of kindness and selfless generosity that is emulated by the members of our community. Citizens and neighbors offered cold drinks and refreshments, and one citizen ferried our canine "Kramer" and his handler back to their vehicle after a long, exhausting track for the suspect. The displays of support extended to our officers during this investigation was extremely appreciated by all members of our agency.

Most importantly, the willingness of our citizens to come forward and provide information to our officers sent a more powerful message; one that should be heard by all criminals who feel that they can commit crime in our county. That message is simple: **The citizens of Hanover County will not tolerate criminal behavior or those individuals that feel that they can prey on our community!**

I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt appreciation to all of those citizens and neighbors who not only offered their kindness and hospitality, but also to those who displayed the courage and commitment to our community to assist in the investigation and apprehension of these individuals. No doubt that we will continue to face criminal behavior in the future and those trends that threaten our county from the outside, but as we continue to work together, we pose a formidable force in the fight against crime in our community.

Colonel V. Stuart Cook