



THE MARLBOROUGH BULLETIN

Vol. IV

Spring 1986

No. 2

Marlborough's Finest:

Police recruit becomes world famous

The newest addition to Marlborough's police force sits stiffly in his squad car for hours, never complains, and couldn't care less about a paycheck. In fact, when he's off duty, he just lies down on the front seat!

But in the seven weeks he's been on patrol, this new recruit has definitely proved he's cut out for the job. He created a reputation for himself that spans two continents.

"How could that be?" you ask. "This thin, quiet, unsmiling lad is world famous?"

Of course, as everyone knows by now, the new patrolman is nothing more than a silhouette cut from a cardboard box, touched up with ceramic paint, and tacked to the police car's headrest. Pete Von Sneidern dubbed him "Captain Cardboard" after his debut.

"I had no idea it would get so much attention," says Police Chief Peter Henry. "The effect on motorists was immediate, it was great. But the attention from the media was totally unexpected."

The saga of the silhouette started when Chris Smith, a Harrisville resident, noticed the corrugated creation soon after it appeared. Chris, a semi-professional photographer, snapped a picture and took it to the Keene Sentinel where it wound up on the front page. Then someone at the Sentinel put the photo and story on the Associated Press wire service and that's when Capt. Cardboard really got famous.

The story appeared in the Manchester Union Leader, the Concord Monitor, the Boston Globe and papers in Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts, Arizona, California, Florida, Minnesota and heaven knows where else. Marlborough's paper policeman was also mentioned on ABC's Good Morning America, Boston's Channel 5, and American TV in Germany. Someone from People Magazine even called Peter for details, and a photographer was sent to take pictures.

Peter is modest about the sudden fame of his brainchild. "I've been thinking about doing something like this for years," he said. "And Easter Sunday my wife, Marlene, painted him up. It only took a few minutes."

Peter says the empty cruiser parked by the roadside wasn't always a reliable deterrent, and the silhouette makes it hard to tell from a distance whether the cruiser is occupied or not. Live three-dimensional policemen are substituted for

Capt. Cardboard on and off, but how often is a closely guarded secret. Finding out for yourself could be expensive.

One trucker learned the hard way. After he was stopped for speeding past the parked cruiser on the east side of town, the surprised truck driver was asked why he didn't slow down. "Well," he said, "I thought it was Capt. Cardboard sittin' in there!"

Peter also says that at least two motorists have stopped to ask the silhouette for directions and appeared startled when they got close to the cruiser. He also mentioned he's seen drivers give warning flashes to other motorists after passing the "occupied" squad car.

With the growing fame of Marlborough's famous cut-up, only one question remains to be answered — who is he patterned after? Some would say he looks suspiciously like David Cheney, the town's best-known policeman from prior days. But others say his blue eyes make him look more like Lee LaChance. The next time you drive past the cruiser parked along Rts. 101 or 124, judge for yourself. But make sure you're within the speed limit. You might be face to face with the real thing!



Capt. Cardboard on duty

Chris Smith