My country, ’tis of thee,
Sweet land of Liberty
Living life as a special needs child can be an uphill battle, but going downhill brought out the best in nine year old Sydney Pamer on June 4th. That’s when the Greater Ohio Area Superkids Classic was held at First Energy Derby Downs in Akron. Sydney is the adopted daughter of Summit County Sheriff Deputy Raquel Pamer, a 17-year veteran with the agency, and the goal of the race was to provide a Soap Box Derby-style race for children with disabilities.

Deputy Pamer had the joy of adopting daughter Sydney when she was just 2 days old, having been placed in her foster care through Summit County Children Services. “I gave Sydney the middle name of Grace, because by the grace of God she came to me.” Raquel said. “She is the funniest, happiest little girl, always singing Old Macdonald, or the Wheels on the Bus go Round and Round, and sometimes mixing the two songs together, just for fun. Her favorite things to do is to ride on the school bus and play with rubber ducks.”

The Greater Ohio Area Superkids Classic race is open to all special needs children ages 7 to 18. For their safety, another youngster steers the cars. Sydney was one of 42 kids who competed this year. Deputy Pamer was fast to show her gratitude for the people behind the scenes, who assist in ways nobody sees.

“My sincere thanks to Sheriff Barry and FOP local #139 for helping to sponsor the race,” Raquel said. “Without their genuine concern, cooperation, and support, this event would never be possible.”

When Sydney was asked what she thought of her Derby Downs experience, and whether she’d like to take on other challenges, she smiled happily, leaving no doubt this girl is “Ready, Willing, and Able”.

Going to the Summit County Fair? So are we! Employees from the Sheriff’s Office will be set up all week, just like we usually do; handing out stickers, magnets, decals, public service information, and other goodies. But it gets better! We are hosting a Community Safety Day on Thursday July 28th from 11am to 3pm inside the Main Arena Complex. They’ll be K-9 Unit activities, Bomb Squad demonstrations, Sheriff’s vehicles of all sort, and plenty of free stuff given out by the Summit County Sheriff’s Safe Communities volunteers. There’ll also be fire trucks, police cars, and emergency vehicles from other agencies. The goal of Community Safety Day is to let everyone see and touch all the safety equipment used in their community. July 28th is also Family Day at the Fair, so all kids 14 and under get in free with their family. For fun, food, and friendly folks from Summit County Sheriff’s Office, get to the Fair!
You might say that starting the first Summit County Sheriff’s Honor Guard was a noble idea, and you’d be right. But it was also a Warren idea. To understand, we have to go back to 1979 when Mel Noble and Richard Warren were sharing a cup of coffee. Mel was a part-time Deputy (called a Special) with the Summit County Sheriff’s Office, and Richard was his Sergeant. Both discussed the need for a special unit that could be called upon to preside at occasions of great privilege and prominence. “We had a humble beginning but very high hopes.” Said Mel Noble for this interview. “Richard and I found some black boots with yellow laces, then added some proper britches. One of us picked up a gold ascot with yellow lanyard, and cobbled together assorted other accoutrements. We looked in the mirror, and with that, we became the first two members of the Honor Guard”.

The idea was a good one, and soon other deputies wanted to join. Two became five, then ten, and by 1984 the Honor Guard had grown to twelve. They were (Sergeant) Richard L. Warren, (Deputies) Mel Noble, William Perkins, Mike Yuhas, Lance Belka, Robert Schutte, Robert Bickett, Frank Zahler, Ray Immel, Joseph Letta, Barry Milich, and Bernard Miller. These gentlemen performed duties at fallen Akron Astronaut Judy Resnick’s funeral, provided service at the opening exercises of the 1984 Buckeye State Sheriff’s Association State Convention in Columbus, received an invitation to participate in the National Police Memorial Service in Washington D.C. in 1986, and served at many other ceremonies throughout the state and county. Few of these fine gentlemen are still with us. “Those were great years,” recalled Mel Noble. “Each of us knew the privilege bestowed upon us, and to a man, we did our very best to return that trust with paramount pride.”

Flash forward to 2016, where the current Sheriff’s Honor Guard consists of fifteen Deputy Sheriff’s. They are Commander John Peake, Lt. Rick Armsey, Sergeants Earl Iselin and William Stokes, with Deputies Jonathan Ragland, Thomas Fickes, James Hipp, Tamika Lewis, Krista Seese, Jesse Lemasters, Coleman Caster, Michael Hawsman, Stephanie Bowens, Robert Ivey, and Reuben Woodruff.

As you can tell, they are a much more diversified group today, but their duties are much the same. These fine officers have recently presided at numerous funeral details, parades, opening and closing ceremonies, the Ohio State Police Memorial in Columbus, several fallen police officer’s ceremonies throughout Ohio, and other events of distinction.

We feel that during the month of July, when America is proudly flying its flags, that we portray the history of our Honor Guard with proper respect and deep appreciation.

As these men and women have stood and saluted so many others, let us now salute them for their discipline and their service.
The broker will tell you to invest in bonds, the banker will swear it should be CD’s, and the realtor will say it should always be land. But for Summit County Sheriff Deputy Todd Hart, the best investment that will yield the biggest return, is our children. Todd is the School Resource Officer for Green Local Schools, and for the past seven years he has invested thousands of hours shaping young students into the strong and confident leaders of tomorrow. The classroom he uses is called Camp Reliance, where the outdoor sky is quite literally the limit, and the lessons learned are life-changing.

Here, every summer following the last day of school, in a beautiful section of Boettler Park, boys and girls are removed from the casual and comfortable routine of normal life and commit themselves to five days of rigorous outdoor activity. They are challenged, both mentally and physically, to do things they think they cannot do, while learning basic survival skills, essential communication skills, the value of teamwork, friendship, and healthy doses of hardship. As Deputy Hart describes, “We get your kids off the couch, away from their computers and carbonated beverages, and back to wholesome physical activity that will force them to rely on their own energy, ability, and initiative.”

Camp Reliance is open to any student in the Green Local School District from the seventh grade and up. There is a cost associated with the camp, and students will need to provide some of their own equipment, but the return on this investment cannot be disputed. Upon completion of the camp, many students can’t wait to return the very next year. They describe their experience as incredible fun, filled with fresh appreciation for others, and a deeper understanding of themselves. A young man named Joey Salser participated in Camp Reliance in 2006. Joey Salser is now Deputy Salser with the Summit County Sheriff’s Office. His is just one of the many success stories that has come out of Camp Reliance.

Jeff Miller is the Superintendent for Green Local Schools and he fully supports the camp, saying “This is an excellent opportunity for students to grow and develop leadership skills. It is another example of the Summit County Sheriff’s Office partnering with Green schools for the betterment of the kids.”

Of course, all this isn’t the work of any one person. To run a camp like this takes volunteers, donors, the support of Green schools, participation of Green Fire Department, Ohio National Guard, and support from the Sheriff’s Office. It takes caring, concern, and compassion. In short, it takes people, -with Hart.

**For more information about Camp Reliance, contact Deputy Todd Hart at 330-472-9613. To get a feel for the experience, view the entire Camp Photo Album on our Facebook page.**
The image of Summit County inmates laying around, lazily watching television, or languishing on their cots while taxpayers go to work is a popular misconception. In fact, The Summit County Sheriff’s Office roadside Litter Detail regularly puts inmates in a position where their energy and ability will benefit the community. Perhaps you’ve seen them, cleaning up along the interstate or some secondary roads.

For the past ten years, their presence is part of a contract between ODOT and the Sheriff’s Office. From April to November, four days a week and 8 hours a day, inmates from Glenwood Jail are escorted by deputy Sheriffs to locations chosen by ODOT for trash removal. On average, between 350 to 400 bags of litter are collected, including old tires, car parts, broken glass and cinder blocks. Abandoned mattresses, couches, and various rotting refuse are cleaned up too. For the past three years, the City of Green has had a similar contract for this service. The photos shown here were recently taken along Wise Road.

To ensure public safety, only non-violent first time offenders who have demonstrated full compliance with authority are chosen to participate in the Detail. These inmates appreciate the fact they have earned the trust of others and feel they are paying back their debt to society in a positive and practical way. While not an official form of rehabilitation, the Summit County Sheriff’s Litter Detail allows inmates to turn their days behind bars into a good day’s work, which carries its own rewards. By seeing what they’re missing on the outside, most inmates say they earn a fresh appreciation for the cherished joys of freedom. Many vow never to return to criminal behavior.

“The Litter Detail is a win-win program no matter how you look at it,” said Deputy Craig Eackelberry, “We see attitudes and old tendencies improve every time we go out. Inmates are treated with respect and given responsibilities like anyone else. In the end, it is the community at large that reaps the most benefit.”

Part of trading trash for trust involves the Litter Detail Deputies buying lunch, with their own money, for the inmates. “After months behind bars, who doesn’t appreciate their favorite pizza or burger?” said Deputy John Barrickman.
What is a Mobile Field Force? It is an elite group of highly trained personnel possessing the strategies, skills, and equipment necessary to safely manage large crowds, demonstrations, and civil disorders. Members of the Summit County Sheriff’s Mobile Field Force will accompany our SWAT team, Bomb Squad, and Mounted Unit as they join 4000 other members of law enforcement at the 2016 Republican National Convention July 18-21st in Cleveland.

We cannot divulge specific details about the tactics or techniques that will be implemented at the RNC. To do so would not only compromise the very purpose of our presence, but could potentially place the lives of our men and women at risk. What we can describe is the state of readiness our teams are in, and the months of training that have gone into their preparation. As Sheriff Barry explained: “Our mission is to support the safety forces of the City of Cleveland in keeping the peace. We will be one of many agencies from across the nation who are there to provide assistance.”

The Sheriff warned: “Assemblies of this size and scope have their inherent capacity for violence. Since no two conventions are ever the same, we must be prepared to respond in a manner appropriate to the situation.” While there were only 2 convention-related arrests at the Tampa RNC in 2012, nearly 300 were arrested in a single day in St. Paul, Minnesota in 2008.

Inspector Bill Holland is one of the Field Force commanders. He is confident but cautious. “While no-one can predict the future, we have trained for every conceivable scenario, both in the classroom and out on the field. We are ready for whatever comes our way.” Lieutenant Doug Smith will also be in Cleveland, and he explained: “Extensive research has gone into prior events of this magnitude, and we will be analyzing intel, hour by hour, leading up to and during our deployment.”

However, Sheriff Barry made a point to make one thing perfectly clear: “I want to assure the citizens of Summit County that our primary forces will always remain here, in sufficient and significant number to manage any emergency should it arise. This is our county, and our commitment.”
Once again we turn back the clock and delve into the Summit County Sheriff’s Archives to unearth another piece of our proud and historic past. This month’s photo dates to July of 1966, and shows Sheriff Robert D. Campbell standing close to one of the most popular television stars of the decade, one Elizabeth Montgomery, better known to fans of all ages as ‘Samantha’ on Bewitched. Elizabeth was joined by Dick York, Agnes Moorehead, William Asher, and others from the show when they left Hollywood to attend the 29th Annual All-American Soap Box Derby in Akron. The photo was taken outside of the fine Sheraton Hotel.

It was though Samantha herself had cast a spell over the city, when thousands of cheering fans flooded downtown streets in the hope of catching a glimpse of their glamorous witch, perhaps in the act of twitching her nose. Akron Police and the Sheriff’s Office had their hands full controlling the crowds that clamored for autographs. As charming and irresistible in person as she was on screen, Elizabeth Montgomery was the hands down hit of the Soap Box Derby. In fact, producers of Bewitched were so taken by the city and its sign of affection that they vowed to return to Akron and film an episode of the program as a tribute to the community. They wasted no time in fulfilling their promise, and on December 29, 1966, the derby episode aired on national television. Today it can still be seen in re-runs, but much to our dismay, no-one from the Sheriff’s Office was asked to play a part in the production. Our Hollywood ‘Star’ would just have to wait.

Ready for any emergency at Derby Downs, the Summit County Sheriff’s Mobilized Emergency Vehicle can be seen in this 1966 photo at far right. Fifty years later, the Sheriff’s Office continues to provide security and support for virtually every special event in the county.

Next month we’ll take another “Peek Into Our Past” and shine new light on a piece of Sheriff history.
Parents, DON'T BE SORRY. Watch your kids. Know where they are, and what they are doing. IF YOU AREN'T WATCHING YOUR CHILD, SOMEONE ELSE WILL!