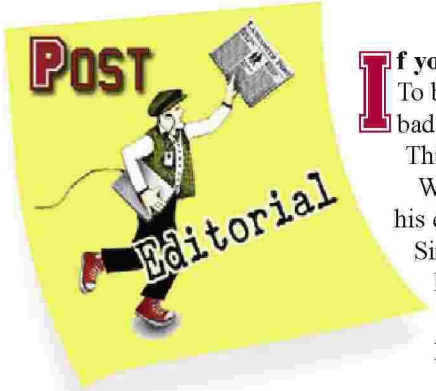
Improved Police Training



If you want to legally cut hair in the state of Pennsylvania, you must have 1250 hours of certified training. To be a cop requires 750 hours. That's right. The state makes you put in more time learning how to prevent a bad hair day than how to enforce the laws of the state.

This is wrong.

We applaud and support the efforts of Chief Rich Garipoli of Warwick Township, who led the push to have his department accredited by the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission back in 2004. Since then, three other Lancaster County agencies have followed Warwick's lead: E. Lampeter Township Police, Lititz Borough Police, and Manheim Township Police. There are five other county agencies and the city of Lancaster who have enrolled in the accreditation program. All county police forces should participate in this effort to improve the work of the police.

There are benefits to police departments and the public through accreditation. The program teaches and raises the overall standards of police work. It improves community relations and confidence in the police. It can save insurance dollars for agencies and municipalities. Accreditation requires the police department and local government officials jointly notify the Accreditation with a "letter of intent." The cost is only a one-time $100 fee. Accreditation is renewed every three years.

We also suggest that police training must not only address the proper use and non-use of force, how to catch a speeding car, or which doughnut shop has the best jelly Ds. It must also encompass training in the Constitution and the civil rights it provides the citizens they are encountering. And there should be an independent civilian oversight board where citizens have redress of issues involving the police.

Finally, given the abuse of police power in the case of the two falsely arrested *Post* Publishers, we strongly encourage private police forces, like the security detail of Franklin & Marshall College, to not only enroll in the program, but to actually apply the principles it learns.

Until they and other departments are adequately trained in all aspects of law enforcement, the people they are sworn to protect will be less safe and less free.

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