

National Police Week a chance for reflection, support by Broome County Sheriff Fred Akshar

“Blessed are the peacemakers...”

Every day, we are bombarded by news stories covering the unrelenting partisan forces, fringe special interests and political punditry continuously working to divide us, turn us against one another and ultimately tear our communities and our society apart. What so often goes overlooked are the groups and individuals in every community tirelessly working every day to hold us together.

Among those peacemakers are the brave men and women of law enforcement, who this week received some much-deserved recognition as part of National Police Week. On a daily basis, our dedicated public servants put their lives on the line to protect our citizens and their families. This protection and service comes absent of any preconditions, qualifications or prerequisites based on our community members’ personal beliefs, party affiliations or politics. Whether our law-abiding citizens appreciate police officers or hate them, it’s every sworn officer’s job to protect them all the same.

Look no further than the recent widespread campus protests, where agitators (often not even students or affiliated with the educational institutions in any way) chose to sow chaos and destruction rather than engage in peaceful and thoughtful discourse. Peacekeepers across our nation were called to do just that – keep the peace, alleviate chaos and establish order and safety for law-abiding citizens, fearful and threatened members of the Jewish community and students simply trying to finish their semester in peace. They were called on once again to walk the line of protecting free speech and preserving public safety for all. Just like they do across our nation every day.

Every year, far too many peacemakers lose their lives protecting the communities they love. Most recently, we lost two heroes in Syracuse, NY and four in Charlotte, NC. In each instance, a peacemaker left home that day, said goodbye to their families and never came home, leaving six families and no less than 10 children’s lives forever changed.

National Police Week allows us an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices so many brave men and women have made, but also to thank and support the dedicated officers serving and protecting us now, even as more brothers and sisters, colleagues and friends are lost.

Make no mistake, our gratitude and support in no way implies that those who wear the uniform or the institutions they represent are perfect. In fact, part of supporting our law enforcement requires that we help our police improve, both individually and systemically. Community engagement will always be a two-way street. Constructive feedback and cooperation are essential to creating and maintaining a society we can all be proud of.

While I can only speak for the Broome County Sheriff’s Office, I can state proudly on behalf of our team that we stand ready to continue working hand-in-hand with the people of Broome County to build a safer community for all.

Through this ongoing partnership, we seek to honor every heroic officer who ever put on the uniform and sacrificed everything as one of our nation’s peacemakers.