

# ROOKER REPORT

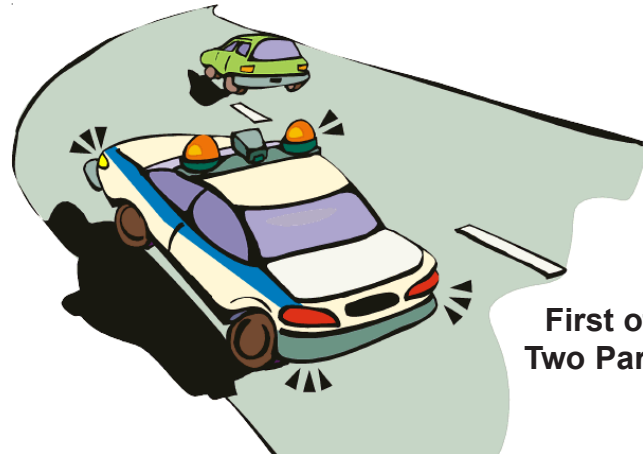
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## Stepped-Up Traffic Enforcement Sends Message to Motorists...

# DRIVER BEWARE



First of Two Parts

Flashing blue lights do not always mean there's a bargain to be had, especially if they are attached to a Metro patrol car.

More and more drivers on the county's road system each month are finding that out as local police continue to zero in on road rule violators under a directive from new Metro Police Chief Ronal Serpas.

The goal not only is to enforce traffic laws but to discover people wanted on other charges in the process. It is not uncommon, police say, to uncover outstanding warrants against motorists during routine traffic stops.

In carrying out the rigid enforcement, police are monitoring highways by land and in the air, utilizing radar-equipped helicopters to help land units detect errant drivers and chase them down.

The effect of the new directive is causing record-keeping supervisors to reevaluate operating procedures in hopes of finding new methods of coping with the increased workload. We will examine that aspect in next month's second part story.

In raw numbers, the charts below reflect the impact of the new police

policy by comparing statistics compiled for the first four months of this year with the same period a year ago when traffic enforcement was less intense.

Combined monthly totals reflect a 39 percent increase in the number of tickets issued for moving violations, representing an average of 15,259 new citations per month. The actual number of violations arising from those tickets rose by 43 percent from 91,374 to 131,419.

The biggest jump came in February when the new policy actually went into full effect. Officers kicked off the new effort by writing 14,927 moving tickets, an increase of 60 percent over the previous February. Violations from those tickets totaled 32,568--a 61 percent increase.

An impressive number of cited motorists took advantage of the department's mail-in ticket convenience which was extended county-wide in January following a one-year limited test run. A total of 3,815 defendants used the service during the four-month period, opting to conduct their business without going to court. That represented a whopping 201 percent

SEE, TRAFFIC, PAGE 3



### MOVING TICKETS ISSUED

	2003	2004	Increase	2003	2004	Increase
January	9,744	10,551	8%	20,108	24,373	21%
February	9,338	14,927	60%	20,175	32,568	61%
March	12,335	18,351	49%	25,481	38,269	50%
April	12,385	17,089	38%	25,610	36,209	41%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>43,802</b>	<b>60,918</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>91,374</b>	<b>131,419</b>	<b>43%</b>

### VIOLATIONS CITED

### MAIL-IN TICKETS

	2003	2004	Increase
January	186	385	106%
February	217	747	244%
March	372	1,265	240%
April	491	1,418	189%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,266</b>	<b>3,815</b>	<b>201%</b>

### PARKING TICKETS ISSUED

	2003	2004	Increase
January	5,403	6,938	28%
February	5,183	8,190	58%
March	6,176	9,508	54%
April	6,806	7,420	9%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>23,568</b>	<b>32,056</b>	<b>37%</b>



## CHEERS...



TROTTER

After one year of courtship, **Sandra Trotter** and beau **Rob Lee** will celebrate their anniversary by tying the knot on May 30. The big event will take place in the Cayman Islands where they will honeymoon before jetting back--he to Atlanta where he is a systems engineer and she to her job as secretary to Davidson County Probate Master **Bob Bradshaw**. But their separation will be short lived. On Oct. 1, the new Mrs. Lee will join her husband in Atlanta, a departure that will mark her second anniversary in the probate clerk's office.

**Frank Halliburton**, security office coordinator for the General Sessions Courts, ended his public service career on May 13 by accepting best wishes at a retirement luncheon at the Ben West Building. He joined the court security team in 1992 after serving more than nine years with the sheriff's department. He was named security office coordinator in 1998. He was a 1959 graduate of Father Ryan High School where he excelled in track and field, setting state records in the decathlon and high jump events. He is the father of two children, **Frank Halliburton Jr.** and **Sarah Harris**, and six grandchildren.



HALLIBURTON

**Steve Hackney**, formerly of Metro's Social Services and General Services departments, has joined Justice Information Systems as a business analyst for the courts. In his new post, Hackney will address the needs of the courts as they relate to the computer networking system. Most recently, Hackney oversaw the Human Resources Department's portion of Metro's new shared business office.

**Tom Brown** has returned to work in our records preservation department after undergoing by-pass surgery on his leg...**Judy Meadows**, a deputy clerk in our General Sessions Civil Division office, is recovering from shoulder surgery and is expected to return to work soon...**James S. Dill**, father-in-law of deputy General Sessions Civil Division clerk **Denise Dill** is doing well after surgery last month to correct a detached retina...And **Randal Eden**, husband of First Circuit Court secretary **Bobbie Eden**, is improving after being hospitalized with heart problems.

## ...TEARS

**ELIZABETH LANCASTER, 95**, passed away on April 30. She was the grandmother of Warren Wolfe, husband of General Sessions Civil Division deputy clerk Kim Wolfe.

In reporting the March 28 death of **Nina Elizabeth Norman**, mother of Third Circuit Court Judge Barbara Haynes and former Juvenile Court Clerk Kenny Norman, we inadvertently omitted the name of another son, longtime Metro employee J. D. Norman, as a survivor. We are pleased to correct the oversight.

## JUNE BIRTHDAYS

### Circuit Court Clerk

- 2 Dan Vincent
- 8 Jill Oliverius
- 16 David Callahan
- 17 Debi Butzler
- Mary Stephens
- 24 Ronnell Griffin

### Probate Clerk

None

### Traffic Violations

- 6 Ron Sarver
- 8 Stacey Plummer
- 26 Daniel Pigue
- 27 Joanie Young
- 29 Teresa Johnson

### General Sessions

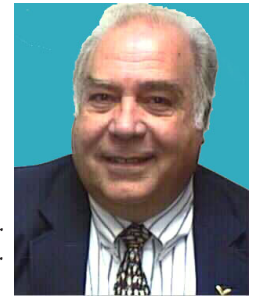
- 3 Sandra Perryman
- 14 Kim Clary



**'Key' Retirement**  
Mayor Bill Purcell praises the 30-year work record of **Barbara Eddings** (seated) during a retirement reception in her honor last month. The mayor would later present her with a key to the city. Eddings began her public service career with the circuit court clerk's office in 1973. For the past several years she served as secretary/calendar clerk in Second Circuit Court. She is one of several court personnel electing to take service pensions this year.

## Spotlight

**Opie Sory**  
Court Officer  
Division III, General Sessions



*To look at Opie Sory, you would never guess that he once sold beauty and barber supplies.*

*He really did.*

*But that was a career akin to a singer waiting tables while trying to make it in the music business. He needed the \$50 weekly salary to pay the bills and keep food on the table for his new bride Judy and himself until something better came along.*

*It did. In 1964 at the age of 23, Sory landed a job with the police department at roughly twice his old salary. He worked on patrol for the next nine years before transferring to the traffic warrant division, which was under the General Sessions Court at the time.*

*For the next three years he would serve as personal warrant officer to then General Sessions Judge Hamilton Gayden. When Gayden won election to a circuit judgeship in 1976, about the same time that the supreme court reclassified traffic offenses as civil rather than criminal and transferred administrative responsibilities to the circuit court clerk, Sory would work briefly for the late George L. Rooker. That same year he accepted a court officer's position for Sessions Judge John T. Boone, who would retire from the bench in 1982 and later pass away at his home in Florida.*

*William Faimon replaced Boone on the court and retained Sory as one of his two court officers. That was 22 years ago. Other court officers have come and gone but Sory has remained constant and loyal.*

*"If Judge Faimon stays to finish out his present term in 2006, I will stay with him," said Sory, disregarding the dangling early retirement buyout carrot that enticed 441 other Metro employees.*

*His loyalty was rewarded on March 15 when he was presented a 40-year service pin during a meeting of General Sessions judges. To him, the highlight of the ceremony was being told by Judge Faimon that "you have been a good court officer."*

*Four decades of government service is impressive, but it still falls short of the 43 years he has been married to Judy, a secretary at St. Thomas Hospital who shares two grown children--Juanita (Clay) Boone and Bobby Sory, a warrant officer for the sheriff's department. There are two grandchildren at the moment, but that number will increase in November.*

## APRIL JURY TRIALS

### APPEALS

#### GENERAL SESSIONS

#### Week of April 19

#### CIRCUIT COURT

CASE	TYPE	COURT	PRAYER	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT
99C-1395	AUTO ACCIDENT	1ST		\$46,717	
02C-1606	PERSONAL INJURY	2ND		\$750,000	

#### Week of April 26

CASE	TYPE	COURT	PRAYER	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
03C-3014	GSA/AUTO ACCIDENT	5TH		DEFENDANT		P-\$3,500	DEFENDANT

## NON-JURY TRIAL RESULTS

#### GENERAL SESSIONS

#### Week of April 5

#### CIRCUIT COURT

CASE	TYPE	COURT	VERDICT	PCT. FAULT	JUDGMENT	APPELLANT
01C-68	CONTRACT	2ND	UNDER ADVISEMENT			
03C-3300	GSA/WARRANT TO RECOVER	5TH	DEFENDANT		P-\$1,500	DEFENDANT
00C-3578	DAMAGES	3RD	\$10,000			
03C-749	METRO APPEAL/VICIOUS DOG	7TH	PLAINTIFF		PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT
01C-223	PERSONAL INJURY	5TH	DEFENDANT			
03C-1769	CERTIORARI/SUPERSEDEAS	1ST	D-\$9,114 + CAR TITLE		P-\$7,614	DEFENDANT
02C-2992	WORKER'S COMPENSATION	6TH	P-30% PPD			
03C-287	CONTRACT	6TH	PENDING			
03C-1821	WORKER'S COMPENSATION	2ND	\$57,120			
03C-3245	GSA/METRO CODES/ZONING	1ST	PLAINTIFF		PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT
03C-2216	CONTRACT	6TH	\$17,265			
03C-1413	DAMAGES	3RD	\$22,995			
03C-3580	GSA/DETAINDER	5TH	\$5,500		P-\$1,444	DEFENDANT
03C-3422	GSA/CONTRACT	3RD	\$13,333		P-\$10,000	DEFENDANT

P	PLAINTIFF	GSA	GENERAL SESSIONS APPEAL	TTD	TEMPORARY TOTAL DISABILITY
D	DEFENDANT	PPD	PERMANENT PARTIAL DISABILITY	ST	SOFT TISSUE

## Traffic Crackdown

(From Page 1)

increase over the pilot run a year earlier. The three-step mail-in ticket option allows violators to either enroll in traffic classes, plead guilty and send in their fines or payment and proof of compliance with non-moving offenses. It is hoped that eventually the mail-in program will dramatically reduce court appearance dockets. The program also is designed to reduce court appearance time for officers, allowing them to spend more time in the field.

Although not coming under the umbrella of total police responsibility, the issuance of parking tickets complemented the growth in moving violations by showing a 37 percent increase in tickets issued. With help from Metro Public Works meter patrol personnel, officers tagged 32,056 vehicles for illegal parking during the four-month period. Biggest months of improvement were February and March with a combined average increase of 56 percent.

The traffic crackdown is generating fuel for the Metro general fund. The Traffic Violations Bureau collected \$1,546,968 in fines during this year's four-month reporting period.

## Coming in June

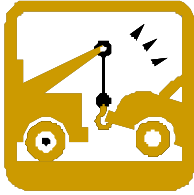
### Retirements & Engagements

- ◆ Typically a month for romance, our June issue will fill you in on who among our staffers is sporting new engagement rings. (No fair telling if you already know.)
- ◆ Pictures and thumbnail sketches on employees who will be retiring during the month.
- ◆ The second part of our story on increased traffic enforcement and the effects on the court system.

### REMAINING HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

MEMORIAL DAY .....	Monday, May 31
INDEPENDENCE DAY .....	Monday, July 5
LABOR DAY .....	Monday, Sept. 6
VETERANS DAY .....	Thursday, Nov. 11
THANKSGIVING .....	Thursday, Nov. 25
DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING .....	Friday, Nov. 26
CHRISTMAS EVE .....	Friday, Dec. 24
CHRISTMAS DAY .....	Monday, Dec. 27
NEW YEAR'S DAY .....	Friday, Dec. 31

## AUTO ACCIDENTS



2004 CASE ANALYSES	
PLAINTIFFS	13
DEFENDANTS	2
RATIO: PLAINTIFFS --6-1	

MONTH-BY-MONTH						
	TOTALS	JURY	NON-JURY	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	NONE
JANUARY	7	4	3	7	0	0
FEBRUARY	6	4	2	4	0	2
MARCH	3	3	0	1	1	1
APRIL	2	2	0	1	1	0

JURY AWARDS			
MONTH	\$TOTALS	DOLLAR RANGE	\$MEAN
JANUARY	57,050	1,296-52,500	3,254
FEBRUARY	76,410	1,266-60,000	15,144
MARCH	243,589	0-243,589	N/A
APRIL	46,717	N/A	N/A

NON-JURY AWARDS			
MONTH	\$TOTALS	DOLLAR RANGE	\$MEAN
JANUARY	60,124	6,664-35,000	18,460
FEBRUARY	6,500	N/A	N/A
MARCH	N/A	N/A	N/A
APRIL	N/A	N/A	N/A

SOFT TISSUE CASES			
MONTH	\$TOTALS	DOLLAR RANGE	\$MEAN
JANUARY	53,500	1,000-52,500	N/A
FEBRUARY	61,266	1,266-60,000	N/A
MARCH	243,589	0-243,589	N/A
APRIL	N/A	N/A	N/A

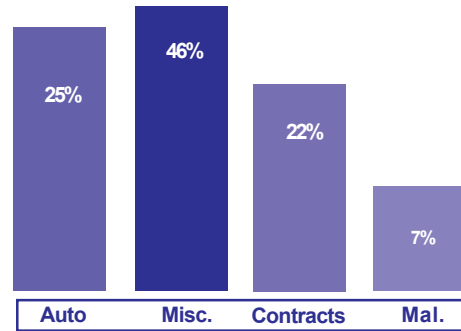
GENERAL SESSIONS AUTO CASE APPEALS				
MONTH	\$TOTALS	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	NONE
JANUARY	28,378	3	0	0
FEBRUARY	0	0	0	0
MARCH	0	0	0	0
APRIL	N/A	0	1	0

CONTRACTS				
YTD	PLAINTIFFS	DEFENDANTS	NO VERDICT	
16	11	3	2	
April Awards--\$30,598. Year to Date--\$137,943				

MISCELLANEOUS				
YTD	PLAINTIFFS	DEFENDANTS	NO VERDICT	
34	28	3	3	

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE				
YTD	PLAINTIFFS	DEFENDANTS	NO VERDICT	
5	1	4	0	

## CIVIL TRIALS BY CLASS



## DATA BANK

Statistics compiled for the month of April

CASE INFORMATION	
<b>Circuit Court</b>	
NEW CIVIL CASES FILED .....	258
JURY .....	114
NON-JURY .....	144
CIVIL CASES CONCLUDED .....	295
JURY .....	163
NON-JURY .....	132
NEW DIVORCE CASES FILED .....	234
DIVORCE CASES CONCLUDED .....	197
<b>General Sessions Civil</b>	
NEW CASES FILED .....	3,920
EXECUTIONS ISSUED .....	3,072
GARNISHMENT PAYMENTS .....	3,547
JUDGMENTS COLLECTED .....	\$624,105
ORDER OF PROTECTION PETITIONS .....	192
<b>Probate Court</b>	
NEW CASES FILED .....	180
CASES CLOSED .....	156
<b>Traffic Violations</b>	
MOVING CITATIONS .....	36,209
PARKING VIOLATIONS .....	7,420
TOTAL FINES COLLECTED .....	\$411,107
NULLIFICATIONS .....	3,922
NULLIFICATION FEES COLLECTED .....	\$47,064

## Rooker Report

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Established by George L. Rooker (1929-1993)  
 (Circuit Court Clerk, 1968-1993)

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