

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

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ARPOC 2003 Conference Chairman

MANNERS!

Last year I attended a Christmas party and observed a female, approximately 24 years old, “burp” loudly, with no apparent concern for the individuals around her. She seemed above it all, and after about 3 outbursts was cautioned by the person next to her. She advised the person next to her that they were lucky that she was not releasing this abundance of air in another fashion!

It then occurred to me that no one had ever taught this young lady “manners”! She had never been told about inappropriate behavior, and probably not instructed in what is correct or incorrect behavior.

About 3 weeks later I learned that this individual had some misdemeanor legal problems. This news did not surprise me because it was just an extension of her behavior, attitude, course of life, and lack of “manners”.

Merriam-Websters collegiate dictionary defines “Manners” as follows: The word Manner comes from the Middle English *manere*, from Old French *maniere* – meaning a way of acting. It is formally defined as: ‘Social conduct or rules of conduct as shown in the prevalent customs.’

In thinking about this incident, that during my 30 years of law enforcement, I had done nothing but teach people Manners. The law enforcement officer (person in charge of Manners instruction) is on the front line for people who have bad manners. People who did not know the difference between right and wrong. People who found it easier to steal instead of work. People who used drugs to avoid reality. People who found it a lot easier to obtain money with a gun, or by selling drugs on the corner- to avoid working at a job. And what are the laws that we are enforcing- other than a list of rules or manners?

Just think how much easier our job would be if parents took the time to educate their children in what is correct and incorrect behavior. If parents took an active part in forming the manners section of their children. In reality the children are raised by day care centers, babysitters, or live in care takers. In most cases they could care less about manners, and would just like to get through 8 hours with the children.

When you make your arrests I would ask that you realize you are dealing with a manner deficient individual. For the young deficient, take a little extra time and perform some manners training. You can add this to your parental duty, and you might change the course of some of your customers. For the older ones I doubt that anything you do would help.

In any case- if you arrest anyone who “burps” loudly with little concern for you- keep in mind they are the final product of years of improper manners training!