

**Intelligencer Journal/Lancaster New Era – August 25, 2011**

## **Unnerving experience for an innocent man**

TO THE EDITORS:

Recently, there was a massive manhunt in the Mount Joy/Marietta/Columbia area for a man wanted for aggravated assault and burglary. My husband came to find out first-hand about this incident in a very disturbing way.

He was on his way into Mount Joy to a local bank, traveling on Route 772 in his silver pickup truck, when he was pulled over by a police cruiser.

He had no idea why he was being pulled over, and found it very odd that the police officer pulled over and stayed about three car lengths behind him.

After a few minutes, the police cruiser pulled back into the lane of traffic and continued past my husband, so he thought there must be a more important call and continued on his way into town.

A little further down the road, he saw this same police cruiser do a U-turn and passed my husband heading back toward Marietta, then did another U-turn behind my husband and continued to follow him.

Once he reached the red light at Main and Barbara streets, he was then surrounded by five to six police cruisers. All of the officers had their guns pulled and instructed my husband to put his hands in the air.

One of the police officers then approached my husband's pickup truck and yelled at him to unlock his door. Scared to death, not knowing what was going on, my husband did as instructed.

The police officer then proceeded to open the driver's door and grab my husband by his arm. At this point, another police officer on the scene yelled, "We got the wrong guy. The truck we want is darker."

The officer who had ahold of my husband more or less pushed him back in the pickup truck and said, "You are not the guy we want," and they all went on their merry way.

At this point, my husband was shaken and still had no idea what was going on.

We discovered a short time later that there was a manhunt and my husband was mistaken for the fugitive.

My husband spoke to Mount Joy Police Chief Jack O'Connell about the incident. He was only told that the officers were "doing as instructed."

How can the police have mistaken an innocent person and treated him the way they did? You would think that, when he was pulled over the first time, the officer would have run his license plate and known that the vehicle was not reported as stolen, and how could anyone that is not colorblind mistake a silver pickup for a darker pickup?

But most importantly, was it truly necessary to treat an innocent man as guilty and have five or six officers with their adrenaline running high to pull and point their guns ... no explanation given?

Tracey Shifflett - *East Donegal Township*