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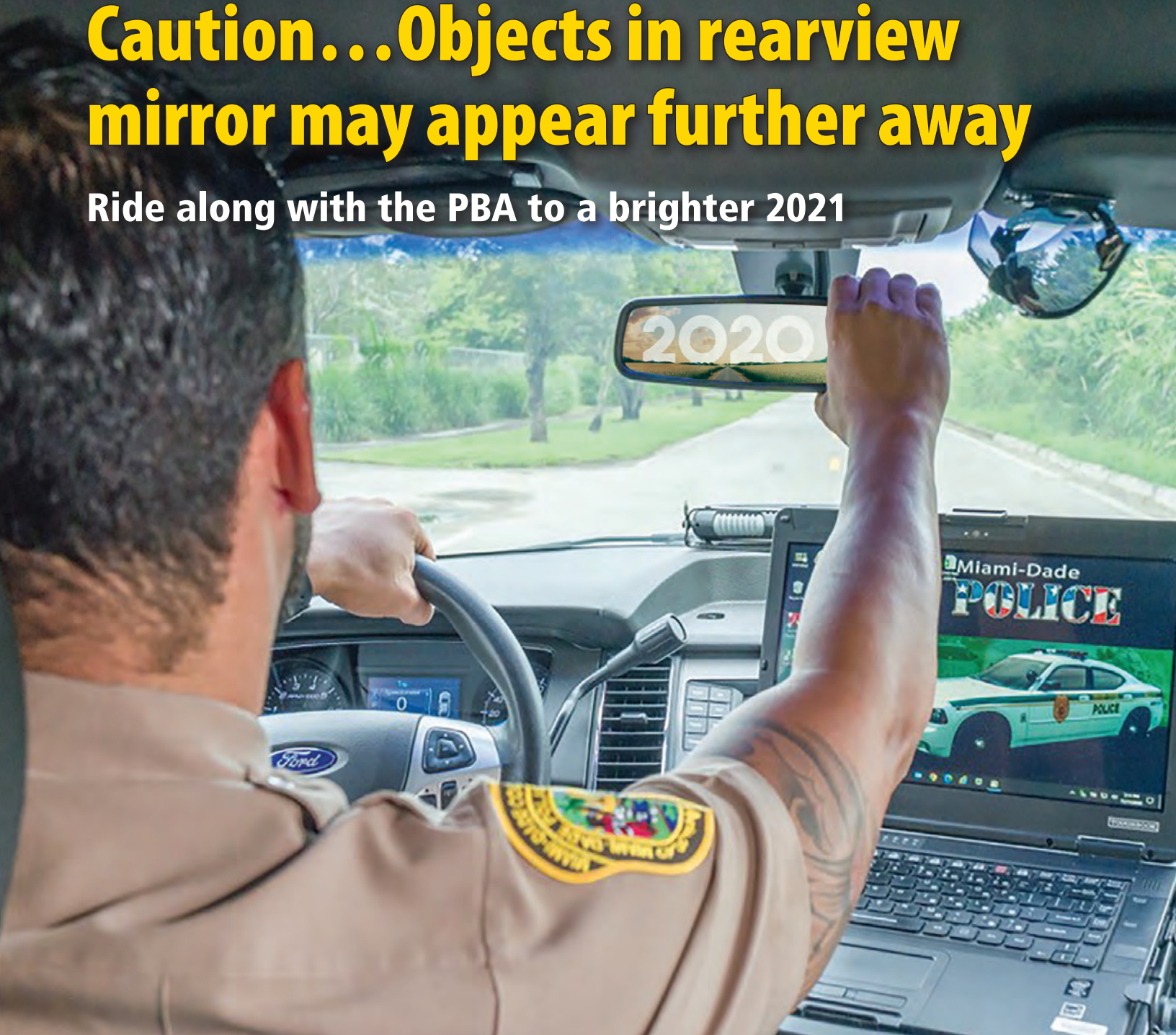
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COVER STORY



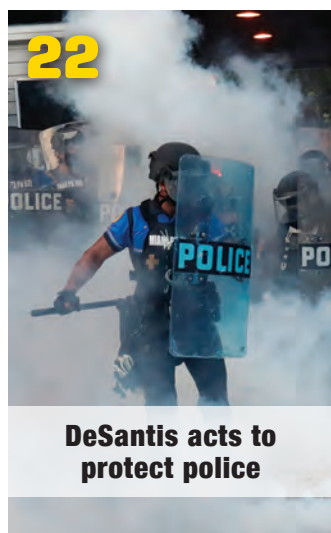
Sunny Days Ahead

A year that has left law enforcement officers vilified, depressed and panicked about the future of the profession culminates with an overwhelming need to look forward to brighter days ahead. South Florida PBA members must endure the cumulative stressors related to COVID-19, civil unrest and election fatigue and stay strong. Psychological professionals offer coping strategies to maintain your mental health, put 2020 in the rearview and set sights on a better 2021.

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INSIDE STORIES



DeSantis acts to protect police



Celebrating a career of defending law enforcement



Our Heron: Remembering a fallen brother



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A hopeful outlook for 2021



**STEADMAN
STAHL**

Brighter days are unequivocally ahead of us. Evidence that we are on the road to resurgence and will leave all the darkness in the rearview has turned up even more than we hoped.

I think we started to see it even toward the end of the election process, when a lot more people offered support for law enforcement. We did see a community stand up and galvanize around public safety. Although some of the media didn't want to tell that story, it's refreshing. And it gives our members hope that the good days are ahead of us.

When looking ahead, I keep going back to what happened when our women and men came back from Vietnam. A segment of this country spit on them and degraded them. History shows that they were wrong. People who have attempted to make law enforcement the enemy these past several months will look back at themselves with the same shame.

And in looking ahead with optimism, I again look back to 1992, when Hurricane Andrew devastated our communities and devastated our members. It looked like there was no hope. But we got through it and the other hurricanes that have come after it. When it seems like there is no hope, we are the best at working through it.

Despite that segment of agitators who tried to paint all law enforcement personnel as the enemy, I have hope that there is light at the end of this tunnel. We went into an electoral cycle like I've never seen before, and what it showed front and center was that there should be no defunding of public safety.

Still, what I believe is that coming out of this election, we all need to come together as one to move forward. And, like always, law enforcement will lead the way.

I also spoke to new Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava the day after the election. She wanted one of her first meetings as mayor to be with us, so we did that shortly after the election. We had a positive, constructive conversation on keeping public safety a top priority.

And now that the election is over, all elected officials will once again realize that when something goes wrong, you come to the police to fix it.

When a person who had a mental health problem went into a school in Broward and started killing everybody, we didn't see politicians dealing with the mental healthcare or the causes of mental illness. They put a police officer in every single school in Florida. That was their solution. When we had an election debacle here in Florida a few years back, they put the police department in charge of fixing it. That's not anything you learn in the academy.

When local governments are fighting themselves, the first one they turn to is law enforcement. And some of them have tried to villainize us. We just wish anybody who is going to vote on something that has an effect on law enforcement spend one shift in a police car, in a jail or working 911 dispatch. Spend one shift. If you're going to affect somebody's life, you should know what you're going to take away. They should be reminded that when you talk about defunding, people who have the least will be affected the most.

But I think that's what we have in Florida with the election. Law and order was a theme. And with Governor DeSantis initiating the "Combating Violence, Disorder and Looting and Law Enforcement Protection Act," that will provide much-needed resources and protection to the police throughout that state, we can look forward to the upcoming Florida legislative session as focusing on protecting the rights of our members.

So as we head into 2021, let's stay positive. Let's focus. And don't forget the mission that we signed up for. As we go into 2021, know that your PBA is standing here with you, shoulder to shoulder and patch to patch. And whatever adversity we face, we will face it together.

Finally, allow me to add some words of praise for our good friend Noel Heron, who we lost to COVID-19 in October. He was a great human being, and when the PBA faced some tough times, Noel was a guiding voice of reason. He was one of our longest-standing board members. Most people, when they retire, they move on. There's probably a few who have actually stayed after they retired to make a difference. He was one of those guys. He continued working for the betterment of the profession. We will miss you, Noel.

Steadman Stahl, President
steadman@sflpba.org



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Success for PBA-endorsed candidates



JOHN A. JENKINS
EXECUTIVE
VICE
PRESIDENT

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving holiday with family and friends as much as possible. I am glad that December is now upon us and we will soon be done with 2020.

This year was challenging for all of us, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, curfews, social distancing, protesting, homeschooling, lack of our favorite sports and pastimes and of course, the election.

Whether your candidate won or lost, you have to be very proud of the record numbers of voter turnout in South Florida and the country, and I want to say thank you for making your vote

count.

Candidate endorsements are something we at the South Florida PBA take seriously. Election outcomes affect our members and their families' quality of life. Regardless of party affiliation, the PBA strives to select the best candidate that we feel will advocate for the needs of our members and the safety of the communities first.

In the general election on Nov. 3, we saw great success with PBA-endorsed candidates who won their races and want to say congratulations to the following:

- Keon Hardemon, Miami-Dade County Commission, District 3
- Eileen Higgins, Miami-Dade County Commission, District 5
- Raquel Regalado, Miami-Dade County Commission, District 7
- Kionne McGhee, Miami-Dade County Commission, District 9
- Ana Maria Rodriguez, State Senator, District 39
- Tom Fabricio, State Representative, District 103
- David Borrero, State Representative, District 105
- Alex Rizo, State Representative, District 110
- Bryan Avila, State Representative, District 111
- Nicolas Xavier Duran, State Representative, District 112
- Demi Busatta Cabrera, State Representative, District 114
- Vance Aloupis, State Representative, District 115
- Daniel A. Perez, State Representative, District 116
- Anthony Rodriguez, State Representative, District 118
- Juan Fernandez-Barquin, State Representative, District 119
- James "Jim" Mooney, State Representative, District 120
- Rodney Harris, Mayor, City of Miami Gardens
- Shannan Ighodaro, City of Miami Gardens Council
- Juan Carlos "JC" Bermudez, Mayor, City of Doral
- Claudia Mariaca, City of Doral Council
- Oscar Puig, City of Doral Council
- Dr. Linda Marks, City of Aventura Commissioner
- Roberto Martell, Mayor, Town of Medley
- Ivan Pacheco, Medley Town Council
- Lizelh Ayala, Medley Town Council
- Anna Hochkammer, Village of Pinecrest Council
- Larisa Svechin, Sunny Isles Beach Commission
- Dana Goldman, Sunny Isles Beach Commission
- Arturo "Art" Gonzalez, Village of Biscayne Park Commission
- Dennis Ward, Monroe County State Attorney
- Craig Cates, Monroe County Commission
- Michael Forster, Monroe County Commission

I want to thank all the PBA members and their families and friends who took time from their busy schedules and volunteered during this election cycle. There are too many to list, but you know who you are. You are appreciated, and I humbly thank you.

Again, congratulations to all the candidates who won their races, and now the real work begins to see who really does have law enforcement and our members' best interests at heart. And to all the candidates, endorsed or not, the South Florida PBA looks forward to dialoging and working with you. Remember, we will be watching and will make our voices heard again in the next election.

I want to wish everyone a happy holiday. Let's put 2020 behind us, pray for our future and start 2021 off right.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, developing issues or just need to vent, please do not hesitate to contact me at 305-593-0044 or via email at jenkins@sflpba.org.

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Celebrating 2020's high points



DAVID
GREENWELL
VICE
PRESIDENT

This has been a very busy year for the law enforcement community, and I would like to thank all of our members who continued to do their jobs, regardless of all of the challenges. We started off with the Super Bowl, which was a huge success, thanks to everyone's hard work. Then we had to deal with the deadly worldwide pandemic of COVID-19. This affected us at work and at home, as some of us got sick and even spread it to our families.

We also had to deal with the civil unrest that followed the murder of George Floyd, when our members were called upon again to protect this community. Personally, I think our men and women did a great job de-escalating and stopping the criminal behavior that was occurring and made our department proud.

Most recently, our officers were there to assist during the most contentious presidential election in history. We had to post officers at the various voting locations, where fights had to be broken up, due to the rising animosity from people of opposing sides.



Captain Sergio Alvarez, Top Gun Officer Bryan Rodriguez, PBA Vice President David Greenwell and Major Arnold Palmer.

Regardless of the challenges we experienced this year, there were some high points to celebrate. A truly great event that gave

our members a chance to step away from the high stress demands of their jobs was the first Annual Hoot Shoot, which the PBA was very proud to sponsor. Not only was it a great event to support the fight against breast cancer, it was a great morale booster for our officers who have been under attack this year. A huge thank you to all the organizers from the Homeland Security Bureau, including Major Arnold Palmer, Lieutenant Jill Sanchez, and Officer Kathy Suarez, just to mention a few, as well as the Training Bureau and all the officers who participated and helped make it such a success. Please make sure to mark your calendars for next October, because this event will be even bigger and better.



The Motor Unit did a record number of escorts during this very busy political season.



Doral officers.



Underwater Recovery Unit.

Another high point is that my job gives me the opportunity to go around and talk face-to-face with many of the great men and women who work to make our community a safer place to live. Please see the attached pictures of these awesome members.

Now, as the holidays are upon us, and we are about to say goodbye to 2020, thank God, I wish everyone a very happy, healthy and safe holiday season, as well as a very happy New Year!

As always, stay safe, wait for your backup, and know that the PBA is always here for you. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 305-593-0044 or greenwell@sflpba.org.

New growth for Miami-Dade officers



**CAPTAIN
NIZAM "ISH"
ISHMAEL
TREASURER**

First, I would like to thank Miami-Dade Police Director Freddy Ramirez for allowing officers to grow facial hair. You must evolve as an organization to serve this melting pot that we call Miami. Having worked in the Personnel Management Bureau as the executive officer, I understand how difficult it is to recruit new officers.

Automatically eliminating possible applicants because they want to eventually grow facial hair does not make sense, especially as society

is growing with changes in style and fashion. The traditional view that clean-shaven police officers looked more professional and trustworthy to the public became harder to square with the fact that many of our community put their lives and well-being in the hands of doctors, dentists, lawyers and even judges with facial hair.

I have heard some grumbling from "old-school" members of our Department about the change in policy, but it is the right thing to do. I have already seen a few of the officers pushing and



exceeding the limits of the new policy. All I can say to them is, do not mess this up for everyone. We have some progressive thinkers at MDPD that made this happen, and there is no need to give anyone a reason to rescind the new facial hair policy.

Also, to the command staff members who have grown facial hair: you all look great. Keep up with the progressive thinking for all of us, as we can continue to find ways to improve morale. As I have always said, if a woman does not have to shave her legs every day to come to work, then males should not have to shave their faces.

I wanted to wish you all a wonderful Thanksgiving and to those of various faiths, happy Hanukkah/Chag Sameach, happy Kwanzaa/Habari gani and merry Christmas. Be safe out there, and do not put on too much weight during this time of the year.

Please feel free to contact me at ish@sflpba.org or at 305-593-0044.

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and the

South Florida PBA
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Toys will be collected until Friday, December 18, 2020

On behalf of the kids who may not otherwise get a gift without your generosity, **THANK YOU!**



A strong team outweighs anything you can do alone



LIEUTENANT
JERMAINE
LAWSON

This year has been a very stressful and tumultuous year for our members. At the onset of the pandemic, we could not have anticipated that it would become the number-one killer among law enforcement, with the majority being correction officers.

According to data compiled by the Officer Down Memorial Page and the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, COVID-19 has killed more law enforcement officers this year than all other causes combined. As the virus began to spread throughout the community, fear and anxiety of the virus and what could happen created panic among our members.

Throughout the pandemic, our department encountered many challenges while attempting to ensure the safety of staff and inmates. Every officer, from Monroe to Miami-Dade County, deserves full credit for stepping up to the challenge when called upon and for their high level of industry in keeping the inmates and our communities safe.

While nothing can completely ameliorate the profound impact COVID-19 has had on our department and community, the effects of the pandemic do present our policy makers and upper management with a unique opportunity to re-envision the future of their operations. I am hoping that the new year will not be anything like this one.

Despite the hardships, all the hard work has not gone unnoticed. While in Monroe County visiting members earlier this month, I had the opportunity to talk with some of the residents to get their views on the department's response to managing the pandemic. To my surprise, they all had good things to say about the contributions made by the department to keep their community safe. They credited this to two things:

1. The department's effort to place greater emphasis on collaborations and visibility in the community.
2. The department's willingness to establish and maintain a strong relationship of mutual trust between the citizens of the community to maintain public safety.

This is a testament to the continued efforts made by the department and each member to find opportunities to interact with community members in a non-law enforcement context to reduce bias on the part of the community members.

Both departments (Monroe County and MDCR) deserve full credit for educating our members on personal safety precautions, such as procedures for handwashing, sanitizing surfaces and work equipment, identifying symptoms of COVID-19 and for the testing of members. Both departments were in a COVID-19 affected stage and gradually progressed into a non-affected stage, due to the implementation of action plans that were focused on stringent measures. Also, both departments made several adjustments (in concert with the CDC) to protect our members from the virus while assuring the public safety needs of the community.

This COVID-19 pandemic serves as a reminder that the safety of the community and members is interrelated. Cities across the country must take immediate steps to ensure that everyone responsible for public safety, law enforcement and the community is protected from this virus and future pandemics. I also want to stress to our members the need to embrace the idea that a strong team can outdo anything you could do alone. Across law enforcement settings, teamwork was critical in ensuring the quality and safety of our department and the community. Working together was the main component that allowed us to get through this pandemic unscathed. Please remember to stay positive, be careful and have a wonderful and safe holiday.



From left, Lieutenant R. Shaw, Employee of the Month recipients Officers E. Sainvil and S. Andre, Lieutenant S. Menard, Employee of the Month recipient Officer C. Jacob, Facility Supervisor Captain A. Yeber.

New members

To all the new members who have joined our department, I have one simple tip to offer. If you want to survive in this environment, you must know your vulnerabilities, and you must listen to others who have walked the walk before you.

Changing of the guard

I would like to make special mention of a member who has contributed so much to Miami-Dade County and our department. When a member unselfishly sacrifices so much personal time to represent the department in such a commendable fashion, it is only befitting to recognize and highlight those contributions. Sergeant Dave Austin became a member of the MDCR Family on Sept. 26, 1993. He became a member of the honor guard and went on to represent the department for more than two decades, during which he served as the honor guard commander for 11 years. During that tenure, he represented the department (MDCR) at national, state and local events. According to Sergeant Austin, even though he considered his position with the honor guard as a privilege, he took great pride in representing the director and the department, regardless of the prestige given to the event or the occasion. Sergeant Austin further explained that presenting the American flag or the officer's encased badge to a family member for their loved one's ultimate sacrifice was his proudest moment. In closing, Sergeant Austin admitted that even though the time has come for him to pass the torch, he will never forget the experience and considers all the memories very priceless.



MDCR Sergeant Dave Austin

As your union liaison, I would like to personally congratulate you on your retirement from the Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department. Though we are all deeply saddened to see you go, I am confident that you will find the same success and happiness in retirement that you experienced during your tenure here. I wish you the very best in your future endeavors. Retirement will surely offer you many new opportunities, which I know you will embrace wholeheartedly, just as you did here at MDCR.

Please feel free to contact me at lawson@sflpba.org or at 305-593-0044.

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The Heart & Lung Bill: vital to law enforcement



DANIEL
VAZQUEZ
STAFF
COUNSEL

On a typical on-call week, one of the most common questions received by the legal department is, “How can I get on the Heart Bill?”

Many of our members seeking legal advice often ask about the Heart & Lung Bill and how the bill, that became Florida law in 2003, can help them.

The Heart & Lung Bill aims to facilitate first responders’ (specifically police officers, correctional officers and firefighters, among others) access to medical benefits as a result of health complications related to the heart or lungs. The Heart & Lung Bill creates a presumption that the first responder suffered these complications as a result of serving in the scope of his or her duties. To understand the basics of the Heart & Lung Bill and what may prevent a member from “getting on the Heart Bill,” we need to take a brief look at how the statute and the courts have interpreted the legislature’s intent over time.

Chapter 112.18 of the Florida Statutes states in part:

Any condition or impairment of health of any Florida state, municipal, county, port authority, special tax district, or fire control district firefighter or any law enforcement officer, correctional officer, or correctional probation officer...caused by tuberculosis, heart disease, or hypertension resulting in total or partial disability or death shall be presumed to have been accidental and to have been suffered in the line of duty unless the contrary be shown by competent evidence. However, any such firefighter or law enforcement officer must have successfully passed a phys-



ical examination upon entering into any such service as a firefighter or law enforcement officer, which examination failed to reveal any evidence of any such condition...

As described above, this rule pertains to the vast majority of our members, including police and correctional officers. Accordingly, there is a presumption that health issues caused by tuberculosis, heart disease or hypertension that result in disability or death are presumed to have been suffered while on the job. Further, unless your employer can prove otherwise, there is a presumption that the “impairment of health” was suffered while in the line of duty. Because of the way the law is written, the claimant does not need to prove “occupational causation” between the illness and the disability. In other words, the statute facilitates the claimant’s case by not requiring that he or she show a direct link of contracting an illness resulting in a disability while in the line of duty.

Once the claimant establishes that he or she has suffered an illness resulting in partial disability because of tuberculosis, heart disease or hypertension while on the job, the burden of proof then shifts responsibility to the employer to disprove the claimant. The employer must show, through “competent evidence,” that the claimant’s case does not qualify under the Heart & Lung Bill. Florida courts have held that the employer must show that the disease-causing disability or death was caused by a specific, non-work-related event or exposure. Even if the employer rebuts the claimant’s presumption with competent evidence, the claim is not automatically disqualified. The evidence from both sides is then weighed to determine whose argument is successful, given the facts of the case.

Now that we have established what the Heart & Lung Bill is and how it may help, it is important to familiarize oneself with some issues that may prevent a claimant from benefiting. Of most importance, the claimant must have undergone and passed a physical ex-

amination upon beginning employment with his or her department. Florida courts have found that a physical examination prior to receiving the benefit of the presumption is a reasonable requirement in order to determine if any of the conditions covered by the statute existed prior to employment.

Even if the claimant passes his or her physical at the onset of employment, an employer will almost always challenge a worker's claim under the Heart & Lung Bill. Depending on the facts of the particular case, there are a plethora of defenses that could be launched by an employer, including alleging that the employee had a pre-existing condition.

The Heart & Lung Bill has many intricacies, only a few of which were touched upon in this brief article. As one can expect with virtually any legal issue, there is much gray area to uncover when it comes to the Heart & Lung Bill. Do not be discouraged if after reading this article, you believe you do not or would not qualify for one reason or another. There are many more issues deriving from the Heart & Lung Bill that can directly impact our members. Most important is for you, the member, to contact the PBA so we can refer you to the attorneys who specialize in this area of the law, to make sure that your rights are always protected. There is no cost to you, so it does not hurt to reach out. We also have periodic informational seminars regarding the Heart & Lung Bill, and we will hopefully be able to continue those once the pandemic eases.

As always, be safe.

2020 PENDING GRIEVANCES

This list represents the pending grievances filed at the various departments represented by the South Florida Police Benevolent Association as of Oct. 31, 2020. The South Florida PBA legal staff receives numerous other complaints that are resolved by other means.

DEPARTMENT/DISTRICT

ANIMAL SERVICES	1
CORRECTIONS	
<i>Association</i>	1
<i>TGK</i>	2
<i>MWDC</i>	1
<i>CBS</i>	1
<i>PTDC</i>	1
Total	6
HOMESTEAD	2
MDPD	
<i>Association</i>	1
Total	1
MIAMI GARDENS	5
MONROE COUNTY DETENTION	1
NORTH BAY VILLAGE	1
NORTH MIAMI	1
OPA LOCKA	3
SWEETWATER	2
TOTAL GRIEVANCES	23

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Words from our board members



DENNIS
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RPOC
PRESIDENT

Wow, I cannot believe we are almost to the end of this year. It has certainly been an incredibly stressful and trying year for all, and I for one am happy to see it end. Hopefully 2021 will be a much better year. I have changed the format of this article to include input from our board members, as I know that they each have important info to contribute.

Ed Spisak, Treasurer

Attention seniors (over 75), honorary and life members: Out of our 1,137 current members, 393 of you fall into those categories and are very much valued and respected by RPOC. Last year, 79 of you filled out and returned your yearly updates. We would appreciate it if many more of you would take the time to update your status and let us know how you are doing. This can be done by adding a note to the reverse side of your membership renewal form when you receive it in January. You are also invited to e-mail us at any time at rpcpba@bellsouth.net or visit our website (www.rpcpba.org) and use the "Contact Us" tab at the top right-hand side of our home page. It would be so meaningful if something special has occurred in your life and you would like to share it with your retired law enforcement brothers and sisters.

John Fraley, Vice President

As we go into year three of the Otis Chambers Scholarship Fund, we have seen an increase in participation by our membership through donations to the fund. Please reach out to your friends and colleagues within our organization with children and grandchildren who are of an age where they are planning to further their education. Our program was created to assist the membership in a worthwhile effort to help with expenses and further the education of our children and grandchildren. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank all of you that have generously donated to the program. I want to personally thank Kay Chambers for her continued support of the scholarship fund. Our program has been expanded to assist in scholarships in the vocational educational fields such as the police and fire academies. Please remember to support the Otis Chambers Scholarship fund when you renew your membership in the RPOC. Every little bit helps.

Jerry Rudoff, Sergeant-at-Arms/Website Administrator

Over the last couple of months, we have made some modifications, updates and corrections to our website and would encourage everyone to take a minute to check things out. From the website, you can join the RPOC, renew your membership, sign up to receive our eNews and other pertinent information, and update your personal contact information. A one-stop shop, you might say. Also, we try to post on

our Facebook page as often as new information about our membership or any law enforcement agency in Miami-Dade comes to our attention. That is also where we post event pictures, both past and present. When you visit your website, please feel free to try out the various nuances so that we then have many sets of eyes ensuring the information is correct and stays relevant. Lastly, we held another retired officers' open shoot on Nov. 16 at Miami-Dade Public Safety Training Institute per an email we received as follows: *"Hello Jerry. Yes, we are planning on having another qualification date (Nov 16th) because after October 1 the new FDLE cycle/year started (always starts on July 1, but because of COVID, it was pushed to October 1). We will be following the same CDC and Miami-Dade County guidelines, so please inform your retirees. Thank you, Sergio M. Alvarez, Captain."* The same guidelines and procedures followed in the September shoot will also apply in this one. If you have any questions, please contact the Training Institute directly. Please go to our website for the latest information on the November Retiree Shoot.

Reba Miller, Chaplain

Friends who have left us but remain in our hearts and minds:

Joel "Joe" Hodges, 67, Retired MDPD
John J. Picarello, Jr., 83, Retired MDPD
Noel A. Heron, 74, Retired MD Corrections
Fermin Reyes JR., 83, Retired MDPD Bureau Commander
Jerrold "Jerry" Rung, 84, retired MDPD

We would like to welcome the following new members: Bill Wallace, MDPD; John Remmen, MDPD; Luis Hernandez, MDPD; Spencer Rorster, Pinecrest PD; Ray Weeks, Miccosukee Tribal Police; Thomas Williams, MDPD; Thomas O'Keefe, MDPD; Phillip Henderson, N. Bay Village PD; James Watts, MDPD.

Finally, regarding next year's reunion, as of this date we are still holding it April 22 through 25, 2021. I spoke to the Marriott Lake Mary this week, and they assured me that they will be open and taking all the necessary precautions to ensure a safe and healthy reunion. Further information will be forthcoming.

On behalf of the board, we hope you all have a happy and healthy Thanksgiving!

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POAT NEWS AND EVENTS

How you can support the Police Officers Assistance Trust



The Holiday Gifts Program provides gifts to children of fallen officers and deployed military personnel. The current pandemic has hit everyone, including the Police Officer Assistance Trust (POAT). As of right now, this may prevent us from collecting in the malls.

During these challenging times, please remember that you are part of the POAT family. While we may come from different backgrounds and celebrate different holidays, we are brought together in support of a special mission: "Serving those who serve."

This year, there are 56 children in the program, representing 14 different agencies. If you would like to help, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to POAT this holiday season. Do this before it is too late to have your charitable donation count for this tax year.

Send your donation to:
Police Officer Assistance Trust
1030 NW 111 Ave., Suite 232
Miami, FL 33172

Or, when doing your holiday shopping online at Amazon, you can have a percentage of the purchase amount donated to POAT by shopping at www.smile.amazon.com and registering Police Officer Assistance Trust as your charity of choice. Then, continue to shop on www.smile.amazon.com.

Every little bit helps!



The Cops Ride for Kids Motorcycle Ride to benefit the POAT's Holiday Gifts for Surviving Children Saturday, December 12, 9 a.m.

The ride will begin at the Miami-Dade Police Department Headquarters Building, 9105 NW 25 St.

Registration is \$20 per bike.

Online registration will be available at www.poat.org.

Please contact Rudy Gonzalez at poatoffice@msn.com for details.

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Jan. 15-16, 2021

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Registration is \$350 (team t-shirts included.)
Deadline for team registration: Dec. 7.



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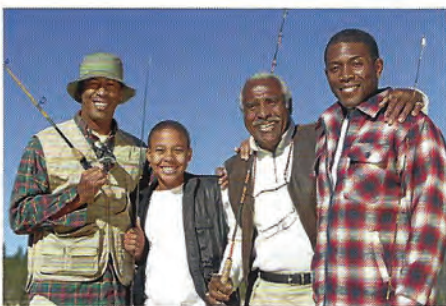


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2021 Vision

**A traumatic year of unprecedented stressors begs the question:
How do we navigate the road ahead to a brighter future?**



■ BY KAREN JENKINS

The civil unrest following the George Floyd incident, the harrowing destruction from COVID-19, the inexplicable threats of defunding the profession and an election cycle that left law enforcement officers wondering if they'd be in a forever-vilified career have become the shrapnel of a depressing 2020.

When assessing the carnage, Miami-Dade Police Department Psychological Services Bureau Major Melissa Barosela

confirmed — with intel from her 24 years of law enforcement service in Miami-Dade — that this year requires stronger support than ever.

“I think we’re really good about being there to respond on a 315 when an officer needs that emergency backup, and that should be no different when we see one of our coworkers who isn’t themselves or seems to be going through something,” Barosela expressed. “People with some pre-existing depression and these additional difficulties we’ve experienced might



actually feel an exacerbation of those symptoms that we normally would expect around this time of year.”

Amid the havoc, however, there are rays of light creeping through as officers look toward the new year. South Florida PBA President Steadman Stahl recently recounted seeing the Blue Angels flying over Homestead as part of a statewide run — a sign that while we were blinded by the tumult of 2020, 2021 brims with optimistic vision.

“I know when they flew over for 10 to 15 seconds, it gave me

great hope,” he recalled. “It hit the reset button for us. It said, ‘Hey, listen: Things are going to be OK.’”

The current year has been bleak, and it has evoked a greater need to raise awareness about keeping an eye on fellow brothers and sisters in blue. Numbers released in January 2020 by Blue H.E.L.P., an organization designed to reduce mental health stigma in law enforcement, showed that 228 law enforcement officers died by suicide in the U.S. in 2019, an in-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

crease from 172 in 2018 — and that increase came before the cumulative stressors that 2020 had to offer.

But the road to brighter days ahead is paved with anticipation. Plenty of tools are available to help officers cope with the holiday season blues that can arrive on top of all the stressors they've already endured this year.

So with 2020 in the rearview mirror (almost), sights should cast forward to 2021. It's time to look ahead and respond to officers' needs this season with the same intensity that is required in responding to a 315.

"I think there's a lot of uncertainty still with what 2021 will bring," Barosela noted. "But I think there's a lot of excitement in that moving into this new, greater sense of normal in 2021, it will actually show us we're more resilient individuals and make us a little stronger as individuals moving into 2021."

At first sight

Longtime police officer Jonathan Sullivan works to align the physical and mental well-being of frontline workers with empathy, care and understanding in his position with the Re-Institute, a division of Compassionate Care Recovery, Inc.

The retired law enforcement officer of 26 years from New Jersey used to shake uncontrollably when his stress levels would get too high on the job. He would give chase, either by foot pursuit or by car, and his cortisol would skyrocket.

The stressors of a law enforcement career are, as Sullivan asserts, the worst part of the job, and they have manifested to unprecedented levels during the course of this past year. Much of the heightened stress that officers have experienced

this past year comes from worrying about bringing COVID-19 home to family members or having frozen water bottles thrown at them when working the protest rallies that continue to take place.

"It's something we have to deal with throughout our whole career," he confirmed about the piling on of 2020 stressors. "You never forget. Whether it's your first day on the job or it's 30 years in and you're retired, you never forget your instincts. You never forget a victim. You never forget the face. You never forget the smells, the sights, the sounds, everything — that's just the average stressors."

It's easy to pinpoint incident after incident that lead to the cumulative stress officers typically endure: The uncertainty of every new day. COVID-19 devastating and destroying communities. Protests putting law enforcement lives on the line even more than normal. And, recently, tropical storms threatening home safety.

"[Officers are] dealing with families having to say goodbye to their loved ones as they're carried out of the house on a stretcher," he said. "And it could be a simple fall or a person with a difficulty to breathe, which now leads to a transference of stress. Now let's throw some social discord on top of it, let's sprinkle in a little hatred and a little defunding."

In 2019, Florida had the fourth highest rate of law enforcement suicide deaths in the U.S., behind New York, California and Texas, according to data from Blue H.E.L.P.

Data isn't readily available for the effects of 2020 yet. But Barosela, a licensed mental health counselor with a master's degree in counseling from Barry University, said the amount of law enforcement officers coming in for mental health services has been steadily growing in the past two years. In 2020, the number has risen exponentially.

As the piling on continues, officers are now, more than ever, in dire need of mental health professionals to help cope.

"We're actually in the process of hiring another clinician, because the numbers haven't stopped growing," relayed Barosela, who has been part of the Psychological Services Bureau since 2007. "Since COVID, every single month, with not one exception, we've had an increase in the volume of our employees coming in to utilize the services. So it's definitely been a very busy couple of years, with 2020 being particularly dizzy."

The resources available are especially important going into the holiday season, where law enforcement tends to see even higher levels of stress than normal. Stahl maintains that looking forward, there's a lot of hope for 2021.

"There are a lot of different programs," he confirmed about getting through the rest of 2020. "We have helped people get through their worst times. There's nothing we can't get through."

Focusing sight

Preventive maintenance for law enforcement officers' mental health is crucial — and even urgent — as the crescendo of 2020 quickly approaches.

"Stay connected — we can do it together," encouraged Christine Driscoll, president and program director at the Re-Institute. "We need to have people use the techniques that will assist them in being able to get through the holiday time with the least amount of damage to their relationships and their well-being."

Driscoll shared that it's easy to discount this past year with





tunnel vision, just trying to ignore chronic stress. But the coping mechanisms presented to officers with more urgency during the past few years can help get officers away from catastrophic events and move into a brighter 2021.

Diaphragmatic breathing, or fully engaging the stomach and abdominal muscles while breathing, is one of the most effective techniques to help lower cortisol levels, according to Driscoll.

When Sullivan worked undercover for the FBI, he studied how to control his breathing and manage his heart rate variability (HRV) to help calm himself down during stressful incidents.

“Breathing is everything, the pause, the breath, the control of the breath,” he noted about incorporating breathing strategies and mindfulness into the job. “Once I was able to harness that, I’d use it, literally, as a weapon — to protect myself and as a defense mechanism — so I wouldn’t be outed as an undercover, or I can control my emotions in a heated moment.”

In order to recognize the moments where diaphragmatic breathing is necessary, self-assessments can be used to diagnose chronic stressors. Driscoll mentioned that irritability, loss of a sense of humor, worry, forgetfulness, aches and pains, fatigue or nervousness should all signal a self-assessment. Once the stressors are pinpointed, listening to soothing music before stressful events, doing simple exercises and journaling can all be used to help focus the vision of being the most mentally resilient law enforcement officer possible.

When utilizing these coping strategies, an officer can get that call to a devastating situation, accelerate the car and drive with sirens, lights and all the overwhelming stimuli to avoid arriving to the scene in a heightened emotional state.

“It is not selfish to be taking care of yourself,” Driscoll declared. “The opposite of fight-or-flight is the relaxation mode. That is where your mindfulness can create a situation where it’s opposite to what the environment is.”

And once all the techniques are implemented, then hindsight will become 2020. All the accruing stressors can start to wash away with the beckoning of a new year.

Sight set ahead

“Really, Nicholas? Now? Why do you want to do this? Do you see what’s going on out there?” Barosela recalled asking her son, who just started his career as a law enforcement officer in August. “His answer was, ‘Mom, now more than ever,

we need people who want to do this for the right reason.’ And I had to reflect on that, and I’m like, ‘He’s right.’”

Barosela, who grew up with her father working as a law enforcement officer with the Miami-Dade Police Department, has witnessed the hardships officers face since she was a kid. But the massive uptick in stressors that Barosela has seen as a clinician during the past year actually gives her hope for 2021.

The Psychological Services Bureau responds to critical incidents throughout Miami-Dade County, from officer-involved shootings to child deaths and gruesome traffic crashes. This past year alone, her unit has responded to 90 incidents that have elicited particularly negative reactions from officers.

And she’s witnessed officers prevailing over their traumas before her eyes, even throughout 2020.

“On a positive note, I think that [this year] solidified us, where officers knew that at least we’re all going through these challenges together,” Barosela shared. “I think that all of these experiences have shown us just how resilient we are as individuals and as law enforcement officers. A lot of people have learned how to adapt better to change in this uncertainty.”

As the vision of new beginnings sharpens, there’s a hopeful image on the horizon. It’s one where officers feel empowered to ask for help, to listen to their brothers and sisters and to admit when the cumulative stress is just too much to bear.

Stahl suggests that brighter days can include more time spent with family, less time spent on the phone and keeping track of the importance of life events, even in times of crisis.

“That’s why, if there’s any message I can hammer home, don’t be afraid to ask for help,” Stahl shared. “If there was one ray of light at the end, we saw the good overcome the evil, good overcome the negative.”

With 2020 almost over, law enforcement officers are set to move into 2021 as sharper, more resilient and more mentally fit versions of themselves.

Barosela is confident that the love of the job and a desire to continue protecting and serving the community will be the prevailing takeaways of 2020.

“I think [this year] has just further strengthened that thin blue line,” she declared. “There’s unity and solidarity in that we’re all stuck in this together, but we can continue to do what we signed up for. It’s what we’re meant to do.”



A Welcome Act

Governor DeSantis creates the Law Enforcement Protection Act to give officers the necessary backing to properly stand up for public safety

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Flanked by the state's top legislative leaders and a detail of sheriffs, Governor Ron DeSantis readied to present the narrative that Florida law enforcement officers have desperately craved. The governor set his hands in that dual karate chop pose he strikes when he means business, then cited from his game-changing proposal for legislation to address the continuing threats to public safety.

Prohibition on violent or disorderly assemblies...third-degree felony for obstructing traffic during an unpermitted protest...RICO liability attaches to anyone who organizes or funds a violent or disorderly protests...six months mandatory minimum jail sentence for striking a law enforcement officer during a disorderly assembly...offense and/or sentence enhancement for throwing an object during a violent or disorderly assembly that strikes a law enforcement officer...no "defund the police" permitted.

Cheers reverberated through agencies across Florida when DeSantis included these words and phrases in the "Combatting Violence, Disorder and Looting and Law Enforcement Protection Act" he announced on Sept. 21 at the Polk County Sheriff's Office. Incoming Florida Senate President Wilton Simpson and House Speaker-Designate Chris Sprowls joined the governor to confirm the need and support for generating legislation to back law enforcement in the effort to fend off protest-empowered threats and challenges to the rule of law.

"Our right to peacefully assemble is one of our most cherished as Americans, but throughout the country we've seen that right being taken advantage of by professional agitators bent on sowing disorder and causing mayhem in our cities," DeSantis declared at this news conference. "The legislation announced today will not only combat rioting and looting, but also protect the men and women in law enforcement that wake up every day to keep us safe. I look forward to working with the Florida Legislature next session to sign this proposal into law."

South Florida PBA members know this side of DeSantis. They saw it in May of 2019 when – a few months after taking office – he keyed the union's annual gala with a speech that promised unconditional coverage of law enforcement officers' backs.

"Clearly, he's a man of his word, and this is a refreshing statement against all the negativity against police," South Florida PBA President Steadman Stahl praised. "We need to know that there is somebody out there looking out for us besides us. This will reinvigorate officers that people are listening and supporting us."

In the act

The governor is not fussing around with a situation that quickly bubbled up following the death of George Floyd. On May 31, DeSantis activated the Florida National Guard, deploying 700 soldiers to assist law enforcement agencies across the state and instructing the Florida Highway Patrol to mobilize 1,300 troopers to assist in policing actions.

Earlier that evening, there was a lengthy standoff between law enforcement and a smaller group of protesters near the Broward County Library. Windows were broken in stores and government buildings, and a piece of artwork valued at \$58,000 was destroyed.

And on June 3, the FBI announced it had arrested in Miami and elsewhere groups of Venezuelans, Haitians, Cubans and Hondurans who were being paid to cause violence at demonstrations. Those arrested admitted they had been hired by unidentified activists, who even provided funds for transportation to the demonstrations.

Consequently, the executive branch of state government realized the urgency to stand with law and order rather than stand with the mob, as some elected officials have the past several months. Alongside the governor, Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody explained how conceiving the Law Enforcement Protection Act resulted from ongoing attentiveness to Back the Blue, the administration's mantra that the state is only as strong as its commitment to the women and men who enforce the rule of law.

"We routinely examine our laws to ensure that we are making our communities safer, and that means doing everything in our power to give law enforcement officers the tools to do their job," General Moody reasoned about the impetus for the act.

Section I of the act (New Criminal Offenses to Combat Rioting, Looting and Violence) and Section II (Increased Penalties) echo the way the administration approaches public safety.

"Personally, I believe we are protecting law and order," Moody added. "Working so closely with law enforcement officers, I know they sign up to do these jobs because they love and care about their communities. And they want to ensure that those in leadership – not just statewide, but mayors and city councils – have the backs of those who are trying to do that in a professional, noble way."

Under Section II, the two planks underscore the administration's acute understanding of how dangerous protests turning violent can be for police officers. The first – Mandatory Minimum Jail Sentence – reads "Striking a law enforcement officer (including with a projectile) during a violent or disorderly assembly equals six months mandatory jail sentence. The second – Offense Enhancements – stiffens penalties for throwing an object at a law enforcement officer or assaulting an officer during a violent or disorderly assembly.

According to the attorney general, increased penalties spawned from feedback from law enforcement officers and leaders asking how to improve laws and mechanisms, not only to make communities safer, but also those who protect and serve.

"In my personal discussion, not just with law enforcement leaders but also the rank-and-file officers throughout the state, I am really heartened by their professionalism and passion to do right by their communities," Moody asserted. "They want to hold themselves accountable to the highest standards for the profession."

Evidence that the administration is listening can be found in Section III of the act, "Citizen and Taxpayer Protections Measures." The first of four measures assures, "No Defund the Police Permitted," and prohibits state grants or aid to any local government that slashes the budget for law enforcement services.

"Focusing on the common goal of all involved necessitates that if, in fact, we want to increase training; if, in fact, we want to recruit and retain higher-caliber law enforcement officers; and if, in fact, we want to ensure that experts are available to assist as needed, all of that calls for increased resources," General Moody confirmed. "If we're having an honest conversation about our goals, it cannot include a politically motivated defunding of our police forces."

Act of faith

General Moody has more good news to report. In her meetings with Simpson and Sprowls, they have confirmed being commit-

ted to ensuring police officers feel they have the support of their legislative leaders.

In the fourth and final point of Section III addressing "Bail," the act proposes no bail or bond until first appearance in court if charged with a crime related to participating in a violent or disorderly assembly and rebuttable presumption against bond or bail after first appearance.

So the act packs some strong language. But will it maintain its teeth as it progresses through the legislature during the 2021 session? Or will it be more bark than bite?

"When you have the governor and the two incoming legislative leaders holding a press conference to announce the proposal, it has some pretty strong legs," Florida PBA Executive Director Matt Puckett commented. "Speaker Sprowls and Senate President Simpson see what is happening. They are sending a message that you don't mess with law enforcement. You don't attack law enforcement. You don't ambush law enforcement."

Legislators – and law enforcement leaders for that matter – all agree that peaceful protesting is a necessary and welcome approach to voicing concerns. But when looking at protests, Puckett has heard that legislators see burning, looting and violent responses as a tough answer to solving the problems.

The Florida PBA has been having ongoing discussions about the elements of the act and has always wanted to see enhanced penalties for attacks on law enforcement. DeSantis has already forwarded a draft of the bill to the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice and the House Judiciary Committee.

"I think members should look at the top leadership in Florida and knows that it supports them and wants them to know they appreciate what they do," Puckett added. "We have seen this for years in a lot of different legislation, and I hope it's penetrating that the leadership of Florida support the officers in the state."

An act to follow

Section 1 – New Criminal Offenses to Combat Rioting, Looting and Violence – includes the following:

- Third-degree felony when seven or more persons are involved in an assembly and cause damage to property or to other persons.
- Third-degree felony to obstruct traffic during an unpermitted protest, demonstration or violent or disorderly assembly.
- Second-degree felony to destroy public property during a violent or disorderly assembly.
- RCIO liability attaches to anyone who organizes or funds a violent or disorderly assembly.

The act leading with recognition of these issues seems to present an understanding of just how bad it has been for law enforcement officers to enforce the rule of law the past few months.

"When it comes to protests, I don't think anybody – police officers included – does not support peaceful protests as being good for society," Stahl explained. "But when it comes to, people throwing bricks at cops and burning down buildings, there have to be some guidelines. These penalties are like speeding tickets that carry hefty fines. For officers, it gives us a little more protection and better rules of engagement."

The Law Enforcement Officers Protection Act might also help prevent a mass exodus from the profession. Ultimately, classifying targeting law enforcement officers on the same level as hate crimes might be more reliable protection.

But perhaps government will follow DeSantis's lead to do so or do more than some elected officials have been.

"There are some in government who want to blame the police, but they should look in the mirror and ask what they have done," Stahl proclaimed. "We are living in a democracy, and to fix this problem, we need more governors like Governor DeSantis, who wants to get out in front of it and let society know that he won't have it."

Douglas Hartman (left) and Michael Cornely have served PBA members for a combined 70 years.



The Power of Attorneys

The legal team of Hartman and Cornely celebrate a phenomenal career of representing PBA members

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Four Miami-Dade narcotics officers had come to the end of their trial, charged with planting drugs on a suspect they arrested. Closing arguments had been rendered. The verdict would probably come down the next day.

As they awaited the verdict, South Florida PBA General Counsel Andrew Axelrad remembers one of the officers telling how it felt the night before. He was sitting in the doorway of his kids' room, watching them sleep and thinking that he might not see them again for a long time if convicted.

The verdict, though, was only going one way. The dynamic duo of attorneys Doug Hartman and Michael Cornely represented these four PBA members with the expertise, passion and vitality that has made them the best attorneys practicing criminal law in South Florida, all of Florida and perhaps even the country.

"That Doug and Michael were able to get that not-guilty verdict and let that guy go home, what does that mean?" Axelrad exclaimed. "It means everything."

It's one more from the illustrious case files of Hartman and Cornely, who have combined to give South Florida PBA members 70 years of unparalleled legal representation in criminal

matters, as well as some wills and estates and family law matters. Hartman and Cornely have been the Ben & Jerry of their profession, the Newman and Redford, the Bing Crosby and Bob Hope, the Batman and Robin. Except it would really be Batman and Batman.

Effective Dec. 31, Douglas C. Hartman and C. Michael Cornely will retire from criminal trial work, bringing down the curtain on a combo of legal stars who once left a formal New Year's Eve party in tuxedos to respond to an officer-involved shooting. They were schooling officers in the use of deadly force back when it was known as "shoot, don't shoot." They have saved numerous families, careers and even lives.

"I think we're both known for being law-enforcement oriented, and that's because police officers have a lot on the line," Hartman noted. "I think if you ask somebody, we're in the top of the realm of attorneys, and that's what the police deserve."

Livelihood, profession or even calling don't fully describe the way they do the job and why they have perennially been named "Florida's Top Attorneys" by the *Wall Street Journal* and "Top Lawyers" by the *Daily Business Review* as plaques filling their waiting room attest.

"I've been very proud of the work we have done for police officers. It's all on the line, and I feel for them," Cornely added. "That's

what gets me going in these cases. You are on edge throughout until you hopefully hear that 'not guilty.' Then it's like the gates of heaven have opened."

Hartman's presence with the PBA goes back to two of its founding fathers, Officer Charlie Maddox and attorney Eugene Spellman. Hartman spent five years working in the state's attorney's office, where he developed extensive relationships with cops working on cases that involved law enforcement. After five years there, he moved to the PBA when Spellman became a federal judge.

That was back in 1980, when he handled all the legal work but collective bargaining. Hartman will retire after 40 years as the person in and around the union who has been with the PBA the longest. If there was a Mount Rushmore for those who have contributed most to South Florida PBA members, there's a good chance Hartman would be on it.

The accolades for his work could come from many law enforcement leaders or labor leaders in the state. The sheriffs all recognize him as an expert. But it's the one who knows him best who explains what has made Hartman such a legend.

"Doug has kind of like the eternal calmness," Cornely extolled. "He is a great tactician. He is able to spot the main issue and go right to the bone as opposed to a lot of lawyers who will play around and ruin what they have tried to do."

Cornely began his legal career working for Richard Gerstein (the one who the Richard Gerstein Justice Building in Miami-Dade is named for). He was then hired by Dade County State's Attorney Janet Reno, where Cornely ascended to become one of her chief assistants. When Reno went to Washington to become President Clinton's attorney general, Cornely did have an opportunity to go with her. But he had already been with the PBA for more than 10 years.

His time with the state's attorney enabled Cornely to participate in a monthly task force that brought 20 to 30 agencies from Miami-Dade into a meeting to share common problems and talk about how to work better with the community. He has always brought a how-can-we-do-it-better approach to serving PBA members, and that's a legacy Hartman easily recognizes.

"Michael is a very smart guy, and he knows he is," Hartman reasoned. "He's a very good trial lawyer. He's not only schooled in the police area, but in law in general."

Having to leave birthday parties and Christmas celebrations to be on the scene for members has been a task of the trade for Hartman and Cornely. And a labor of love. Certainly, they love what they do, but it's really more than that.

Hartman considers why they have been doing it for so long and tells a story about a member who had been on for 30 years and never shot anybody. Until that one night.

"He was the most frightened person I've ever seen in my life," Hartman recalled. "And he was an ex-homicide detective."

So this is why. These are the members who have inspired them to work the grueling runs of 12-hour-plus days. They have always looked at it as more than a job because they know it's more than a job to the officers they serve and protect.

"A police officer makes a decision and hopefully it's the right one," Cornely explained. "It is second-guessed and pulled apart, dissected or whatever by everybody. So you're representing someone that the verdict is going to affect their life, their livelihood, their family and their future plans forever."

With such an approach, Hartman and Cornely have gained a certain renown among their peers. Judges all know them. Juries like them.

And they also became known as being the attorneys members call in when they are in that harrowing situation. It's serving the officer who beat a DUI, but in the aftermath has to face

termination from the department as a result that reminds them why they have given their combined 70 years to defending law enforcement.

"The preparation is difficult. You need discipline and you need people to help," Hartman shares. "The trial part of it is great. There's no feeling in the world like when the jury comes back. It's a real rush."

Perhaps that is because the jury almost always has come back in their favor. There are so many memorable cases that fall into that category, but on the eve of their retirement, there's a natural inclination to ask if there is a defining moment.

Hartman and Cornely would never admit to one, so we will have to do it for them. There was this one case in federal court against a U.S. attorney.

"The U.S. attorney wins 97.7 percent of these cases," Hartman submitted.

Their clients were accused of perjury. The U.S. attorney was overly confident that it was a clear-cut winner. The jury came back within a couple of hours with a not guilty across the board.

"The U.S. attorney was so upset that she was crying and carrying on," Hartman added. "It was a complete upset."

Certainly, Hartman and Cornely can be content about riding off into the sunset with what they have accomplished. Before doing so, however, they wanted to share some closing thoughts with the members they have loved serving.

"Be very careful about what you say and what you write," Cornely reminded. "If you feel there's something not right, then you should call the PBA and have somebody come down. Don't say anything until you talk to them."

As the senior partner, Hartman gets the last word.

"Rely on your training, which does kick in," he confirmed. "And remember the PBA supports you 100 percent."



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And the awards go to...

Two members of Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation earn national recognition

■ BY KAREN JENKINS

Corporal Wanda Presley was sitting in her office in September when she got the celebratory call she never expected.

Her years of hard work had resulted in a nomination for a 2020 JailCon Award for the Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department, along with Officer Jazmany Castellanos for a Distinguished Valor Award.

Every year, the National Institute for Jail Operations award committee recommends a list of nominations to the board of directors, which then reviews the list and selects winners based on each officer's overall contributions.

"Nationwide, different facilities nominate somebody," Presley explained. "[Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department] saw my achievement goals and accomplishments and they submitted me. At that point, I'd just been submitted for nomination, so we didn't know if we were going to win."

And then, on Sept. 15, she received an email stating that she had been named Detention Supervisor of the Year for the annual awards ceremony, which recognizes correctional officers for services that go unseen throughout the year. Presley, who has 29 years on the job, won from a national applicant pool.

"I was like, 'Are you kidding me, out of the nation?'" she recalled. "They said that Miami-Dade County Corrections had not won in many years. So for me to even be nominated, they were very proud of that."

Presley's award came as the result of flourishing as a supervisor and empowering her staff to become the best correctional officers possible. When she first started in the Courts Services Bureau Jail Arraignment/Bond Hearing Unit with Miami-Dade Corrections, it led its peers in response-to-resistance incidents and battery-on-inmate incidents.

The corporal went into the unit and immediately got to work teaching about how to talk to inmates, how to defuse situations and how to eliminate situations when an inmate is upset. She also upgraded the unit by providing new computers for officers, a new refrigerator, microwaves and desks.



Wanda Presley with the Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department is named Detention Supervisor of the Year on Sept. 15 as part of the 2020 JailCon Awards for her successful efforts in implementing new techniques in her unit to reduce use-of-force reports.

The final piece of the morale-building puzzle included talking about teamwork and co-existing with other employees, agreeing to disagree and becoming a therapy-oriented working unit.

When the corporal first arrived in the unit, it was tracking an average of 30 use-of-force reports annually. This past year, they only had seven.

"I mainly just boosted them all," Presley affirmed. "I wanted to gain the trust of all the officers, as well as gain the respect of the inmates that were coming at all of us before. I didn't go in and just, 'Oh, do this, do this, do this.' I went in watching them, observing how they work and how the unit worked prior to me implementing my new ideas to show them how we can make it better."

Presley represented the Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department well as the Detention Supervisor of the Year. Right alongside her, Castellanos received a Distinguished Valor Award for a lifesaving response.

After working his shift in May 2019, Castellanos was heading to the gym in Miami and heard a scream in the parking lot. He observed a car that had just hit an elderly man. While a crowd tended to the man, Castellanos gave chase to the driver in his vehicle.

He was able to cut off, apprehend and



Jazmany Castellanos went above and beyond the call of duty to catch the suspects in a hit-and-run incident, earning him a Distinguished Valor Award as part of the 2020 JailCon Awards.

handcuff the suspect. In a moment, he also became aware of a second occupant in the car. Castellanos gave verbal commands and told the passenger to exit the car, ultimately handcuffing both suspects and holding them until more law enforcement officers were able to arrive on the scene.

Castellanos said he "was just doing his job as a sworn law enforcement officer" while demonstrating heightened situational awareness and bravery in the hit-and-run incident, exhibiting the expertise that corrections officers bring to the street.

Both Presley and Castellanos represented the Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department with honor, distinction and professionalism in the 2020 JailCon Awards.

Presley noted that the key to being a productive corrections officer — and what ultimately led her to receiving the prestigious award — is exhibiting kindness and authority while on the job, to both staff and inmates.

"You have to care for your staff and the job as well," she confirmed. "You've got to prove you're in authority by being respectful and talking to [inmates] like they're people, because that's what they are. You'll see that when you approach people that way, they're going to respect you."

A Guiding Voice

Noel Heron, a longtime member of the South Florida PBA Board of Directors, passes away after a devastating battle with COVID-19

■ BY KAREN JENKINS

Anytime Mike Clifton called Noel Heron, he was met by Heron's distinct voice — a deep timbre with a Jamaican lilt. Heron was well-spoken and articulate while carrying a personable and professional air, similar to a college professor.

No matter how long it had been since they last spoke, Clifton knew that when he called Heron, the conversation would pick up wherever it had left off, without skipping a beat.

"When you're listening to him speak, everybody knew it was Noel, that's for sure," Clifton recalled. "He was very intriguing. And when he spoke, I mean, people listened."

Heron retired from Miami-Dade Corrections in 2006. He had the distinction of being one of the longest-serving members on the PBA Board of Directors, according to South Florida PBA President Steadman Stahl.

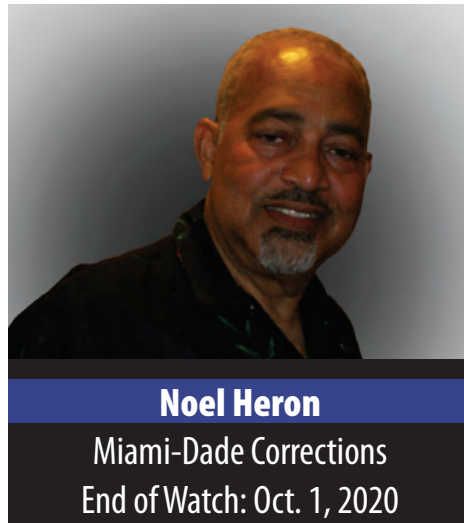
"I knew him personally. He was a great human being, very active with the PBA," Stahl stated. "When we were facing some tough times, he was a guiding voice, a voice of reason. He would guide us through whatever the issues were."

He was appointed to the Board of Directors by Clifton, who acted as vice president of the union in the late 1980s and subsequently served as president from 1990 through 1992. Clifton appointed Heron during his time as president.

"He was a very active member with the organization on the Board of Directors," shared Clifton, who retired in 2003 after 31 years with the Miami-Dade Police Department. "He was a very close associate of mine and with the organization. He cared quite a bit about corrections, PBA and his fellow man, that's for sure."

After years of dedicated law enforcement service, Heron passed away following a battle with COVID-19 on Oct. 1. He is survived by his wife, Monica, his two children, Julie and Peter, and his seven grandchildren. His family describes Heron as "a true leader, a true hero, a true Heron," with immeasurable love for his wife, children and grandchildren.

A memorial service was held on Oct. 17 through Zoom to adhere to social distancing regulations. Heron's wife, son, daughter and grandchildren all shared two-minute



Noel Heron, a retired Miami-Dade Corrections officer and voice for members on the PBA Board of Directors, passed away from COVID-19 on Oct. 1.

memories of the beloved officer, who was known for his bright laugh, strong personality and kind heart, as stated on the memorial service program.

Heron was always upfront, and Clifton noted that he regularly stepped in as a voice for correction officers while serving on the Board of Directors with the PBA.

"I think he was a constant reminder of how we should all conduct ourselves in our daily lives — I can never remember hearing him say a bad word about someone," Clifton expressed. "He may disagree with somebody, but I certainly never heard him speak bad about anybody. He had a calming effect if there was ever tension in a room. He was a very strong person in that sense and very humble."

Heron's upbeat personality will be missed at Board of Directors meetings. After being such a devoted union member for almost 30 years, Clifton isn't sure who will be able to step into that realm.

"It certainly was Noel's passion," he said, regarding Heron's involvement in the PBA. "Even after retiring from the department, they made him a life member of the organization, which is a very respected position. It's hard to replace that passion; someone has to have it in them. We're always looking for that as an organization, but it's very difficult when someone like Noel passes away."

Stahl shared that Heron's passion for



Heron's family organized a memorial service over Zoom on Oct. 17 and posted these photos to honor and remember him.

the PBA extended to serving on the Youth Scholarship Committee. His participation provided scholarships for many students over the years.

And even in retirement, Heron remained active in law enforcement. He was a member of the Retired Police Officers Council, a nonprofit Florida corporation for retired federal, state, county and city law enforcement officers.

Stahl relayed that as a fierce supporter of members' rights, Heron will be deeply missed by the PBA for his voice and vision.

"Most people, when they retire, they move on — there's probably a few who have actually stayed after they retired to make a difference," Stahl expressed. "He was one of those guys. He continued working for the betterment of the profession. He was absolutely one of those guys."

MASK MASTERS



Members, friends and family of the South Florida PBA show us the custom masks the union made, complete with some tips and quips about how to wear it well.



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Moral mask support.



Masking up with the Officer of the Year.



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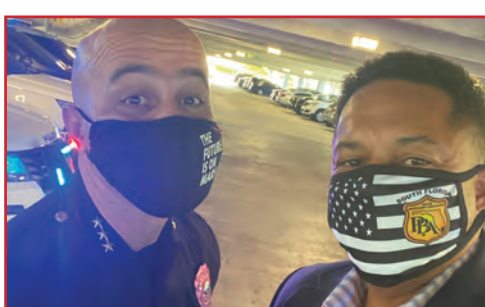
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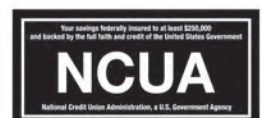
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Members Only Section

Celebrating South Florida PBA members and the way they serve every day

Miami-Dade Police Department makes strides against breast cancer

The Miami-Dade Police Department showed up in support of breast cancer awareness on Oct. 17, with participation in the Making Strides of Miami-Dade "Drive for Stride" parade.

Officers, decked out in pink masks and with pink patrol vehicles, rode through Tropical Park in Miami for an hour and 15 minutes to support the important cause.

Making Strides of Miami-Dade, started by the American Cancer Society, works to unite communities in the fight against the deadly disease. Making Strides of Miami-Dade is the largest network of breast cancer awareness events in the nation and provides a number of fundraising initiatives throughout the year, beyond walking.

The Miami-Dade Police Department ranks No. 3 out of 94 teams for this cycle of the fundraising initiative, which concludes at the end of the year. Officers have raised \$13,575 so far, significantly surpassing their original goal of \$1,000.



In total, Making Strides of Miami-Dade has raised \$167,087 and hopes to reach its goal of \$275,000 by December. Together with the Miami-Dade Police Department, this parade for breast cancer awareness helped pay tribute to all the loved ones fighting, and honored the lives of those who have been lost too soon.



Keeping the faith in Medley Police Department

Cristian Lopez represented Medley Police Department in the annual Faith and Blue Solidarity Ride on Oct. 9.

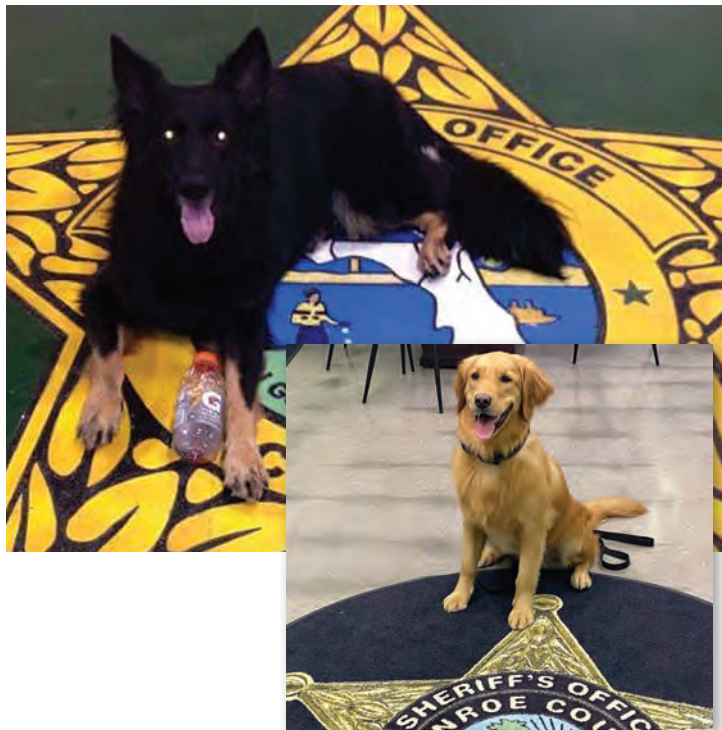
The ride, which shows solidarity among faith communities and Christian Peace Officers from different police departments, had law enforcement leaders and faith leaders caravan to different stations in Miami-Dade County.



Monroe County Sheriff's Office K9 wags tail for retirement

After 10 years of dedicated service, Monroe County Sheriff's Office K9 Deja retired on Oct. 1. She served her community with honor and distinction. Taking Deja's place will be newly hired K9 Coral, an enthusiastic golden retriever.

"K9 Coral has some huge paws to fill, but we are confident she is up for the challenge," said Sheriff Rick Ramsay.



Sweetwater Police Department brings delicious support to hospital staff

Officers from the Sweetwater Police Department headed over to Mercy Hospital Miami on Oct. 3 to provide a much-needed pick-me-up to the hardworking medical staff.

Along with the Miami-Dade Police Department and various other community members, officers brought meals from restaurant Naked Taco in Miami to thank staff for tirelessly working on the frontlines throughout the pandemic.

Miami-Dade County Animal Services Department celebrates not-so-spooky adoptions

This Halloween, children weren't the only ones trick-or-treating. Miami-Dade County Animal Services Department dressed up potential adoptees in costumes from Oct. 26 to Oct. 31 and sent along some holiday treats with every new pet that was adopted from its socially distanced, onsite adoptions.

Pets older than four months old are able to be adopted with all vaccina-

tions, de-worming, spay or neuter surgery and microchips. Adoption fees are low in Miami-Dade County, with a top charge of only \$85 for puppies younger than four months old.

The Miami-Dade County Animal Services Department provides care and refuge for 28,000 to 30,000 lost and abandoned dogs and cats annually. Through onsite and off-site event adop-

tions, they remain firm in their no-kill mission to get all pets adopted.

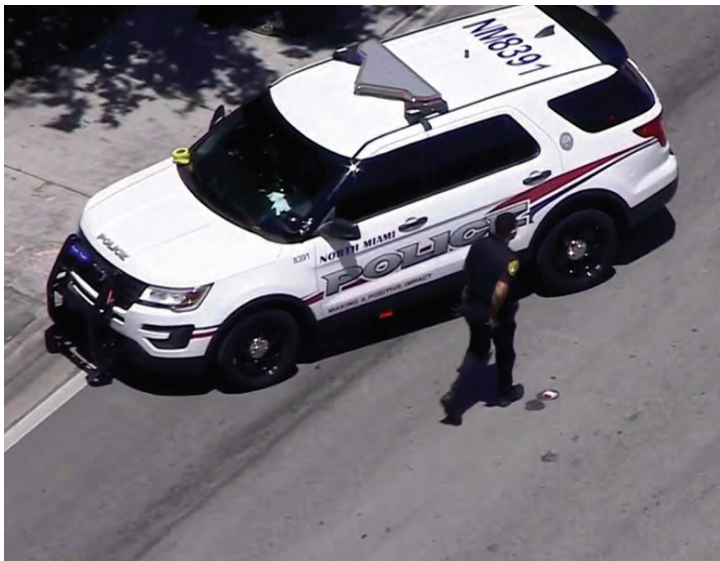
And as a special Halloween treat, a number of animals were adopted this year. A small, black dog dressed as a flamingo, one dressed as a unicorn and another pulling out the classics and opting for a sparkly pumpkin costume all honored the spooky holiday while finding new homes.



North Miami Police Department officers back each other up

A combative man wielded a knife on Aug. 14, approaching an officer and narrowly avoiding stabbing the officer, shared North Miami Police Department Commander Kessler Brooks.

Brooks shared that another officer quickly arrived on the scene and was able to end the threat, effectively saving his colleague from a dire situation.



Dishing out generosity for North Miami Police Department

A group of students on scholarship at Barry University donated dinner baskets to officers with the North Miami Police Department on Oct. 20.

The Barry University Stamp Scholars program provides full tuition and room and board to deserving students for four years as a full-merit scholarship. The scholars were thrilled to give back to their officers with baskets of treats and orange juice.



Miami-Dade Police Department celebrates Red Ribbon Week

The Miami-Dade Police Department gathered on Oct. 23 to kick off Red Ribbon Week, which runs through Oct. 31.

The week is an alcohol, tobacco and drug awareness campaign observed annually in October. It began 35 years ago as a tribute to fallen Drug Administration Enforcement Special Agent Enrique Camerena, who was brutally tortured and murdered by drug traffickers in 1985.

The Sweetwater Police Department provides food, assistance to elderly homeless man

John Wrves, with the Sweetwater Police Department, teamed with a local nonprofit to provide assistance to an elderly homeless man on Sept. 16.

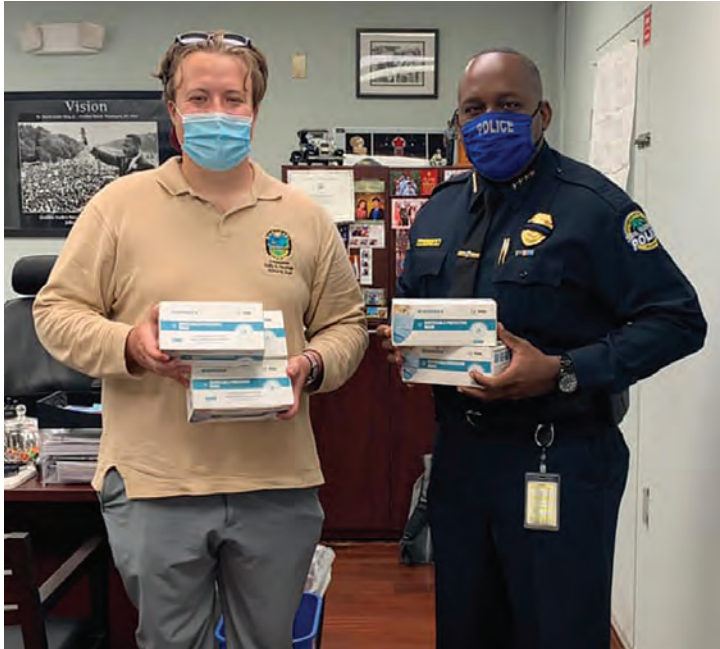
The Homeless Trust, which seeks to eliminate homelessness in Miami-Dade County, helped Wrves with providing the man money, food and a place to sleep after he had undergone a series of unfortunate events that caused the loss of his home.



Bal Harbour Police Department masks up

The Bal Harbour Police Department received a generous donation from County Commissioner Sally Heyman on Sept. 1.

She stopped by the station to donate masks to the officers out of genuine concern for their safety and the well-being of all Bal Harbour public safety personnel.



Christopher Alfaro celebrates 10 years of service with the Aventura Police Department

Christopher Alfaro was honored for his 10-year anniversary with the Aventura Police Department on Oct. 6. Throughout his tenure, Alfaro has received many distinctions from the department.

Most recently, Alfaro completed the grueling Defensive Tactics Instructor Course in 2018, and he received the Law Enforcement Professional Frontier Award from the Aventura Police Department in 2019.



Caring for the children of Miami-Dade County

With the ongoing public health crisis, the emotional well-being of children is being called into question. From being cooped up throughout the summer to now enduring the difficulties of virtual schooling, children are being recognized

by officers in Miami-Dade County, who went above and beyond their regular duties of protecting and serving.

A number of kid-focused events designed to foster community have taken place over the past couple of months.

Officers know the importance of providing valuable resources to children of Miami-Dade County, and they're coming out in full force with events, initiatives and activities to help nurture one of the most vulnerable populations.



El Portal Police Department

In an act of support for the youngest fighters going up against childhood cancer, El Portal Police Department was just one of many police departments that participated in the Gold Ribbon Parade on Sept. 5. Patrol vehicles decked out in gold ribbons circled Nicklaus Children's Hospital's parking lot, and officers then stepped out to wave at the children inside who were looking out the windows.



Florida International University Police Department

When 2-year-old David told his mother that he wanted to see a "real police car" for his birthday, Officer Christopher Arce couldn't refuse. David showed up in full uniform on Sept. 30 to meet his real-life hero and look around Arce's patrol vehicle for an unforgettable birthday celebration.



South Miami Police Department

Since 2015, Officer Marcus Kinlaw has been the executive director of South Miami Police Department's Police Athletic League (PAL). On Sept. 16, he held his annual bookbag giveaway with volunteers from PAL to help equip children of South Miami with the resources they need to succeed this school year.

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Snoring and fatigue could signal something serious



DR. MICHAEL DOBLIN
SLEEP
SPECIALIST

Obstructive sleep apnea is characterized by a compromised airway leading to a decrease in oxygen. Most of my obstructive sleep apnea patients are men in first responder professions where quick decisions, decision-making, minimum response time and physical acuity are necessary.

Patients with obstructive sleep apnea have lower levels of testosterone, mental fatigue, physical fatigue and reduced physical activity. Low testosterone levels also cause reduced libido, sexual dysfunction, a decrease in quality of sleep and obesity, especially abdominal fat. The reduction of testosterone is related to the severity of hypoxia (diminished oxygen).

The more severe the sleep apnea, and consequently the reduction of oxygen, the more the reduction of testosterone. As we age, testosterone, which controls pituitary and gonadal function, decreases. In addition, the quantity (in some cases due to an enlarged prostate and frequent bathroom trips) and the quality (less REM time) of our sleep decreases, leading to lower testosterone levels.

Obesity is strongly linked to testosterone levels and causes an increase in the hormone ghrelin, which stimulates hunger and a reduction in the neural transmitter leptin, which suppresses appetite. If you have decreased oxygen levels, resulting



in lower testosterone levels, you end up with more abdominal fat. This abdominal fat then becomes inflamed, leading to insulin resistance and obesity associated with type 2 diabetes.

In summary, if you snore or feel tired, get tested and treated for obstructive sleep apnea. The consequences are decreased testosterone, which results in poor job performance, and even a fat gut.

Dr. Michael Doblin has been involved in treating snoring and obstructive sleep apnea. He is dedicated to educating people and helping them sleep better.



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Thank-You Notes TO THE PBA



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MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COURT JUDGE


My dearest friend and supporter:

Erica, Steadman & PBA,

My immense thanks to you for your generous contribution to the "Campaign to Keep Judge Christine Bandin as a County Court Judge" efforts. There is no question that one of the reasons I was fortunate enough to prevail in this election is because of the help I received from all my supporters, which was also undoubtedly during an incredibly trying and challenging time. Words cannot express or describe how humbled I am by your trust, faith, and belief in my ability to continue to serve as a County Court Judge in this great community of ours, Miami-Dade County. It is an honor and a privilege, and I will honor my promise to work hard for you and uphold the rule of law.


Many thanks again to everyone for their never-ending friendship, love, and support.

Sincerely,



Christine Bandin

Thank you for the generous contribution & for your continued faith in my ability to serve our community! & thank you for your service to our community! Hope to participate with a future tournament soon! (Philly)




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August 14, 2020

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Citrus County	139,271	243

*Official US Census



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We're here to provide home financing advice. One way is by reviewing your mortgage.

Let's see if it makes sense for you to refinance and possibly save some money. All we need is a picture of your mortgage statement!

Call or email to find out how to securely send your picture.

SNAP.

Snap a photo of your mortgage statement

SEND.

Send the picture directly to us through our secure document portal

SAVE.*

We will call you and discuss your potential savings

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- 2) Do I Understand How the Retirement Option I choose can have Long-Term Consequences on My Retirement Income?**
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