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COVER STORY

PHOTO BY NOAL REGAN

Page 21



Roast With The Most

The second annual Pig Roast Bowl Series presented another swine day for thousands of PBA members, family members, friends, elected officials and the South Florida community. More than 100 teams from departments throughout the county, fire departments and local businesses participated, bringing their own special recipes for roasting the pigs and some amazing ways to present the delectable dishes. The aroma rising from Tropical Park, where the Pig Roast was held, might very well still linger, one of many memories from one of the greatest events ever for the South Florida PBA.

COVER DESIGN BY GINA CROTCHFELT

MESSAGES FROM THE PBA

- The Pres Says.....**Page 5**
- Message From the Executive VP**Page 8**
- The Dish From Ish.....**Page 10**
- Corrections Corner.....**Page 12**
- South Florida PBA Legal Corner.....**Page 13**
- POAT News.....**Page 14**
- RPOC News**Page 16**
- Honoring Retired Members.....**Page 17**
- Reflections**Page 32**
- Members Only Section.....**Page 35**
- Thank-You Notes to the PBA**Page 46**

INSIDE STORIES



Let's All Go To The Lobby



In The Neighborhood



Main Number: 561-757-0464

Advertising: 201-880-7288

Editorial: 201-370-4082

Distribution: 201-880-7288

Email: cops@PBAHeatMagazine.com

MITCHELL KRUGEL

Publisher/Editor

mitch@PBAHeatMagazine.com

GINA CROTCHFELT

Art Director

gina@PBAHeatMagazine.com

DAN CAMPANA

Staff Writer

SYLVIA RIVERA

Director of Operations

sylvia@PBAHeatMagazine.com

KIMBERLY FLYNN

LAUREN PURCELL

Copy Editors

NIZAM "ISH" ISHMAEL

PBA Editor

ish@sflpba.org

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THE PRES SAYS

Projections, directions and elections



STEADMAN
STAHL

We're gearing up for another big year. An election year unlike any PBA members have ever known.

It starts with getting ready for Miami-Dade electing its first sheriff in many years who will oversee all law enforcement in the county. That's probably going to be one of our most important races that we're going to have to stay engaged in, and it's going to have the biggest impact on the bulk of PBA members. We'll start to get into more details on this race in just a minute and be on top of it from now until the primary in August and the final decision in November.

But we've got commissioners that we have to make sure we help get reelected because they're the ones that give the sheriff the money. And there are many municipal races that affect the benefits and working conditions of our members.

So we're going to be all-in this election year, because every race is important. We have to stay focused on all of them and continue our successful track record when it comes to being engaged at all levels of politics. And we want our mem-

bers to stay vigilant.

Right now, we are looking at the best candidates for all offices that affect our members. There are still entering the sheriff's race. At some point, the list will dwindle down and then we know who are the true viable candidates. There are a lot of good candidates that are running, which is good.

What's for sure now with the run for sheriff is that the people will be able to hold somebody responsible who is exclusively accountable for public safety. With the form of government we have now with a mayor who oversees everything, sometimes you have to focus on road construction and things like that. Now, you will have a sheriff whose sole responsibility will be maintaining peace and tranquility, and their only focus will be on public safety.

Rick Ramsey is also up for reelection in Monroe County. So far, nobody has even challenged him, and we don't anticipate that there will be somebody he will have to contend with.

Sheriff Ramsey continues to prove himself to the PBA and our members in Monroe County. So we look forward to continue supporting him, to continue working with him and keeping it going.

With regard some of the other races, we are already working on it. Miami-Dade Mayor Danielle Levine Cava is up for reelection, and we have already endorsed her. We have also already endorsed State's Attorney Kathy Rundle for reelection. All six incumbent Miami-Dade County commissioners are also going to get our endorsement.

We have some judges in both counties we need look to at and make sure they are supporting law enforcement. There are a lot of great people out there running for office and, come November, we have to make sure that we keep the good ones in office.

Which means we have to get out and vote. Listen, this is also a presidential election, and I'm predicting staggering numbers of people showing up to the polls. This election at every level, at every position is going to have great ramifications on everybody's lives all the way down to the municipal elections.

I don't want to make the bottom of the ballot any less important than the top, because we have a lot of great people in the cities where represent the officers. But as I've said in the past, elections have consequences. And I know that we're living in a time and era where a party affiliation can separate families. I hope that when it comes to our PBA family that we stay united, and we stay focused on what's going to matter to everybody.

Our job is to make sure that we get the right people in those offices who are going to ensure that public safety is always front and center. It's probably the most important thing that you'll be voting on.

This year will also be one to build on what we have accomplished. Which is a lot, and none of it could have happened without the partnership of the members and a great board of directors that gives me the support I need to make sure that we maintain the strong, positive relationships, not only with our elected officials, but with the community.

I look forward to a great year. But it's going to be a tough year, a challenging year, a lot busier than we've ever been. That started at the end of 2023 when we signed the last contract Miami-Dade officers will ever negotiate with the county. The next one will be with the sheriff, so we made this last one historic. To commemorate it, we brought in all the county units we represent, from MDPD to MDC&R to Animal Services, to the PBA Hall and join in the signing ceremony.

But you know when you're one of the largest union organizations in the county, there's always

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



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Our executive board joined with Mayor Danielle Levine Cava and public safety leaders from the county as we signed our new contract.



A photo op with new officers after they graduated from the academy in January.

STAHL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

a contract coming up somewhere. We represent so many different cities and two counties. It just seems like every time we close out one contract in one city, another one's opening up. That's why it's important for us to have six full-time lawyers that work for the members 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

And a great board of directors and great staff. If we didn't have the staff and our board and our members, none of this would be possible. There's not a single event we host where we don't have some of our board members getting involved.

It's what separates us from other organizations out there. Our board and staff also make a huge difference in being able to present all the events we do for our members. Look, having these events is time-consuming. A lot of work goes into it.

We do them for our members to have a good time, but also to raise money for the PBA Love Fund, which helps out so many. And if it wasn't for the community, our elected officials and everybody being involved to do whatever it takes, we wouldn't be in a position to help as many members as we do in their times of need. For whatever situation you are facing – many of them which are out of your control – we're going to get through it together. You're going to have a big family coming around and making sure that we get you through it.

Looking ahead in 2024, I hope all members mark the date for the Pig Roast Bowl Series and have the chance to attend. And even compete in this event that I really have no words to describe.

I attended my first Pig Roast this past December. (I missed the first one in 2022 because I was attending my son's graduation.) I was overwhelmed by the outstanding turnout, with thousands of people showing up. We had more than 100 teams participating representing different municipalities, different police departments, fire departments, organizations, communities, rotary clubs and city governments. You should have seen the elected officials out there rolling their sleeves up.

There was such camaraderie, and the creativity of these police, corrections and fire teams was outstanding. Every group that took

The President's Gallery



The second annual Pig Roast Bowl Series was one that I will never forget. Maybe you notice what I noticed in all these pictures and especially in the one of me holding the trophy: Everybody is smiling.



part in it made it a special day. Like I said, just overwhelming.

We had Doral Mayor Christi Fraga out there cooking along with Miami Gardens Mayor Rodney Harris. We had Mayor Cava and just about all of our county commissioners hanging out, watching the kids have fun on the bounce houses and getting into the live music. I was also elated to have our newly appointed clerk of the circuit court and comptroller for Miami-Dade County, Juan Fernandez-Barquin, out there with us.

I can promise you that as soon as this event ended, we started thinking about how we can make the next one even bigger and better. We know a tremendous amount of work that goes into that thing, but at the PBA, we have big, strong shoulders, and we'll just keep stacking it on them. We're ready for it.

Allow me to conclude this first report of the year with a story that I hope provides a happy ending. A couple weeks ago, we had three Miami-Dade PD South District officers respond to a call where they had some squatters. In fact, it was the first call of the shift for them working the night shift.

When they get to the house, one guy comes with a shotgun and starts blasting away. They had their vests on, which took a lot of the fire. Yes, they all wound up going to the hospital. But thanks to St. Michael, all three went home. And the bad guy is no longer with us.

The shooting took place close to midnight. We left the hospital with just enough time to go home, take a shower and make it to the academy by 10 a.m. the next morning for the graduation of 43 officers.

Cut this one either way, and you have another story about a great batch of crime fighters ready to go out there. That's what makes the PBA work and makes us all work so hard for you.

Steadman Stahl
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Here are my New Year's resolutions



DAVID
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New Year's resolutions date back hundreds of years. Every year, we make them, usually with regard only to diet and exercise. I often meet with both senior law enforcement officers and those who have retired. These honorable public servants together have thousands of years of experience in law enforcement and more importantly, life, with the ability to reflect on what should or could they have done better.

I have asked them over the years, "What is something you would tell the new guys that you wish someone had told you as a rookie or as a young officer?" Based on their responses, combined with my 40-plus years as a cop and 30-plus being married,

here is what I offer to base your resolutions on for the rest of your life:

Health. Everything you do revolves around your health, so of course this one is important. Get a checkup and find a workout that works for you. Eat healthier daily and drink more water. Your goals should always be to eat healthier and move more, not just to lose 10 pounds, then forget about it.

Financial health. Almost every retiree I meet with wishes they saved more money and put away more in deferred compensation. It's hard to understand this in your 20s, but with compound interest and investment products available, it's never too early to start your plan, and the earlier the better.

Family life. Are you mindful when you are with your family? You will be forgotten quickly at work, but your kids will remember each time you weren't there. Sometimes we are forced to work, but

when you must choose between going out with friends or being with your kids, it goes without saying.

Maximize you. Be the best that you can be. Are you truly honest with yourself when assessing your job performance? Try to improve something every day, and at the end of the year, you will reap the benefits.

Check on your friends. Mental health is losing the taboo it has had for most of my career. We all know of individuals with "issues" but rarely try to help them. Just being there as a friend, a person someone can confidently confide in and vent to, goes a long way. We have great resources out there. Please use them or refer your buddies to them.

Rumors. Stop spreading them. Law enforcement is notorious for this, which is very hypocritical. When we are investigating a crime, only the facts matter. But when rumors are circulating, we are quick to fill in blanks without seeking the truth. It has been said that "rumors are carried by haters, spread by fools and accepted by idiots."

Thankfulness. Be thankful for what you have. There is no reason to keep up with the Joneses. Often, they are deep in debt, and it's a facade. Start with your family, your health and your job security.

Just be your best, do your best and don't measure your success against others. Your life will greatly improve, and you — and those around you — will be happier.

As always, please stay safe! If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at 305-593-0044 or greenwell@sflpba.org.



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Jason L. Fox, Esq.
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Tonya A. Oliver, Esq.
Tonya@OliverFoxLaw.com

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The last thing to worry about is whether we will wear brown or green uniforms



NIZAM "ISH"
ISHMAEL
VICE
PRESIDENT

I have always been in support of an elected sheriff instead of an appointed police director. I believe this should have happened decades ago. There are many critical factors that impact efficiency, accountability and relationship with the community within a law enforcement agency. In the context of the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD), there are compelling arguments for having an elected sheriff rather than an appointed police director.

Accountability to the public. An elected sheriff is directly accountable to the voters, fostering a direct line of responsibility to the community.

This accountability through elections encourages transparency and responsiveness to public concerns. In contrast, an appointed police director may not be as directly answerable to the community's interests, potentially leading to a disconnect between the department's actions and community needs.

Political independence. Elected sheriffs are often perceived as politically independent, as they derive their authority directly from the people rather than from a political appointment. This independence can insulate law enforcement decisions from political interference, ensuring that law enforcement actions are guided by professional judgment rather than political agendas.

Long-term vision and stability. An elected sheriff may offer stability and continuity, as their tenure is not limited by changes in political administrations. This stability allows for the development and execution of long-term strategies for the department's improvement, as they are not subject to the frequent changes that usually accompany new political appointments.

Reduced political influence. While political oversight is essential, an elected sheriff might be less susceptible to day-to-day political pressures compared to an appointed police director who could be subject to political whims or influences, potentially compromising law enforcement decisions.

Merit-based leadership vs. political connections. Elected sheriffs are chosen based on their qualifications, vision and plans for the department, allowing for merit-based selection. On the other hand, an appointed police director might be chosen due to political connections or allegiance, potentially impacting the department's effectiveness.

However, it is essential to acknowledge potential challenges that come with an elected sheriff system. Political campaigning for the sheriff's position will introduce partisanship, and there could be instances where popularity or political appeal overshadows competence.

Qualities we should be looking for in a sheriff

An outstanding sheriff should possess a range of qualities



Stay informed

Scan here to see the candidates running in the 2024 general election for the office of the sheriff in Miami-Dade County. Click on their names to view their financial reports.

that set a high standard for leadership and service within their team of deputies. An exceptional sheriff leads by example, inspiring trust, respect and motivation within the team. They should have a clear vision for the department and effectively communicate goals and expectations. Honesty, transparency and ethical behavior are crucial.

A sheriff should uphold the law with the highest moral standards, setting an example for deputies to follow. Strong communication abilities are vital for effective collaboration, conflict resolution and conveying directives clearly. A sheriff should be able to listen actively and express ideas convincingly.

Quick thinking and sound judgment are essential in law enforcement. Deputies should feel confident in the sheriff's ability to make tough decisions under pressure. Law enforcement often involves dealing with challenging situations. A sheriff who understands and shows empathy towards both the community and their team fosters a supportive environment.

In an ever-evolving field, adaptability is key. A good sheriff should be open to change, willing to embrace new technologies and able to navigate through unforeseen circumstances. Being able to strategize long-term plans while also handling immediate issues efficiently is important. A sheriff needs to balance short-term actions with a clear vision for the future of the department. Law enforcement can be physically and mentally demanding. An outstanding sheriff should possess resilience to handle the stress and challenges that come with the job.

From community issues to internal departmental challenges, a sheriff should have strong problem-solving abilities to address issues effectively. Building a cohesive team is crucial. A great sheriff should be able to foster a positive and supportive work environment that encourages professional growth and teamwork among deputies.

When deputies see these qualities in their sheriff, it can foster a strong sense of confidence, loyalty, and dedication within the department.

The sheriff and the PBA

The relationship between a sheriff and the PBA is crucial for many reasons. The PBA represents officers and support

personnel in matters related to pay, benefits, working conditions and disciplinary procedures. The sheriff needs to work with the union to negotiate fair and reasonable contracts that satisfy the needs of the deputies while also aligning with the department's goals and budget.

A positive relationship with the PBA will maintain high morale among law enforcement deputies. When there is a sense of mutual respect and understanding between the sheriff and the union, it can foster a more positive work environment. Collaborating with the PBA allows the sheriff to involve deputies' perspectives in policy development.

Understanding their concerns and insights will lead to better-informed decisions and policies that are more widely accepted among the department's members. When conflicts or issues arise within the department, having a good relationship with the union can facilitate smoother conflict resolution. It allows for open communication channels and negotiation rather than escalating disputes.

The PBA serves as a strong advocate for officers' rights and welfare. Having the support of the union will be beneficial for the sheriff when implementing changes or dealing with external pressures.

Overall, a collaborative and respectful relationship between the sheriff and the PBA is essential for the effective functioning of the department and the well-being of its deputies.

In conclusion, the direct accountability, political independence, community engagement and long-term stability pro-

vided by an elected sheriff will be particularly beneficial for the MDPD. The key is to strike a balance between democratic accountability and maintaining professionalism within law enforcement, ensuring that the leadership serves the best interests of the community while upholding the principles of justice and fairness.

Whether you are a fan of brown or green uniforms, this should be the last question on your mind. Currently Galls can't even provide us with an adequate number of uniforms in a timely manner, and the amount they charge is a ripoff. It is a shame that MDPD cannot outfit graduating classes in their class As for their swearing-in and class Bs for their assignments. At least with the green, there are tons of suppliers and no shortages of materials. And the cost will be substantially less than we are currently paying.

This is not a high school popularity contest; it is the election of the best qualified individual for the job. Someone to craft the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office, get rid of the dead wood in the Command Staff, give us the best equipment, best training and to make us the best in the country. Just less than a year from now, there will be brighter days ahead for us all. Just hang in there — it can't get any worse. Or can it?

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



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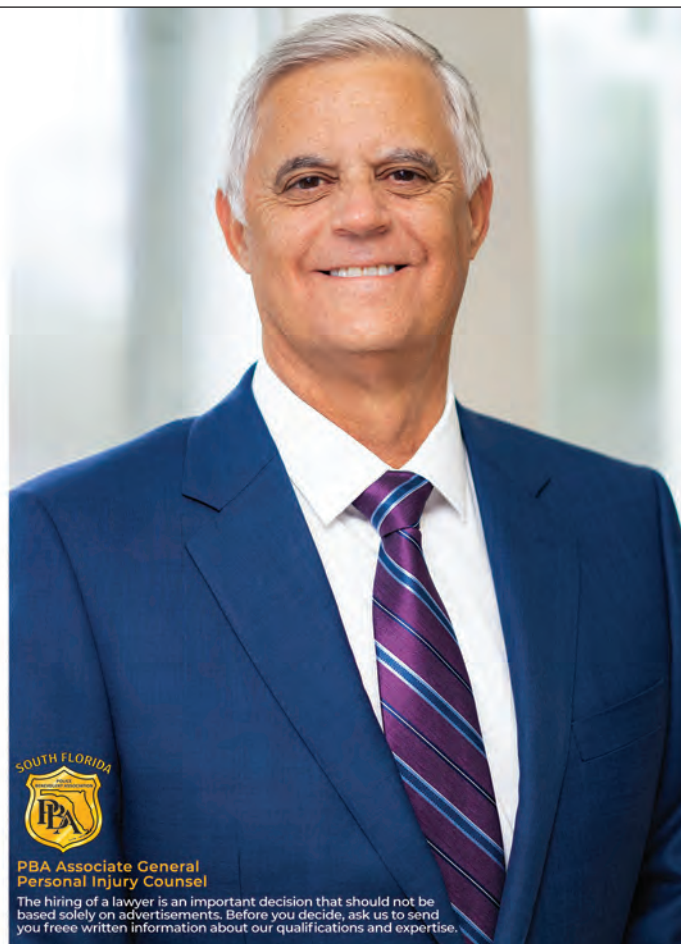
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We are all vital to law enforcement



KARLOS RAMOS
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

My passion for being a corrections officer and my reasons for wanting to send out this message are not really about whether we are considered to be of the same caliber as police officers, but to remind us all just how important our job is in corrections. My goal is to get rid of the stigma between police and corrections and to highlight just how vital it is to stand as a unified front.

Growing up, I always wanted to be a police officer. After the military, my journey began as a police dispatcher. While working for the city, I applied to both the police department and the department of corrections and rehabilitation. I was given an opportunity to join the academy with corrections. After a couple of years in corrections, my passion grew, and I decided to forfeit my application with the police department and continue my tenure with Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation. I was on midnights with Tuesday-Wednesday off. It was quite an adjustment, but I loved the team I was working with and the department as a whole. Here I am, 20 years later, and I'm still loving what I do.

Over the years, I kept a positive mindset, determined to be the best correctional officer I could be. This mentality definitely helped me overcome any negative feelings and comparisons between the corrections department and police department. I looked at police and corrections as a brotherhood that trumped any kind of division between the departments.

Going back a few years, during my tenure in the academy and at the training bureau, police and corrections trained at the same location. There was no division between us. We were side by side; a unified front is what I liked to call it. We learned together and motivated and supported one another.

We had holidays together, we ate together, we celebrated each other's successes and lifted each other up. We were a family. Somewhere down the road, something changed, and division gradually started settling in. The negative shift in mindset was very unfortunate. It was evident how pivotal leadership is when it comes to unity and togetherness.

The interaction between corrections and police is vital in the intake process, which takes place in the rear lobby at Turner Guilford Knight. Once an officer has made an arrest, the subject is transported to TKG, where the first connection is made between the police officer and the correctional officer. Typically, this encounter is a positive one and both units work together, as the safety of the officers is our top priority.

During my time working in the Rear Lobby, I would say that the majority of the time this process was executed successfully and smoothly. We've had some instances where the police officer has driven into the noncombative area with a combative subject for processing. There is a designated area for combative subjects that allows us to get the situation under control. Following this protocol ensures the safety of all officers involved during intake. This is a brief example of how

a situation like this can lead to a negative interaction between corrections and police, resulting in some division.

Overall, I would like to say that the interaction between the officers in the Rear Lobby and police officers has been positive.

Beyond the Rear Lobby, and for those who are not familiar with what happens within the walls of MDCR, allow me to give you a brief look inside. Of course, you know that our biggest responsibility is to maintain a safe and secure environment for the inmates and our fellow officers.

MDCR faces many challenges within the walls of the jails, all while trying to maintain a positive workspace. We see and deal with the worst of the worst, and some days are harder than others.

A good friend of mine who used to work with corrections and is now a police officer made a pretty interesting comparison when it comes to describing police and corrections. He said, "Look at sanitation workers, for example. They work on the streets, picking up trash all day. They are on the road, dealing with the trash and the smell every day. Yet, we don't ever think about those men and women working in the back of the building by the actual dumpsters their entire shift. At least the guys on the street get some fresh air and a change of scenery. They are able to separate themselves from what's going on back at the main dumpster."

I thought that was a pretty powerful comparison. Here we are, locked in a building with the criminals of our community, walking the floors, performing head counts, checking cells and maintaining order day in and day out.

There are many correctional officers who say, "I would never want to be out there in the street trying to figure out who's the bad guy. At least in the jails, we know who the bad guys are." Police officers are on the front line, never knowing how a 911 call will unfold. With that being said, I have also spoken to many police officers who have said they would never want to do our job.

As I take on my new role as the PBA's sergeant-at-arms, and being the only member of the executive board who works in corrections, I feel there is an opportunity to bridge any gaps between departments and agencies.

My goal as an executive board member and representative for corrections is to support and assist supervisors and members of the PBA in any way possible. I want to be a lifeline for MDCR and extend that same support across the board to police. I want to join forces in bridging that gap between police officers and correctional officers. I'm hoping my role in the PBA can bring forth positive changes departmentwide in efforts to support and unify us all.

I’m positive for WHAT?

Drugs in the world of law enforcement



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PBA CHIEF
ASSISTANT
GENERAL
COUNSEL

Happy New Year, my friends. As we begin a new year, I am reflecting. I have spent the past 25 years at the PBA representing our law enforcement family. In that time, I have seen some crazy things happen to my clients, and I have helped them navigate their way through some very difficult issues. Issues they often did not see coming.

I hope my experiences can benefit our family as a whole. Therefore, I share my stories as often as I can. You may think testing positive for drugs is something that everyone should know is a potential career ender. However, you would be surprised how often it occurs in ways that an officer does not expect. When it does, depending upon the circumstances, it is something that can potentially result in arrest, discipline by your agency and the loss of your certification to be a law enforcement officer at the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

Here’s the thing. I’m not just talking about being pulled over for drinking and driving. I’m talking about people showing up at their regular employment physical after football Sunday, completely oblivious to the fact that they are going to test positive for alcohol. Even if you are not above the legal limit to drive, if you test positive, you have a problem. Though alcohol is a “legal drug,” be aware that you are taking a risk if you show up for an employment physical or get randomly drug tested and come back positive. Welcome to my world. Random drug testing in law enforcement is slowly becoming the norm at most agencies.

Even agencies that don’t have random drug testing yet, can and do test you if you are injured on duty, as part of their drug-free workplace policies. The injury doesn’t have to be a serious one. Perhaps you are directing traffic and step off a curb, twisting your ankle on duty. Guess what? You can be sent for a drug test if it is the policy of your agency. And perhaps the evening before you twisted your ankle, you took a pill prescribed to you by your doctor a couple of years ago, because you have been having trouble sleeping lately. Guess what? You are positive for a controlled substance that both your agency and FDLE believe is no longer valid because of the age of the prescription. It doesn’t matter that your doctor attests to the fact that he wrote the prescription for you. Your agency believes it is expired because it was written two years ago. Therefore, they are recommending you be terminated because you tested positive for a controlled substance. They are also sending that recommendation to FDLE, which initiates an action that could result in the loss of your law enforcement certification, because all positive drug tests are sent to FDLE. Welcome to my world.

Or perhaps, since medical marijuana is now legal in the state of Florida, you have a condition for which you obtained

Pending Grievances

This list represents the pending grievances filed at the various departments represented by the South Florida Police Benevolent Association as of **Dec. 31, 2023**. The PBA legal staff receives numerous other complaints that are resolved by other means.

DEPARTMENT/DISTRICT	
CITY OF MIAMI PD	4
MIAMI-DADE CORRECTIONS	
ASSOCIATION	1
TOTAL	1
MIAMI-DADE POLICE	1
MIAMI GARDENS PD	3
MCSO (DETENTION)	1
NORTH MIAMI PD	1
SWEETWATER PD	1
TOTAL GRIEVANCES	
	12

a medical card. Guess what? You will test positive for cannabinoids/THC, which is a controlled substance that law enforcement prohibits in spite of the state of the law in Florida. And don’t use over-the-counter CBD oil or gummies, either. They can and do result in positive drug tests for cannabinoids/THC even though they may not have the levels of THC that result from smoking marijuana.

The problem is this: Things like CBD oil are not regulated, and though they may not immediately result in a positive drug test, over time they build up in your system. You eventually will test positive for cannabinoids if you take them. At least 90 percent of these law enforcement officers get fired. Then they also have to deal with FDLE yanking their certification to be a law enforcement officer, as well. Welcome to my world.

I don’t want you to call me and tell me you just tested positive. Forewarned is forearmed. I don’t want to say to you what I have said to so many of my clients over the years: “Strap yourself in. This is going to be a wild ride that won’t end quickly or easily.” Please don’t make my experience your experience. It is an endless nightmare you don’t want to deal with. Expect the unexpected and use your common sense. Most of all, use the experiences I am sharing with you to steer clear of this issue.

Have a happy and a safe new year!

A year with no new names



SERGEANT
KENNETH
HORGAN
POAT
COMMITTEE
CHAIR

As we begin 2024, I am extremely happy to report that no names will be added to the Police Memorial Wall from 2023. After five straight years of adding names to the wall, this year there will be none!

We will still hold our annual ceremony, letting the families know that their sacrifice will never be forgotten, a solemn tribute to all the officers and their families. We pray that every year will be the same, with no names engraved on the wall ever again. Not one more.

We just completed two of our signature fund-raisers: our annual motorcycle ride and kickball tournament. Both were a huge success. Please save the date for the POAT

Golf Outing, scheduled for April 22. Details coming soon.

We would like to thank Luis Vera of Vera Cadillac for selecting POAT for his public service announcements. We cannot thank him enough for the exposure and support he has provided. Through Vera Cadillac, a PSA was made with actor Cole Hauser, asking the community to support POAT.

The commercial has brought POAT to the forefront and has given us a stage that we have never had before. Thank you, Luis. We will forever be grateful for what you have done for the law enforcement community.

If you know of an officer who is struggling or in need, please contact us at 305-594-6662. If you want to learn more about POAT, please visit our website at POAT.org.

Now Accepting Applications for PBA Scholarships!

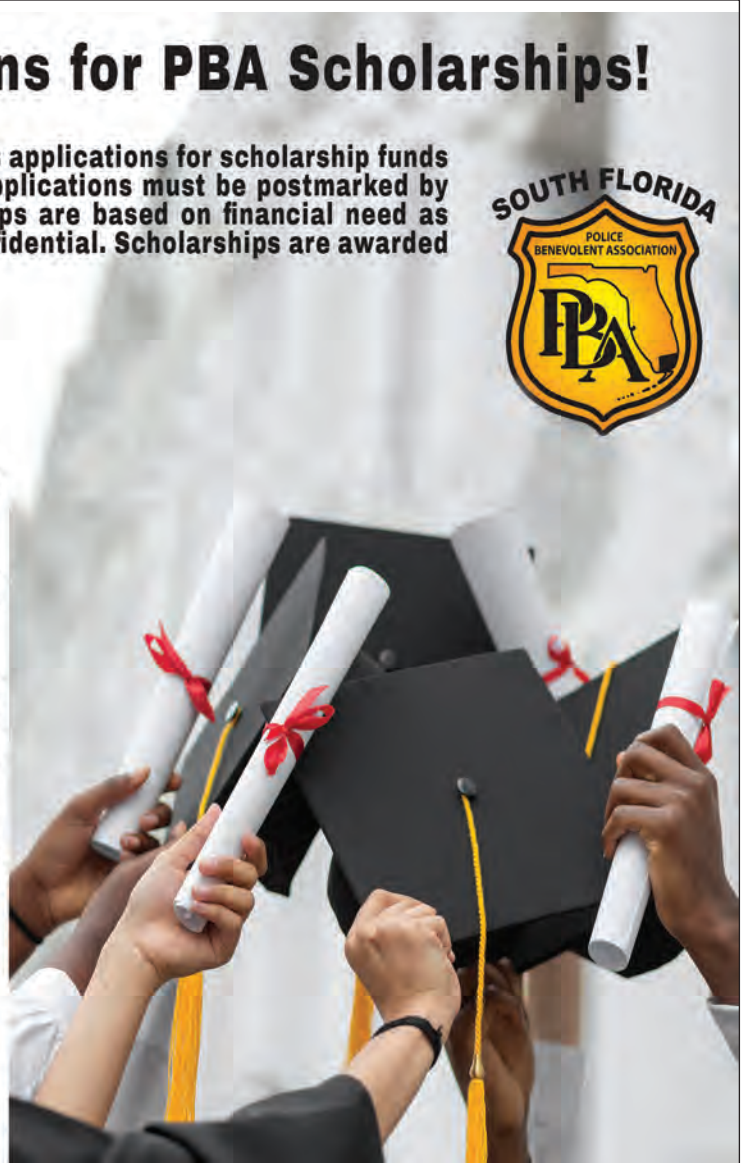
The South Florida PBA Scholarship Committee accepts applications for scholarship funds between January 1st and April 15th of each year. Applications must be postmarked by April 15th for acceptance. No exceptions! Scholarships are based on financial need as well as merit. All information provided will be kept confidential. Scholarships are awarded once a year.

Eligibility Requirements (all criteria must be met to be considered):

1. Applicant must be a child of a South Florida PBA member with a minimum of one-year membership or have prior Board approval. Children of retirees are not eligible to apply.
2. Applicant must be, or plan to be, a part-time or full-time student at an accredited two-year or four-year college. Graduate students are not eligible to apply.
3. Applicant must include an essay, of no more than 750 words and discuss a current problem or difficulty that law enforcement is now experiencing and provide a viable solution. What role do you see yourself playing in tackling this issue? The essay must be typed, double-spaced, using 12-point Arial or Times New Roman font only.
4. Send application, essay, Letter of Acceptance (first-time applicants only) and an official transcript with GPA in one package to: South Florida PBA Scholarship Committee, 10680 PBA Memorial Blvd. (NW 25th Street), Doral, FL 33172.

DO NOT submit any photos, resumes, letters of recommendation. DO NOT bind in any way.

To download the application, visit www.dcpba.org/scholarship-award or, if additional information is needed, contact Kim Gregson at: (305) 593-0044 or e-mail: kim@sflpba.org.



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Reflecting on the past, planning for the future



JOHN FRALEY
RPOC
PRESIDENT

I'm hoping that each and every one of you has a healthy and happy 2024. The RPOC is dedicated to the well-being of our members. The current members of the Miami-Dade Police Department and Miami-Dade Corrections, and all the first responders serving the people of Miami-Dade County, are in our thoughts and prayers each day. May God bless you for all you do and what members of the RPOC did during their years of service.

My article in the previous issue referenced the mass shooting on NW North River Drive in 1982. It's stories like that and others that members who wore the "brown gown" will remember. The Dec.

29, 1972, crash of Eastern Airlines Flight 401 came to mind last month. The political conventions of the same year were very interesting, to name a few. We saw and did the things that were necessary to preserve the safety and well-being of the citizens of Dade County.

The plane crash brought the north end motors together along with others in the department to work at a very gruesome scene. It was a very long day after celebrating the promotion of Russ Kubik to sergeant. We all made it to work that morning. It was 36 degrees, and I rode my motor to Station 1 in a long-sleeved shirt. Due to the amount of antifreeze I had in me, it didn't feel that cold.

I like to reflect on these types of stories because it demonstrates our dedication to the job we did and how we did it. We wore the brown gown for a variety of reasons; one was that it was the uniform of the Dade County Public Safety Department, and it distinguished us from the other departments in the county. The other reason is we had each other's back at work. We were a team dedicated to a job.

I had the opportunity to speak with Norman Kasoff, who is about to turn 94 this year. Norm fell and fractured his hip last year and had been in rehab for months with several months more to go this year. Norm is a wealth of information about the early days of the Dade County Public Safety Department. Norm and another old-timer, George Gibson, are sharp-witted for retirees in their 90s. I also wanted to advise the membership that Al Papa and J. J. Crocker are recovering from medical issues and doing quite well.

Please remember that the Otis Chambers Scholarship Fund is now open to applicants. Remember that grandchildren and, in some cases, children of our retirees are eligible and should apply. The fund is open for scholarships for trade schools, schools, police and fire academies as well as the medical field. I really enjoy being the chairperson of this program. Please donate what you can when you receive your renewal packets in January.

With regard to our upcoming reunion, we will be sending out email invitations to all of our members with instructions on how to register for our 2024 reunion online. However, those who wish to register beforehand can go directly to our website

at www.rpocpba.org, scroll down to the bottom of the first page, click on the top right yellow box and follow the directions. We would also like to encourage our current members to gain access to our private Facebook group, where we discuss many topics relative to our retirees and keep them updated on the latest FRS information. The link to our Facebook group is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1804848986470800/>. Lastly, today marks seven years of the Retired Police Officers Council private Facebook group. Thank you all for helping keep this community strong. What you all have set out to do you have accomplished, and this is just the start to having a page that is relevant to your interests and desires while having discussions that are respectful and mindful of our other colleagues. Always remember that now we must serve and protect each other, as we've earned it through our actions.

One last point: The renewal packet for the RPOC, golf fees, lunch cruise fees and all other fees regarding the reunion are explained in the eight different items in the packet. Please read all the items and fill them out as appropriate for your needs. If you need more information, contact me at 954-651-0451.

Chaplain Reba Miller's report

Blessings and favor to all our members, friends and families during this new year. May the new year bring a refreshing and abundant sense of renewal and anticipation to all of us. May all of us embrace change and find the courage to let go of what no longer serves us, making way and space for new beginnings.

Our world is full of conflict and chaos, but in the midst of all the challenges, may you discover an inner strength and faith you never knew existed. Hope and renewal are cornerstones in faith. In faith, we see each year as not just a change in the calendar but an opportunity for a fresh start. A time to renew our commitment to faith and hope and God almighty. Always remember, you were designed with purpose, and each creation has a destiny.

We send out continuing encouragement to the following members for healing and their determination and commitment: Kathy Rivers, Gary Gable, J.J. Crocker, Barry and Patty Savage, Marcy Myrttil and Norm Kasoff.

We honor and extend our profound condolences to Suzanne Sante for the loss of her husband, Mickey, and to Shirley and Ronnie Key following the passing of their son, Jordan Isaiah.

We also are remembering and honoring the passing of these, our esteemed RPOC members:

- John Pruitt, MDPD: August 2023
- Eileen Decora, MDPD: November 2023
- Hugh Peebles, MDPD: January 2024

Remember these words from Gloria Gaither:

"God has not called us to see through each other, but to see each other through."

Congrats to retired members

The South Florida PBA is proud to honor retired members who have put in long hours and outstanding service for their departments and communities. Join us in honoring these great members and exceptional public servants as they celebrate their retirement.



Closel Pierre
Miami-Dade Police Department



Jorge Avetrani
Miami-Dade Police Department



Lazaro Gonzalez
Miami-Dade Police Department



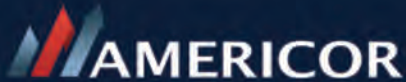
Michael Dieppa
Miami-Dade Police Department



Michael Leoncini
Aventura Police Department



Richard Brown
Florida City Police Department



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Signing Day

PBA members join with county and department leaders to celebrate an historic new contract

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

For Miami-Dade Mayor Danielle Levine Cava, greeting South Florida PBA members on this momentous occasion began with getting down on her fours to pet a couple of dogs. It was that kind of celebration when the PBA signed a new collective bargaining agreement with Miami-Dade County.

A delegation the size that gathered at the PBA Hall on Dec. 8 usually convenes for a historical document like a declaration or a constitution. This signing was certainly historic, as well as illustrious and distinguished.

Most noteworthy was that this contract that runs through 2026 is the last the PBA negotiated with and signed with the county. It's also the last that will bring together Miami-Dade County police officers, Miami-Dade Corrections & Rehabilitation officers, animal services, communications and all the units the PBA represents in the county.

When it's time for the next contract, the police department will be well into serving – and negotiating with – the new Miami-Dade County sheriff, who will be elected this coming November.

“That was the last contract that we negotiated with the county, so we wanted to take the time to bring in everybody and recognize the significance,” PBA President Steadman Stahl commented. “It was great day for one of the largest contracts that we’ve had in more than 30 years.”

The pomp and circumstance seemed elevated by the hall being set up almost like a continental congress. Representatives from Miami-Dade police took up one flank. Corrections officers and other units filled several rows of seats on the opposite side.

Stahl and Mayor Cava sat at a head table along with Director of Public Safety James Reyes, Miami-Dade Police Director Stephanie Daniels and MDC&R Director Sherea Green. PBA officers stood behind the leadership to create a backdrop that added to the ceremonial atmosphere.

This was a fitting culmination of nearly three months of negotiations to reach the auspicious agreement.

“There was a lot of going back and forth where they didn’t want to give things,” Stahl explained. “But we stayed profession-



Mayor Cava pets two of the MDPD therapy dogs that were part of the festivities celebrating the PBA's new contract.

al and positive. We engaged at every turn. We didn't give up. We kept making sure that we got the most that we can get for the members.”

The headline of the new deal is that it is filled with a substantial amount of cost-of-living adjustments and supplemental pay. All totaled, the bulk of members will receive a 15 percent increase in compensation over the life of the contract.

When the agreement finally came to the membership for a vote, it passed with more than 80 percent approval. And when the



South Florida PBA President Steadman Stahl and Miami-Dade Mayor Danielle Levine Cava put their signatures on the new collective bargaining agreement that nets members up to 15 percent in pay increases.

documents were passed to the founding mothers and fathers of the agreement seated at the front of the room, the smiles and handshakes erupted.

It would be easy to say the PBA saved its best for this last one. But there is never any resting on the laurels with this union.

“As we move forward, we will be ready for whatever lays in store for us,” Stahl added.

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Fine Roasted



The Pig-A-Holics from Hialeah Gardens PD show their patrol car, which created with a smoker to cook their pig and win Best Pig Presentation.

When the smoke cleared, the second annual South Florida PBA Pig Roast Bowl Series left a lingering feeling that a national phenomenon is in the making

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

■ PHOTOS BY LINDA CARTA AND NOLAN REGAN

Through the smoke of 107 pigs roasting, see thousands of people smiling. The masses that attended the South Florida PBA's second annual Pig Roast Bowl Series on Dec. 9 seemed to be grinning throughout the day. All day. Except when their mouths were watering from the aroma rising through the smoke that began smoldering before the sun came up.

Even the alligator the Pig-A-Holics from Hialeah Gardens Police Department barbecued alongside their pig in the most fantastic cooking contraption ever invented seemed to be smiling. Especially with the cigar Mayor Yioiset De La Cruz put in his mouth.

Ariel Gonzalez and his teammates on Doral Swine, representing the Doral PD, arrived at Tropical Park for the Pig Roast before sunrise. Such commitment would more than pay off later in the day, and it helped create the element that embraced everyone who took part in an event that has become a phenomenon in just two years.

"You could smell the pigs, different flavors, throughout the whole park," described PBA Board Member Tony Rodriguez, who competed for the second time with his fellow officers from MDPD Homicide on the Bleeding Blue team. "Imagine going to different barbecue pits at one place. You get to smell the different odors of seasonings and stuff."

It would take 107 words to describe the distinct delectability from each team. All told, you still might be able to catch a whiff of the tasty aroma even two months after the fact, and the mouthwatering feeling that came with walking into the park that day may last even longer.

To be sure, the feast more than accomplished its primary goal to raise thousands of dollars for the PBA's Love Fund. As well as the residual benefit of generating so much love and positive exposure for first responders and a community connection for law enforcement that is as indescribable as the "Mmm mmm good" of the pigs.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



Members of the Doral Swine accept the trophy for Best Law Enforcement Tasting Pig.



Thousands of people attended the second annual Pig Roast Bowl Series.



The team sponsored by 305 Chef and Mission PT was named 2023 Grand Champions.



FINE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

"It was just a perfect all-around day," praised PBA Rep Julio "JP" Priede, the event organizer and member who conceived the Pig Roast Bowl Series. "The music was good, the vibe was great, the food was ... everything was positive. Which is great because it's a movement now."

Another swine day

The Pig Roast Bowl Series has already become a movement big enough to surpass many of the barbecue competitions that take place throughout the South nearly every weekend. Big enough to attract "pro" teams that run this circuit.

Big enough that the event awarded champions in eight categories. The team sponsored by 305 Chef Paulette Bilsky-Phillips, and Mission PT emerged as the Grand Champions. They were as shocked as anyone, being a non-law enforcement group that basically came out to bring some love to the Love Fund. Other notable winners included the Pig-A-Holics being the overwhelming choice in the Best Pig Presentation category, and Doral PD winning Best Law Enforcement Tasting Pig.

Also big enough that it felt like the PBA actually was able to control the weather. How else to explain that the ongoing rain stopped for the day of the event, and then, that night, a monsoon began brewing.

Magnitude, however, was not just measured by the doubling of the number of teams from the competition's first year. Or that the number of spectators doubled as well, with so many families attending that the bounce houses on site never stopped bouncing.

With Miami-Dade electing a sheriff this year, many of those who declared they are running attended the Pig Roast. Mayors from many of the municipalities that competed came out to support their police teams. They joined the chiefs, some of whom were part of the teams, proving that too many chiefs do not spoil the pig.

And enough elected officials wanted to be part of the festivities that they had their own teams. Perhaps they will need their own division next year, like firefighters had this year. The Miami Firefighters Benevolent Association won that category.

"I think the word is getting around that basically, it's a good cause, and everybody wants to be part of a great cause," Priede explained. "We have people that didn't participate last year that were calling and like, 'Man, I want to be part of it. I saw it last year. I didn't know it was going to be that great.'"

The truly triumphant feeling might have resulted from the vision for the community coming together. And in the process, express the positive feeling toward law enforcement and first responders that flows more in South Florida than may be any other part of the country.

And while the Pig Roast might be on its way to becoming one of the premier law enforcement events in the country, it's important to keep in perspective what having the day does for PBA members.

"I got to see a lot of people I don't normally see all the time," shared Edison Cruz, who led Pinecrest PD's team. "It was really cool to see what the other teams did, and we don't lose sight that it's just an awesome event for everybody to come out and just participate."

As he witnessed the amount of love toward first responders rising as powerfully as the aroma, Cruz observed another lingering value of the event.

"Just working with the community and getting other people

to come out there and kind of give law enforcement a whole different perspective,” he added. “It really humanizes the badge more.”

Or, as Doral’s Gonzalez observed: “It was just so family oriented, which is what law enforcement is all about. And to be honest, that’s what the PBA is all about.”

Roast valuable players

So much of what transpires at the Pig Roast Bowl Series must be seen to be appreciated. And smelled, of course.

Nothing has been more illustrious than what the Hialeah Gardens PD brings to the event. It would be reasonable to think that the Pig-A-Holics built this patrol car with a smoker in the trunk and a grill under the hood just for the Bowl Series.

But it really came to pass as a way to promote community interaction. Head chef Osiel Jimenez had been at a pig roast when he saw people looking at an antique car. That inspired him to ask his captain if the department had a dead car that might be used to create an attraction at events.

Turned out, Jimenez’s first patrol car on the job had blown an engine. And the transmission went. So Chief Louis Diaz gave the go-ahead. They built a smoker box in the trunk and the grill up front. Diaz even came up with the idea of building a cooler into the prisoner’s cage.

“So every time we went to an event, this was an attraction for people,” Jimenez detailed. “We cook for them, and that’s pretty much what we’ve been doing since we got the car.”

Last year, Hialeah even brought the car to Miami-Dade Day, held in front of the Florida state Capitol in Tallahassee. That was the first time they had grilled an alligator, which President Stahl saw and asked if it could be encored at this year’s Pig Roast.

A friend of Jimenez’s from Cuba provided some of his expertise working with metals to create a box for smoking the pig in the trunk that would not get hot enough on the outside to burn anybody wanting a closer look. Although, the trunk remaining closed for most of the day only helped create another aspect that helped the Pig-A-Holics win best presentation.

“Once you open the trunk, you’ll see all the smoke coming out,” Jimenez added. “That, to me, is very impressive.”

The cherry on top of the Hialeah experience, of course, was the alligator. Off duty, Jimenez traps alligators with a friend. They will get a call from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission of a nuisance gator, like on somebody’s patio or in a pool, then receive a permit from FWC to go get it.

The Pig Roast provided an opportunity to benefit from the trappings of that gig. And when the mayor added the cigar, well, they had smoked the rest of the presentation competition.

Roast of all

So what the heck did Doral Swine put in that pig that made it the best-tasting of all law enforcement teams? Being sponsored by Tripping Animals Brewing might be a tip regarding the secret ingredient.

But Gonzalez hinted that it was about more than the seasoning. He brought the experiences with his father and father-in-law cooking a pig on every Christmas Eve to the table.

“I’ve been around my family since I’ve been born, so I guess it’s in the blood,” he shared.

Doral also showed how the experiences of the four team members can mix so successfully. The best minds together, as Gonzalez noted, who know a lot about barbecue created a special smoky taste.

The winning way here was to have a trial run earlier in the week to hone the ingredients for the rub. So the Doral team came out on the day of the event confident the judges would

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24



Bleeding Blue, made up of MDPD Homicide detectives, was one of many teams that arrived before the sun came up to start cooking.



Hialeah Gardens added a special dish to its fare, using the grill built under the hood of the car to cook an alligator.



The toughest part of the day for judges might have been picking the winners or actually making it through so many delicious entries.





FINE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

like what they tasted.

But even with the motivation of, as Gonzalez said – “We’re going to come out this year and show them” – nobody was more surprised than Doral’s swinest when they were announced as the category winner. From there, it was all over but the shout-outs.

“You can’t cook a pig by yourself,” Gonzalez declared. “You need other people that know what they’re doing and actually get you through the day. And then when you get the finished product, you know it was a lot of cooking and a lot of love going into that pig.”

Totally swine

Where there’s smoke, there’s a once-a-year feast to be devoured at the Pig Roast. And as he reveled in the tailgating aspect of the event – any excuse for a great time, as is a Miami vice – Priede revealed that he might need until next year’s event before he is even hungry again.

“To be honest with you, I couldn’t even taste any more of the samples after a while,” he quipped.

But enjoying the greatness of the second annual Pig Roast Bowl Series meant persevering through what Stahl realized when he started his tasting rounds.

“I tried some, and it was like eating caramel candy,” he gushed. “It was just so crisp. And everybody has their own secret seasonings that I think would rival KFC.”

Actually, far better and with far more culinary science than the seven herbs and spices. Most teams began their preparation days or even weeks before and arrived before the sun came up on game day to dig in.

At first, the aroma came from the charcoal, perhaps with a little zest, firing up. As for what comes from sunup until dusk, well, you kind of have to be there. Proper description is probably best left to somebody who was, and has been, a lot.

Anthony Nicolosi from the BBQ & Craft Company in Lake Worth competes in or judges these types of competitions nearly every weekend. He served as a judge for the Pig Roast Bowl Series and offers the view from the roasting pits. And the smell.

“First, you get that nice smoke roll that’s coming from everyone,” he began. “Then, once that hog starts sweating, pushing out that moisture, that’s when it starts hitting the coals or the hot sear from the pan or whatever’s underneath it. Then you get that fatty smell, that’s when it really kicks in. That’s when you know you’re in heaven.”

So that explains why everybody was in hog heaven, especially those competing among the 107 teams entered. Maybe because it showed that there are at least 107 ways to cook a pig. Whether it was using a mixture of types of wood, roasting on a rotisserie or cooking in the *caja china*, as the box is known, “You imagine your stuff the right way,” Jimenez said.

From his travels judging and competing from north Florida to Georgia to North Carolina to Virginia, Nicolosi recognized the nearly professional methodologies and results achieved at this year’s Pig Roast. He observed that the *mojo*, or the rub, on the pig was one of the key ingredients, along with the meat, the cooker and the participants bringing the passion behind it.

“They are like, ‘No, no, no, taste this, taste this. This is the best. It’s so good,’” Nicolosi described about what he saw that made the event so special. “You feel that passion with all of those teams’ families there from the 2-year-old to the 82-year-old. That’s the real big takeaway from how I feel about this event. It’s really that camaraderie and that the entire family is there.”

JANUARY 2024 NEWS UPDATE

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*Some restrictions apply ** Health News Florida and FDA

Bringing Up the ‘Rear’

Spotlighting the difference-making work that takes place at MDCR’s Rear Lobby

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Picture a bus station. Or a train station. Or, more spot-on, Grand Central Station.

Now, picture it filled with people in handcuffs who have committed crimes, even violent crimes. And who might be drunk or high. Or have serious mental health issues. Or might be trying to kick or throw punches at the people in charge.

Police officers throughout Miami-Dade County and Miami-Dade Corrections & Rehabilitations officers know this wide, open structure as the world of Rear Lobby at Turner Guilford Knight Correctional Center. Or on some nights, it can be like an alternate universe.

Every offender in the county who has been arrested is processed through Rear Lobby. Police officers hand them off to corrections officers, where arrested development can take up to eight hours.

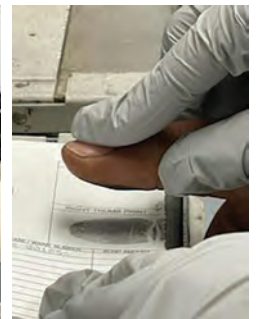
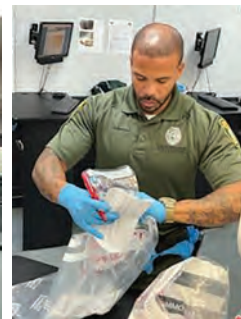
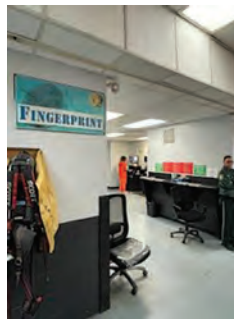
Rear Lobby is also the facility where many of the county’s most dedicated law enforcement officers do business at a very high level. And shedding a spotlight on what takes place here might illuminate how Rear Lobby has become a linchpin for Miami-Dade law enforcing.

“This is a one-stop shop. Everybody knows their part. We just jump in, assist one another, and then it just all comes together like a little family,” asserts Sergeant Tammy Rozier, who has worked in Rear Lobby since 2013 and supervises the 2-10 p.m. shift most weeknights. “I think it sometimes goes unnoticed or unappreciated because you can’t really see what it is that we do.”

Lieutenant Jose Mendez sees it every day as the night shift commander of the Rear Lobby unit. Forgive him for sounding like a proud papa, but there is something he wants to tout about the officers who work the Rear.

“Basically, we screen our officers, and they have to be put in this specialty unit,” he explains. “And then we train them. We train them, because they have a difficult job, and they have to learn different areas here that are very important. So they’re highly trained, they’re motivated, and they are top-tier officers.”

Every PBA member would seem to benefit by taking a closer look to see what it is that they do in Rear Lobby. In a county with a population of 2.4 million, consider what percentage wind up being arrested. Whatever that number is, they all come through intake at TGK. That’s every agency in the county.



Even when offenders come into Rear Lobby, they belong to police officers. They sit like passengers waiting at the train station, except with less conversation and males and females are seated separately.

Until they are prescreened by medical personnel, have vitals checked, answer all the medical questions and the nod comes to process each individual. Charges are accepted by the county, offenders are booked, and they are issued a jail number. The process, of course, includes mug shots, fingerprints, property storage and the like, and it can take up to eight hours before offenders get to their location.

There are some exceptions to these rules. Special handling processes juveniles, high-profile offenders and even members of the media. And if some offenders do not pass medical screening, they can be sent for further treatment through corrective health services in partnership with Jackson Memorial Hospital.

Then there are the offenders known as “combative.”

“They come in, they’re kicking on the

police vehicle or they’re just being aggressive,” Mendez notes. “So we process them in a different area, away from everybody else, to isolate them and control the situation.”

To get an idea of what it takes to work in Rear Lobby, look no further than Rozier. Officers in the unit have special training and special instincts, including the expertise Rozier has that earned her the nickname “The Psych Whisperer.”

“You have people that come in from all walks of life, and sometimes we have to calm them down or talk them down,” she relates.

So the calling in Rear Lobby is to be a calming influence.

“I just try to listen to the offenders, because it gets agitating,” Rozier continues. “But my motto is – and I tell my staff this all the time – ‘Patience is a virtue.’ If they have mental health issues, they’re on drugs and whatever else is going on with them, then what’s our excuse? Because we are none of the above. So I might offer them something to eat or, ‘OK, would you like some

water?' Whatever I have to do to take it all the way down."

Like so many aspects of working corrections, Rear Lobby can be dangerous. Rozier mentioned how two officers just went on restricted duty because one has a broken wrist and one has a broken hand, both injuries coming from processing offenders.

Consequently, the standing order for all law enforcement becomes the prevailing response scenario here:

"I always talk to them to make sure that they remain professional," Mendez adds. "I will say a good 70 percent of the inmates have psychological problems. They'll talk to you, and if you're not careful, they'll punch you right in the face. I mean, without even arguing with you. You're like, 'What in the heck was that?' So they have to be on their toes at all times."

Rear Lobby, as well as corrections and, for that matter, all of law enforcement, too often is a thankless job. Then, there are always moments of redeeming value.

"As a matter of fact, last year, we received a nice email from an inmate that came through here," Mendez shares. "He was very impressed with the way he was treated and the professionalism of the team here."

Perhaps he noticed that patience that runs deep in Rear Lobby, the understanding of what it takes to be with the offenders for hours, taking the handoff from police officers who are with them for as long as it takes to get them processed. To do so, there is acute attention to building morale.

Rozier said she takes on the role of mother of the ship to take morale under her wing. She sets up dinners, celebrates birthdays and does anything else to relieve some of the stress.

And she might use those occasions to hit the Rear Lobby team with words of inspiration that bring balance to this world.

"We try to explain to them that it's not a one-man show, that it's one sound, one band," she proclaims. "No one is on an island, and teamwork makes the dream work."



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Beautiful day in the neighborhood

MDPD NRU officer takes community policing to a personal level

■ BY DAN CAMPANA

While others might judge the book by its cover, Miami-Dade Neighborhood Resource Officer Leonard Cantave turns the pages to look deeper.

When Cantave met Maria as she struggled to get her van to start, it didn't take him long to recognize that the 60-year-old homeless woman needed someone on her side. She needed opportunity.

In late December, Cantave was doing what the NRU unit does best — making contact with the public, helping out however possible, community policing at its core — when he spotted an older man trying to jumpstart Maria's vehicle. After getting the car going, Maria acknowledged the car had no gas.

Cantave, who works in the Midwest District and has been on with MDPD for three years, started to gather a picture about Maria through simple observations and thoughtful questions.

"Tell me about yourself," he recalled saying. "I'm asking because I want to help you."

Maria described losing a job and understanding that her appearance likely gave the wrong impression as she sought work. Cantave knew he could help, not realizing how much he would eventually come to mean for someone he met just doing his job.

In the spirit of the holidays, Cantave gave Maria \$50 and then had her follow him to a nearby gas station, where he filled up her tank. But the van wouldn't start again.

"There was an auto mechanic shop in the back, so I spoke to the owner," Cantave said, adding that the man didn't hesitate to lend his assistance. "[The owner said], 'Since you're going to help her out, I'm going to help her out.' So, he gave her a brand-new battery."

This heartwarming story of help and hope only grew from there. Cantave talked to Miami-Dade Dispatch Nikki Sears, a good friend of his, about Maria. Knowing they both wanted to do more, Sears created a GoFundMe campaign that raised \$600 to help their newfound friend.

With that money, Cantave helped Maria get a post office box, buy a pair of shoes and renew her security license, which had

lapsed after losing her job in 2022. What was left went toward gas for her car.

But Cantave went a step further by contacting Maria's former employer, who agreed to bring her back part-time. And then he guided her to complete an application for an affordable housing opportunity.

At the heart of all this is truly Cantave's appreciation for opportunity. After coming to the U.S. from Haiti as a 19-year-old, he spent 20 years in the Army on active duty and as a reservist. He then worked 15 years for Miami-Dade Corrections & Rehabilitation — a tough job that he used to help others see what is possible. While working corrections, Cantave earned a Boot Camp Employee of the Month award in 2017 for his professionalism and effective efforts with cadets to keep them from future incarceration.

"I'd talk to the guys about how it's not too late to turn your life around, things of that nature," he explained of his perspective about working with the inmates. "You have to treat everybody right. Today could be their turn, tomorrow could be yours."

His kindness toward Maria continued in January when, after receiving some money owed to him related to his military service, Cantave gave Maria the funds she needed to renew her insurance and driver's license. And he continues to invest in her with a commitment to service that defines how the MDPD NRU builds positive relationships and connections with the community.

"Every day, I go back to check on her, make sure she's all right," Cantave said. "I helped her out because that's just me. That's my nature. We just took Maria and ran with it. We're going to go all out. It's a good feeling, I'm not going to lie."

Maria, in turn, has grown more confident as her situation has improved with Cantave's and Sears's assistance. No one wanted to help her out, she told Cantave, but he showed up out of the blue to change her life. When she talks about trying to repay him, Cantave offers a simple message.

"When you get back in your field, whenever somebody needs help, you go help them out," he related. "Pay it forward. That's what I need you to do."



MDPD Midwest District Officer Leonard Cantave.




Maria shows the uniform for her public safety job that Officer Cantave helped her get back.



Officer Cantave enlisted the aid of Freddy's Tire and Auto Service to help fix Maria's van.



From left, Leonard Cantave, Maria and Miami-Dade County Communications Officer Nikki Sears.



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Another Event-full Year

South Florida PBA sets schedule to give members more great experiences in 2024

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Meetings and planning sessions at the South Florida PBA late last year focused on putting together another rousing schedule of events for 2024. The previous year's successes had so enthralled members, with record attendance at the annual Law Enforcement Awards Gala, second- and third-generation PBA families gone fishing in the Saltwater Fishing Tournament and the smoking hot success of the Pig Roast Bowl Series.

Still, another year of planning and work required to execute these events to such great heights seemed daunting for the PBA. Car rallies, bike shows, cigar nights and the like are great. And they raise significant donations to the PBA's Love Fund and generate oh-so-important community connection.

But the union's executive board asked the question about how much is too much?

"We're going to slow it down. We're going to just do less events next year," PBA Treasurer Alex Munoz revealed when asked about planning events for 2024. Like all the executive officers, the office staff and many board members, Munoz had been in the thick of running the events in 2023, and he wondered where the PBA would get the impetus to create an events encore for 2024.

"But people just kept calling us," Munoz continued. "They were saying, 'Hey, I had a great time at that car show. When is the next one?' So we kind of owe it to our members, and at the end of the day, yeah, it's more work on our end, but we're raising awareness, and we're raising money for the Love Fund."

Peruse the 2024 South Florida PBA Upcoming Events on the facing page to see what's on tap for this year, beginning with Bike Night on Feb. 21 and culminating seven events later with the Pig Roast Bowl Series on Nov. 2. To underscore the annual gala on June 1 as a can't-miss event would underestimate the pure enjoyment of the others, let alone what they do for the PBA's Love Fund, which helps out so many members and their families when they go through tough times professionally, personally and emotionally.

Munoz shared some of the back-room conversation among board members about meeting the objective of each event to raise awareness for the union and support for the Love Fund.

"In doing so, these events become so popular that before the year even starts, people are calling us and asking, 'Hey, when is your next car show? When is your next motorcycle show?'" he noted.

He also relayed a story that made the rounds at the union. Two members who worked the same shift at the same station but never really talked met at a bike show last year. Their common passion for motorcycles confirmed that the events are creating friendships among members built on something beyond the uniform.

In fact, the shows in 2024 will be less about who has the hottest car or the bike that wins the trophy. Accentuating engaging community members will be a major part of the objective. Think "Cars and Coffee With a Cop," except that it will be more like a beer with members, community members, and you never know who else will show up to add to the fun.

"We're not competing for anything. We're just hanging out," Munoz confirmed. "It's going to be food, music and friends. So people calling to ask when is the next one just makes it that much more worth it for us because it shows us that the proof is in the pudding. People are asking us to put on these events again and again because they're enjoying them."

There will be enjoyment and more at the PBA Golf Tournament on March 15 and the Cigar Social on April 25 when elected officials in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties will again come to hang out with PBA members. Having the people who make decisions on pensions, benefits and many other aspects of the job show up and speak to members certainly gives them a greater understanding of the job.

That juice is more than worth the squeeze of the time and energy it takes to put on and pull off any of these events.

"For them to come over here and talk to us, hear us out, have a cigar with us, it makes it a lot easier for us to work with them," Munoz submitted. "And it puts them in a position where they understand where we come from as well."

The Fallen Officer Tribute that takes place throughout September and the Feast Day Celebration of St. Michael on Sept. 27 are parts of the events schedule that perhaps mean the most to the PBA and its members. These are the days that remind everyone what the Love Fund is for, why the benevolence and brotherhood of the union is so powerful and necessary.

"There's a reason why we do this. And it's to benefit those that so desperately need it," Munoz declared. "You put that much work into these events to make sure that we're there for them, because they're out there doing the work. And that makes it all worth it in the end."



2024



UPCOMING EVENTS

February 21

Bike Night

March 15

Golf Tournament

April 25

Cigar Social

June 1

**Annual PBA
Law Enforcement Awards Gala**

June 22

Fishing Tournament

Sept 1-30

Fallen Officer Tribute

Sept 27






**Feast Day Celebration of
St. Michael**

Nov 2

Pig Roast Bowl Series

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REFLECTIONS

Catching up with a renowned South Florida PBA Member

MDPD's Power Couple

Clarence and Joy Coffee are proud of their lasting impact on the profession

■ BY DAN CAMPANA

Cops get cops.

Cops who marry cops get a built-in understanding about working opposite shifts and taking on extra hours because of major incidents, and a general common ground about what comes with the territory in law enforcement.

Although the secret to a good marriage is unique to each couple, it's safe to say Clarence and Joy Coffee's shared experiences in policing have helped keep them on the same page throughout the years.

"When you're in law enforcement, especially being on the female side — I can only speak for myself — a lot of times, the gentlemen in your life don't really have an understanding of what you do if they're not in law enforcement," said Joy, who spent 30 years in a variety of roles with MDPD. "[Clarence] understood. It's nice to have somebody who you can talk to."

Added Clarence: "The biggest thing is just the ... communication. That was totally enhanced because we could talk about life issues."

Their marriage resulted after an introduction by Sergeant Rick Holton and working at the department together. Years later, they have six grandchildren and two great grandchildren from their several adult children.

Looking back on their respective careers, Clarence and Joy's impact is measured in a legacy of who they are as people, as much as what they did.

Clarence ended up in law enforcement somewhat by happenstance. While working at Sears, he ran down a shoplifter on his own as co-workers looked on from a window.

"That was my first indication that if I'm going to do any type of law enforcement, I might as well do it for real," said Clarence, who spent 35 years on the job, following the lead of his police officer brother.

He made several stops along his three-decades-plus career — organized crime, Special Response Team, SRT negotiator,



Clarence Coffee's Record

- Hired as police service officer in 1975
- Hired as full-time police officer in 1977
- Member of Hostage Response Team, which later became Special Response Team
- Worked in Organized Crime Bureau, in Sexual Battery and as an SRT negotiator
- Best known for years serving as a training adviser at the academy
- Retired in 2007

investigating sexual battery and serving as a firearms instructor. His time at the academy stands out most notably; he was the first African American officer to serve as a firearms trainer.

"I worked at the academy in the early '80s, and I taught a lot of recruits. A lot of those recruits actually turned out to be in command positions in the departments. I know I've had contact instructionally with at least three former directors," Clarence said, noting that he also trained South Florida PBA President Steadman Stahl. "I did everything in my power to



Joy Coffee's Record

- Started in Kendall Districts in 1988
- Worked in HUD, community policing and the Robbery Intervention Detail
- Served as an FTO for many years
- Best known for service as an administrative officer for RID
- Retired in 2018

make sure that when I graduated a recruit that they totally understood what that silver badge meant."

There is a meaning to being a police officer that Clarence tried to instill in every officer he trained — and it's one that might very well be his legacy.

"I kept them focused on [having] to bust your butt to get that silver badge because we're not giving them away," Clarence added. "You earn it or you don't."

Clarence's service-oriented approach toward training recruits is why, even more than 15 years after retirement, he still occasionally encounters officers and department leaders who remember having him as their trainer.

For Joy, working as a field training officer and then in the Robbery Intervention Detail (RID) instilled a feeling of family.

"I really loved being an FTO. I loved

going in the car. I love working with people,” she said.

Mentoring is part of her legacy. There are many officers in MDPD who cut their teeth working with Joy, including many male officers. But being a female and training male officers was never an issue.

“You’re wearing a brown gown, I’m wearing a brown gown. Yes, I’m a female, yes, you’re a male. However, we’re here to do a job ... to go out and serve the community,” she explained. “Our job is also to go home every night, so I’m going to work with you to put you in the best position to do a great job.”

She carried that same approach to her work as the administrative officer for the MDPD’s renowned RID from 1997 until her retirement in 2018. After she came off the road, RID officers knew Joy as the one who made the unit go, taking care of everything from the cars to the finances with her consummate attention to detail.

“Anything they needed me to do,” she recalled. “Those were my kids. I was the mama bear. Everything runs through me as far as just helping and supporting the bureau.”

Similar to her husband, Joy takes pride in seeing those she worked with in their formative years in RID move up the ranks.

“It’s just a nice feeling to have worked

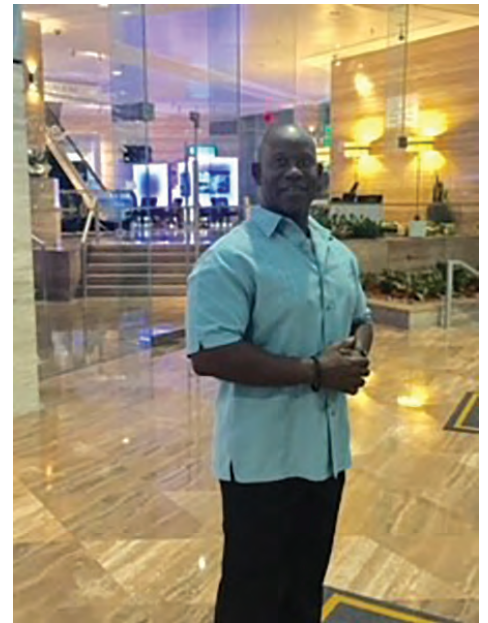


with them as an officer and now to appreciate what they did and how far they’ve moved up to support and take care of the department as it is now,” she added.

Clarence called it an “incredible” feeling to know he helped shape a multitude of officers at the academy level.

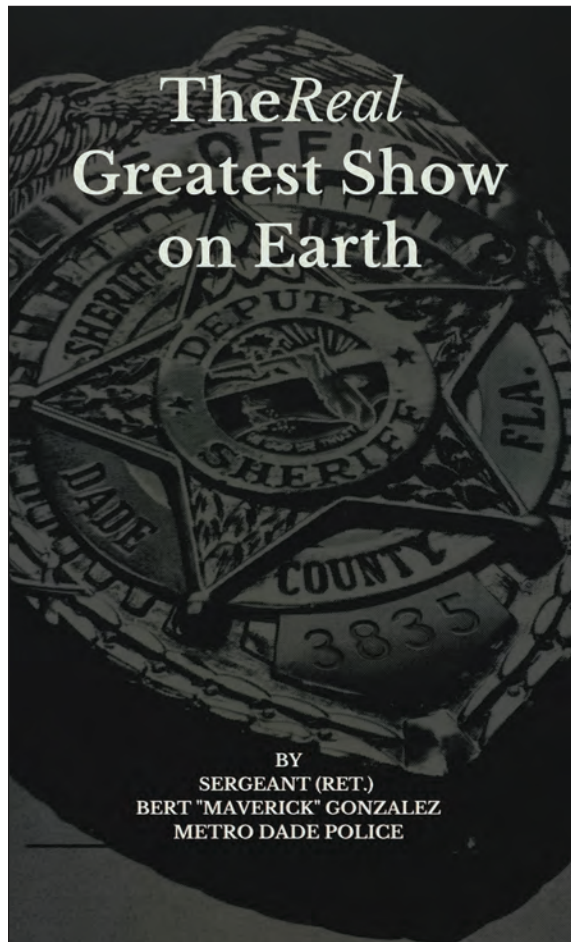
“My biggest hope was that I did what I needed to and instilled in them what the department’s needs were,” Clarence said.

When the couple attends Miami Dol-



phins games, they still get noticed for their days with the department. Some recognize Joy from her RID days of not too long ago. Others treat Clarence like something of a celebrity.

“It’s amazing, the love they still have for him,” Joy commented. “Even though he’s been gone since 2007, a lot of people that are now getting ready to retire still recognize him and know who he is. It’s a really nice feeling.”



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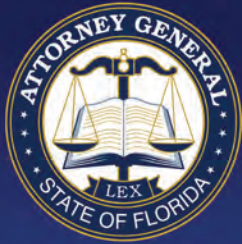
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Members Only Section

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

Keeping the Dream Alive

South Florida PBA members honor Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Martin Luther King Jr. delivered the “I Have a Dream” speech on Aug. 28, 1963. In that speech, he enlightened the world on the importance of standing up for what you believe in and fighting for those who are marginalized.

Over 60 years later, Dr. King’s lessons about acceptance and peace continue to inspire people, including local law enforcement. To promote his message, the South Florida PBA participated in multiple events in his honor on and around Jan. 15.

Several departments, including Miami-Dade Police and Miami-Dade Corrections & Rehabilitation, joined in the fun at the Miami-area MLK Day Parade. Another MLK Day Parade took place in Perrine. Pinecrest Police showed up in full force with their squad of superheroes, including Batman, Spider-Man and Captain America.

It was a beautiful day for Key West’s MLK Day Parade, and Key

West Police showed up to support with smiles on their faces.

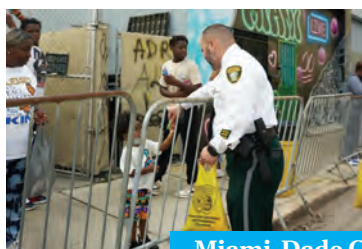
Other departments chose to get active in honor of MLK at the One Miami MLK Day Bike Ride on Jan. 14. Bal Harbour Police and Florida International University Police enjoyed the nice weather and the company of other departments.

Miami-Dade Police attended two breakfasts to celebrate MLK Day. On Jan. 11, the department participated in the Children’s Trust annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast.

To conclude the weekend, Miami-Dade Police also attended the 31st annual Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Breakfast, sponsored by the 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project. Miami-Dade Corrections & Rehabilitation members were in attendance as well to support the organization, which bridges the gap between law enforcement and the community.



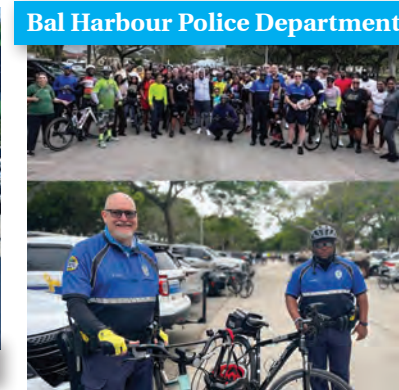
Miami-Dade Police Department



Miami-Dade Corrections & Rehabilitation



Pinecrest Police Department



Bal Harbour Police Department



Florida International University Police



Celebrating the holidays with the South Florida PBA

The songs, the lights, the presents under the tree — but not necessarily for all families in South Florida. But that's where South Florida PBA members stepped in and stepped up. Throughout the month of December, the South Florida PBA took on the task of making sure every family had a holly jolly Christmas. Here's a look at some of the great giveaways from members:



Miami-Dade Police

To say that Miami-Dade Police was busy giving back this holiday season would be an understatement. On Dec. 23, the department's Special Victims Bureau hosted a toy giveaway for their Police Officer Assistance Trust, a group which helps families of fallen officers and officers in need.

Santa is a busy man, but on Dec. 20, Miami-Dade's Hammocks District Neighborhood Resource Unit enlisted the big man in red for a visit to Great Heights Academy. Of course, the department had to make sure local children battling illness had a merry Christmas. On Dec. 11, the Kendall District Neighborhood Resource Unit partnered with HCA Florida Hospital to bring smiles to the faces of young heroes.

Miami-Dade Corrections & Rehabilitation



It was a holiday party for the books for Miami-Dade Corrections & Rehabilitation and their "littles." The department's "bigs" put on a festive holiday celebration on Dec. 21, complete with caroling and a gingerbread house competition.

MCDR was able to make the holidays season merry and bright at their fifth annual "Shop With a Correctional Officer" event on Dec. 13. The department took 20 children from the Citrus Family Care Network on a holiday shopping spree at Walmart. They even got a special visit from Mr. and Mrs. Claus and the Grinch.



Pinecrest Police

Pinecrest Police also lent a helping hand to the Citrus Family Care Network over the holidays. On Dec. 20, the department collected a mountain of toys that were delivered to the organization.

To bring some extra holiday cheer to local families, Pinecrest's Police Superheroes came out to celebrate Christmas at Suniland Park on Dec. 9.

North Miami Police



North Miami rivaled Santa and his sleigh on Dec. 21 when the department visited local neighborhoods delivering toys.

Heroes Helping

South Florida PBA members take local children on a holiday shopping spree

The holidays are a time to give back to those in need. Since 2009, Target has been hosting the Heroes and Helpers event with first responders to help local children who are in need of some Christmas cheer.

Members of the South Florida PBA had the chance to participate in Heroes and Helpers throughout the month of December.

Miami-Dade Police, Homestead Police and Miami-Dade Corrections & Rehabilitation combined to raise funds to purchase more than \$2,500 in Target gift cards for kids to use to purchase Christmas gifts.

Homestead Police partnered with local non-profit Start Off

Smart to host their Heroes and Helpers event on Dec. 15. SOS and Homestead Police sponsored 25 kids in total, showering them with clothing, toys and other gifts.

Miami-Dade Police's officers in the Kendall District participated in a similar event on Dec. 16. Even Santa made an appearance for the shopping trip.

Miami Dade Corrections & Rehabilitation Department joined Coral Gables Police for their Heroes and Helpers event on Dec. 7.

Because of these officers and these non-profit organizations, children throughout South Florida were able to have a Christmas that they will never forget.



Christmas was a little brighter thanks to the special "elves" from the Homestead Police Department handing out gifts to local kids.



On Dec. 14, Medley Police hosted their "Shop With a Cop" event, allowing local children to pick out the presents they wanted for the holidays.

Road Warriors

South Florida PBA members go along for the Wounded Warriors Ride

Perhaps you know the phrase, “It’s about the journey, not the destination.” That applies to many events in life, but especially the Wounded Warriors Project Soldier Ride.

Members of the South Florida PBA participated in the multi-day ride that culminated in a seven-mile run over the Florida Keys’ Seven Mile Bridge on Jan. 6.

Before riders took on that challenge, Miami-Dade Police joined the group on Jan. 4 to show their support for riders who faced both mental and physical challenges on the ride.

The Wounded Warriors Project Soldier ride aims to build confidence and strength through physical activities and acts of ser-

vice. But more than that, it honors the sacrifice of the men and women who have been injured serving their country.

After the stop in Miami-Dade County, the riders headed south towards the Keys. Key West officers, many of whom made the ride, greeted the participants, thanking them for their service and sacrifices made. Members from Aventura also joined local vets in making the ride.

In the past 20 years, the ride has benefitted 17,000 warriors, leaving a lasting impact on veterans and members of law enforcement alike in Florida.



Aventura



Miami-Dade



Key West

Saving a seat for a hero



They say, “Heroes get remembered, but legends never die.” That phrase perfectly encapsulates how MDPD brothers and sisters continue to remember and honor Officer Cesar “Echy” Echaverry.

Echy was lost in the line of duty on Aug. 17, 2022, at just 29 years old, after being involved in a shootout with an armed robber.

Since then, Miami-Dade police have done everything they can to keep Echy’s memory alive.

Last year, on Dec. 8, his birthday, Miami-Dade police unveiled a chair in his memory to his family members at the second annual Angel at Shortstop Softball Tournament.

The chair now sits in the auditorium of Miami-Dade’s headquarters so everyone who comes inside can learn about what a legend Echy was.

Monroe County Sheriff’s Office celebrates longtime officer

There’s something special about the tradition of law enforcement.

On Jan. 13, Monroe County Sheriff’s Office celebrated an officer with a long history of serving others: Everett R. Rivas Sr.

Rivas’s family visited MCSO headquarters to honor their grandfather, whose uniform and other memorabilia from his unprecedented service are now being displayed in the department’s showcase.

Rivas came to the area in the 1920s, becoming the first motorcycle officer in Monroe County in 1926. He served in various positions and was a sergeant when he retired the first time.

As we’ve seen throughout history, it’s often hard to let go of a job that has given you so much. So it wasn’t long before Rivas returned to the job after retiring.

When he came back, Rivas went to work as Judge Ignatius Lester’s bailiff. In total, he served on the job for 52 years when he ultimately chose to retire.





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S. Paul Sloane, DNP, APRN, FNP-C
As a retired Fire Captain with 30 years of service and a Doctorate-level Advanced Practice Nurse Practitioner, I understand the physical and emotional demands of first responders.

Critical considerations for married couples choosing FRS pension plan options



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Planning for retirement is a crucial aspect of financial well-being, and selecting the right pension plan can significantly impact your financial security and that of your beneficiaries. In this article, we will delve into the complexities of FRS pension plan options, specifically focusing on the potential pitfalls of choosing between Option 1 and Option 3 for married couples.

The Florida Retirement System (FRS) offers four pension plan options, each with its own set of features. For the purpose of this

article, we will concentrate on married couples navigating the decision between Option 1 and Option 3.

Option 1 provides a payout for as long as the retiree lives, while Option 3 ensures payouts for as long as either the retiree or their spouse lives. While Option 3 offers more comprehensive coverage, it comes with a reduced dollar benefit compared to Option 1.

Common Pitfalls of Option 1 and Life Insurance

Investment risk transfer.

Opting for Option 1 and relying on life insurance to secure your spouse's financial future essentially puts them in an investment plan. Upon your demise, the guaranteed pension money ends, and your spouse receives a lump sum, similar to participants in the Investment Plan. Choosing the pension plan typically signifies a preference for a steady monthly income guaranteed by the State of Florida, avoiding market fluctuations and concerns about running out of money.

Life insurance challenges. Relying on life insurance introduces challenges, including potential expenses, accessibility issues, and expiry concerns. While term life insurance may bridge the financial gap between Options 1 and 3, it can be costly, especially for individuals with underlying medical conditions. Moreover, if the coverage has a limited duration, your spouse may be left without financial protection after that timeframe.

Creditor risks. Life insurance proceeds may be vulnerable to creditors if not handled properly. Unless held in a trust with specific provisions, the death benefit received by your spouse could be pursued by creditors in the event of a lawsuit. In contrast, pension income is typically protected from such creditor claims.

While acknowledging the importance of life insurance, it is crucial to recognize that Option 3 provides married couples with greater assurances and protections compared to simply choosing Option 1 and relying on a life insurance policy to fund their spouse's future financial needs.

Additionally, it's essential to be mindful of potential conflicts of interest when receiving advice. Life insurance salespersons, compensated based on policies sold, may advocate for larger policies, creating a direct conflict of interest. This emphasizes the importance of seeking advice from impartial financial professionals who prioritize your unique needs.

Choosing among pension plan options is a significant decision that requires careful consideration of your financial goals, risk tolerance and the well-being of your beneficiaries. While Option 1 may seem attractive due to its higher dollar amount, the potential drawbacks — including investment risk transfer, life insurance challenges and creditor risks — warrant a closer examination.

Option 3, offering longevity protection for both you and your spouse, provides a more comprehensive and secure solution. As you navigate this decision, ensure that your choices align with your long-

term financial objectives and seek guidance from professionals who are committed to your financial well-being, rather than influenced by conflicting interests. Ultimately, making an informed decision today can pave the way for a more secure and prosperous retirement tomorrow.



Nicolás Valdés-Fauli is the founder and CEO of Thin Blue Line Financial (www.tblinefinancial.com). Call 305-798-1842 or email nvf@tblinefinancial.com. Nicolás has served the LEO community in South Florida for 20 years and is dedicated to helping his clients make sound decisions before and during retirement. He is an expert in all matters related to the FRS, deferred compensation and local municipal retirement plans. This material has been prepared for informational purposes only and is not intended to provide, and should not be relied upon, for tax, legal or accounting advice, nor is it intended to be a solicitation for business. Investment advisory services offered through Main Street Financial Solutions LLC.



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How law enforcement officers can manage their stress



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Law enforcement officers face one of the most demanding and stressful professions. The physical and mental toll is substantial, which can lead to stress, poor eating habits and interrupted sleep. All of these problems can impact one's hormonal responses, especially testosterone levels in males.

Recent studies continue to highlight the correlation among stress

levels among law enforcement officers, decreased testosterone levels and heightened cortisol levels. Notably, these studies reveal significantly lower free testosterone levels in police officers compared to those in other professions.

Compounded by poor sleep quality and nutritional challenges due to shift work, attaining optimal testosterone production becomes increasingly difficult. Despite the tough nature of shift work, there are effective strategies to combat this issue. Let's delve into the complexities of low testosterone and ways to identify its signs in the law enforcement community.

When a day off isn't enough to recharge

Days off should be a time for recharging and recovery, especially in the warm Sunshine State. After a restful night's sleep, one should feel invigorated and ready to tackle the day ahead. While this holds true for most men, some, even in their early 30s, struggle to experience a normal amount of energy. Fatigue and extreme tiredness, surprisingly, are the most common symptoms plaguing men with low testosterone, often overshadowed by the focus on libido.

When you just can't get enough sleep

Quality sleep is essential for testosterone production, and in the midst of a stressful profession like policing, the struggle for proper rest can be a potential recipe for disaster. On days off, lifestyle demands often involve active social engagements and family responsibilities, creating time for quality sleep becomes even more crucial. Testosterone — responsible for energy levels, muscle building, mood and memory in men — peaks during sleep. Without sufficient rest, the body's ability to perform efficiently diminishes. In such cases, testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) becomes a valuable solution to help supplement the body's depleted levels.

Don't let the aging process slow you down

While it's natural for a man's body to slow testosterone production with age, the aging process doesn't have to dictate how one feels. Supplementing testosterone is a transformative approach, helping men across the country feel and look great. Regulating hormone levels through TRT contributes to fat loss, muscle gain, enhanced cognitive function, improved sleep, a



satisfying sex life and a slowed aging process. Embracing age doesn't mean embracing a diminished quality of life.

Elite Anti-Aging recognizes that not everyone is a candidate for testosterone replacement therapy. Lifestyle changes, such as nutritional adjustments and stress management, can also significantly impact well-being. Our approach begins with a comprehensive assessment, including blood tests and performance evaluations, to identify factors affecting testosterone production. Whether through testosterone replacement or lifestyle adjustments, Elite Anti-Aging is committed to helping you regain control of your vitality.

If you believe you're a candidate for hormone replacement therapy in Florida, contact Lisa at 941-342-4344 to schedule your consultation with Elite Anti-Aging. We offer virtual visits, providing flexibility and accessibility for individuals seeking to optimize their hormone health. As a special offering, we extend discounted pricing to all Florida PBA members.

Dr. Sachin Shah, co-founder of Elite Anti-Aging, earned his medical degree from the State University of New York in Syracuse and was trained at New York University Langone Medical Center. Dr. Shah began expanding his interests in pain management, venous medicine and, most recently, stem cell application for regenerative medicine. Dr. Glenn Foss is a graduate of New York Chiropractic College. During his 19 years of clinical experience, he has seen how musculoskeletal dysfunction relates to nutritional and dietary deficits, physical deconditioning and hormonal imbalances.

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Synergies to maximize health and fitness



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In the realm of health and wellness, individual components often receive the spotlight for their unique benefits. High-protein diets, probiotics, digestive enzymes, electrolytes and quality sleep are all recognized as vital elements for overall well-being. However, recent studies suggest that the true power lies in the synergy of combining these components, offering amplified benefits that surpass those of each element in isolation.

High protein: Fueling growth and repair

Protein is the building block of life, essential for muscle growth, tissue repair and overall metabolic function. A diet rich in high-quality proteins such as lean meats, eggs and legumes not only supports physical strength but also aids in weight management. Protein powder supplements are a great way to add protein to your diet quickly and often on the go, when you don't have access to clean and lean protein sources. However, consuming protein alone may not optimize its benefits.

Probiotics: Cultivating gut health

The gut microbiome plays a crucial role in digestion, immune function and even mental health. Probiotics help maintain a healthy balance in the gut. They improve nutrient absorption, reduce inflammation and bolster the body's defenses against harmful pathogens.

Digestive enzymes: Enhancing nutrient absorption

Digestive enzymes are key players in breaking down food into nutrients that can be absorbed by the body. As we age or when we experience digestive issues, our natural enzyme production may decline, leading to bloating, gas and nutrient deficiencies. Supplementing with digestive enzymes promotes efficient digestion, alle-

viates discomfort and ensures optimal nutrient absorption.

Electrolytes: Maintaining fluid balance

Electrolytes such as sodium, potassium and magnesium are crucial for maintaining proper hydration and supporting various bodily functions, including nerve signaling and muscle contractions. Imbalances in electrolytes can lead to fatigue, muscle cramps and impaired performance. Even if you eat sufficient protein, having low electrolyte levels will hold you back from building sufficient muscle tissue and allowing that muscle tissue to perform at its best.

Proper sleep: Restoring vitality

Quality sleep is often overlooked but is fundamental for overall health and well-being. During sleep, the body repairs tissues, consolidates memories and regulates hormones essential for metabolism and immune function. Chronic sleep deprivation is associated with a myriad of health issues, including obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Prioritizing adequate sleep duration and quality is essential for optimal physical and mental performance.

While each component — high protein, probiotics, digestive enzymes, electrolytes and proper sleep — offers significant health benefits on its own, their combined effects are greater than the sum of their parts. A synergistic approach addresses multiple aspects of health simultaneously, promoting optimal digestion, nutrient absorption, hydration and recovery. By integrating these elements into a holistic health regimen, individuals can unlock their full potential for vitality and well-being.

Dr. Debbie Rosen is a performance psychologist with expertise in health and wellness, nutrition and physical fitness. She is the founder and president of TruVidity Labs and Wellness Solutions, a high-quality all-natural nutritional supplement company and provider of anti-aging and wellness programs. www.truviditylabs.com.



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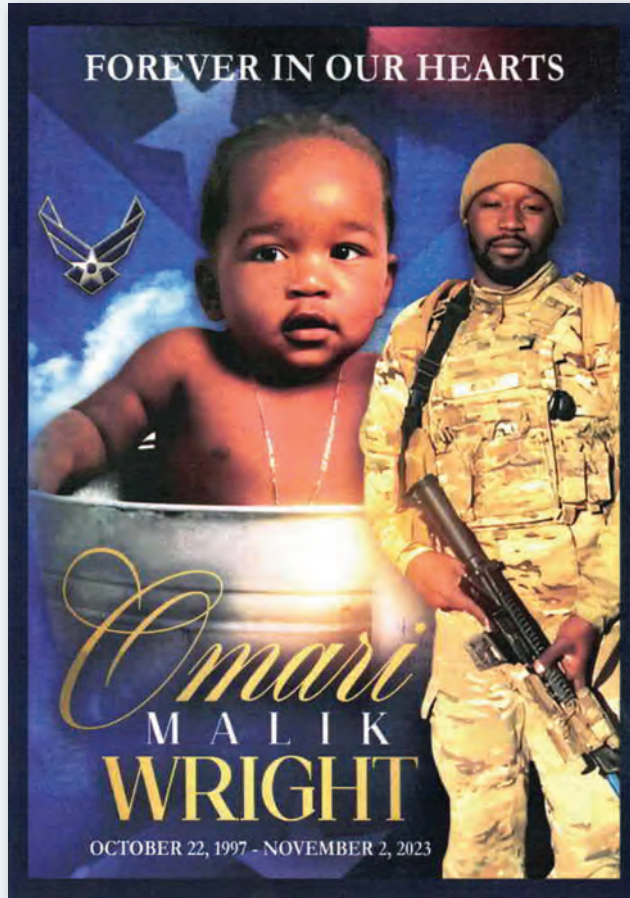
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~The Family of Omari Malik Wright~

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