



"The voice of local law enforcement"

CODE THREE

Official Publication of the Palm Beach County PBA

FALL 2021

A full-length photograph of Detective Jemel Headings, a Black man with a goatee, wearing a dark police uniform. He is holding a silver trophy that says "TOP COP 2021". He stands in front of a blue backdrop with a podium to his left. The podium has a poster of a police officer saluting in front of an American flag.

True Detective

Riviera Beach Detective Jemel Headings honored as a NAPO Top Cop

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Top Notch

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Riviera Beach Detective Jemel Headings didn't hesitate on the February day in 2020 when Florida State Trooper Joseph Bullock was shot and killed. His heroic actions resulted in being honored as a Top Cop by the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) during National Police Week in October. And in his emotional acceptance speech, Headings expressed how he wished he could have done more.

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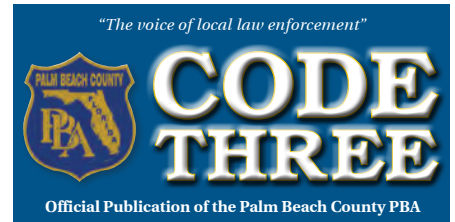
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Have a Cigar Night

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our members are top-notch



JOHN
KAZANJIAN

We continue to reach agreements on new contracts rewarding our members with the compensation and benefits they deserve.

With three of our member agencies – Jupiter, Boynton Beach and Riviera Beach – we are in the process of taking action to show that we're not going to take any more unfair treatment from department and municipal leaders.

And we are coming out of the pandemic strong, with events that bring our members together, including our first-ever Cigar Social in October and, of course, bringing back our phenomenal Angel Run in January.

But above and beyond all that, we first must recognize a defining achievement by one of our own. We have a Top Cop among our membership. And his name is Jemel Headings.

Now, I know you are all top cops in your own way. But most of you know what Riviera Beach Detective Jemel Headings did on that Feb. 5 day when Florida State Trooper Joseph Bullock was assassinated assisting what he believed to be a driver in a distressed vehicle. And for that response, Jemel was honored as one of the 10 best in the country on Oct. 15 at the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) Top Cops awards banquet in Washington, D.C. More than 800 people attended this event, where officers from California and New York, Maryland and Michigan, Texas and Oklahoma, whose heroic acts included saving lives and taking down violent murderers, shared the stage and spotlight with Jemel.

Listen, you know Jemel. When he accepted the award, he insisted he wasn't a hero that day, that he was just doing his job. But I think he is a hero, and that's why we wanted to put him on the cover of this issue. You can read all about it beginning on page 14.

Here's why Jemel is a hero. A lot of people would have driven past the scene and kept going. Jemel saw somebody waving their hands in trouble. He spun his car around, checked it out, put on his vest and went into action.

He's your definition of law enforcement officer. I mean, that's what we ask of many of our law enforcement officers. You're on 24/7. And that's what Jemel did.

When he stepped up to get his award, I'm telling you right now there were tears coming down from my eyes. I think I can speak for many police officers and corrections officers. We never waver. We know what we need to do or what job needs to get done. That's what made Jemel a Top Cop and that's what makes you all top cops.

So we're not going to let anybody mess with you. You have seen how the PBA has responded to politicians – and chiefs who are nothing but politicians – when they go after one of us. Or more than one of us. We take it right back to them.

Maybe you saw the flyover in Jupiter with the plane trailing the message "JUPITER TM BENOIT MUST GO...PBCPBA. ORG." This is one of the methods we have used to target elected officials who are going after us.

The town manager in Jupiter is messing with us. The chief and the city in Boynton Beach are messing with us. The Riviera Beach chief is messing with us, too. He told one of our members to unarrest one of the city council members, who was charged in a domestic violence incident. That's a big story.

And we will pounce on the Boynton Beach issue, too. That's also the city manager. I know the police chief wrote the city manager a recommendation for reorganization after PERC ruled in our favor to allow the captains to unionize. For them to do that, it's union busting. But this is all coming from the city manager. So we're working to take her out too. She needs to go.

It all comes down to politics. Elections are coming up in March. It's an election year for these local agencies, and hopefully we can get some people in there and vote out these tyrants.

So we must continue to stick together. That's one of the reasons we hosted our Cigar Social on Oct. 8 – to give back to the membership and bring members together. I'll tell you, that was a home run, and we're going to do another one on Jan. 14.

I have to thank Rich Tschernia of Cross Country Mortgage for sponsoring the cigar night and bringing the best cigar roller around. That guy is awesome.

The camaraderie was great that night and, as we come out of this COVID, it's making us all stronger. And I think it's a good indication that our best times are ahead. Don't forget that you all are top cops. Keep on doing your thing and remember we've got your back.

And, as always, be safe.

A stylized, handwritten-style signature in blue ink that reads "Kaz".

JOHN KAZANJIAN

PBCPBA PRESIDENT

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Several of our members have incorrect information on file with the PBA office. Please check with your fellow officers to see if they receive the magazine and if not, please email angela@pbcpcb.org to update your information.



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Updated EEOC guidance: COVID-19 vaccinations



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The EEOC enforces workplace anti-discrimination laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act (which include the requirement for reasonable accommodation and nondiscrimination based on disability, and rules about employer medical examinations and inquiries), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion and sex, including pregnancy), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (which prohibits discrimination based on age, 40 or older) and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act. Note:

Other federal laws, as well as state or local laws, may provide employees with additional protections. The following can be found on the EEOC's website:

This technical assistance on vaccinations was written to help employees and employers better understand how federal laws related to workplace discrimination apply during the COVID-19 pandemic. The EEOC questions and answers provided here set forth applicable EEO legal standards consistent with the federal civil rights laws enforced by the EEOC and with EEOC regulations, guidance, and technical assistance, unless another source is expressly cited. In addition, whether an employer meets the EEO standards will depend on the application of these standards to particular factual situations.

K.1. Under the ADA, Title VII, and other federal employment nondiscrimination laws, may an employer require all

employees physically entering the workplace to be vaccinated against COVID-19? (Updated 10/13/21)

The federal EEO laws do not prevent an employer from requiring all employees physically entering the workplace to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, subject to the reasonable accommodation provisions of Title VII and the ADA and other EEO considerations discussed below. (See Section L, Vaccinations – Title VII and Religious Objections to COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates).

In some circumstances, Title VII and the ADA require an employer to provide reasonable accommodations for employees who, because of a disability or a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance, do not get vaccinated against COVID-19, unless providing an accommodation would pose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business. The analysis for undue hardship depends on whether the accommodation is for a disability (including pregnancy-related conditions that constitute a disability) (see K.6) or for religion (see K.12).

As with any employment policy, employers that have a vaccination requirement may need to respond to allegations that the requirement has a disparate impact on—or disproportionately excludes—employees based on their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin under Title VII (or age under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act [40+]). Employers should keep in mind that because some individuals or demographic groups may face barriers to receiving a COVID-19 vaccination, some employees may be more likely to be negatively impacted by a vaccination requirement.

It would also be unlawful to apply a vaccination requirement to employees in a way that treats employees differently based on disability, race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), national origin, age, or genetic information, unless there is a legitimate non-discriminatory reason.

K.2. What are some examples of reasonable accommodations or modifications that employers may have to provide to employees who do not get vaccinated due to disability; religious beliefs, practices, or observance; or pregnancy? (5/28/21)

An employee who does not get vaccinated due to a disability (covered by the ADA) or a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance (covered by Title VII) may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation that does not pose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business. For example, as a reasonable accommodation, an unvaccinated employee entering the workplace might wear a face mask, work at a social distance from coworkers or non-employees, work a modified shift, get periodic tests for COVID-19, be given the opportunity to telework, or finally, accept a reassignment.

Employees who are not vaccinated because of pregnancy may be entitled (under Title VII) to adjustments to keep working, if the employer makes modifications or exceptions for other employees. These modifications may be the same as the accommodations made for an employee based on disability or religion.

If you have questions or concerns regarding COVID-19 vaccinations in the workplace and your individual situation, do not hesitate to reach out to the PBA.

Stay safe!

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Reports from Palm Beach County and Martin County units

How COVID sick days are handled

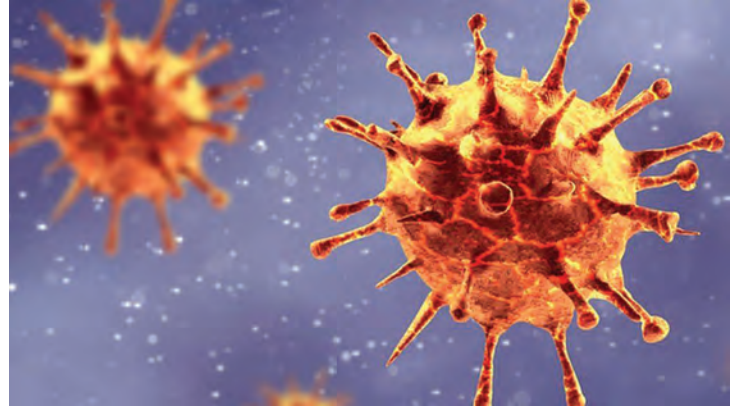
Submitted by Karl Nelson
Martin County Sheriff's Office

Martin County Sheriff's Office has been no stranger to COVID-related issues. Recently, we have had an uptick in the number of exposures and confirmed cases. In many instances, this has caused members to have to stay home from work.

For the record, the Sheriff's Office has affirmed that it is following the CDC guidelines pertaining to its response and handling of COVID-related issues. Personally, I have fielded a number of questions and tried to address concerns relating to how the Sheriff's Office has handled the response to affected members.

The main issue is that in some cases, members have been asked to use their accrued sick time, as opposed to administrative leave, when directed to stay home. It appears that this action is on a case-by-case basis and greatly depends on the circumstances believed to have been the cause of the exposure and/or infection.

Also of concern is the fact that in some cases, the member never exhibits symptoms or even tests positive during the "quarantine." I see no time in the near future that these mat-



ters will be quickly resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

Therefore, it is imperative that our members are diligent in notifying their supervisors of potential exposures, especially since there is not a presumption that our front-line first responder members are being exposed on the job. The administration has told the PBA that it will schedule a labor management meeting to discuss the matters and concerns.

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Take it from the Top Cop

Riviera Beach PD Detective Jemel Headings honored as NAPO Top Cop for catching the killer of Florida Highway Patrol Trooper Joseph Bullock

■ BY ROSEMARY AN

■ PHOTOS BY ED CARATTINI JR.

As Riviera Beach Detective Jemel Headings accepted the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) Top Cops award in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 15 during National Police Week, PBCPBA members filling multiple tables at the banquet moved their hands up to wipe their eyes.

"There were tears coming down my eyes," exclaimed PBCPBA President John Kazanjian.

Riviera Beach PBA representatives Nir Mordechay and Jeremy Summers and officers Cherise Phillips, Justin Hawkins and Major Travis Walker watched their brother in blue take the stage. Although they were familiar with the incident that warranted this honor, listening to the description at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in a room filled with 800 law enforcement officers, family members and friends from throughout the country made it feel like the first time all over again.

"Everybody at our table from the major on down choked up," Mordechay added. "Because that was our own. That was our own that reacted, that did the right thing. That's our brother up there."

Headings was honored as Florida's Top Cop for taking out Franklin Reed, the killer of Florida Highway Patrol Trooper Joseph Bullock, in an off-duty response in February 2020.

While Headings could have reveled in the achievement, the reserved and modest officer couldn't help but feel conflicting emotions, from anger to acceptance, all at once. He thought about how much more he could have given had he arrived a few minutes earlier.

"It's bittersweet," Headings confided. "I'm humble for all the support from the entire law enforcement community and the citizens. But at the same time, it's still sad because two people's lives were ended. Not only that, but [I'm sad for] the families of both."

Headings took a moment to replay the incident that he will never forget. He was on Interstate 95 southbound, driving to work, when he saw a tow truck driver wearing a camouflage vest frantically waving him down. Then he saw Bullock lying on the ground.

Thinking Bullock needed medical attention, Headings put on his vest and approached the trooper. It was too late.

"I looked down and saw that he was bleeding from the head," Headings recalled. "He was shot."

Headings called 911. He had no clue what had happened to Bullock or whether the killer was nearby. He started to clear nearby cars when Reed walked out of the driver's side of the tow truck.

"At that time, all I know is that there's a cop here with a bullet



Riviera Beach Detective Jemel Headings was honored as a 2020 Florida NAPO Top Cop.



From left, Riviera Beach Officer Cherise Phillips, Sergeant Nir Mordechay, Headings, Officer Jeremy Summers, K9 Officer Justin Hawkins and Major Travis Walker attended the awards ceremony.

in his head," Headings explained. "So everyone's a suspect. With my [firearm] drawn, I tell him to get on the ground."

Reed refused to comply. He drew a gun instead and fired two times at Headings.

Headings returned fire. He hit Reed in the chest.

"He falls to the ground," Headings remembered. "As I slowly take a step or two, he sat up, looked at me and then he shot himself in the head."

With Bullock and Reed down, Headings waited for backup.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



Headings, center, with his father, David, and mother, Evelyn.



Florida Highway Patrol PBA President William Smith, right, Executive Vice President Dennis Hobbs, second from left, and FHPPBA board member and Troop K representative Henry Rodriguez, left, met with Headings, second from right, in front of fallen Trooper Joseph Bullock's name at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.

TAKE IT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Summers, the closest union representative to the shooting, rushed to the scene in his patrol car, lights and sirens blaring. Summers helped to keep Headings away from the chaos until the PBA attorney arrived.

"My job is to protect them from all the initial inquiries into the investigation," Summers clarified. "You remember so much more of the critical incident 24 to 48 hours after, so you never want to give just an initial statement."

The officers later learned that in an altercation with the tow truck driver, Reed had fired his weapon, but it malfunctioned. That's when the driver ran down the median and flagged down the first driver he could find, who turned out to be Headings in an unmarked vehicle. Summers said there are countless ways that the incident could have turned worse.

"He could've easily jumped in the tow truck," Summers cautioned. "And took off in the trooper's car, too. The only reason the driver is not dead is because by the time he cleared that jam [in his weapon], Jemel had shown up on scene."

For someone who had no idea what he was walking into, Headings knew how to react on the spot. His swift and courageous response caught Bullock's killer. And there is no doubt in his abilities.

"He's your definition of a law enforcement officer," Kazanjian applauded. "To me, he's a hero. A lot of people would've drove past and kept going, but not him. He saw somebody in trouble,



The Florida Highway Patrol created a tribute to State Trooper Joseph Bullock where his name is inscribed on the wall at the National Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial.

spun the car around, checked it out, put on his vest and went into action."

Riviera Beach officers can confirm that this act of bravery is not new for Headings. If anyone is going to respond to this kind of incident, Headings is the officer for the job. They describe him as a man of integrity. Fair. Firm. Consistent. Professional. And someone who acts the same whether he is in uniform or not.

"He's not a fake," Mordechay declared. "That's the best way I can explain it. It wasn't a shock for me to know that he reacted the way he did, because that's what Jemel does. When a police officer is needed to react, he's going to act. He's not going to hesitate, and he's going to do the right thing."

Not only did Headings do the right thing, but he also exuded humility when honored for his actions. He was named PBCP-BA 2020 Officer of the Year before accepting the 2020 NAPO Top Cop award and even mentioned feeling bad that he won over other officers involved in critical incidents.

"Whenever you talk about somebody who did something courageous or brave, you say, 'He's really humble,'" Mordechay noted. "But if you know him, he really is humble. He doesn't really believe that he deserves it. He also feels bad that [while] he got an award, an officer died."

Top Cop awards were given to exemplary officers throughout the country, including six officers from the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department in Tennessee who were honored for their response to a bombing. And two officers in the New York City Police Department who exchanged gunfire with a suspect while keeping watch for a woman who was leaving her abuser.

Still, Summers says Headings' award was special because he took down the man who not only could have potentially killed more people but also had already killed a cop.

"Think about how that is ingrained in every law enforcement officer's mind across the nation," Summers expressed. "He showed up and took out the evil that killed one of our own. And is still humble."

NAPO Top Cops is one of the highlights of National Police Week, along with the Candlelight Vigil, and is also an opportunity to pay respects at the National Law Enforcement Officers Me-



On stage for the Top Cops Awards, from left, NAPO Treasurer Scott Hovsepan, NAPO President Mick McHale, Riviera Beach PBA Rep Nir Mordechay, PBCPBA President John Kazanjian, Jemel Headings, Riviera Beach Major Travis Walker, Riviera Beach PBA Rep Jeremy Summers, Riviera Beach K-9 Officer Justin Hawkins, Riviera Beach Officer Cherise Phillips and NAPO Vice President John Flynn.

morial. Bullock's name was added to the wall this year. A Florida Highway Patrol officer laid a patch underneath his name, while a collage of Bullock's photos could be seen on top.

Florida Highway Patrol PBA President William Smith met Headings for the first time at the wall and thanked him for his heroic response in the wake of Bullock's death. Smith did not have the opportunity to become close to Bullock. Nevertheless, the uniform bonded them as brothers for life, and with Bullock's loss came great despair.

"It's a brotherhood," Smith revealed. "You never forget the ones who have given the ultimate sacrifice. You can't give any more than that. And [Headings] acted with what he was trained to do. How many people tend to go the opposite direction when we walk into the danger?"

The law enforcement career comes with obvious risks. But Mordechay says the incident opened their eyes to the extra dangers that troopers face on the job.

"They're on the highway and have no idea what they're pulling up on," Mordechay suggested. "Whether you're driving home or coming into work, you're ready to do your thing. At the end of the day, even off duty, you're never really off."

Bullock's passing and Headings' response are a testament to how officers can instantly face death while trying to do their job to protect and serve citizens. Headings doesn't boast about receiving an award for the response. Instead, he attributes the honor to the training he's received at Riviera Beach PD, with a pinch of impeccable timing.

"Coincidentally, we had active shooter training the day before [the incident]," Headings recalled. "My trainers are second to none, and this is what we do. I'm being celebrated for what happened, but this is what most police officers do. It just so happens that I was the one put in that position."

Headings believes any of the officers at the banquet would have responded the same way he did. And he says sitting in a room filled with nearly a thousand officers with admirable achievements is an incredible feeling.



From left, PBCPBA President John Kazanjian, Executive Director Ernie George, Jemel Headings, Secretary Kevin Igo and Corrections Coordinator Pete Tartaglione at the Tops Cops banquet.

"I was looking at the stories about the officers," Headings relayed. "Those were brave officers. These are cops who actually care about their community, even when sometimes the community doesn't care about us."

Riviera Beach officers didn't attend the Top Cops banquet just to enjoy a dinner and congratulate one of their own. They showed up as Headings' second family. When Headings walked off stage, the Riviera Beach officers jumped up to squeeze him in a bear hug. He smiled from ear to ear as he welcomed, and reciprocated, the warm embrace.

They wanted to serve as a shoulder to lean on for Headings and show him that not only are they proud of their brother, but they will also be there for his every need.

"Feeling something less than sadness can make us feel guilty nevertheless," Mordechay mentioned. "Even though it shouldn't. Perhaps feeling this was a way to remind him that even though one of our brothers has fallen, Jemel is very much alive and has to carry on. I can't imagine how difficult that may be."

Palm Beach County Sheriff Ric Bradshaw (center) and PBCPBA President John Kazanjian (right) with members of the PBSO unit finalize the new contract.



PBA, Sheriff Bradshaw go the extra mile to achieve successful new agreement

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

PBSO members filled seats ringing the perimeter of the PBCPBA Hall. The unit's contract negotiating team took positions on both sides of a table in the middle of the room. Palm Beach County PBA President John Kazanjian and Executive Director Ernie George also had reserved seats. And Sheriff Ric Bradshaw sat at the head of the table.

One of the PBSO's open-door contract negotiating sessions was underway in the center ring. The presence of members – standing-room only, by the way – having a spectator's view might make this meeting seem like a boxing match. Or perhaps theater in the round.

It was anything but.

Allowing members to participate in open-door sessions contributed to the new PBSO contract becoming one of the best in the county. And the state. Maybe even the country.

"We had two open-door meetings," PBSO Unit President Mike Kennedy explained. "I think any time you're transparent with what you have going on, the questions you're asking and the benefits you're trying to get for the members, it's a win-win. They see the PBA is fighting for them. They see that we're asking for and keeping their best interests at heart. And then they see the sheriff's response."

The sheriff's response confirmed how much he continues to value the PBSO's greatest asset: its people.

The new three-year contract gives all members from PBSO, PBSO Corrections and PBSO Civilians a 9 percent increase over the life of the contract. Combined with the 3 percent cost-of-living raise members received this year, and it's up to 12 percent. If that same 3 percent comes the next two years, it's an 18 percent overall bump.

Additionally, the new contract includes an increase in longevity pay of 5 percent for 10 to 15 years and 7.5 percent for 15 to 20 years. This is a huge win for members.

The sheriff also kicked in an increased contribution to medical benefits. There were also increases to sick time and vacation time. Add that to the incentives PBSO members get, like a 1 percent salary bonus or a day off for going 18 months without getting into an accident, and there's a goodwill toward members that almost seems priceless.



Sheriff Bradshaw speaks to PBA members during the meeting to finalize the new PBSO contract.

"It genuinely seemed like they wanted to do everything in their power to make this a great working place," commented Kennedy about leading negotiations for the first time since recently becoming unit president. "When you look at it, a lot of the departments around our area might make a little more money as base salary. But when you add in our benefits package, our retirement plans, the medical, we're far superior to almost everybody in the county, probably even the state of Florida."

Kennedy referenced the impact of the contract on employee retention in PBSO. He noted how it also helps attract many officers from other departments in the county to want to come to PBSO.

West Palm Beach, for example, might have procured a decent pay raise when moving collective bargaining representation away from the PBA last year.

"But their latest and greatest is nowhere near what we got," Kennedy added. "We're a couple of steps ahead of them, and that's why we're pulling some of their better candidates. Because, long term, it's really hard to beat what we have."

And in the win-win of this transaction, the community and the department are getting a great return on their investment.

"I think that's why a lot of this department is held to a little higher standard," Kennedy commented. "Because you are paying people what they are worth, there's no excuse not to be accountable for your actions."



Many members attended the open-door session at the PBA Hall.

In addition to the open-door meetings and other negotiating sessions, Kennedy reports that a lot of input from members helped form many of the contract proposals. During the negotiating phase, he said he was receiving up to 100 calls per week from members with ideas, requests and wants for the new deal.

The unit was able to lean on the PBA and Kaz, who personally delivered some of the proposals directly to the sheriff and the administration. But it can be hard to ask for everything when, as the PBA would confirm, the sheriff does so much for all employees.

"It was stressful to the reps, stressful for Kaz and I think even the sheriff stressed about it," Kennedy revealed. "We're trying to do everything we can for as many people as we can, but some things are unrealistic. Like there were a lot of requests for specialty unit pay. But we like to be able to say every unit is special. And if every unit is special, no one is. You know what I mean?"

When they came to the table, however, that seemed to ease all the stress. Actually, that turned out to be the most productive aspect of negotiations, as many members witnessed during the open-door sessions.

"What I enjoyed most about the negotiating process was that



PBPPBA President John Kazanjian presents a contract proposal.

the sheriff came in with an open mind," Kennedy continued. "He didn't come in with a predetermined, 'I'm not doing this.' He listened."

And from the administration's financial experts to the chief, colonels, majors and captains, the PBA ascertained a clear, consistent message.

"I think they have the employees' best interests at heart," he added. "And they're trying to do what they can to make it better for us to work here."

Even the most transparent and successful contract negotiating sessions can leave members feeling like the administration is all talk. But Kennedy witnessed a confirmation that the sheriff does indeed listen and understand.

"When we were walking out of that negotiating session, I saw a deputy walk by and say something to the sheriff," he recounted. "That deputy had received an award a couple months ago. The sheriff remembered who he was. We have 5,000 employees here. And that's what a lot of us respect about the sheriff. You're not just a badge number here. You're a name."



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THE PBCPBA HAS YOUR BACK

A plane toting a message to Town Manager Matt Benoit from the PBCPBA flew over Jupiter before city council meetings in October.

JUPITER TM BENOIT MUST GO...PBCPBA.ORG

Sky Hook

Handwriting is in the sky as PBA efforts lead to Jupiter town manager's resignation

BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Look up in the sky...

It's a plane, and looking at the banner it is towing, there seems to be a bird reference in there somewhere.

The plane towing the banner with the charge "JUPITER TM BENOIT MUST GO... PBCPBA.ORG" flew over the area around City Hall, the beach and other parts of Jupiter before the town council meeting on Oct. 5. There was an encore flyover on Oct. 19.

The soaring, seething action is not just a statement from the Palm Beach County PBA, but proved to be a prophetic forecast. The PBCPBA's Jupiter unit, led by reps Scott Kimback, Jonathan Gentile, Salvatore Martino, Paul Gundlach and Jason Alexandre, continued to apply the pressure calling for Town Manager Matt Benoit to resign.

And on Oct. 26, Benoit finally got the message. After weeks of mounting pressure from PBA members and Jupiter residents, Benoit submitted his letter of resignation. Town council members had decided to pursue an outside consultant to review allegations against Benoit, but at the Nov. 2 council meeting they voted on his severance package.

"I really want to give credit to the reps, because they are the ones who did all the heavy lifting," praised PBCPBA Vice President Rick McAfee, who helped set up the flyover and worked with Jupiter members to mount the campaign against Benoit.

"The PBA gave them the tools, but they're the ones who met with the council people. They're the ones that got the guys together to fill the council chambers for the meetings," McAfee continued. "They took a leadership role within their city and took the bull by the horns to push this through."

The flyover helped emphasize the PBA's high-intensity effort calling for Benoit's resignation in the wake of his keeping the department understaffed, putting a strain on patrol units and retaliating against officers.

"Benoit has a toxic leadership style. He's very abrasive, mean and disrespectful,



Retired Jupiter Chief Dan Kerr (right) came to the Jupiter City Council meeting on Oct. 19 to make a statement to embattled Town Manager Matt Benoit (left).

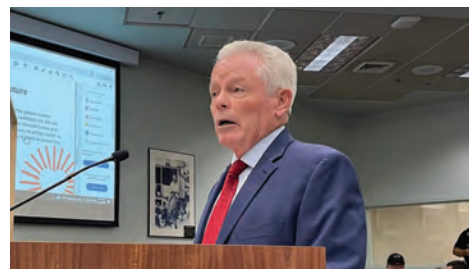
ful," McAfee clarified. "In the years he has served as town manager, the Jupiter Police Department has been plagued by mismanagement that has resulted in staffing shortages, failure to train officers effectively and a very low morale."

When the PBA planned the first flyover, the objective was to raise public awareness about the campaign against Benoit. That first pass received such an overwhelming response from other city employees and citizens of Jupiter that it only made sense to schedule a return flight.

As a result, city employees expressed their gratitude to the PBA for being their voice when they were afraid to speak out against Benoit for fear of retaliation. Benoit's ineptitude has been ongoing, according to McAfee, but it was his retaliation against three members that really intensified the pressure for him to resign.

McAfee noted that those three members filed a lawsuit in June against the town, seeking more than \$100,000 and alleging they were not properly paid for overtime hours they worked. The lawsuit contends that Jupiter officials knowingly, intentionally and willfully violated the Fair Labor Standards Act by failing to pay the officers the overtime compensation to which they were entitled.

The anti-Benoit sentiment reached a fever pitch at the most recent city council meetings. The Oct. 19 meeting included a couple of special guests who attended to add to the case against Benoit. Retired Jupiter Chief Dan Kerr drove all the way from



Naples to speak at the meeting, where he directed a pointed message.

"He treats Chief David England with disrespect and hostility, as well as other department heads," Kerr announced. "Matt, town employees tried to work with you to no avail. You do need to go."

The packed council meeting room, which featured many citizens wearing red shirts to side with city employees, erupted in an ovation over Kerr's remarks. At the Oct. 5 council meeting, Lori Bonino, the former assistant town manager, took the stand and described how she left office seven months after Benoit was hired because of his toxicity.

"He single-handedly created a hostile environment where employees are job-scared and afraid to speak up," she submitted.

But the PBA members in Jupiter were not afraid to speak up. Some of the reps even risked putting promotions on the line to rally the city for this cause. Adverse effects on their careers, however, apparently paled in comparison to the adverse effect Benoit had on the police department.

"For them to put their careers on the line and push this through says a lot," McAfee asserted. "But I think it shows what politics is all about. It's unfortunate that cops have to become politically active, but they have to. They have to take control of their futures in these times. Politics and getting the community behind them is the best way to do that, which they did in both aspects."

Chief Complaints

PBA blows the whistle on Riviera Beach's Osgood ordering unarrest of council member

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Did you hear that?

The sound reverberating through Riviera Beach was the PBCPBA blowing the whistle on Police Chief Nathan Osgood. The union charges that his "unarrested" development is official misconduct and has put Osgood's ability to lead the department in serious question.

The incident in question involves an arrest of Riviera Beach City Council Member Douglas Lawson, who was apprehended for simple battery stemming from a domestic dispute on Aug. 29. Osgood reportedly told PBCPBA member Captain Rochelet Command to edit a probable cause affidavit describing Lawson's arrest and ordered Command to release him.

Command was terminated on Sept. 2, the day after PBA attorneys filed a whistleblower complaint against Osgood and four days after Osgood ordered Command to execute the unarrest. The PBA's blowing the whistle on Osgood's action caused

enough of a response that Command was reinstated on Sept. 9 and placed on paid administrative leave pending an investigation.

As the investigation ensues, the PBA anticipates it will confirm Osgood's misconduct and make a case that could lead to his resignation or dismissal.

"My thing is, why is the chief not on paid administrative leave?" PBCPBA President John Kazanjian began. "The state's attorney came back and said there is probable cause to make the arrest. So that clears our member right then and there. And it's the PBA's stance that the only investigation should be against the chief."

Whistling Osgood for a foul might stem from the timing of his actions. Lawson was honored with an award at the 4th Annual Domestic Violence Stiletto Awards on Sept. 11, an event that brings awareness to domestic violence.

"So they unarrested him, and he still went to the freaking gala and received his award," Kaz added. "And this incident was



The PBCPBA says Riviera Beach Chief Nathan Osgood is no longer fit to lead the department, caught on video, so it's there for the public to see."

The video shows Lawson forcibly removing his fiancée from her vehicle, lifting her off the ground and carrying her away from the vehicle over his right shoulder out of camera view. A report from an off-duty security officer who said he observed the incident indicates Lawson was seen wrapping his arms around her legs, lifting her off the ground and pinning her up against the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

PBA will not let Boynton Beach's Gregory get away with union-busting

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Boynton Beach, you're busted.

The Palm Beach County PBA is not going to let city management and Police Chief Michael Gregory get away with an obvious attempt at union busting by demoting five members from captain to lieutenant. Especially after the Florida Public Employee Relations Commission (PERC) confirmed a recommended order that these captains be allowed to form their own collective bargaining unit.

According to the order issued on Sept. 9, the PBA's filing of a representation-certification petition seeking to represent a supervisory bargaining unit of captains in Boynton Beach was upheld. The city had objected to the proposed unit, asserting that captains are managerial employees and that a separate unit for them would result in over-fragmentation of the department. It is important to note that the PBA already represents a bargaining unit for Boynton Beach sergeants.

On Aug. 13, the PERC hearing officer upheld the recommended order, concluding

that captains are neither managerial nor confidential employees. He further concluded that captains are appropriate for inclusion in a supervisory unit, except for the executive captain of finance and procurement and the professional compliance captain. As a result, a PERC election to vote for bargaining unit representation was scheduled and ballots were counted on Oct. 28.

Gregory, however, sought approval from City Manager Lori Laverriere to "restructure" the department and demote the five captains seeking to form the unit to lieutenant. After reviewing Gregory's detailed memo about restricting, she authorized the plan on Oct. 16.

Though the captains had not been notified in writing as of late October, there was to be no reduction in pay or benefits. But the demotions are retaliatory and would avoid having to bargain with the separate unit.

Ironically, in 2015, Boynton promoted all lieutenants to captain, effectively doing away with the rank and making them



The PBCPBA is battling Boynton Beach Chief Michael Gregory's union-busting attempts.

exempt employees. Again, it was a way to keep the city from having to bargain with another unit.

"It's union-busting," confirmed PBCPBA attorney Katie Mendoza. "They're mad, and it's clear retaliation for their participation in the hearing and the attempt to form a bargaining unit."

Florida state statute grants the Boynton members the right to form their own unit. On Oct. 15, Mendoza sent a letter to Boynton City Commissioners explaining how PERC adopted the findings of fact that a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



THE PBCPBA HAS YOUR BACK

RIVIERA BEACH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

wall of an elevator.

As a result, there could be up to four investigations being conducted. One is being done by Riviera Beach PD IA. And, at the request of City Manager Jonathan Evans, an independent firm with a background in law enforcement has been retained to do another.

The PBA is confident that the investi-

gation will show Evans authorized Command's termination prematurely.

"It was a knee-jerk reaction," Kaz told the *Palm Beach Post*. "I think the city manager was sold a bill of goods and now the city has egg on its face."

The PBA is pushing to expedite the investigation because even though Command is on paid leave, he is missing out working on overtime. And losing the opportunity for compensation can be construed as being

disciplined.

As part of settling the matter, however, the PBA wants it made clear that the investigation will show Osgood is no longer capable of leading the department.

"I met with the city manager, and he wants to be transparent," Kaz commented. "I trust the city manager. But what this police chief did, anybody can see through that. He's not fit to lead for what he did."

BOYNTON BEACH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

bargaining unit of captains was acceptable.

She further wrote, "According to Chief Gregory's memorandum, the City warned PERC that it simply would re-organize the department, i.e. 'reclassify' the Captains, if the Captains were successful in their attempts to form a bargaining unit. Apparently, the City has made good on its word – in the midst of the ongoing PERC election. Such activities are intentional interference with the Captains' rights under Chapter 447, Florida Statutes."

The informative letter also notified the city that if it proceeded with the demotions, the PBA would file an unfair labor practice with PERC against Gregory and Boynton

Beach. The restructuring has further fractured the relationship between the chief and a group of supervisors, whom he has been making work like watch commanders all along.

"He's not winning any favors with anybody," Mendoza related. "He got in there in 2019 and took away a lot of their authority. He made them even less. They can't discipline. He took away their power, and they are not managerial."

Preventing Gregory's plan can set an important precedent because the city is backing him in his union-busting endeavor. And it seems to be a vindictive response from a chief who wants to get back at his captains for exercising their rights, as well as an at-

tempt from the city to avoid dealing with with another collective bargaining unit in the long term.

"It's like a big you-know-what," Mendoza added. "These members are entitled to have a bargaining unit, but the city and the chief are just playing games with them."

On Oct. 25, Laverriere responded to the PBA stating she approved Gregory's "recommendation to change their titles from captain to lieutenant" and would "not tolerate conduct by any employee, contract or otherwise, that undermines the mission of the City..."

In response, the PBA has filed an Unfair Labor Practice to reinforce the message that bullying will not be tolerated.

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A Good Cigar Night

Cigar Social shows that where there's smoke, there's the unity that makes the PBA great

■ BY KAREN JENKINS
■ PHOTOS BY BILLY GRAY

Members who gathered for the Palm Beach County PBA Cigar Social on Oct. 8 enjoyed an aroma they had not sensed in a long time and certainly needed. As they lounged at tables inside and outside the union headquarters, each taste of the cigar allowed them to inhale brotherhood and exhale stress.

The cloud of smoke was not as thick as the cloud of camaraderie, for the Cigar Social brought back one of the PBA's most important assets. No public scrutiny or anti-police sentiments here. No worries about contracts or grievances. Just a smokin' hot night of what makes being a member great.

"It's just fate — it's to give back to the membership," expressed PBCPBA President John Kazanjian. "Cruising the whole state, seeing what works and what [other unions] do for their membership. You take a little from here, take a little from there. I'll tell you, that cigar night was a home run."

The evening, which consisted of cigars, dinner, beverages and relaxation for the membership, went off without a hitch at the PBA Hall. It seemed so necessary for everyone to be able to relax together in person that the PBCPBA will be reprising the event on Jan. 14, 2022.

"We've been cooped up with this COVID stuff and we're just starting to get out, and by doing a little get-together like that, that went a long way," Kaz relayed. "I think in January when we do it [again], it'll be a little cooler out, and I think we'll see a lot more people show up. The camaraderie was great. They all got together, and from different agencies. And it's what you need to do as we're coming out of this COVID."



From right, J.P. Munoz and Richard Tschernia from CrossCountry Mortgage, who sponsored the PBA Cigar Social, and the cigar roller from Don Juan Cigars, with Southwest Florida PBA President Mick McHale and PBCPBA President John Kazanjian.

The Cigar Social night was sponsored by Rich Tschernia with CrossCountry Mortgage, who is no stranger to supporting an evening of cigars for law enforcement officers — particularly in Florida. The PBCPBA was adamant about not charging its members to attend to fully foster an evening of community.

"Kaz saw me do the [cigar nights] for other PBAs, so he decided he was going to do one," Tschernia explained. "And it went off pretty good. He didn't charge for it. He does it for his membership."

Members enjoyed a dinner of Italian food, pizza or Chick-Fil-A and a raffle run by the PBA's Pete Tartaglione to benefit the scholarship fund, then kicked back with cigars provided by Tschernia for the evening. The cigar roller who accompanied him supplied his own personal blend of Don Juan cigars and rolled with decades-long expertise.

"[The roller's] family goes back to Cuba, and they've been in the cigar-rolling business for 50 years plus. So he just follows the family tradition, and he goes out and he rolls," Tschernia shared. "Even the novice cigar smokers actually like them. He makes them mild, medium and obviously robust or strong, as far as the cigar goes ...



that's a guy that's a perfectionist on his cigars. That's what I think people appreciate most about a guy like that."

For SallyAnn Josef, a representative with PBSO Civilians, this cigar night was the first event of its kind she has attended since joining the agency 25 years ago.

Her husband, Dieter Josef, is also with the PBSO, and they both enjoyed getting to connect with friends outside of work for the evening over a nice meal and cigars.

"We enjoyed each other's company. We all went outside and talked, and some of the women smoked cigars — most of the guys enjoyed cigars," Josef laughed. "It was very nice. We got to see some old friends and talked to some new people, newer people with the agency, and it wasn't just PBSO, it was all of the different agencies, which was very nice."

And Josef shared that she will go out of her way to attend the next cigar night on Jan. 14. When an opportunity comes from the PBCPBA to connect with other law enforcement officers and civilians from across the county, it's nearly impossible to deny.

She expressed that because everyone is still required to mask up while at work, an evening of complete relaxation and re-

Smokin'

A look at some of the PBA members, family and friends who enjoyed the Cigar Social



connecting was exactly what the membership needed.

"I enjoy going to all the different events, and of course I want to be present and be

there for the membership, so I felt not only did I want to go, I needed to go," she said. "I felt the camaraderie, the fellowship. There were people there that you don't get to see

because we're so spread out, so sometimes those events are the one time a year that you get to get together. It was great in that sense."

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The Kaitlin A. Kazanjian Angel Run & Walk has become one of the PBCPBA's premier events

■ BY KAREN JENKINS

The sixth annual Kaitlin's Angel Run & Walk is triumphantly returning in January 2022 after COVID-19 restrictions shut down the event in 2021. And this year, it is going to mean even more to see everyone uniting for the important cause.

"You know what I think? I think the time of the year is perfect. Start off the first of the year," PBCPBA President John Kazanjian expressed. "It's growing. It's getting there. I know last year because of COVID that we're going to get this thing back and we're going to get it bigger than ever."

The run benefits the Palm Beach County PBA's Kaitlin A. Kazanjian Memorial Scholarship Fund, in memory of Kaz's daughter, who died in an automobile accident on Nov. 5, 2003, at the age of 16. The event tasks participants with running 3.1 miles through Abacoa to remember Kaitlin.

Many runners and walkers have participated in the 5K race since its inaugural year. For Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Commander David Moss, 2022 will be no different as he defends his first-place overall title.

"I've always done it every year, just because of traffic safety, and I remember the story of Kaitlin Kazanjian when that incident happened," explained Moss, who has 31 years on the job. "I'm personally able to identify with that specific event, so I always do it every year."

Sixth Annual Kaitlin A. Kazanjian Angel 5K Run & Walk

Jan. 2, 2022

Check-in: 6:30 a.m., Start: 7:30 a.m.

Abacoa Town Center/FAU Jupiter Campus

More info & registration: www.PBCPBA.org



Although participants are timed and recognition is given to top finishers, competition is not the prevailing attitude throughout the day. From the check-in for runners and walkers at 6:30 a.m. to the snacks provided after the race, a feeling of unity and fellowship permeates.

Walkers committed to the cause are heavily encouraged to participate, and Kaz's mother serves as evidence. She has crossed the finish line every year to fundraise for her late granddaughter.

"She'll be 90 years old this May, so God bless her," Kaz shared. "[It's inspiring] seeing so many different agencies [as well as] the people that are trying to get back in shape ... 'I want to get a little bit more healthy, but all right, let's get involved in this fundraiser.' So I think it's a win-win for everybody."

There will no doubt be many laughs,



PBSO Officer Dave Moss crosses the finish line at the 2020 Angel Run.

hugs and possibly tears ahead of the 7:30 a.m. race start. Moss isn't anticipating another big finish — "I'm sure there'll be plenty of much younger, faster people," he quipped — but he's excited to get out and reconnect with other law enforcement officers.

"It's a lot of camaraderie. They always have good food, a good awards ceremony. A lot of the people that go are friends with each other because they're in law enforcement," he expressed. "It doesn't matter where you place or how fast you go, so everyone has a good time."

And as always, participants can rest assured that when they show up to the event, they are running with an angel on their shoulders. Crossing the finish line always means more when considering the real reason behind the race.

"Everyone, I think, is successful just if they get out there and show up," Moss affirmed. "They do what they can do. And I think that's always what's important."

Having Some Fundraising

MCSO hosts event to help Corrections Officer Gregg Newton in his battle with cancer

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

The best medicine Martin County Sheriff's Corrections Officer Gregg Newton could have received in his battle with cancer came with the 200-plus PBCPBA members, friends and friends from the Martin County business community who came to an event in his honor on Oct. 22 at Charlie's in Stuart.

Of course, PBCPBA President John Kazanjian provided a heavy dose of healing when he presented Newton with all the donations collected to offset growing medical expenses and otherwise help his family. But Major Patricia Oslager and Captain Jennifer Perkins sat with Newton to have a bite and a toast with their brother, who has been serving Florida corrections for more than 25 years.

And then Martin County Sheriff William embraced Newton with one of those brotherly hugs that can make all the pain go away for a few minutes. It was that kind of night for Newton, who seemed to feel better by the moment as this fundraiser went on for more than four hours.

"It's sad to see somebody go through that, so we try to take care of our brothers and sisters any way we can," commented MCSO Corrections Rep Samuel Haidy who coordinated the fundraiser. "I called the PBA and said, 'Let's set up a fundraiser to help his family with bills and stuff.' And we got it done."

Newton is battling stage 4 renal cancer, which has approximately a 20 percent survival rate. His treatments have left him with such painful neuropathy that he can barely walk.

But Newton was almost floating on air when he saw the crowd who attended to support him. Haidy noted how many community businesses and organizations showed up to donate. One of those organizations was the Blue Angels, made up of NYPD officers.

"People just kept coming up and handing him checks. I had people that weren't even PBCPBA members that kicked in," Haidy marveled. "It was appreciated, what they did for him. The public and law enforcement did really well for him."

Newton began his law enforcement career in 1996 working with the Florida Department of Corrections Okeechobee Correctional Institution. In 2011, he transferred to MCSO corrections.

Haidy said that Newton could have retired from the job already. But he has



MCSO Corrections Captain Jennifer Perkins (left) and Major Patricia Oslager with Officer Gregg Newton at the fundraiser to support Newton in his battle with renal cancer.



Palm Beach County PBA President John Kazanjian (white shirt) presents Newton with the donations collected in his honor.



The PBCPBA Grill Team added its special touch to the evening. always been the kind of officer to keep going, and that's what he's doing now. The fundraiser will help him continue his treatment, as well as pursue some additional therapies that can help him endure.

The uplifting feeling the fundraiser gave Newton lasted well after the eve-



Martin County Sheriff William Snyder embraces Newton.

ning ended. He expressed his appreciation for all those who came out for him.

"He hasn't stopped thanking me," Haidy shared. "He texted me to please get a hold of the PBA to say, 'Me and my family thank you so much.' He said the money is going to help him so much. He was so appreciative. It was a lot of work and a lot of people kicked in. And it was so worth it."



Attorney Kevin Drummond, right, created wills for MCSO Corporal Andrew Porcelli and his wife, Ericka.



PBSO Sergeant Mike Mendelsberg signs the will attorney Kevin Drummond helped him with through the PBCPBA's Life Planning program.

Will Do

Members discover even more benefits from Life Planning program

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Since the PBCPBA initiated its Life Planning benefits package for members, many accolades have come about working with attorney Kevin Drummond and his Blue Line Law Firm. Members have raved about the estate planning that includes wills and trusts.

But the greatest praise might have come recently from Martin County Sheriff's Office Corporal Andrew Porcelli. After seeing how easy and beneficial it was to take advantage of the free benefit and have Drummond draw up a will for him, Porcelli went ahead and paid for Drummond to do a will for his wife, Ericka.

"She loved it, too," confirmed Porcelli, who will hit 25 years on the job in January and works as a school resource officer. "It made us talk about a lot of different things and the things that can happen when you are married to a law enforcement officer."

As more and more members continue to take advantage of the PBA's Life Planning resources, they share what makes the experience so, well, beneficial.

One is how quick and easy it has become. The process takes place online until the documents are finished. Then, members come to the PBA office to sign the papers.

Another benefit is the value of working with Drummond. As a sworn law enforcement officer, he continues to bring that experience and perspective to helping members do their life planning.

Porcelli also found another benefit that came from securing his plans. As a commander of the MCSO honor guard, he has experienced what happens when a member passes and has

learned what can ease some of the pain of that time.

"With your life plan, you can plan right down to what you want your funeral to be like," Porcelli explained. "So when the time comes, they are able to say, 'This is what he wanted.' So taking a little bit of time now will save a whole lot of stress for you loved ones."

Taking care of family is, of course, the foundation of the Life Planning program. When PBSO Sergeant Mike Mendelsberg read about the benefits in a past issue of *Code Three*, he realized he had some unfinished business to take care of.

At 59, with nearly 36 years on the job, Mendelsberg has begun thinking about retirement. One of the aspects of life he realized he needed to attend to was updating his will. At this point in his life, his goal was consistent with what every member looks for in this benefit.

"I just wanted to make sure my family is taken care of," Mendelsberg noted. "If something happens to me, I want to know the assets go where they're supposed to go."

It couldn't have been easier to get a new will done. He sent Drummond a copy of his existing will. Drummond knew exactly what route he wanted to go. Mendelsberg answered a couple of simple questions and then met Drummond at the PBA office to sign the papers.

And he realized the value of the service: What other people might have to pay several hundred dollars for, PBA members get for free.

"No matter what your age, take care of this, because if you don't, your estate goes into probate," Mendelsberg emphasized. "That peace of mind makes it that valuable. It's one less thing you have to worry about every time you go out on the job."

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MEMBER INFO UPDATE



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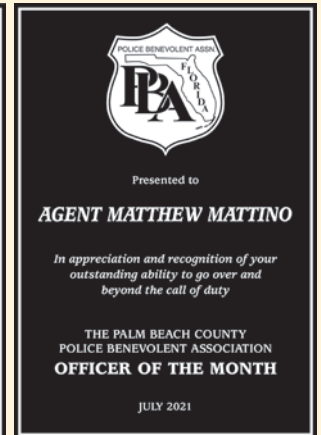
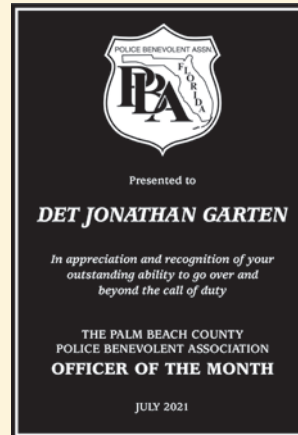
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Palm Beach County PBA Officer of the Month Honorees

JULY

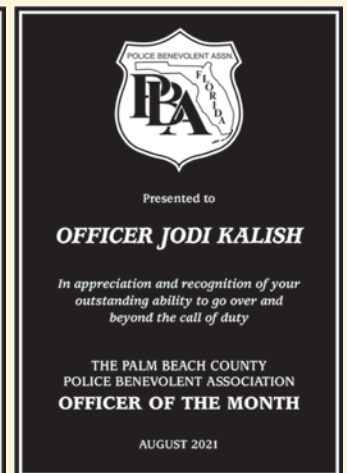
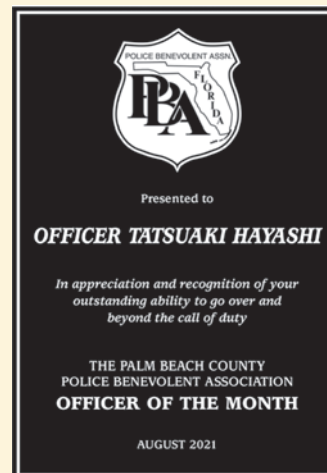
Agent Matthew Mattino
Detective Jonathan Garten
Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office
Nominated by Lieutenant Daniel Hopkins

In July, Agent Matthew Mattino and Detective Jonathan Garten were tracking a homicide suspect in Lake Park. They executed a tactical plan to detain the suspect. The man bailed out of his vehicle and began shooting at Detective Garten, who returned fire. Agent Mattino encountered the suspect as he fled. Agent Mattino also was forced to return fire, and the suspect barricaded himself in an apartment building. The officers quickly established a perimeter, and the suspect eventually took his own life. These officers reacted quickly and prevented the man from fleeing into a nearby daycare. We commend them.



AUGUST

Officer Tatsuaki Hayashi
Officer Jodi Kalish
Palm Beach Gardens Police Department
Nominated by Committee

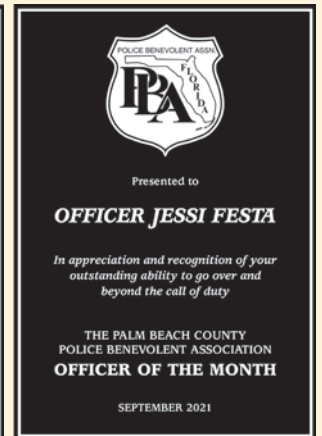
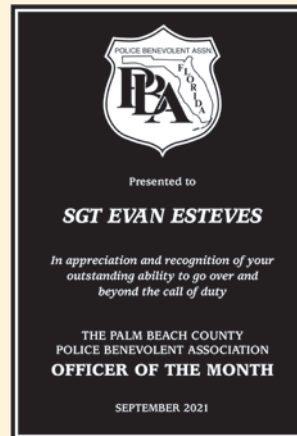


Officers Hayashi and Kalish responded to a call regarding a 12-year-old child with special needs running toward Lake Catherine. They found the child in a canal, treading water but struggling to stay afloat. They went into the canal and rescued the child from drowning. Their swift actions saved this child's life.

Palm Beach County PBA Officer of the Month Honorees

SEPTEMBER

Officer Jessi Festa
Boynton Beach Police Department
Nominated by Sergeant Cory Herny



In May 2021, Sergeant Esteves and Officer Festa responded to a domestic disturbance in the Via Lugano Community Complex, where a man broke into his ex-girlfriend's apartment and was actively battering her. The victim was able to break away and run outside, and the suspect followed with a knife. He refused to drop the knife despite several warnings to do so. The suspect charged at both officers and the victim with the knife, and the officers were forced to fire their weapons. Their brave actions saved the victim's life.

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Members Only Section

Celebrating PBC PBA members and the way they serve every day



It's a Miracle League

Delray Beach PD helps make dreams come

Delray Beach members showed up in support of opening day for the baseball teams of the Palm Beach County Miracle League.

Despite the forecast of rain and lightning that would ultimately cancel the opening-day ceremonies on Sept. 25, the Miracle League was still able to begin its 29th season at Anthony V. Pugliese V field at Miller Park in Delray Beach. The mission is to make it possible for children all over the country with physical and mental disabilities to achieve their dreams of playing baseball.

"This is one of those events that if you even live remotely close, you're going to want to come out here and experience the electrifying atmosphere for yourself," said Gary Ferreri, the Delray Beach PD Miracle League event organizer. "There's not a dry eye in the stands. When one of the kids hits the baseball, you can just see it in their eyes, the sense of pride and accomplishment. You can just feel it radiating from them, just unfathomable."

Since Palm Beach County Miracle League's inception in 2007, the Delray

Beach PD has been an avid supporter of the initiative created by the Miracle League Association.

Delray Beach PD also brought its own ice cream truck to the event as a particularly tasty thank-you to all the attendees.

"Our department gets so excited about the Miracle League that when we put out an email to our professional staff, we always get an overwhelming attendance," Ferreri described. "When we found out that the event was beginning again after a couple of seasons being canceled due to COVID-19, our department chief looked at me and said, 'Find out when opening day is. We're sending everything and everybody.'"

For Delray Beach PD, the Miracle League doesn't just represent an event where children's dreams can come true. It is also an opportunity where they can help strengthen family and residential relationships among the local citizens, particularly among adolescents.

"This is the single most important thing we can do as law enforcement officers," Ferreri declared. "Supporting these events helps us build trust and relationships. The



belief is that if we can start building relationships with the youth at these younger ages and engage with them, we can really create a generational change in trusting law enforcement."

PBSO members bond with local youth

Officers from the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office spent the summer strengthening relationships with the community's adolescents.

PBSO teamed up with the Cops Helping Kids nonprofit relief organization, spearheaded by officers and service-oriented citizens, in volunteering their time to serve disadvantaged children and to take part in their fourth annual bike giveaway event on Sept. 1.

The officers also visited Barton Elementary School on Sept. 20 to pass out safety information and speak with the students to raise consciousness about community violence during International Gang Awareness Week.

Lastly, on National Thank a Police Officer Day, Sept. 18, residents gathered at a Palm Beach County park and participated in a community event paying tribute to law enforcement officers. Children were also able to play games and interact with the officers.



Cops Helping Kids



Boynton Beach members go above and beyond for the community

Boynton Beach PD officers have been out in the neighborhood, strengthening community relations.

Officers teamed up with the not-for-profit Community Greening organization on Sept. 27, hosting a gardening event to help beautify the Boynton Beach municipality. Members spent the day bonding with volunteers and planting plants throughout the neighborhood streets.

In another kind gesture, Boynton Beach PD hosted its own National Coffee Day event at a local Starbucks on Sept. 29. Residents were able to enjoy their food and beverages while engaging in conversation with their local law enforcement officers.

Delray Beach PD congratulates Students of the Month

Delray Beach law enforcement officers honored students from the Village Academy Center with the August Student of the Month awards on Sept. 30. The awards honor students who display exceptional behavior, dedication and scholastic achievements.



Jupiter PD contributes to the Little Smiles Holiday Toy Drive

With a goal of bringing awareness to crime and drug abuse prevention in the community, Jupiter PD hosted the 2021 National Night Out Parade on Aug. 3.

The event also served as a collection for the Little Smiles Holiday Toy Drive.



Neighborhood residents were encouraged to donate new toys to the local children to commemorate the beginning of the holiday season.

Martin County Sheriff's Office salutes active service members



Officers of the Martin County Sheriff's Office attended the Salute to Service Flag Waving and Veterans Memorial Bridge walk on Aug. 21.

The event was organized by the Palm City Chamber of Commerce — with the help of Congressman Brian Mast, State Representative John Snyder and Commissioner Ed Ciampi — to pay tribute to active service members.

MCSO Sheriff William Snyder, along with 30 others, joined Mast and Snyder for the Saturday morning ceremony.

"Officers walked shoulder to shoulder with each other in a representation of solidarity, supporting those who have made the ultimate sacrifice," said Willie Weiss, Martin County Sheriff's Office deputy sheriff. "It's important that our department come out to this event because I think those serving right now maybe don't know or aren't aware of how much we appreciate them. We have a lot of military veterans who are a part of our department, so the county holding events like this hopefully shows that we love them."

In a strong display of patriotism, the residents of Martin County waved American flags as veterans passed by en route to the finish line. Local Gold Star families, Operation 300, Florida Senator Gayle Harrell and her family also participated in the ceremony, along with community first responders.

"It really was a spectacular sight to see, and I know our department's members will be talking about this event for years to come," Weiss said. "I think this brought a new appreciation, not just for the younger generation, but for everyone, for those serving to protect this great nation. Every

day throughout the world, someone is serving and putting their life on the line to protect all of us."

Stuart PD steps up to protect the youth

The Stuart PD Community Relations Unit was honored with the Juvenile Gang Prevention of the Year award at the Florida Gang Investigators Conference on Aug. 3.



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Riviera Beach members look for ways to help students

Riviera Beach PD officers met with North County Education officials on Aug. 6 to share ideas about how they can become involved with the students and faculty during the upcoming school year.



Stuart PD gives back to the local children

Stuart PD participated in the community's annual back-to-school-supply giveaway on Aug. 7. The goal was to bring community members together for a day of fun while providing children with the supplies necessary to excel academically.

The officers passed out backpacks, school apparel, writing utensils and free lunches to children. The department also teamed up with local officials and the Martin County Health Department to distribute COVID-19 vaccines to more than 50 people attending the event.

Delray Beach PD feeds the hungry

Delray Beach law enforcement officers lent a helping hand to the Eat Better Live Better organization by bagging and delivering healthy food baskets to underprivileged families on Sept. 24. The initiative aims to provide nutrition education and healthy foods to the communities they serve.



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Top Cop Adviser

Spectrum Advisory Group has become a leader in providing insurance that supports law enforcement

■ BY KAREN JENKINS

The original objective when Alex Perez formed Spectrum Advisory Group was to build supplemental insurance products created by law enforcement for law enforcement. Perez has been doing that, plus much more, since 2010.

The organization protects law enforcement by providing financial security that is personalized for officers, first responders and their families.

Perez comes from a deep cultural understanding of what it takes to be in law enforcement, having observed his father serve as part of the San Antonio Police Department for 34 years.

“He became heavily involved in the union at the latter part of his career,” serving as both president and vice president, Perez explained.



“I think there’s a couple of things that I learned being around union business....Becoming so familiar with that type of culture has allowed me to create a special bond with my clients.”

**Spectrum Advisory Group Founder
and President Alex Perez**

In 2006, the San Antonio Police Officers Association (SAPOA) went to bid on its supplemental insurance, and a company out of El Paso won the bid. That insurance company was looking for an agent of record, so it brought on Perez. However, during Perez’s work selling an Allstate product to the officers, he noticed that the individuals he was serving needed more.

“What we found was an off-the-shelf product just does not fit for police,” Perez relayed. “When [officers] get hurt, they can’t work overtime or extra jobs, and there was no product out there that was designed to protect that. So in going through this, I saw a lot of officers getting frustrated because claims were not getting paid.”

In response, Perez decided to build his own supplemental insurance product, tailored to the needs of law insurance, from scratch. SAPOA was his first client.

“I think there’s a couple of things that I learned being around union business: Obviously, it’s a close-knit group, there’s a lot of loyalty that comes along with it and they’re out to do good for their members,” Perez expressed. “Becoming so familiar with that type of culture has allowed me to create a special bond with my clients, but also with future clients, where I’m able to relate to the issues and to the challenges that they have on a day-to-day basis.”

Spectrum Advisory Group’s clients expanded to organizations within Texas, and in 2017, Perez was asked to speak at a NAPO convention in Las Vegas.

At the convention, he received an influx of inquiries about how to participate in the insurance products. One of those inquiries came from Michelle Jotz, a retired law enforcement officer involved with the Las Vegas Metro Police Managers and Supervisors Association (PMSA).

Perez started going through the process of seeing if Spectrum Advisory Group could get licensed in multiple states.

“We did get PMSA Las Vegas as a client, and from there, word



just started to spread about the benefits that these officers were getting,” Perez shared. “My 10-year goal is just to be the largest insurance provider for law enforcement in the country.”

With the benefits offered through Spectrum Advisory Group, which is approved in Florida, it’s difficult to find products better suited for law enforcement. Spectrum provides an administrative duty policy, and it’s the only company in the marketplace that offers that to police nationwide.


It also offers an accident and disability policy, and it’s the only insurance provider that pays a light-duty disability benefit to law enforcement officers.

“If an officer gets hurt and they’re not hurt enough to be completely out, they get put on a desk job or they’re doing camera surveillance,” Perez explained. “When they’re on light duty, they can work all that overtime and extra jobs. Our disability pays them until they go back to work full time.”

In addition, Spectrum provides cancer, heart and stroke products, a brokerage platform for life insurance, and retirement planning.

Perez hopes to grow Spectrum quickly in the next few years and create a platform that is a one-stop shop for law enforcement officers nationwide.

“It’s a fulfilling feeling, and it’s something that I consider a passion of mine,” Perez emphasized. “One of the things that I try to do is make people aware that no matter what their image is on the television or in the media, 99.9 percent of these guys are normal people, doing a job that no one else is willing to do. And so it’s very easy for me to do my job and to motivate the people around me to carry the torch and do the same thing.”



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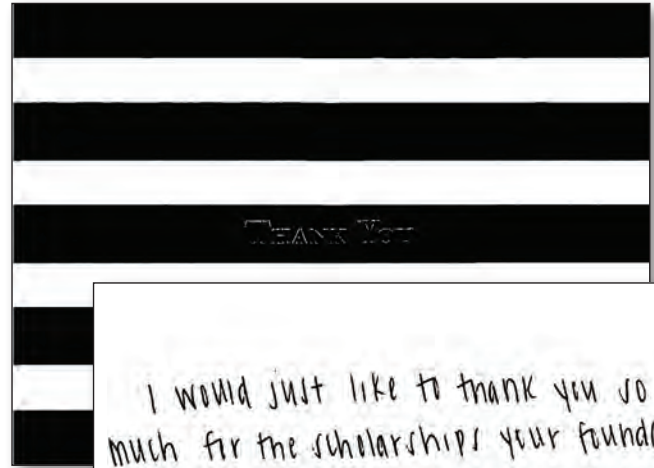
Thank-You Notes TO THE PBA



Dear PBA,

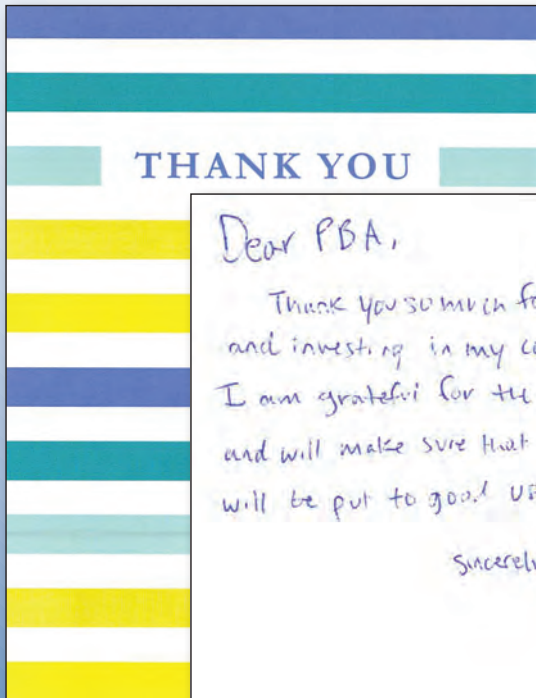
I want to say thank you so much for providing me a scholarship & supporting my endeavors. This scholarship means a lot to me. I'm so excited to be attending my classes thanks to support like this.

-Sincerely, Ethan Eastman



I would just like to thank you so much for the scholarships your foundation has given me. They have truly been such a blessing and a help that has allowed for my college education. I wish you all the best! Thank you!

-Madeline Furtado



Dear PBA,

Thank you so much for the scholarship and investing in my college education. I am grateful for the scholarship, and will make sure that this money will be put to good use.

Sincerely, Hunter Furtado

I would like to thank you and everybody else at the Police Benevolent Association for my \$500 scholarship award. This helps me tremendously with major college expenses, and I understand that it helps other recipients of this award as well. I believe that this annual award is a meaningful contribution to the community.

Sincerely, Alyssa Dorfman



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