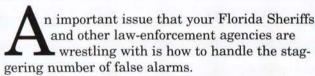


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From the desk of . . .

Gary Perkins, Executive Director Florida Sheriffs Association



In this *Sheriff's Star* magazine, we've included two articles outlining the problem with false alarms, including one by Alachua County Sheriff Steve Oelrich, who has discovered a way to successfully address it.

So what's the problem? An April 15 Law Enforcement News article explained it best. It said that nationwide, only 2 to 4 percent of all alarm calls are legitimate. And yet, they can account for up to 20 percent of police calls for service.

This problem is turning overloaded police forces into "false alarm managers," the article said.

Overloading law enforcement, which is what false alarms do, detracts from the agency's mission — which we all know is to protect citizens. While your Sheriffs are not going to do anything to jeopardize the safety of citizens, it's clear that we need to come up with a solution to reduce these calls in order to continue the same level of service you've come to expect.

Cost is alarming

The Broward County Sheriff's Office conducted a study and determined that it takes an average of 14 minutes for a deputy to respond to an alarm call, carefully check the premises and document the event. So, one quarter of an hour multiplied by 4,300 alarm calls per month equals about 1,000 hours per month of wasted deputies' time. That is the equivalent of 125 eight-hour shifts and amounts to more than \$22,000 in deputies' salaries (and tax dollars) wasted every month.

In addition to the drain and demand it puts on law enforcement's resources, false alarms also delay response to other calls – placing real victims at a higher level of risk by diluting resources.

With all of the budget cutbacks and the current state of the economy, Sheriffs and other law-enforcement agencies are constantly looking for ways to minimize their costs and maximize their effectiveness. And that's why we are looking at other communities to consider their examples.



What's working

In Las Vegas, an agency that once had 100,000 dispatches on burglary alarms in one year, had reduced it to 10,000 – a 90-percent drop – by adopting a verified alarm policy, according to *Law Enforcement News*. This was in spite of a population increase of nearly 50 percent. Burglaries have also decreased by 8 percent over the three years following the change in policy.

Verified response requires alarm companies to first confirm something suspicious at an alarm site – such as an open door or window – before a patrol unit is dispatched.

Some companies will dispatch a private security company to verify the call is real, before public resources are used. Monitored alarms, which can include the ability to listen in at the site once an alarm is tripped, or a phone call to the residence to verify that it's not a user error, are other methods. Some communities also impose fines for false alarms.

Need for teamwork, compromise

Other communities across the country have also reported that a verified response strategy is working—but it's still meeting with resistance from the alarm industry.

Yes, there are tough decisions to be made. And eventually, somebody has to pay. All of us need to work together – law enforcement, citizens and alarm industry representatives – to find out the best solution for our communities.

Your Florida Sheriffs are committed to bringing parties to the table in a spirit of cooperation. We're willing to take the lead in seeking corrective measures. Let's make some strides before regulators step in.

If you have ideas, write to: gperkins@fl sheriffs.org and let's solve this problem together.

Gary Perkins, Executive Director

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FEATHERLITE

COMMAND AND COMMUNICATIONS **CENTER**

CRIME TRENDS

Don't Be Fooled: Distraction Methods Being Used to Steal

Purses

In April, the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office warned citizens of a ring of women who were using distraction methods to steal purses – mostly from elderly, unsuspecting women while they shopped.

Incidents were reported at grocery stores and retail centers throughout the county.

Operating in the daytime hours, they used stores with shopping carts. In all cases, the victims either left their purse on the cart – even briefly – or allowed it to dangle loosely on their shoulder.

A typical method included one subject asking the victim for assistance in reaching for an object. The second subject would then open the victim's handbag and steal their wallet. The perpetrators then quickly left the store and immediately began making credit card purchases before the victim even knew her wallet was missing.

In the first four months of the year, there were 21 thefts under investigation by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office.

On March 28, two individuals were arrested at a Publix grocery store. One was 24 years old and pregnant. She and her 36-year-old accomplice were caught by Publix security outside the store while still possessing the purse.

The PBSO was conducting an investigation to determine if the women were part of the ring of distraction thieves. The Sheriff's Office was also combining efforts with other local law-enforcement officials.

Tips for women to protect their valuables while shopping
Women – both young and old – should follow these precautions while shopping:

- Be aware of your surroundings
- don't present yourself as an easy target.
- · When carrying a purse, only



take the essentials you'll need, such as a limited amount of cash and one credit card or debit card.

- Avoid carrying your driver's license and social security card or bank numbers together.
 Consider taking only one or two checks – not the entire checkbook.
- Never carry items that can't be replaced (original photos of grandchildren, jewelry, etc.)
- It's safest to use a belly bag or a shoulder strap purse that can be worn across your chest.
- Make a list of items in your purse and put them in a safe place.
- And, finally, if a person attempts to make conversation with you, hold your purse tightly. Never leave your purse unattended in a shopping cart.

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By: Leon County Sheriff Larry Campbell

uring this millennium, many lawenforcement agencies will be
faced with a range of complex
challenges. With the threat of terrorism,
increasing criminal activity and the
spectre of fear that pervades our communities, local law enforcement must
ensure that our presence and effectiveness will not be undermined.

ness will not be undermined. In order to combat these threats, the Leon County Sheriff's Office has acquired a mobile deterrent that can project a respectable presence, yet still retain its ability to respond quickly and efficiently to hostile situations.

The Leon County Sheriff's

Office and our Division of Emergency

Management is proud to introduce our

9-1-1

new state-of-the-art Mobile Command and Communications Center (MCCC). The MCCC is a semi-tractor trailer with high technology and cutting edge equipment. The interior is well thought out and utilizes a combination of ideas and expertise suggested by our LCSO staff.

Central command on location

This MCCC can be driven to the location of any emergency or disaster when public safety operations need to be coordinated or directed from the scene. The MCCC will allow us to implement an effective Command and Control Vehicle that can be placed in crisis situations with minimal delay. Taking advantage of its comprehensive electronics and communications suite, the MCCC can be used to relay vital information to supporting units, check and assign duties and allow the operator to establish a solid, yet versatile, base of operations.

The MCCC will help with many high-profile cases. It will be used in large mobilizations during investigations, to assist in crowd control and give deputies a second base of operations during a manhunt for a suspect or a search for a missing person or witness. The MCCC also serves as a safe haven for deputies who need to monitor a dangerous site. They can be a mile away from a HAZMAT (hazardous materials) situation, and the commander can run the whole incident from inside the vehicle.

The center was designed to be as comfortable and self-sustaining as possible, equipped with its own generator, air conditioner and refrigerator. Sophisticated electronics allow LCSO to communicate with virtually any agency if the need arises. A television and AM/FM radio allows us to monitor what news agencies are reporting. The center may also serve as a staging area where the news media and other officials can gather to receive accurate, first-hand information about the event.

The MCCC is designed to complement or replace any existing 9-1-1 center in the state of Florida. It can provide an agency a place to operate during an emergency such as a hurricane.

In times of natural disaster or catastrophic events, rapid deployment of supplies and personnel is mission critical. Response teams need flexibility to position personnel as close to the incident site as possible. Safe, secure meeting locations and rendezvous points are necessary. Set up time from arrival to ready position can be critical, and the need for accessible, sophisticated communication systems and technology is essential.

State-of-the-art technology on the MCCC includes: a complete mobile 9-1-1 communications center; a full business telephone system with automatic cellular telephone back up; five telephone lines; five work stations – three of which are fully dedicated to the 9-1-1 answering system; two dispatch positions equipped to communicate with other law enforcement and emergency services agencies, including the Florida Highway Patrol; 800 MHz and UHF radios, which provide dispatching capabilities to other agencies in the region.

In addition, the center is designed as a satellite Sheriff's Office location to interact with the public. The rear of the vehicle is a duty desk, where the public can have access to do business. It is equipped with a copier, fax, printer and large plotter, which allows us to print large maps to be used for searches, floods or for perimeters. There's also a Geographic Information System, file servers and computer back up, PA system, radio systems and satellite radio system to communicate with state emergency management. The MCCC is equipped with a satellite network, satellite telephone and the new statewide 800 MHz system. We have a marine radio, aircraft radio, four band amateur radio and Red Cross radio.

One part of the MCCC serves as a conference room with telephones, computer and plasma screen television. This room also has an electronic white board for group meetings.

Of course, the MCCC includes security and backup, including a Sonitrol security system, 40 KV generator and 20 KV generator for on-site electrical service. It can accommodate water hookups and provides flood lighting.

We are extremely proud of our new Mobile Communications and Command Center. For more information, or to stay informed about its travels, visit our website: http://lcso.leonfl.org/.

GOING THE EXTRA MILE:

Deputies making a difference

Deputies' Kindness Begets Kindness

When they mailed a donation to the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches to help send two youths to summer camp, Larry and Elizabeth Kittinger wrote a note saying they had been inspired by the actions of a group of deputies at the Seminole County Sheriff's Office.

They included a clipping from the *Orlando Sentinel* that highlighted several deputies for caring enough to go beyond filing a crime report.

It seems that 4-year-old Emily Salmon received her first bicycle as a birthday present from her grandparents. Unfortunately, she had to be hospitalized because of complications stemming from her recurrent neuroblastoma, a form of cancer most often found in young children.

When she returned home, though, she learned that the bicycle had been stolen.

Seminole County Sheriff's Deputy Jamie Jones responded to the call from Emily's mother. After meeting the young girl, he joined efforts with Sgt. Jay Summers and fellow deputies Steve Taylor, Neil Steward and Mike Hawkins to raise the money to buy Emily a new bicycle.

And they delivered it the same day.

Jones told the newspaper that replacing the bicycle "just seemed like the right thing to do." When offered praise, he brushed it off, saying, "We didn't do anything different than any other squad in the department would have done."

DARE Grads Get a Kick Out of Kickball

By: Steve Olson Public Information Officer Seminole County Sheriff's Office

It was a tough match on Wednesday, March 26 as the Seminole County Sheriff's Office, District 3 deputies took on some tenacious 10-11-and 12-year-olds in a game of kickball at Heathrow Elementary School. It was part of the DARE graduation activities at the school.

Deputy Neal Fowler came up with the idea, trying to expand DARE graduation ceremonies to capitalize on the energy of the students. But the eight deputies had their hands full, taking on each of the fifth grade classes, one at a time, which added up to more than 100 kids. They kept a running score.

Led by Deputy Carl "The Leg" Tipton, the deputies ended up winning 30 to 14. Tipton sent several kicked balls over the portable classrooms.

The kids didn't hold any grudges about the score, though, and decided to share their DARE graduation pizzas with the deputies after the game.



Seminole County Deputy Carl "The Leg" Tipton.

Seminole County Sheriff Don Eslinger endorses these and other fresh ideas that help reach young people. A decentralization of the Sheriff's Office gives district commanders the flexibility to meet the needs of the citizens of Seminole County, he says.

One Deputy's Actions Helps Launch New Nonprofit Group

By: William McKeon Systems Analyst Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office

When Hillsborough County Sheriff's Deputy Steve McDermott answered a 9-1-1 call on April Fool's Day, 2002, and no one answered his knock on the door, he suspected a prank.

But he tried one more knock – a little louder – and heard a quiet voice inviting him in.

Once inside, he met Carol, a quadriplegic confined to a wheel-chair. She had called the Sheriff's Office because her caregiver had stolen from her. In the course of helping her with the immediate problem, McDermott formed a friendship with the woman, who spent most of her waking hours on her "special-needs" computer, talking to and counseling other disabled people.

From that day on, McDermott made a point of checking in on Carol regularly. A few weeks after they met, though, McDermott noticed that Carol had been crying. The old computer she so depended on had stopped working – it was beyond repair. She could not afford the price of a new system, and she worried about all those people who depended on her for daily encouragement.

McDermott sent out a countywide message to all deputies, asking for help for Carol. Within three days, more than \$1,500 was raised through the generous donations of county deputies. Then, a local company offered to build Carol a custom, special-needs machine for their cost. It wasn't long before Carol was back on the Internet.

When Carol's story was told in an article published by the Tampa Tribune, readers responded by contributing enough money for Carol to get the "always on" Internet connection she needed. Readers of the story also contacted Deputy McDermott, telling him they liked what the deputies had donegoing in and solving a problem, without the usual reams of red tape. Those readers offered to donate money and computer equipment so others in need could be provided with computer equipment.

McDermott decided to take up



Hillsborough County Sheriff's Deputy Ben Tillis (in uniform) works with other volunteers to set up computers through the "Cops and Computers for the Community" (CCFTC) program. The start-up organization gave away more than 200 computers its first year.



the cause. He and several of his coworkers formed a nonprofit group of law enforcement officers and concerned citizens. With little money and two old computers, they gave away their first computer to a foster home in eastern Hillsborough County. With one computer left – and no notion of how to obtain any others – they set a goal of giving away at least one computer system every month.

In the course of just one year, "Cops and Computers for the Community," (CCFTC), surpassed its goal by giving away more than 200 computers. Recipients include a number of inner-city kids, several nursing homes and the Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranch.

As CCFTC enters its second year, the organization continues to grow.



Patsy Komsie (second from right) and her family lost all their belongings when a fire destroyed their home. After columnist Judy Hill wrote about them in

> the Tampa Tribune, locals helped them find a new home and the CCFTC group provided a top-ofthe-line Pentium computer. Sherri Johnson (left), an employee with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, is a CCFTC volunteer.

Nine-year-old Thomas and his mother were unable to afford a computer, so he was using the public library access whenever possible. Hillsborough County Sheriff's Deputy Richard M. Smith referred them to the CCFTC program and now Thomas is polishing his skills daily from his home. His mother is also improving her computer skills to move up in the workplace.

McDermott wants to get the word out that they are always looking for monetary donations, both old and new computer equipment of all kinds, and volunteers who would like to commit some time to this worthy cause. With a new and ambitious project about to get underway – setting up four new computer-learning labs—they can use the help.

McDermott notes that everything received via donation, whether money or equipment, is returned to the community in the form of individual computer grants, community labs, youth mentoring programs, etc.

For information on the Cops and Computers for the Community, visit their web site: www.ccftc.org.

Crime Prevention and Personal Safety

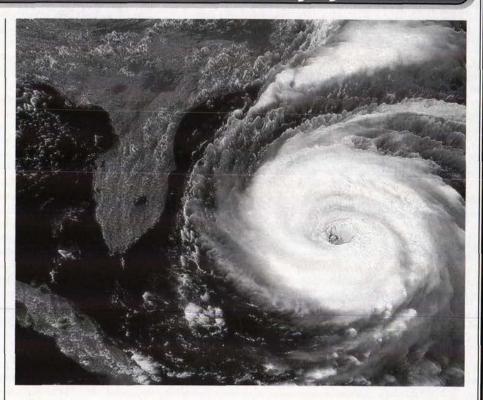
With Hurricanes, You Can Never Be Sure . . . So Be Prepared

By: Sgt. Rick Hord Public Information Officer Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office

Experience has shown that we should always be prepared for the possibility of a hurricane. Averages and records may be interesting, and various predictions are offered every year about the upcoming hurricane season (active, average, or slow), but it's important to remember: A "very slow" year, with only one hurricane could be a very active year ... if that one storm hits your community. Conversely, a "very active" year, with 20 named storms, might be considered "slow" if your community is never threatened.

Historically, the "average" Atlantic hurricane season produces nine named storms—one in July, three in August, three in September and two in October. In this hypothetical typical year, five of those nine named storms develop into hurricanes; with two reaching Category 3 or higher. September is the month most likely to produce strong hurricanes.

Hurricane season begins the first of June, and runs through November. About 97 percent of all tropical weather activity occurs during hurricane season. Hurricanes and tropical storms outside of the official season are possible, but rare. Northwest Florida had an April storm this year. "Olga" (the replacement name for "Opal") in 2001 persisted in the Atlantic until December 4. February is the only month in



which an Atlantic tropical storm or hurricane has never been observed.

What's in a name?

From "Alice" in May 1953, to "Ana" in April 2003, 459 Atlantic basin tropical storms and hurricanes have been given official names. Fifty-four of those names have been "retired." Of those 54, seven struck along or near the Emerald Coast: Camille (1969); Agnes (1972); Eloise (1975); Frederic (1979); Elena (1985); Opal (1995); and Georges (1998). A notable local storm whose name was not retired was "Erin," which struck our area as a Category, one month before the infamous "Opal." "Erin" was used in 2001 and is on the list for 2007.

The familiar system of names was adopted in 1953. Until 1979, only female names were used. The first Atlantic hurricane given a male name was Category-1 "Bob," which hit Louisiana in July 1979. That first co-ed season also produced the memorable "Frederic," which ravaged Dauphin Island,

Alabama, and caused considerable damage along the Alabama and Northwest Florida coast.

This year's names: "Ana,"
"Bill," "Claudette," "Danny,"
"Erika," "Fabian," "Grace,"
"Henri," "Isabel," "Juan," "Kate,"
"Larry," "Mindy," "Nicholas,"
"Odette," "Peter," "Rose," "Sam,"
"Teresa," "Victor" and "Wanda."

You can never be sure

Predicting the path of a tropical storm or hurricane is difficult. This year, there's a major change at the National Hurricane Center. We will be seeing five-day advance forecasts for the first time. Threeday forecasts have been issued since 1964. The good news is the new five-day forecasts should be as accurate as the 3-day forecasts were 15 years ago (about the time of "Eloise"). The bad news is, that's not very accurate. The average error in this year's five-day forecasts is expected to be on the order of 370 miles.

Letters to The Editor

Editor:

In the March/April issue, under crime prevention you state, "install double cylinder locks with keys removed."

My wife has Alzheimer's and has a tendency to walk out. In an attempt to stop this I went to a locksmith. He refused to install a double cylinder lock on the grounds that in case of fire no one could get out.

Perhaps a little more thinking in this matter would be forthcoming.

BQ (via e-mail)

Editor responds:

Yours is a very valid point in your particular situation. We've had a similar fear when guests are visiting. A solution we found was placing the key on a table or other surface close to the door and pointing out the availability of the key to friends who stay in our guest room.

This way, the key is out of immediate reach – if a burglar decided to break the glass to gain entry – and yet close by for easy, convenient entry and exit.

Editor:

I read with great interest the letters regarding uninsured motorists published in the Mar/Apr 2003 edition of *The Sheriff's Star*.

With regard to the last letter in the column sent by E. L., if most insurance companies are like mine, GEICO, they issue six-month policies.

For those of us who abide by the law, reissuing plates every six months would be a real burden for the tag agency.

RDL, from Pensacola, has good suggestions. I must confess that I support all or any for implementation. This state must take some action to rid itself of the uninsureds. Hopefully, it will reduce premiums for all of us if we can remove these hazards from the road.

Immediate removal of license tag and driver's license should be policy in the event an uninsured motorist is involved in an accident.

LL, Jacksonville

Editor:

I am a seasonal resident in Palm Beach County. A telemarketer called in January for a donation to the Police Benevolent Association for the Village of Palm Springs. I have not replied, as I am on a fixed income.

I live in New York state. In 2002, the PBA was recognized for the help of retarded children at a Rose Ball.

(My question is) if the money goes toward the PBA, do they get 100 percent of funding?

I wish a law would be enacted to eliminate the calls to private citizens regarding fundraising.

DNS, Palm Springs, FL

(Please see Tom Berlinger's reply below)

Editor:

Reading the current issue of *The Sheriff's Star* magazine, I noted on page 10, a letter to the editor mentioning the Florida Association of State Troopers and questioning the legitimacy of this operation. Late last year I received a solicitation by phone to contribute to the Florida State Troopers Local 6000. I was a little suspicious and requested information by mail.

What arrived was (a disclaimer document and) a decal for the car. To me the significant information is contained in the text on the reverse of the contribution reply slip, which states that 90 percent of each contribution is retained by their paid soliciting organization LAS L.L.C.

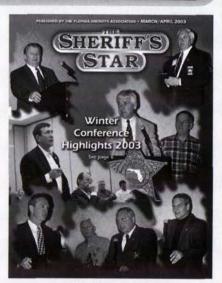
I did not contribute, but would like to know if this is the same organization as the one mentioned in your magazine and if it is a legitimate police fund raising organization.

E.W. (via e-mail)

Tom Berlinger, FSA's Director of Law Enforcement, responds:

It is difficult to answer your question without appearing to be throwing rocks at other organizations, but I'll try.

The Florida Association of State Troopers, the Florida State Troopers Local 6000 and the Police Benevolent Association are "legitimate" in the sense that they are operating within the



The Sheriff's Star, March/April 2003

bounds of Florida law. But, you may wish to consider other factors before deciding whom you want to support.

Local 6000 and the PBA are labor unions, not charitable organizations like the Florida Sheriffs Association. Contributions to a labor union are not tax deductible.

The larger question, though, and the question that you should be asking yourself when you are solicited is this: "Do I want to support ANY organization that hires telemarketing solicitors, who then willingly hands over anywhere between 50 percent and 90 percent of my hard earned contribution money to the telemarketing firm?"

If you are comfortable with that

HAVE A COMMENT?

If you would like to send a comment, please write:

Editor, The Sheriff's Star Magazine, P.O. Box 12519, Tallahassee, FL 32317-2519, or e-mail: jbettinger@flsheriffs.org.

While we are not able to publish every letter, or answer them personally, we will do our best to get your comments represented in these pages. Please write legibly. We reserve the right to edit for space considerations. For privacy reasons, we will only publish the initials and city or county of the writer unless

authorization is given.



kind of arrangement and you don't mind keeping phone solicitors in business so that they can further pester you and your friends in the future, then that decision rests with you.

On the other hand, if you'd rather make a tax-deductible, charitable contribution to a statewide law enforcement support organization, declared a bona-fide charity by the IRS, and to an organization that enjoys an extremely low percentage spent on fundraising, then you may want to consider simply supporting the Florida Sheriffs Association.

I am proud to tell you that we were founded in 1893 and that we have never hired a telemarketing firm to make even one single telephone solicitation call in our 110year history. And, we never will.

You see, we think that your hard-earned donation ought to go to the cause for which you intended, not to some telemarketer that gets paid a huge bounty for getting you to part with your money.

Thanks for asking.

Editor:

I have found the Sheriff's Star magazine to be extremely informative.

My utmost concern is the use of cell phones by drivers. I am a very conservative driver and do not understand how any individual can concentrate on the road, traffic, traffic signals and pedestrians at crosswalks when engaged in a conversation on a cell phone.

Will there ever be a law that makes the use of cell phones illegal while driving?

Thank you.

DDT, Longwood

Tom Berlinger, FSA's Director of Law Enforcement, responds:

Personally, I agree that drivers are far too distracted when driving while using their cell phones. But, whether or not Florida will ever pass a law making the use of a cell phone illegal when you're driving is up to the 120 members of the Florida House of Representatives and the 40 members of the Florida Senate.

Truth is, from a political standpoint, I believe that the legislature would be very leary of passing such a bill.

If you look around, it seems that everybody is using a cell phone while driving. Most of those same people are voters. Public safety aside, legislators are going to be extremely cautious about passing legislation that will make lawbreakers out of millions of otherwise law-abiding citizens.

While this may not be the response you were hoping for, it's the political reality of the question you posed.

We very much appreciate your support of the Florida Sheriffs Association and wish you well. Thanks for writing to us.

Editor:

I am a well and capable 65-year-old person who has always respected the disabled. I also respect their space and their parking areas.

I have been a resident of Sarasota for 15 years. Every day that I am out, I see people parking in the handicapped zone, and yet they walk very well and perform well in stores without assistance.

Many times I confront them because of their disrespect of the parking area, saying they should be ashamed of themselves. They say they are entitled to park there because they have a sticker. They say their spouse or someone in their family is disabled and need it – but the one who needs it is not in the car and they are well and able bodied. They say it's none of my business.

I have also reported it to the store people and they say they have no one to police the area. I said that if they have staff working in the parking lots collecting shopping carts, they could take the license plate numbers and call it in to officials. I have found that a Handicapped Card is a free parking pass to anyone in the family. What can we do about it? Does it start from the top at the doctor's office or are people just not educated enough about what it's intended for or do they just not care?

DB, Sarasota

Editor responds:

As one who has a family member who is disabled, I can assure you that this is definitely a problem. But it's one that is difficult to enforce.

My nephew's disability is obvious – he's in a wheelchair and drives a wheelchair-equipped van. And yet I have met people who seem able-bodied, but suffer from fibromyalgia or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, and you would never know from appearances that they had this disability.

There are also mental and heart conditions that are difficult to detect.

Like you, I am sensitive to abuses of these reserved parking spaces. In fact, my beef is the way people discard their shopping carts by parking them in the blue handicapped zones. This basically renders the space unusable.

When you suspect abuse, it's best to leave any confrontation up to the officials. Consider yourself another set of eyes and ears for law enforcement, but for your own safety – and perhaps, sanity – please leave the questioning up to law enforcement. Report your suspicions to store officials, first, and if you feel they aren't going to act, call your local law enforcement's non-emergency number. Be sure to have the tag number and details of the vehicle and driver.

Put a Star on Your Car!

The Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches Specialty License Plate provides Florida citizens with a



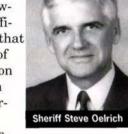
unique and personal way to help in the ongoing fight against juvenile delinquency and neglect. Along with the regular tag fees, the additional specialty tag donation will help Florida's needy boys and girls find shelter, guidance and self-confidence. To purchase your Youth Ranches Specialty Plate today, please contact your local Tax Collector.



False Alarm Reduction Unit Nets Big Savings, Better Safety for Citizens

By: Alachua County Sheriff Steve Oelrich

As sworn lawenforcement officers, we know that a few seconds of response time on alarm calls can mean the difference between catching a viola-



tor or letting a criminal go free. But as many as 99 out of 100 alarm calls in Alachua County are false alarms.

False alarm calls cost time for law enforcement, and they cost taxpayers money. But more importantly, they divert lawenforcement officers from real emergencies and encourage complacency when answering calls. That's something that could one day cost a life.

In Alachua County, though, we established a program that succeeded in reducing false alarms by 56 percent. By combining new computer technology and old-fashioned common sense, Alachua County's False Alarm Reduction Unit is saving time for deputies and saving dollars for county taxpayers.

Better public safety response for our citizens and safety for our deputies is our primary goal. Since 1999, alarm calls have been cut 56%, total, from 12,000 to less than 5,500 in the city of Gainesville and from 9,000 to less than 4,000 in the unincorporated areas.

Two-pronged approach works

We've accomplished this by helping educate

alarm users, while providing effective incentives to eliminate repeated false activations. It's a two-pronged approach designed to get at the root causes of the false alarm problem.

According to a report by a coalition of alarm industry sponsors and the International Association of Chiefs of Police, 80 percent of false alarms are triggered by 20 percent of the alarm users, and the major source of false activations is user error.

We believe that our focus on education, combined with escalating penalties for repeated activations, is what has put Alachua County ahead in addressing this problem.

As agencies all over the nation — from the largest communities to the smallest — try to find ways to cope with the problem of false alarms, they have increasingly turned to local ordinances. While ordinances have been proven to be effective in reducing false alarms calls, many agencies are finding it impossible to properly enforce the ordinances because they lack the ability to track repeat offenders and bill them.

That's why we created a new way of doing business. Our False Alarm Reduction Unit enforces both the city's and the county's ordinances, and since 1999, alarm calls in the city of Gainesville have dropped from more than 12,000 to less than 5,500. In the unincorpo-

rated area, they are down from more than 9,000 a year in 1999 to less than 4,000.

While many agencies are happy to experience a 20- to 30-percent drop in false alarms after enacting an ordinance, we've had a reduction of 56 percent.

Here's how we did it.

Incentives and Systems

Under the leadership of False Alarm Reduction Unit Director John Moorhouse, Alachua County teamed with Purvis Gray Technology Group, LLC, a division of Purvis, Gray and Company, CPAs, to develop a new computer system that integrated the information from all the alarm systems registered in the county.

The computer tracks alarm-call responses received through the Computer Assisted Dispatch or CAD system and also the citations for false alarms issued under both county and city ordinances. It is essentially a one-stop streamlined registration and billing system to track alarm calls and cite the repeat offenders who account for most of the problem.

The graduated schedule of fines set up by the ordinances includes one "free" call per year. After that, there's increased fines for repeat offenders, hoping they will implement procedures to reduce false alarms.

In addition, the False Alarm Reduction Unit offers free monthly classes to educate alarm system users on provisions of the False Alarm ordinances and proper maintenance and use of their alarm systems.

Using our software to simultaneously register alarm users and track the calls has been key to administering this system. Though the ordinance has been in place for two years, our agency never had a system that could keep the alarm records and generate the billing information at the same time.

The end result is improved public safety, quicker response time to legitimate calls and significant sav-

ings for taxpayers. The proven effectiveness of our False Alarm Reduction Unit is an example that false alarms can be substantially reduced, leaving more availability for law enforcement to handle our ever-increasing call load. Better service to our citizen customers is what this program is all about.

False Alarms Causing Alarm in Broward County

"National statistics indicate that more than 90 percent of all alarm calls are false alarms, and 80 percent of those are caused by user errors."



By: Jim Leljedal, Media Relations

Prompted by reports that many big city Police Departments are officially ignoring alarm calls, Broward County Sheriff Ken Jenne has reviewed the situation here in Broward County, and the results could be described as alarming.

This spring, Los Angeles, California, adopted a policy shared by several other major American cities, in which police refuse to respond to unverified alarm calls. National statistics indicate that more than 90 percent of all alarm calls are false alarms, and 80 percent of those are caused by user errors.

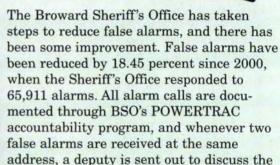
Sheriff Ken Jenne matter to matter the police refuse to compare the property of the propert

In the areas patrolled by the Broward County Sheriff's Office, nearly 100 percent of all alarm calls are bogus.

An internal review, ordered by Sheriff Jenne, revealed that BSO received 51,691 alarm calls in 2002 and 51,552 were unfounded. A total of 139 alarms actually signaled a burglary, robbery or other serious crime being committed. Of the nearly 1,000 alarm calls received each week, 99.7 percent of them are false.

Unintended consequences

False alarms are a tremendous waste of time, money and effort. It takes an average of 14 minutes for a deputy to respond to an alarm call, carefully check the premises and document the event. A quarter-hour, multiplied by 4,300 alarm calls per month, equals to about 1,000 hours a month of wasted deputies' time. That is the equivalent of 125 eight-hour shifts and amounts to more than \$22,000 in deputies' salaries (and tax dollars) wasted every month.



matter. In most cases, homeowners and business operators appreciate the concern and take corrective action. This benefits the homeowner, alarm company and the Broward County Sheriff's Office.

Aside from the expense, false alarms pose a special hazard. Because they are almost always unfounded, alarm calls can prove dangerous for deputies or officers who become complacent in responding. While BSO receives nearly 1,000 bogus alarms each week, two or three of them, on the average, are real.

What you can do

There are a few basic steps that alarm system owners can take to prevent false alarms. Everyone with a key, including guests and workers, must know how to operate the system, the pass code, and how to cancel an alarm. Windows and doors must be securely closed when the system is armed and motion sensors must be properly adjusted.

Alarm systems offer an added sense of safety and security and they can be an effective crime deterrent, but when they don't operate properly, they pose a major problem for law enforcement and the public.

Star Briefs

Open Letter of Thanks from Sheriff Jenne

Broward County Sheriff Ken Jenne requested that we publish the following letter for all of the Florida Sheriffs Association membership to read.

Broward County Sheriff's Deputy, 25-year-old Philip Billings, was killed while working a security detail for an automobile dealership in the early morning hours of April 6. He had been with the Broward Sheriff's Office for 18 months.

Suspects in the murder, Kevin Chermark, 25, and Christopher Spicer, 24, were found dead April 10, the result of a murder suicide. To the Florida law-enforcement family:

You know how proud I am of the men and women of law enforcement. This pride grew tenfold in April as scores of deputies and officers offered their support following the tragic and untimely death of Deputy Sheriff Philip Billings.

On April 10, 2003, we laid to rest one of our own. Deputy Philip Billings was a devoted public servant and a devout Christian. He was a man of courage and conviction. He was a man in the beginning of his career – yet he had so much to offer. He will be deeply missed.

I want to publicly thank all of you for the outpouring of emotion and untiring support. Each and every one of you stood by your brothers and sister of the Broward Sheriff's Office in our time of need. You sent your prayers to the Billings family, as well as to this agency. We received hand-written notes by the hundreds and more e-mails and phone calls than we could count.

The law enforcement community is unlike any other. Each day, you go to work prepared to give your life to protect our public. In Deputy Billings' honor, together we will stand shoulder-to-shoulder and

continue to make Florida a safer place.

Ken Jenne, Broward Sheriff



First in the Nation: Orange County Deputies participate in smallpox inoculation program

By: Jim Solomons Orange County Sheriff's Office Media Relations

Orange County Sheriff Kevin Beary rolled up his sleeve last December to kick off a program that will provide all of his personnel with the opportunity to receive a smallpox vaccination, and, at the same time, participate in a program that will produce Vaccinia Immune Globuline (VIG). VIG is vital antidote necessary for those who experience a negative reaction to the smallpox vaccine when they themselves receive the immunization.

"The threat of a bio-attack on the United States remains a major concern for those of us in the Homeland Security business," said Sheriff Beary. "The smallpox virus is one of the biological agents

SHARE

Dr. Ronald Brown, of Mid Florida Biologicals in Altamonte Springs, inoculates Sheriff Beary with the Smallpox vaccinia, the first step necessary to participate in the VIG production program.

that concerns us the most."

That concern has led the federal government to consider making mass smallpox inoculations available to the public for the first time since the vaccinations were discontinued in 1972. First responders and health care workers would be among the first to be offered a Smallpox vaccination. "Making this program available to my sworn

and civilian personnel and their families puts us ahead of the game," added Sheriff Beary.

Sheriff Beary stresses that participation in the program is voluntary. Those who participate will be carefully screened and given a physical examination to ensure that they are at the lowest possible risk to have an adverse reaction to the vaccination. A week to 10 days

after the vaccination the volunteers will be re-examined to determine if their immune systems have produced sufficient antibodies to enable them to participate in the plasmapharesis portion of the program.

During plasmapharesis blood is taken from the donor. The antibody-rich plasma is taken to produce VIG while the red blood cells and other blood components are returned to the donor. Program participants undergo this procedure twice a week for at least five weeks.

Award-Winning Book On Florida Sheriffs 1821-1945

The Florida Historical Society has awarded the 2002 James J. Horgan Award for "Outstanding Books on Florida History," to coauthors William Warren Rogers, Ph.D., and James M. Denham, Ph.D., for penning the book, *Florida Sheriffs: A History*, 1821-1945.

In presenting the award, University of Central Florida's Jose Fernandez, Ph.D., chair of the selection committee, said, "Bill Rogers and Mike Denham have provided an important look at an important element of county politics in Florida. They have focused their attention on county Sheriffs who were important political figures in Florida and who also operated on the frontlines of law enforcement. This is a major contribution to understanding the political dynamics of early Florida."

If you haven't already secured your copy of this **Award-Winning** book, don't miss this opportunity. Copies are available for \$29.50 each, plus shipping and tax. This edition will also make a great gift – so be sure to get extra copies!

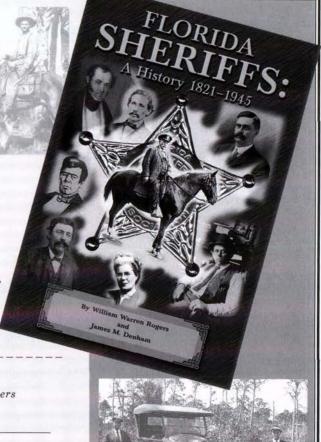
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Please make check or money payable to: Florida Sheriffs Association P.O. Box 12519 Tallahassee, FL 32317-2519

Questions? Please call: 1-800-877-2168



About the authors

Co-authors William Warren Rogers and James M. Denham have earned enviable reputations nationally for their ability to dig out little known historical facts and publish them in book form for others to enjoy. Both are professors of history, but more important they are talented storytellers. Their latest project, the history of the Florida Sheriffs, is the result of years of research. Don't miss this printed documentary of the chief law enforcers in



Co-author William Warren Rogers, Emeritus Professor of History, Florida State University



Co-author James M. "Mike" Denham, Professor of history, Florida Southern College

FLORIDA SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION



ALACHUA COUNTY - Presented by Alachua County Sheriff Steve Oelrich (center) to Allison Folds (left) and Scott Walker of Folds & Walker, PA.

HONOR ROLL

This honor roll gives special recognition to individuals who have demonstrated their commitment to progressive law enforcement by supporting the Florida Sheriffs Association as honorary members for 25 years or more. Many progressive

business leaders are supporting the Florida Sheriffs Association and its anti-crime activities by enrolling as Business Members of the Association and becoming "partners against crime." The Florida Sheriffs recognizes those businesses that are making a difference in their communities. Gold members commit \$500 annually, Silver members \$250 and Bronze members \$50 annually.



LEON – Gold Business Member plaque presented by Leon County Sheriff Larry Campbell to Harold Leslie president of A Storage Solution.



SEMINOLE COUNTY – 25-year certificate presented by Seminole County Sheriff Don Eslinger to Randy Raspotnik.



CITRUS COUNTY – 40-year certificate presented by Citrus County Sheriff Jeff Dawsy to Joseph Garrett and Mr. & Mrs. Duncan Macrae.

Mr. & Mrs. Duncan Macrae

Samuel A. Sidoni



HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY – 30-year certificate presented by Hillsborough County Sheriff Cal Henderson to James Nestle, Sr.



SUMTER COUNTY – 25-year certificate presented by Sumter County Sheriff Bill Farmer to Henry S. Web.



OKALOOSA COUNTY - 25-year certificate presented by Okaloosa County Sheriff Charlie Morris to Bill D. Bertron and Samuel A. Sidoni.



ST. LUCIE COUNTY – 30-year certificate presented by St. Lucie County Sheriff Ken J. Mascara to Fred D. McGrath



COLLIER COUNTY – 30-year certificate presented by Collier County Sheriff's Office Chief of Operations Bill Stiess to Dr. V. Keith Riley.



OKALOOSA COUNTY – 30-year certificate presented by Okaloosa County Sheriff Charlie Morris to Chuck Clary.



JACKSON COUNTY - Presented Jackson County Sheriff Johnny McDaniel to Mr. & Mrs. Leroy Vickery.



ST. LUCIE COUNTY - 30-year certificate presented by St. Lucie County Sheriff Ken Mascara to Roman Mager and Grayson E. Bell.



ST. LUCIE COUNTY – 25-year certificate presented by St. Lucie County Sheriff Ken Mascara to John T. Conaty.



HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY – 40-year law enforcement member award presented by Hillsborough County Sheriff Cal Henderson to Larry Terry

FLORIDA SHERIFFS YOUTH RANCHES



ST. LUCIE COUNTY - Presented by St. Lucie County Sheriff Ken Mascara to Mr. & Mrs. Ed Kavlich.

HONOR ROLL

>>>>>>>>>>

On these pages we give special recognition to generous supporters of the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches who have qualified for Lifetime Honorary Memberships in the Florida Sheriffs Association by giving \$2,500 or more in

cash or \$5,000 or more in non-cash gifts to the Youth Ranches. Each Lifetime Honorary Member receives a plaque, a lifetime identification card and lifetime subscriptions to *The Sheriff's Star* and *The Rancher*. Those whose gifts total over \$5,000 receive additional gold stars on their plaques – one for \$5,000, two for \$10,000, and so on, up to a maximum of five stars for gifts totaling over \$25,000.

New Lifetime Honorary Members

Ms. Kendra Abeledo Mr. and Mrs. John Accardi Mr. and Mrs. Charles Adams Mr. John Allison Mr. and Mrs. Terry Austin Mr. William J. Bachschmidt Mrs. Ann Banach Mrs. Linda Barker Mr. and Mrs. Donald R. Bell Mr. Willy G. Brommelsick Mr. and Mrs. Craig Brown Mr. Melvin J. Brown Mr. Joe Butler Mrs. Laura Cannon Mr. James R. Cavagnaro Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Chatfield Colburns Body Shop Mr. and Mrs. Dean Cooke Mr. Eugene Costa, Jr. Mr. Merton E. Curtis, Sr. Mr. and Mrs. John V. D'Albora, Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Henry DeWolf, Jr.

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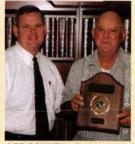
Zakshevski



MARION
COUNTY Presented
by Marion
County
Sheriff Ed
Dean to
Derrick
Kelly and
Ray Barnett
(Harley
Davidson of
Ocala).



ST. LUCIE COUNTY - Presented by St. Lucie County Sheriff Ken Mascara to Major H. G. Thorne, Jr.



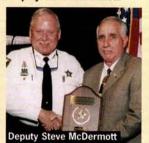
LEE COUNTY - Presented by Lee County Sheriff Rodney Shoap to Harry E. Brown, Jr.





HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY – Presented by Hillsborough County Sheriff Cal Henderson to Andy Thomson (on behalf of Cops & Computers for the Community), Deputy Flix Moret, Jr., Carolyn Oliver (for Bank of America) and Deputy Steve McDermott.





Pettigrew Pomtatambo Stable

FLORIDA SHERIFFS YOUTH RANCHES



HONOR ROLL CONTINUED



POLK COUNTY - Presented by Polk County Sheriff Larry Crow, Jr., to Ms. Keightley Stringfellow.



Steve Appel



MARION COUNTY - Presented by Marion County Sheriff Ed Dean to Mr. & Mrs. Thomas C. Fulford, Derrick Kelly and Ray Barnett (Harley Davidson of Ocala), Marion County Sheriff's Office Deputy Brian Litz, Steve Appel and Roland Sosa (Rispoli-Sosa Architecture, Inc.).



LEE COUNTY - Presented by Lee County Sheriff Rodney Shoap to John E. Guard and Harry E. Brown, Jr.



SARASOTA COUNTY – Presented by Sarasota County Sheriff Bill Balkwill to Judge and Mrs. Vincent J. Bruno.



SARASOTA COUNTY - Presented by Sarasota County Sheriff Bill Balkwill and FSYR's Bill Brown to Genevieve Bailey.



SARASOTA COUNTY - Presented by Sarasota County Sheriff Bill Balkwill to Ronald Hoza.

Vehicle Donations Needed

The Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches accepts vehicles in fair to great condition! Please be sure your donation has emission controls, fair tires, no major body damage, the engine and transmission in good working order and no major rust problems. Boats need to have road worthy trailers. Call 1-800-765-3797 to make your tax deductible gift of a car, truck, boat, RV or any vehicle and help save the future of a deserving child.



Attention Members:

Are you moving north for the summer? Please send us . . .

. . . your new address so that you'll continue to receive The Sheriff's Star. And please remember to let us know again when moving again.

We don't want to lose you as a valuable member, but if your address has been changed, you may not be receiving your FSA mailings.

Please take a moment to check the mailing label on the back cover of this magazine. If your address is different in any way, let us know.

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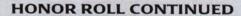
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FLORIDA SHERIFFS YOUTH RANCHES











CITRUS COUNTY - Presented by Citrus County Sheriff Jeff Dawsy (far right) and FSYR's Bob Connelly (far left) to John Park, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Schaefer, Dan Kennedy, Mr. & Mrs. Richard Nystrom, Mr. & Mrs. Donald Gold, and Mr. & Mrs. John Hulser.









CITRUS COUNTY - Presented by Citrus County Sheriff Jeff Dawsy (far right) and FSYR's Frank Kenny (far left) to Citrus County Sheriff's Office Lt. Doug Dodd, Thomas Donahue, Mrs. Franchion Cowles, Ron Dillon, and Carlos Melendez.

















COLUMBIA COUNTY - Presented by Columbia County Sheriff Frank Owens to Steve Brisco (The Money Man), Mrs. Joe Price, Hugh Wilson, Mr. & Mrs. Paul Brundage and Virginia Blackerby (ASC Geosciences, Inc.).



MANATEE COUNTY – Presented by Manatee County Sheriff Charlie Wells to Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Rogers.



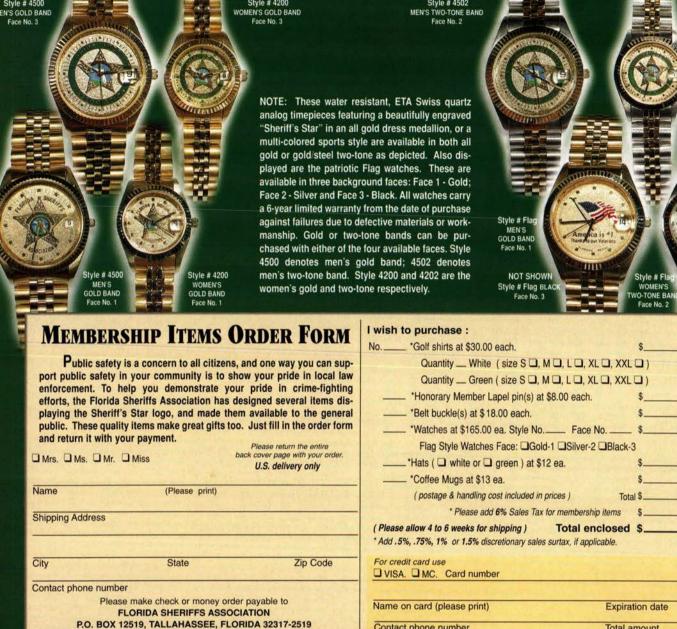
ESCAMBIA COUNTY - Presented by Youth Ranches Development Officer Linda Crews to Joe Gilchrist.



NASSAU COUNTY – Presented by Nassau County Undersheriff Colonel Tommy Seagraves to Mary Sadesky.



LEON COUNTY – Presented by Youth Ranches Development Officer Linda Crews to Dr. Herbert Quay.



GOLF SHIRTS green or white with multi-colored embroidered logo



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Florida Sheriffs Association

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Style # Fla

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