

FLORIDA SHERIFFS

ALL POINTS BULLETIN



Volume 10, Number 3, 2000

Deputy Yona Valdez is the FSA Deputy Sheriff of the Year for 2000

Each year for the past decade, we have solicited nominations from each sheriff, in an effort to find the one person that will be named as the FSA Deputy Sheriff of the Year.

As in past years, the field of candidates was as wide and varied as you can imagine. Among others, we had nominees that worked undercover and made multiple drug arrests; deputies that worked lengthy investigations that came to successful conclusions; and still others that excelled in the area of DUI and traffic enforcement.

But, there can only be one first-place winner, and this year the screening committee chose Deputy Yona Valdez of Manatee County.

The event that has earned her the honor began on December 6 at approximately 8:40 in the morning. That particular morning, a uniformed deputy sheriff was dispatched to a home in the community of Palmetto, located in western Manatee County. There, an individual by the name of Roy Morris, age 39, had shown up at his estranged wife's residence, in clear violation of a court order to stay away from her and the home.



Manatee County Sheriff Charlie Wells (left) and outgoing FSA President, Bay County Sheriff Guy Tunnel, congratulate Deputy Yona Valdez for her heroic effort saving the life of a fellow deputy. Despite being wounded in her left arm by a suspect who had a gun aimed at the head of Deputy Mike Grimes, she was able to steady her weapon and kill the suspect.

In light of the court order, the wife refused to let Roy in the house. But, she felt compelled to call the sheriff's office after Morris broke out a window in an attempt to gain forcible entry.

At the time of the call, Roy's wife

was extremely scared. Several times before, she had suffered the wrath of Roy's abusive ways. In fact, Morris had a history of at least 3 previous arrests for domestic violence and for

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violations of probation, as well as violations of other court injunctions. Unfortunately, though, by the time deputies arrived, Morris had fled the scene.

Now, armed with probable cause to make an arrest for violation of the DV order, the deputy put out a "BOLO" that notified all other deputies in the area that Morris was now a "wanted" person, and to arrest him on sight.

At about 1:00 PM that same day, a mere four hours after breaking out the window at his wife's home, Morris himself called the sheriff's office and wanted to "discuss the matter" with a deputy. Roy had again returned to the house, only to discover that his wife had gone to church and had not yet returned.

This time, deputies Yona Valdez and Mike Grimes were assigned the call. Each knew before they arrived that they would, no doubt, be taking Morris into custody, for both violation of the court order, as well as for the criminal act of breaking out the window.

Upon arrival, the deputies informed Morris that he was under arrest, but Morris apparently had other ideas. He made it clear that he was not going to be willingly taken into custody.

Deputy Mike Grimes and the suspect initially fought, and both wound up on the ground. While scuffling around on the ground with Deputy Grimes, Morris somehow managed to wrestle Grimes' gun out of his hip holster.

Upon seeing that Morris now had the gun, Valdez stepped back a few paces. In a second that probably seemed like an hour to Deputy Valdez, the suspect pointed the gun directly at her and shot her in the upper left arm.

After shooting Deputy Valdez, the suspect then turned the gun towards

Deputy Grimes. Despite Grimes having all but a death grip on him, the suspect succeeded in getting the gun pointed directly at Deputy Grimes' head.

Just before pulling the trigger and shooting Deputy Grimes, though, Deputy Yona Valdez fired her service weapon, using her injured left arm, and shot and killed the suspect.

There is no doubt that this courageous act saved the lives of at least two deputies, and perhaps other innocent people.

In recent months, Deputy Yona Valdez was named the Manatee County Hundred Club's Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Last December, she was named Deputy Sheriff of the Year for the Manatee County Sheriff's Office.

And, now, she's the year 2000 Florida Sheriffs Association Deputy Sheriff of the Year!

For her courage, bravery and life-saving efforts, Deputy Valdez was awarded a handsome plaque, and a check for \$1,000. The presentation was made recently, at the annual Florida Sheriffs Association Conference that was held at the Saddlebrook Resort, in south-central Pasco County.

The Runners-up

In addition to the major 1st place award, we also will choose runners-up. This year, one of the runners-up awards went to a pair of Lee County deputy sheriffs who were involved in one major incident. The other went to a Hillsborough County deputy sheriff involved in a third major incident.

Here are their stories.

Deputy Traci Estep and Deputy Roger Turner Lee County Sheriff's Office

Back on November 11th of last year, deputies Traci Estep and Roger Turner were on uniformed patrol in Lee County, several miles south of Fort

Myers. They received information from the radio dispatcher that there was a possible violation of a restraining order between husband and wife at the Terraverde Condominiums.

When both arrived and approached the apartment, Turner, a long-time veteran deputy sheriff, stated to Estep that he, "had a bad feeling about the situation."

Standing off to the side of the doorway into the apartment, the deputies tried to summon the attention of Lori Potter, wife of the suspect, and the complaining witness that called for law enforcement assistance. Deputies got a verbal response from Lori but she would not come out. They could tell from her voice that she was tense and under a lot of distress, but, her husband would not let her leave. No amount of verbal coaxing would bring her out.

The deputies continued to speak through the window to Lori while standing adjacent to the doorway. Without warning, several shots rang out at the deputies from inside the apartment. The shots were so close to Deputy Turner that he received a cut on the face from shrapnel as the bullets passed through the door.

The deputies attempted to take cover when another volley of shots erupted. Although in imminent danger, both deputies stood their ground and continued their efforts to get Lori safely out of harms way.

The door suddenly opened, however, and Lori exited the apartment bleeding and disoriented, the apparent victim of gunshot wounds.

Deputy Turner could see the silhouette of a man behind Lori and still in the apartment. Turner fired two shots at Stephen Potter, the suspect. The shots backed Turner away from Lori and back him deeper into the apartment.

As the suspect was retreating, he fired two more shots. The first one was

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EDITOR'S CORNER

By Tom Berlinger



OSCEOLA – Sheriff Charlie Croft
ST. LUCIE – Sheriff Bobby Knowles
SARASOTA – Sheriff Geoff Monge
VOLUSIA – Sheriff Bob Vogel

All of these men served our association and their respective constituents in a manner that deserves our praise and recognition. And, all have some noteworthy history that departs with them, signaling the end of an era in their county.

Items of interest from this group includes:

★ Sheriff Peavy was first elected in 1972, and that he was unopposed in three of the seven elections that he went on to win.

★ Sheriffs Tom Mylander, Bobby Knowles and Geoff Monge all served a stint as president of the Florida Sheriffs Association.

★ In his earlier life, Sheriff Ed Miller was a lawyer that served as a county judge.

★ Sheriff Charlie Croft worked his way through the ranks in Osceola County before being elected in 1992.

★ A feature was done about Sheriff Bob Vogel on television's "60 Minutes" for his uncanny knack at catching drug smugglers on I-95, capturing dozens upon dozens of bad guys and seizing millions in cash and drugs.

★ Sheriff Dewey Hatcher earned so much respect as a local deputy in Dixie County that the voters picked him after being a deputy only two and a half years.

We all wish these men good health and prosperity in their future endeavors. And we all hold high hopes that those that follow in their footsteps will serve as honorably as these men did.

Every four years, in the same election cycle as the race for president of the United States, 65 counties in Florida hold elections for the Office of Sheriff.

The two counties that don't are Duval (Jacksonville) and Miami-Dade. In Duval County, by county charter, the sheriff's race is held every four years, but it is held in the cycle two years before and two years after the rest. In Miami-Dade County, there is no elected sheriff. Although he performs the usual and regular duties expected of the sheriff, the agency head there is called the director of the Miami-Dade Police Department. The director is appointed by their 16 member county commission.

On average, and this compares to the national average, 1/3 of the state's 67 sheriffs will change each election cycle, including those that voluntarily retire. If we hit the average, there stands to be 22 new sheriffs taking office on January 2, 2001.

This year, eight of our incumbent sheriffs have announced that they are no longer seeking re-election. They are:
DIXIE – Sheriff Dewey Hatcher
MADISON – Sheriff Joe Peavy
HERNANDO – Sheriff Tom Mylander
OKEECHOBEE – Sheriff Ed Miller



Lee McGehee passes away

Lee McGehee, age 57, the retired police chief of Ocala, former deputy chief at St. Petersburg Police Department and the person that most recently served as the director of the FDLE Criminal Justice Executive Institute died in his sleep during the morning hours of September 19.

McGehee suffered a massive heart attack on September 1st. After being stabilized for over a week, he was moved to a hospital in Ocala at his request. Doctors at Monroe Regional Medical Center performed a successful quintuple by-pass on September 12th. In the days following the surgery, doctors were very optimistic about a full recovery. Apparently, though, that wasn't to be.

McGehee's father, F. L. McGehee was the sheriff of Marion County (Ocala) between 1957-60. In 1960, Lee's mother, Agnes, was appointed sheriff when her husband died from a heart attack while still in office. Mrs. McGehee served as sheriff until the election was held later that year.

"Lee McGehee epitomized everything a law enforcement professional should be," said FDLE Commissioner Tim Moore, "He forgot more than many of us ever knew about law enforcement, and he was a true visionary when it came to determining the training needs of the law enforcement executives of the future."

He is survived by his wife, Abigail, four adult children, and four grandchildren.

We will miss you, Lee.

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The Runners-up

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fired at the deputies, and with the second shot, Potter took his own life.

Potter had a history of domestic violence, and was arrested for that charge on October 29, about two weeks before this incident. It was later determined that Potter had purchased a .40 cal. semi-automatic handgun just two days before the arrest, the gun that later was fired at deputies who were trying to rescue his wife.

Thankfully, Lori Potter survived this horrible ordeal due to the work of these two brave deputies.

Cpl. James Stone Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office

As evidenced by the previous two incidents recounted in this article, this past year was a bad year for deputy sheriffs being involved in shootouts with suspects. This case was no exception.

The incident that earns Cpl. Stone the runner-up award occurred on January 11.

While performing his usual duties, Stone heard an alert broadcast on his police radio that three suspects had just fled two different armed robberies within the city limits of Tampa. The suspects were riding in what was described as a red Toyota van.

Very soon thereafter, Cpl. Stone stationed himself in an area that the suspect vehicle was known to frequent and sure enough, Stone saw the vehicle pulling into a nearby apartment complex and parking in the lot. That forced Stone to stop and act quicker than anyone planned, because they didn't want to lost sight of the suspects.

Upon seeing Cpl. Stone, the driver of the suspect vehicle bailed out of the van and began shooting at the deputy, striking his vehicle. Unbelievably, the suspect then began running towards Cpl. Stone continuing to fire his pistol.

Three more shots hit Stone's police cruiser. Almost simultaneously, the other two suspects jumped out of the van and fled on foot through the apartment complex.

Cpl. Stone, was shot in the abdomen from a round that had ricocheted off the car. He then leaned over towards the passenger side of his front seat, to take cover. In an instant, though, the suspect approached his drivers' side window. Fearing that the suspect was about to shoot him again, Cpl. Stone fired back. After being shot, the suspect faltered and dropped, and was found on the pavement no more than four feet from Stone's car. The suspect, whose gun was cocked and still in his hand, was pronounced dead at the scene.

The two other suspects were later located and taken into custody.

As evidenced by these three incidents, the career of a deputy sheriff in Florida can be as dangerous as any law enforcement job anywhere in America.

New partnership targets deadbeat parents in Broward

*By Kirk Englehardt, PIO
Broward County Sheriff's Office*

FT. LAUDERDALE – The Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) and Broward County CrimeStoppers have teamed up to make deadbeat parents pay up. Sheriff Ken Jenne has announced that CrimeStoppers is now offering \$200 for information leading to the arrest of a deadbeat parent who has an outstanding warrant for failure to make support payments. Anyone can anonymously call CrimeStoppers with the information that is then forwarded to the BSO Civil Division. BSO has deputies permanently assigned to tracking down

deadbeat parents throughout the county.

Sheriff Jenne announced this innovative program in mid-summer. Within two weeks of the announcement, Broward CrimeStoppers had received 21 anonymous tips about parents who had not paid. The partnership has also had other positive, but unexpected, results. CrimeStoppers received an additional 64 calls from people that wanted warrants issued for deadbeats not already in the system. The procedure was explained to callers so that their claims could be investigated by the state.

BSO's Civil Division conducts regular sweeps to find and jail deadbeat parents. Once found, they are detained until they settle their outstanding child support debt. During a sweep, for example, on April 27th, 17 deadbeats were apprehended and more than \$45,000 was collected. Between May 1999 and April 2000, BSO deputies took more than 176 deadbeat parents into custody.

Taking the initiative one step further, BSO is currently negotiating with the Florida Dept. of Revenue (DOR) to give the agency's civil deputies access to case notes compiled by DOR investigators, making it easier to locate and arrest these individuals. BSO will also be able to review Social Security information, state employment files, and records of Florida Lottery winners.

Sheriff Jenne believes that this innovative partnership is a positive

step towards combating this growing problem. "The real victims are the children of single parents struggling to pay rent

or put food on the dinner table," said Sheriff Jenne.

"Working together, we can better help these parents provide for their children."

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"A MOST UNFORGETTABLE CHARACTER"

The Florida Sheriffs Association, in concert with one of our sheriff's offices, presents a seminar developed especially for the Sheriff's personal secretary each year.

Although called by various names, there are secretaries, administrative assistants, executive assistants, personal secretaries, executive aides, you kinda' get the picture, huh? You can see why giving our seminar a name proposed some study. It was decided that "Seminar for the Executive Aide to the Sheriff" was perhaps the most appropriate name since it seems to encompass the entire range of duties assigned to that position.

The individuals that attend these seminars are just as varied in personality as the titles might imply. In order to recognize the uniqueness of each of these women, it was decided that we would spotlight one person from a different county each year. The person so chosen is required to tell the group about herself, and then describe the most unforgettable character she has ever met.

At this year's seminar in Key West, Karen Cline, secretary to Charlotte County Sheriff Richard Worch, described her relationship with Elaine Fornea, a longtime member of the Lee County Sheriff's Office. The two met at the first of these seminars in 1991, and they have continued to be the very best of friends ever since.

To everyone's dismay, Elaine was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1997. The following year she underwent a mastectomy, chemotherapy treatments and re-constructive surgery, but was able to return to work later in the year. Then, in 1999, she was diagnosed with liver cancer and the chemotherapy started once again.

In March 2000, after episodes of dizziness and severe headaches, Elaine was rushed to the hospital and was later diagnosed with brain cancer. She underwent six weeks of radiation treatment for the brain cancer while still undergoing chemotherapy for the liver cancer.

Karen learned that the doctors were going to give Elaine a break from the chemotherapy during the week of June 5th, so she invited Elaine to go to attend this year's seminar as her guest. Elaine had a wonderful time with surprisingly few moments of illness.



Karen Cline of Charlotte County (far left), Elaine Fornea (center) and Alicia Trapp of Charlotte County (right) join together as the great friends they have grown to become...

During the seminar, Elaine was able to visit once more for, as she described, "possibly the last time," with the many people she had come to know and love. Despite her plight, Elaine remained lighthearted among her friends. She did her best to ignore the pain and nausea, she tried to speak to everyone individually at some time during the event. In short, Elaine did her best to enjoy all that her friends and the setting had to offer.

As she was commended at our closing day luncheon, Elaine thanked us for honoring her and allowing her to attend the seminar as Karen's guest. She thanked Karen for

her friendship and for helping her to face the trials and tribulations cancer has placed on her and her family.

Elaine Fornea is indeed unforgettable.

Day in and day out, she continues to fight a battle that her doctors insist she cannot win. She has given every day her very best. Her only regret is that her family and friends have had to suffer with her.

LATE POSTSCRIPT: At press time, we were informed that Elaine passed away at noon on September 3rd.

GATEWAY offers discount to all Florida government employees

GATEWAY, one of the world's largest manufacturers of personal computers, has instituted the "Florida Government Employee Discount Program."

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3. Just present your identification card that was issued from the city, county or state government agency that you work for at any of the GATEWAY Country Stores in Florida to receive your automatic discount.

If you encounter any difficulties with the plan and you live in northern Florida, call Mr. Sean Berger at 1-800-779-2000, extension 25576.

Those living in central and South Florida, contact Mr. Brad Danke at 1-800-779-2000, ext. 25390.



KIDS Program to Help Young Abuse Witnesses

By: Tamara Lush, St. Petersburg Times; with contribution made by staff writer Alisa Ulferts

They are silent victims of domestic violence, the ones who cower in a corner or hide under the bed while their parents fight and hit each other.

Children who see violence in the home suffer everything from sleepiness in school to post-traumatic stress disorder, similar to combat veterans, researchers say. The effects of the trauma last a lifetime.

"It's just as damaging as being beaten themselves," said Dave Fisher, who has a doctorate in education psychology and is a detective with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.

When he was a patrol deputy, Fisher said, he broke up hundreds of family fights and often had to step over children to arrest a parent. There was little he could do to help the frightened children at the moment of the arrest, Fisher said.

Pasco County Sheriff Lee Cannon cites similar experiences when he was a Tampa officer 20 years ago, and the feeling of helplessness stayed with him. That's why he has pushed to receive funding for a program that will help children who witness violence in the home, he said.

"These kids are going to grow up to be abusers or to accept abuse," Cannon said. "If we stop one child from growing up to be an abuser by this program, then we're successful."

Last week, officials announced that the Pasco County Sheriff's Office will receive \$274,862 in state money to begin the program. Called Kids in Domestic Situations, or KIDS, the money will fund the first year of the pilot program.

The money will pay for four detectives, a supervisor and a clerk. Cannon will have to apply to the state in 2001 and 2002 for nearly \$600,000 if he wants to continue the program. Pilot programs typically run on a three-year cycle.

On July 1, Cannon will hire the new employees. When the program starts, they will:

- Review police reports of domestic violence to find out whether any children were in the home at the time of the incident.

much promise,"

Similar programs are offered by battered women's shelters and other Tampa Bay social service agencies, said Stephanie Wally, the director of the Salvation Army Domestic Violence Program in Hudson.

In Wally's program, children are taught to dial 911 and find a safe place to hide if violence breaks out in their home. Toddlers are given a coloring book called "When Daddy Hit Mommy" and are encouraged to talk about the violence, she said.

"These children come from a background where they are told 'Don't talk about it, don't tell friends,'" said Wally. "They are in total denial. At the shelter, it's okay to talk. They are encouraged to talk."

But some think that such counseling should stay within the walls of a shelter or social service agency and not at the sheriff's office.

Senator Ginny Brown-Waite, R-Brooksville, whose district includes parts of Pasco, told the legislative sponsor of Cannon's program that the agency shouldn't take on another social service program.

"My advice. . . was not to have the sheriff's office handle this issue," Brown-Waite said of the KIDS program. "There are shelters that handle this sort of thing."

But Cannon says that taking over the program will allow deputies to conduct thorough, accurate investigations and will ultimately, allow families to get the help they need.

If they don't, says Fisher, depression, learning disabilities, bullying and truancy are common traits in kids from violent homes.

Add that to the steady diet of violence on television and in video games, Fisher said, and a child will likely abuse others or accept abuse in his or her life.

"Most violent behavior is learned. If it's learned, the theory is that it can be unlearned," he said.

Fisher, who published an article last year in *Preventing School Failure*, an academic journal, said if adults can help a child within 12 hours of witnessing violence, there is more of a chance that the child will heal.

If adults aren't there to help, the child will be more at risk for a broad range of social problems.

Pasco's program may prevent the onset of those problems, Fisher said.

"It's a real forward, progressive step for law enforcement to take," Fisher said. "I haven't polled all the agencies around, but I don't know of any other law enforcement agency that's taken this step."

- Interview any children in the home to determine if they have been abused. Any allegations of abuse would be investigated.
- Visit the children's homes to assess the needs of the family.
- Offer training, support and social service agency referrals to parents.

"Typically, not very much attention is paid to these kids, and they are carted away to a foster home until their mother gets out of the emergency room," said George Hinchliffe, the assistant secretary for programming and planning at the state Department of Juvenile Justice in Tallahassee. "(This program) is on the cusp of something that shows

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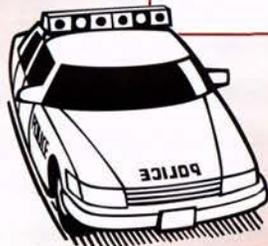


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Sheriff Ronnie Lee says "THANKS"

On the evening of Monday, August 21, Hendry County Deputy Sheriff Shelton Blackwell was shot and seriously wounded while on duty.



* Sheriff Lee

Hendry County Sheriff Ronnie Lee wrote to *APB* recently, and he credits the Glades County and Lee County EMS, and the Lee County EMS Helicopter Crew with saving Blackwell's life.

Ironically, at the time of the shooting, Blackwell's wife Wendy was in training to be a deputy sheriff in neighboring Lee County (Fort Myers).

Sheriff Lee wrote, "By the time I arrived at the hospital in Fort Myers, Lee County Sheriff John McDougall was already there with a chaplain and Wendy Blackwell. The Fort Myers and Cape Coral Police Department were already arranging for blood donations for Shelton, and Sheriff McDougall offered to send as many Lee County deputies as I needed to patrol in Hendry County while my deputies investigated the shooting, which involved the death of two other individuals."

"There is no way that I can ever adequately express my gratitude and that of Hendry County Sheriff's Office

for the kindness and efforts of the staff of Lee Memorial Hospital, Sheriff McDougall and the Lee County Sheriff's Office, Sheriff Jim Ryder and the Glades County Sheriff's Office, the Fort Myers and Cape Coral Police Departments, and the EMS personnel that assisted in so many ways," noted Sheriff Lee.

Lee closes by writing, "The Hendry County Sheriff's Office is a proud neighbor of Lee County and Glades County...they're just wonderful to us."

Cellular Phone Warning!

By Agent Chris Ferris, FDLE



Recently, an incident occurred involving a driver that suffered burns and his car was severely damaged when gasoline fumes ignited an explosion. It was later determined that the explosion was caused by the use of a cellular phone near a gas station attendant that was pumping gas.

Mobile phone makers Motorola, Ericson and Nokia all print caution in their user handbooks that warn against mobile phone use in "gas stations, fuel storage sites and chemical factories." Other areas which are potentially explosive but not always marked such include: below deck on boats; vehicles using liquefied petroleum gas (such as

propane or butane); or areas where the air contains chemicals or particles such as grain, dust or metal powders.

Caution should be taken using cell phones wherever you would normally be advised to turn off your engine.

Exxon has begun placing "warning stickers" at its gas stations. The threat mobile phones pose to gas stations and their users is primarily the result of their ability to produce sparks that can be generated by the high powered battery inside the phone.

Use your cell phone safely and wisely!

Dates for Annual Jail Administrator's Workshop set

Under normal circumstances, the annual FSA Jail Administrator's Workshop is held during the month of December. However, with retirement of some sheriffs, and with the election process inevitably changing some others, we are moving the date of the next jail workshop back a few months to accommodate any changes that will take place.

Thus, the next Jail Administrator's Workshop will be held February 20-22, 2001, at the Jacksonville HILTON Riverfront, located in beautiful downtown Jacksonville.

As is our usual practice, details and registration forms will be sent to all sheriffs, vendors and all jail administrators about sixty days before the starting date of the conference.

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