

# FLORIDA SHERIFFS All Points Bulletin



VOLUME 14, NUMBER 2, 2004

## Berlinger Takes a New Post

Early this year, the Florida Sheriffs Association had to say goodbye to Tom Berlinger, a 30-year veteran of law enforcement and founding editor of the *All Points Bulletin*. Berlinger was appointed Public Information Administrator at the Florida Department of Law Enforcement in February.



It's fortunate for all of us to have Berlinger continuing to serve in a statewide capacity, as his skills have been developed serving local law enforcement agencies all over the state.

Berlinger worked his way through community college as a communications officer with the Lee County Sheriff's Office. His "frontline" law enforcement career began in Gulf County in 1973, where he spent two years as a Deputy Sheriff. Berlinger then spent two years with the New Port Richey Police Department and 12 years with the Pasco County Sheriff's Office where he was a Captain of the Administration Bureau and their chief media spokesperson.

Berlinger relocated to Tallahassee in 1988 to begin a new era in his

career – serving all of the 67 Sheriffs of Florida and contributing significantly to the defense of public safety in this state. His title, "Director of Law Enforcement and Jail Management Services," is woefully inadequate when you consider the day-to-day responsibilities Berlinger took on. At FSA's Midwinter Conference, he was recognized for working as FSA's legislative liaison, helping to forge a better working relationship between lawmen and lawmakers, and his dedication to representing the interests of fallen officers and their families. Each week, Berlinger would review the cases going before the parole board and would research and defend the interests of murdered law enforcement officers and their survivors.

Of course, most APB readers have come to know Berlinger best through this publication. You recognize his classic New Yorker humor and have likely come to appreciate his willingness to tackle the really tough issues.

It's a rare breed of person who can represent the interests of law enforcement in the written word – as Berlinger has so skillfully done over the last 14 years, contributing to FSA's *The Sheriff's Star* magazine, the National Sheriff's Association's *Sheriff* magazine and numerous others.

Just as the Sheriffs of Florida gave a standing ovation to Tom Berlinger at their last gathering, we would like to join in with our own "ovation."

On behalf of all law enforcement in Florida and the citizens we serve, thank you, Tom, for the contributions you have made to improving public safety. We look forward to witnessing your continued contributions from your new home at FDLE. ☪



## K-9 Finds New Home in Florida Via the Web

When budget constraints and the military activation of a Starke, Florida K-9 handler forced the agency to auction his German Shepherd partner, 5-year-old "Huro," Chief of Police Gordon Smith wanted to restrict bids to law enforcement agencies.

He decided to use GovAssets4sale to screen bidders. After receiving nationwide calls and bids, the most suitable home for this dual certified (criminal patrol and narcotics) K-9 turned out to be in Florida – at the Cedar Key Police Department.

Chief of Police Daniel Swogger and Officer John McMullen welcomed Huro to the ranks of their agency, where he continues to serve public safety.

*Continued on page 2*

# Hey, Kids: It's Not Just Cops & Robbers Anymore

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



Here's a fact that surprises the public: at any local law enforcement agency, at least 85-percent of the activity does not involve robbers or any other criminal.

As we all know, that's not to say 85 percent of what cops do isn't important.

The fact is that for most citizens, at any given moment, the most important function of local law enforcement might be to make the traffic slower... or a party quieter... to find a missing child... bring peace to a landlord/tenant dispute... assist a lost motorist... or even talk someone out of taking his or her own life.

## Job specs

The job responsibilities (and expectations) of a Deputy Sheriff or Police Officer are very broad. As an example, here's what Okaloosa County Sheriff's Deputies did in one statistically "average" day in 2003:

- Made about 68 traffic stops; plus another 50 traffic-related calls such as crashes, complaints of reckless drivers, roadway obstructions, malfunctioning stoplights and more
- Wrote 35 traffic citations and made 21 criminal arrests
- Rendered some form of assistance to citizens about 25 times
- Answered 19 theft calls, 43-percent of which were gasoline drive-offs
- Responded to about 19 false alarms (figures show that less than three per month are actual burglar-

ies, robberies, etc; only 34 out of 7,000 alarms in 2003 were "real" emergencies)

- Conducted about 16 security checks of homes and businesses (the real number is much higher due to routine patrols, but we only count the ones with incidents)
- Tracked down 13 individuals who dialed 9-1-1 and either hung up or didn't provide enough information for emergency response
- Responded to the scene of 13 fights or disturbances, not including at least four domestic-violence incidents per day
- Responded to 12 reports of prowlers or suspicious persons or vehicles
- Served 10 subpoenas and injunctions
- Five to 10 times, assisted other agencies on loud music complaints, transporting prisoners, investigating vandalism and dealing with trespassers
- And, finally, in the twice-a-day to four-times-a-day range were the burglaries, harassment/stalking/harassing telephone calls, school zone details, dealing with drunks, animal incidents, child abuse reports, juvenile curfew checks/truancy, reports of drug activity, environmental complaints, missing persons, forgery and check or credit card offenses and found property.

This is only a start, of course. About 86 calls daily didn't fit any of the categories mentioned...as anyone on the frontline will attest, they come in every color and flavor.

As for the grand total – a typical day for our agency in 2003 was 429 incidents. For all of you statistical types, the slowest day of the year was Christmas day, with 226 calls, and the busiest was Friday, August 8 (summer is our busy season), with 617, which was slightly ahead of Good Friday with 602 and the 4th of July with 591. ☺



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continued from page 1  
**K9 Finds New Home**

GovAssets4sale is an online service to assist government sellers in disposing of their property. It's designed to meet the unique needs of public agencies selling surplus and seized



assets. Sellers may select the method they wish to use for the transaction – such as auction, restricted auction, sealed-bid, transfer or swap – and they may accept any bid or reject all bids.

For more information, visit their website: [www.GovAssets4sale.com](http://www.GovAssets4sale.com). ☺

## FLORIDA SHERIFFS ALL POINTS BULLETIN VOLUME 14, NUMBER 2, 2004

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By: Julie S. Bettinger

Over the last nine years writing for the Florida Sheriffs Association, my last name has caused a bit of confusion.



After hearing me introduce myself in that first year, a Sheriff asked me, "Are you married to Tom?"

I was a bit perplexed. No, in fact, I'm married to Jim...

Then I put it together. Bettinger, Berlinger. Yes, they sound very similar and even resemble each other on the printed page.

To add to the confusion, Tom's wife has a similar-sounding name as mine – she's June Berlinger.

It won't surprise those of you who know Tom Berlinger's sense of humor to learn that he used this, jokingly, at every opportunity. No one enjoyed his efforts more than his wife and me.

Shortly after I accepted the position as editor of *The Sheriff's Star*, FSA's bi-monthly magazine, I was surprised to learn that Tom Berlinger was the author of an article I had edited previously for a city magazine. It was a two-part series, a first-person account of his daughter's amazing survival of a parachute jump – though the parachute didn't open.

I remember reading the article and being so caught up in the drama – which indicates the author's gift with the written word – that I was no longer editor...I was the father, standing with the other parachutists' family members, watching as their loved ones took that leap...then feeling the horror as one of the jumpers hit the ground – without the chute opening.

And, as was the title of the story, thinking: "It couldn't possibly be Diana."

I don't have to tell regular readers of APB about Tom's talent as a speaker and scribe. He couldn't possibly have

survived this many years working for the 67 Sheriffs of Florida, providing written and spoken testimony in front of the parole board and lawmakers, if he couldn't hold his own as a communicator.

Tom has clearly earned his stripes.

### What/Who is Next?

So, you know my predecessor well. And it's only fair that I provide a glimpse of my own experience. Although I expect we will be coming to know each other much better in the coming years, as I do my best to fill the very large shoes left by Mr. B.

I've been the editor of *The Sheriff's Star* since mid 1995, following on the heels of its very capable founding editor, the late Carl Stauffer. Thankfully, Carl stayed around for those first few issues, helping to mold me with his wisdom accumulated through 40 years of service to the Florida Sheriffs.

I've been a writer for 20 years, contributing to various publications from South Florida to New Jersey. In the Southeast, my work has appeared most frequently in *Florida Trend* magazine and two city magazines – *Tallahassee* and *Emerald Coast* – where I also served as editor.

I was honored to also co-author "The Book of Bowden (2001) and two coffee-table books."

Educationally, I have a degree in Communications from Florida State University and am "all but thesis" in earning my Masters in Creative Writing.

I've been married to my husband, Jim Bettinger, for 20 years and we are the proud parents of a beautiful yellow Labrador named Daisy Bell. In my leisure time, I'm an avid runner, kick-boxer and am active in my church.

I came to law enforcement writing quite accidentally...I wrote a dramatic nonfiction article titled, "DUI: Getting Caught," which covered a night on DUI patrol with the Tallahassee Police

Department. Somehow, my work was noticed and next thing I knew I was volunteering for the Leon County Sheriff's Office writing articles for their *CrimeWatch* newsletter and working as an on-air reporter on their television show.

I'm eternally grateful to Leon County's then-Sheriff Eddie Boone and then-Chief of Police Tom Coe who recommended me for Carl Stauffer's position. FSA's former executive director Buddy Phillips likes to tell the story that when we first met, he had already determined it wasn't a matter of "if" he was going to hire me...his focus was on working out the details to get me on board.

To those of you who serve in law enforcement, I don't have to tell you that it's a noble calling. I'm grateful to have also been called and I look forward to serving you in this new position for many years to come. ☪

## Florida Sheriffs Association Annual Calendar of Events 2004



- **FSA 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference for the Sheriff's Assistant, Wyndham Reach, Key West, June 7-10**
- **National Sheriffs Association Summer Conference, Seattle, Washington, June 27-30**
- **FSA Summer Conference, Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa, Hollywood, July 18-21**
- **FSA's Southeast Car Evaluation & Fleet Management Training Conference, Crowne Plaza Sabal Park, Tampa, October 13-15**
- **Newly Elected Sheriffs Basic Institute, Ramada Inn & Conference Center, Tallahassee, December 5-10**

# Death Becomes Her

By: Yvonne Martinez  
Public Information Officer  
Brevard County Sheriff's Office

The body was buried just a few feet underground, bits of tissue and clumps of hair still clung to the bones. The maggots inhabiting the body had already transmogrified several times into varying species of fly.

It is within this scene that Brevard County Sheriff's Office Crime Scene Investigator Luci Ross finds herself right at home. It is not your typical workplace environment to be surrounded with the stench of a stale corpse perhaps buried for weeks, months or even years. But Ross maintains that her job is intriguing.

She's a rare breed in other respects, too. She's one of only a few in the country with the latest tools and training to find the answers hidden within the decomposing cadavers.

"Every inch holds a clue," says Ross. "It's a matter of knowing how to read those clues to determine what happened to the body, how long it's been there and who it was."

## **It starts in the classroom**

For 10 weeks, Ross immersed herself in studying decomposing corpses at the only school of its kind in the United States, The National Forensics Academy at the University of Tennessee. The school offers an intensive program designed to meet the needs of law enforcement agencies in evidence identification, collection and preservation. But few can get in, and often they must wait. Ross was part of the seventh graduating class.

"We studied everything from weapons of mass destruction to arson investigations to DNA and patterns for



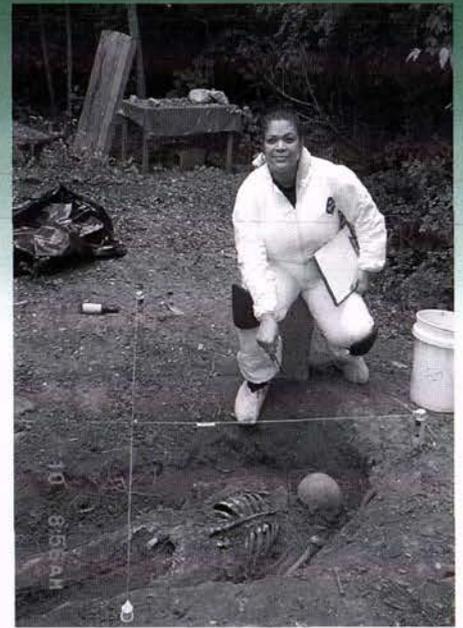
**At home with corpses, Brevard County Sheriff's Office Crime Scene Investigator Luci Ross has received specialized training, graduating from the National Forensics Academy at the University of Tennessee.**

bone trauma," Ross says. But the most interesting aspect of her 10 weeks away from the daily grind was the so-called "body farm." It was there she and her classmates studied 47 different deaths – corpses that were buried in various stages of decomposition. Her mission was to find the remains, recover them in a way that would preserve the evidence, study the bone patterns for trauma, age, gender and race; then determine, among other things, how long the body had been buried. Such information often eludes crime scene investigators.

"It's a very tedious process," Ross says. "I now have an entirely new approach to viewing crime scenes."

Upon her return, Ross was called to process the scene of a triple shooting in Cocoa. A trail of blood where one of the victims attempted to chase the assailant hinted at where the suspects may have fled. But one of the key pieces of evidence to find was the bullet's casing. Several shots were fired that night and the odds of finding a bit of the bullet were about 50-50.

"Generally we would use a laser in this kind of scenario, but we didn't have one available," Ross says. "What I learned was I could use extending



dowel rods to do the same things.

"That's when I found the bullet went through the top of the couch, through the wall, onto a built-in porch, through two chairs, out the porch (seven feet) to the fence...out the fence through a pool liner, landing on the ground under some trees. The bullet traveled 58 feet (total)."

It is that kind of detail that makes Ross one of the best in her field.

Sgt. Bruce Barnett agrees.

"Luci is one of those people who knows exactly what she's doing and doesn't need to be told what to do," Barnett says. "This experience will be beneficial in many ways. Luci is very artistic and this was more of an analytical class where you are taught about the entomology aspects of explosions, fires, incendiary devices and how they impact our crime scenes."

Barnett attended the school last year, and says he hopes all the Sheriff's office crime scene agents can attend.

"This is not just about the latest and greatest technology, it's about the studying the details that are often overlooked," he says.

"The devil is in the details, they say,  
(continued)

## Tune-In to Jail TV: The Detention Learning Channel



In collaboration with the University of South Florida's WUSF broadcasting, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office has developed a closed-circuit television channel to provide educational programming for inmates. This innovative project provides informational programming to reach the entire inmate population, without additional staff and classroom space considerations.

As far back as the early 1980s, Hillsborough County broadcasted videos across a closed-circuit channel about three evenings per week. Content was comprised of PG or PG13 rated movies and educational programs, through use of a public broadcasting license. Additionally, regular off-the-air channels were available for inmates to watch entertainment and sports.

In 1995, as more media attention focused on whether offenders should have the privilege of watching television while in jail or prison, Hillsborough County made the decision to restrict inmate viewing to the closed-circuit channel and to the local PBS and university educational channels, only.

Educational programs increased when movies were removed from the weekly line-up. In the late 1990s, Court Communications, an office of the

13th Judicial Circuit Court, began operating video court on a daily basis at two of Hillsborough's four detention facilities. Utilizing video court lines, the broadband signal originating at Orient Road Jail was relayed to the downtown courthouse, and then back to Morgan Street Jail.

Through a cooperative partnership between the Sheriff's Office and the courts, the idea developed to send programming directly from the Orient facility to the downtown jail. And for the first time, two jails located in separate parts of Tampa were receiving the same closed-circuit programming.

As time passed, many of the same issues that hampered the original closed-circuit project re-emerged. As the equipment purchased in 1989 aged, breakdowns were more frequent. In addition, closed-circuit programming was still unavailable to two facilities due to the lack of fiber-optic lines.

In early 2000, Court Communications completed running fiber optic lines to all Hillsborough County detention facilities. Then in the fall, the Sheriff's Office had the opportunity to contract

with WUSF to provide all of its multimedia production and audio-visual services, resulting in the distribution of what became named "JAIL TV, the Detention Learning Channel."

The channel broadcasts 10 hours per day. It's seamless, complete with promos, schedules and built-in infomercials. All four Hillsborough County Detention Department facilities receive the same broadcast of high quality educational and informational programming.

Programming includes educational, vocational, life and employability skills, health issues, parenting, substance abuse and domestic violence education, and legal procedures. In addition, videos will be produced at the jail, highlighting internal programs and community aftercare. The goal of Jail TV is to provide positive educational programming that has direct application for jail inmates. These programs are not intended to supplant the many educational, vocational, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence counseling and religious services provided through staff and volunteers. However, television programming will serve as an additional means to reach offenders in a positive and cost efficient manner.

As the Jail TV project progresses, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office will continue to explore opportunities with new partners to increase its video programming. ☺

### continued from page 4

and that's often where you find the answers to an unsolved crime."

Ross says the National Forensics Academy is a great school. "I hope it really takes off and turns into something of the caliber of the FBI national academy."

### Groundwork for "ground work"

Ross began her career as a police officer in Titusville in 1978. She ended up a crime scene investigator "quite by

accident," she says.

It happened while she was on patrol in Orange County. She was tasked one night to "baby sit" a crime scene. A man's body was found burned and lying on a mattress.

"I was there, bored, so I started drawing the crime scene the way it looked," she says. "I turned in the drawing with my report and when the homicide chief received it, he asked if I would be interested in crime scene investigations as a composite artist. I

said yes, and have been doing this type of work for 19 years."

Ross has gained a reputation for her ability to put faces on unidentified dead people and matching them up to the real person with amazing results.

Her drawings and reconstructions are almost divinely inspired. "It's a gift," she says. "And fortunately for me, I have a passion for it."

The writer, Yvonne Martinez, can be reached via e-mail at: [yvonne.martinez@brevardsheriffsoffice.org](mailto:yvonne.martinez@brevardsheriffsoffice.org). ☺



## New Gun Range Will Be State-of-the-Art

Lee County local governmental agencies, including the Lee County Sheriff's Office, have begun construction on the county's new firearms training facility – a project that has been in the works for 10 years.

Located on Buckingham Air Field in Lehigh Acres on property leased to the county by the Mosquito Control District, the gun range will be operated by the Sheriff's Office for use by area law enforcement agencies and the general public.

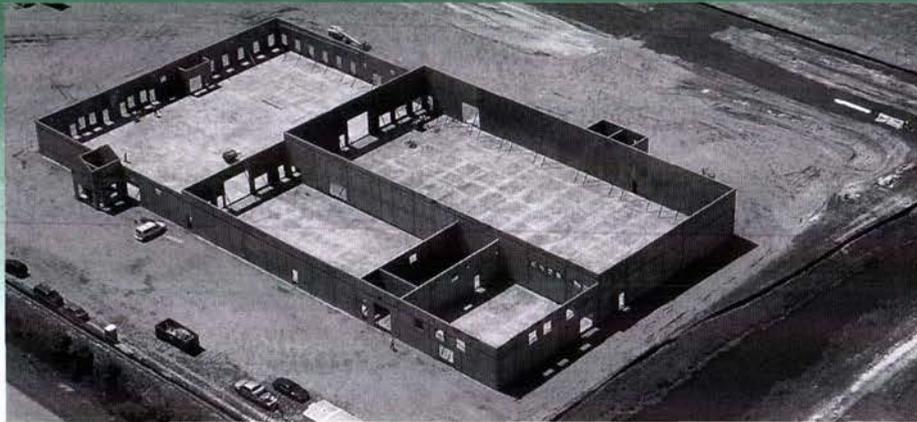
When completed in early 2005, the \$7.38 million, 52,000-square-foot indoor facility will be one of the most state-of-the-art gun ranges in the United States.

Use of non-toxic ammunition is expected to result in a reduction of construction costs by nearly \$400,000 and a reduction in annual operating costs by more than \$225,000.

The facility will be divided into public and law enforcement use. Along with LCSO, the facility will be open to 19 other law enforcement agencies in surrounding counties.

The entire gun range area will be completely encapsulated with one-quarter inch thick, AR500 ballistic resistant steel. An enhanced air conditioning/heating filtration system will circulate an above average requirement of outside air that will be monitored by a Carbon monoxide detection system.

The law enforcement gun range, with 22 separate 50-meter lanes, will be operated by an advanced computer control system with the ability to run different tactile training scenarios. The user-driven control system



**One of the most state-of-the-art gun ranges in the United States is being built in Lee County. When completed in 2005, it will be open for use by law enforcement in 19 surrounding counties and the public.**

also will control lighting that emulates various low-light conditions. The 14 public lanes will use a retriever system where the operator can vary the target range up to 25 meters.

In addition to housing advanced operating systems, the facility has been designed with higher than normal structural requirements because of its secondary use as a disaster command center. The building will be equipped with a generator, provide the shell for a command center room, and house Mosquito Control helicopters during storm conditions.

Other building components include administration areas for the Lee County Sheriff's Office training and support staff, two classrooms for public and law enforcement training, a gun-cleaning room, and a gunsmith area for repairs and law enforcement weapon maintenance.

*For more information, contact Pete Winton, Assistant to the County Manager, Lee County Administration via e-mail: [wintonpx@leegov.com](mailto:wintonpx@leegov.com).* ☪

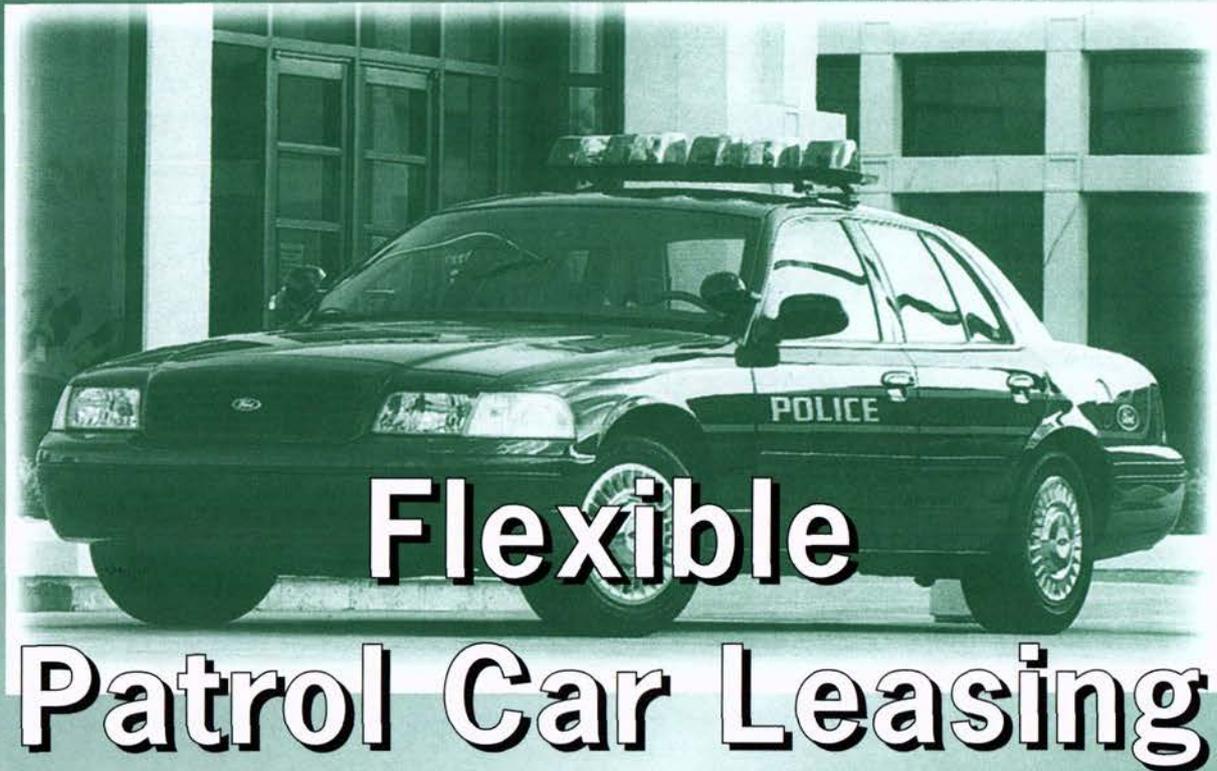
### AEDs Distributed in Pasco

Pasco Sheriff's Office deputies have recently been given 60 Automated External Defibrillator (AEDs) that were donated by the local American Heart Association chapter. The association is raising money to purchase a machine for every Pasco County Sheriff's Office patrol vehicle at a cost of about \$2,000 each.

Fifty of the original AEDs have been placed into patrol vehicles. The remaining 10 have been distributed in other vital areas, including county courthouses, a detention center and the police academy.

Rao Musunuru, M.D., a heart surgeon at Regional Medical Center, has spearheaded the AED effort and hopes to make heart defibrillators as common as fire extinguishers in Pasco.

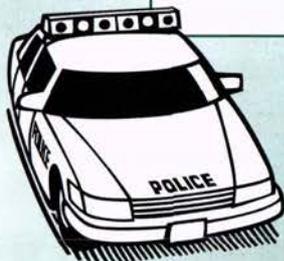
The American Heart Association notes that if defibrillation is performed in the first 1-3 minutes of cardiac arrest, a victim's chance of survival is increased by 70-80 percent. Arming law enforcement – often the first on the scene of a medical emergency – is expected to save many lives. ☪



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## Accountability 101: Core Values in Law Enforcement

By: Major Tom Wilder  
Bureau Chief for the Community  
Policing Bureau  
Marion County Sheriff's Office

In this day and age, as law enforcement officers, it is important to continually remind ourselves the importance of ethical behavior. We know that every day our customers – the citizens – expect that we handle each situation not only professionally but ethically, as well. Because of our chosen profession we are held to a higher standard than most.

Case in point: When is the last time you read on the front page of the newspaper Joe Citizen's arrest for DUI? Now, if that DUI offender was a law enforcement officer, that's front-page news in the eyes of most newspaper editors.

### Embracing ethics-based values

With ethical actions by officers becoming more closely scrutinized, law enforcement agencies must work harder to instill in their officers the importance of ethical behavior – even to the point of identifying it as inclusive of the rules and directives. Officers are expected to be consistent, too – practicing this both on and off-duty.

It's not an easy process to introduce ethics based values into a law enforcement agency. At first, officers may experience a negative attitude when their agency adopts and begins promoting a new set of core values, holding them accountable. They may struggle to understand where the real source of the regulation is coming from, i.e., inside the agency or outside. Their first reaction may be the charge that "big brother" is watching them both on and off-duty.

The fact is that the true regulation comes from outside the agency and it's a matter of preserving the integrity of the agency and gaining and keeping credibility. It's comforting when all employees demonstrate the type of behavior that the citizens expect from a professional, forward thinking law enforcement agency.

It all begins with an effort by the agency to shape ethical decision-making and acceptable behavior within itself.

### Core values day-to-day

The sign of a progressive agency today is one that is not ashamed of establishing and promoting core values as part of its day-to-day operation. It is also important for managers to lead by example. Without this commitment, the agency will struggle to achieve the desired result. Once a law enforcement agency adopts core values, the benefits can be endless – from gaining an increased respect from the community to promoting the agency and specifically the officers as highly professional.

The benefits also extend to each employee, as they now see in print and practice how core values that have been adopted are bringing desirable changes within the agency. Core values also give employees a greater sense of stability in their jobs following adoption and enforcement.

Still, to aid in the full understanding of the importance of a value-centered agency, in the initial stages, employees will need to know the consequences of unacceptable behavior.

Officers and agencies that continue to struggle with adopting core values will have tough choices to make. After all, even Enron had an excellent code of ethics, but obviously kept it well hidden.

Here's an example of why core values are necessary within a law enforcement agency: An officer tells a "white lie" about how minor damage

occurred to her patrol car, because she fears losing the take home privileges for a period of time. She says it happened when it was parked, when, in fact, it occurred when she backed into a telephone pole.

What seems minor in her eyes turns into a career-ending offense for lying to her supervisor. It's a matter of truthfulness – law enforcement officers are the guardians of truth. In the eyes of the supervisor (and the public), if the officer is willing to lie for something that's incidental, what would she lie about in the future?

Now, if your agency is values-centered and all officers are provided accountability training, their decisions will always take into account the consequences and therefore lay the groundwork for the officer to make the right choices when an incident occurs.

### Self-policing

Some people argue that promoting core values within an agency adds undue pressure to officers and makes the agency like the "morality police." What they don't understand is that each of us has morals and values on which we were raised. So it's not a foreign concept.

A Code of Ethics and Core Values can be excellent guides for our agencies. They are principles and qualities that describe how each of us are – or should be.

In today's world it's necessary that we each become ethically mature so that we can demonstrate behavior that is acceptable to the agency and the citizens we serve – our customers.

Major Wilder is currently working on his MBA, with an emphasis on Criminal Justice, at Saint Leo University. He can be reached via e-mail: [twilder@sheriff.marioncountyfl.org](mailto:twilder@sheriff.marioncountyfl.org) ☪

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## Suicide vs. Line-of-Duty Deaths, 2:1

By: Gary Martin, Ph.D.

Homicide Detective

Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office

In the United States, approximately 300 police officers intentionally take their own lives each year. In contrast, roughly 150 officers perish annually in line-of-duty deaths.

As difficult as it may be to believe, police suicide is an alarming reality. Statistics show that it's potentially a higher risk to officers than other hazards of policing.

The problem of law enforcement suicide is not just a present-day phenomenon. Research indicating higher suicide rates for police has been noted since the 1920s. Moreover, this problem is not particularly limited to a certain geographic area. Suicide prevalence within the profession has been documented in police forces in New York, Chicago, Tennessee, Wyoming and Detroit as well as in law enforcement agencies outside the United States.

Considering that law enforcement officers generally operate within a highly interconnected, survival-conscious, professional network, one would expect that the issue of police suicide would be gathering considerable attention in the law enforcement community. For whatever reason and toward its own peril, this topic seems to lack significance within the police culture.

### Did I miss something?

During my 22-year career as a sworn police officer, I received yearly, mandatory, comprehensive, self-defense and firearms training. The laudable objective of this instruction was to prepare me, with the most contemporary and effective means available, to prevent

my own homicide. Yet, throughout this experience, I received no training in the subjects of suicide awareness, prevention, intervention or recognition.

Considering that it is genuinely more likely that I, or one of my fellow officers, will die by a self-inflicted wound than by the will of another, it seems that a substantial *disconnect* exists within the law enforcement community between perceived and actual risk of death.

My experience is echoed by university professor and researcher, John Violanti, Ph.D. In one report, he wrote that there's a "consuming denial by officers and departments that suicide is a problem." In fact, he stated, "Suicide prevention is often forsaken for operational training programs, and no one wants to admit that suicide may exist in epidemic proportions within their own profession."

### Contributors to police suicide

A variety of environmental, relationship and personality factors have been proposed to explain the frequency and motives for police suicide. Although no aspects of policing have been directly linked to police suicide, certain suspect characteristics of the police profession are well documented in the research literature. They include: stress, alcohol use, access to firearms and relationship problems.

### Intervention and prevention

Because even one suicide is too many, law enforcement organizations and individual officers must be sensitized to the issues surrounding police suicide. Awareness begins the sensitization process. Once aware, the police community can take steps toward intervention and prevention.

Post suicide investigations reveal that approximately 80 percent of those bent on suicide communicate their intent before hand, either explicitly or implicitly, to members of their social

circle. Too often these communications go unrecognized. The American Association of Suicidology lists the following behaviors as potential suicide warning signs:

- Talks about committing suicide
- Has trouble eating or sleeping
- Experiences drastic changes in behavior
- Withdraws from friends and/or social activities
- Loses interest in hobbies, work, school, etc.
- Prepares for death by making out a will and final arrangements
- Gives away prized possessions
- Has attempted suicide before
- Takes unnecessary risks
- Has had recent severe losses
- Is preoccupied with death and dying
- Loses interest in personal appearance
- Increases use of alcohol or drugs

### What you can do

If you become concerned enough to consider that a person might be suicidal, there are some things you can do:

- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide. There is no evidence to suggest that talking about suicide will provoke some one to take his or her own life
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings
- Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong
- Be available
- Offer hope that alternatives are available
- Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills
- Enlist the help of others

I would argue that the obligation falls to those who recognize warnings in others to take some appropri-

(continued)

Continued from page 10

ate, yet affirmative steps toward intervention. Depending on the urgency of the circumstances, that step may be as straightforward as having a frank, clarifying conversation with the person "at risk," to reporting your alarm to superiors or mental health professionals. Your legitimate concern for a fellow officer who may be suffering may save his or her life.

### What your agency can do

At the organizational level, several options exist which may reduce the risk of police suicide. These suggestions may seem costly, but consider the potential savings in emotional turmoil generated from an officer's suicide.

As with self-defense training, suicide awareness and stress coping education should be mandated. At minimum, a small block of in-service training must be devoted to these topics. Such training could include: recognizing warning signs for suicide, active listening skills, conflict resolution, intimate relationship maintenance and identification of stress triggers. If these subjects are relegated to the category of elective training or brief "roll call" discussions, officers may form the impression that these issues are not an agency priority.

Additional agency efforts could include:

- Creating or revitalizing peer support networks
- Setting up a confidential crisis line for officers in distress
- Effectively marketing the confidential and professional nature of the agencies' Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

As police officers, we spend our days and nights solving problems for others. It is past time for us to bring our collective and considerable problem solving skills to this issue.

*Homicide Detective Gary Martin is also Director of Counseling Services at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida. E-mail him at: marting@pbso.org*



## Transporting Prisoners: Are You in Compliance?

Like most industries, the private extradition industry is subject to government oversight. But with the ever-changing regulations, some companies in Florida may be falling behind and, in fact, may not be in compliance.

If you are using a private company to transport prisoners, you need to be aware of changes in recent years and assure compliance by your vendors.

### Jeanna's Act:

#### A Question of Compliance

In 1999, a bill to create legislation to define and enforce minimum standards for the private prisoner extradition industry was introduced. The bill specified that the standards would be

defined by the Justice Department and would be applicable specifically to the transport of violent offenders.

Officially titled, "The Interstate Transportation of Dangerous Criminals Act of 2000 – Public Law # 106-560," it is commonly referred to as "Jeanna's Act."

The bill was in response to the October 13, 1999 escape of convicted child killer and molester Kyle Bell from a prisoner transport van in New Mexico. Bell had been convicted of murdering 11-year-old Jeanna North of Fargo, N.D. in June 1993. According to reports, the repeat child molester and killer has not been apprehended.

New minimum standards require background checks and pre-employment drug testing, as well as train-

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## (True) Confessions of a PIO

By: Gary Davidson  
Public Information Officer  
Volusia County Sheriff's Office



After nearly nine years on the job, serving as the Volusia County Sheriff's Office's chief media spokesperson, I can honestly say that this position continues to be exciting, challenging and rewarding – but rarely dull.

On any given day, I find myself dealing with issues that run the gamut from very serious criminal events – such as drug raids, murders, rapes and robberies – to the absurd. A giant inflatable rat hauled onto a high school campus to protest a construction contract award comes to mind.

Of course, there's also the downright politically thorny issues, like Black College Reunion, homeland security and the centralization of public safety dispatching services.

But let's not go there.

Of course, I don't do any of the actual labor. That's all done by incredibly hard-working and dedicated patrol deputies and courtroom bailiffs and investigators and telecommunications and evidence technicians and crime scene analysts and records clerks and trainers and bomb detection experts and helicopter pilots and paramedics and school resource officers...Um, did I leave anybody out?

When you get right down to it, all I really do is speak for those who do the actual work around here. In that regard, the most important tools in my war chest are mere words.

And let's face it: After nearly 22 years in the newspaper/communications/PIO field, my job skills aren't exactly suited to much beyond uniting

pen and paper (or, these days, fingers and key board).

### Words have fire power (and sometimes backfire)

However, the job of PIO has its own set of complexities. For when it comes to shaping the public's opinion of the Sheriff's Office, words can have as much of an impact as guns and bullets. It is for this very reason that when speaking on behalf of the SO, I try to choose my words carefully.

Yet, I will be the first to admit that the results have not always been what I intended.

A couple of years into the job, I learned a valuable lesson when I got verbally sucker-punched during a live interview conducted by a local, ranting A.M. radio tag team. I was naively lured onto the show under false pretenses, led to believe the two were actually interested in what I had to say. In fact, all they were looking for was a Sheriff's Office representative to verbally berate on the air. Needless to say, this was not my finest moment on the job. That I didn't see the attack coming and allowed myself to be thoroughly blindsided is among my biggest regrets.

Still, guarded or not, this position is target-rich.

Take for example, the March 2002 example when a watchful and protective father rushed into a Blockbuster video store where his son was working, interrupting an armed robbery in progress and gunning down one of the thieves.

The father's intervention elicited strong feelings of sympathy and support from the community. During the investigation, a reporter with the *Orlando Sentinel* asked me whether the father could face criminal charges for his lethal actions. Not expecting to be quoted, I momentarily let my tongue engage before my brain and jokingly replied, "Quite the contrary.

We're going to give him the good citizenship award."

An amusing line, to be sure. But when dealing with matters of life and death, it's probably not the best time to be glib. Naturally, to my utter dismay, the quote appeared in the paper the next day.

### In need of a land mine detector

In May of that same year, senior pranksters managed to disrupt the campus at DeLand High School when they spread 80,000 bees around the school grounds. I tried my best to temper my comments to the news media...walking a fine line between not condoning the prank, but at the same time expressing a desire to have the guilty parties punished, but not so severely that it would ruin their lives.

Apparently, some took my comments as a sign that the Sheriff's Office wasn't taking the matter seriously enough. A few days later, a representative of PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, called Sheriff Johnson to urge us to criminally charge the students with animal cruelty for mistreating the bees.

Does this story seem familiar?

And then there was the time a woman heard some suspicious noises outside her home. Fearing someone was about to break in, she armed herself with a handgun and fired a shot through her door, slightly injuring a person outside her home. When a *Daytona Beach News-Journal* reporter grilled me about the possibility of the woman facing criminal charges, I explained that the Sheriff's Office would have to fully investigate to determine whether the perceived threat was sufficient justification for using deadly force. As soon as my comments were published, I quickly discovered that I had

*Continued on page 16*

# College Graduate or Not – Good Study Habits Key to Better Promotional Exams

By: Kimberley Glover

Vice President

Criminal Justice Consulting Corporation

A recent study published in the *American Journal of Criminal Justice* reveals that college graduates score higher marks in law enforcement promotional exams than those who don't have a degree. This is not to say that graduates are "smarter" than their counterparts, but more likely that their time at college helps them accumulate study skills. College graduates – especially recent grads – are accustomed to learning new material, memorizing it, then applying what they have learned in a standardized test. Candidates who have not pursued college degrees may find it difficult to get back to the books and retain the specifics on rules and regulations they may be tested on.

The good news is that, with a little time and effort, those without a college background can perform just as well by using multiple study methods and determining which ones works best for them.

In a study by Thomas Whetstone, 72 officers sat for a sergeant's written examination. Each officer completed an exit interview after the exam, and a large majority allowed Whetstone to review their test scores. The findings clearly indicated that college graduates performed better in the sergeant's exam. College graduates earned a median score of 84, while their lesser-educated peers scored only 74. The results also indicated that candidates who had attended college, but had not graduated, also fared better than those who had not attended college at all.

There was no significant difference in the scores of applicants based upon their years on the job, duty assign-



ments or districts. But there was a significant difference between the college graduates and non-graduates in the study methods used. The second strongest predictor of exam scores (beyond having college experience) was the highest degree obtained. The conclusion is that candidates performed better not because of their higher education or degrees but because of the study skills they developed *pursuing* their degrees.

This information can be extremely helpful to non-college graduates in gaining an edge while preparing for promotional exams.

## Test preparation, no matter your education level

What are the essential study methods that make the difference in test preparation? For starters, college graduates used a variety of study methods, and as their educational level increased, so did the number of tools utilized.

The most obvious study method is to read the material. This may sound basic, but not all candidates in this study read the suggested materials before taking the exam. In fact, 86 percent of college graduates read the materials once, compared to only 70 percent of non-college graduates. Fifty seven percent of graduates read the material twice, compared to 48 percent of the lesser-educated officers. Ninety-one percent of the graduates used a highlighter when studying the material, compared to 74 percent of their non-graduate peers.

Additionally, a higher percentage of the grads studied at work, devised quizzes, outlined materials, attended all

**"The most important conclusion... from this study is that it is not the degree that helps graduates score higher on promotional exams, it is how they study and how many methods of study they employ."**

prep sessions, made and used flashcards and drew up practice exams. Other significant differences were that college students asked managers questions, made audiotapes and formed study groups, while the lesser-educated officers did not.

The most important conclusion law enforcement officers can make from this study is that it is not the degree that helps graduates score higher on promotional exams, it is how they study and how many methods of study they employ.

To even the playing field, non-college graduates may consider enrolling in a study skills course at a junior college. The knowledge earned in just a few weeks from such a course could provide a lifetime of benefits. Another idea for non-college graduates would be to join a study group where the majority of candidates are college educated and observe how they study for the exam, or ask one of them for suggestions.

Still, passing a promotional exam is not as much about studying harder or longer hours, but studying smarter.

*Kimberley Glover is the Vice President of Criminal Justice Consulting Corporation, which administers promotional examinations throughout the State of Florida. She holds a Master's degree in Business Administration and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Criminology. Email her at: kimberleyglover@aol.com.*

*The full article "Getting Stripes: Educational Achievement and Study Strategies Used by Sergeant Promotional Candidates" by Thomas S. Whetstone was published in the American Journal of Criminal Justice, Spring 2000, Volume 24, Issue 2. ❁*

# Custom-Designed Boat Patrolling Broward Waters

By: Hugh Graf  
Public Information Officer  
Broward Sheriff's Office

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 led to many changes throughout the nation and here in Broward County, where Sheriff Ken Jenne helped lead efforts to improve security. One need has now become reality in the form of a 41-foot RIB, a Rigid Inflatable Boat designed specifically to patrol and protect Port Everglades.

Newly imposed federal security regulations following the terrorist attacks underscored the need for a new type of boat in the BSO fleet: one that could handle long hours of patrol at idle speed and then race to the scene of an emergency at more than 40 miles an hour without straining the engines...one that could easily handle rough waters in daylight or darkness and carry dozens of passengers...one that could detect other vessels, submerged divers and potential threats on the water or below it. Those needs were met with the delivery of BSO's custom-designed RIB.

The RIB is the result of months of planning by a panel of law enforcement and marine industry experts. Nautica International of Pembroke Pines won the contract to build the RIB and began work in May 2003.

The high-tech boat, a prototype for other law enforcement agencies, was delivered to BSO in December 2003 at a cost of \$425,309 – nearly \$20,000 below the anticipated price.

After successful sea trials, training, and a weeklong shakedown period, the vessel began patrolling the waters, escorting cargo ships, and protecting cruise ships as they enter



and leave Port Everglades. In fact, BSO's new RIB was on hand January 26th to help usher Cunard's Queen Mary II into port as she ended her 14-day maiden voyage from Southampton, England to Ft. Lauderdale.

## Named for fallen deputy

Befitting its unique status, the RIB will be first boat in BSO's fleet to be named. Sheriff Jenne has christened the new vessel "the Deputy Philip G. Billings." Deputy Billings was with BSO for only 18 months when he was shot and killed in the early morning hours of April 6, 2003 while working a detail at an auto dealership near Pompano Beach. Deputy Billings was the 12th BSO deputy to give his life in the line of duty.

The Deputy Philip G. Billings vessel joins a fleet of 16 other boats that BSO uses to patrol the port, the Intra-coastal Waterway and miles of the county's coastline and inland waterways. The Broward Sheriff's Office Marine Unit enforces marine laws and ordinances, investigates boating accidents, and offers safety courses and boating education to the nearly 45,000 registered boat owners in the county.

*Broward Sheriff's Office PIO Hugh Graf can be reached via e-mail: [Hugh\\_Graf@sheriff.org](mailto:Hugh_Graf@sheriff.org) ✪*

## Equipment, Capacities and Features of New BSO Vessel

- Boat is 41 feet long and nearly 10 feet high with the cabin. It has a draft of 31 inches, weighs 14,300 pounds and can carry as many as 31 passengers and a crew of four, up to 6,120 pounds.
- The vessel is powered by twin Yanmar 440 hp inboard diesel engines with Hamilton 292 jet drives. Twin aluminum tanks hold up to 300 gallons of fuel. An onboard generator capable of powering all electronic and electric gear on the vessel.
- Cabin has two shock-absorbing crew seats, two bunks, a marine head, heat, and air conditioning. There is a Halon fire protection system, four bilge pumps, hydraulic steering system, a large swim/dive platform, non-skid fiberglass deck and foredeck, and numerous grab rails and handholds throughout the vessel.
- The RIB is equipped with an infrared, remote controlled camera, allowing operator to see better low light or foggy situations. Infrared will detect warmth of a human in the water or the heat of a boat's engines.
- Link to "Cat's Eye" surveillance system at USCG station allows RIB to easily view all water traffic -day or night-coming through port.
- Side-scan sonar can locate objects below the water's surface and global positioning satellite (GPS) system can pinpoint exact location on the water.
- Fire fighting water station capable of pumping 200 gallons per minute and two remote controlled, 750,000 candle-power spotlights.

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inadvertently managed to offend the pro-gun lobby.

### Spreading the message far and wide

Speaking of the power of words, the advent of the Internet has resulted in some rather unusual consequences regarding the spoken and written word. I know this first-hand because my words have shown up in some mighty strange corners of cyberspace. For instance, my flip remark regarding the Blockbuster shooting is now displayed on pro-gun web sites such as [www.keepandbeararms.com](http://www.keepandbeararms.com) and [www.firearmsnews.com](http://www.firearmsnews.com).

Hopefully, this makes up for hacking off the pro-gun lobby with my comments regarding the shot fired through the door.

A check of my name on the search engine Google revealed that my words also are posted on several racing-related sites, including [www.turnermotorsport.com](http://www.turnermotorsport.com) and [www.karnac.com](http://www.karnac.com). I find this kind of ironic since despite living in Volusia County (home to the Daytona International Speedway) for the past 24 years, I still don't know beans about car racing.

### Roosters and rest stops

In December, Volusia deputies stumbled onto about 120 roosters on property that housed a fighting ring, razor-sharp metal spurs and all the

other paraphernalia for staging illegal cockfights. To my surprise, my words are now prominently displayed on a web site called [www.gamefowlnews.com](http://www.gamefowlnews.com) that questions the validity of the arrests in this case.

Several stories quoting me appear on another web site called [www.dramatheatre.surfsw.com](http://www.dramatheatre.surfsw.com). I don't know why.

Over the past nine years, I've written several news releases about operations targeting lewd behavior at interstate rest areas. Now, this is an issue that requires some delicate wordsmithing. After all, this is not a moral issue. Nor is it any concern of law enforcement what two consenting adults do in private. But the fact is that this tends to be open male-on-male activity that turns rest areas into a magnet for public lewdness and unsolicited sexual propositions. By the way, you can read all about it at the web site [www.moralgroup.com](http://www.moralgroup.com).

And in case you haven't surfed the Volusia County Sheriff's Office web site lately, our Sheriff's Office newsletter is now posted prominently on the site, including a column by yours truly.

Which means my name will be associated with who-knows-what in the future...Coming soon to a web page near you. ☺

### Transporting Prisoners Continued from page 11

ing programs focused on the use of restraints, searches, use of force, CPR, map reading and defensive driving. The standards place restrictions on the number of hours an employee can be on duty during a given time period, and specify the number of employees required to supervise the transport of violent offenders. Such things as identifying uniforms for transportation agents and brightly colored jumpsuits for various categories of violent offenders are also addressed. The requirement of immediate notification of appropriate law enforcement agencies following an escape are also included in regulatory guidelines.

Jeanna's Act also defines penalties for private extradition operators who fail to comply with these regulations. Such companies will be subject to civil punishment not to exceed \$10,000, as well as be required to make full restitution for all cost incurred while apprehending an escapee.

To find the most current information on Jeanna's Act, access the Code of Federal Regulations' website: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html> and search by topic, such as "28cfr, prisoners and transportation." You may also contact the U.S. Attorney General's Office at: (202) 514-2001. ☺

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