Russell Swartzel is 1995 FSA Correctional Officer of the Year

Jacksonville - Each year, FSA solicits nominations from Sheriffs — impanels a screening committee — and chooses a person to honor as the FSA Correctional Officer of the Year.

Earlier this year, the committee chose a person who has been employed by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office since 1987, and he's C.O. Russell A. Swartzel.

Sheriff Nat Glover reported that Officer Swartzel has worked in Jacksonville's Corrections Division in "every imaginable job assignment you can think of" during his eight year tenure with his agency. Swartzel's present assignment is that of Jail Industry Officer, a job which has him overseeing an inmate work program within a metal shop.

Since taking on this important role, Swartzel has made significant improvements within the massive James I. Montgomery Correctional Center.

He oversaw and taught inmate work teams to manufacture window louvers for each building, external air ducts, a security garbage chute, weight benches, cutting tables, mattress packing tables, gates, playground equipment for community schools and parks, cattle feeders, box blades, steps, and institutional style dining room tables with attached benches.

His work group also manufactured hay teeth for a pay loader, a firing range tower, a guard tower, portable dog pens for the K-9 Search Unit, and he designed and built the SWAT Team obstacle course.

Why all this energy?

"To save the Sheriff's Office from having to purchase these expensive items on the open market," said the smiling award winner.

Day in and day out, Swartzel proves himself to be a valuable asset, a dependable employee, and an honest and trustworthy self-starter who sets absolutely no limits on the tasks he can accomplish, reports Sheriff Glover.

"Other than having the ability to manufacture almost anything from scratch," Glover said that Swartzel trains inmates to learn welding, carpentry, and — in stark contrast to any notions you might have about him, he also teaches inmates the delicate and fine art of artistic painting."

In fact, some time ago, when National Corrections Officer Week was celebrated in Jacksonville, Swartzel emerged from behind the scenes to design and paint a distinctive logo for this annual celebration. It was such an impressive design, that it received high praise from city officials within the combined City of Jacksonville.

Off-duty, C.O. Swartzel is involved in a wide and varied number of civic and religious activities. He assisted his local church by designing and installing a massive sound system for his fellow parishioners.

He also volunteers his talents as a

Continued on page 2
firearms instructor, with particular focus on those individuals who, year in and year out, have a problem in getting through firearms re-qualification.

Officer Swartzel also instituted a system for re-furbishing handcuffs and inmate restraint sets, effecting a savings of untold thousands of dollars. He routinely assists nearby counties when they need to initiate repairs of jail sleeping bunks, and jail mattress covers.

Last, but not least, Swartzel regularly volunteers his off-duty time to Jacksonville’s local school board — helping in an array of community oriented projects.

Officer Russell Swartzel was recently named the 1995 Corrections Officer of the Year for the City of Jacksonville.

Now — he is honored by being named among the best our state has to offer — the statewide 1995 FSA Correctional Officer of the Year. For his efforts, Swartzel was awarded a handsome plaque and a check in the amount of $1,000 at the recent 1996 FSA Mid-Winter Conference.

Baby-napper ‘bopped’ by bean bags

Orange County Sheriff’s officials bagged a suspected baby-napper by bopping him with “bean bags.”

They used a new form of less-than-lethal force fired from a shotgun to subdue the Orlando man who was holding his girlfriend’s baby hostage. "We have a new version of bagging the bad guy," said Steve Jones, a Commander who works for Sheriff Kevin Beary, "it’s a device we can use which is non-lethal, but it knocks the guy on his butt."

The bean bag, a new addition to the agency’s armaments, is a 11/2” square cloth bag filled with metal pellets, said Jones. The bag is packed in a 12-gauge shotgun shell, providing a charge that propels the bag. The device has an effective range of about 75 feet.

The suspect, 41-year old Stephen Cline, was shot three times with the bean bags inside his girlfriend’s house in Union Park, a suburb of Orlando. Cline was armed with a knife, deputies said, and he’d been holding his girlfriend’s 16-month old son hostage.

For a brief minute, Cline had put the child down. Thus, when the bean bags struck, they spun the suspect around and knocked him to the ground, enabling deputies to subdue and handcuff him without further incident. Cline was treated on scene for minor injuries, but didn’t require a trip to the hospital, according to Jones.

The bean bags are similar to an older tool that police departments have been using for 20 years, Orlando Sgt. Mike Holloway said. The older version had bean bags shot from a special, large-barrel gun and weren’t real convenient or effective in most situations, said Holloway.

FORT LAUDERDALE - Broward County Sheriff Ron Cochran (right), presents a runner-up award to Correctional Officer Kurt Minard.

Kurt Minard named runner-up

In some instances, like the award presented to Russell Swartzel, recognition is given to someone who — on a daily basis — year in and year out — works at maximum levels of efficiency.

At other times, recognition is given for a specific act which is so special — and so above the call of duty, that it is worthy of high praise.

Such is the case with the individual named as runner-up for the 1995 FSA Correctional Officer of the Year, and this year’s choice is C.O. Kurt G. Minard of Broward County.

The single act for which Officer Minard was honored took place in the early morning hours of September 13, 1995. Minard was on what is commonly known as “perimeter patrol” — driving around exterior of the Broward County jail compound.

While on tour of duty that eventful day, Minard observed a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed — strike a metal guardrail — and plunge into an adjacent canal. In pitch dark, after assisting two of the vehicle’s occupants out of the water, he heard a third occupant calling out for help. Officer Minard entered the water and retrieved the victim by assisting him to the water’s edge.

Minard then began questioning the trio — and quickly determined that there might be another individual in the car. He feverishly searched through the dark, murky water with the aid of a flashlight, and located another submerged victim. Without hesitation, he was able to pull the unconscious victim to safety — thereby averting a senseless tragedy.

It’s perilous activities like these that are certainly over and above the call of duty — and it’s the reason why C.O. Kurt Minard is a runner-up for the statewide award.

We applaud both Russell Swartzel and Kurt Minard for setting the standard that others should emulate.
Some Sheriffs plan retirement

Every four-year cycle, at the same fall election when we choose our U.S. President, 65 of 67 of Florida's sheriffs posts are up for election as well. There are two exceptions to that rule. In Dade County, by county charter, there is no elected sheriff. In Duval (Jacksonville), their charter calls for the sheriff's election to be held every four years in mid-term of the other 65.

Over the past three or four sheriff's elections, history reflects that there are usually 20-25 new sheriffs who take office. Some lose to a newcomer while others choose to voluntarily relinquish the office undefeated in pursuit of retirement or new challenges.

So far, we've got a half-dozen who have publicly declared that they're no longer running. As individuals, the group is as diverse as you'll find. Their personalities, their law enforcement background, and their personal management styles will leave a mark on Florida's law enforcement community long after they're gone.

Charlie Dean, one-time Marine reservist, was elected in '80 by defeating B. R. Quinn, the Citrus County (Inverness) incumbent who defeated his very own father (also Charlie Dean), about 25 years before. I need not say anything else about his career but this one thing wouldn't any one of us give anything to pay tribute to our dad in such a unique and special way? Anything?

Eddie Boone, former Florida National Guard member and sheriff of Leon County (Tallahassee), departs with almost forty years in law enforcement. He started off as a fingerprint technician for the FBI and the Florida Sheriff's Bureau (now FDLE), worked his way to become FDLE's North Florida Regional Supervisor before his election in 1980.

Jamie Adams of Sumter County (Bushnell), also a member of the class of '80 and a former Army paratrooper, was a career Wildlife Officer with Florida's Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission prior to election. Anyone who knows Sheriff Adams even a little bit won't be asking him what he's going to be doing after retirement. "Going fishing and hunting" is what I'm sure he'll be telling the uninformed stranger.

Warren Roddenberry of Franklin County (Apalachicola), spent 24 years a trooper with FHP prior to his election in '88. Ask him where he's headed when he hangs up his star and with a grin, he's likely to tell you that he will spend the "next few years" on a golf course, "until I get sick of it."

Jim Floyd of Gilchrist County (Trenton), proudly served in the U.S. Air Force prior to a 20-year stint as a trooper with the Florida Highway Patrol prior to his election in '88.

John Wesley Walker of Taylor County (Perry), one-time U.S. Army reservist, was with the Florida Marine Patrol for 22 years prior to his appointment, then election in 1988. He said recently that upon retirement, he's going to rest for a while, do a little traveling, rest some more...then...who knows?

One interesting coincidence I found in my quick look into each man's background. All six retiring sheriffs are Brother members of a Masonic Lodge. As a member myself, I can attest to the fact that high on the list of Masonic principles is love of your fellow man, love of country, patriotism, and service to others.

Maybe it's no coincidence after all...
While law enforcement agencies across the country are studying ways to cut back on high-speed pursuits, deputies in Hillsborough County believe they’ve found a viable solution, according to a story written by Tim Grant of the St. Petersburg Times.

Instead of chasing suspects at dangerous speeds on crowded highways, they simply box them in.

“It’s fantastic,” Deputy Cindy Fitzpatrick told the Times. “It saves lives and keeps innocent, uninvolved people from getting hurt.”

When sheriff’s deputies spot a stolen car or someone who may be wanted for a felony offense, instead of flipping on the blue lights, they radio for help. Within minutes, a helicopter, a canine unit and several other patrol cars converge on the scene. Once everyone is in position, they all turn on their lights in unison.

The stunned driver has no where to go.

This new procedure is known by the acronym “VIP,” or Vehicle Intercept Program. It’s big advantage is that while the first patrol car is training the suspect without the blue lights, the person is likely to drive slowly, use turn signals and obey all traffic control devices, hoping not to attract attention.

“Usually they are leery of the patrol car behind them, but they don’t know what to do,” Fitzpatrick said. “So they proceed with caution and take their chances. I mean, it’s some of the best driving you’ve ever seen.”

By the time the lights come on, the car is blocked, so the suspect loses many options.

“Normally, the door flies open and everyone runs, or they just sit in the car dumbfounded,” Fitzpatrick told the reporter.

Before VIP became policy, deputies conducted 8-10 high-speed pursuits a month, according to Col. Ron Poindexter.

The original concept was developed by Cpl. Clyde Eisenberg, Deputy Fitzpatrick and other Hillsborough deputies working out of the district office in Brandon.

“This procedure is an alternative to the reckless behavior that often occurs in many police pursuits,” said Eisenberg, a 15-year veteran of the Tampa based sheriff’s office.

“Our agency is large and fortunate to have many diverse options at our disposal,” reported Hillsborough Sheriff Cal Henderson. “This might not work in rural counties where deputies are spread out miles apart, but for us, it will, no doubt, save lives.”

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"Your Financial Partner"
S.O. car crashes profiled for ‘94

The Hunt Insurance Group in Tallahassee has been administering the Florida Sheriffs Self-Insurance Fund since its inception in 1978. The Fund covers liability claims filed against sheriffs, deputies, correctional officers and civilian employees in 54 out of 67 sheriff's offices.

For a number of years, they have also been administering SHARP, an acronym for the Sheriff's Automobile Risk Program. During 1994, 37 of Florida's sheriff's offices were covered through that plan for their automobile insurance needs.

In a study done on 1994 claims filed in connection with automobile related claims, some interesting facts have emerged. Among them are:

* Of the 5,219 vehicles covered, 550 (10.5%) were involved in an accident during that calendar year

* Of the total, 49.3% were either preventable, or partially or fully the fault of the sheriff's office member driving the car

* Personal injuries were sustained in 26.6% of all SHARP accidents

* There were 4 accidents resulting in 8 fatalities during 1994, compared to 1 fatality in 1993. Two of these were no-contact accidents; two were contact accidents; and three involved pursuit

* Of all the accidents (fatal and non-fatal), 34 (6.2%) involved pursuit

* Of all accidents reported to SHARP, 30.4% were considered to be absolutely preventable (rear-ended claimant; unattended vehicle rolling into other vehicles; collision with fixed objects, backing-up; and accidents which involved two agency vehicles crashing into each other), and with adequate care, should not have happened. “Preventable” accidents accounted for more than $173,000 in expenses to SHARP.

Good student? ...win a car!

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office and their local school system began working on a project late last year.

The overall goal of the project is to improve school behavior and attendance, as well as maintaining acceptable grades. In November, Sarasota Sheriff Geoff Monge instituted the program in which his agency will donate a 1988 Chevrolet Beretta for a drawing to be held in mid-April. In order to be eligible for the car giveaway, a Sarasota County public high school student must meet the following criteria:

- Maintain a 2.0 GPA for the second and third grading periods
- Have no discipline referrals during the second and third grading periods
- Hold a valid Florida driver's license by April 12, 1996
- Submit a signed statement by the parent/guardian indicating that they will be responsible for all taxes, registration, insurance, etc. that may be required.

Tentative plans call for students who meet the criteria by 2 PM on April 12, 1996 to received one ticket, with the drawing to be held on Instructional Television on Monday, April 15.

Wow! What a great idea for other sheriff's offices to consider!

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Pasco detective runs in New York Marathon

Before he left New Port Richey for The Big Apple, Pasco Sheriff’s Detective Kali Gardner told local newspapers, “As long as I don’t get mugged running...I’ll be okay...it’s the weather that I’m worried about.”

Then, what he feared worst became reality. About half way through the 26.2 mile New York Marathon, the thirty-three year old Gardner felt the cramps in his legs coming on.

“It was those wickedly cold temperatures,” Gardner reported after running the November event which, by tradition, passes through all five boroughs of the City of New York. Race officials reported that the temperatures for the duration of the race were just above freezing, and that 40 MPH wind gusts made life miserable for runners and spectators alike.

For the three months preceding the run, Gardner, an eleven-year deputy who’s assigned to Pasco’s training division and a member of their elite SWAT Team, ran eight miles each night and one distance run each week, the longest being eighteen miles.

A challenge from Leukemia Society supporters prodded Gardner to enter the world’s most famous foot race. Through pledges, he raised about $2,300 for research to help find a cure for the cancerous blood disease. Nationwide, runners raised about $1.2 million for the society, according to Det. Gardner.

Mr. Gardner expressed surprise that New York residents, all of whom were extremely supportive and friendly, stood seven or eight deep for nearly the entire run. “During most of the route, I ran alongside two New York area plumbers,” he recalled.

Gardner was determined to finish despite the cramps. Thus, at the 16-mile marker, he had to resort to jogging and walking the last ten miles to make it to the end.

Would he do it again?

“I’d run it again in a heartbeat,” said Gardner, recalling the visit he had with some children he had met the week before the race — kids wheelchair-bound from the chemotherapy associated with treatment for the dreaded disease, “in a heartbeat.”

“We really proud of Det. Gardner’s accomplishment,” said a beaming Lee Cannon, the Pasco County Sheriff who is also Gardner’s boss. “I can’t imagine running over twenty-six miles in any kind of weather let alone freezing, blowing wind,” he noted.

Arrest warrant info published in local newspapers

In an effort to serve some of the more than 2,000 outstanding warrants in their county, the St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office admits to swiping a great idea from one of their sister agencies, and they couldn’t be happier with the results!

First tried by Sheriff Ken Ergle in Marion County last August, the St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office, with the assistance of their local paper, the St. Augustine Record, ran a special “pull-out” section of the paper, and for identification purposes, published the names, races, dates of birth and charges filed in connection with the warrants.

In addition, “we ran accompanying photos of our ‘44 Most Wanted’ individuals to place emphasis on certain individuals we really wanted to get our hands on,” reports St. Johns County Sheriff Neil Perry.

One month following the paper’s special edition, 111 outstanding warrants were served, 41 were recalled, and 19 others were returned unserved because suspects had moved out of the county or state. As an added bonus, nine of the ‘44 Most Wanted’ were taken into custody as well.

Many suspects, upon learning of their name on the list, jumped at the chance to turn themselves in voluntarily to avoid the embarrassment of being arrested at their place of employment or in front of family members.

Sheriff Perry noted that this project cleared loads of data from their computer files, closed out some long-time outstanding warrants, and provided the obvious benefit of bringing many individuals to justice who may otherwise have avoided prosecution indefinitely.

FSA to host another Disaster Preparedness Course

After Hurricanes Andrew & Opal, we need no further warning that planning ahead is the way to go...so, FSA is hosting another 20-hour Disaster Preparedness Course. It is planned for May 21-23, 1996, at the state Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee. An announcement has been sent to all Sheriffs.

For further information, contact Mr. Tom Berlinger at FSA at (904) 877-2165.
Sgt. Kathy Fossa wins national award

The National Sheriffs' Association has selected Pasco County Sheriff's Sgt. Kathy Fossa as the 1995/96 national recipient of the J. Stannard Baker Award for Traffic Safety.

The purpose of this award is to recognize one sheriff's office employee from among the over 3,000 sheriff's offices across the U.S. who has made a significant contribution to the cause of highway safety.

This prestigious honor is presented annually to a deputy sheriff who has shown unusual initiative and drive. Fossa's current assignment is that of DUI and Grant Coordinator for Pasco County Sheriff's Office, an agency which, over the years, has been nationally recognized by MADD for its ongoing efforts to rid the roads of impaired drivers.

Pasco County Sheriff's Sgt. Kathy Fossa

The first Floridian to receive the award, Sgt. Fossa will be formally recognized on June 17 at the National Sheriffs' Association Annual Conference and Exhibition in Portland, Oregon.

Congratulations, Kathy, for a job well done! Keep up your great work!

Deputies responsible for accident deductibles

As of December, deputies who wreck their agency-owned vehicles in an at-fault accident in St. Johns County will be required to pay up to the $1,000 deductible out of their own pockets.

"This is not punishment," Sheriff Neil Perry told the St. Augustine Record, the hometown daily paper serving his county, "we just had to find a way to cut down on the number of at-fault accidents, and this may get their attention."

In 1994, agency records reflected that 8 of 26 accidents involving agency vehicles were listed as being, "at-fault. Two of those accidents involved a single vehicle hitting a fixed object, so there's no question as to who's at fault."

But, the Sheriff also allowed that every crash is not a cut and dried mat-
Continued on page 8

Universal Studios Florida shows its appreciation

For You!

ORLANDO - Law enforcement, EMS and fire service workers like you can visit Universal Studios Florida for a very special price between April 5 - May 25, 1996 when they host their fifth annual Appreciation Days.

During that time, all members of Florida's law enforcement, corrections, fire and EMS community, and their families, are invited to take advantage of tremendous price reductions. The discounts are available when accompanied by a discount coupon and valid municipal, state or federal ID. Civilian, non-sworn personnel are qualified as long as they produce valid ID proving employment with an eligible agency. Discount coupons have been mailed to all emergency and special service agencies across the state.

With the coupon, one-day admission for adults is only $25 (plus tax) during the seven-week-long event. For children ages 3-9, a one-day ticket to the entertainment-packed theme park is just $19 (plus tax). These prices reflect a substantial savings from regular admission of $38.50 for adults and $31 for children (3-9). Each coupon is valid for up to six people.

In addition to the value-priced admissions, you will receive a special coupon booklet for discounts on food and merchandise purchased at select locations in the park.

These Appreciation Days encompass personnel in the Military (police, firefighters, EMT's, etc.), civilian EMS and fire service persons, forestry officers, and all state, county and local law enforcement agencies throughout Florida.

Universal Studios Florida, which opened in 1990, is the #1 movie studio and theme park in the world. Ongoing expansion includes the summer opening of the mega-attraction "Terminator 2 3-D," a new "cyber-optic" virtual adventure featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger. Academy award winning producer/director Steven Spielberg serves as creative consultant to the Universal Studios Florida and to the future Universal City Florida, a multi-billion dollar expansion project being built in phases over the next decade.

Universal City Florida will include the existing, highly successful Universal Studios Florida, along with a second theme park named UNIVERSAL'S ISLANDS OF ADVENTURE to open in 1999, a 12-acre entertainment complex called E Zone, to open in 1998.

Why not pack up the family and take advantage of this rare opportunity to visit Universal Studios Florida...all, at specially discounted prices? For more information, call (407) 363-8217.

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Agricultural trespass signs deter crime

The St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office began an anti-trespass sign campaign late last year, at the urging of civil Deputy William Eddy, and so far, it appears to be a success!

Deputy Eddy, in addition to his regular duties serving civil papers, also checks on the welfare of elderly county residents. One elderly citizen approached Eddy last year, and asked him if the sheriff’s office would consider creating a trespass warning sign bearing the signature of St. Johns Sheriff Neil J. Perry, and post them on agricultural land.

When approached, Perry liked the idea, and assigned Deputy Kim Bucher of his crime prevention division to work on the project. Once established, the program also included a special anti-trespass sign to be posted on construction sites throughout the county. Before kickoff of the project, 500 agricultural and 250 construction site signs were designed and purchased.

“Agricultural signs sell for $2.00 each, and the construction site signs are $2.50," said Sheriff Perry, “and that’s about half of the actual cost.”

“We budget for the remainder through our crime prevention division, a small price to pay for the peace of mind now enjoyed by members of our farming community and those working in the construction trades,” a proud Sheriff Perry noted.

For additional information, call Deputy Kim Bucher at (904) 824-8304, extension #168.

Court rules inmate can starve himself

A state prisoner at Martin Correctional Institution inmate won a second court’s permission to starve himself to death in the first Florida case to establish criteria for inmates seeking to block forced medical treatment.

The 4th District Court of Appeal agreed with Martin Circuit Judge who last year stopped MCI officials from force-feeding inmate Michael Costello during a hunger strike.

While ruling that Costello’s right to privacy outweighed the prison system’s interest in preserving life, the 26-page ruling issued in January ended with assurances that every inmate has the right to starve to death.

In March, 1995, Costello ended his 68-day hunger strike protesting prison policies. But, appeals court judges said they considered the case anyway because it deals with an “issue of great public importance that is capable of repetition.”

Costello, sentenced to life in prison for a 1969 murder, is the same Florida inmate whose 1972 class action lawsuit improved inmate health care, food services, and led to the early release of thousands of inmates.