Mark Nelson is the FSA Correctional Officer of the Year

The results have been tallied, and the 1996 FSA Correctional Officer of the Year is Broward County Correctional Deputy Mark Nelson.

Prior to entering corrections, Mark Nelson earned a 2-year degree in criminal justice. In 1985, at age 25, he graduated from the Broward County Criminal Justice Institute Corrections Academy in Fort Lauderdale.

On graduation day from the academy, Mark was bestowed the "Honor Medallion" as the #1 overall student in his academy class. This honor is given to the person in the class with the best attitude, cooperative spirit, and display of job knowledge, as well as for academic and physical achievement.

After being on the job for nearly 12 years, Mark Nelson has received consistent high marks in each of his work evaluations — and every one of his supervisors has made special comment about his cooperation and diligence during the entire time. But, there is so much more to Mark Nelson than just good evaluations.

In 1988, after only three years with the Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO), Mark was diagnosed with a serious form of skin cancer. For two years, he fought hard against this terribly debilitating disease. During that stretch, even while in undergoing painful treatment, Mark received 3 commendations for his display of concern for others — and his respectful and courteous attitude to inmates, his co-workers, and to the members of the public we all serve.

In 1994, without regard for his own future personal needs, Mark donated a block of his accrued sick time to a fellow employee who had suffered a seriously debilitating stroke. A year later, in 1995, he was awarded a "10-year Meritorious Service" award by BSO for a decade of hard work.

About a year and a half ago, at age 34 and on the eve of the five-year cancer window that we are all familiar with — Mark was informed that the cancer had re-surfaced. Since that time, Mark has braved the side-effects of regular chemotherapy and radiation treatments, always scheduling the sessions so as not to interfere with his...
Mark Nelson is the FSA Correctional Officer of the Year

attendance at work.

We all work with employees who will use any excuse to take sick leave, and keep their sick leave balance hovering around 0-0 hours. Unbelievably, when the pain and weakness from the chemotherapy and radiation treatments started affecting Mark's ability to walk, he secured a pair of crutches and continued to report to work — every single day.

Mark's boss, Sheriff Ron Cochran, said it best when he wrote, "Mark has risen above his personal pain and displayed integrity, dedication, and bravery... and his kindness and gentleness during very tough times have truly brought out the best in all of us."

Last November 20th, Sheriff Cochran, and Mark's co-workers celebrated his bravery when they awarded him BSO's "Profile in Courage Award." The award took notice of Mark's many years of exceptional service — and thanked him for being an inspiration to all of the people whose lives he has touched.

As FSA's Correctional Officer of the Year, Mark was awarded a handsome plaque and a check for $1,000 at a banquet held on January 28th during FSA's Mid-Winter Conference in Panama City Beach.

With almost 60 of Florida's Sheriffs and their wives looking on, FSA's Chaplain Buddy Smith closed the evening with a prayer in Mark's behalf, asking, "...Lord, please reach out and wrap your arms around Mark Nelson...touch him with your healing power...and bless him and his family in a way that only You can..."

Anyone present that night will never forget the sight. In the closing moments, while everyone else in the room was at the absolute edge of their emotions, Mark Nelson stood erect and proud, with crutches propped under each arm of his full dress uniform — grinning as if he was on top of the world.

Florida S.O.'s Win Traffic Awards

At the 103rd Annual Meeting of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) which was recently held in Phoenix, several Florida sheriffs and sheriff's offices were honored by receiving an array of national traffic safety awards.

Martin County Sheriff's Office (Sheriff Bob Crowder) received the 1st Place Award for the "Sheriff-4," the category for sheriff's offices with 101-500 sworn personnel, with their 44% reduction in alcohol related deaths through wolfpacks, saturation patrols and Selective Traffic Enforcement Patrol (STEP) activities. Their patrol division also focused on speeding violations, public information and education.

Collier County Sheriff's Office (Sheriff Don Hunter) received the 3rd Place Award in the "Sheriff-4" category as well. His agency was recognized for its well-rounded traffic safety program through enforcement and education.

In category "Sheriff-5," (501-1000 sworn), the Hillsborough County and Pinellas County Sheriff's Office were the two top winners respectively.

In Hillsborough, Sheriff Cal Henderson implemented a program called "HEAT," an acronym for the Habitual Enforcement Apprehension Tracking Program. The program targets habitual DUI offenders. Deputies are notified of the identities of these individuals and advised to look out for them. To date, 11,000+ offenders have been entered into the system and of those, 750 qualify for felony charges. They also instituted a very pro-active under age drinking enforcement program, as well as a widespread public information and education program.

In Pinellas, Sheriff Everett Rice has taken an assertive approach in addressing the traffic behavior of motorists through selective traffic enforcement that targets DUI, speed and underage drinking, as well as a thorough public information and education program, utilizing all forms of media.

In the "Sheriffs-6" category (1001-2000 sworn), the Orange County Sheriff's Office (Sheriff Kevin Beary) "set the standard," according to IACP officials. Their program includes STEP, saturation patrols, wolfpacks, and aircraft, and they target DUI and speed violators. They also instituted, "Operation Roundup," targeting violators with revoked licenses.

The IACP has made an important commitment to traffic safety. They provide an "Awards Breakfast," and 3-night accommodation, air fare and per-diem for all first place winners, and the opportunity for all first-place winners to use a fully equipped marked police vehicle for one year.

FSA lends its congratulations to all these wonderful programs.

THE 10 METROPOLITAN AREAS IDENTIFIED IN THE STUDY WITH HIGHEST VEHICLE THEFT RATES WERE:

1. Miami, FL
2. New York, NY
3. Fresno, CA
4. Jersey City, NJ
5. Memphis, TN
6. Phoenix-Mesa, AZ
7. Jackson, MS
8. Stockton-Lodi, CA
9. Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA
10. Sacramento, CA

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6. Honda Civic
7. Ford Mustang
8. Toyota Corolla
9. Chevrolet Caprice
10. Oldsmobile Delta 88/Royale

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An impressive promise is fulfilled

When a local newspaper editor writes about his/her wonderful sheriff, it's the only sheriff they've got to write about. APB, on the other hand, writes for and about 67 wonderful sheriffs. Unlike the newspaper editor, when we devote a column to only one sheriff, we face the possibility that one or more of the 66 others may be privately thinking, "why didn't he pick me to write about?" That said, here's a column on just one of them. Once read, nobody will ever question why.

First, some background on Sheriff Nat Glover of Duval County (Jacksonville). Glover began his career with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office back in 1966. Over the next 29 years, he worked his way up to Director of Police Services before retiring in 1995. Shortly thereafter, he declared his candidacy for sheriff when then Sheriff Jim McMillan decided he was not going to run again.

Glover won the election handily, and aside from being head of one of the biggest police agencies in the state, he also enjoys the distinction of being the first African-American to hold the office of sheriff in Florida in over 100 years. That's certainly impressive, and given that fact, one might assume that this column is about his being African-American — but it's not.

Instead, it's about an unusual campaign promise that he made — and most importantly, which he is keeping.

Despite the fact that it is perfectly legal, legitimate, and done by thousands of others across the state and nation, politicians in the "other corner" tried to cast Glover's candidacy as a guy running for sheriff so that he could "double dip." That is, had Glover won, he would have been eligible to collect a considerable city pension — plus a handsome salary for being sheriff.

To counter that spurious claim, Glover made a campaign promise. "If I run and win the office of sheriff, I will donate my first four years of pension money to fund college scholarships for needy children...." No doubt, the critics were looking over the top of their glasses and thinking, "Yeah, right."

In November, Glover delivered on his promise by donating the equivalent of four years of pension money, in fact, a whopping $240,000 of his personal funds to the "Take Stock in Children" program, a statewide initiative that grants scholarships to low-income children. To earn a scholarship, a student must sign a contract committing to stay crime and drug-free, and maintain a 2.5 GPA.

The first of 30 "Nat Glover Scholars" were named recently at a ceremony at Andrew Jackson High School in Jacksonville.

"Who knows," Glover said with a wide smile at the ceremony, "we might get a sheriff or a doctor or a lawyer out of here."

JUDGE NOT — LEAST YE BE JUDGED

In Dadeville, Alabama, three men holding a contest to determine their knowledge of the Bible each quoted different versions of the same passage. One of the men checked his Bible — realized he was wrong, then shot and killed Gabel Taylor, age 38, the man who had the correct answer. Police Chief Terry Wright quoted witnesses as saying the suspect said "Taylor knew more...and that that made him mad."

DID YOU KNOW.....

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Courtesy of FDLE
INNOVATIVE HOUSING IDEA EASES JAIL CROWDING

By Linda A. Wood, Assistant Director Broward Sheriff’s Office Division of Community Corrections

“It’s not a tent,” Broward County Sheriff Ron Cochran told a group of guests during a tour of the new dome-shaped “Sprung” (corporate name) structures built to house 80 additional county jail inmates. The two 40' x 80' housing units, connected by a 30' x 50' bathroom structure received their first inmates on October 17, 1996. The structures were assembled at Broward Sheriff’s Office’s (BSO) Division of Community Corrections (DOCC), on one of three BSO jail sites. The structures were constructed in 90 days to relieve their severely crowded jails.

The average daily population of the Broward jail system is 3,700. Their jails have been chronically crowded for the last twenty years, resulting in a federal court imposed population cap designed to force the county and the sheriff to explore quick solutions for housing the overage. While 1,024 new inmate beds are under construction scheduled to open in late 1997, finding short-term cost-effective solutions continually posed a dilemma.

In the early nineties, traditional military-style tents had been erected to house inmates, but were quickly taken down when the federal court intervened. In 1994, while reviewing the feasibility of prefabricated structures, the sheriff and the county signed a contract with Monroe County to house 120 inmates to alleviate crowding. This alternative provided minimal relief, as the inmate population continued to increase about 10% a year. In 1996 a contract to house inmates in Indian River County was signed for 100 additional inmate beds to add more capacity to the system.

In 1993, BSO purchased a $75,000 “Sprung” structure as a prototype juvenile boot camp. The structure was in storage because the county, the sheriff, and the Department of Juvenile Justice could not reach consensus on the details of the juvenile boot camp. In discussions held in 1994, the feasibility of erecting this structure was discussed. But, a drop in jail population in late 1995, and the probability of red-tape and fees imposed by the City of Ft. Lauderdale diminished the attractiveness of the option.

In mid-1996, however, when the upward inmate trend continued, the feasibility of using the already owned structure, and leasing an additional structure, again became a prime option. In May, 1996, the county approved the funding for the lease of the second “Sprung” dome and the connecting bathroom. The county worked with BSO and the City of Ft. Lauderdale to expedite the permitting process. By October 17, 1996, the structures were inmate ready.

The tent-like rigid structures are
LAW ENFORCEMENT

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In addition to all this, Law Enforcement members may also participate in the Florida Sheriffs Association’s Pre-Paid Legal Services Program. The Pre-Paid Legal Services Plan is designed to give you and your family affordable access to legal services for both personal and business-related matters. It’s your benefit of protection against countless legal matters and it’s available to Law Enforcement members for just $3.45 a week or $179.40 a year. Simply check the appropriate box on the order form and the postage will be paid by the association.

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manufactured with a highly rugged flexible material known as "tedlar." Concrete slabs, including the water and sewer lines were poured, and the tedlar was stretched between 4" aluminum beams anchored in the concrete slab. Meeting all of south Florida's stringent building codes, the manufacturer guarantees the structures to be strong enough to withstand 100 mph winds. They are fully equipped with air conditioning, sky lights, ceiling fans, and telephones, and are connected to the facility's emergency power supply.

Although a contractor was hired to oversee the construction and building assembly, inmate labor offset some costs. The inmates were responsible for preparing the site, including pulling up asphalt, excavating the area for pipe installation, and assembling the structures. Inmates also assisted with installing the plumbing and painting interior spaces. The total cost to build the structures was about $350,000, with inmate labor contributing $50,000 of that total cost. The manufacturer estimates that the life span of the "tedlar" as 10 years. Then, it's a simple replacement of the "skin" only, not the entire structure.

Since the structures are minimum security by design and construction type, the decision was made to house medium custody inmates. By housing inmates involved in programs, intensive security staffing was avoided. Ten additional staff were added when the structure opened, funded by an additional appropriation by the county. These staff were assigned to two new posts in the housing areas vacated when the inmates were moved into the new structures.

Sheriff Ron Cochran has issued an open invitation to anyone who would like to learn more about this innovative housing alternative to tour the structures. For more information, please contact Assistant Director Linda Wood at (954) 831-5310.

SNakes AS AN INTERROGATION TOOL

Jakarta, Indonesia — Police in a town in Java say they plan to start using venomous cobras to break up mass demonstrations and compel crime suspects to confess.

"The cobras will be used to intimidate suspects during interrogation, and to disperse mass riots," Lt. Col. Alex Bambang Riaidmo of the Bekasi police was quoted as saying by the Indonesian Observer newspaper.

Sgt. Usman of the Bekasi police station, contacted by telephone, confirmed the report.

Bekasi, a town about 15 miles from Jakarta, suffers from a high rate of murder, rape and other violent crimes. Riaidmo said his office is working with a snake handlers in Bekasi to develop the "poisonous weapon," according to the Observer. Not surprisingly, Indonesia's human rights commission expressed shock and opposition to the plan.

"It is a violation of the freedom from fear by the use of intimidation and methods of torture," said Marzuki Danusman, deputy chief of the commission.

Lt. Riaidmo justified the use of cobras by comparing criminals to animals. "A human being is basically an animal with morality and ethics, and when he loses his morality and ethics, he will injure and even kill, like an animal," he said.

Courtesy of CRIME CONTROL DIGEST
OFF-DUTY DEPUTY FOils BANK ROBBERY

One day last October, about the same time that off-duty Manatee County sheriff’s deputy Ed Woodruff was cashing a check in the drive-through of Republic Bank in Ellenton, two men barged into the bank armed with handguns. The robbers ordered a teller to begin stuffing money into a white garbage bag. As the bank was being robbed, another teller at the drive-through window turned to Woodruff, who was sitting in his patrol car and dressed in his off-duty uniform.

“We’re being robbed,” the teller mouthed to him.

Woodruff noted the look of fear on the teller’s face, and deciphered the message, then notified dispatch.

The teller then mouthed a more urgent message to Woodruff: “They have guns.”

Woodruff knew that if the robbers realized he was outside, it might ignite a hostage situation. So, he updated dispatch, finished his bank transaction, and calmly pulled away and into the Food Lion parking lot next door.

Within seconds, Deputy Alan Fifield arrived at the scene and parked in the northwest corner of the bank’s parking lot. Then, they waited.

As the two robbers exited the bank, they ran into Fifield and Woodruff, who had their guns trained on them. They ordered the robbers to the ground, handcuffed them and pulled loaded handguns out of each of their belts. The pair, Todd Graves, 21, of Cape Coral, and Ronald Johnson, 40, of Fort Myers, were arrested and charged with armed robbery and two counts of aggravated assault.

“It shows the value of a take-home car,” sheriff’s spokesman Dave Bristow told the Bradenton Herald.

While Woodruff foiled the armed bank robbery, he also acted wisely by staying low-key until help arrived and the men were outside the bank. “I knew I had to wait until they came out before any action was taken,” Woodruff said. “Even if they got away, it would have been better than somebody getting hurt.”

Woodruff has worked for the sheriff’s office for about eight years, but had been on the road for only about two months when the incident occurred. One of his trainers was Lionel B. Oliver, a deputy who died the month before the robbery from a respiratory syndrome.

“Lionel had probably the most influence on how I was trained,” Woodruff said. “If it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t have been as sharp as I needed to be today...that’s for sure,” he told the newspaper.

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Don Hunter
Collier County Sheriff

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WEIRD BUT TRUE NEWS

The Des Moines Register reported in July that among the treasures turned up at the excavation site of the “Bertrand,” a steamboat which sank on the Missouri River near Omaha in 1865, were four pocket-knives with glass rivets that contained explicit, pornographic photos. “They are evidence,” said conservator Jeanne Harold, “that people have not changed much in 131 years.”

The California Style in Crime: According to police in Toronto, last August, two men who had just executed a well-planned jewelry store robbery, made a successful getaway, but only after stealing a car from in front of the store in order to drive to their getaway car which was parked only a half a block away.

Again in California, according to police in Huntington Beach, it was apparently the incessant chatter of Karen Pedersen, 52, that caused the man who was stealing her truck to give up and flee. She had intercepted the man before he could drive it away, and despite his having a gun, she just began talking non-stop. Said Ms. Pedersen later, “He sounded irritated. He said, ‘I can’t believe how this is going. This is like something out of the movies.’” After she gave him a T-shirt to wipe his fingerprints off the truck, he fled.

According to Gardner, Kansas Sheriff’s Lt. Bill Garrett, a woman was treated at Olathe Medical Center for a scalp wound after her husband shot her while the two were playing hide-and-seek in the woods. According to Garrett, the husband said the couple had played hide-and-seek with handguns before.

And, in Owensboro, Kentucky, road department driver Sam Holinde, driving his 20-ton dump truck across a bridge clearly marked with a “Limit 3-Ton” sign, got about half-way across the bridge before it collapsed. Luckily, the fall was short. Holinde suffered only minor injuries.

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Sprint salutes the Florida Sheriffs Association!

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“TOP FLIGHT” - BSO’S YOUTH AVIATION PROGRAM

The Police Aviation Unit of the Broward County Sheriff’s Office (BSO) recently implemented a new and innovative youth aviation program called Top Flight. Sergeant Carmine W. Berardino, supervisor of the unit, explained that the aviation unit has taken steps beyond traditional air support, in an effort to more actively involve them with community groups. Like most traditional aviation units, they historically have provided only conventional services such as airborne law enforcement support, static displays and medical/rescue missions. This program allows pilots quality interaction with local area youths.

About the program: BSO’s aviation unit, in partnership with the Broward Chapter of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) recently completed the first six-week Top Flight Aviation Youth Program. Selected flight instructor pilots were chosen to provide positive role model interaction and classroom instruction to each of the youth members. The aviation unit reached out to area youths ranging from 12 to 18 years of age with an aviation interest. A total of twelve youth participants were selected from six of the Broward CAP squadrons (two cadets from each squadron).

The overall intent of this program is to enhance and strengthen program participant’s overall aviation knowledge aviation interest and leadership skills. In addition, programs like this one build a stronger bond between the youth and law enforcement personnel.

The six-week course of instruction parallels current CAP text references. The lessons covered topics such as aviation weather, navigation and a basic introduction to flight training. Additionally, each cadet has the opportunity to view their helicopter and airplane fleet first hand.

At the conclusion of the training program, each student is academically tested on the aviation knowledge they were taught in the course. All students are then presented with a certificate of training from BSO. However, the top two graduating students were presented with special Certificates of Achievement and given an opportunity to ride in one of their police helicopters as an “observer.”

Overall, the first program was a great success measured by the positive feedback from all of the students, parents, community leaders and CAP Command Staff. The aviation unit is looking forward to hosting another class early next year.

FLORIDA SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION
Tallahassee, FL 32317-2519

Address correction requested