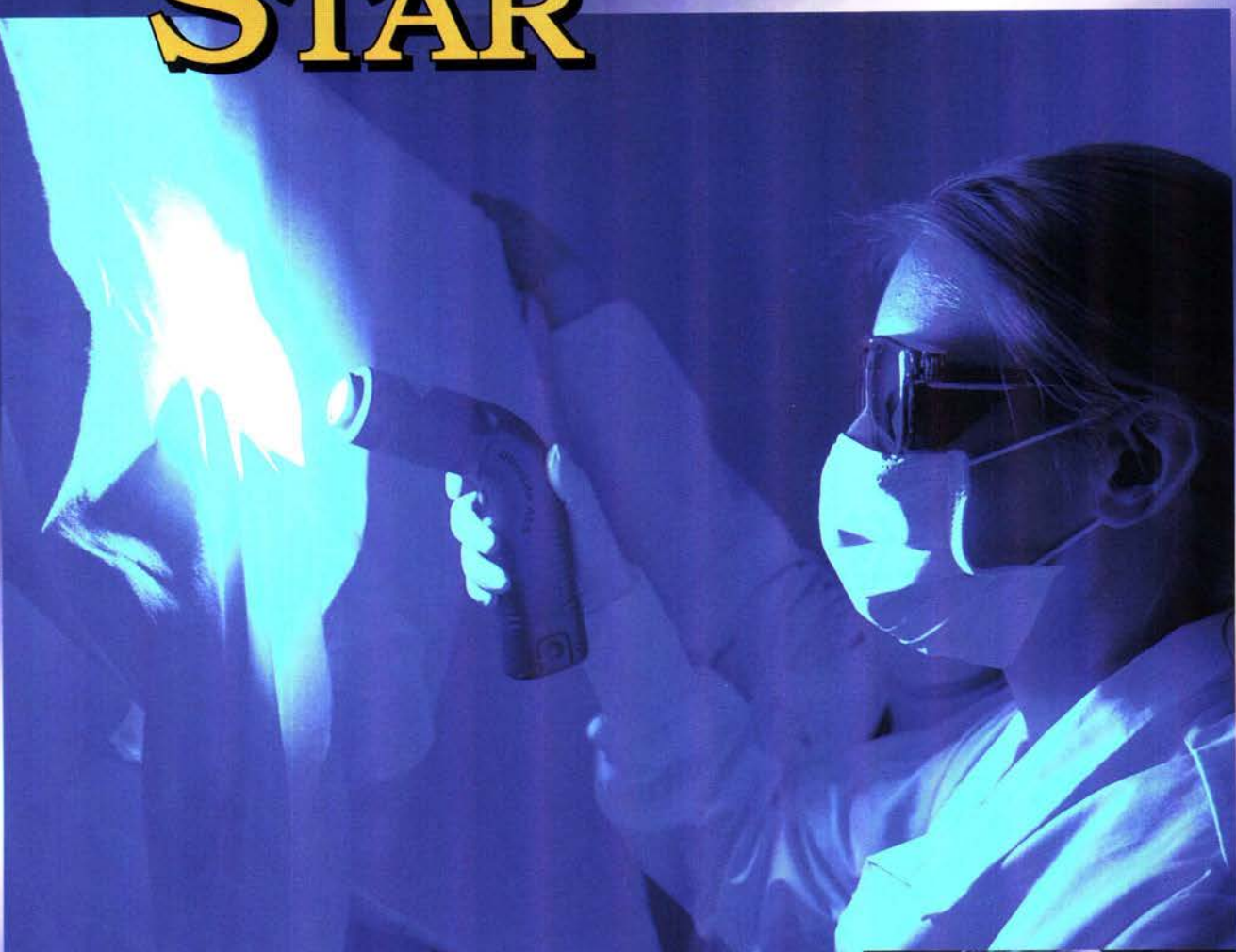


# THE SHERIFF'S STAR

PUBLISHED BY THE FLORIDA  
SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION  
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2007



## Local-Based DNA Screening Helps Sheriff's Office Catch Criminals Quicker

See page 4





## FROM THE DESK OF . . .

**Gary Perkins, Executive Director  
Florida Sheriffs Association**



**W**ith each passing year, we must say goodbye to Sheriffs who have made an indelible mark on the history of Florida through their service. Learning of the death of a retired Sheriff gives us a chance to reflect on their lives and the sacrifices they made on behalf of this great state, and we try to recognize them in the pages of *The Sheriff's Star*.

Recently we learned of the passing of former Palm Beach County Sheriff William Heidtman, who died December 7 at the age of 91. We had the honor of hosting Sheriff Heidtman at an FSA summer conference in 2004. I recall him talking about one of his most famous cases – the crucifixion of an 18-year-old woman by a motorcycle gang (she lived to testify). But more than anything, I remember Sheriff Heidtman encouraging his fellow Sheriffs. The job of Sheriff is not an easy one. But there is, perhaps, no other position in which you have the opportunity to help people in such a significant way – that is, saving lives.

### *Unbound*

In our last issue of *The Sheriff's Star*, our "Dean of Sheriffs," Wakulla County's David Harvey observed that Sheriffs are in a unique position to learn what people want and are not hamstrung by a city or county manager

in responding. They come up with a solution and get to work. "We do what the people want," Sheriff Harvey said. That's what makes the office unique.

Sheriff Heidtman got to work in a hurry when appointed in 1967, and forever changed how law enforcement is carried out in Palm Beach County. He quadrupled the size of the 125-deputy Sheriff's Office, bought a helicopter, modernized communications and fought hard for budget increases – including taking his proposals all the way to the governor's office. He was named Lawman of the Year in 1968 by the National Sheriff's Association and won numerous other awards.

On a much quieter scale, was former St. Johns County Sheriff Dudley Garrett, who died November 2 at age 76. St. Johns County's current Sheriff David Shoar began his law-enforcement career during Sheriff Garrett's term and was a personal friend.

During his tenure, Sheriff Garrett was credited with closing down a numbers racket, two houses of prostitution and helping to chase moonshiners out of the county. A "cop's cop," he had been a special investigator for the State's Attorney office, an intelligence officer for the State Beverage Department, an Alachua County Deputy and police officer for the University of Florida before becoming St. Johns County's "top cop."

Sheriff Garrett adopted the

first policy manual at the Sheriff's Office and upgraded equipment. He often served as a backup unit, and on one such occasion had to shoot an armed man who was holding a child hostage. He expanded the Sheriff's patrol unit and increased shifts to 24-hours-a-day.

### *Defies job description*

A few years ago, we tried to come up with a job description for Sheriff to help people better understand the job. We reviewed several "position announcements" online from agencies across the country. It was clear that writing a description for this job is a lot like writing an employment ad for a superhero. "Must be able to leap over tall buildings in a single bound."

Thankfully, your Florida Sheriffs continue to make the personal sacrifices required and meet the demands. And through perseverance, they are making their own mark on Florida history.

May God bless them and keep them and those who serve safe in 2008.

Gary Perkins, Executive Director  
Florida Sheriffs Association



## Making TraCS: FSU Professor Helping Keep Florida's Roads Safe

By Barry Ray

In dozens of communities throughout Florida, law-enforcement officers are finding their jobs have become both safer and more efficient, thanks to a computer software system that a Florida State University researcher is working to distribute and implement statewide.

Lisa K. Spainhour, an associate professor of civil engineering in the Florida A&M University-Florida State University College of Engineering, leads a program that distributes the software, at no charge, to local law-enforcement agencies throughout the state. Called TraCS Florida (TraCS being short for "Traffic and Criminal Software"), the software enables officers to prepare and transmit a variety of reports from laptop computers located in their patrol cars.

"Speed and accuracy are critical when officers are preparing documents," Spainhour said. "For example, an officer who is on the scene of a vehicular accident needs to be able to prepare a crash report quickly and get back on the road in order to reduce the risk of a secondary crash. TraCS enables the officer to do that."



Agencies using the software are seeing other benefits as well. Officers no longer have to travel back and forth to a central office to deliver paper reports or pick up books of traffic citations, enabling them to spend more time on their primary function – protecting the public. Some agencies, such as the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, are realizing savings in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, thanks to the efficiencies that TraCS brings.

Other, commercially available software applications can perform similar functions, Spainhour said, but she sees several reasons why law-enforcement agencies in Florida increasingly are turning to TraCS.

"First, larger agencies can find themselves spending tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars in licensing fees and upgrades for commercial software systems," she said. TraCS, on the other hand, is funded by the State Safety Office of the Florida Department of Transportation for the purpose of increasing traffic safety through quality data collection. Which means no cost for local law

enforcement.

"What's more, the software is easy to learn, and it can be customized according to each agency's specific needs," she says. An added benefit is that the TraCS Florida team helps agencies with implementation and training, and provides phone, Web and e-mail support – all at no charge.

TraCS was first developed by the state of Iowa, in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration, beginning in 1994. In 2002, the Florida Department of Transportation began developing and deploying the software in Florida, and Spainhour received grant funding for the project. The program went into full production August 2006. Today, a team of about 10 people continues to refine the software and provide assistance to law-enforcement agencies using it.

About 75 agencies in Florida are now using TraCS in some capacity, ranging in size from one-man departments to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, which is one of the largest law-enforcement agencies in the state.

For more information about TraCS Florida, visit the program's Web site at [www.tracsflorida.eng.fsu.edu](http://www.tracsflorida.eng.fsu.edu) or call (850) 410-6237.

### THE SHERIFF'S STAR

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## CRIME TRENDS

# Local-Based DNA Screening Helps Sheriff's Office Catch Criminals Quicker

**Marion County Sheriff's Office opens first Level 3 DNA Screening Lab in Florida**

Criminal Justice professionals would all concede that Hollywood gets the Emmy for depicting the future for crime-scene processing. Homicide cases always get solved before lunch, much like Perry Mason used to defend his client, find crucial evidence and expose the real killer, all within an hour-long TV drama.

When CSI Miami first started, the victims of our real-life crimes started telling us how to process their burglary scene. They made unrealistic demands, wondering why we couldn't immediately identify the subjects who broke into their home by using fingerprint evidence at the scene.

### *Back to reality*

The real world of crime investigation in Florida involves not just combing the scene for evidence, but collecting fabric, gloves and articles too numerous to name and sending it off to one of six Florida Department of Law Enforcement laboratories for DNA screening and analysis. In the laboratories, specially-trained technicians screen for blood, saliva, semen and hair, which then must go to test tube analysis for profiling. That's where suspects are tagged – or eliminated – based on a DNA match.

Yes, DNA – what once was the wave of the future for crime solving

### **What you need to know:**

- The explosion of DNA analysis being used to solve crimes has caused a backlog of processing at six of Florida's seven state-owned crime laboratories
- A significant portion of the backlog occurs in screening articles for the presence of blood, semen, saliva and hair
- Through a pilot program, the Marion County Sheriff's Office has established an in-house DNA screening laboratory; evidence then goes to FDLE for analysis and profiling
- The result: Crimes are being solved quicker, probable cause is helping to get perpetrators in jail faster – preventing them from committing additional crimes – and the Sheriff's Office is doing its part to relieve backlog at FDLE

– is here. Unfortunately, since it is the preferred means for crime-scene investigation, DNA testing has caused a strain on available resources. An explosion of requests for DNA analysis from Florida's 67 counties – including all local, state and federal law enforcement agencies – has caused a backlog of cases. Adding to the problem is the re-processing evidence on "cold cases" – those that occurred before the DNA technology was available – submitted by the same agencies.

While technology has taken a leap, state and federal budgets have

not been able to keep pace.

### *Marion thinks big*

The Marion County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) was not immune to these problems. FDLE has continued to add staff and streamline processes to decrease the ever-growing backlog, but resources are limited.

In 2004, as part of the MCSO's Strategic Plan, the agency's Evidence Division was directed to review all data with their Quality Review Team and look at all the options available to assist in shortening turnaround times







**DNA Technician Shannon Bertholf screens a victim's sweater for hair for DNA submission to FDLE.**

for DNA analysis. One discovery was that time spent screening evidence – that is, determining the presence of blood, semen, saliva and hair and collecting samples – took the most time. The actual analysis portion – which includes automation – is relatively small.

Marion County first investigated the idea of establishing a full DNA laboratory by studying one of only a few laboratories run by Sheriffs' Offices. Cecelia Crouse, DNA/Serology Supervisor with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Crime Lab, provided a great deal of background to MCSO. Unfortunately, while the research was educational, it became clear that Marion could not afford the nearly \$5 million needed to construct, equip and hire specialized personnel.

#### *Another solution*

The Marion County Sheriff's Office turned to a second option – that is, to establish a partnership with FDLE to create a DNA screening laboratory staffed with personnel whose training would meet FDLE's standards. After all, it was the screening portion – a vital step in the overall analysis – that was causing the largest backlog.

In partnership with FDLE, the

**The DNA screening laboratory took about 18 months, from concept through construction, including training. Amazingly, the Sheriff's Office managed to stay under budget; the total cost was approximately \$235,000. In right photo, (l to r) MCSO DNA Tech Shannon Bertholf, FDLE Crime Lab Analyst Nikki Lee, MCSO DNA Tech Debbie Wilcox and FDLE Crime Lab Analyst Jason Hitt.**



National Forensic Science Technology Center (NFSTC) and the Department of Justice, the MCSO was selected to do a pilot project – creating a Level 3 DNA screening laboratory. The Sheriff's Office made an agreement with FDLE to establish guidelines for the process, which would allow items collected from crime scenes to be screened for samples used in DNA testing. The pre-screened samples would then move directly into DNA analysis at one of the FDLE laboratories.

In January, 2007, while construction of a laboratory was started at the Sheriff's Office headquarters, the Marion County Sheriff's Office hired three DNA screening technicians and they began their initial two-week training at the NFSTC with FDLE on

February 5, 2007. Next, the technicians spent four weeks of supervised case-work on crimes committed in Marion County at the FDLE laboratory in Jacksonville.

As the partnership agreement outlined, the DNA screeners were trained by FDLE and obtained their certification. Their training encompassed the same training, testing, report-writing and report styles as FDLE screeners, which ensures consistency between FDLE and MCSO laboratory personnel. The DNA screeners also were required to meet the same educational requirements as FDLE screeners. They are responsible for bodily fluid identification and they issue reports of their findings. The biological samples and reports are then submitted to FDLE for DNA analysis. *continued on next page*



## Local-Based DNA Screening Helps Sheriff's...

*continued from page 5*

### *Reaching the goal*

As of this writing, the pilot program has proven successful; MCSO has been able to significantly reduce DNA turnaround time with certified Level 3 screeners, averaging six days for screening. DNA profiling at the FDLE lab also has been reduced on Marion County samples – to 83 days.

Lt. Bill Sowder, who heads up the new lab, says these are just preliminary numbers. "It will take at least a full year to compile overall data and review the findings for its full potential," he says.

Besides reducing turn around time, having FDLE-trained DNA screeners at the Sheriff's Office has proved beneficial in other ways. They can provide investigators with critical early information. For example, the presence of blood or semen at a crime scene can provide enough probable cause to make an arrest in a rape case

or the sexual abuse of a child.

Establishing the DNA screening laboratory is about taking ownership, Lt. Sowder says. "My screeners are screening for crimes that occurred in our counties," which he sees as an advantage. "We're taking ownership for our part of the evidence to better serve citizens."

Lt. Sowder estimates that from concept to construction, including training and processing the first Marion County crimes, the process took about 18 months. Amazingly, he says, they managed to come under the projected \$250,000 estimated budget to get operational. The total cost was approximately \$235,000.

### *Getting criminals off the street*

One example of the screening laboratory's benefit was illustrated by a recent rash of armed robberies that involved convenience stores and hotels in the city of Ocala and other parts of Marion County. Detectives were stumped until some gloves that the robber was wearing during the incidents were recovered. DNA Screening Laboratory Technician Nicki Palmer collected DNA from the gloves, which

later was used by FDLE to tie a suspect to the robberies – within 12 days of the suspect's first hit.

"This outstanding work between our agency and FDLE prevented this criminal from committing additional robberies and possibly preventing a homicide," says Marion County Sheriff Ed Dean. "As we all know an armed robbery is just a trigger pull away from a homicide."

Having the DNA screening local is providing other benefits to the agency, too. Technicians are able to review "cold cases" for evidence that may have been previously tested with outdated technology and re-process it with the latest techniques.

Says Lt. Sowder, "As law-enforcement agencies, we need to acknowledge that we have a certain amount of responsibility related to the backlog of DNA processing that has occurred at FDLE." With the creation of the successful DNA screening lab, he says, there's hope that more agencies also can become part of the solution.

*Marion County Sheriff's Office Major Chris Blair, Captain Jimmy Pogue and Lieutenant Bill Sowder contributed to this report.*

## Flagler Named LE Agency of the Year by Beall's

Retail stores work hand-in-hand with law enforcement, and occasionally, that relationship gets recognized in a special way.

This year, the Flagler County Sheriff's Office was on the receiving end of the compliment. Beall's Department Stores of Florida named the Flagler County Sheriff's Office "Law Enforcement Agency of the Year." The award recognized the outstanding service provided to their Palm Coast stores.

"This is quite an honor since

this included nominations of law enforcement agencies throughout Florida and Georgia," said Terri Centonze, Beall's Palm Coast loss prevention manager. She added that the Sheriff's Office was nominated because of their quick response times and professionalism. "Whenever we call them, they are there for us," she said.

In giving the award, Beall's highlighted Flagler County deputies with whom they've worked closely with to reduce theft-related crimes in the stores:



*Flagler Sheriff Don Fleming*

- Sgt. Chris Sepe
- Cpl. Phil Reynolds
- Cpl. Frank Celico
- Deputy Dave Edmunds
- Deputy Sam Cooper
- Deputy Carmine Celico
- Deputy Eric Pederson
- Deputy Mike Miller
- Deputy John Reckenwald
- Deputy Bernie Woodward
- Deputy Mark Linde

Learning of the award, Flagler County Sheriff Donald W. Fleming said, "These deputies and all of our deputies work hard every day to provide a top level of service to our business community." He said he is proud of the work they do.



# Polk County Adds AEDs, Saves Life of Canine Handler

By Carrie S. Rodgers  
Public Information Officer  
Polk County Sheriff's Office

**T**his year, the Polk County Sheriff's Office reached its goal of having an AED (Automated External Defibrillators) in every patrol car. Little did they know that one of them would be used to save the life of a Corrections Canine Handler at a law enforcement event.

In 2006, Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd and his staff recognized that with over 2,000 square miles to cover for emergency services, very often patrol deputies were the first on the scene when medical help was needed. They set a goal to have an AED in every patrol car. In the fall of 2006, Polk County EMS/Fire purchased 100 AEDs and gave them to the Sheriff's Office. Then in early 2007, the PCSO purchased 300 more, so every patrol car was equipped and deputies were being trained to use them. Many lives have been saved as a result.

On October 24, the worthiness of the idea struck closer to home for the patrol deputies.

Law enforcement canine teams from all over the U.S. had come to Lakeland (Polk County) to compete in the national USPCA K-9 Field Trials. Two Polk County Sheriff's deputies, Kenny Knox (a trained AED instructor), and Sgt. Dan Cone, came to the field of competition and joined other spectators to watch and support their fellow PCSO deputies who were competing. Deputy Knox was on his day off, and Sgt. Cone was assigned to a nearby area.

Just after 10:00 a.m., Sgt. Terry Couch and his K-9 partner, Dargo, from the Iowa State Department of Corrections, had just finished their apprehension exercise

When officers noticed a handler's canine acting erratic, and running loose, they realized his partner had

collapsed of an apparent heart attack. When Canine Dargo, true to his training, tried to protect the man, deputies used a training sleeve to lure the dog away. Those involved in the life-saving rescue are, from left, PCSO Deputy Paul Leslie, Deputy Tyson Choquette, Sgt. Dan Cone and Deputy Kenny Knox.



and left the field, making way for PCSO Deputy Kurt Walker and his K-9 partner Moe. As Deputy Tyson Choquette joined Deputy Walker and Moe on the field to assist with their exercise, acting as the "decoy" that Moe was to apprehend, he noticed Sgt. Couch's canine Dargo acting erratically and running loose off to the side. Nobody had seen Sgt. Couch collapse of an apparent heart attack, but they all noticed Dargo. Once it was apparent that Sgt. Couch was in need of immediate medical attention, people ran to his aid, only to be held at bay by his faithful K-9 partner who, after all, was only doing as he had been trained to do—protect his master.

Deputy Choquette was the first to jump forward, wearing a canine training sleeve on his arm, luring the protective dog to bite him so that others could get to the man on the ground. Once Dargo was safely out of the way, many spectators and deputies rushed to the man's aid, as his face was beginning to turn purple.

Deputy Knox and Leslie Johnson, an Emergency Room nurse from North Carolina there in support of her husband, together administered CPR; Leslie applied the chest compressions while Deputy Knox did the breathing.

Sgt. Dan Cone quickly retrieved his agency-issued AED from the back of his patrol car. When they hooked it up to Sgt. Couch, it instructed them to administer a shock to him, which they did. Then they did it again.

Meanwhile, Deputy Paul Leslie ran to his car and retrieved the K-9 trauma kit, recently donated to the PCSO K-9 unit by Manatee County Fire Rescue just a few months before. The kit contains a variety of equipment specially formulated to help canines in medical emergencies. The people working to revive Sgt. Couch used the oxygen tank from that kit to help Sgt. Couch breathe.

Within minutes, Sgt. Couch went from having a purple face with no heartbeat, to alive, talking, and wondering what happened. One spectator said it was so alarming, "the hairs stood up on the back of my neck." An ambulance took the Iowa canine handler to the nearest hospital, where he fully recovered. Money was raised to fly the man's wife and son to Florida to be with him.

The PCSO deputies who were there that day may not have placed first in the competition, but in the eyes of the Couch family and everyone else who witnessed their heroic acts, they were the real winners.



# *Sheriffs' Wives* *Learn Self-Defense*







*By Julie S. Bettinger,  
Photos by Alison Evans, Florida  
Sheriffs Youth Ranches*

**W**omen have been learning self-defense methods for decades. Very often, they are spurred to seek training after hearing about or experiencing a threat to their personal safety.

The wives of Florida Sheriffs were jolted into a similar awareness after the horrific murder of Jackson County Sheriff John P. "Johnny Mac" McDaniel's wife, Mellie. She was shot and killed along with Jackson County Deputy Michael Altman in Sheriff McDaniel's driveway earlier this year. Investigators later learned that the suspects – killed by deputies during a shootout – were seeking revenge on the Sheriff for a six-year-old unsolved murder case, in which both men were suspects. Deputy Altman was the first to arrive on the scene to help Mrs. McDaniel and was killed during his rescue effort.

The Sheriffs' wives decided to organize themselves and use their time together at the FSA Summer Conference to polish their skills in self-defense. Sheriffs' spouses traditionally



attend the conference and participate in special programs, while the Sheriffs are in business meetings throughout the day.

At the 2007 Summer Conference, the Leon County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit provided an interactive workshop for the wives and other family members. FSA vendor Meggitt Training Systems, brought a "virtual fire" training system to allow the wives to practice handling a firearm and reacting in simulated threatening scenarios.

As with any self-defense course, the Sheriffs' wives left the gathering more confident and better prepared, should they ever encounter a dangerous situation.

FSA would like to thank Meggitt Training Systems and the Leon County Sheriff's Office for their time and resources. The Sheriffs are grateful, and it is a great way to honor the memory of Mellie McDaniel.





# Pinellas County Sheriff's Office Veteran Named Retail Officer of the Year

Runners-Up Honored from Gainesville, Holmes Beach and Miami

By Brenda Grindstaff  
Florida Retail Federation

More than three decades of law-enforcement experience, coupled with a talent for recognizing criminal behavior, helped Sergeant Daniel J. Carron, a detective with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, break two separate shoplifting rings last year. One case involved a chance encounter while out of uniform, that led to the breakup of a multi-state shoplifting ring responsible for as much as \$100,000 in losses. Another operation nabbed those responsible for up to \$500,000 in losses by Florida retailers.

For these and other contributions, Sgt. Carron was named the Florida Retail Federation (FRF) 2007 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. He was honored during the FRF annual awards banquet November 13 in Daytona Beach Shores. Sgt. Carron received a check for \$3,000 and an attractive custom-crafted medallion and plaque. His name will be added to another plaque that lists each LEOY recipient since the program's inception in 1974.

Sgt. Daniel J. Carron has worked for the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office since 1977. He currently supervises the Office's Tactical Apprehension and Con-



Sergeant Daniel J. Carron, a detective with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (center) was named the 2007 Florida Retail Federation Law Enforcement Officer of the Year (LEOY). He was nominated by Sheriff Jim Coats (left). Dan Doyle, Vice President of Loss Prevention and Human Resources for Beall's, Inc., (right) made the presentation at the Retail Federation's annual meeting November 13.

trol (TAC) Unit, which is part of the Property Crimes Division. Twice in 2006, Detective Sergeant Carron's dedication and expertise resulted in the downfall of separate shoplifting rings that were targeting home improvement stores throughout Florida.

She picked the wrong victim  
In July 2006, Sgt. Carron was in plain clothes conducting a follow-up investigation at a large home improvement store in Largo. A woman approached him and asked if he wanted to purchase a store gift card. While he declined, it reminded him of the ongoing theft scams in which suspects shoplift items, then return the items for gift cards and later sell the cards for cash profit.

Sgt. Carron's astute observation and quick thinking led to the demise of a trio of criminals who, it was discovered, had their car stocked with fraudu-

lent or altered identification, maps, and a list of home improvement stores throughout the Southeast. All admitted their involvement in a multi-state shoplifting ring that was responsible for as much as \$100,000 in losses.

In another complicated operation, requiring hundreds of investigative hours during a six-month period, the efforts of Sgt. Carron and his detectives' culminated in the arrest of more than 10 suspects. The gang of shoplifters traveled around the state netting between \$2,000 and \$5,000 a day for an estimated total theft of as much as \$500,000.

Three officers also were selected as runners-up from the field of outstanding nominees that represent various law enforcement entities from throughout the state. They are: Officer Carlos Decespedes of the Miami Police Department; Officer Michael Leonard of the Holmes Beach



Police Department; and Officer Joseph Register of the Gainesville Police Department.

### **About the Runners-Up**

Officer Carlos Decespedes, Miami Police Department

Officer Carlos Decespedes is an 18-year veteran of the Miami Police Department. He is driven by a relentless commitment to protect and serve his community. Described as "dependable" and a "team player," Officer Decespedes was honored as the Miami Police Department's "Officer of the Month" for February, April and August of this year for his exceptional work in the Overton area. Specifically, he embarked on an aggressive strategy to rid the area of known street level narcotics dealers and armed offenders. He continues to serve as an example to other officers and leads the entire department with high productivity of arrests and summons each month, including 101 total arrests in April – all without using any form of physical force. City of Miami Police Chief John A. Timoney nominated Officer Decespedes.

### **Officer Michael Leonard of the Holmes Beach Police**

On Christmas Day 2006, Officer Michael Leonard was dispatched to a Holmes Beach pharmacy to respond to a reported armed robbery in progress. Upon his arrival, the suspect fled on foot into a condominium complex and carjacked a vehicle from a family. A car pursuit followed, with the suspect crossing the centerline of a busy state road, running

numerous vehicles off the roadway. The suspect eventually wrecked the stolen vehicle in the middle of a bridge, fled, and attempted to dive off the bridge into the water below. Officer Leonard tackled the suspect and prevented his escape. The suspect's numerous charges included armed robbery and aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer. He also was charged with an unrelated bank robbery that occurred several days before in a neighboring jurisdiction. Holmes Beach Police Chief Jay Romine nominated Officer Leonard.

### **Officer Joseph Register of the Gainesville Police Department**

Officer Joseph Register has worked for the Gainesville Police Department for less than three years. During the past year, he has been assigned full-time to the Oaks Mall, a 140-plus store shopping center serving the majority of North Central Florida. Rolling through the mall elevated on his Segway scooter, Officer Register is a welcome sight to busy shoppers and retailers alike, helping to ensure their safety. He is an incredible asset to the mall retail establishments and has conducted crime prevention training for store staff. During the past year, he made a total of 265 arrests, 42 of which were for felony offenses. Officer Register also prevents thousands of dollars of merchandise losses each month by catching shoplifters in progress. In the past year, he has recovered over \$37,000 in stolen merchandise from subjects attempting to flee businesses without paying for

the items. Gainesville Police Captain Ed Book nominated Officer Register.

### **The LEOY Program**

The Florida Retail Federation Law Enforcement Officer of the Year program has been an annual event since its inception in 1974. The purpose of the program is to support and encourage outstanding police work throughout the state, and to recognize the important contributions made by Florida's law-enforcement professionals in promoting safety and security. The program's time-tested campaign theme, "Often taken for granted, they never stop serving ...because they care," remains as relevant today as when LEOY was first introduced.

The Florida Retail Federation is a statewide trade association that represents Florida's retail industry. It has served as "The Voice of Florida Retailing" since its inception in 1937. Florida retailers pay more than \$33 billion in wages annually, provide one out of every five jobs in the state, and collect and remit more than \$20 billion in sales and retail-related taxes for Florida's government each year.

*For more information on the awards event or the LEOY program, please contact Brenda Grindstaff, awards coordinator, at (888) 357-3824 or FRFAwards@frf.org or visit FRF's Web site at [www.frf.org](http://www.frf.org).*



# LETTERS

## We Stand Corrected

In our September/October issue, there were a few errors in the story titled, "Accreditation Encouraged Among Sheriffs." The logo illustrating the story was actually from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA), which is national, not the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc. (CFA). The



CFA's offices are located in Orlando, and the organization is independent of FDLE. The group has 12 Commissioners, which includes the State Law Enforcement Chiefs Association. We apologize for any confusion that may have been caused by our errors.

## "Encyclopedia of Florida Sheriffs" Entry Extension

*The Sheriff's Star* has published several stories submitted by Writer and Editor Victor Silvestri in previous issues. He informed us that he has extended the submission time for entries to include in his "Encyclopedia of Florida Sheriffs." Silvestri has distributed information packages and worksheets

to the families of Florida Sheriffs. His "Encyclopedia" will include information on all active Sheriffs, retired and former Sheriffs, and deceased Sheriffs and their families. The anthology will offer a comprehensive list, plus condensed biographies, family genealogies and history of tenures, from 1821 to 2008.

For more information, contact: Victor R. Silvestri, editor, 561 Tall Oaks Road, Defuniak Springs, FL 32435-8972. Phone: 850-892-6962, E-mail: summers@gdsys.net.

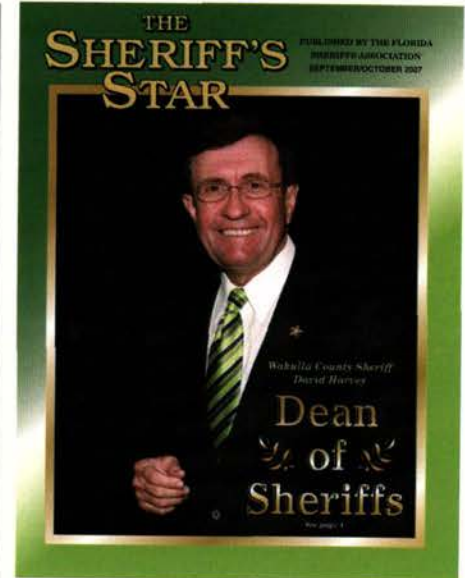
## From the Editor:

Thanks to the couple that mailed us a photograph taken with a former President of the United States. We appreciate receiving correspondence from Honorary Members, but must reserve these pages for the business of Florida Sheriffs, and the Florida Sheriffs Association. We offer several pages in each issue to recognize our Honorary Members (see pages 16, 17 and 18). Please accept our congratulations on the honor of meeting a former U.S. President!

## Recommended Web Site

A reader passed along a Web site that she thought other members of the Florida Sheriffs Association would be interested in. It's a National Sex Offender Registry. Find it at: <http://www.familywatchdog.us/>.

Please be aware that the Florida Department of Law Enforcement also has a very comprehensive database that's easy to search. Find it at: [www.fdle.state.fl.us/offender](http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/offender).



*The Sheriff's Star,  
September/October 2007*

[fdle.state.fl.us/offender](http://fdle.state.fl.us/offender). Sheriffs' Offices in Florida often post information on sexual offenders from their communities on their Web sites as well. Find your local Sheriff – and corresponding Web site for the agency – at: [www.flsheriffs.org](http://www.flsheriffs.org). Choose "Meet the Sheriffs" and search by county.

HAVE A COMMENT?  
If you would like to send a comment, please write:  
Editor,  
*The Sheriff's Star* Magazine,  
P.O. Box 12519,  
Tallahassee, FL 32317-2519, or e-mail:  
[jbettinger@flsheriffs.org](mailto:jbettinger@flsheriffs.org).

## FSA Conferences 2008

- FSA Annual Mid-Winter Conference, Renaissance Resort at World Golf Village, St. Augustine, February 10-13
- FSA Annual Summer Conference, Rosen Shingle Creek Hotel, Orlando, July 27-30



## Six Resolutions Worth Keeping

Sgt. Rick Hord  
Okaloosa County  
Sheriff's Office



**W**e hear the stories every year: Many people make New Year's resolutions, but few keep them. Whether it's exercising, eating healthier, tossing out the cigarettes or spending less money, few of us are able to resist slipping back into our old habits after a few weeks or months.

This year, consider these six resolutions. They're simple, and shouldn't be difficult to keep.

### 1-Know what's in your wallet.

Many of us have suffered through the inconvenience of dealing with a lost or stolen wallet. Why not get in the habit of taking an inventory of your wallet each New Year's? Either photocopy or write down important numbers from your driver license and credit card(s). Be sure to have the bank name and phone number for the credit cards. Keep that list or photocopy in a separate place, along with at least one credit card and backup ID. Some numbers shouldn't be in your wallet at all: Social Security numbers, bank account numbers, PINs, passcodes and combinations.

### 2-Save the serial numbers.

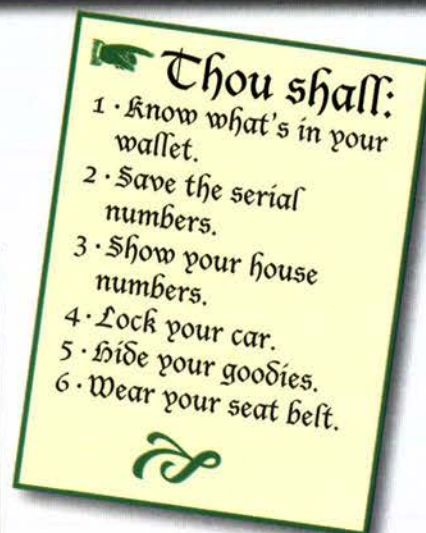
They're not endangered like the whales – but, like whales, they're seldom seen. Not all items have serial numbers, but where they exist, we'd like to see them on every theft report. That would include guns, cameras, computers and a lot of electronic equipment. You'd probably be astonished to know how often cops inspect a stolen item and hand it right back to the thief, because without a serial number in the computer, the officer has no way of knowing the property is stolen.

### 3-Show your house numbers.

You probably don't have trouble finding your house, but we might. Any officer who has worked even one day on the road has felt the frustration of being so close, yet so far, when looking for an address. That's a frustration we share with ambulance services and delivery people. Take a look around your own neighborhood and others – especially at night: can you easily find and read even half of the house numbers?

### 4-Lock your car.

Nighttime burglaries of occupied houses are quite uncommon, but thefts from the cars in front of those houses are very common. Ironically, most folks are conscientious about locking the house before bedtime, but it's amazing how many of us leave unlocked



cars in the driveway. Most car burglars don't bother breaking into vehicles; they just rummage through the unlocked ones.

### 5-Hide your goodies.

A thief won't take what he doesn't see. Car windows almost never get smashed unless the bad guy sees something worth grabbing. Vehicle burglaries, a very common crime, would become almost extinct if everybody would lock their doors and hide their valuables.

### 6-Wear your seat belt.

No lectures here; we've all heard them. Quite a few people don't think it should be the government's business to mandate buckling up. I'll concede that's a reasonable point for argument. I cannot, however, see any merit whatsoever in choosing not to use seat belts... law or no law. The fact that seat belts save lives is undeniable.

*Send your crime prevention and personal safety questions to Rick Hord, c/o Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, 1250 Eglin Parkway, Shalimar, FL 32357-1234 or via e-mail: rhord@sheriff-okaloosa.org.*



# From Police Widow to Volusia Deputy, Ashley Koester's Faith Sustains Her

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

*My darling husband,*

*Words cannot describe the horror and shock of your tragic passing. You were my soul mate and best friend. You died a hero, but you were my hero long before this happened.*

- Ashley Koester, from her Feb. 23, 2005 posting on the Officer Down Memorial Page web site

\*\*\*\*\*

It was a Monday morning in DeBary, the southwestern tip of Volusia County, and Deputy Ashley Koester was on routine patrol when she was dispatched to a report of a dead person. She arrived at the residence to find a grief-stricken man whose wife had passed away in her sleep. The man seemed lost and didn't know what to do. A deeply sympathetic and nurturing woman, Koester grieved with the man, helped explain what needed to be done and even checked up on him over the next few days to make sure he was OK.

For this 68-year-old widower, the healing process had begun, thanks in large measure to Koester's kindness and compassion.

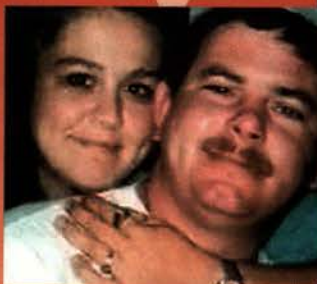
It was Koester's own tragic life experience that helped her connect with the grieving man so successfully, and with such

empathy and understanding, on that morning in March 2007. For Koester knows all too well the pain of losing a spouse. Her husband, former Lake County Sheriff's Deputy Wayne Koester, was killed by a shotgun blast in 2005 while responding to a domestic disturbance.

Ashley Koester, who has had a nearly life-long yearning to be a cop, was a dispatcher with the Lake County Sheriff's Office at the time. She was home, washing dishes and just starting her day on Feb. 9, 2005 when her phone started ringing. Her hands still wet, she ignored the first call and let it go to voice mail. Seconds later, the phone rang again. This time, she picked it up. It was a friend of Wayne's calling to tell Ashley that she had just heard that three Lake County deputies had been shot. Koester tried to call her husband, but got no answer. So she called the Communications Center, and in that instant, had that sick, eerie feeling that something wasn't right.

"As soon as I picked up the phone, I knew something was wrong," Koester recalls.

A department Chaplain picked up Koester and took her to the hospital, where she learned the horrific news that her 33-year-old husband was dead. Two other deputies, also shot that day, survived their wounds.



## *Survivable wounds*

Koester, too, is a survivor. For most anyone in her shoes, it would be hard to imagine how life could continue. But now widowed, with two daughters to raise, she learned to carry on – little by little, step-by-step, day-by-day. And she's convinced that it was an inner strength passed on to her by her departed husband that has helped her to cope. "I think when Wayne left, I took all of his strength," said Koester. "He gave it all to me."

Koester sees signs of her husband's earthly presence all around her. "He's there. He leaves little signs," she says. One of the hardest days following Wayne's death was the start of the trial against his now-convicted killer, Jason Wheeler. Overcome with grief and emotion, Koester felt as though the inner strength that she had learned to rely on just wasn't there that day. So she left the courthouse, walked to the parking lot and sat in her new vehicle. Then she looked down at the odometer, and it read 1426 -- Wayne's ID number. To Koester, it was a sign that her husband was still watching over her. "He has left some signs to let me know he's around," said Koester. "I know he has."

When Koester returned to



work at the Lake County Sheriff's Office, she just couldn't bear to go back to the radio room. So she transferred to the Intelligence Unit. Still, that longing to be a cop never faded. Her desire had its beginnings as a curious teenager in Tampa, watching and even following behind as officers raced to scenes. "We put our noses into everything and wanted to know what was going on," recalled Koester. "I was 15-

2005 enrolled in the Lake Technical Center Institute of Public Safety, the fees waived under a program that provides assistance to the spouses of slain law-enforcement officers. Koester earned her Basic Law Enforcement certificate in December 2005 and started applying for a job.

#### *The place for her*

Although she applied with

she has realized her dream to be a cop, Koester says she can't imagine doing anything else. More than most, she knows the dangers that come with the job. But she said it's not something that she worries about. "When it's your time to go, it doesn't matter what line of work you're in, where you are or what you're doing," said Koester. "You're going home."

So what's it like to be a 34-year-old rookie cop? Koester says she enjoys road patrol and the opportunity to train and constantly learn something new. Her fellow deputies call her "Mom" because she likes to take care of them as if they were her own. And just like her 19- and 20-year-old counterparts, Koester still gets an adrenaline rush running lights and siren to an in-progress call. But she says that the biggest satisfaction is in simply helping people and being able to make a difference in someone's life.

"You have the ability to help like in no other job," says Koester. "You're able to save a life or put the bad guy in jail, help a homeless guy get off the street or get a female into a shelter. It's still the coolest job in the world."

\*\*\*\*\*

*Hello my love,*

*Well, it's official. I am now a Deputy Sheriff...I went today and got fitted for my uniforms, gun belt, I.D. card, etc. I can't believe my dream came true. I only wish you could be here with me to see me sworn in. But I know you will be watching and I know you are happy for me.*

-Ashley Koester, from her May 10, 2006 posting on the Officer Down Memorial Page web site



**Ashley Koester managed to overcome the grief of losing her husband Wayne, a Lake County Deputy, and realized her lifelong dream of following in his footsteps. She believes the strength is coming as an answer to his prayers for her, and has seen signs of his support at difficult moments.**

years-old at the time, thinking that was the coolest job in the world."

She had discussed it with Wayne many times, but with four children between them to raise and bills to pay, it never seemed to be the right time. However, after Wayne's death and a bit of soul-searching, it just seemed like the right thing to do and the right time to do it. So she left her job and in July

the Lake County Sheriff's Office, there was perhaps a sense that the emotions were still too raw for her to return there. But the Volusia County Sheriff's Office seemed a perfect fit, and she was hired in May 2006. After graduating from the Sheriff's Office's in-house Field Training Evaluation Program, Koester eventually was assigned in January 2007 to patrol in DeBary and has never looked back. And now that



# FLORIDA SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION



**MANATEE COUNTY** - Gold Business Member certificate presented by Manatee County Sheriff Brad Steube to Daniel Judge, Honeycomb Company of America.



## HONOR ROLL

This awards program gives special recognition to individuals who have demonstrated their commitment to progressive law enforcement by supporting the Florida Sheriffs Association. Certificates are given to those who have been Honorary Members for 25 years or more. A special "Lifetime Honorary Member" plaque is reserved for those individuals who give \$2,500 or more and for law enforcement personnel who have served at least 40 years. Business leaders who support the Florida Sheriffs Association and its anti-crime activities are recognized with plaques and yearly renewals at the following levels: Gold (\$500), Silver (\$250) and Bronze (\$50). For membership information, please email us: [membership@flsheriffs.org](mailto:membership@flsheriffs.org) or visit our website: [www.flsheriffs.org](http://www.flsheriffs.org)



**PINELLAS COUNTY** - Gold Business Member plaque presented by Pinellas County Sheriff Jim Coats (right) and Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches Donor Relations Officer Don Meek (left) to Mr. and Mrs. William Douglas.



**LEE COUNTY** - 40-year certificate presented by Lee County Sheriff Mike Scott to Robert Louis.



**SARASOTA COUNTY** - 30-year certificate presented by Sarasota County Sheriff Bill Balkwill to Alberta Hicks.



Russell Courtemanche



Charles A. Lancaster

**OKALOOSA COUNTY** - 25-year certificates presented by Okaloosa County Sheriff Charlie Morris to Russell Courtemanche and Charles A. Lancaster.



**PASCO** - 30-year certificate presented by Pasco County Sheriff Bob White to Ed Graham. The Sheriff's Office notes that Mr. Graham is 100 years old and has been part of his neighborhood security patrol for 29 years. He still volunteers three days a month.



**POLK COUNTY** - 40-year certificate presented by Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd to Janis E. Woodward.



**POLK COUNTY** - 30-year certificate presented by Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd to Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Ruel.



**SUMTER** - 25-year certificate presented by Sumter County Sheriff William O. "Bill" Farmer (right) to James L. "Zip" Young.



**CLAY COUNTY** - 30-year presented by Clay County Sheriff Rick Beseler to Clark Thomas.

**Happy New Year!**  
from all of us at the  
Florida Sheriffs Association.



# FLORIDA SHERIFFS YOUTH RANCHES



**LEE COUNTY** – Presented by Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches Donor Relations Officer Bill Brown to Fran Stevens.



## HONOR ROLL

On these pages we give special recognition to generous supporters of the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches who have qualified for Lifetime Honorary Memberships in the Florida Sheriffs Association by giving \$1,000 or more in cash or \$5,000 or more in non-cash gifts to the Youth Ranches. Each Lifetime Honorary Member receives a plaque, a lifetime identification card and lifetime subscriptions to *The Sheriff's Star* and *The Rancher*. Those whose gifts total over \$5,000 receive additional gold stars on their plaques – one for \$5,000, two for \$10,000, and so on, up to a maximum of five stars for gifts totaling over \$25,000.



**VALDOSTA, GA** – Presented by Florida Sheriffs Boys' Ranch Business Manager Bruce Goff (2nd from right) to "41 South" Band members (l-r): Jim Copeland, Steve Walker, Danny Ray, Willis Colson and Wendy Colson.



**VOLUSIA COUNTY** – Presented by Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches President Roger Bouchard to Geneva Tilley.



**HERNANDO COUNTY** – Presented by Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches President Roger FSYR Donor Relations Officer Shep Young.



**PINELLAS COUNTY** – Presented by Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches Donor Relations Officer Done Meek (back center) to the ladies of The Beta Beta Chapter of ESA #5359.



**ATLANTA, GA** – Presented by Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches President Roger Bouchard (left) to Gerald Stacy.



**DESOTO COUNTY** – Presented by Desoto County Sheriff Vernon Keen to Major (Ret) Will Wise and his wife Kay.



**FLAGLER COUNTY** – Presented by Flagler County Sheriff Donald W. Fleming and FSYR Sponsorship Director Debbie Gerard (left) to Bridget Bostic.



Mr. and Mrs. James Stephen

**FLAGLER COUNTY** – Presented by Flagler County Sheriff Donald W. Fleming (second from right) and Major David O'Brien to Mr. and Mrs. James Stephen and Peter Brownell.



Peter Brownell



**HIGHLANDS COUNTY** – Presented by Highlands County Sheriff Susan Benton to Glenn W. Robinson.

### New Lifetime Honorary Members from 10/11/07 to 12/10/07

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Mrs. Ida Shaw Barber  
Mr. and Mrs. Allen J. Barnett  
Mr. and Mrs. Jerry M. Bell  
Mr. James A. Black  
Mr. Joe B. Blackmon  
Mr. Leonard T. Boutiette  
C & S Accounting Service  
Mr. and Mrs. William D. Campbell  
Cape Coral Bass Club  
Mr. Edward Cassatly  
Mr. George A. Castle  
Mrs. Sally S. Clemence  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Corliss  
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Mrs. Doris A. Craparo  
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Mrs. Frances W. Healey  
Mr. and Mrs. Christian Y. Heskett  
Dr. Dennis C. Howley  
Mr. Sherwood A. Jones  
Mrs. Earlene J. Kessler  
Mr. and Mrs. John M. Kratzert  
Ms. Kathryn C. Kurtz

*Continued on next page*



# FLORIDA SHERIFFS YOUTH RANCHES

## HONOR ROLL

*Continued from page 17*

Mr. and Mrs. Julien LeCompte  
 Ms. Alice H. Mace  
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Maxwell  
 Mr. and Mrs. Alec J. McCaig  
 Mr. and Mrs. James F. McGuire  
 Mr. James A. Merkner  
 Mrs. Salma G. Mikhail  
 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Noller  
 Ocala Tire Service, Inc.  
 Mr. Joseph T. Pardovich  
 Mr. and Mrs. Raymond W. Paulsen  
 Mr. Arthur C. Pendergraph  
 Piney Point Women's Club  
 Mr. Harry G. Pithie  
 Lt. Ernest V. Plantz  
 Richmond Capital Management  
 Mr. and Mrs. R. Wayne Robinson  
 Mr. Walter H. Rogers, Jr.  
 Mr. and Mrs. John Root  
 Mr. Paul V. Russell  
 Mr. Joe L. Saunders  
 Savanna Club Men's Club  
 Mrs. Irma Scudder  
 Mrs. Christine M. Shakeshaft  
 Mr. Michael J. Shopa  
 Mr. James S. Smiley  
 Mr. Richard H. Smith, Jr.  
 Mr. Gary W. Stanton  
 Sunrise Systems of Brevard, Inc.  
 Mr. and Mrs. James S. Taylor  
 Treasure Coast Obstetrics & Gynecology, P. L.  
 Mr. and Mrs. Roger F. Vaughn  
 Ms. Martha C. Wright



**LAKE** – Presented by Lake County Sheriff Gary Borders to Jeannette McIntosh.



**COLLIER COUNTY** – Presented by Collier County Sheriff Don Hunter to Dr. Erich A. Geiger, who is pictured with his daughter, Andrea Weiler and grandchildren Lena and Erik.



**SARASOTA COUNTY** – Presented by Sarasota County Sheriff Bill Balkwill (left) and Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches Donor Relations Office Bill Brown (right) to Mr. & Mrs. David J. Isgan.



**OKALOOSA COUNTY** – Presented by Okaloosa County Sheriff Charlie Morris to Mr. & Mrs. Caries Booker.



Michelle DeGollier



Lt. George Duffy



Tina Green

**PINELLAS COUNTY** – Presented by Pinellas County Sheriff Jim Coats (right) and Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches Donor Relations Officer Don Meek (left) to Tina Green, Lt. George Duffy and Michelle DeGollier.



James Legee

**POLK COUNTY** – Presented by Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd to James Legee and the Central Florida Street Rod Association.



Central Florida Street Rod Association



**Thank you for caring and sharing in 2007!**

**“Florida’s Charity for Florida’s Children”**

[www.youthranches.org](http://www.youthranches.org)



## NEW License Tag Frame Now Available!

The Florida Sheriffs Association is offering another opportunity for you to show your support for law enforcement in your community through a newly-designed License Tag Frame. Unlike many tag frames on the market, this handsome frame conforms to the Florida Statute 316.605 licensing of vehicles requirements, by not covering any type or numbers on the face of the tag. The tag frame will fit most any style vehicle. Demonstrate your support for FSA and the crime fighting efforts of Sheriffs by ordering your License Tag Frame today. And don't forget: These frames make great gifts, too!



**SPECIFICATIONS:** These high quality frames are brass plated metal with black imprint and standard four-hole mounting. Frames are for use with your official license tag on the rear of your vehicle. Please pre-measure before ordering. Size of frame: 6-1/2 x 13-1/4 inches. Not guaranteed to fit all vehicles.

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## Attention Members:

### Are you moving? Please send us . . .

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

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

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

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# "Traffic Elf"

## Goes to Work for Orange County Sheriff's Office

*Putting the Grinch and an elf on traffic detail is all in the name of raising awareness and saving lives.*

By Jim Solomons  
Media Relations  
Orange County Sheriff's Office

Ask Commander Ken Wynne, Supervisor to the Orange County Sheriff Traffic Squad, why he is so passionate about his unit's annual holiday traffic safety details and without missing a beat he'll tell you, "One hundred eighty four people lost their lives in traffic crashes in Orange County this past year. That's 184 too many." And he makes no apologies for using an elf or the Grinch to draw attention to red light runner and speed enforcement details because it is the attention he wants.

"We are on the streets almost every day of the year doing the very same details and no one pays the least bit of attention to

(us)," said Commander Wynne. "Using a costumed character on a speeding detail generates a great deal of public and media interest in the goals and objectives of our traffic safety initiatives."

The commander also readily admits that adding holiday characters to an enforcement detail breaks the monotony of a long year and allows his fellow deputies to have a little fun.

Deputy Dickie Lockman is the agency's resident traffic elf. He made his first appearance of the 2007 holiday season on a major roadway on the county's east side during peak rush-hour traffic on December 12. In two hours, Deputy Lockman and 20 uniformed motor deputies issued 184 uniform traffic citations – 130 of which were

speeding.

While the majority of motorists tend to take being ticketed in stride, some protest – rather vocally at times – over the idea of being clocked by a deputy dressed as an elf. One woman was extremely upset over her stop because she stated she already had too many speeding tickets and they were going to suspend her license if she got another.

"What we are doing is all about awareness," said Wynne. "Then there are some people who never do seem to get the message."

