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SPECIAL REPORT

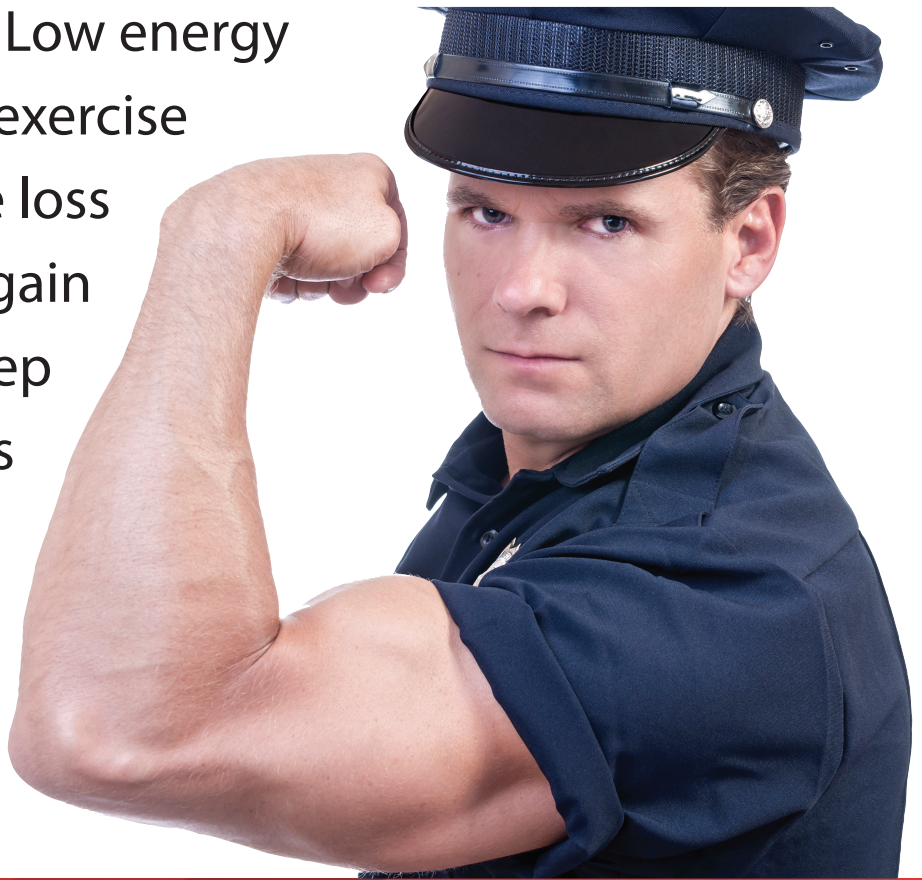
Vaccination Examination

An injection of information for PBA members to understand how the COVID-19 vaccine will affect them



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The President's Message

Getting out in front of the COVID vaccine



**Patrick
Colligan**

Before I begin, I want to offer my condolences to two more of our members who recently fell victim to COVID-19: State Corrections Local 105 member Erick Whitaker and Old Bridge Local 127 member Chris Cronin. I would also like to acknowledge the death of Sussex County Local 138 member Jason Franco, who was tragically killed in a hunting accident, as well as the passing of Hoboken Local 2 member Peter Zanin and Somerset County Sheriff's Department Officer Ahmed Mackey.

Our thoughts remain with their families, friends and coworkers as they lay their loved ones to rest. Not only has it been a terrible year, but their deaths come at a particularly tough time during what should be a joyous time of the year.

One look at the cover of this month's issue and you will see what we have inside. With the fast emergence of at least two vaccines and the pending plans to vaccinate some members, there was no better time to discuss your rights. We wanted to provide enough information for all of you to make an informed, educated decision about taking the vaccine.

That choice is yours. I have no doubt whatsoever based on information that we have been seeing that some of your employers will attempt to mandate that you receive it. We strongly believe that will not be permitted, but please read the perspective from Bob Fagella and Paul Kleinbaum in the PBA Legal corner on page 10 for a comprehensive analysis of your legal rights.

Another must-read concerning what is known scientifically and medically about the vaccine as we went to press comes from Dr. Stavros Christoudias, our good friend from the NJ Doctor Patient Alliance, on page 27. Our goal was to assemble as much information as possible (legal, medical and ethical) so that you can make your own informed decision.

As you all know, data and additional information regarding the vaccine are emerging almost daily. We will keep you all updated on these issues and changes as they come out.

The new year can't come soon enough. This past year is one for the books that I don't want to ever see again. First, our members had to deal with this horrific pandemic. While our friends and family worked from the safety of their homes, we had no such luxury.

And while we worked under incredible conditions that we've never experienced before, many of our employers were kind enough to come out with ridiculous COVID leave policies. Frankly, a few – usually crafted by management attorneys who were also safely behind the front door of their homes – belonged in the insanity column. Many of those issues are working their way through your grievance process, PERC or the courts.

Please don't miss the information on pages 31-34 about a very reasonable policy just ironed out by my own Local (Franklin Township Local 154) and management that I think strikes the balance we don't always see these days. And kudos to the staff at PERC to send us back to the table to try an old, trusty trick: NEGOTIATIONS!

If COVID didn't make 2020 an incredible challenge for all of us, the death of George Floyd on May 25 took us from heroes to zeros in exactly 8 minutes, 46 seconds. The death was tragic and undeserved for Mr. Floyd. I was among the first to call it a murder and, despite the "previous footage" that emerged later, no human being deserves to have his airway blocked for 8 minutes, 46 seconds.

What came out of his death were some reasonable changes to our profession. But we also know some extraordinarily bad legislation was born on the federal and state level that is wholly undeserved and will profoundly affect policing (and crime rates) for a very long time to come.

So with 2020 coming to an end, I say things can only improve. In the meantime, PLEASE keep an extra eye on your coworkers. Especially at this time of year and even more so with what we've all been through. Help is literally ONE call away. PLEASE make that call!

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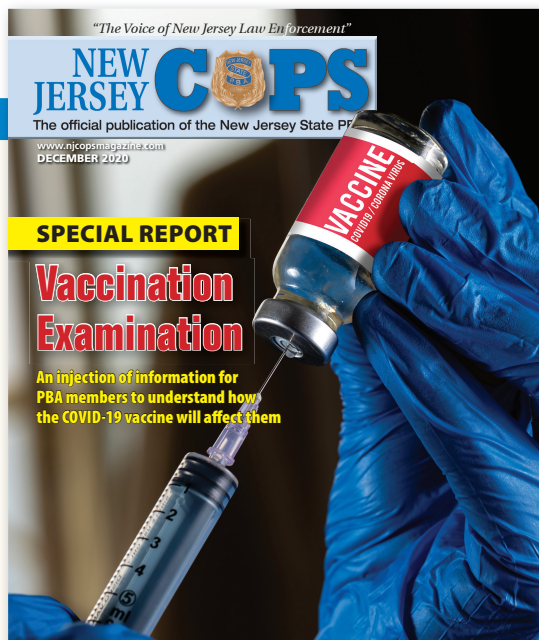
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Marc Kovar
Executive Vice President

Let's look forward to a great 2021!

When I think about 2020, it is obvious that the most prominent issue we faced was the global pandemic. During the past year, every member of law enforcement had to deal with the inherent dangers of our jobs along with the additional risk of putting our families at risk as COVID-19 spread through the communities we serve.

Needless to say, 2020 was a difficult, and very different, year for all of us. We should never forget the sacrifice made by law enforcement members who lost their lives serving during this pandemic.

Looking back to recent years past, 2018 is remembered for NJSPBA taking control of our pension system. That was the year in which we finally got legislation approved that separated the Police and Firemen's Retirement System (PFRS) from the rest of the state's public employment retirement systems and handed management to a newly constituted board of trustees, with police and fire unions, together, holding a majority of the board seats.

Following that, 2019 was the year of local media presenting click-bait analysis of partial facts and statistics with regard to police use of force throughout New Jersey. While editors in charge of generating anti-police headlines might insist that they are not condemning all of law enforcement, the data important to our members remains a concern to our lives and livelihoods and we will continue to fight against poorly constructed arguments and misinformation wherever it may arise. Yet, public opinion of those who have chosen to protect neighborhoods and communities everywhere plummeted while assaults on police officers have skyrocketed around the country.

Just as there were elected officials willing to do the work with us to establish control of our pensions, we found that many of those holding office remained silent in the face of the debilitating misinformation being put forward into our communities. This is why I continue to preach about how much elections matter and why I will never stop highlighting the need to back up our endorsements with real efforts to support our preferred candidates, candidates that benefit law enforcement.

We take our NJSPBA endorsements seriously and so should all of you. The NJSPBA is most effective when we speak with one collective voice and when we stand together for those who

actually respect law enforcement.

And we proved again that our endorsements matter in the 2020 election when the NJSPBA backed the re-election of Congressmen Chris Smith and Jeff Van Drew as well as State Senator Anthony Bucco. We will continue to endorse candidates based on who is watching out for the men and women of law enforcement, and not based on partisan politics.

NJ State PBA President Pat Colligan and I take pride in knowing that we have always stood up for each and every one of you, and all of your families, in all that we do on behalf of the PBA. We've taken our knocks from governors and others in Trenton, and we have never given an inch when it comes to our membership.

We will continue to fight in the press, in Trenton and across the state. But we all need to continue doing whatever we can to make our voices heard. We all need to stand as one. Let's continue to do what we have done so well and make sure the collective voices of our 33,000 members and their families are heard as one.

The NJSPBA and our Locals ended 2020 in traditional ways by hosting and supporting holiday turkey giveaways and toy drives for the communities we serve. Those volunteer efforts continue to be indicative of the tremendous service our members are providing in streets and in neighborhoods across the state. And we know those efforts are greatly appreciated.

Lastly, I want to remind everybody to keep an eye out for sisters and brothers who might be hurting as we go into the holiday season. We know this is a tough time of year when we see officers taking their own lives. The fatigue of the pandemic will not help this situation. So I urge you more than ever to be your sisters' and brothers' keepers.

Also, please join me in sending our condolences and best wishes to the families of State Corrections Local 105 member Erick Whitaker, Old Bridge Local 127 member Chris Cronin, Sussex County Local 138 member Jason Franco, Hoboken Local 2 member Peter Zanin and Somerset County Sheriff's Department Officer Ahmed Mackey, who all passed away this month.

Happy New Year! Here's to a safe, prosperous 2021. I look forward to seeing everyone in this coming year. Stay healthy and be safe.



What is '20 and Out?'



ROB NIXON

Some phrases are used so often in conversation over the years that the background and meaning of them become lost. One of these phrases is "20 and Out." As we hope to celebrate legislation restoring "20 and Out" passing the Senate and moving to the Assembly for consideration, it is important to look back on what 20 and Out means, where it came from and why it is so important that it be restored to the PFRS.

New Jersey pension law developed somewhat haphazardly since the establishment of PFRS nearly 75 years ago. Pensions were established for law enforcement, the NJ State Police, teachers, judges and public workers independently of each other to reflect the unique nature of each of those professions. But if one pension system gained a benefit somewhere down the road, legislation would be introduced to enhance the benefits for another system. And, as such, the retirement system for the State Police (SPRS) offered benefits PFRS did not have, such as widow's benefits and 20 and Out.

Under the leadership of former NJ State PBA President Mike Madonna, comprehensive legislation was drafted in 1999 to ensure that all law enforcement officers had similar benefits. "The Parity Bill," as we came to call it, was born and signed into law at a PBA state meeting by then Governor Whitman, and 20 and Out was a key part of that bill. In testimony, we called it the "burn-out" provision to recognize the stress and changes that working in law enforcement have on people.

The concept behind 20 and Out, in addition to parity with the

State Police who had the benefit available to them for years, was that it is unhealthy for officers and costly to employers for an officer to work 25 years to get a pension when they are simply worn out by the job. The law changed the benefit from 40 percent to 50 percent of final salary, and it was designed for the few in law enforcement whose time had come early. It was a reasonable proposal that worked well until Governor Christie's Division of Pensions single-handedly changed the rules and ended the benefit for anyone hired after January of 2000.

The idea behind the new 20 and Out bill is to restore what Governor Whitman and the NJ state legislature promised us in law in 2000. This bill removes all doubt about who is eligible for the benefit. While it is frustrating to even need a bill to restate what the law already says, it is best to take the matter out of the hands of politicians and government lawyers once and for all.

It is also important to know what 20 and Out is not. This is not a buyout. This is not an early retirement incentive like in the 1990s. This comes with no offer of extra service credit for leaving. There are no health benefits. This is simply a chance to retire early at a fair pension should an officer need to go sooner than planned.

The movement of this bill rights a wrong done to PFRS members during the Christie Administration, and it reaffirms what we argued in the 1990s. When the bill finally passes in 2021, it will be history repeating itself. But passing a law that benefits the lives of law enforcement officers and their families is history that we can look back on with pride.



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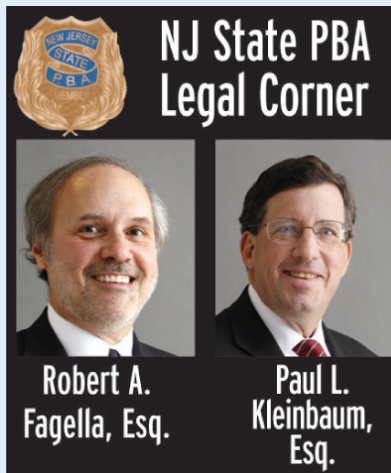
Can COVID-19 vaccines be mandated?

It would be an understatement to say that the past nine months have been challenging and unprecedented. Everyone has been affected in one way or another by the COVID-19 pandemic, but first responders are undoubtedly bearing its full brunt. There is no remote work option in law enforcement.

But while the next few months appear bleak, there is some light at the end of this dark tunnel. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has just decided to authorize emergency use of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Other manufacturers will also follow suit shortly. Hospital personnel and first responders will undoubtedly be among the first in line to receive a vaccination.

Not surprisingly, many are suspicious that the vaccine has been rushed. Questions have understandably arisen about whether an employer can require its employees to receive the vaccination, and the consequences of a refusal. The pandemic, which has intruded into all of our lives, provides a whole new set of considerations for this issue, and the novelty of this situation makes legal predictions very difficult. For a number of reasons, however, we seriously doubt there will be immediate and mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations.

As noted, the FDA has now authorized emergency use of the COVID-19 vaccine. It is important to note that Pfizer requested



Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the vaccine. This is a process by which the FDA may authorize use of a new product on an emergency basis before it is available for commercial use.

The FDA also has the authority to place conditions on the administration of the vaccine. The law giving the FDA this authority states that individuals to whom the vaccine will be given must be informed "...of the option to accept or refuse administration of the [vaccine]...."

The FDA has adopted this condition. With its authorization, the FDA has issued a "Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers" which states, "It is your choice to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine." We have provided a copy of this fact sheet to the NJ State PBA. As a result of this authorization, we do not believe that

employers will attempt, let alone succeed in, a requirement for employees to be vaccinated. This appears to supersede an employer's ability to do so. This condition will be in effect for as long as the EUA is in effect, and there is no specific time period.

In short, the FDA's emergency authorization should put to rest any concern about an employer's ability to require the COVID-19 vaccination. It is highly unlikely that any employer, including law enforcement agencies, would attempt to compel COVID-19 vaccinations in light of the FDA mandate. And if that did occur, there are obviously very good legal challenges which could be filed.

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For those who do accept vaccinations, there are protections under state law if you become ill. Under the “Thomas P. Canzanella 21st Century First Responders Protection Act,” enacted in 2019, a “public safety worker,” which includes law enforcement officers, who become ill after receiving a vaccination as part of an employer’s vaccination program during an epidemic is entitled to workers’ compensation benefits. This includes a vaccination which is provided in connection with the officer’s employment or in connection with any governmental program or recommendation. This law would apply to the COVID-19 vaccination now authorized by the FDA. The law also creates a presumption that the officer’s illness arises out of, and in the course of, employment entitling the employee to benefits under worker’s compensation laws.

However, there may be concerns about other types of vaccinations, such as the flu vaccination, which is recommended by the CDC. Because the flu vaccination is well established and is not subject to the FDA’s emergency authority, the issue then becomes a matter of local concern. The question of whether employers have the authority to adopt policies which require employees to be receive the flu vaccination is not limited by the FDA’s EUA conditions.

More than 100 years ago, in 1905, in *Jacobson v. Massachusetts*, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected an employee’s challenge to a compulsory smallpox vaccination program because the program constituted an invasion of his liberty. The court concluded that the vaccination program was constitutional and that the state had the authority to safeguard the public health and the public safety. *Jacobson* is still good law.

The New Jersey Supreme Court issued a similar decision in 1948. More recently, in *Phillips v. City of New York*, a federal appeals court relied upon *Jacobson* in rejecting a challenge to New York’s public health law, which required that all children be vaccinated in order to attend public school. In the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, courts have also rejected constitutional challenges to orders implementing various restrictions, such as requiring individuals to wear masks in public.

Even if employers adopt mandatory flu vaccination programs, they must include provisions for certain exemptions. There must be exceptions for legitimate medical reasons and for sincerely held religious beliefs. The EEOC, for example, has issued guidance suggesting that an employer cannot adopt such policies without these two exemptions. But these policies do not have to include exemptions for personal or moral objections. Courts have rejected challenges to mandatory policies based on strong personal or moral objections, regardless of how sincerely held.

Finally, even if an employer’s mandatory flu vaccination policy includes the two exemptions, there may be ways to challenge at least part of the policy. Employers will undoubtedly argue that they have the managerial right to adopt a mandatory vaccination policy, particularly for certain classes of critical employees such as first responders.

Even if, for the sake of argument, an employer has that authority, there will be issues over which the PBA may demand negotiations. For example, issues such as who pays for the vaccination, the conditions under which the vaccinations will be given to ensure officers’ health and safety and what consequences may follow a refusal are examples of policy repercussions which may be negotiated.

If your employer issues a mandatory vaccination policy, we strongly suggest PBA Locals should immediately notify the NJ State PBA and speak with their attorneys about demanding negotiations over the implementation of the policy and the impact of the policy, as well as any other issues which may be appropriate depending on the policy which is implemented.

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A new year, a good time to review your beneficiaries



PETER
ANDREYEV

As we finish this year, I want to remind all of you to check on a few pension items for the start of the new year. Please remember to check that your beneficiary list is correct and up to date on your pension. I have been told way too many times this year that some of our members who had unfortunately passed away did not have their beneficiaries in order. One of our members who died this year did not have any beneficiary listed at all; it was blank.

When you list a family member as a beneficiary, those family members will have access to the money that they may be entitled to from the PFRS pension. I know I write an article every few months to remind all of you to review and update your beneficiaries. Please make sure you review the list so that when you pass away your family does not have to go through your estate and possibly hire an attorney to navigate through your papers. If you name your beneficiaries and they are entitled to benefits, they will be paid by the Division of Pensions and will have no issues obtaining the monetary benefit.

Another piece of information regarding beneficiaries is the special needs trust. Our pension recognizes your unmarried

children at any age with a mental or physical incapacity, who are not capable of taking care of themselves and are eligible for a pension benefit upon your passing. What that means is that if you have a disabled child, they may be eligible for a survivor's pension that would be equal to 15 percent of your final compensation or 20 percent of your final compensation if you do not have a surviving spouse.

There is a case law from 2014 in which a firefighter named Thomas Saccone wanted to set up a trust for his disabled child because the child was getting Social Security disability benefits. The money that would have been left to his disabled child would have placed his child over the income threshold and possibly disqualified his disabled child from those benefits. Saccone sued the PFRS Board of Trustees because they forced the family to choose either the Social Security Income or the survivor's pension. Thankfully, Saccone won his case and now it is permissible for PFRS members to have a special needs trust in place for their disabled child to collect a pension, along with any other income they may be entitled to.

Please call or email me at the State PBA office if you have any questions on your beneficiaries.

Enjoy the rest of the holiday season with your loved ones, and hopefully 2021 will be better than 2020.

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** During your Local's Open Enrollment–Must Be Actively At Work

A head-spinning 2020 offered insights going forward



**MICHAEL
FREEMAN**

Speaking only for myself, December couldn't come fast enough. This has been a unique year that's included a medical, social and political conflagration that has never been experienced before. For much of the year, PBA members were routinely exposed to a deadly virus that also risked the lives of their families. I am so proud to be associated with the women and men in law enforcement, healthcare, education, and all the other essential employees who bravely went to work to take care of everyone.

In the aftermath of George Floyd's death, we were bombarded with nationwide calls for police reform, with a backdrop of a contentious national election that also fueled the inferno. NJSPBA members can take pride in the fact that most of the proposed reforms that are being discussed have been the standard operating procedure in New Jersey for many years. But we must not lose sight of the fact that we are here to serve the public in a law enforcement capacity. The concerns of the public cannot be dismissed by claiming they do not understand what it takes to do this job. It is now our responsibility to acknowledge our shortcomings and failures, and to demonstrate a professionalism that eliminates those negatives and accentuates the positives.

The events of this year raged partially because many people were bunkered at home with a need for an outlet. Many were at a loss for how they should handle the new abundance of time they normally spent at work.

On the pleasant side, creativity in the form of memes that spread some humor were a welcome distraction. One of my personal favorites was a scene from the 1980s film "Back to the Future," with Doc Brown telling Marty, "Rule number one — don't enter 2020." The single image that was seen more than any other was of the late Barry Wood. You may not know his name or anything about him, but you know his face and he will undoubtedly be an enduring symbol of 2020. On the unpleasant side, this office fielded more questions about grievances and unfair labor practices than ever before.

In the spring, police agencies were struggling with how to safely continue providing services. Most administrators understood that failing to adapt to the threat of the spread of the virus through a squad of officers would hamper the availability of the department. Policy changes were desperately needed to cover a variety of subjects, most notably PPE, non-essential personnel work locations, police response to calls for service, traffic enforcement, and work schedules of essential personnel. Some administrators decided to do nothing until they were convinced that officer safety was a necessary element of protecting the public. It is also considered mandatorily negotiable.

Often, the PBA was involved in the discussions or advised of the proposed policies that the chiefs were intent on implementing. Policies considered to be managerial prerogatives that are enacted in this manner are normally the most useful because they involve input from stakeholders. The PBA is able to provide buy-in of the membership because they can take partial ownership of the development of the policy. The reasoning behind the

policy and the expectations are understood by all. Policies that are not clearly management rights, because they involve the terms and conditions of employment, are mandatorily negotiable, so the PBA must be involved in the discussion.

There were so many unknown variables in the beginning of the pandemic that it was understandable that some departments reacted to the emergency without regard for the Collective Negotiations Agreements. But what is incomprehensible is the departments that were advised of violations of contract policies that they implemented continuing to push their position, claiming that the declared state of emergency superseded the Agreement. There were several egregious examples of this, most notably that of a County Sheriff's PBA President being forced to grieve a written reprimand that disciplined him for a violation of a directive that prohibited the distribution of written directives to anyone who was not a member of the Sheriff's Office without approval. The President was charged with sharing the directive with the Local's attorney. The President admitted that he frequently sent policies to their attorney for review and advice. According to Frank Crivelli, Esq., the grievance was settled at Step Two, when the County's Attorney reduced the penalty to an oral reprimand and made a strong recommendation to the parties that "a blanket approval be approved for purposes of facilitation of communication and input by Union counsel."

Another Sheriff's Office issued a policy that required a 14-day quarantine after returning from a state listed in the Governor's Travel Advisory. The time of the quarantine would be deducted from the officer's allotted sick time. Initially, there were no exceptions until the PBA stated objections to the unilateral policy change. The Sheriff responded by making the quarantine "voluntary," but if an officer chose to come to work, he or she would have to adhere to stringent rules that were reminiscent of my junior high in-school suspensions. Assigned seats, no talking, staring straight ahead, being limited to one bottle of water for the day and permission to use the bathroom were all noted as part of the work assignment for not volunteering to utilize sick time. In response, the PBA filed an Unfair Labor Practice through their attorney, Jim Katz. Prior to the hearing at PERC, the County rescinded the policy altogether.

A similar policy was issued by a municipal department (without the punishment post) and the PBA filed a ULP through their attorney. It went to a hearing, where the attorney representing the Township boldly claimed that he had been attempting to negotiate with the PBA. That claim was roundly disputed by the PBA, but subsequent negotiations yielded an acceptable agreement that balanced the needs of the department and the rights of the Union.

In the words of Crivelli, "Everyone knows that unilateral changes cannot take place as it pertains to a settled contract; however, many often forget that the same premise applies to policy. All too often we get complaints and grievances to review about unilateral policy changes that took place a year or two ago and there is no negotiation or notification to the union of the change. At that time, it is often too late if the policy is implemented and has been followed."

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- Monthly delivery of *New Jersey COPS Magazine*, the official publication of the NJ State PBA
- A monthly State PBA Watch List, which updates legislation affecting current and retired PBA/PFRS members
- A list of job openings for retired officers
- Survivors Bulletin
- Annual newsletter
- Monthly luncheon meeting: Second Tuesday of each month. Log on to www.njspba600.org for location and time.

You may want to forget 2020, but remember the courage you all have shown



JIM TOMA
STATE
DELEGATE

As we approach the end of 2020, and hopefully the beginning of the end of COVID-19, we all need to reflect on the past nine months. Rather than trying to forget it, think about the courage many of our members exhibited.

Think of the family leadership, the support for loved ones who either were in fear of or actually fought through the virus. Some of us lost loved ones, friends or family, and we supported them, held them, albeit sometimes remotely. I spoke to many of our members who rode that rollercoaster of emotions but always showed the bravery needed to say, "Lean on me." After long careers displaying the same leadership and courage, I don't think this was surprising.

So now we celebrate the holidays, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and New Year's in the most peculiar way. But we will get through this, too, with the support of family and the hope of a brighter future. On behalf of the Local 600 executive board members, we wish you a happy holidays and a happy New Year.

As we know, without a holiday party and with limited access to the Local 600 office, all membership applications, order forms, LPP applications and vision applications are being done by mail. So far, with the hard work of several members who have come into the office, socially distancing and rotating days, all seems to be going smoothly. We appreciate all who have sent in their applications early, giving us the necessary time to process.

Some updates on this:

- LPP applications cards will be sent out soon. But know that if your check has been cashed, you are covered.
- VSP (vision plan) applications are coming in for renewals and new members. However, be aware that if renewals are not in by the end of the first in January, VSP will drop you from coverage. New members have more flexibility to join during year.
- Merchandise and card orders are being processed daily. Of course, the priority is to get out the courtesy cards for renewals and new members.
- All other benefits, including dental, can be accessed on the Local 600 website.

Lastly, after discussing with other executive board members, we are going to try and focus some of our future submissions to *NJ Cops Magazine* on members who have stood out in their careers. We want to recognize accomplishments on the job, as well as community service and charitable work. So please contact me with stories we can use to show appreciation for our members. I look forward to highlighting some of these members in future issues.

Please continue to stay safe and look forward to a great 2021.



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Are we staffed for 2021?



BRIAN
DAWE

Bail reform, de-incarceration, GPS, home monitoring, drug decriminalization, declining tax revenue and legislation are all leading to major changes in corrections. One result has been the shuttering of jails and prisons across the nation, replete with the layoffs, transfers and early retirements those entail. This “downsizing” in corrections will have a substantial impact on staffing. The Bureau of Labor Statistics is anticipating an overall decrease of 7 percent in the number of corrections officers nationwide, while anticipating a 9 percent increase in probation and parole

officers and community corrections personnel. Even private prisons are signaling a change by switching from investing in jails and prisons to community supervision and GPS monitoring. The national trends are undeniable.

We must seize upon this moment and change the narrative. We need to argue that now is the time to bring staffing levels up to the original numbers envisioned when our facilities were built. The reform movement which has the ears of our politicians is calling for more programming, more counseling, decreased segregation, decreased violence, better recidivism rates and staff de-escalation training. Those issues require more staff and more training, not less. But how do we determine the appropriate staffing levels to meet these changes?

Correction professionals know there is no issue that impacts the safe and orderly running of a correctional facility more than staffing. Programs, meals, inmate visits — everything is determined by staffing levels. Yet there is no information harder to get from most corrections departments than inmate-to-officer ratios. When questioned, the deceptive answers given come in two forms.

The first is an outright distortion of the numbers. National-ly, the ACA reports that staffing ratios in our correctional facilities are roughly five inmates for every officer. If you work in any correctional facility in the nation, you already know what a farce that is. DOCs knowingly deceive the public and our elected officials with this sleight-of-hand reporting. The DOCs take the total number of inmates and divide that by the total number of staff, regardless of whether they are custody personnel. The DOCs include all staff in their calculations, *even if they are not working*. How is that accurate? It's not, and it's purposeful in its deception. They do not want the public to know how grossly outnumbered we are and, consequently, how dangerous and ineffective our prisons and jails have become.

When pressed, most agencies double down on this deception and promote the equally artificial argument that the information is classified and could cause a breach of security if the inmates know our staffing levels. This is ridiculous — the inmates know our staffing levels better than we do. They see and live them every day. Their entire lives behind the walls are impacted by our staffing levels. They not only know how

many of us are on duty, but also where we are posted each day and how we react. Inmates will plan minor disruptions to see how we respond and from what posts. They study our movements every day.

Reporting a 5:1 inmate-to-officer staffing ratio gives the public a false sense of security and our administrators a way to justify ongoing vacancies. So how do we determine accurate staffing ratios, and how do we know what the minimum baseline for staffing is at each facility?

When a facility is built, the number of inmates it can hold and the number of officers needed to secure and properly run the facility is its design staffing ratio. The agency heads make these decisions and determine what they feel are safe operational numbers. These numbers are documented, they are historical facts and they can be readily researched on any facility.

Once these numbers are ascertained, we can turn to current inmate population and staffing levels and compare them to when the facility opened and see if that ratio has changed. By comparing the facility design staffing ratio to the current reality, we can determine whether any “slippage” has occurred. These numbers can then be compared to the rate of increase or decline in recidivism, assaults on staff, inmate-on-inmate assaults, the use of segregation and a host of other indicators that reveal a system's effectiveness. Therein lies another reason why agencies withhold this information: it may reveal how ineffective they actually are at carrying out our true mission.

Lastly, we need to codify minimum staffing levels. From ascertaining the historical staffing pattern, we know what the minimum level was when the facility opened. But how do you determine what management believes the current-day bare minimum is for staffing a facility? Overtime.

The reality is that administrations are rarely judged on the number of assaults or lowest recidivism rates; they are judged by whether they come in on budget. By far, the biggest impact on that budget is personnel. Consequently, when a shift commander makes the decisions to initiate overtime, that is the number that establishes what they believe to be the minimal operational number on each shift.

As decisions begin to be made on future staffing levels, we need to be in those discussions. As staffing goes, so too go the safety and security of our facilities. We need to take strategic advantage of the fact that many reforms being sought require more staff, not less. Like it or not, they are tied together, and that's something we need to take advantage of.

Brian Dawe spent 16 years as a state correctional officer in Massachusetts, beginning on May 31, 1982. He is a co-founder of the Massachusetts Correction Officers Federated Union, administrator of the Corrections and Criminal Justice Coalition and executive director of Corrections USA and the American Correctional Officer. He is the originator and owner of the American Correctional Officer Intelligence Network (ACOIN).



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“Undesigned and Unexpected”

Navigating accidental disability pension law



STUART
ALTERMAN

As the pandemic rages on, we at Alterman and Associates remain committed to fighting for your rights. Recently, we successfully challenged a determination of the PFRS Board, which ruled that a correctional police officer being rendered totally and permanently disabled as a result of an assault by a violent inmate was not “undesigned and unexpected” within the meaning of *Richardson v. Board of Trustees, Police & Firemen's Ret. Sys. (2007)*. *Richardson* is one of the main cases in New Jersey dealing with accidental disability pension law, which defines the criteria for a “traumatic event” or “accident” in the accidental disability statutes.

The board's reasoning, in a nutshell, was that since correctional police officers have a responsibility to control inmates who become violent, they should expect to be assaulted and rendered totally and permanently disabled by those assaults. Not only is this interpretation offensive and contrary to law, but it is contrary to the policy and purpose for which accidental disability pensions exist.

While the board ruled the event was not “undesigned and

unexpected,” the law says otherwise. *Gable v. Board of Trustees of the Pub. Employees' Ret. Sys. (1989)* held that where a correctional police officer is rendered totally and permanently disabled as a result of an altercation involving a violent inmate, such a violent assault by an inmate on a correctional police officer qualifies as a “traumatic event” as a matter of law, and therefore an officer is entitled to accidental disability retirement benefits. This case could also apply, in certain circumstances, to police officers in certain aspects of their duties. The reasoning in *Gable*, as interpreted through the lens of *Richardson*, is that, while correctional police officers must regularly guide inmates or intercede between inmates being unruly or fighting amongst themselves, violent assaults by inmates on correctional police officers are rare occurrences. As a result, a violent assault by an inmate which renders a correctional police officer disabled is an “undesigned and unexpected” traumatic event.

During the hearing at the Office of Administrative Law following our appeal of the board's decision, fellow correctional police officers who testified, as well as the lieutenant in charge of administration of the jail, confirmed that instances of vio-

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lent assault, where an inmate actually attacks an officer, are rare events. Our arguments, based on *Gable* and *Richardson*, ultimately carried the day and we received a favorable decision from the administrative law judge.

However, there are multiple issues which the board can raise to deny an application for accidental disability retirement benefits. In addition to saying an event which rendered an officer totally and permanently disabled was not “undesigned and unexpected,” the Board also often points to another of the *Richardson* factors and rules that a PFRS member had a pre-existing condition, from either an injury or even in some cases arthritis, and so is disqualified from receiving accidental disability retirement benefits. This, like in the case of the correctional police officer discussed above, is a misinterpretation of the law on the part of the board.

In essence, often when the board denies an application for an accidental disability pension on the basis of a pre-existing condition, the board overlooks the fact that a traumatic event, as defined by statute and case law, has occurred which caused the member's total and permanent disability. For example, if a police officer has injured his back in a previous accident, either at work or something like a football injury in high school, and is heading to a call and a ton of bricks falls on his back, rendering him totally and permanently disabled, the board's current interpretation of pre-existing condition law can lead it to rule that the pre-existing condition, and not the ton of bricks, was the cause of the disability. This is because of language in case

law which basically says that if your disability is the result of a pre-existing condition, you are not entitled to an accidental disability pension. However, the key is whether the disability is the result of the condition, not whether there existed a previous condition. In the case of the bricks, the fact that the officer had previously injured his back was not the cause of his disability — the falling bricks were. Yet the board often employs the approach that if a member ever had a previous injury, that means they have a pre-existing condition as discussed by *Richardson*, and therefore are not entitled to an accidental disability pension, even though that is not what the law says.

When facing uncertainty, and potentially unlawful or incorrect decisions by the Pension Board, it is necessary to have knowledgeable, competent and aggressive PBA attorneys working on your behalf. At Alterman and Associates, our responsibility is to present the law to the board and the courts to establish and defend your rights. We tackle these issues head-on and actively represent your interests through every step of your accidental disability pension process.

A former municipal police officer, county corrections officer and municipal prosecutor, Stuart J. Alterman has represented law enforcement officers for more than 25 years in all areas of employment issues. He is an NJ State PBA Lifetime Silver Card recipient.



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President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice releases draft report

The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice released a draft report of its final recommendations on actions that can be taken to prevent, reduce and control crime, increase respect for the law, and assist victims. The release of the final report is being held up by an Oct. 1 order by a U.S. district judge that found that the commission violated the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) by appointing only law enforcement as commissioners and by holding closed meetings without advance public notice. The judge ordered the commission to halt its work until it comes into compliance with FACA.

Issues reviewed by the commission include:

- challenges to law enforcement associated with mental illness, homelessness, substance abuse and other societal factors;
- recruitment, hiring, training and retention of law enforcement officers;
- potential for public and private initiatives to reduce crime and improve police-community relations;
- refusals by state and local prosecutors to enforce laws or prosecute categories of crime;
- safety, health and wellness of law enforcement officers;
- need to promote public respect for the law and law enforcement officers;
- training;
- better integration of education, employment, social services, and public health services to reduce crime and ease the burden on law enforcement, the courts and corrections systems;
- challenges and opportunities for technical innovations for law enforcement and the criminal justice system; and
- effectiveness of federal grant programs.



Within the 308-page draft report are significant recommendations around promoting officer peer mentoring programs and protecting officer confidentiality in mental wellness programs. The commission also recommends that Congress pass legislation that would create new federal offenses for those who deliberately target law enforcement officers with the intent to kill. Further, the commission specifically recommends that qualified immunity for law enforcement officers should not be weakened and, in several places, recommends protecting officer due process rights in administrative and criminal investigations of officer use of force.

National Blue Alert Network Update

The Blue Alert Advisory Group, of which NAPO is a member, in conjunction with the Justice Department's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office, is continuing to work on establishing Blue Alert systems in all 50 states. Currently, 15 states and Washington, D.C., do not have Blue Alert networks. Getting Blue Alert plans up and running in all 50 states is a priority for NAPO as it ensures the National Blue Alert Network we fought so hard to get enacted as part of the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act works efficiently and effectively to protect officers from harm.

This year, New Jersey joined the ranks of states that prioritize officer safety and are part of the National Blue Alert Network. Blue Alert legislation is currently pending in several states, including New York and Iowa, where NAPO's member organizations are playing an integral role in moving the legislation.

The National Blue Alert Network is tracking law enforcement officers shot, both fatally and non-fatally, in the line of duty. This data is important, as the number of officers killed in the line of duty every year does not reflect the reality of how often officers are being shot.

From all of us at



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Response Time

A conversation with a prominent NJ State PBA member

This month

Maple Shade Local 267 State Delegate Scott Pacheco

The Vitals

- Grew up in Maple Shade
- Hired by Maple Shade Police Department in 2006
- Living with girlfriend Katie
- Helping raise Leo, Ariana and Jess
- Member of the NJSPBA Valor Awards Committee
- Maple Shade Local 267 State Delegate since 2010
- Member of the NJSPBA Executive Board since November 2020

First Response

How does it feel to represent Burlington County as one of the newest members of the NJSPBA Executive Board?

I think it's a great honor. I'm replacing Terrance Benson, who was the former Burlington County Corrections Officers Local 249 State Delegate. With Terrance, those are pretty big shoes to fill, because he was always heavily involved. So I'm looking forward to try and meet his expectations, as well as the state's expectations. I've always had an interest in the State PBA, because I like the political aspect of labor relations.

Conversation pieces

Have you always wanted to be a law enforcement officer?

Toward the end of high school, I started looking into it, and it seemed like something that would interest me. So I started pursuing it through college, and right before I got my bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Rutgers University-Camden, I took the civil service test and was selected by Maple Shade. So I took the opportunity and then finished college after I got through the academy. I would say life experiences at the job matter more than anything else, but it never hurts to be extra educated.

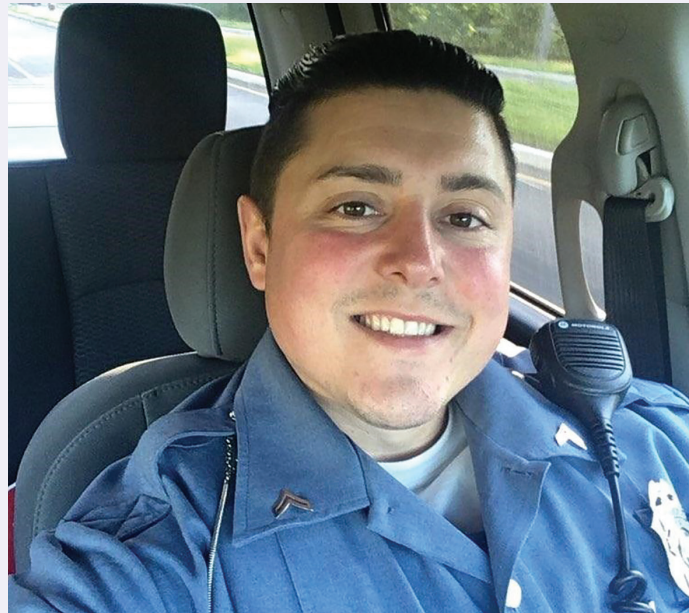
As a first-generation officer, where does your drive come from to be so heavily involved in the PBA?

I've always been a good communicator and heavy into problem solving. I have always cared about helping other people solve their problems. As a kid, we always had something going on with school and sports. I think I've always been a goal setter as well, which plays into my involvement with the PBA. I'm always doing something and always working toward completing something. There's no issue too small that I won't take up and there's no issue too large that I won't dive into research to find out what is right, what is wrong and what can be done to further members' rights.

Last Response

What's your favorite part of being in the PBA family?

The state really comes down and helps the Local every chance they can get. You get as much as you put into it as far as staying active in your Local. I love the union aspect of things, and I like the guys I've done the job with — so hopefully, I can do that for the rest of the members at the [NJSPBA] level.



Maple Shade Local 267 State Delegate Scott Pacheco was sworn in to the NJSPBA Executive Board in November.

What aspect of the PBA are you excited to get into as a E-board member?

From being a member and a State Delegate, I've seen that it's just a very, very active union. They all care about the actual members, and they're not too nationalized where the Local problems and issues aren't addressed. So I like that it's close, and the personal thoughts you get from everyone. Everyone's problem actually means something. I've known most of the guys since I became a State Delegate, and I'm excited to get the opportunity to work with them and do what we can do for the members.

What is Maple Shade Local 267 doing this year for its annual Project Santa event?

Every year, we deliver gifts to families. It's something I'm always heavily involved with. We select a family in need and let them know we're going to take care of Christmas for them. We get a list for each of the children and one or two things that the spouse might want. On Christmas Eve, we show up and deliver presents after the kids go to bed. We put the presents by the tree and then go on our merry way. We're doing Project Santa this year a little bit differently, obviously, with COVID. One of my three brothers just passed away. The Local decided to do it for my brother's family, so this year, it hit close to home for me.

Scott Pacheco's List

Our member of the month shares some of his favorite things

On-the-Job Training

Arson investigation

Food

Pizza

Sports Team

Philadelphia Eagles

Gift

Mazda RX-7 from my parents when I was 17

Hobby

Weightlifting

TV Show

Yellowstone

Animal

Bear



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The COVID vaccine: What's the deal?



**DR. STAVROS
CHRISTOUDIAS**
BOARD CHAIR
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The NJ State PBA has asked me to share any and all information about the COVID-19 vaccine. As with all medical decisions, I feel it's best to educate as thoroughly as possible and to make a decision together with your healthcare provider. There is a lot to unpack about the vaccine, as it is a new technology.

So, let's get started.

Details on the vaccine itself and clinical trials

The COVID vaccine is "the first of its kind" (for better or worse), insofar that it uses a new delivery system never deployed before to fight an infection. This form of vaccine has been in existence since 2010; however, it has primarily been researched to treat cancers. It is an mRNA

vaccine, meaning that it isn't actual parts of the virus, like most traditional vaccines. Instead, it uses mRNA to teach your own cell's machinery to temporarily create those parts of the virus (for about a week), thus teaching your body to attack the virus without an actual infection. In essence, it uses the "manufacturing plant" your cells have and temporarily gives the blueprint (mRNA) for creation of parts of the virus.

It is crucial to note that this does not alter your DNA or imprint itself to your DNA permanently. Doing so would require an electric shock, so unless someone's hooking you up to a car battery prior to your vaccine — there's zero chance of that. The mRNA rapidly degrades within a week of injection, which is completely innocuous.

There are one or two principal vaccines which are or will be available to us, depending on when you're reading this. These are the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. They both are identical in mechanism; however, the difference is in the delivery system. Moderna's is more advanced, which translates to a colder storage requirement for Pfizer (-70 degrees Fahrenheit) vs. Moderna (-10 degrees F), and more injection site soreness with the Pfizer version.

Both vaccines require two separate identical shots, spaced two to three weeks apart. Both vaccines have been tested in massive clinical trials, with 40,000 test subjects for Pfizer and 30,000 for Moderna. Both of these trials failed to show any sig-

nificant vaccine injuries and show an astounding 90 to 97 percent efficacy rate, which is the ability to produce a desired or intended result. As of today, only the Pfizer vaccine has received emergency use authorization (EUA) by the FDA.

Both of these trials are considered to be truly adequately sized to pick up most known vaccine injuries, and no injuries were found. The trials, however, did have two major shortcomings: the length of monitoring and the variety of test subjects.

The length of monitoring for vaccine injury was two months, and the efficacy was measured at one week after the second vaccine. Typically, fully approved vaccines are studied for both efficacy and safety for two years before formal approval. This isn't practical, though, when 300,000 Americans have already died of the coronavirus this year. Also, the 90 to 97 percent efficacy was only one week after the vaccine. It is expected that this number will drop over time, and the best guess from the experts

is that it should last anywhere from nine months to five years. The reason this efficacy rate is so important is that the "herd" immunity that is often discussed in news reports is based in part on the vaccine's efficacy. With an efficacy rate that high, COVID's herd immunity would occur at 55 percent vaccination rate, not the 70 percent rate often quoted by the news media.

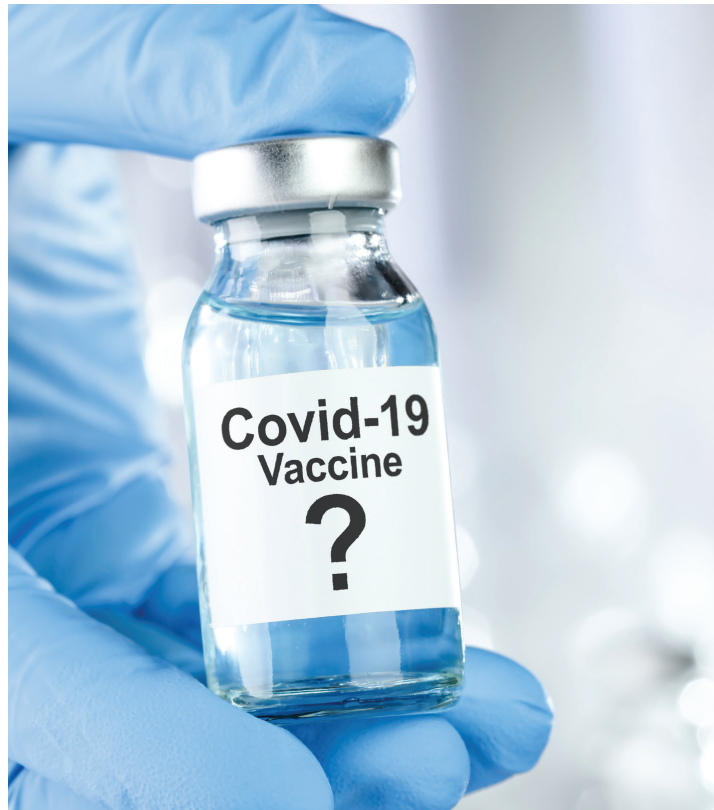
Both studies excluded children under 16 and pregnant women, so there is no safety or efficacy data on those two populations. The last criticism of the test population was that African Americans and Asian populations were underrepresented, so there is a lingering question if it will be as effective in those populations.

Notably, as with all new technologies, these vaccines are not considered the best vaccines, but were developed as the fastest vaccines that could be reasonably created and distributed.

As with all new technologies — think of cell phones — it is expected that new-generation technology will be developed, which will be superior to the first ones to market. However, it is not expected that these new technologies will be available for at least a year.

What does this mean to me?

What this typically boils down to is whether I recommend taking the vaccine, if you are lucky enough to have it offered to



CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

THE COVID CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

you. If you are over the age of 18, and not a woman who plans to be pregnant, I do recommend you take it. If you are over 40 and have any comorbidities that make COVID particularly dangerous to you, I unreservedly, and without any hesitation, very strongly recommend you take it.

If you would allow me to, I'd like to give you some perspective on this recommendation for the following reasons:

The COVID infection is not pleasant. I have seen young patients suffer, not just when sick, but long afterward. Do you remember from your history books when Christopher Columbus came to America and the native people died from simple colds because they had no prior exposure to those viruses? Well, we're all those people now, and COVID is absolutely ravaging our bodies because we, as a population, have had no exposure or immunity to it. The damage can be wide-ranging and debilitating. One in five who get it will have serious psychiatric, cardiac or pulmonary effects that may be permanent. It is justified to be fearful of this infection, and I believe it's sad that some may see that as a political statement. It's not. It's simple scientific fact. This disease can be dangerous to us all.

Assuming the worst-case scenario plays out and that there are vaccine injuries possible that just haven't been picked up — if so, the ratio of vaccine injury is not nearly as high as morbidity and mortality due to COVID. Even with that assumption, it's the lesser of two evils. Arguing that you don't want the vaccine because it might not be safe (which doesn't appear to be true) is like arguing you don't want to put a fire sprinkler system in your house because you're afraid it may make the carpets wet or don't want to wear body armor because it may chafe your chest.

Positions on vaccines are not binary. It's a spectrum. On one end, you have people who think vaccines are a conspiracy filled with microchips. On the other end, there are those who pledge blind fealty to them 100 percent of the time and believe that they can't ever do any harm. I would say I am closer to the believer end of the spectrum, but with a healthy dose of skepticism, acknowledging that there are things that I do not and cannot know yet. I pledge my loyalty to my patients first, and feel that you, the patient, deserve the respect of discussing that possibility, even if it can be a little bit scary.

If you are offered the vaccine, and decide to "wait and see," consider that you may not be offered it again for a very long time. There is a very finite amount of vaccine to go around in the first shipment (roughly 20 million vaccines for 340 million Americans). If you were on the Titanic and were offered a seat on the first lifeboat, would you say you wanted to wait and see if something better came along, with spoilers and padded seats?

The reason my recommendation shifts on a case-by-case basis is that the COVID threat is very different based on your risk factors. We know without a doubt that your risk of getting very sick or dying from COVID increases substantially with age, obesity, gender (male), diabetes, high blood pressure and immunosuppression. Each one of these makes COVID more deadly. As an analogy, a perfectly young and healthy patient choosing to get the vaccine may be like standing downrange and choosing to be shot with a BB gun (the vaccine) or a 22-caliber bullet (catching COVID). However, to someone who has all the risk factors above, the choice is choosing to be shot with a BB gun versus a rocket-propelled grenade. Pretty easy choice, if you ask me.

If you are pregnant or are planning on becoming pregnant, definitely have a discussion with your OB/GYN about the vaccine. It has not been studied in pregnant women, but there are plans to have those studies. I do know for a fact that COVID presents a particularly dangerous risk to both mother and fetus in pregnant women, who fare especially poorly if the infection occurs early in the pregnancy. However, since I am not an obstetrician, I would definitely defer to those who are on this matter.

If you had COVID already, yes, you should get the vaccine. The reason is that the virus itself forms an antibody to your immune system's messenger system, essentially diminishing your body's ability to create a natural immunity to the virus after infection. There are already numerous cases of reinfection shortly after getting over the virus the first time, and we only recently discovered this was why. It'd be like shutting down the security cameras when robbing a bank. The bank would be ill prepared for it to happen again. The virus is just this cunning.

What should I expect if I get the vaccine?

Based on the clinical studies, there is a bit of a post-vaccine condition that occurs mostly for the 24 hours after receiving the vaccine in roughly half of those who get the vaccine. This consists of mostly headaches, muscle aches, runny nose, fever, sore throat and similar symptoms. NSAIDs (Advil, Motrin, etc.) will substantially cut down on these symptoms. So I do recommend taking these immediately after getting the vaccine. Additionally, there was soreness and redness at the injection site (also roughly 50 percent), so not planning on using that arm for about 24 hours is also a good idea.

The side effects of the vaccine do appear to be stronger after the second vaccine. If possible, you should schedule the vaccine on a Friday or plan on taking the day off after receiving the vaccine. The last thing you need when you're feeling achy is to be dealing with a suspect coming at you at full charge.

Conclusion

I planned to receive my vaccine on Dec. 21, and again three weeks later. I am 41 and overweight with high blood pressure. I probably come in direct contact with or operate on a COVID patient a couple of times a week. I have three children who need their dad. For me, it was the easiest decision I ever made.

Thank you to the NJSPBA leadership for inviting me to share my perspective on this topic. I know that this is stressful to you all, and I am and always will be indebted to every one of you for putting your health and lives at risk while serving our communities in these trying times. Your jobs were hard enough prior to this pandemic, and I know we could all use a vacation. However, if there is one thing I am certain of, it's that this too shall pass. The world will go back to normal again, and this vaccine may be a huge stepping stone to getting there.

None of the above should be taken as direct medical advice. If you have any questions about the vaccine, I strongly recommend discussing it with your primary care physician with knowledge about your health status.

Dr. Stavros Christoudias is a board-certified general surgeon practicing in Bergen County. He specializes in minimally invasive surgery and has been nominated by his peers as an NJ Top Doc in 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2020 and Best of Bergen in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. He serves as board chair of the NJ Doctor Patient Alliance, a social welfare organization which aims to preserve the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship by keeping big business interests out of patient care decisions.



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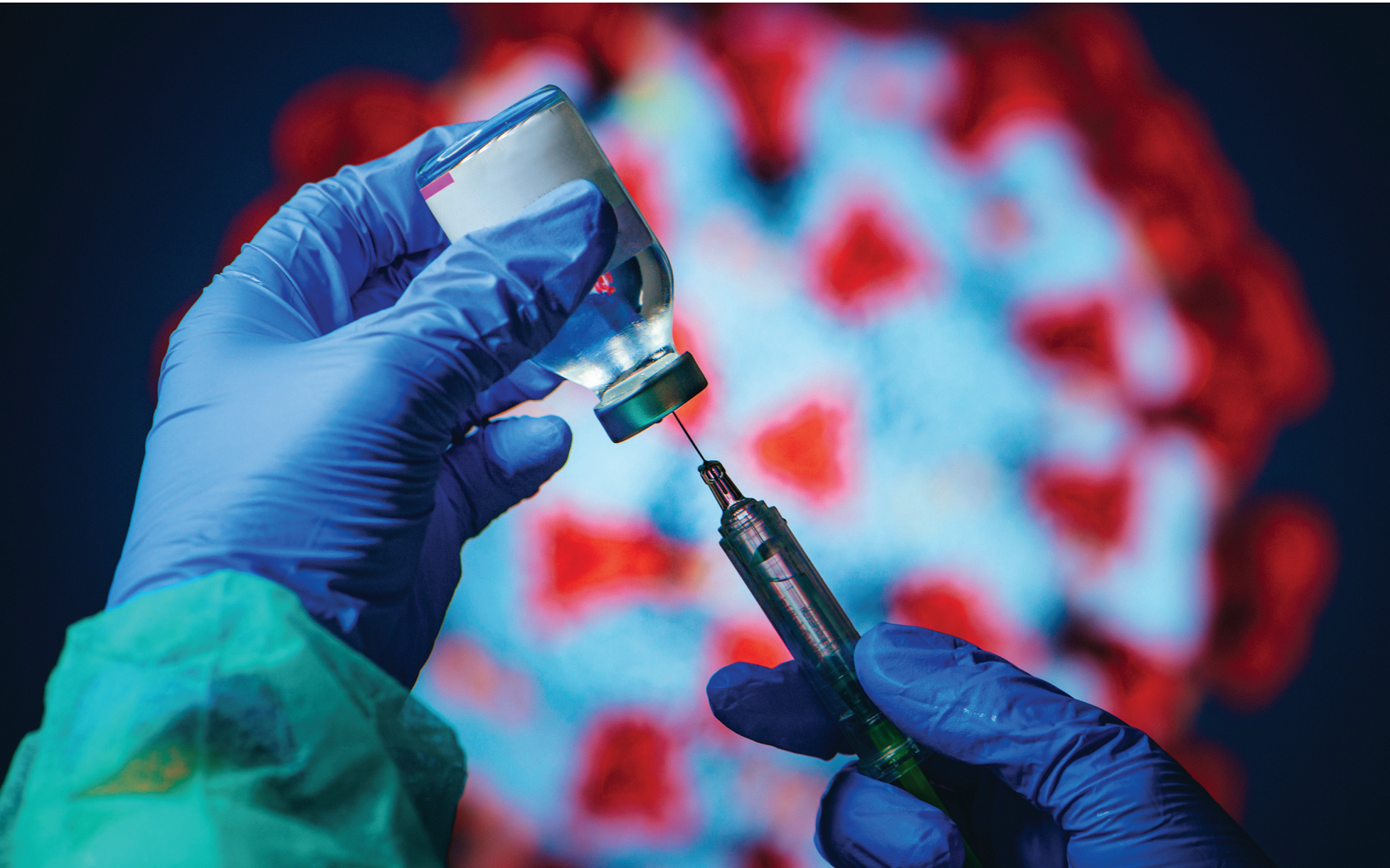
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Vaccination Evaluation

Let's go right to the PBA sources to get more information about getting the shot



■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Vaccine news and developments have fired up the detective genes in the NJSPBA leaders. They have been combing news media, social media and the vast array of experts in the PBA network, including attorneys, medical professionals and healthcare administrators, to give members the tools and information to decide whether to take the COVID-19 vaccine.

Kevin Lyons, the PBA's health benefits coordinator, has been particularly investigative, alongside President Pat Colligan. He has spoken to some of the union's most knowledgeable sources, attempting to solve the case of whether members should take it and have to worry about an adverse reaction, or not take it, risk getting the virus and it not being a covered event.

"I don't see a clear path," Lyons submits. "One of our major health insurance contacts is advocating for everybody to take the vaccine, but they don't know what the long-term effects are."

So, the mission at hand as commissioned by President Colligan is fundamental.

"Our main goal is to allow our members to be the lions they

are, not sheep," Lyons continues. "From my standpoint, we want our members to have the tools to make a decision based on the knowledge we can make available to educate their families."

By now you have read a substantive download of information that PBA attorneys Robert Fagella and Paul Kleinbaum provided on pages 10-11 of this issue and a medical synopsis from Dr. Stavros Christoudias, the chair of the NJ Doctor-Patient Alliance, beginning on page 27. If you have, not please make sure to do so.

Still, updates about the vaccine seem to come out every hour. By the time you reach the end of this story, in fact, there might be more information available.

But here's some of what we know:

According to Fagella and Kleinbaum, nobody categorically knows the answer to the question of whether taking or not taking the vaccine can cause any legal issues. "The definition of the law is whatever the last judge says it is," Fagella reasons.

As noted in their report on page 10, Kleinbaum emphasizes

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VACCINATION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

that employers are not going to be able to mandate members take the vaccine without negotiating it. And in this landscape, it is imperative that Locals look out for the health, safety and welfare of their members more than ever.

Given the nature of the virus, it's entirely feasible that to go to Yankee Stadium, you would need to prove you got the vaccine. State Corrections Local 105 State Delegate Ray Heck, who overcame getting COVID-19 in October and has been part of a detail conducting testing statewide since April, expounds on this being the way of the world.

"The vaccine is to make sure you do not give it to everybody else," Heck asserts.

It's coming soon, at least on an optional basis. The state put out its list of which employees will be offered the vaccine when. NJ State Police is on the A list. State Correctional Police Officers are on the B list.

So many more questions continue to churn through members' minds. To further this mission, some of the PBA's resources provide more information to achieve peace of mind.

"As we put everything out there, you should sit down with your significant other and decide what's best for you and your family," Lyons reinforces. "Nobody should ever be in a position where this choice becomes a career choice. Any employer that puts somebody in that position is no better than the people who implemented child labor back in the 1920s."

A policy discussion

As Colligan reported in his President's Message on page 4 of

this issue, his Local (Franklin Township Local 154) negotiated a policy with management that illustrates how to navigate implementing pandemic-necessitated policies. This one addressed employees returning to work after traveling to certain "hot" states included on New Jersey's travel advisory list.

Local 154 and the SOA filed respective unfair practices charges with PERC asserting that the travel policy was mandatorily negotiable. So they negotiated with the town, and an ensuing policy established that any member ordered to quarantine shall be placed on paid administrative leave upon return from a "hot" state in any of the following circumstances:

- The member was already en route to a state when it was designated as "hot."
- The member made the travel plans before the state was designated as "hot" and cannot secure a refund of all travel and lodging costs.
- The member traveled to a "hot" state due to a medical or other emergency involving an immediate family member.
- The member traveled to a "hot" state due to the death of an immediate family member.
- The member traveled to a "hot" state to fulfill a military obligation or as part of official duties (including approved training).

Additionally:

- All members who had previously been compelled to use their own accrued sick leave were reimbursed.
- Any member who had previously been compelled to use sick leave had the option of substituting any other accrued leave.






The First Responders Partnership Health Center (FRPHC) is the most exciting health care news in many years for first responders!

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- In the event a member elects to utilize vacation, personal, and/or comp time leave, it must not impact the strength of the scheduled shift to prevent another officer not in quarantine from utilizing vacation, personal and/or comp time on said day.

Attorney Lou Rainone, whose firm Rainone Coughlin Minchello represents more than 60 municipalities in New Jersey, negotiated the travel policy for Franklin Township. He has guided towns as they have reacted from one executive order from the governor to the next addressing the evolving issues from the pandemic. Rainone has realized the important distinction of law enforcement officers being essential employees, which fueled this policy and may do so with any policies related to the vaccine.

While some have created strange situations – like members having traveled to a state for vacation that suddenly was added to the “hot” list while there – the experience has indicated that management and labor have to work together to figure out the issues.

“It has become this interaction between operation of the executive order and our responsibility to protect the workplace and collective bargaining agreements,” Rainone clarifies. “The one thing we have learned during this pandemic is that our policies are only as good as the next announcement by the CDC or executive order. But the inevitable issue is how you deal with it from a collective bargaining standpoint.”

Booster shots

Discovery of evidence about the pros and cons, virtues and views of the vaccine leads back to expertise flowing through

the PBA. File these observations in a place where you can easily access them as the pandemic persists and the decision about getting the vaccine nears:

- Few members have been exposed like Heck. Being part of the statewide testing detail, he has studied the virus transmission and knows how it has become savvy enough to last longer in the air and even penetrate some of the PPE. He’s also one of the most well-read members and has studied it enough to observe, “It looks like the vaccine is effective for a good part of the population, but for how long?”
- While he says there is still a lot to learn, Heck declares, “If I’m able to get it, if I’m healthy enough, I will get it immediately. I’m on the front lines, and if I go down, it puts a strain on the rest of my teammates.”
- There appears to be a growing responsibility among members to set an example by taking the vaccine. Not just for the public, but for each other. State Corrections Local 105 President Bill Sullivan shares that he, too, will get it as soon as possible because “I wouldn’t ask any of my members to do something I wouldn’t. Especially if it can help make sure everybody is safe. A lot of our board members feel the same way that if it’s something they can do to prevent the spread and make a difference, they are more than willing to do so.”
- Fagella and Kleinbaum recognize that there is some precedent to reference regarding implementation policy that can be applied to getting the vaccine. They evoked

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VACCINATION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

the drug-testing comparison, noting that employers are obligated to negotiate over procedures used, as well as particulars like having a split sample, notice that needs to be given and labels that are used.

- Attorney Frank Crivelli of the firm Crivelli & Barbati, L.L.C., which represents many Locals, researched the question of whether the vaccine can be mandated. He presented a report that the U.S. Department of Justice published titled, "The Role of Law Enforcement in Public Health Emergencies," which discusses mass immunization programs for sworn law enforcement officers. Although the publication addressed whether there should be special sick leave policies, whether there should be a special leave category for officers who have been exposed but do not have symptoms and how isolation or quarantine should be handled for infected persons, it stopped short of issuing guidance on the legality of a mandatory immunization program and whether an affirmative order to be immunized would have to be followed.
- Crivelli further noted that the military has been presented with similar issues and had to get immunized. The anthrax vaccine is one of the more prominent examples. What is the connection here? "Although law enforcement can be considered paramilitary, statutorily created organizations, they are not mandated to waive many of their constitutionally protected rights the way that our soldiers, sailors, airman and Marines do when they enlist," he reasons.
- In the document the state sent to its employees, includ-

ing correctional police officers, there is a reminder that the vaccine won't do the job of containment by itself. According to the document, "In some cases, COVID-19 vaccines may protect against severe infection, but not necessarily prevent mild or asymptomatic infection. If this is the case, an infected person could still spread the virus. This is why it is expected that even after a vaccine becomes available, people will need to use masks and practice social distancing measures for some time."

- Lyons reminds that it's not all on the members. "I hope chiefs are reading this because we have chiefs out there who cannot go into this blind. They are leaders in their departments, and if there is a problem with mandating the vaccine, they are going to be held accountable. The chiefs need to come to the table with the union."

With questions addressed and information presented, many members may still be left with what they might think is an insurmountable feeling of trepidation. If you are feeling that way, it's not a bad thing.

"I tell everybody, I think fear is good," Heck admits. "Fear can achieve focus. Fear of the vaccine can compel you to ask your medical experts the pertinent questions."

But fear of the vaccine is no reason to back down now.

"I tell everybody that we're near the finish line," Heck adds. "We're a high-performance occupation, so let's run through the finish line. We don't want to go back and have another wave now when we're so close."



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PBA's expert on implicit bias

Glen Ridge Local 58's Uliano tapped to develop statewide training program for law enforcement

■ BY MICHELE C. HOLLOW

Law Enforcement officers might question why implicit bias and cultural training is necessary. The bill signed into law by Governor Murphy makes the program mandatory and law enforcement officers must take the training every five years starting in March 2021.

"I don't believe there is any other profession out there interacting with these diverse populations more than police officers," says Joseph Uliano, president of the Glen Ridge Local 58, and a municipal police officer for close to two decades. "It's why this training is critical for both our recruits in the police academies and our veteran officers."

Uliano, who has a doctorate in education and has served as a department field-training officer and a Police Training Commission (PTC) certified police instructor, understands that implicit biases can be found everywhere.



Glen Ridge Local 58 President Joe Uliano will be representing the NJSPBA to develop state-mandated implicit bias and cultural training for law enforcement officers.

"We often hear people saying they are not racists or are nonjudgmental of others," he says. "On the surface, this often proves to be true. When we take a deeper look at ourselves, we may realize that our unconscious thoughts may, in fact, elicit a judgmental attitude toward others."

The NJSPBA has tapped Dr. Uliano to help create the training program. Outside the job, he is a private educational consultant and has been a sought-after guest lecturer at several New Jersey colleges and universities, speaking on criminal justice and research methods.

Uliano is also part of the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety's panel that is developing training course materials and an online tutorial. He will be the one member of the panel who can offer the perspective that truly represents law enforcement.

"My role is to offer my professional insight from a frontline police officer's



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perspective, representing the members of the NJSPBA,” he explains. “As a veteran police officer, I was grateful to hear that the Attorney General’s Office asked the PBA to send a representative to work side-by-side with their panel of experts in a collaborated effort before rolling the training out.”

Uliano emerged as the perfect choice to represent the PBA in this initiative. His expertise is another example of the wide array of knowledge that members have in so many areas that can help improve law enforcement.

“Joe is a very bright guy who has advanced degrees, and this kind of fits into his model of research,” noted PBA President Pat Colligan. “It’s awesome to go to somebody with those credentials. Here’s a guy who sits in a patrol car and humps calls like most officers do. Quite frankly, that’s not the experience of the bulk of that committee. Joe brings frontline experience.”

Bias training is not new. All New Jersey agencies have received some form of implicit bias training. This new curriculum will be designed by a wide array of experts, including prosecutors, law enforcement executives, frontline officers, educators, social services, and members of different religious communities.

Uliano will bring research to efforts that will work to define diversity and achieve the common goal of equality for those who serve in the criminal justice system. In addition to his frontline experience, he brings a unique perspective developed from teaching and lecturing on this topic.

“Researchers have found our perceptions of others are not innate but rather learned behavior,” Uliano explains. “These biases stem from the observations and stereotypes we have cognitively and unconsciously stored away into our deepest thoughts, making them so covert that we often don’t even know we possess them.”

He will be called on to begin reporting on the initiative at state PBA meetings. Members should be ready for doses of cutting-edge information that will make a profound impact on how they view implicit bias.

“Research has also found that our implicit biases toward others increase during stressful interactions,” Uliano continues. “These thoughts are not deliberate, lacking premeditation to hurt others, but instead, are detrimental, which is why this is important for law enforcement officers, who often face stressful encounters, to be trained to

recognize and adjust accordingly.”

The training will go beyond race. It will also address age, gender, special needs, religion, cultural diversity, and sexual orientation. In terms of deploying the training, Uliano believes awareness of unconscious thoughts will shed light on the fact that officers who believe they see everyone the same will realize this is not necessarily true.

“This is acceptable because, as research indicates, we all have implicit biases,” he confirms. “What’s not acceptable is ignoring what we uncover from our unconscious thoughts and disregarding that we can all do better. This is not exclusive to police officers; it applies to all walks of life.”

Uliano believes the training will enhance law enforcement work and allow officers to better serve their communities. He’s grateful to Colligan for appointing him to represent PBA members. The state president confirmed there is not a better member for the job.

“We wanted somebody who understands our perspective and can get it done,” Colligan praises. “Joe will get it done and bring it back to our members so they can get it done.”

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The System is working

PFRS Trustee Board looking ahead to 'monumental' year

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Members of the Police and Fire Retirement System (PFRS) Trustee Board continue to huddle each month, working on their game plan and keeping the ball moving. Even with the pandemic and even though the meetings have been Zoomed, they have not missed approving retirements and making sure the pension checks get out to members as they should.

But the planning continues to drive toward the ultimate payday. Following a 2020 of adding system-changing building blocks in a structure that started from the ground up less than two years ago, 2021 is set up for finally making the moves that will give the PFRS the autonomy it was designed to achieve when Chapter 55 was signed in 2018 to make it independent.

The push this coming year will move the system's nearly \$7 billion in assets from under the increasingly unreliable thumb of the NJ Division of Investments (DOI) to PFRS control. This is the moment members have been waiting for, and though considerable clean-up will be needed, analysts insist that when the assets are transferred, it will be historic.

"We are leaps and bounds ahead of where many thought we would be," assures PFRS Trustee Board Chair Ed Donnelly, the president of the NJ FMBA. "I think 2021 is going to be a monumental year for New Jersey cops and firefighters."

And why is that?

"We are going to be able to make the changes necessary to increase the funding of the pension system," adds James Kompany, the trustee board's vice-chair and a member of Roselle Park Local 27. "That's why we're here. That's what this is all about."

The foundation of the PFRS infrastructure has been an unprecedented meshing of management and labor on the trustee board. Looking back to July 2018 when Governor Murphy signed the bill that created Chapter 55, there was considerable concern, even conflict, over whether the trustees representing the state's municipalities would try to incessantly battle the board members from public safety.

But this dedicated dozen bolstered by the municipal management expertise of Retired Members Trustee Bruce Polkowitz, a former State Delegate for Edison Local 75 and president of it's SOA as well as a former mayor of Franklin Township in Hunterdon County, has put the team in teamwork. That has helped maintain the mindset of getting the pension to be solvent and funded at the highest level. This has been the most significant progress toward the most important goal Donnelly set for the initiative other than full funding.

"To take politics out of the pension system," he reiterates.

And how is that?

"It hasn't been a partisan group," Kompany confirms of the trustee board. "Each situation we come across, whether a member's disability, general business or hiring for a position, it's been straight across the board. Everybody has been cohesive on that."

Building up from there, the independently run PFRS also has recently retained its own actuarial firm. Such a presence will enable the board to get an unbiased report on the value of the fund, something that has not been wholly reliable with assets under DOI control.

And under the leadership of Executive Director Gregory Petzold for the past year, the PFRS office is now running at peak efficiency. That has only added to the timeliness of day-to-day matters such as processing pension payments.

The latest acquisition, however, has the PFRS even more primed to embark on the full-funding journey. New Chief Investment Officer Russ Niemie joined the team, brining unprecedented pension management prowess to the system.

Niemie emerged from a group of nearly a dozen finalists. His experience includes a seven-year stint turning the Texas state pension from underfunded into being rated as one of the top public pension funds in the country. Following that, Niemie ran the pension for the New York Nurses Association and led it to a funding level of 112 percent that made it the top performing public pension fund in the country.

"Obviously, his resume speaks for itself," Kompany relates. "But what impressed me is that he has a presence about him. He won't be intimidated coming into the situation he's coming into."

Niemie's presence comes from a work ethic that was spawned working on fishing boats in California starting at 9 years old. His father was a law enforcement officer in Morro Bay, California, who went on to serve as a California State corrections officer.

"My mother still lives off that pension," he quips. "I come from a blue-collar family and many of them served in public service. None of them would have been able to retire if not for their pensions."

The situation Niemie is walking into will be sorting out the assets that will be transferred in 2021. By March, the board plans to have control of the Common Pension Fund D, which includes equity and fixed-income portfolios – primarily stocks and bonds. By the end of the 2021, the transfer of Common Fund E that includes alternative investment portfolios should be complete.



"We are going to be able to make the changes necessary to increase the funding of the pension system."

PFRS Trustee Board Vice Chair and Roselle Park Local 27 member James Kompany

And so begins the cleaning up process that will increase the funding level. The DOI has so many investment contracts that more than 100 managers are currently involved in the assets. Kompany explains that an evaluation process will take place under Niemie's direction to determine which of those managers will be green-lighted and which underperforming ones will be red-lighted.

Niemie adds that thinning out some of those managers could contribute to creating efficiencies that bring in nearly \$500 million a year in additional revenue. Some of those investments are under long-term contracts, so Niemie warns that the turnaround will take some time.

"We will have that time because we are fortunate to have a board that is supportive and wants to take the time to understand what we're doing," Niemie emphasizes. "There are going to be some bumps along the way, but because of this board we won't have to waste our time putting out fires. We also have people like Ed and [NJSPBA President] Pat Colligan, who know that this is their cause. And it's a just cause. If we're successful, it will be historic."



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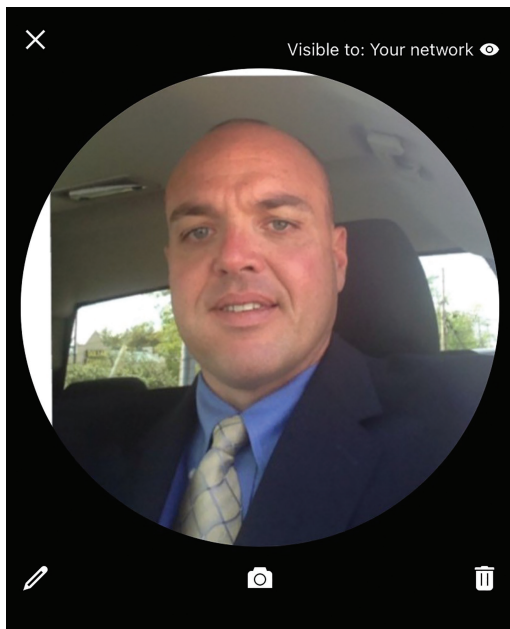
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Luke Sciallo, who has served as the Allenhurst-Ocean Township Local 57 State Delegate for 15 years, took over the role of NJSPBA Judiciary Committee chair from past Jackson Township Local 168 State Delegate Frank Cipully in October.



Berkeley Heights Local 144 State Delegate Pat Moran has been the NJSPBA Bylaws Committee chair since August 2016.

Bylaw Enforcement

The NJSPBA Judiciary Committee and Bylaws Committee work hand in hand to help Locals maintain their integrity

■ BY KAREN JENKINS

Guttural groans are often a whimsical accompaniment to the NJSPBA Judiciary Committee chair walking up to the podium at a state meeting to report on bylaws violations that require corrective action.

Although the complex information can be met with lack of interest, a peek behind the scenes shows work that is anything but boring.

Behind that podium is new PBA Judiciary Committee Chair Luke Sciallo, who sat down at his computer on a recent Saturday evening after a difficult week on the job. It was the only quiet time he could find between his wife working from home, his 16-year-old son completing schoolwork in the basement and his 17-year-old daughter on the phone in her room.

He wrote up judiciary decisions while the sun set. The screen illuminated Sciallo's face as he processed questions from Locals, responded to emails and worked through judiciary files.

"One thing the guys know is that I'm kind of no-nonsense; you don't have time for games and stuff," expressed Sciallo, who has been the Allenhurst-Ocean Township Local 57 State Delegate for the past 15 years. "When I have a question, it's like, 'Who's working midnights that I can call to bounce it off of?' I talk to [NJSPBA Bylaws Committee Chair] Pat Moran a couple times a day, you know, 'Hey, I got a call from this Local and need to know what the bylaws say.'"

On this particular weekend, Sciallo worked until 5:45 a.m. on Sunday. When he finally finished, he shut down his computer and got just a few hours of sleep before the demands of the next day beckoned. But working through the night is part of the difficult and vital work of the NJSPBA Judiciary Committee and the

NJSPBA Bylaws Committee.

"I've got to be honest, it's a lot. But I enjoy it. I'm just getting my feet wet now," shared Sciallo, who took over as chair in October. "You want to make sure you do everything right."

Fact-finding missions

There's a lot of information to get right within the Judiciary Committee. Sciallo frequently works with the Bylaws Committee — most often Bylaws Committee chair Moran — to investigate Local bylaws violations.

Some of the biggest issues Sciallo has come across are discrepancies within Local elections and members bringing up other members on bylaws violations by either word, deed, sign or token. With elections, for example, if a member does not believe another member is qualified to run for a position on the executive board, that complaint goes to the Local's Election Committee.

The member can appeal the decision to the Local's own Judiciary Committee. Provided that committee does not give a sufficient answer, the issue can then be appealed to the state committee.

Twenty-five members sit on the state Judiciary Committee, but a quorum of five is typically scheduled for each hearing to review the complaints of bylaws violations.

"It's an informal hearing, it's like a fact-finding mission we would do to decide whether someone violated the bylaws," Sciallo explained. "We find the facts and we see if it violated or if they did it properly and ultimately we rule on it. So, you know, sometimes you've got to be the bad guy."

Since Sciallo just took over the Judiciary Committee chair

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

position from Frank Cipully, the past Jackson Township Local 168 State Delegate who was promoted to sergeant in October, he frequently calls on two people while going through files on fact-finding missions — Cipully, and, of course, Moran.

“You hear everything from elections to violating the bylaws, and that’s why myself and Pat Moran work hand in hand,” Sciallo confirmed. “It demands a wealth of knowledge, which is Pat. I want to be 100 percent informed and right before I speak or write something.”

For the members

A house can’t run without rules, and an effective Local can’t run without updated bylaws, according to Moran, who has been the Bylaws Committee chair since 2016.

“The new delegates come in the door when they’re sworn in, and they have to attend a new delegate class. They get told there that they have to update their bylaws,” shared Moran, the Berkeley Heights Local 144 State Delegate. “It’s what guides their Local, and that’s what the charter lives by. They create the rules and regulations based on their options that they choose.”

The PBA Bylaws Committee is a fact-finding entity that investigates allegations of bylaw violations alongside the Judiciary Committee. Once a violation is detected and thoroughly investigated at the Local, the 11 members of the state committee adjudicate it to assure the maintenance of the bylaws.

And, Moran added, former judiciary chair Cipully was instrumental in crafting a five-year update requirement on bylaws to keep Locals as current as possible.

“Reviewing bylaws from the 1980s, ’90s or [early] 2000s doesn’t work,” Moran relayed. “In policing, we deal with change on a daily basis of how we do our business, so updating the PBA bylaws shouldn’t be a heavy lift.”

A recent violation that came up was a Local election in which members were putting “Donald Trump” in the ballot box. While those members were just goofing around, Moran had to tell them that it was election tampering, and the whole process had to be restarted.

“People weren’t happy with me. They’re not happy with Luke,” Moran noted about the situation. “I like to joke just like the next guy, but we have the difficult job when it comes to upholding integrity. That’s the hardest part, having to investigate your friends.”

Forging friendships with PBA delegates and presidents while also holding them accountable during investigations is a difficult balance, but Sciallo recognizes that his work with the Judiciary Committee isn’t personal. Putting feelings aside in both committees is crucial in maintaining the integrity of the organization.

“I’m impartial. I hear everything,” Sciallo affirmed. “You have a roadmap, that’s the bylaws, make sure you follow it.”

As for where Sciallo wants to take the dynamic between the judiciary arm and the bylaws, he plans to help create a thriving relationship with the membership. He knows that he has big shoes to fill after Cipully, but he’s up for the challenge.

Even if members never see Sciallo illuminated by the glow of his computer screen through the night, when he steps up to make that judiciary report, he vows to keep working hard to uphold the values of the Judiciary Committee and Bylaws Committee.

“When Frank was the head, I didn’t realize there was this much work involved,” Sciallo said. “But I enjoy it. I think I’m pretty educated, and I take my job seriously. I’m a worker. I do what needs to be done, and I enjoy it.”

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Milltown Magic

Milltown Local 338 members set up a mailbox for children to send letters directly to the North Pole and receive a special letter back from Santa himself

■ BY KAREN JENKINS

Santa's magic is alive and well in Milltown, despite the extraordinary circumstances of a socially distanced holiday season.

Milltown Local 338 State Delegate Armando Rosario and Local 338 President Mike Dinis are carrying on the important work of spreading Christmas cheer this year as Santa's elves. They set up a mailbox outside the Milltown Police Department that is accepting letters addressed to the North Pole from Nov. 30 to Dec. 18.

Rosario and Dinis check the mailbox every night while on shift, and so far, they've received 66 letters from children around the town. Each child will receive a personalized response from Santa with a small bag of reindeer food — oatmeal and glitter — to sprinkle on Christmas Eve as a guide to their houses for the magical animals.

"We wanted to start giving back to the kids in the community, being that everybody was inside and cooped up with their families and stuff," expressed Dinis, who has seven years on the job. "We wanted to give them a chance to get out and be interactive, with not just us, but actually go somewhere and do something physical. So they can mail a letter to Santa, and it's just stuff that gets the PBA more involved with the community during this time."

The setup for the letter drop-off is rife with Christmas spirit. Dinis borrowed a playhouse from his children, who are 2 years old and 5 years old, to accompany the mailbox as decor. When the two kids found out that Santa needed to borrow their playhouse for a month, they were extremely excited, Dinis shared.

The local Home Depot donated the mailbox post to the officers, along with garlands, ribbons, bells, lights and decorative candy canes. Rosario and Dinis then went out and hand-stenciled "Letters to Santa" on the side of the decked-out mailbox.

"We just decorated it like a little Hallmark movie in Milltown," Dinis laughed.

Members of Local 338 regularly spread Christmas cheer every year as part of the Marine's Toys for Tots. But for the 2020 holiday season, the Local members felt that residents — and especially the children — of Milltown deserved an above-and-beyond way to celebrate.

This year's effort has undoubtedly played a major role in creating the timeless magic of Christmas for the town.

"We take care of our kids, they're the future here," said Rosario, who has 13 years on the job. "We love to give back to them and make sure that they see us in a positive way. We love to interact with the kids, and the respect gets reciprocated by the parents. We have a very good community."

While working on Dec. 7, the pair watched a young boy reach for the mailbox by standing on his tiptoes and place in his letter to Santa excitedly. Another enthusiastic child carried his Elf on the Shelf doll with him as a set of extra eyes to make sure his letter would reach the North Pole. The mailbox sees about eight to 10 children a day who are eager to send off their Christmas lists.

"Everybody is just tired of being home, and this gives them a chance to get out and do something and be a part of the community," Dinis affirmed. "It's blown up with positive feedback from all the residents, some that are saying it's just so great to see the



Milltown Local 338 State Delegate Armando Rosario (left) and Milltown Local 338 President Mike Dinis set up a letter drop-off station outside the Milltown Police Department, with letter collection from Nov. 30 to Dec. 18.



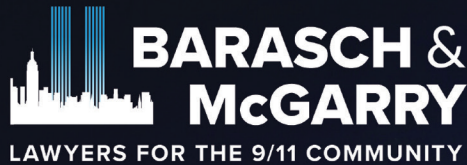
The mailbox, with hand-stenciling on the side by Rosario and Dinis, was donated by the Milltown Home Depot.

department getting really involved. They're so happy, especially now with everything going on."

Local 338 members hope that this year's letter drop-off is a lasting and magical holiday memory for the children in Milltown, particularly amid the unprecedented times they're currently enduring.

Rosario and Dinis are looking forward to hearing about the excitement the children feel when they receive their letters back from Santa, just in time for Christmas.

"I think it's just going to bring the whole holiday spirit to them," Rosario said. "I also think it's something that the parents are going to see as, 'Hey, we really care about you.' Give back to the community, and the community gives back to you."



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A Superhero

State Correctional Police Officer Erick Whitaker had the power to make everybody feel all good

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Sergeant Bill Shorter had so much to say about his good friend, State Corrections Local 105 member Erick Whitaker, but he was struggling with the South Jersey cell reception on this December evening. No problem. He moved outside into the sub-40-degree weather to speak.

"To talk about my friend, I would gladly sit out in the cold," related Shorter, who worked with Whitaker for 19 years at South Woods State Prison in Bridgeton.

Whitaker gave them so much to talk about. Fellow Local 105 member and South Woods officer Erick Gould reveled at how the amount of wisdom Whitaker had was unbelievable. This about a guy he first met at the academy when he was gigged for an infraction in the mess line and had to do push-ups on a bush.

Whitaker's son, Jeson, explained how his dad's favorite superhero was Superman. To Jeson, he was Superman. He shared how his father once had his left leg run over and it was so bad that doctors wanted to amputate. Instead, Erick went on without ever getting the feeling back in his leg.

"He never wanted me to know how much he was hurting," Jeson described. "He never wanted to see anybody down. Whether or not his situation was good, he wanted make sure everybody around him was all good."

Erick Whitaker, State Corrections badge 6111, was lost on Dec. 4 due to COVID-19. He had most recently been working as a medical officer at South Woods, where Shorter suspects he was exposed to the virus multiple times. He had texted Shorter he was feeling better, but an ambulance had to respond to his home on Dec. 4. Thus ended a 19-year



Erick Whitaker

State Corrections Local 105

End of Watch: Dec. 4, 2020

career that highlighted the best in correctional police officers.

Whitaker was renowned for talking with inmates rather than just ordering them. According to Shorter, he wanted them to know that all correctional police officers show compassion when needed.

Oh sure, he demanded they all greet him at the start of his tour by saying, "Good morning." But he wanted to give them a sense of humanity that they could attain when getting out.

"That was his style of jailing," Gould commented. "He felt you could get to them in a better way by communicating than by just giving demands. He was the type of person who wanted to teach you."

Whitaker was all about others. When Shorter was out for three years battling an unjust termination that was ultimately overturned, Whitaker called him every

week to remind him he had the strength to get through the ordeal.

They used to go out a lot after work, and he loved being the guy to pick up the check. Shorter recalled how he once ran into a guy he knew in Bridgeton who didn't have enough money to buy dinner. So Whitaker picked up his check.

"He was a people magnet," Shorter marveled. "You would be hard-pressed to find somebody who didn't know him."

Whitaker lived to spread the wisdom, according to Gould. Jeson shared some of the life lessons that mattered most to his father.

He wanted people to know that the world is larger than your city, your street or the house where you grew up.

He reminded people to not get wrapped up in their own environment. There was always room to grow, he said, no matter who you are and what you've done.

"And he said that you don't only live once, you live every day," Jeson added. "So wake up every day and be who you want to be."

Whitaker could be larger than life with the way he lit up every room he ever walked into. But he was always conscious of his big personality so he took to giving people a verbal or actual embrace so they wouldn't be intimidated.

Combined with an intuition that truly endeared him to fellow officers, inmates and really anybody he met, well, that created an image that will last forever.

"He should have been a major or a captain or a chief," Gould submitted. "He should have been running the place. That's the amount of knowledge that man had, and he wanted to share it with everyone else."



State Corrections Local 105 member Erick Whitaker always lit up the room, but he was never happier than with his son, Jeson, shown here when he was a small boy and then all grown up.

A man about town

Thousands show the love for Old Bridge Local 127 Officer Chris Cronin, who they saw as one of their own

■ BY ROSEMARY AN

People depended on Old Bridge Local 127 Member Chris Cronin to crack a joke when they needed a pick-me-up. Members relied on him to spin a bad situation into a light-hearted one. Friends trusted him to listen and help in the face of adversity.

So when news of Cronin's passing on Dec. 2, due to COVID-19-related complications, was posted on Facebook, friends, family and residents of Old Bridge flooded the post with thoughts and prayers. Some expressed how they counted on his guidance as a friend and some had worked with him directly in the department or through volunteering. Others remembered feeling safe whenever they saw his patrol car outside their buildings.

The 40,000 people who saw the post were reminded of the lengths Cronin went to in order to be a dependable friend, as well as a neighborhood police officer. They knew him from how he would strike up conversations while on patrol.

"Everybody loved him, and I know everyone says that," praised Mike Cronin, his younger brother and an Old Bridge detective. "But it was true with him."

Part of what made Chris Cronin special was his ability to connect with people. He attended the Monmouth County Police Academy in 2000 and instantly became the "platoon morale leader" of his class. Afterward, he continued to lead the group by planning get-togethers for members down to every last detail.

"There's definitely a huge hole left in the group now," Local 127 member Steve Connolly commented. "There's no way you can fill that hole. Those little jokes we had together — you can tell people, but that person being there is irreplaceable."

The Cronins are a household name in Old Bridge. Chris served the department for 20 years. His father, Dennis, is a retired captain and his younger brother, Mike, has been a detective since 2007. Siblings serving in the same department is not uncommon for Old Bridge. At one point, the Local had nine sets of siblings.

Chris and Mike were inseparable. They grew up together in the family-oriented town, went to the same college and had the same circle of friends.

Although they both became police officers, Chris had the idea first. He attended Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale and studied criminal justice, while Mike studied education there. Then, Mike decided that he wanted to follow Chris and give back to the community that took care of them.

"Our dad made the streets safe for us," Mike shared. "So we wanted to do the same."

Chris was diagnosed with leukemia at two years old and spent years in chemotherapy and radiation before going into remission at age 10. He was the only patient in his ward who survived. Even after enduring those tough few years, Chris took care and was pro-



Chris Cronin

Old Bridge Local 127

End of Watch: Dec. 2, 2020



tective of Mike in their teenage years.

"As long as we were together, there's no chance anyone could hurt me," Mike noted.

Chris connected with and looked out for the people around him long before becoming a police officer. His magnetic personality led to becoming homecoming king in college, president of his fraternity and well regarded by his peers. When Connolly made the phone call to fraternity brothers and friends in Miami about losing Chris, it was a tearjerker.

"People were just openly crying on the other end [of the call]," he noted. "There is never going to be anyone who even comes close, no one ever."

In his years of service, Chris would constantly go out of his way to stay involved with in the community and his coworkers. Connolly recollected Chris calling him every day about his shift, and the two would exchange stories of their day. Chris and his wife, Lorena, never had children but regarded Connolly's as their own.

"My children were in tears for days because 'Uncle Chris' wasn't going to be here anymore," Connolly revealed.

Chris had the unique ability to remain calm in the face of danger. When best friend and Local 127 member Gregory Miller was hit by a car, Anna, his wife, called Chris immediately. Anna was frantically asking for more information when Chris calmly replied, "He [Greg] said he will call you back." When she nudged him to call headquarters, Anna recalls Chris being unflappable as ever: "If he was hurt he wouldn't have picked up."



From left, Retired Old Bridge Captain Dennis Cronin with Chris, his mother, Monica Gleason, and Mike.

People who had the opportunity to experience Chris as their friend, family member and neighborhood cop said his greatest asset was his humor and empathy.

"He was our rock," Mike declared. "That's what makes this so hard."

Big Ideas

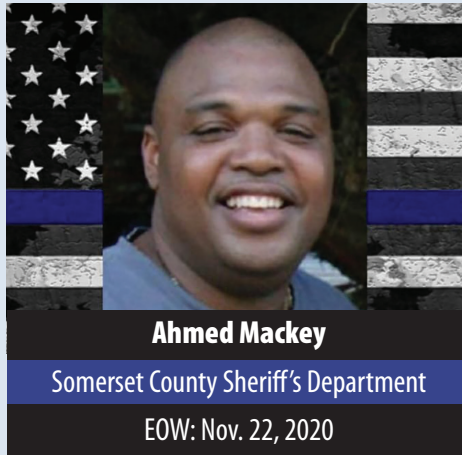
The tragic loss of Ahmed Mackey leaves Somerset County Sheriff's Office mourning one of its most valuable members

BY KAREN JENKINS

Ahmed Mackey of the Somerset County Sheriff's Department was an ideas guy. That's why Somerset County Sheriff Darin Russo had recently appointed him to the public relations team at the Sheriff's Office.

"He was just coming up with ideas, good things for the department and the community," shared Russo, who was elected sheriff in January 2020. "Bringing flowers to cancer patients, food to staff in the hospital, things like that. He was coming up with a couple of toy drive ideas."

In October, Mackey spearheaded an initiative to bring pink carnations to breast cancer patients at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Officers



pulled up with pink patrol vehicles, and the staff — along with patients who waved at the officers from their windows — loved the event.

"I think that was a big eye-opener for me about how effective Mackey was," Russo said. "It wasn't like, 'Oct. 1, let's do this.' He had planned it for months."

Mackey, who was 50 years old, tragically suffered a heart attack on Nov. 22 while at work. Nearby officers performed CPR and transported him to Robert Wood Johnson

University Hospital Somerset, where he passed away that afternoon.

He was a 20-year veteran of the Somerset County Sheriff's Office. Mackey served seven years with Conrail and Norfolk Southern Railway Police before joining the Somerset County Sheriff's Office in January 2001.

The certified gang resistance education and training officer also acted as president of the state Juvenile Justice Association and was a valued member of the Hate Crime Bias Unit. Russo posthumously promoted Mackey to sergeant.

The sheriff expressed that the office suffered a monumental loss with Mackey, who assisted at the front desk with a grin and always offered free-flowing creative energy to continually invest in the community.

"My [PR team leader] would come down to my office a couple times a week and be like, 'It's Mackey again, he's got two or three more ideas,'" Russo said, fondly recalling Mackey planning Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day events for the coming year. "He's going to be missed tremendously. But we've all got a little bit of Mackey in us. We're going to keep his thoughts and ideas going."

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A 'Peachy' Guy

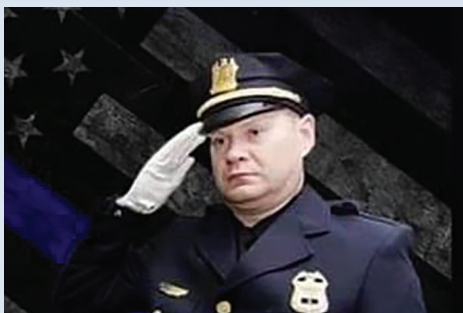
Hoboken Local 2 remembers their fallen friend Peter Zanin

■ BY KAREN JENKINS

The city of Hoboken knew Peter Zanin as a dedicated sergeant who served the community he grew up in with a devoted fervor.

His closest friends and colleagues also knew Zanin affectionately as "Peachy" — a childhood nickname that came from his red hair. He carried the nickname all the way to the Hoboken Police Department, which he joined in 1999.

"I have memories of Peachy running around with his friends," recalled Hoboken Local 2 State Delegate Mark Aurigemma, who has 38 years on the job. "He was just a kid running around with those friends, and most of them are cops here now."



Peter Zanin

Hoboken Local 2

EOW: Nov. 21, 2020

Zanin was a lifelong resident of Hoboken before moving to Parsippany a year ago. He passed away on Nov. 21 at the age of 46 while fighting medical complications following a two-week illness at St. Clare's Hospital in Denville. He's survived by his loving wife, Samantha, and his three children, Olivia, Christian and Madison.

As an engaged member of the PSOA, the supervisors' union in Hoboken, the Hoboken Local 2A member was heavily involved in events that gave back to the

community. Aurigemma facilitated turkey giveaways for Thanksgiving and Toys for Tots during Christmas early in his career, but once Zanin came onto the scene, Aurigemma passed the events off to him. He became a vital part of facilitating the events that took care of others.

"As the years went on, different generations took those things over, and Pete was one of the frontrunners with it," Aurigemma shared. "This year, we decided to do our annual toy drive, and we're joining with Hoboken Grace Community Church, calling it the Sergeant Peter 'Peachy' Zanin Hoboken Police Toy Drive. Now and in the future, that is its new name."

Aurigemma will never forget the little red-haired teenager running around Benny Tudino's Pizzeria in Hoboken with his friends Eddie and Arbend Drishti, who also grew up to become law enforcement officers. The loss of Zanin's gentle soul will be felt in Hoboken and beyond.

"He respected me as an elder, but I respected him because of his supervisor skills," Aurigemma said. "We have a word we use in Hoboken, 'cump' — it's a derivative of 'compadre.' It's a term of affection. I considered Pete my 'cump.' I'm going to miss him."



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18 holes of relief

Crystal Springs' law enforcement appreciation day a big booster for PBA members

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Talk about a much-needed vaccination with more than 100 percent efficacy.

Nobody gives law enforcement appreciation a shot in the arm like Chris Mulvihill and his crew at Crystal Springs Resort in Hamburg. The chief marketing officer of the state's most illustrious golf haven has rolled out the red carpet so often for PBA members, including the amazing NJ Law Enforcement Open the Springs has hosted since 2017.

With the fourth annual extravaganza cancelled due to the pandemic, Mulvihill wanted to find a way to get members, whom he always treats like family, a day on the links. He wanted to provide a day away from all the muck and mire of COVID exposure and anti-police nonsense.

So on Nov. 10, Mulvihill and his team opened the resort's six renowned courses for NJ cops to basically play for free. Not surprisingly, the sun soared all day, temperatures spiked to unseasonable heights and nearly 350 members hit the links to partake of this extraordinary – and much-needed – act of kindness.

"If there was any year the police deserved support, in my mind it's this year," Mulvihill stated.

Law enforcement appreciation day at Crystal Springs was originally scheduled for Oct. 29, but inclement weather rained on the parade. Of course, that didn't deter Mulvihill from extending his offer of free rounds at the resort's Minerals, Cascades, Black Bear and Crystal Springs courses, 75 percent off at Wild Turkey (normally \$100) and \$50 at Ballyowen, NJ's best public course, which is normally \$150.

This was not a day to track scores and definitely not the number of lost golf balls. Actually, the only part that needing tracking was whose turn it was to buy the next round of beverages.

The foursome from Middletown Township Local 124 didn't have that issue.

"We made the boss buy," quipped Albert Scott, who served as Local 124 president from 2012 to 2016. The boss was Anthony Gigante, who played with fellow Local 124 SOA member Brian Mc-

Grogan, Local 124 member Greg Buhowski and Scott. This group has been playing together for a couple of years, but they've never had a day like this.

"Well, we just needed to get away from work," Scott confided. "It was great to be at a place where the mindset is actually someone who cares and not having people always yelling, 'We don't care about you.'"

The Middletown members also expressed the feeling that other officers certainly shared about paying that kindness forward.

"We will definitely give them more business down the line, either with another outing or maybe even buying memberships," Scott added.

The day was such an attraction that Bergen County Sheriff's Department Local 134 put four foursomes together. President Jordan Kalendar organized the group outing, and they could be heard enjoying themselves throughout Black Bear, where Local 134 members played.

According to nearby sources, it was easy to figure out it was Local 134 because, amid all the revelry, the unmistakable voice of retired member and past State Delegate Andy Pacucci rang out loud and clear. Pacucci reunited with his members to experience the feel-good Crystal Springs spread around.

"For one day, it felt like the pandemic didn't exist," mused Pacucci, perhaps speaking up for the entire Local 134 contingent. And perhaps all 338 PBA members who participated.

"Whether you're an avid golfer or whether you just wanted to get away for the day and have some fun, you didn't have to be concerned about anything," he continued. "It was just good to be outdoors, up there in those mountains where it's beautiful."

Pacucci also spoke on behalf of members participating when surmising how Crystal Springs went above and beyond the call with this day of appreciation.

"It was a great thing they did," he explained. "First of all, with all the negativity toward law enforcement, we actually had a company that was willing to do the unpopular thing and do some-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54

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Law enforcement groups are invited to send their two best golfers to compete for a free golf membership and bragging rights. This event is open to all law enforcement departments, agencies and associations everywhere.

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The Players Gallery

PBA members came out in force to enjoy law enforcement appreciation day at Crystal Springs



From left, Middletown Township Local 124 members Albert Scott, a past Local president, Greg Buhowski and SOA members Anthony Gigante and Brian McGrogan.

18 CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53

thing for us. It would have hurt some businesses. But it was definitely appreciated by everyone out there who was playing.”

Golf has grown to be such a passion for PBA members that there might be enough ardent duffers to make for their own mini tour. But this would be a tour where members come out to support the cause.

Players who have been there repeatedly under such circumstances include Englewood Local 216 State Delegate Carlos Calderin, Hackensack Local 9 State Delegate Tim Skroka, Western Bergen County Local 79 State Delegate Kevin VanDyke of Midland Park and past Ridgewood Local 20 State Delegate Pat

Elwood, who retired this past April. They came to Crystal Springs as a foursome representing the Bergen County Conference, which Calderin chairs.

With course conditions as pristine as could be imagined, the mountain air rolling in and the unconditional hospitality of the Crystal Springs staff, they joined the 338 players in recognizing how much this day of appreciation meant.

“The camaraderie allows you to regroup,” Elwood confirmed. “The whole day just removes you from the constant strains of the job. It allows you to exhale. You can relax and engage in some good conversation. A good or bad game of golf doesn’t matter. It’s better than being at work.”

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NJSPBA brings its special services to West Virginia to honor fallen hero

The NJ State PBA Special Services trailer rode to Charleston, West Virginia, on Dec. 8 to support officers attending the funeral for 28-year-old Officer Cassie Johnson, who was lost in the line of duty on Dec. 3.

Johnson responded to a parking complaint on Charleston's West Side on Dec. 1, when she sustained gunshot wounds in the chest shortly after arriving on the scene. She was transported to Charleston Area Medical Center, where she remained on life support until Dec. 3.

Johnson had served with the Charleston Police Department for almost two years and previously served as a city humane officer for two years.

Montgomery Township Local 355 State Delegate Joe Sles once again joined the PBA Special Services team to make the trip to West Virginia. Atlantic City Local 24 State Delegate Matt Rogers and Morristown Local 43 State Delegate Don Chaudruc also were part of the group that was led by PBA Special Projects Coordinator John Hulse.



Members of the NJ State PBA bring the Special Services trailer to honor 28-year-old Officer Cassie Johnson, who was lost in the line of duty on Dec. 3, after being shot in the chest while responding to a parking complaint.



Johnson was sworn into the Charleston Police Department in January 2019.



The Charleston Convention Center lights up blue during Johnson's memorial service on Dec. 8, as the NJSPBA joins law enforcement officers from West Virginia in the parking lot to honor the fallen hero.



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AROUND THE STATE

News about NJ Cops

Rescue Reunion

Roselle Park members visit woman they saved from near-death experience

■ BY ROSEMARY AN

When Roselle Park Local 27 Members William Hannon, Angelo Marino and Gregory Polakoski finally worked together again on the day shift in November, a woman they had saved four years ago popped into their heads. Motivated by the opportunity to show their support for the community, especially amid the pandemic, they set out to reconnect with Lisa Guarnaccio.

Polakoski, the Local 27 State Delegate, reached out to the woman's husband, Patrick, to set up a surprise visit on Nov. 20 at Robert Gordon Elementary School, where Lisa works.

"Of course, I love you guys, I would love to be there as well," Patrick told Polakoski.

The members reached out to the school to visit Lisa's classroom, but due to pandemic restrictions, they settled for surprising Lisa at dismissal. The officers, alongside Patrick and the couple's two daughters, showed up with a bouquet of flowers for the woman who almost lost her life due to a cardiac arrest four years ago.

"This time of year, usually when her day is coming up, we all remember what happened and you kind of cross your fingers," Patrick shared. "We say, 'We made one year now, let's keep going' and now we are on the fourth year and she has been doing pretty well."

Patrick Guarnaccio woke up to his wife gasping for air at around 2 a.m. on Nov. 20, 2016. Their elder daughter, 26-year-old Brandy, woke up suddenly and went to her parents' room to find her father administering CPR on her mother.

As Brandy assisted with calling 9-1-1, Amber, 21, walked into the chaos. "She started freaking out," Patrick remarked. "Let's face it, you see your mother on the floor not breathing."

Marino, who responded to a call about an unknown medical emergency, was



From left, Roselle Park Chief Daniel McCaffery and Lisa Guarnaccio with Officers William Hannon, Angelo Marino and Gregory Polakoski.

the first to arrive. When Hannon and Polakoski came on the scene, he told them, "This lady is not breathing."

"The only thing I remember is seeing the look of concern on their faces," Polakoski recalled.

They rushed upstairs to find Patrick standing over his wife, who was on the floor and unconscious. The officers took turns administering CPR, but it wasn't enough.

They set up a defibrillator and shocked her once, but that wasn't enough.

After a second shock, she started to breathe again.

When someone goes into cardiac arrest, there is a narrow window of eight to 10 minutes before the lack of oxygen to the brain causes serious harm.

"The timing was amazing," Patrick shared. "You could see the compassion and humanity of the officers, because they really wanted to revive her."

After emergency medical personnel arrived and took Lisa to Trinitas Hospital in Elizabeth, she was put into a medically induced coma. She finally woke up on Nov. 23.

The Guarnaccio family tries not to dwell on the incident. But the couple remembers the incredible work that Polakoski, Hannon and Marino did for the family.

"They are definitely my angels, and without them I would have missed so many of the blessings I have today," Lisa shared. "All of these blessings in the last four years, like having my dream come true of being a teacher, being able to meet my three new grandchildren and being able to wake up and breathe every morning."

And as someone who thinks about her lifesavers every day, Lisa was ecstatic to see the three members, along with her family, standing outside Robert Gordon Elementary School.

"I did not know who my husband was standing with, and I was like, 'Who is calling me by my first name?' And then I saw Gregory, and on the other corner my family," Lisa noted. "Them coming here and not forgetting about me, visiting me four years later, was so heartwarming that they care so much."

Students on board with appreciation for Old Bridge Local 127

A board with “thank-you” letters and pictures to law enforcement officers plastered all over it hangs in the lobby of the Old Bridge Township municipal building.

One message written by a child reads, “Dear Old Bridge Police Department, thank you so much for keeping us safe.” It includes a red heart drawn on the bottom.

Students, parents and staff at McDivitt Elementary School in Old Bridge school presented a “Kudo Board” to Local 127 members that includes notes and messages of appreciation for the men and women in blue who are sworn to defend and protect every day.

The poster featured pictures of all the school events that the Local ran with students, along with messages supporting members and praying for their safety. The Local has a longstanding relationship with all of the elementary schools in town, especially McDivitt.

When delivering the poster, school principal Laurie Anne Coletti told members, “Our police department is the best, and we are lucky to have you.”



The Kudo Board also features such memorable notes as one with a blue line flag inside a heart. Another includes hand-drawn images of a hand holding up two fingers for peace, a blue heart and badge with blue line flag inside. It carries the message, “Peace. Love. Back the Blue.”

“It was a remarkable poster,” shared Local 127 President Vinny Galgano. “It was a really nice gesture and heartfelt, so everyone appreciated it.”



Middletown Township Local 124 salutes veterans

The 7,002 American flags arranged on the front lawn of Westminster Presbyterian Church on Nov. 7 served as a reminder of the courageous soldiers who gave their lives for freedom. To honor the soldiers’ sacrifice, Middletown Township Local 124 members presented a 21-gun salute and played “Taps” at the 8th Annual Field of Flags Ceremony.

The Local did not previously have an Honor Guard or a member who could play the bugle, but there was a surge of volunteers this year. Member Michael Allen, an active duty military soldier, knows how to play and stepped up to put together a group of members to perform flawlessly.

“In the recent years I’ve noticed that we’ve been tapped on the shoulder to kind of be a bigger part of the ceremony,” said Local 124 State Delegate Anthony Dellatacoma. “[The ceremony] really has grown in size over the years, and just to be a part of that platform was an honor.” The memorial remained standing until Nov. 14.

The Field of Flags Ceremony was first



established in 2012 to honor the military soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice, and especially those involved in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. This year’s guest speakers included Mayor Tony Perry, State Assembly Member Gerry Scharfenberger, military veteran Darren DeMotta and pastor Reverend Joseph Hein.

Dellatacoma notes that the more than 7,000 flags are a poignant reminder of the high price of war, which is especially striking to this Local because half of the department’s members are military veterans or active military.

“To have them involved in something that touches their hearts so near and



dear and have them recognized not only as police officers but also as military veterans is important because they wear two hats,” he shared. “To give them the recognition they deserve and to give back to the community like this — it’s a win-win all around.”

Hopewell Township Local scores touchdown for domestic violence awareness

Against a team of career and volunteer Hopewell Valley Firefighters, Hopewell Township Local 342 played a football game on Nov. 28 to raise money for Womanspace, an organization that provides services for those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault.

Local 342 member Jim Rosso came up with the idea for the fundraiser that came to fruition with minimal time to organize.

"For only being thrown together in a couple of weeks, we had a great turnout," said Vinnie Amabile, the Local's president. "It was competitive but not too competitive — just enough."

Local 342 emerged victorious in the first installment of what they hope will be an annual event played on Thanksgiving weekend. The Local won 47-35 in a hard-fought game filled with light-hearted smack talk and a whole lot of fun.

Amabile mentioned how within the last year or so, the Local has been trying to put forth a bigger effort with fundraising events.



"Anything our members are willing to be a part of and contribute to, we're all for it," he shared.

The Local has worked closely with Womanspace for many years, and the game allowed them to donate \$1,250 in proceeds to the cause with the help of the Hopewell Valley Firefighters. They hope to expand on the charity football game once the COVID-19 pandemic settles.

"It's just a great opportunity to have fun and do a good deed," Amabile said.



Old Bridge Local 127's very own winter wonderland

Old Bridge Local 127 went all out to secure Santa and his toys this year. The Local, along with the Old Bridge Police Department, hosted a successful 24th Annual Cops for Kids Holiday Party for local families in need on Dec. 4. This year, the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions prompted an outdoor drive-thru "Winter Wonderland" event, where families were greeted by police and township employees who went with their families.

Families were also able to enter a raffle for a chance to win a 36-inch television, six drones and seven bicycles as holiday gifts, which were presented by none other than Santa and his No. 1 elf, Bella.

"We went in with no expectations because this is the first time we ever did the event outside," said Old Bridge Local President Vinny Galgano. "And it turned out better than expected."

Local 127 member Chris Heredia played Santa and his elf was Bella Rondinelli, who worked hard to make the event a true holiday party for the children of the families. The event also featured a free dinner and ice cream for dessert, compliments of Friendly's of Old Bridge.

Several Old Bridge businesses participated in the event through donations of food, gifts or funding, including DuPont, DeFino Contracting, Old Bridge Militia, Bagel Boy, Giuseppe's, Krispy Pizza, Domino's, Aiello's, KFC, Nicolo's, LaDolce, Meliani's, Old Bridge Pizza, ShopRite, Grand Marquis, Outback Steakhouse, McDonald's, Texas Roadhouse, Bubba's 33, Palms Plaza, Top Hat Catering and Wegmans.

"Remarkably, this year we got more donations for the kids than we had ever gotten," Galgano shared. "People realized that kids are really struggling during this pandemic and needed a pick-me-up."



New Providence Local 132 goes on a candy mission

Members of Local 132, along with New Providence residents, collected several hundred pounds of candy for Operation Candy Drop IV, an event intended to thank and support National Guard soldiers currently serving in Afghanistan. But candy wasn't the only treat — handwritten letters from students of Salt Brook Elementary School were also mailed to several New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland National Guard soldiers to help make their mission more comfortable.



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It's 'Don't Shave December' for Roselle Park Local 27

Roselle Park Local 27 participated in "No Shave November," but members were able to extend their beard time into December to raise donations for Cop2Cop, a support program for New Jersey officers and their families. In December, participating members are seeking donations in memory of Edward Nortrup, who took his own life on Jan. 19 this year.



Woodbridge Local 38 receives \$5,000 donation

Woodbridge Local 38 was presented with a \$5,000 donation from HF Health and Fitness Professionals, a facility that provides physical therapy, acupuncture and chiropractic services. Pictured is Local 38 President James Distelcamp with HF owner Sean Basinger.

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Fanwood Local 123 promotion and new members

Fanwood Local 123 member Marc Gottlick, a 25-year veteran of the Local and a lifetime resident of Fanwood, was promoted from sergeant to lieutenant on Oct. 20. He was joined by his wife Jen and sons Ethan and Jackson when being sworn in to his new position.

The Local also welcomed three new members: Robert Jastrzebski and Kimara Ransom, who transferred from Plainfield, and Carlos Gonzalez from Newark.



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Another feast-ive giveaway in Passaic

Local 14 members step up again to feed those in need

A little pandemic math seemed worthy of applying to the annual Passaic Local 14 Thanksgiving turkey giveaway. Local 14 once again distributed 500 turkeys to families in need, who gathered in front of City Hall on Nov. 23.

Figure one turkey of this size can feed up to 10 people. That's 5,000 people who could have enjoyed a hearty Thanksgiving meal.

Now, multiply that by a factor of 10, perhaps, given how the pandemic has left so many families struggling to put food on the table. And then add in how the Local 14 turkey giveaway bolstered the efforts of the Passaic food pantry.

"We were thinking of another location, but the mayor called us and told us there was just a huge shortage of food," explained one of Passaic Local 14's finest – NJSPBA Executive Vice President Marc Kovar. "Sometimes, it's easier to write a check, but to be able to pass out turkeys, to do something for people who can't do for themselves, that makes you feel really good inside."

Nearly 20 Local 14 members once again stepped up to work the turkey giveaway. Members of the State Troopers NCO and Mayor Hector Lora also came out to lend a hand.

Seeing them unload the truck full of turkeys and stage them on what might have been the biggest Thanksgiving table of the holiday was additionally heartwarming for those who helped. Even with the pandemic-required social distancing, members were able to interact with residents enough to see the thanks on their faces for receiving this holiday gift from Local 14.

"Working in Passaic for all those years, you see so many people down on their luck," Kovar added. "I never thought I would be in this position to help people out like that. This turkey giveaway has become the best part of our Thanksgiving."



Woodbridge Local 38 makes a special delivery

Members of Woodbridge Local 38, with the assistance of Saker ShopRite of Woodbridge, successfully provided meals and smiles to 50 families throughout the township on Nov. 23. The members helped organize, shop for and deliver the special Thanksgiving food deliveries to relieve local families who were harder hit during the pandemic.



Old Bridge Local 127 provides dinner and dessert

Members of Old Bridge Local 127 and 127a took the morning of Nov. 21 to give back to the community. The members participated in the annual Thanksgiving donation at the Old Bridge Food Bank and created a drive-thru event this year to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Thanks to the members, families were able to pick up a full Thanksgiving meal from the comfort of their cars. The event — with 75 turkeys and pies donated for local families in need — was made possible through the Old Bridge Department of Parks and Recreation and Social Services in partnership with the Department of Public Works.



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Mercer County Conference gives back for Thanksgiving

The Mercer County Conference helped unload and distribute more than 600 pounds of turkey and 450 meals at St. Phillips Baptist Church in Hamilton on the morning of Nov. 23. They also assisted with turkey deliveries to the Hamilton YMCA and distributed turkey at the Willing Workers Jerusalem Church in Trenton.



Left to Right: **EVAN BAIRD, MD**, Assistant Clinical Professor, Mount Sinai Medical Center;
RAFAEL LEVIN, M.D., M.S.C., Chief of Spine, HackensackUMC at Pascack Valley;
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Manasquan Local 284's truckload of food



When the Elizabeth Housing Authority called about an extra 200 boxes of food it wanted to distribute,

Manasquan Local 284 went to help. Members of the Local transferred more than 7,000 pounds of packaged groceries to the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the Southern Monmouth office on Nov. 16 using a Boar's Head truck.



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Know what to do at a grade-crossing accident



THOMAS J. JEDIC

For many of you with experience investigating a collision between a motor vehicle and a train at a grade crossing, some of these points will reinforce what you already know. However, during the past year I have received numerous calls from municipal and other police agencies with questions regarding the issue and who has responsibility.

First, remember that as first responders, the local or jurisdictional police dispatched to the accident are most likely the best equipped to handle the case. Railroad Police in New Jersey cover hundreds of square miles and may be hours away

from your scene — too far away to respond in a timely manner. Railroad police can and will act as support, logistical assistance and the link between your agency and the railroad itself. Railroad police will respond if necessary and without doubt at derailments and serious events, fatal strikes, etc. But remember, a grade crossing is a roadway which has railroad tracks through it. The crossings are engineered and designed by the Department of Transportation. The roadway leading up to the track(s) is not the railroad's responsibility; it's the domain of the local, county or state highway authority in which it lies. The railroad maintains the signals, the crossbuck signs, the Emergency Notification Sign (ENS), the pavement between the rails and other sim-

ple maintenance. The highway authority controls the travel lanes and the round yellow-and-black RRR sign, also known as the advanced warning sign.

When you arrive after a collision occurs, immediately make sure your dispatch contacts the railroad operating the track(s) to ensure that all rail traffic will be halted during your investigation. You *must* contact the rail line — the ENS blue and white

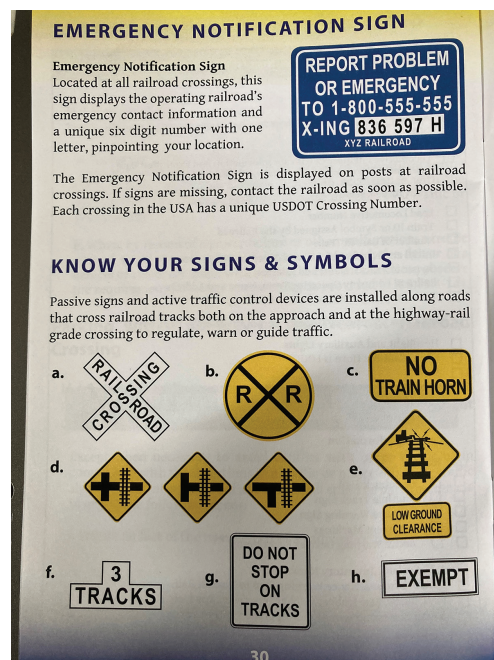
sign at the crossing will display the 24/7 contact number. Then as a police officer, you always render necessary aid. But when the NJTR-1 begins, you can handle it.

The state has numerous motor vehicle statutes that cover incidents at grade crossings precisely because you can investigate. It may not be possible to wait for a responding railroad police officer to respond, as he or she may be many miles away and even in another state. By all means, the railroad police will be called and made aware. They will also reach out to ascertain if you need any assistance in gathering details about the line, the train symbol, the crew, etc. The railroad police will act as your link in gathering any information you may need (such as train video, signal information and other logistical sourcing).

So, I urge everyone to visit the www.uctoa.com homepage and view or download the New Jersey Railroad Law Enforcement Guide. This 40-page booklet covers a wide variety of topics and lists criminal and motor vehicle statutes you will use along the tracks. It explains 49 CFR Part 219.201, the federal regulations regarding alcohol- and drug-related incidents involving train crews. The booklet also explains how an engineer does not have to produce a driver's license, since the locomotive is not a motor vehicle and his or her information does not go in the driver's section of the NJTR-1.

The best rule of thumb is safety, of course. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, reach out and I will help get the answers you need. Be safe, especially around the railroad environment. Have a safe and healthy holiday season and a happy new year.

Brother Thomas Jedic is the Railroad Police of New Jersey Local 323 State Delegate, a member of the Norfolk Southern Police — Special Operations Response Team (SORT) and an executive board member of NJ Operation Lifesaver. He can be reached at 201-207-1394 or thomas.jedic@nscorp.com.



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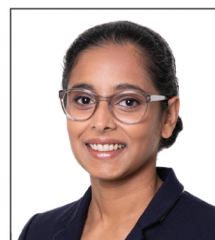
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Current case law on home entries



ED
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Many times, officers are confronted with a situation where they are on the doorstep of a person's home and need to decide if they can lawfully enter. However, the decision to enter — or not to enter — is one that must be made considering many different cases involving home entries that have been decided by our courts. While our courts are sure to issue new rulings that will refine, modify and, in some instances, set forth new case law on home entries, I will summarize the most common case law referenced on this topic.

As a basic fundamental principle, our Constitution clearly provides protections to individuals from unreasonable government invasion. With regard to private homes, the expectation of privacy is so important and society's acceptance of it so apparent that warrantless entries are viewed as being unreasonable unless the entry falls into one of the recognized exceptions to warrant requirement.

As a starting point, in *Payton v. New York*, the U.S. Supreme Court held that “for Fourth Amendment purposes, an arrest warrant founded on probable cause implicitly carries with it the limited authority to enter a dwelling in which the suspect lives when there is reason to believe the suspect is within.” The same principles apply to a home entry when an officer is in possession of a search warrant issued upon a finding of probable cause. Of course, the location entered under the authority of a search warrant must be listed in the warrant to satisfy the particularity requirement. With respect to multi-family homes and apartment buildings, the search warrant has to describe the specific apartment or unit within to satisfy the particularity requirement.

Generally, unless a “no-knock” warrant is issued, prior to entry under the authority of a warrant, an officer must knock and announce their presence, authority and purpose, and demand entry. During daytime warrant executions, our courts have ruled that 15 to 20 seconds is a “reasonable” time under the Fourth Amendment to wait between the initial “knock-and-announce” and the forced entry. According to *State v. Robinson*, “[t]here are common factors to be applied in determining the reasonableness of the delay between knocking and announcing and a forcible entry. They include, but need not be limited to: a suspect's violent criminal history, an informant's tip that weapons will be present, the risks to officers' lives and safety, the size or layout of defendant's property, whether persons other than defendant reside there, whether others involved in the crime are expected to be present, and the time of day[.]”

The Supreme Court addressed the issue of when officers do not “knock-and-announce” during a warrant execution when

a judge had originally refused to issue a “no-knock” warrant. In *Richards v. Wisconsin*, the court stated that a “decision not to authorize a no-knock entry should not be interpreted to remove the officers' authority to exercise independent judgment concerning the wisdom of a no-knock entry at the time the warrant is being executed.” In other words, the doorstep events trump the judge for this limited purpose. According to the court, “[i]n order to justify a “no-knock” entry, the police must have a reasonable suspicion that knocking and announcing their presence, under the particular circumstances, would be dangerous or futile, or that it would inhibit the effective investigation of the crime by, for example, allowing the destruction of evidence.”

When officers are waiting for a search warrant to be issued, they must rely on the New Jersey Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. State*, which generally requires officers to “get a warrant and, if reasonably necessary, [they] may secure the [location] for a reasonable period of time from the outside.” In *Brown*, the court stated that “New Jersey recognizes the exigency exception to the warrant requirement. In a case of true exigency and probable cause, the police can enter a dwelling.”

Officers also provide a “community caretaking” function and have an obligation to respond to and investigate emergencies. However, such entries must be based on the officer having “an objectively reasonable basis to believe that an emergency requires that [they] provide immediate assistance to protect or preserve life, or to prevent serious injury,” and that there is a “reasonable nexus between the emergency and the area or places to be searched.” (*State v. Edmonds*)

Finally, when officers ask to enter a home, they are not required to advise an occupant of a premises of the “right to refuse” the officer's request to enter. This is limited to the entry itself and does not extend to a consent search requested by an officer once inside. Lawful consent searches require that a person's consent be “unequivocal and specific” and “freely and intelligently” given. We often refer to this as being “voluntary, knowing and intelligent,” and that includes a person knowing they have the right to refuse.

Ed Esposito is a captain at the Essex County Sheriff's Office and a member of PBA Local 183A.

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Domestic violence and the military reservist



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Do not waive your rights in the Reserve Component just because you have a civilian charge. The military has a separate system of due process. Yes, for military reservists, the issuance of a final restraining order (FRO) can be fatal to both careers. Under the New Jersey Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (N.J.S.A. 2C:25-19), the purchase, ownership, possession or control of a firearm is prohibited by persons convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence offenses. Basically, if an FRO is entered against you, you are no longer able to carry a weapon and ultimately cannot continue to do your job. But you can still protect your military benefits.

New Jersey allows victims of domestic violence to seek a restraining order against: a spouse, former spouse or any other person who is a present or former household member; a former or current dating partner or anyone with whom the victim has had a romantic relationship; or any person with whom the victim has a child in common or anticipates having a child in common, if one of the parties is pregnant.

In New Jersey, proof of a “predicate act” — the actual offense committed such as assault, stalking, battery, sexual assault and harassment, to name a few — is necessary to obtain an FRO. Altogether, the state recognizes 19 different crimes that can be

used as predicate acts. New Jersey also looks at whether there is a history of domestic violence and whether issuing a final restraining order is necessary to protect the person complaining of domestic violence.

Firearm prohibitions for persons subject to domestic violence restraining orders

As soon as a temporary restraining order (TRO) is entered, the police will confiscate any and all weapons belonging to the accused. If you are a law enforcement officer, that means for the next 10 days, at least, you will not be able to carry a weapon until a resolution of the domestic violence complaint is reached.

Within 10 days of the issuance of a TRO, there will be a hearing to determine whether an FRO is necessary. During this time, seek legal advice from experienced military and civilian counsel. You need to know military law as well as defending against a FRO and any possible criminal charges. If an FRO is entered against you, your weapons will not be returned, but that is not the end of the process.

The Lautenberg Amendment

Under the Lautenberg Amendment, those who have a protective order issued by the military or a misdemeanor conviction for domestic violence (an FRO) are not allowed to carry or transport a firearm or ammunition. There is no exception for military or law enforcement. Without a weapon, most cannot do their jobs.

New Jersey Prevention of Domestic Violence Act

In addition, the New Jersey Prevention of Domestic Violence Act dictates that weapons seized under the act must be transferred to the county prosecutor's office where the alleged domestic violence occurred. The prosecutor's office must then file for a forfeiture of the weapons within 45 days of receipt.

A hearing will then take place in Superior Court to determine whether the weapons should be returned. To return the weapons, the court must find:

1. The owner is not subject to any disabilities as stated under N.J.S.A. 2C:58-3c (purchase of firearms); and
2. The domestic violence complaint has been dismissed by the person who originally alleged the domestic violence and the prosecutor has determined there is no basis to indict.
3. The defendant was found to be not guilty of domestic violence by a court of law.
4. The domestic violence situation no longer exists.

Lawyers with experience in family law, military law and criminal defense will be essential. Military protective orders and FROs are not straightforward issues. Defending yourself in a military setting as well as a civilian court is a daunting task, with decisions that affect two different pensions. Get help, and do not discuss without a lawyer. Statements made to sergeants and military officers are just as admissible as statements made to Internal Affairs.

Thomas Roughneen, Esq., practices at CitizenSoldierLaw and focuses his general practice on veterans.

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My law enforcement connection

Retired sergeant from Passaic County Prosecutor's Office in 2011 and proud member of Local 265. Held various positions, the last being vice president. Now a Retired Officers Local 600 member.

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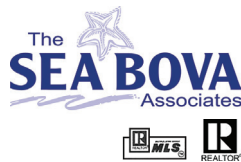
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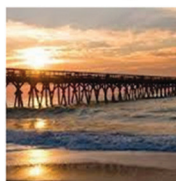
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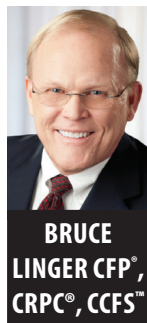


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Before you claim Social Security



Whether you want to leave work at 62, 67 or 72, claiming the retirement benefits you are entitled to by federal law is no casual decision. You will want to consider a few key factors first.

How long do you think you will live?

If you think you will live into your 90s, it may be better to claim later. If you start receiving Social Security benefits at or after full retirement age (FRA, which varies from age 66 to 67 for those born in 1943 or later), your monthly benefit will be larger than if you had claimed at 62.

If you really need retirement income, then claiming at or close to 62 might make more sense. The choice comes down to more, smaller lifetime payments versus fewer, larger lifetime payments. Social Security projects that the average 65-year-old man will live 84 years, and the average 65-year-old woman to 86.5 years.

Will you keep working?

You might not want to work too much, since earning too much income may result in your Social Security being withheld or taxed.

Prior to full retirement age, your benefits may be lessened if your income tops certain limits. As of 2018, if you are aged 62 to 65, receive Social Security and have an income over \$17,040, \$1 of your benefits will be withheld for every \$2. If you receive Social Security and turn 66 later this year, then \$1 of your benefits will be withheld

for every \$3 that you earn above \$45,360.

Social Security income may also be taxed above the program's "combined income" threshold. ("Combined income" = adjusted gross income + nontaxable interest + 50 percent of Social Security benefits.) Single filers who have combined incomes from \$25,000 to \$34,000 may have to pay federal income tax on up to 50 percent of their Social Security benefits, and that also applies to joint filers with combined incomes of \$32,000 to \$44,000. Single filers with combined incomes above \$34,000 and joint filers whose combined incomes surpass \$44,000 may have to pay federal income taxes on up to 85 percent of their Social Security benefits.

How much might be coming your way?

Visit ssa.gov to find out. Social Security calculates your monthly benefit using a formula based on your 35 highest-earning years. If you have worked for less time, Social Security fills in the "blank years" with zeros. If you have 33 years of work experience, working another couple of years might translate to a slightly higher Social Security income.

Bruce Linger is a representative with Lincoln Financial Advisors and may be reached at www.goforanswers.com, 201-556-4564 or bruce.linger@lfg.com. Securities and advisory services offered through Lincoln Financial Advisors Corp., a broker/dealer (Member SIPC) and registered investment advisor. Insurance offered through Lincoln affiliates and other fine companies. 61 South Paramus Road, NJ 07652 201-556-4500

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Opening the door to communication with young children



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Previously, we discussed the possibility that children of first responders may be at risk for secondhand trauma or secondary traumatic stress (STS). We listed symptoms parents can watch for, including sleep disturbances, lowered concentration, sadness, irritability and thinking bad things are going to happen. If you notice your child might be experiencing these things, it's important to be able to talk with him or her.

Here are some tips for creating an environment in which your children feel safe to express their thoughts and feelings, which is just as important to their wellbeing as teaching them the three Rs.

And opening the door to communication when children are young can help keep it from being slammed shut when they reach adolescence.

Six levels of validation

In simplest terms, validation is a way to show your child that you get it. It is the ability to communicate that their thoughts, feelings and actions are understandable, and to create a psychologically safe space for them to open up. Validation does not necessarily mean you agree; it means you hear your child and understand where they're coming from.

In using validation as an effective communication tool, it can be helpful to think in terms of the following six levels:

Paying attention. At the very minimum, validation means paying attention. It means putting down your phone, turning off the TV and tuning in to what your child is trying to say to you. Parents are good at multitasking, but when it comes to communicating with your child, it is important to push distractions to the side and show them they have your full attention. Try setting aside at least 15 minutes every day to have a conversation with your child.

Reflective listening. Reflective listening shows your child that you really do hear what they are saying. The act of reflective listening involves repeating back to your child what they said and asking if you got it right. For example, if your child is upset about not getting invited to a birthday party, you might say: "I hear you are sad about not getting invited to the party, is that right?" Try not to use language or a tone that may be perceived as judgmental, and try not to get them to change their mind. Even though you know there will be other parties, it is important not to minimize the hurt your child is feeling at that moment.

Reading between the lines. Try to be sensitive to what is not being said as much as you are to what is being said. Though you may not be able to read your child's mind, you can sense when something is off. For instance, if your child is normally talkative at dinner and then one night is very quiet, don't ignore it. Say to them: "You're unusually quiet tonight. How are you feeling?"

Understanding. Tell your child that you understand how they feel. Let them know that it's understandable to feel anxious about appearing on video for their virtual class or that it makes a lot of sense that they're feeling angry that they can't see their friends because of COVID-19 and the need to social distance.

Acknowledging the valid. Acknowledge when your child's feelings make sense and that their behavior makes sense when there are facts and logic that support it. For example, if your child can't sit still for class, acknowledge that it makes sense they are feeling tired and distracted and might not want to sit at their desk.

Showing equality. Show your child that even though they are young, their feelings carry equal weight. Avoid dismissing their feelings as childish or immature. There is a time and a place for parents to share their own experiences, but in the moment, that could come off as invalidating or one-upping. Keep the focus on your child.

When help is needed

Sometimes, children may not be able to express their emotions or handle their feelings effectively, even in households where open communication is practiced and valued. If you are concerned about your child's mental health, talk to your pediatrician and seek help from a mental health therapist. It's important to be aware that secondary traumatic stress (STS) is a symptom not a disease or disorder. So, if STS is a symptom, we need know the answer to the question: What is the source of this symptom? Because when we identify its source, then we can treat it so that the symptom will go away.

The Children's Program at Penn Medicine Princeton House Behavioral Health offers intensive outpatient treatment services for children ages 6 to 12 with emotional and behavioral problems that interfere with functioning at school and at home.

Currently, the program is offered via telehealth three or five days per week for three hours per day. The program helps children to:

- improve self-control and coping ability
- express emotions in a positive way
- function in healthier ways at school and home
- improve self-esteem.

Iris Perlstein is the clinical coordinator of first responder treatment services at Penn Medicine Princeton House Behavioral Health. To learn more about the Children's Program at Penn Medicine Princeton House Behavioral Health, call 888-437-1610 or visit www.princetonhouse.org.

When to see a doctor

It's not always obvious when you have a serious condition, such as heart disease — just as high blood pressure usually has no symptoms — and many people don't know they're affected. Many other symptoms of heart disease can be similar to those of other conditions, or you may chalk them up to a busy lifestyle or a stressful job.

But did you know that if you have untreated high blood pressure your heart has to work harder than normal to meet your body's demands? Over time, this puts you at increased risk for a heart attack, stroke, heart failure and even kidney disease.

With health risks in mind, here are five things that should send you to your doctor or cardiologist:

You're tired. Many of us are tired, due to overloaded lives, but if you feel sluggish even when you've had enough rest, your heart may be to blame. If you wake up tired and your partner says you snore, you may have sleep apnea, which, if left untreated, increases your chance of high blood pressure, heart damage, abnormal heart rhythms, heart failure and stroke.

You're short of breath. If activities you used to do without a problem cause you to be short of breath, don't ignore it. Don't just assume you're out of shape or tired. Being short of breath

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE TIPS



can be a symptom of heart failure. Sudden-onset breathlessness can also be related to a heart attack, so if you can't catch your breath and have accompanying chest pain, call 9-1-1.

You're dizzy. It's not uncommon to have a quick bout of dizziness when you stand up from a seated position

too quickly or don't eat or drink enough. But feeling dizzy can be related to your blood pressure, or an abnormal heart rhythm. It can also be a symptom of a heart attack. Don't ignore it.

Your legs or ankles are swollen. If your heart isn't pumping effectively, it can lead to poor circulation in your extremities, especially your legs. Swollen feet or ankles can be a symptom of heart failure, and pain in your lower leg can indicate a dangerous blood clot.

You have pain in your upper body. Not all heart attacks are accompanied by sudden and severe chest pain; instead, you may notice discomfort in your arm, jaw or back, especially if you're a woman. So if you have pain you can't attribute to another cause, or also have symptoms such as fatigue, dizziness or sweating, get medical help.

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ASK THE PHYSICIAN

Renee Bullock-Palmer, M.D.

Cardiologist

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Q: I've let myself get really out of shape these last few years. Now I have high cholesterol, so my doctor put me on meds, which I don't like taking, and he also told me to cut the fried, fatty foods and start exercising, which, frankly, I also don't like doing! My question is this: If I really get serious about exercising, can I get my cholesterol down so I don't have to keep taking meds?

-Tom K., Wildwood

A: Tom, I applaud your honesty, and you're certainly not alone with your feelings about medications and exercise! Eating a healthy diet is always an important factor in preventing heart

disease, but exercise can also help lower your cholesterol. Being overweight tends to increase the amount of low-density lipoproteins (LDL) in your blood, which contribute to fatty build-ups in arteries. Research has shown that exercise stimulates enzymes that move LDL from the blood to the liver. The cholesterol is then converted into bile or excreted, so the more you exercise, the more LDL your body expels. Even moderate exercise (about 12 miles of brisk walking or jogging per week) positively affects LDL levels, and the benefit increases with more intense exercise, as HDL levels are increased. As your physician has cleared you to begin an exercise program, I would strongly recommend taking up the challenge.

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State PBA Meetings

Every month except August, the State Board of Delegates meets to discuss the business of the organization. All members in good standing are welcome to attend. See Page 8 for meeting locations and dates.

Clinical Services

On-site counseling for individuals and family members, training seminars (e.g. suicide, stress, PTSD, etc.) & general consultation on mental health is available to PBA Members at no cost. For services, call 732-636-8860 or for the 24-hour emergency hotline call 732-609-3554.

PBA License Plates

Every member of the PBA may have PBA license plates issued to them for display on vehicles owned or registered to the member or the member's spouse. There is a \$50 fee.

Courtesy Cards

Each year, members are issued 10 PBA Courtesy Cards that can be given to law enforcement supporters.

Family Member Courtesy Cards

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Every member may have up to three shields licensed to them for display in vehicles owned or registered to the member or the member's spouse.

Special Services

The PBA maintains three trailers equipped with refreshment services and other event support functions. These trailers are used at events such as law enforcement funerals, the Polar Bear Plunge and other events members attend. The trailers are also available for Locals' functions.

Keeping the Members Informed

The State PBA is the only Law Enforcement Union in New Jersey that provides its membership with a full-color, monthly magazine that contains real-time news and information about events and happenings that affect your working conditions. *NJ COPS* is mailed directly to the homes of our active and Local 600 members.

Peer Assistance Response Team

For assistance with any issues related to mental health, addiction, suicide prevention or critical incidents, contact:

- **Dr. Eugene Stefanelli**
Clinical Services Director Hotline: 732-609-3554
Cell: 973-768-5300
- **Mauro Farallo**
Peer Liaison Committee Chairman
Cell: 973-902-7821
- **Cherie Castellano**
Executive Director Cop-2-Cop
Hotline: 866-267-2267
Cell: 732-713-8037
- **Dr. Michael Bizzarro**
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Cell: 732-771-7165
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Beneficiaries of PBA members killed in the line of duty as a law enforcement officer or member of the National Guard or Reserve will receive a \$25,000 death benefit provided by the NJ State PBA Survivor & Welfare Fund.

NJ COP SHOT

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Labor consultant Mike Freeman is available to assist PBA Locals and SOAs with labor and discipline representation and research questions.

Union Leadership Training

Training for Local State Delegates, presidents, and other executive board members is provided at the State PBA office on a regular basis.

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