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The official publication of the New Jersey State PBA

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MARCH 2021

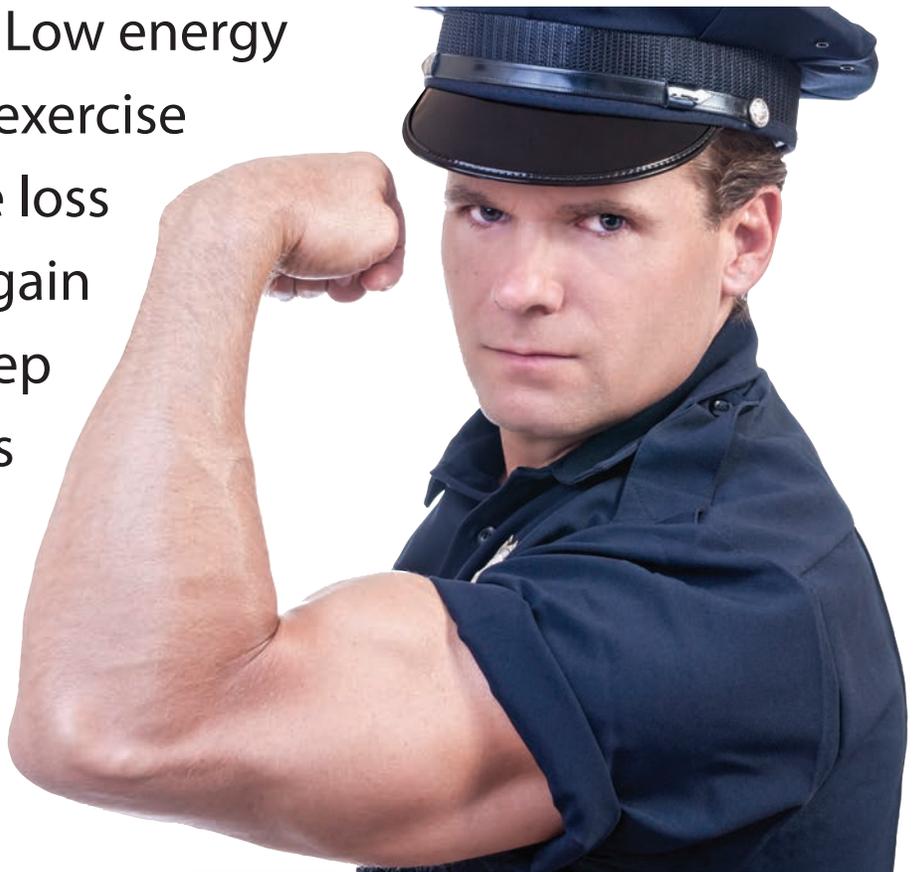
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NJ Cops Magazine celebrates 10 years as the official publication of the NJSPBA

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The President's Message

For 10 years now, we know you have been getting the message



**Patrick
Colligan**

These days, many marriages don't last 10 years. But as you can see from the cover story of this issue, we are celebrating our 10th anniversary of the partnership between the NJSPBA and Krurapp Communications, Inc. publishing *NJ Cops Magazine*. I will note in a bit of irony that the traditional gift for a 10th anniversary is tin. If you don't get it, you're still too new!

I vaguely remember the PBA newsletter *New Jersey's Finest*. Try as everybody might, deadlines were usually delayed by one emergency or another, and it was difficult to chase down the big stories without a full-time staff. But despite being cobbled together, usually at the very last minute, it was still a great opportunity to get our message out to the members. It was not perfect, but it worked.

Then, the opportunity came along to remove a big weight from everybody's plate, get on a tight timeline and produce a much better platform to reach our members. *NJ Cops* had already existed but was acquired by Krurapp in 2011. So the marriage was in the works.

I still think it's incredibly important to attend your PBA Local meetings. The union simply cannot run without your commitment and support. COVID has certainly made it even more difficult. But the business of the PBA continues every day, pandemic or no pandemic. In fact, with the wave of horrible COVID policies implemented during the past year, I would say there is no more important time to be involved.

As difficult as COVID has been, the flurry of police reform discussions made this past year even more trying for all of us. I will be very blunt: If your State Delegates have continuously said "nothing to report," they just haven't been listening. I would say that there has been more information disseminated during the past 12 months than in recent memory.

And this has been where *NJ Cops Magazine* has been able to fill in the gaps. It has given the NJSPBA the ability to get the important messages out to all our members, especially during the past year, when many Locals weren't able to have meetings.

We count on *NJ Cops* to deliver news and information to our members, but these last 12 months were more important than ever in our 10-year history with Krurapp. I can say with a fair amount of certainty that our profession has never faced more changes and challenges than we have in the last year. We've counted on *NJ Cops* to deliver our message, and we appreciate their commitment to our vision and, more importantly, to every one of our members.

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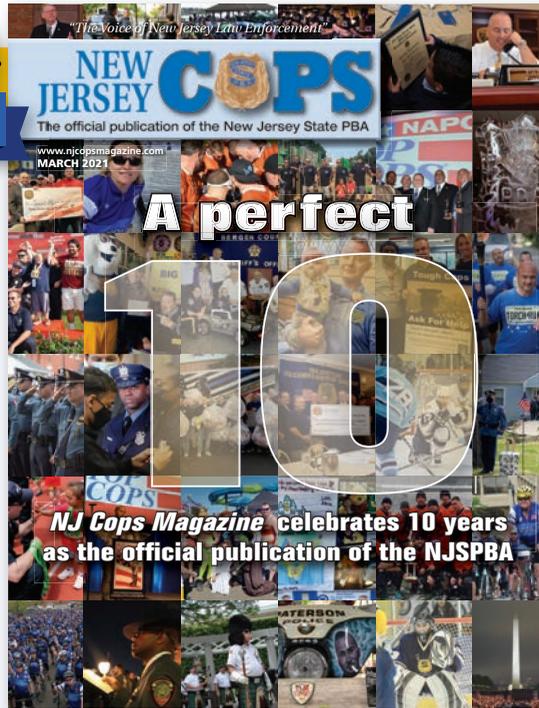
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COMMEMORATIVE EDITION



Our Tin Anniversary

Welcome to your souvenir of the past 10 years. The past decade of *NJ Cops Magazine* serving as the official publication of the NJ State PBA has resulted in hundreds of stories showing the perseverance of law enforcement, the tenacity of leadership and the above-and-beyond efforts of members to protect and serve every day. We have created a keepsake edition that takes readers on a tour of stories that showcase jobs well done, the best of Police Week, spotlights from the Valor Awards, legislative victories and so much more.



COVER DESIGN BY GINA CROTCHFELT

Thank you for a Perfect 10. The tour of the past 10 years of NJ Cops Magazine begins on Page 41.

Fund days and nights

May features events to help support the NJSPBA Survivor & Welfare Fund, including the Inaugural Cigar Gala, PBA golf outing and Bergen County Local 102 cigar night. Find out how to have some fun for the Fund**Page 31**

Local Connection

Seeking more knowledgeable and reliable representation, Pennington officers voted unanimously in February to become part of Hopewell Township Local 342**Page 34**

Ride On

In Part 2 of our series celebrating 25 years of the Police Unity Tour, PBA members describe what it's like to ride nearly 300 miles for four consecutive days to make the tour from New Jersey to Washington, D.C., every year.....**Page 37**



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Marc Kovar
Executive Vice President

Winning battles during difficult times

As we begin to turn the corner and see the light at the end of the tunnel in this battle against the global pandemic, it goes without saying that the strain and the difficulties our members battled through during the past year have never been greater. We know how hard you have worked to keep our streets safe and our neighborhoods and jails secure, even while risking your own health on the front lines.

There is no denying that these have been some of the toughest times to be a law enforcement professional. Even something as obvious as providing officers with the ability to notify parents when a child is caught with alcohol or marijuana became a contentious point when the legalization of marijuana law passed without that commonsense measure.

The original legislation essentially opened us all up to lawsuits while ensuring that we had no chance to enforce the law. It has taken a very strong public push to move legislators to introduce "cleanup" legislation on marijuana legalization to even allow us to notify parents. Quite frankly, the train left the station, and this is more proof that common sense goes out the window when people lose sight of what it takes to do our jobs.

But we keep pushing forward every day, establishing new relationships and working with those we already consider to be partners in Trenton to achieve positive results that will help you and your families.

Our latest significant victory is the early retirement legislation to allow for 20-and-out. The 20-and-out retirement legislation passed both houses of the legislature. The Assembly passed the bill 66-0 on March 1 following the State Senate passing it 38-0 in December. The bill is awaiting the governor's signature for final approval, which we are hoping occurs shortly.

While existing law limits early retirement for law enforcement hired after January 2000, the 20-and-out benefit was stripped away when former Governor Christie's administration misinterpreted a 1999 law. Christie's administration established that early retirement was only available to PFRS members enrolled

in our pension system as of the law's effective date in 1999.

The legislation on Governor Murphy's desk clarifies that the benefit is for all eligible members with 20 years of service regardless of their hiring date, allowing all PFRS members to be treated equally. The NJSPBA's biggest opposition on the bill is the New Jersey League of Municipalities and New Jersey Association of Counties, both of which argue without any proof that the cost is too great.

As you know, the NJSPBA previously fought for control and separation of the PFRS. In the summer of 2018, we finally got approvals that separated the 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.

These two groups also opposed our members controlling our pensions and worked against us with their political allies. They were unsuccessful in those efforts, and the historic legislation granting us control over our pensions was passed and signed into law.

All the positive gains we have made could not, and would not, happen if not for our involvement in politics and our willingness to prioritize actions over rhetoric. While we do not win every political battle, the relationships forged have created much more opportunity for our members. That remains our top priority.

So with this light at the end of the tunnel, please do everything in your power to stay safe. Your most important job each day is to make it home safely. Let us continue to look after each other and cover each other's blind spots.

In closing, we offer our condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Paterson Captain John Phelan, a 36-year law enforcement veteran who succumbed to medical complications from responding to the 9/11 attacks at Ground Zero, and to family, friends and colleagues of recently retired Bloomfield Officer Benedetto Christiano, who was lost to COVID-19.



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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;
JONATHAN LESTER, M.D., Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation;
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Legalized marijuana and the new normal

Legalized recreational use of cannabis has arrived in New Jersey. On Feb. 22, Governor Phil Murphy signed the legislation that allows 21-year-olds to use and possess cannabis. And for those younger than 21, marijuana is now decriminalized. The new laws are enabling legislation resulting from New Jersey voters overwhelmingly approving an amendment to the state constitution calling for legalization.

This tidal-wave change, years in the making, will significantly impact all workplaces and workers in the public and private sectors. For those in law enforcement, the law implicates both their rights as employees and their obligation to enforce the law.

Overview

The three bills Governor Murphy signed into law that will provide the legal and regulatory framework for recreational cannabis use are: (1) the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance Act (NJCREAMMA, S21/A21), which legalizes cannabis use and possession; (2) another bill that removes criminal and civil penalties for possession (the decriminalization bill, S2535/A1897); and a third bill that addresses concerns related to underage use (the clean-up bill, S3454/A5342). These laws do not affect existing prohibitions on any other unlawful drugs such as heroin, cocaine, amphetamines, barbiturates and the like. The changes relate only to cannabis.

Usage while off duty

There is no doubt that the long-standing practices regarding marijuana use and possession have been changed radically by the new statutes. New Jersey has now become the first state to explicitly protect employees who use cannabis while off duty and outside the workplace. In general, employers can no longer penalize, suspend or terminate employees for off-duty cannabis use.

The new laws seek to provide a bright line regarding cannabis usage. Cannabis usage, or being under its influence, is always prohibited while working. Thus, employers still have the right to enforce zero-tolerance drug policies in the workplace during work hours. All employer prohibitions on use, possession and impairment remain lawful when limited to employees on the clock. Conversely, off duty is considered personal and permissible.

But ambiguities remain. As a rule of thumb, employees who hold positions that could be described as safety-sensitive – i.e., police, firefighters, healthcare workers and operators of heavy machinery – should not yet assume the new off-duty protections apply to them, and we advise to go very cautiously before using cannabis off duty. Guidelines are expected shortly from the attorney general to provide greater understanding of off-duty law enforcement usage.

Medical marijuana

As you probably know, medical marijuana has been lawful for several years. An individual with a lawful marijuana prescription for legitimate health issues is authorized to use and possess it off duty. But the law had remained unsettled as to whether an employer could nonetheless decide to terminate an employee with a lawful prescription. While the regulatory and statutory scheme for medical marijuana has not changed, it would ap-



pear to now be much less relevant in light of the new recreational law, which encompasses any type of marijuana usage. If anything, a prescription for medical marijuana will insulate the employee even further from adverse actions.

Drug testing, workplace impairment experts and discipline

Because marijuana can remain in the user's system for up to 30 days, the statute attempts to address how to distinguish between prohibited on-duty impairment and authorized off-duty usage. New Jersey is now the first state to explicitly limit an employer's ability to take disciplinary action against an employee solely on the basis of a positive drug test.

Because the statute recognizes that marijuana may be present in an individual's system without recent usage, an employer is now required to couple any drug test with some other factor, such as safety concerns or an observable impairment. With respect to signs of impairment, the employer must employ or retain a certified "impairment expert" at the workplace to conduct a physical evaluation of the employee if on-duty use or impairment is suspected.

It would seem that an employer's or supervisor's lay observation of suspected impairment is insufficient. A licensure procedure will be created to train and certify such impairment experts. Only if both the impairment expert and drug test indicate intoxication may an employer take disciplinary action.

There is conflicting language in the law about whether employers are limited with respect to when they can drug test employees for cannabis. One section of the law states that employers may conduct drug testing randomly or as part of pre-employment screening and routine testing of current employees. But the law also states that prior to conducting a drug test, an employer must have a "reasonable suspicion" that an employee is using drugs at work, demonstrates signs of impairment or is involved in a work-related accident.

It remains unsettled as to whether employers need reasonable suspicion for requiring a drug test or are permitted to test randomly. But in either case, the drug test must be coupled with a determination of current intoxication before discipline can be imposed. However, this applies only to a positive test for the presence of cannabis. Testing for other unlawful drugs, and consequences for their usage, would appear to be unchanged.

Compounding the uncertainty is that there is no scientifically accepted consensus of what level of cannabis presence would constitute impairment. For example, the new law requires any drug test to be scientifically reliable. But this remains an unclear standard since, as noted, there is no scientific consensus about how to measure an individual's level of impairment when cannabis is detected. Even with an impairment expert, there will undoubtedly be disagreements about whether an employee is actually intoxicated/high while working.

Pending federal legislation

Further complicating the issue is that cannabis remains illegal under federal law. While the federal government has generally not taken action to enforce the federal statutes in states where cannabis is lawful, existing federal regulatory schemes should still be deemed intact.

This confusing patchwork will be significantly clarified if

pending federal legislation is enacted. This would effectively give states like New Jersey more power to regulate cannabis on their own. Reform could also mean many federal agencies would remove marijuana from their list of drugs required for monitoring, even in safety-sensitive positions.

The Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement (MORE) Act was passed by the House in December 2020. Similar legislation sponsored by Senator Cory Booker is pending in the Senate. Under the MORE Act, marijuana would be decriminalized throughout the U.S., and nonviolent marijuana-related convictions would be expunged. President Biden has said he is in favor of marijuana decriminalization, rescheduling marijuana, medical cannabis legalization and expungements for people with prior cannabis convictions.

Enforcement of marijuana laws for juveniles

While the foregoing discussion involves the rights of law enforcement officers in their status as employees, the new laws also impose significant hurdles – and potential criminal and civil penalties – when officers attempt to enforce the law. Cannabis possession by juveniles is now decriminalized. Penalties for use or possession by minors are limited to an initial written warning, eventually topping off at nominal fines for repeat offenders.

The law significantly limits how officers may approach juveniles suspected of possession and/or usage, describes what related actions, such as searches of person or property, are permissible and mandates a panoply of procedural requirements such as body-camera usage throughout any encounter with a juvenile. Most remarkably, the new law actually imposes criminal penalties upon officers who knowingly fail to approach or interact with juveniles pursuant to the statutory requirements.

Put simply, the law as written contains much greater risks and penalties for officers enforcing the law regarding juveniles than such minors can actually suffer for violating the law.

Specific examples of the ambiguities of the law are so numerous that they are beyond the scope of this article. Guidance from the chief law enforcement officers of each department, prosecutors' offices and the attorney general are urgently needed to allow officers to understand their obligations under these remarkable new provisions.

Questions and areas where the law remains vague

It appears obvious that despite the law's broad strokes regarding legislation, uncertainty and many open questions remain. The Cannabis Regulatory Commission, which was created in 2019 to regulate medical marijuana, is tasked with regulating recreational cannabis. Among the many issues that are expected to be addressed by the commission within the next year include:

- What testing, if any, is deemed to be "scientifically reliable"?
- What is the necessary training to become a certified impairment expert?
- What are considered observable signs of intoxication according to the certified impairment experts?
- What level of marijuana presence in an employee's system can be deemed to constitute impairment?
- What opposing evidence could an employer rely upon to contradict an opinion of "current" intoxication?
- How will New Jersey reconcile its law with conflicting federal statutes?

Clearly, these are uncharted waters. New rules and regulations related to New Jersey's cannabis law will be rapidly evolving. We will keep you advised of all new developments.

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Frustrated when trying to contact the Division of Pensions?



PETER ANDREYEV

If you are reading this and you are one of the many thousands of members who have tried to contact the New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits (NJDPB), I have some good news for you. We have heard the stories that you cannot reach anyone when you call there from just about everyone.

As a result of everyone's frustrations, the NJDPB has announced that they are extending their call hours due to the enormous call volume they are receiving. You can call 609-292-7524 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. Monday and Friday call hours remain 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. When you contact them, make sure to have your PFRS number ready so they can better assist you.

The Division of Pensions also announced that they are going to do video conferencing for members who would like to speak with a pension counselor. The pension counselors are not taking any in-person appointments at the offices of the Division of Pensions and Benefits due to COVID-19. This video conferencing is taking the place of the in-person appointments, and you

will still be held to the 30-minute time limit. Visit the website at www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/, click on the "Contact Us" tab at the top of the page, and and you will land on another page where you can click on a link that says "To make an appointment online."

Once you click on that link, you'll see the information regarding your online video appointment. At the bottom of that page, you will click on a blue tab at the bottom of the page which will allow you to schedule or cancel your online appointment. Once on the next page, click on the drop-down box to select the interview type and schedule your appointment.

If you have not set up your MBOS account, you should do so as soon as possible. Most of our pension or retirement matters can be resolved through MBOS. A member can update or delete beneficiary information, access the Personal Benefits Statement, apply for a pension loan, apply to purchase previous service credit, get a retirement estimate and apply for retirement.

New Jersey State PBA members can always email me or call me at the State PBA office regarding retirement issues, and we can assist you in resolving your retirement questions, concerns or problems.

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Full disclosure on testosterone therapy

After Chapter 78 became law and we became stakeholders in our health benefits plans, I thought it was important that our members made educated decisions. I thought it was important that our primary focus be that the health and welfare of our members be at the forefront of their decision-making process, not just for the obvious moral reasons, but to try to rein in healthcare costs through better health, thus creating a win-win situation.

One of the first issues that we explored was testosterone therapy. Early on, as Design Committee members, we were advised that testosterone therapy was something that had to be closely monitored for abuse and its adverse side effects.

After recent conversations with friends and subtle observations (i.e., men in their 60s with veins popping out of their forearms), I thought it might be a good time to revisit this from an educational standpoint.

As you all know, I am not a healthcare professional, I just enjoy research from reliable sources, so I want to qualify these facts in advance. All of the statements here will have annotations so that unscrupulous providers can just summarily dismiss them. Having said all that, the FDA has approved and believes that there is medical efficacy under certain circumstances for testosterone therapy. I just ask that you do your homework before you engage in a short-term fix that could create a long-term problem.

Let's start with words from the FDA website, which has also required labeling that warns of increased heart attacks and strokes:

Testosterone is FDA-approved as replacement therapy only for men who have low testosterone levels due to disorders of the testicles, pituitary gland, or brain that cause a condition called hypogonadism. Examples of these disorders include failure of the testicles to produce testosterone because of genetic problems, or damage from chemotherapy or infection. However, FDA has become aware that testosterone is being used extensively in attempts to relieve symptoms in men who have low testosterone for no apparent reason other than aging. The benefits and safety of this use have not been established. <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/>

[drug-safety-and-availability/fda-drug-safety-communication-fda-cautions-about-using-testosterone-products-low-testosterone-due](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/development-approval-process-drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-drug-safety-communication-fda-cautions-about-using-testosterone-products-low-testosterone-due).

The Mayo Clinic also has a few concerns with the use of testosterone therapy for normal aging. Testosterone therapy has various risks, including:

- Worsening sleep apnea — a potentially serious sleep disorder in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts
- Causing acne or other skin reactions
- Stimulating noncancerous growth of the prostate (benign prostatic hyperplasia) and growth of existing prostate cancer
- Enlarging breasts
- Limiting sperm production or causing testicles to shrink
- Stimulating too much red blood cell production, which contributes to the increased risk of forming a blood clot. A clot could break loose, travel through your bloodstream and lodge in your lungs, blocking blood flow (pulmonary embolism). See <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/sexual-health/in-depth/testosterone-therapy/art-20045728>.

The one consistent bit of information that I gleaned from a review of these articles is that there is inconclusive evidence that testosterone therapy reverses the effects of aging, so be wary of anyone who tells you it is the fountain of youth.

At the same time, there are some real medical benefits for those who are suffering from certain medical conditions like hypogonadism. There are specific guidelines for physicians to prescribe testosterone in these circumstances, and anyone who prescribes it without doing a full medical screening is committing malpractice in my eyes.

Make sure you do your research. Harvard Health Publishing also has a great article on the subject. In closing, just remember that if testosterone replacement therapy was the panacea that could build your muscles, make you smarter and satisfy your partner for hours, would doctors need to advertise for patients to prescribe it to?

Important notice for all NJSPBA members

The PBA has learned that the State of New Jersey suffered a data breach into the MBOS system earlier this year.

Unknown actors were able to gain data that allowed them access to the personal information of numerous members of the state's pension systems. At the time of this printing, the severity of the breach is unknown. We are urging members to turn on multi-factor authentication, which is available on the "My Account" page of your My NJ account.

We have been told that all affected members have been

contacted via phone, and we are attempting to ascertain further information as this issue goes to print. We strongly recommend that our members keep close tabs on both their credit reports and their pension and benefits accounts for any suspicious activity. We are actively advocating for you and will continue to do so until we know all of the details of the breach.

Should you have any questions, we suggest you call the Office of Information Technology at 609-376-8000 x212 or email them at OIT-ESD@tech.nj.gov.



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A State Delegate's report you won't want to miss



MICHAEL
FREEMAN

The major responsibility of a NJSPBA State Delegate is to act as liaison between the state and local associations, reporting all matters of interest. This is most often done at the monthly Local meeting; however, at times there are urgent matters that need to be communicated immediately. The March State Delegates meeting was certainly one of those instances. Because each Local is unique and a good delegate knows how to communicate best with her/his members, the delegate's report needs to be carefully prepared to make sure that everyone receives the message

clearly.

Franklin Township Local 154's Mark Keller was kind enough to share his delegate's report with me as an example of how to inform the membership in a manner that will keep their interest and spark discussion. He sent an email to all members of Local 154 to avoid any delay in explaining several pressing issues. Brother Keller has allowed me to share this with all PBA members, with the proviso that I do not alter any of the grammatical, syntax or spelling errors. He was adamant that those were purposely left in for the effect of urgency in relaying the message. I respect and appreciate how well he presented the following:

Good morning everyone, I'm gonna get right into it with....

Marijuana....

Let me not beat a dead horse, but I will!!!! It has been brought to my attention that we can face a 2nd degree charge of Deprivation of civil rights if a juvenile gets hurt during the search for alcohol or marijuana. For instance:

*You're on routine patrol and of course you're doing your park checks. You come to Bascom Park where you come across a group of individuals that should not be there, after dark, and you smell the odor of marijuana. You get out to investigate and you see what **APPEARS** to be an adult, acting a little squirrely. Like all good officers do and write in their reports "For Officer safety I patted this individual down for weapons". This individual runs from you, and you give chase. Being that this individual is not as athletically inclined as you, he falls, you jump on him and make the collar..... Hurrayyyyy.... You find out this individual is a **JUVENILE** and now has a broken leg. You can now potentially be charged with the 2nd degree Deprivation of civil rights.*

*There is **NO CLARITY, NO DIRECTION** and we are not wonderfully VERSED in this new law. So, if you want to roll the dice, let me know how it works out. Allegedly, the AG will be sending a liaison to every county prosecutor office to assist and answer questions with this new ridiculous law. Hopefully, we will get **CLARITY, DIRECTION** and become well **VERSED** in this soon, so that the*

criminals just don't walk off into the sunset and we are fighting for our lives for doing our jobs.

SOCIAL MEDIA!!!!

*I was sitting in my lounge chair the other day smoking (A CIGAR) and reading the New York Post. I began reading an article talking about certain Dr. Seuss books being banned. All I could do was shake my head and I moved to the next article. Some of you are very passionate about your beliefs and may have taken your displeasure to social media and said some things that could attract groups that may not like police officers very much. You are again rolling the dice. Now, some of you may be saying, but Keller what about my first amendment rights, my freedom of speech??? I would say you're right, but Franklin Twp and the many anti police groups waiting for us to slip may not agree. Everyone of your friends on your social media accounts, may not really be your friends!!!! We have a great Internal Affairs Division, and while I can say they are not looking for anything like this, if it's brought to their attention they will have to act. So, in the end you may have all the green eggs and ham and legalized marijuana you want, if you lose your job **BE SMART!!!***

20 and out.....

*This has finally been passed and is now on the governor's desk waiting to be signed. This will allow you to retire after serving 20 years at 50% and **NO HEALTH BENEFITS!!!!** There will be a 2yr trial period to see how this will affect the funded value of the pension. Please, if you are thinking of this, check your finances and make sure you'll be able to provide yourself with some type of medical benefits.*

Lastly, Off Duty work down the shore or anywhere.....

*During our State Delegates meeting this was brought up and if it was brought up, it means someone F'd up. When you're off duty and not working for Franklin Twp, and decide you're gonna make \$25 hr working Security at Barsell's Tiki Bar wearing a "POLICE" shirt and something happens (and you know it will), **YOU ARE NOT COVERED BY L.P.P !!!!***

Ok, now i'm done cause some of you may have stopped reading or some of you are like, "alright already Keller." While I may try to allow for some levity in my emails and get a lil smile from you all, these are very serious matters and will destroy your lives if you don't move cautiously. Please don't be that guy or gal....

*Stay safe and Healthy,
Keller*

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One Voice United to honor fallen correctional officers



BRIAN
DAWE

The One Voice United Medal of Honor Committee, under the leadership of retired New Jersey Lieutenant Ed Sullivan, has voted to honor more than 160 officers who have died in the line of duty due to COVID-19.

Since COVID-19 struck the nation, OVU has been tracking LODDs among correctional officers. As the numbers began to climb, it became obvious that 2020 would be the deadliest year in our profession's history. Last year at this time, these officers all went to work not aware that a silent killer was stalking them. Today, 160 families are missing

these brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice while upholding the oaths they swore.

Annually, the Medal of Honor has five awards (Gold, Silver and Bronze) that recognize three officers, a supervisor and a staff member/civilian. This year, the officer Gold Award and the supervisor and staff/civilian awards will be given posthumously to the officers, supervisors and staff who died in the line of duty as a result of COVID-19. The Silver and Bronze awards will be announced as usual. However, due to the pandemic, this year's event has been rescheduled for May 12-14, 2022. The 2020 Bronze and Silver Honorees will be flown to Washington, D.C. and recognized with full honors in May 2022, along with the winners of the 2021 awards.

Each surviving family will receive a Medal of Honor and a 5' x 9½' American flag in a triangular glass and wood engraved interment case. Each facility will receive a plaque memorializing the officer's sacrifice. Civilian staff families will be honored with one plaque for the family and one for the facility. In addition, we are requesting that all correctional facilities nationwide fly their flags at half-staff on May 14, 2021. That evening, the Medal of Honor Committee will host a Virtual Vigil and read off the names of all COVID-19 line of duty deaths. The Zoom link will be posted on our website at www.onevoiceunited.org.

Thirty states and Guam suffered at least one line of duty death. Six states had at least ten: Texas (41), Florida (18), Louisiana (12), New York (10), New Jersey (10) and California (10). When you consider that in most years, 11 officers die in the line of duty, the numbers we are seeing from COVID-19 are staggering.

If we take a little deeper look, these statistics may reveal something else. Oddly, the most LODDs occurred in three states that are traditionally considered to be non-union states. In fact, 44 percent of all correctional officer LODDs came from those three states: Texas, Florida and Louisiana together have approximately 88,000 officers and suffered 71 LODDs. California, New Jersey and New York, traditionally considered union states, have approximately 83,000 Officers and suffered 30 LODDs. Why have officers in non-union states died at twice the rate of officers in union states? Is it because in union states, the

officers have more of a voice, more input into working conditions? The LODD rate due to COVID-19 is not just higher — it's double in non-union states. Why is that?

Another consideration: Ask yourself, in which states are the officers and general population more likely to wear masks? Does that have an impact? Although hardly scientific, these numbers should make everyone pause and are certainly worth considering moving forward.

State	LODDs	# of COs	State	LODDs	# of COs
CA	10	36,000	TX	41	47,160
NY	10	35,420	FL	18	33,040
NJ	10	11,320	LA	12	7,950
	30	82,740		71	88,150
1 LODD per 2,758 COs			1 LODD per 1,241 COs		



One Voice United will be speaking with officers and their union representatives across the country to coordinate this major undertaking. Delivering the honoraria will be the biggest challenge and, in many instances, will be delayed possibly until the fall. We will work with our union partners like the NJSPBA to devise the best manner in which to make the honoraria available to the families. Whether a ceremony will be held, or an Honor Guard dispatched to deliver the honoraria, or some other method is desired by the families, we will do all we

can to assist the unions and/or the correctional departments to accommodate those requests.

I want to thank the Medal of Honor and Selection Committees as well as the One Voice United Board for taking on this project.

<u>One Voice United Board</u>		<u>Medal of Honor Board</u>	
Andy Potter	MI	Ed Sullivan	NJ
Jeremy Tripp	MI	Rob Brouillette	MA
Simon Greer	NY	Brett Ohnstad	MN
Corey Post	NY	Jack Rosser	DC
Havi Carrillo-Klein	OH	Dale Waldroff	MD
Josh Wilson	AK		
<u>Selection Committee</u>		Anthony Gangi	NJ
Eric Spierer	NJ	Mike Simpson	MA
Eddie Callaghan	NY	Steve Curran	CT
Lisamarie Fontano	CT	Fred Fontz	MD
		Jim McHenry	MI

Be safe; be well. We are in the home stretch, but it's not over yet. Please wear your mask.

Brian Dawe started his career in corrections as a Massachusetts state correctional officer in 1982. He is currently the national director for One Voice United, founder of the American Correctional Officer Intelligence Network and serves on the One Voice United National Medal of Honor Committee. He can be reached at brian@onevoiceunited.org.



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A Worthy Contribution

Advisors Mortgage Obsuth team steps up to help Survivor & Welfare

BY ROSEMARY AN

If you've bought a home at the Jersey Shore, you've probably heard of Advisors Mortgage Group LLC. Just a few blocks down from the boardwalk at Point Pleasant Beach, the lender does more loans than any other broker in the area.

Of course, it is also home to retired member Bob Obsuth, who has been among the biggest PBA supporters in the business community. He was a Point Pleasant Borough Local 158 member for 24 years and even ran the Ocean County Conference for four years.

So when Obsuth joined the Advisors Mortgage team in May 2020, he wanted to figure out a way to give back to his roots. His latest endeavor is initiating a program with Advisors to raise money for the NJSPBA Survivor & Welfare Fund.

"I've ridden the Unity Tour for at least 15 years with actual survivors," Obsuth said. "So [the cause] is very dear to me. And I've been playing in the Change to Survivor & Welfare Fund Golf Outing for 10 to 15 years, too."

On March 11, the Advisors Mortgage team presented a \$6,300 check for the Survivor & Welfare Fund to PBA State President Pat Colligan.

"This is not chump change," Colligan noted. "This is a lot of money that's plugging a pretty deep hole we have right now, so it's perfect timing."

But that's not all: The more than \$6,000 raised was as of January 31, and they are still going.

"We've got about the same amount of money coming along," said Sean Clark, vice president of Advisors Mortgage. "Our donation total will be \$13,000 to the fund in a matter of a few months."

Obsuth and Sam Hernandez, loan officer and Freehold Township Local 209 State Delegate, started donating \$100 from each loan that they sold. When Advisors Mortgage President Steven Meyer heard about the members' efforts, he wanted his team to match the



From left, PBA First Vice President Pete Andreyev, PBA President Pat Colligan, Advisors Mortgage President Steven Meyer, retired member Bob Obsuth, loan officer Tara Cooper, Freehold Township Local 209 member Sam Hernandez, Advisors Mortgage Vice President Sean Clark and Branch Development Manager Luke McCann at the check presentation on March 11.

donations.

"We donated \$200 to the Survivor & Welfare Fund on every loan that we did with a PBA member, whether they're active or retired," Obsuth said. "Then the names started to overflow, so we couldn't stop after the first \$6,300."

What started as a gesture for a cause near and dear to active and retired members has become a labor of love for Advisors Mortgage. To Obsuth and Hernandez, it's a way to maintain a good relationship between the business community and the PBA, all while raising money for a great cause.

"And anybody that's coming to us will be like, 'Yeah, I'm a retired guy and want to make sure my loan goes to [the program],' Hernandez added. "And I've seen what the fund does for people. It's amazing."

Colligan says the Advisors Mortgage team's donation confirms the business community's appreciation of law en-



The Advisors Mortgage team donated more than \$6,000 to the NJSPBA Survivor & Welfare Fund.

forcement.

"The people who don't appreciate the police are the vocal ones," Colligan remarked. "The people who are here until 10 p.m. are the ones who appreciate us and don't always have the time to write on their blogs or protest, because they're working. I know they exist, because I do it all the time, and this is proof."



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LEOSA Reform Act reintroduced

The National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) is proud to have worked with members of Congress to enact the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act (LEOSA) in 2004 to allow well-qualified off-duty and retired officers to carry their firearms for the protection of themselves, their families and our nation's communities.



session of the 117th Congress, including the need for legislation to enhance officer safety by increasing penalties for the murder, attempted murder or assault of federal, state and local law enforcement officers; the Protecting America's First Responders Act; and the committee's priorities for this year.

Now there is a proposed amendment to the law, known as the LEOSA Reform Act. This important bill would expand the areas in which qualified current or retired officers are allowed to carry a firearm, including in Gun-Free School Zones; on state, local and private property otherwise open to the public; and in certain federal facilities. It will allow qualified officers and retired officers to carry an ammunition magazine of any capacity that is not prohibited by federal law. Importantly, it will reform qualifications standards to alleviate undue burdens for those carrying under LEOSA.

With the rise in targeted violence against law enforcement officers and violent crimes in our communities, allowing all qualified officers and retirees who have sworn to serve and protect our communities to be armed in accordance with LEOSA would allow them to respond more efficiently and effectively in emergencies for the safety of themselves and those around them. The LEOSA Reform Act will go a long way to ensuring all qualified off-duty and retired officers across the country can legally carry their firearm under the law.

NAPO on the Hill

NAPO spoke with majority staff of the House Judiciary Committee to discuss our priority issues and legislation for the first

Increased penalties for the murder, attempted murder or assault of a federal, state or local law enforcement officer because of their status as a public safety officer will deter such crimes and bring greater protections to officers and the communities they serve. NAPO is backing two bills that would provide increased penalties for such violent crimes against officers: the Back the Blue Act and the Protect and Serve Act.

The Protecting America's First Responders Act would make it easier for public safety officers disabled in the line of duty to qualify for the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program's disability benefits. It would also ensure that beneficiaries receive the highest award amount possible, and it will make certain that all children of public safety officers disabled or killed in the line of duty are able to benefit from the Public Safety Officers' Education Assistance program.

The committee is also interested in expanding partnerships between law enforcement and the social services and public and mental health communities to help improve responses to mental health and substance abuse calls for service. This is an area of great importance to NAPO to increase training for officers, promote integrated response teams and shift some non-emergency-related calls for service to other local agencies.

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Response Time

A conversation with a prominent NJ State PBA member

This month

Springfield Local 76 State Delegate Brian Trotman

The Vitals

- Born in Orange, raised in Irvington
- Married to Asia for five years
- Hired by Springfield in 2011
- Father to Brian Jr. and Bria
- Local 76 State Delegate since 2018
- Member of the NJSPBA New Presidents Committee, Valor Awards Committee and Convention Committee

First Response

What are your thoughts about the latest legislative efforts that might adversely affect law enforcement?

When it comes to the social justice aspect of a lot of things going on in the world right now, I can see both sides of the spectrum as far as legislation is concerned. I just hope that they take it at a case-by-case basis. For whatever particular situation that may have happened, whether tragic or not, that doesn't mean that it is, or should be, associated with the masses. And I believe that in all aspects of any profession, so I just hope that legislation can really take a step back and not categorize everybody into one spectrum.



Springfield Local 76 State Delegate Brian Trotman, left, with wife Asia.

Conversation pieces

You have been emphatic about communication being so important. How do you communicate with Local members to get them all the information they need?

Communication is my strong suit, and I like talking to people. I may not be the smartest person, but I'm not the dumbest either. But when you have information, and you can get it from these educated delegates that have held the position for many years, why not call and build relationships? Even if we're not from the same county, there's nothing wrong with picking up the phone. That's probably why I stayed in patrol for so long – I can talk a lot of people out of doing something crazy. People would say, "Oh, let Brian talk to me." That's my thing, and I don't mind it.

What is the best part about being a state delegate?

It's the relationships that you build, the information you can gather and just knowing the ins and outs. And having good leadership in Pat Colligan and Marc Kovar has been tremendous for me just because they've had an open-door policy, so we can call and get information directly from them.

What is the hardest part about being a state delegate?

I'm the type of person who likes to keep everyone happy and try to take care of everybody's needs. For the most part, I do get that accomplished, but sometimes it is hard to try to please everyone. I try to keep in mind the good of the masses rather than one person feeling like they possibly got slighted. So the hardest part is that balance, especially when I'm going into contract negotiations and such, but I work through it by thinking about the greater good.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your Local?

We wanted to be more involved in the community and see if there's anything people need during this trying time, including delivering household items and food. In previous years, Locals asked for money from their residents or for donations to events like golf outings, beefsteaks and more. But due to the pandemic, obviously we didn't ask for money, since people are struggling financially. I think this past year we didn't ask for money, and we also tried to give out a little more money than usual.

Last Response

Union County has a grand tradition of having active State Delegates. How do you want to continue that legacy?

I'm the type of guy who's big on camaraderie, union and looking out for each other – that's what drove me to being an officer, a member and a State Delegate. I'm not trying to be biased, but one of the stronger counties statewide. So you have your, as you would know, your Michael Freemans, your Mike Hellers, your Pat Morans, a lot of strong delegates came from here. So I try to pass that on to my Local as well. Our Local is small, but it's tight, so we all try to do a lot of fundraisers and be a great representation of Union County. And we have a lot of strong delegates who came from here, so I try to pass that on to my Local as well. But it's also about knowing how to protect ourselves and our colleagues to continue the tradition.

Brian Trotman's List

Our member of the month shares some of his favorite things

Sports Teams
Mets, Knicks, Giants

Movie
Bad Boys

Food
Steak

Music
The Isley Brothers

Hobby
Hanging out with my kids

PBA Events
Main Convention and Collective Bargaining Seminar



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Booster shot

Three upcoming events will provide a much-needed injection for the NJSPBA Survivor & Welfare Fund while reuniting members for the first time since last year

■ BY KAREN JENKINS

It's not Pfizer, Moderna or even Johnson & Johnson. It's NJ State PBA members and sponsors providing a boost.

This summer, the NJSPBA Survivor & Welfare Fund will be getting three doses of events that will help revitalize the fund after the major financial hit it took due to the pandemic.

The NJSPBA Survivor & Welfare Golf Tournament, the NJSPBA Survivor & Welfare Cigar Night and the Bergen County Local 102 Survivor & Welfare Cigar Night will all offer a necessary injection of funds to support survivors.

"With our Survivor & Welfare, COVID impacted the fund incredibly," said NJSPBA President Pat Colligan. "The Locals were kind enough to still pay their Valor Awards fee, which helped plug — literally — a huge hole in the program. In addition to the golf tournaments, I thought that we'd have to do a premier event."

The first of the shots will come on May 4, with the annual Bergen County Local 102 Survivor & Welfare Cigar Night fundraiser at the Graycliff in Moonachie. A cocktail hour, three-course dinner and cigars will help replenish the fund.

The premier event is the NJSPBA Survivor & Welfare Cigar Gala, which takes place on May 18 at Crystal Springs Resort and includes a day of golfing and an evening of cigars. The dose of being together and refreshing the fund will be the first major PBA gathering since the mini-convention in March 2020.

"This is important," Colligan said. "[Members] know what [the Survivor & Welfare Fund] does. There's no question that it's run efficiently. I think they just know that it's the right program. They know, 'OK, here's something that I may need someday, my family may need someday, my coworker might need someday.' We are a very fiscally prudent board. I think they just know it's the right thing to do."

Somerville Local 147 State Delegate Vittorio Spadea and Dunellen Local 146 State Delegate Joe Dudley were approached by Colligan this past summer to administer the life-revitalizing shot of an event for 2021, and Spadea said they ran with the idea of reuniting members in a safe and relaxing environment.

"[The fund] took a hit, so we have to try to get those numbers up to be able to take care of our fallen officers and their families — that's directly what the fund goes to," he explained. "After a year of not seeing people, you know, it'll be good to see some faces again and almost have some kind of normalcy."

With the prime location of Crystal Springs, the hope is that PBA members can celebrate in a daylong event. Experiencing this booster will feel far from sitting in a doctor's office. After enjoying a game of golf at 50 percent off, members can check into their rooms, rest up and have a drink before joining together for a premium cigar from 6 to 10 p.m.

"It's a point where everybody can dress up a little bit, sit down and enjoy a good cigar and a good cocktail and in the meantime, the generosity and the charity flows," Dudley said. "Specifically with COVID this year, we lost quite a few members from it. So right now, revitalizing Survivor & Welfare should be one of our absolute top priorities. This gives us a really good opportunity to refamiliarize ourselves with how to socialize with one

SAVE THESE DATES

May 3
NJSPBA Survivor & Welfare Fund
Golf Tournament
Trump Bedminster

May 4
Bergen County Local 102
Survivor & Welfare Fundraiser
7 p.m.
The Graycliff

May 18
NJSPBA Inaugural Cigar Gala
6 p.m.
Crystal Springs Resort



another and gives us a really good jumping-off point to start replenishing the Survivor & Welfare fund."

Chris Mulvihill, the chief marketing officer at Crystal Springs Resort, is always excited to host PBA members for outings, but he's particularly thrilled about this booster that supports such an important cause.

"I've gotten to meet Pat, and it's just been a good relationship. We'd like to do what we can to support law enforcement," Mulvihill said. "You've got to think about what those families go through."

The events are already proving to be effective, with a platinum sponsorship slot of \$10,000 already filled and other spon-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



The NJSPBA golf outing for the Survivor & Welfare Fund will once again be played at Trump National in Bedminster.

BOOSTER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

sorship levels gaining traction.

Last year's NJSPBA Survivor & Welfare Golf outing, postponed to Aug. 17 due to the pandemic, helped replenish the more than \$300,000 disbursed to help families of the fallen and COVID-stricken members.

For the 2021 Survivor & Welfare Golf outing, which will once again be played at Trump National in Bedminster, an even more substantive injection of solidarity is sure to fortify the fund even further.

"It's one of the best feelings you could have, knowing you're supporting not just the men and women in law enforcement, but the families that have lost law enforcement mothers, fa-

thers, spouses, sisters and brothers," said Jeff Rosen of Lending to Heroes at the 2020 outing. "It's a feeling that you can't put a price on."

When members roll up their sleeves for these three doses of life-giving events in May, they'll be major players in the first step toward strengthening the Survivor & Welfare Fund while reuniting with their union family.

"I think the most important thing is, at the base level, the service of the PBA is to care for its members," Dudley confirmed. "This event not only will help replenish what we used to do exactly that — to take care of our members — it will make sure that we have the funds to continue to take care of our members moving forward in the future."

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Moving Over and Moving Up

Pennington officers join Hopewell Local next door to find better representation

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Change.

When Pennington Officer Novin Thomas considered why the rank-and-file members of his department would move up from their previous collective bargaining agent to become part of the NJ State PBA, he reasoned that they wanted a fresh perspective. Given the increasing, and perhaps unfathomable, constraints making law enforcing more tenuous and more at-risk, Pennington saw the virtue of more knowledgeable, more encompassing, more reliable representation and in February voted unanimously to become part of Hopewell Township Local 342.

“Our guys wanted something different, so it was like, ‘Let’s see what the PBA has to offer,’” Thomas reported. “It makes sense because we’re right here with Hopewell. We work with them all the time, so let’s join up together to better serve the community.”

Pennington has seen how the other half lives. A 1-square-mile town in the Hopewell Valley, Pennington is surrounded on all sides by Hopewell Township. It is known as the dough-



nut hole of the Hopewell Valley and uses Hopewell Township dispatch. Members of both departments have formed a relationship through backing up each other on calls.

Despite union boundaries, Local 342 members never hesitated to throw an arm around Pennington officers. Hopewell’s community support and presence overflowed to Pennington and its officers on many occasions.

“Some of the guys in the department have friends in the PBA and said, ‘Yeah, it’s a good thing. It will be a good thing for us,’” Thomas added. “They seem like they are always in the community trying to help people and things like that. They give you information and always seem like they are on top of things.”

Embracing Pennington actually rippled all the way through the Mercer County Conference. Local 342 President Vinnie Amibale and State Delegate James Hoffman were on a county conference call earlier this year when word spread that Pennington was interested in making the move to the PBA.

“When the conference call ended, we reached out, and they told us they were looking to get away from the FOP,” Amibale

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disclosed. “They weren’t happy with the representation they were getting, and we’re big PBA guys on multiple levels. So anything we could do to support the PBA we do, and adding some more guys seemed like the perfect opportunity.”

Opportunities to move to the PBA’s renowned representation seem to be contagious. At the March state meeting, NJSPBA President Pat Colligan noted how it seems like there is one department a month coming over.

It might be a matter of members realizing other unions cannot provide the depth of representation and services officers need to overcome the increasing constraints. But the movement probably is more about law enforcement throughout New Jersey banding together to find the unity needed to endure these tumultuous times.

“I’ve always said it and I certainly feel it, ‘Blue is blue,’” Colligan submitted. “There is still something about having a different affiliation in the next town. Having the ability to say, ‘Hey, let’s do a fundraiser now or one of our members needs support’ is formidable. Again, blue is blue, and sometimes it’s a little easier to reach out across the street to say, ‘Come on, let’s do something together.’”

Local 342 will run as a multitown enterprise going forward. Pennington will have a representative working with Hopewell to become connected to the PBA’s relentless information flow. Pennington will maintain a separate collective bargaining agreement and continue to handle its own grievances.

But the support system bolstered by the PBA’s Legal Protection Plan resources and its collective bargaining, pension management, health benefits and legislative expertise has Pennington members galvanized. Add in the opportunity to raise the level of community events and fundraisers by spreading

throughout the Hopewell Valley, and this seems to be a consummate match.

“We back them up and they back us up, so we already have the one-for-all mentality,” Amibale commented. “So when it came to the union stuff, this was another piece to the puzzle. With everything going on and everybody hunkering down for the long haul with all these changes, and the overall perception of what the profession has turned into, they felt more secure with better representation for their members.”

Amibale added that the State PBA’s efforts to show Pennington the virtues of its resources and the accessibility to its network of information made a very positive impact on Pennington’s decision to make the move. As has been the case with the wave of departments becoming PBA, Amibale confirmed that the State PBA’s input and advice made the process very smooth. It no doubt contributed to Pennington members voting unanimously in their PERC election to become PBA.

Now, Thomas says Pennington members are motivated by the opportunity to get some new ideas from the PBA and to bring some, as well.

“Maybe we’re doing some good things, but maybe if we add this into it, we can make it even better,” Thomas recognized as the exchange with the PBA he believes will be very helpful. And he also believes there are bigger opportunities on the horizon.

“It’s two departments working together for the greater good of the people of not only Hopewell and Pennington, but also Mercer County and New Jersey,” Thomas continued. “Whatever we, as PBA 342, can do to better help people, that’s what it’s all about.”

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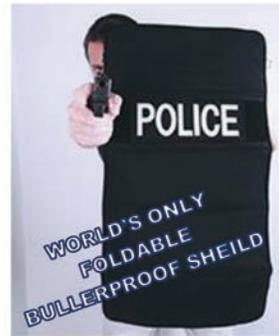


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Inside the Ride

Seeing what it's like to endure the four grueling days of the Police Unity Tour through the eyes of PBA members who have repeatedly taken on the challenge

■ BY KAREN JENKINS

The ride became a movement.

After the successful first year of the Police Unity Tour in 1997, founder Pat Montoure and Police Unity Tour Executive Director Harry Phillips decided to reprise the ride. So in summer 1997, the two bicycle cops headed to the NJ State PBA headquarters in Woodbridge to meet with President Michael Madonna and Executive Vice President Anthony Wieners.

They described the transformative journey they had just taken with 16 other officers to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. They talked about sitting in a bike saddle for 10 hours a day for four days straight. They discussed the 70-degrees-to-40-degrees-in-an-hour change in conditions. They relived the reverence of each officer riding into the memorial. Each day provided its unique set of aches and pains, and each mile was life-changing — that's how it feels to ride for those who've died.

They urged the PBA to get involved, and the PBA excitedly pledged to donate \$25,000 to jump-start the tour for its second year.

"We got the PBA behind us, and that helped an awful lot," Phillips recalled about expanding the tour to 37 riders in its second year. "It just kind of grew. We went to 50, which we thought was crazy — Oh God, 50 people, how are we going to keep them under control? — but we did it. And it just kind of grew from there."

That may be the biggest understatement of the past 25 years. The first ride conjured \$18,000 from 18 riders. The 1998 ride brought in \$50,000. Since 2017, every tour has surpassed \$2 million in fundraising, with at least 2,500 participants.

Manchester Local 246 State Delegate Artie Cronk, who serves as the national delegate for Central New Jersey Chapter 10, is rolling into his 14th tour this year. When he rides, his mind recounts his fallen brothers and sisters.

"The motivation itself is the person or the people you're riding for who would give anything to be in your shoes," Cronk explained. "There's no excuse why I can't go ride because I'm tired and my body hurts and I don't feel good, because the person I'm riding for would give anything to be here and doing this right now. That's the only motivation I need."

Motivation comes from many sources when you're riding nearly 300 miles for four consecutive days. What's that journey like? Hear from some of the PBA members who make the trek from New Jersey to Washington, D.C., every year.

Day One

Riders with Northern New Jersey Chapter I typically enjoy a mild May morning in Florham Park the first day. Garden State C.O.P.S. President John Ciuppa, vice president of flagship Chapter I, might be losing his mind just a little bit on Day One.



Law enforcement officers salute their Police Unity Tour counterparts as they endure the 300-mile, four-day bike ride from New Jersey to Washington, D.C.

As part of the support team, he organizes and transports four days' worth of luggage for hundreds of riders.

Every year, he sees out-of-state friends grinning, laughing and enjoying themselves and feels relief in being reunited.

"You make friends from all over the country," Ciuppa affirmed. "You just don't realize how important it is to still have those connections and have those friends. That's what the tour does."

In central Jersey, with Chapter 10, Lawrence Township Local 119 State Delegate Chris DiMeglio also loves to be in the group of 600 people and chat with friends he hasn't seen since the previous Unity Tour.

DiMeglio feels cool and reassured as a seasoned rider with eight tours under his belt. Even standing at that starting line with nearly 300 miles in front of him, he knows that Biofreeze, a water-resistant windbreaker and rain covers for his shoes will help him through the toughest conditions.

"There hasn't been a year that I've not done some sort of preparation," DiMeglio shared about cycling. "I'm always trying to keep ready. I've never put myself in a situation where I knew I didn't train."

When they take off, DiMeglio watches the newest riders pedaling to get to the front of the group. He keeps a steady pace in the middle of the pack to conserve energy.

Come 6 p.m., he'll be able to get a few hours of rest. For now, the first day is about reconnecting with friends and staying focused on the marathon ahead as they pedal through New Jersey.

"I've just learned that if you put in the time [to prepare] then

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38



At any point during the four days of the Unity Tour, a thin blue line of bikes, motorcycles and a vital support team stretches out in a powerful image.

INSIDE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

you can accomplish it and really, really enjoy it more,” DiMeglio advised. “I bike and I talk with people. I have a conversation and a whole 15-mile leg passes. And you won’t even realize you did it.”

Day Two

A wake-up call of 5 a.m. typically rouses riders on the second day of the tour. They grab a quick hotel breakfast and pump up their wheels.

Retired Ewing Township Local 111 State Delegate Mike Pellegrino, who is preparing for his 20th tour this year, says a challenging aspect of the second morning is fighting through the soreness and dwindling adrenaline of the initial day.

“The second day doesn’t feel like the longest ride in the world, but it’s definitely one you have to prepare for,” Pellegrino expressed. “It’s one that you have to get loose for to get started.



Throughout the four days, officers receive encouragement from crowds along the route and other riders to persevere toward their goal of reaching the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.

Forty-seven years old is different than 25 years, so it takes me a little bit more to get ramped up, but it’s all within a mindset.”

Chapter 10 kicks off Day Two with a route from Somerset to Delaware. Northern California Chapter XIII has joined Chapter 10 the past few years, and Gil Curtis, a 31-year law enforcement officer retired from the LA Police Department, leads the group.

He’s experienced rides through Philadelphia with driving rain and lightning taking down trees. When storms happen, Curtis gets on the walkie-talkie to plan safety precautions.

“You’re talking hundreds of officers, where to put up in a safe environment,” he explained. “The weather back East is challenging in that it just rains at the drop of a hat.”

Curtis knows that with two more full days to go, remembering

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After the 5 a.m. wake-up call, Unity Tour riders log about 10 hours on their bikes for four consecutive days.

the reason for the ride is key.

“It’s a life-changing experience,” he shared. “[Riders] are willing to put up with the sacrifice for four days knowing that the person that’s on the wall in Washington, D.C., would give anything to have just 30 seconds back of their life.”

Day Three

When riding through the farmlands of Maryland, the sun beats down with 95-degree ferocity, and unpleasant animal odors permeate the air. The third day is when limbs start to feel a little heavier, conversations dwindle and riders’ grit gets them through.

It’s also when the Un crustables come out.

“They are definitely the tour favorites,” DiMeglio laughed about snagging extra helpings of the packaged peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches from snack stations. “Everyone hoards those. A bicycle shirt has three pockets in the back, and you will be hard-pressed to find many people that don’t have an Un crustable shoved in there.”

When the tour makes its way through Baltimore, the riders are usually met with cheering crowds. Sometimes, they ride through schools to children grinning and yelling out to the officers. Lined up in the streets across every state are people warming up the riders for the support they’ll find in Washington, D.C., and motivating them to keep going forward.

“Nine out of 10 people are very supportive,” Ciuppa said. “Even when we block out intersections, they’re very understanding and excited to see us.”

Sometimes on that third day, Pellegrino will fall back just a little bit to watch the line of bikers, motorcyclists and support mustering up hills. The visual representation of the thin blue line stretching across the state — while remembering the reason for the ride — gives him chills, even in the heat.

“That’s pretty powerful,” he affirmed. “It’s a very emotional couple of days. What you’re doing and who you’re doing it for, you can’t take away that purpose. It’s not about where you’re going, it’s about the journey and how you’re going to get there.”

Day Four

Those final two miles. More about those final two will come in Part 3 of this series in the next issue.

They send a message to the people lined up at least half a mile away from the memorial and the names on the wall: “We did it for you.”

“When we muster up at RFK Stadium and start the descent into the memorial, you choke up,” DiMeglio relayed.

For a moment, the aches melt. Despite the fanfare, 2,000-plus riders experience the exact same life-changing emotions that those 18 pioneers did 25 years ago. On the final day, the day that kicks off Police Week, the riders of the Unity Tour get to rest and look back at the journey.

“If you’re not choked up every year, then I don’t know why you’re doing it,” DiMeglio expressed. “You know, that’s the moment. That’s it. That’s why we do it.”

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"The official publication of the New Jersey State PBA"

10-4 You 

Our commemorative issue is all about 10 for you: a retrospective of how the PBA and its members have made 10 years of *NJ Cops* as the union's official publication so memorable

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Walking into the president's office at PBA headquarters in January 2011 instilled some fear of the unknown. Having taken ownership of *New Jersey Cops Magazine* seven months earlier, this was intended to be a meet and greet with leaders of an organization we knew as the state's largest law enforcement union.

President Tony Wieners seemed 7 feet tall when he stood up to shake hands. Executive Vice President Keith Dunn and Second Vice President John Hulse sat to his left as part tribunal, part detectives. We had no anticipation that this would be a life-changing and game-changing moment.

Hoping to come out of this meeting with a working relationship as a source for stories important to the profession, the conversation commenced with asking whether the PBA leadership would be interested in contributing some content to *NJ Cops*. Turned out, they were looking for something more.

We had purchased *NJ Cops Magazine* in June 2010 from Larry Holtz, the promotional test-prep guru of Holtz Learning Centers. Holtz had bought the magazine in 2007 from North Jersey Media Group, which published the *Bergen Record* newspaper. During the year prior, the publisher of the magazine was the person whose name is atop this article.

After chatting with Tony, Keith and John, I finally submitted having another idea about a relationship between the PBA and *NJ Cops Magazine*.

Keith responded, "Let's hear the idea."

What if *NJ Cops Magazine* became the official publication of the New Jersey State PBA?

"That's what we've been waiting to hear," Tony declared.

On Feb. 10, 2011, *New Jersey Cops Magazine*, the voice of New Jersey law enforcement, became the official publication of the NJSPBA. In March, we published our first issue, a door-opening 56 pages that featured a story about how the PBA was not going to stand for the attacks on law enforcement, a charge the union has continued to take on in every issue since.

In March 2011, *NJ Cops Magazine* set out on its mission to showcase the work, achievements and stories of the NJSPBA and its members. It has tried to be a monthly celebration of what that union and the members do and be a venue for the PBA to get its message out to the masses – not just members, but elected officials and anybody who wants the 411 on what this one-of-a-kind association accomplishes.

"It gives us that opportunity to get the important messages out to the individual members," NJ State PBA President Pat Coligan confirms. "They may not be active, but they deserve the rights and privileges of PBA membership, and [*NJ Cops*] gives us that opportunity to get that message out to them."

10-fold

And so with this 10th anniversary, we celebrate "A Perfect 10" of getting the message out. Of showcasing the unmeasurable efforts to protect and serve that members put forth every hour. Of providing information that can support and improve working conditions. Of providing information that can help New Jersey cops on and off the job.

To commemorate this anniversary, the forthcoming pages present "Perfect 10" lists of some of the stories that have made *NJ Cops Magazine* a privilege to present and have created a reliable vehicle for members to get the media attention they so richly deserve and don't otherwise get from the mainstream news folks.

You will see A Perfect 10 for categories that have formulated so much of our content. Creating lists for your monthly PBA contributors would have been a disservice to the union, for each of these has been so important and impactful that we could combine them into a best-selling book.

So we ask you to take a stroll down memory lane to check out 10 for the 10th anniversary, among them these:

- Cover stories.
- The best of the rest of the big stories.
- PBA Local events and fundraisers.
- Valor Awards.
- PBA conventions.
- Police Unity Tour.
- National Police Week events.
- Jobs well done.
- Special Olympics events: Polar Bear Plunge, Snow Bowl, Torch Run and Plane Pull.

Trimming to 10 stories in each category proved to be the toughest job we've had since we began this 10 years ago. But we hope the highlights on the ensuing pages provide memories that bring smiles to members' faces and emphasize what you all know should be the media narrative.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

A PERFECT 10

10-4 CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

The stories we did not include on these lists actually rise above everything else: tributes to PBA members who have been lost in the line of duty. When we came on, the PBA was grieving over the assassination of Lakewood Local 71 member Christopher Matlosz. Honoring Chris helped set a standard for creating a special place in *NJ Cops Magazine* for any officer lost in the line of duty, perhaps a small contribution to never forgetting any of these heroes.

During the past 10 years, we have been able to honor Teaneck Local 215 member John Abraham Jr., Mount Arlington Police Officer Joseph Wargo, Newark Detective Michael Morgan, Millville Local 213 member Christopher Reeve, Jersey City Officer Melvin Santiago, Ocean County Prosecutor's Office Local 171 Detective John Scott Stevens, Summit Local 55 Detective Matt Tarentino, Paterson Local 1 Detective Tamby Yagan, Asbury Park Local 6 Detective April Bird and Bridgeton Local 94 Officer Sean Peek.

The presence of *NJ Cops* has also been able to properly recognize members who were lost to COVID for the sacrifices they made. We will never forget Hudson County Corrections Local 109 member Bernard Waddell Sr., State Corrections Local 105 member Nelson Perdomo, Bedminster Township Local 366 member AlTerek Patterson, Patterson Local 1 member Francesco Scorpio, Union City Local 8 member Alex Ruperto, State Corrections Local 105 member Maria Gibbs, Bloomingdale Lo-

cal 354 member Gary Walker, Hudson County Corrections Local 109 member Zeb Craig, Glen Ridge Local 58 member Charles "Rob" Roberts, State Corrections Local 105 member Erick Whitaker, Old Bridge Local 127 member Chris Cronin, Somerset County Sheriff's Department Officer Ahmed Mackey, Hoboken Local 2 member Peter Zanin, State Corrections Local 105 member Vincent Butler, State Corrections Local 105 member Edward Jamandron and Cumberland County Corrections Local 231 member Luis Andujar.

The PBA has extended tributes throughout New Jersey and the country with its Special Services trailer, and another privilege has been to chronicle these. The inspiration for remembering all these law enforcement officers came from a meeting with Wieners in May 2011, when he set the standard by saying, "There is nothing law enforcement does better than honoring its own."

The Perfect 10 lists could never be all-inclusive or a 10 best, because the best stories are the ones that mean the most to members. And hopefully, every PBA member has more than a few favorites. The ones presented in the following pages are meant to be a cross section of those that showcase your work, your efforts, your passion. And that you can always count on these stories to be published here.

Going on 10

Before letting you turn the page and take a stroll down memory lane, please indulge a moment to recognize some of those



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A PERFECT 10

who have made this possible. A thank-you note, if you will.

Of course, it begins with Tony and Keith. They turned it over to Pat and Executive Vice President Marc Kovar, who have done so much to elevate *NJ Cops*. Pat has contributed three different regular columns – Political Action, Pension Benefits and the President’s Message – as well as an incredible number of the stories spotlighting members that have filled these pages.

Early in the partnership, we met Marc, a member who wouldn’t hesitate to do the heavy lifting. He still does, and his devotion inspires us to make every story as great as it can be, because that’s what members deserve.

Ed Carattini Jr. is responsible for so much of what makes *NJ Cops* memorable. It’s not uncommon for Ed to work a night shift, then head out early the next morning with no sleep to photograph a PBA event. The images he has brought to the pages bring so much of the honor the magazine has been able to present.

Kevin Lyons, Pete Andreyev, Mike Freeman and Rob Nixon fill the magazine with so much expertise each issue. Their articles have helped create the presence for *NJ Cops* that makes it a must-read every month.

PBA attorneys Robert Fagella and Paul Kleinbaum have the distinction of being the only ones to have contributed an article to every issue of *NJ Cops Magazine*. There’s no better way to measure how much they have helped members by examining

and explaining so many important topics.

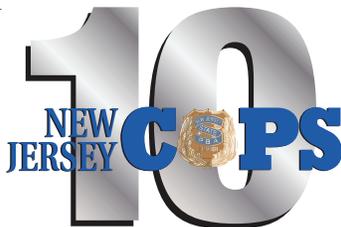
Check the left-hand column on page 4 of this and every issue to see a list of all those members who have contributed so much to *NJ Cops*. There is not enough space to mention them by name, nor is there enough to thank all the State Delegates, Local presidents and other members who have graciously granted interviews and information to enable us to report and write these stories.

On a personal note, allow me to give a nod to the *NJ Cops* staff, who have worked so hard to give members something memorable each month. Gina Crotchfelt, our art director, works more hours than anybody will ever know putting together the pages each issue. She is a goddess. Karen Jenkins and Rosemary An have joined the team and bring a boundless passion to telling the stories. We miss Amber Ramundo, who gave you so many joyful stories during her time with *NJ*

Cops.

Lastly, I get down on my knees and bow in homage to John Hulse. His vision was to create a monthly magazine that would showcase the best of the PBA and its members. He has given so much to teach us how to do this and ensure we do our best every issue. This is part of John’s greatness, to give instinctively and endlessly of himself for the benefit of the PBA and its members.

With that, the only thing left to say is this: Read on, now and forever!



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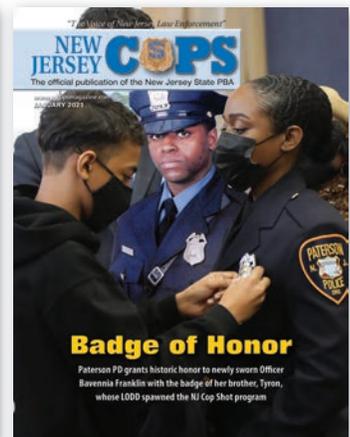
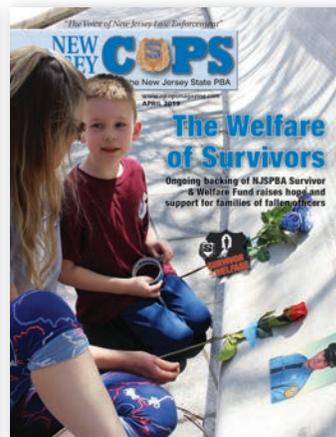
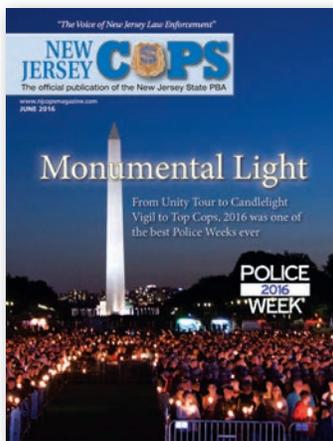
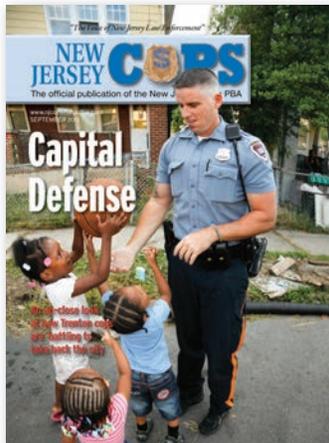
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The Covers

The 10-year run has produced 120 covers. How do you select the perfect 10 when so many showcase the greatest hits of the PBA, its members and the law enforcement profession?

So here are two sets of 10.

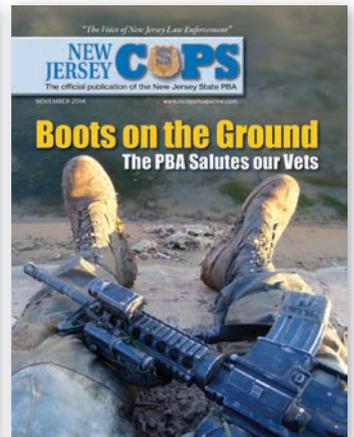
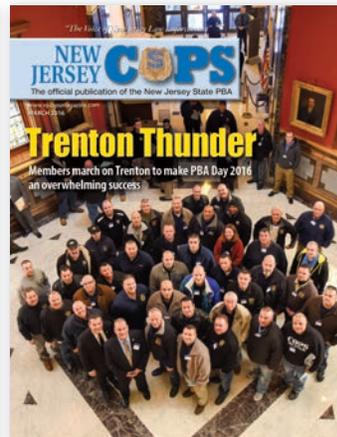
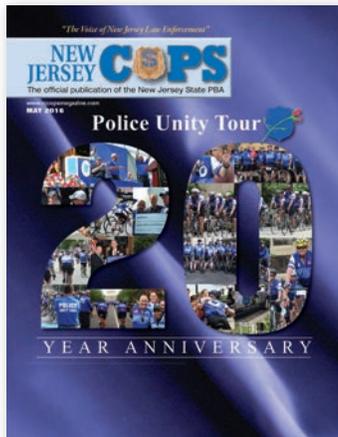
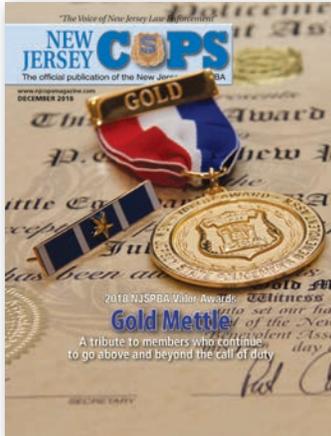
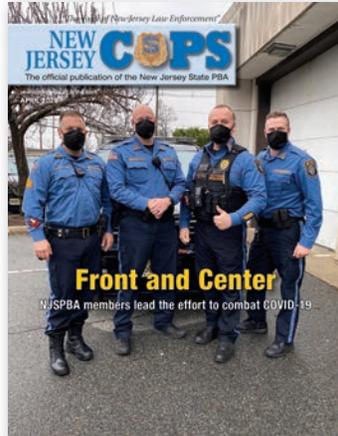
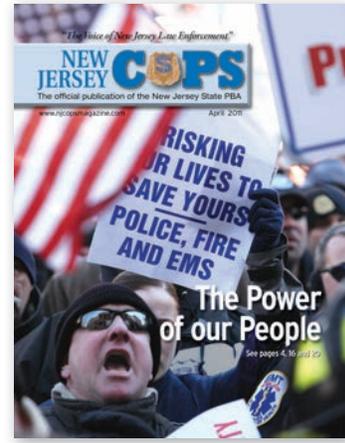
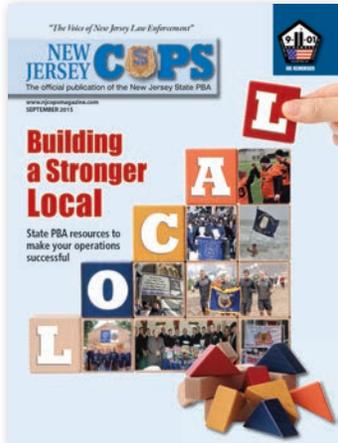
From riding along with Trenton members to members going all-out in fundraising – and showing their athletic prowess – to dramatic moments to moments of remembrance, the first 10 and the second 10 capture the courage, honor, integrity and ability to change lives of the union and its members. Scenes from National Police Week and



Special Olympics events also highlight the amazing work of photographer extraordinaire Ed Carattini Jr., your Verona Local 72 State Delegate.

With a “Thin Pink Line” honoring members who are breast cancer survivors and tributes to the success of the PBA’s political action, this tour includes the Police Unity Tour, great events like PBA Day in Trenton and the annual PBA Toy Drive and, of course, the work of members on the front lines. Of all the covers, which one is the best? Well, ask 120 PBA members, and you might get 120 answers.

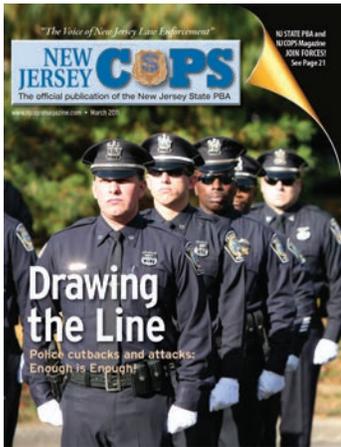
That’s what has made it such a wonderful 10 years.



The Cover Stories

Of the 120 cover stories during the past 10 years, we have covered great PBA events, saluted officers lost in the line of duty, honored members for outstanding service, spotlighted some of the important trends in law enforcement and labor and tried to offer informative, timely and engaging reads.

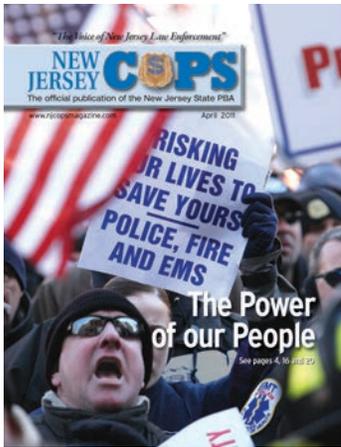
Picking 10 that represent the mission of *NJ Cops Magazine* to be the voice of New Jersey Law Enforcement and a reliable vehicle for the PBA to get its message to members might have been easier using a dartboard. In the end, this set of 10 is a list that bull's-eye stories that have made a difference for members and readers.



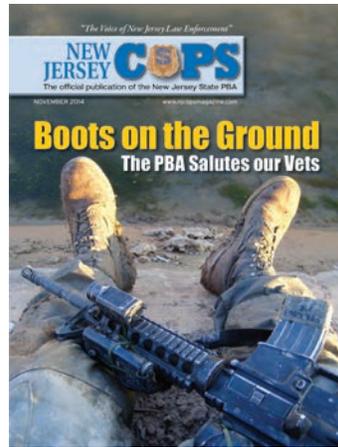
Drawing the Line: In the March 2011 issue, our first cover story showed that the PBA will never tolerate attacks on law enforcement, layoffs or legislative hypocrisy under a headline of "Enough is Enough." The first member quoted in the first cover story: a future NJSPBA executive vice president from Passaic.



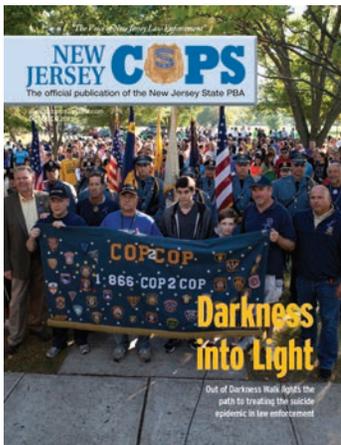
Follow The Leaders: The story that introduced the PBA's new president and vice president in July 2014 forecasted their intentions as the new union leaders. President Pat Colligan pledged, "I try to keep my sense of humor no matter what's going on. I try to look for the silver lining." Executive Vice President Marc Kovar was described as, "He feels his presence represents the people he's fighting for, and he doesn't take any crap." They have been men of these words.



The Power of our People: Issue No. 2 in April 2011 followed "Enough is Enough" by chronicling the rally of more than 12,000 public safety employees in Trenton on a blistering-cold March day. This story set a standard for the magazine to repeatedly illustrate how much of a force the PBA and its members can be.



Boots on the Ground: This Veterans Day tribute in November 2014 to PBA members deployed in all aspects of military service confirmed the commitment to honor that special quality in law enforcement officers to do anything and everything to defend the rule of law and fight for freedom.

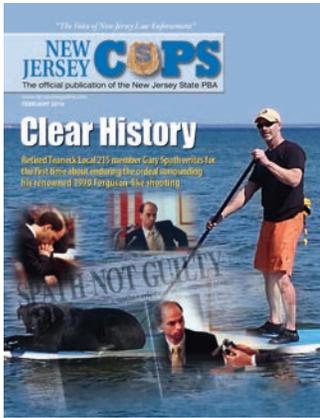


Darkness into Light: Spot-lighting the Central Jersey Out of Darkness Walk in October 2013 presented the ongoing and relentless commitment the PBA has made to be a leader in suicide awareness and prevention for law enforcement.



The Thin Pink Line: A group of Bergen County female members formed Ladies in Blue Fighting in Pink, a mobile support system for those in the fight as a titanic force to raise awareness for breast cancer. As these members related their personal battles in the October 2015 issue, they pursued their goal to let everybody know cancer is a word, not a sentence.

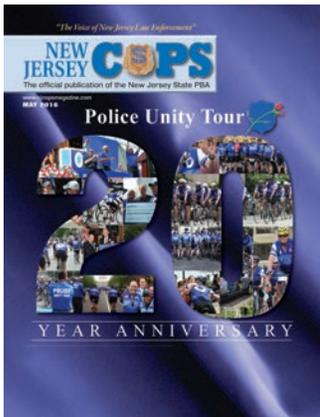
A PERFECT 10



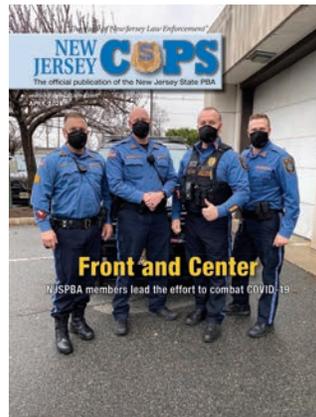
Clear History: In the February 2016 issue, retired Teaneck Local 215 member Gary Spath wrote his exclusive and never-before-published account of the incident in which he had to use deadly force. Twenty-five years after the response made national news, Spath received a thunderous ovation when he spoke at the PBA Mini Convention.



A tribute to you my family in Blue: In May 2017, 8-year-old Mikayla Raji, who was born seven months after her father, Perth Amboy Local 13 member Thomas Raji, was lost in the line of duty, anonymously paid for the dinner of Jamesburg Local 389 member Joseph Quinn. For a feel-good story — and a good cry — go back and read this one.



Police Unity Tour 20-Year Anniversary: This May 2016 celebration of the Unity Tour captured what a long great ride it's been, 20 defining moments explaining why they ride for those who died and how it became one of the most illustrious events in the profession.



Front and Center: A view of members on the front lines of the COVID-19 response in April 2020 celebrated the way PBA members didn't hesitate to meet the toughest challenges head-on. As they always have.



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The Big Stories

Throughout the last decade, the tenacity and resilience of PBA members have led them to advocate for legislation, honor fallen brothers and sisters, strengthen union representation and even to perform the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of providing security for the Pope.

Tour through a gut-wrenching visit to the NJ Police Officers Memorial, an inspired rally for Sandy Hook victims,

the painstaking journey to Police and Firemen's Retirement System (PFRS) independence and more in some of the most rousing stories from the past 10 years.

Of the dozens of stories that the *NJ Cops Magazine* team considered beyond cover stories as the best of the rest, here are some that truly changed the landscape of the union, its members and the policing they do.

9-11-11



On the 10th anniversary of 9/11, Locals across the state unified in a day to remember that featured the Renegade Pigs Motorcycle Club riding from Clifton to North Arlington in memory of one their own, Port Authority Local 116 member Paul Laszczynski. Fort Lee Local 245 members also helped dedicate the town's memorial built from World Trade Center steel.

Not on our turf



Former Governor Chris Christie scheduled a town hall meeting on a sacred playground on July 22, 2014, and PBA members, firefighters and teachers showed up to protect their turf. They stood up to the governor's disdain for law enforcement on a playground built by public servants that stands as a tribute to Lauren Rousseau, a teacher killed in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.



Great day for the PBA

A super Sunday

All New Jerseyans can boast that Super Bowl XLVIII took place in their home state in February 2014, but East Rutherford Local 275 members worked the biggest game of the year.



Papal security detail

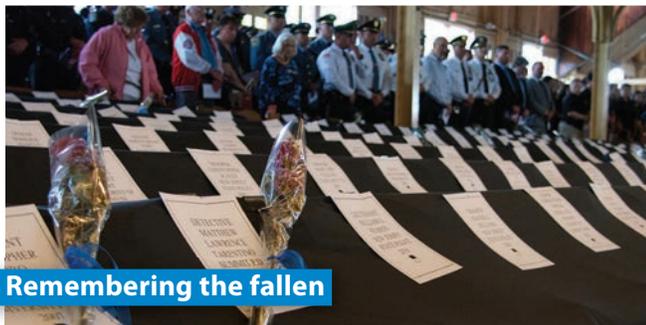
Members secured interstate arteries for the Pope's 2015 U.S. tour, with stops in New York City and Philadelphia from Sept. 22 to Sept. 27. The visit was designated as a National Special Security Event by the Department of Homeland Security, making it a federal endeavor that included Secret Service collaboration.



Chief for a day

Bergen County Sheriff and former State PBA Executive Board member Michael Saudino yielded his title to 5-year-old Chief for a Day Justin Pagan on June 3, 2016 as part of a countywide program for children battling chronic conditions.

More than 500 PBA members took a vacation day to be part of the NJ State PBA Day at the State Legislature in Trenton on March 3, 2016. The monumental day gave members the chance to show their faces to their representatives and enhanced the PBA's relationship with legislators.



Remembering the fallen

The 34th year of the New Jersey Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Service brought PBA members to Ocean Grove on May 22, 2018. The service annually remembers New Jersey officers lost in the line of duty, and each one of their names is printed on placards and set on rows and rows of empty chairs.



Mallory's Army melts the ice

The NJSPBA hockey team honored Mallory's Army in the annual rivalry game against the NJ State Police on Dec. 29, 2017. The event started an annual fundraiser for 12-year-old Mallory Grossman, a tragic victim of cyberbullying.



Independence Day

This was actually July 3, 2018, when NJSPBA President Pat Colligan, Executive Vice President Marc Kovar and other members of New Jersey public safety unions watched Governor Phil Murphy sign a historic bill that made the PFRS independent from state control.

Healthy Alliance

The inaugural NJ State PBA and New Jersey Doctor-Patient Alliance (DPA) golf outing on Sept. 16, 2019 allowed law enforcement officers and medical professionals to raise nearly \$100,000 for the PBA's Survivor and Welfare Fund.



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

FRPHC is a collaborative effort of the first responder union leadership and Integrity Health, a well-known, New Jersey-based firm specializing in managing health plans from a patient-centered medical home platform called "Partnership Health Center".

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- Providers unfamiliar with the unique health challenges of law enforcement.

www.IntegrityHealth.com

The Locals Stories

They call it a signature event. An annual turkey giveaway in Passaic. The Pension Pig Roast the Monmouth County Conference hosts in honor of a certain PBA president. The renowned Bergen County Toy Drive. PBA Locals crush it when it comes to signature events — fundraisers, events to honor fallen members and outreach that profoundly impacts the community. Members are constantly looking for ways to do more than protect the streets, especially helping other individuals and families.

Here are 10 perfect examples of how Locals fulfill their passion to serve as much as protect.



Monument man: Essex County Sheriff's Officers Local 183 honored member Jorge Oliveira, who was killed while serving his country in Afghanistan in October 2011, with the unveiling of Staff Sergeant Jorge Oliveira Plaza in Newark's Essex County Veterans Memorial Park in November 2011.

Angels for Jay: In 2015, Ocean County Sheriff's Officers Local 379 and other Locals worked with the Where Angels Play Foundation to dedicate a playground in memory of fallen member Jay Marles, who lost his life in a motor vehicle accident, five years after his death.



For Mary Ann: Fair Lawn Local 67 — and the rest of the PBA — honored member Mary Ann Collura on the 10th anniversary of her being lost in the line of duty by unveiling a memorial statue at the Fair Lawn Borough Hall in April 2013.



Getting piggy with it: When the former New Jersey governor called NJ State PBA President Pat Colligan a "pension pig," Monmouth County Conference turned it into a pig roast fundraiser that generated \$25,000 in the first two years to benefit the NJSPBA Survivor & Welfare Fund.



One-two punch: Passaic County Corrections Local 197 hosted a Public Safety charity boxing event with nine bouts matching members in 2014. The event supported the PBA Survivor and Welfare Fund and Jayden's Journey, a fund for 13-year-old Jayden Singer, who survived severe brain trauma.



Toy story: Northern Valley Local 233 spearheaded Santa's Response Team as part of the Bergen County Toy Drive, where members of more than 50 agencies provided 300 military families, 40 charitable organizations and nearly every hospital in Bergen County with gifts and special holiday requests.



A PERFECT 10



Remembering our brother: Members of Mercer County Sheriff's Officers Local 187 presented Pablo Santiago's wife, Jennifer, and daughter, Ava, with a donation raised from selling 400 bracelets inscribed with Pablo's name and badge number in honor of their lost brother in February 2019.



Turkey giving: Passaic Local 14 partnered with the NJSPBA and NJ State Troopers NCOA in November 2019 to distribute 500 turkeys and pies to citizens who otherwise would not have been able to put food on their Thanksgiving tables.



Walk with us: Belleville Local 28 members bolstered the department's community policing success on Walk to School Day in February 2019 by meeting students at designated spots and walking them to school, naturally forming connections with them along the way.

Ray of light: Cranford Local 52 led a fundraiser for the wake and mass of Raymond Schwartz, a 15-year-old who was named an honorary Cranford officer after his fourth operation during treatment for glioblastoma. Ray passed away in February 2019 following a 15-month battle with the rare form of brain cancer.



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The Valor Awards Stories

At its annual Valor Awards, the NJSPBA hands out nearly 30 awards that recognize upward of 100 members for their bravery, service, professionalism and overall excellence. So do the math on how many awards and members that has included during the past 10 years.

Some of these stories are almost unbelievable. Members stopping mass shootings, school shootings and violent criminals armed with unimaginable intent and weapons. Defusing hostage situations. Rescuing kids, disabled people, seniors and the like from fires, oceans and other life-threatening situations. Putting their own lives at risk every day for the greater good.

Looking for a definition of valor? Look right here at 10 examples from the hundreds chronicled the past 10 years that confirm valor is a way of doing the job for PBA members.



A child's best friend: On July 3, 2014, New Brunswick Local 23 members Michael Phommathep, James Hoover, Kevin Conway and Raymond Hansen raced to rescue a 4-year-old girl being attacked by pit bulls. After removing the threat, Hoover used his uniform shirt to wrap around the child's head to stop the bleeding. The swift action saved her life.

Donor honor: The 2015 Valor Awards presented one of the most

heartwarming stories ever when Vineland Local 266 member Domenic Ferrari received a Lifesaving Award for donating a kidney to Local brother Fred Demary. Both members attended and hugged each other tightly, celebrating Demary returning to work eight months after the kidney replacement.

Saving a brother: In October 2015, Hackensack Local 9 member Mohammad Sheikh accompanied two other detectives from the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office to perform a search for a man wanted for homicide. While sweeping a dark room, a suspect grabbed one of the officers and held a knife to his head. Sheikh fired a round that caused the suspect to release the detective.



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A career highlight for any PBA member is earning a Valor Award.

A real wife-saver: In July 2015, longtime West New York Local 361 State Delegate Jorge Ramos was on a Sunday afternoon drive with his wife and two daughters when, with no warning, he went into cardiac arrest. Knowing that death could have come in minutes, his wife, West New York Lieutenant Monica Ramos, managed to shift the car into park, called for an ambulance and began CPR. Moments later, Officer Jorge Salgado arrived and took over compressions, and three jolts with a defibrillator revived Ramos.

The legacy of a family hero: On June 6, 2016, James Clarke and his wife were sitting in the sand in front of their beach house when they realized that boys swimming in the ocean were struggling to return to the shoreline. One of the boys stuck in the powerful rip tide was their son. James ran to the beach and pulled each of the boys to safety before collapsing to the sand. He was lost on that day, and to honor him, Long Beach Township Local 273 presented his family with a Civilian Gold Medal of Valor.

When off-duty calls: Bellmawr Local 375 member Christopher Cummings brought his kids to Atlantic City on the Thursday before Labor Day in 2016. They were shopping at the Tanger outlets – the area known as The Walk – when Cummings walked into a store and encountered a man with a gun in his hand who had shot another man and then turned the gun on himself. After securing his family, Cummings immediately advanced on the man and wrestled the firearm from his possession.

Saved by the cell: On April 7, 2017, Mercer County Corrections Local 167 member Jippey Creighton found an inmate with deep lateral cuts in both wrists. When Officer Dominique Connors arrived at the cell, she found Creighton rushing to stop the victim's bleeding by using bed linens as a makeshift tourniquet. She quickly took hold of the victim's other wrist, and their actions saved his life.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54



Members being honored walk into the Valor Awards.

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The Valor Awards are always a memorable photo op for family members of award winners.



The NJSPBA Valor Awards Committee also goes above and beyond to create an extraordinary event.

VALOR AWARDS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53

Girl Power: The 2018 Valor Awards celebrated the meritorious service of two female officers who didn't back down. Neptune Local 74 member Dominique Russo chased down a suspect who had been pointing a gun at a group of people. Russo pursued the man, who was a foot taller than she, into the backyard of a residence and ran him down. Plainfield Local 19 member Omnya Alahwol was dispatched to the scene of a man being assaulted with a hammer and fearlessly sprang out of her patrol car to give chase. Alahwol spotted a shotgun in the attacker's waistband, and despite him towering over her, drew her weapon and got him to drop his gun and back down.

An "All Night" celebration: Eleven Trenton Local 11 members were honored with a Gold Medal of Valor and a meritorious service award for their historic response to the 12th Annual Art All Night Festival

mass shooting in June 2018. Officers Matthew Bledsoe and Robert Furman and Detectives Eliezer Ramos and Michael Cipriano led the response to one of the largest mass shootings in the history of the state of New Jersey left not having to suffer with any innocent civilians being killed.

School safety: Columbine. Sandy Hook. Marjory Stoneman Douglas. No chance Tamaques School in Westfield was going to make that list on June 13, 2019, when this team of five officers and two detectives from Westfield Local 90, deploying a well-detailed active shooter response, disarmed a man who was parked near the school armed with a handgun. Officer Jeff Johnson, Westfield's active shooter instructor, led the response that included Officers Joseph Habeiche, Elizabeth Savnik and Tiffany Kenny and Detectives Nicholas Bruno and Jason Merritt.



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The Conventions Stories

From presentations about going undercover in a notorious biker gang, to the tale of coming back from fourth-degree burns, to stopping domestic terror threats and mass shootings, the NSJPBA Mini Conventions and Main Conventions never fail to bring jaw-dropping tales of law enforcement fervor to the forefront.

With hundreds of riveting speakers from the past decade of conventions who also address issues important to furthering union efforts, here are a perfect 10 of convention presentations that augment the virtue of all NJSPBA conventions.

Never a doubt: Gary Spath recounted his story at the 2016 Mini Convention about surviving the attacks and the trials following his fatal shooting of a 16-year-old youth in Teaneck, where he served as an officer and Local 215 member for 10 years.

Holding onto hope: Port Authority Local 116 member Will Jimeno spoke at the 2017 Mini Convention about holding on while buried 30 feet under the rubble of a skyscraper following the 9/11 attacks. Jimeno's experience was chronicled in the Oliver Stone movie, "World Trade Center."

Crisis leadership lessons: Former Boston PD Superintendent-in-Chief Daniel Linskey recounted the hunt for the Boston Marathon bomber and stressed

the necessity of response in terrorist attack training at the 2017 Mini Convention.

Mallory's Army: Local members across the state made a commitment to blue-out bullying at the 2018 Mini Convention after a stirring presentation from Dianne Grossman, the mother of 12-year-old Mallory Grossman, who suffered cyberbullying that caused her to take her own life.

Political action: Political campaign expert Hank Sheinkopf called for a revolt by NJ State PBA members at the 2014 Main Convention in Orlando, Florida. The wake-up call ignited the PBA's political action that has made a significant impact on the union and members.



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Ovation of a lifetime



Never-ending fight



Political Action

Ovation of a lifetime: Trooper Bobby Smith spent two hours preaching to Main Convention attendees on Sept. 16, 2016 about a critical incident that left him living in blindness for 33 years. Smith passed away on Oct. 2, 2016, just weeks after imparting his wisdom that will remain eternal.

Let it strengthen you: Phoenix Detective Jason Schechterle was broadsided by a taxi driver suffering an epileptic seizure at 115 miles per hour, causing his vehicle to burst into flames on March 26, 2001. Schechterle received fourth-degree burns. He lived to tell his life lessons of perseverance at the 2016 Main Convention.



Let it strengthen you

Las Vegas mass shooting: At the 2018 Main Convention, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) Officer Yasenia Yatomi shared the harrowing details of the response to the Route 91 Harvest music festival shooting on Oct. 1, 2017.

Never-ending fight: At the 2018 Mini, Philadelphia Police Officer Jesse Hartnett recounted surviving an assassination attempt by a midnight shooter as an alleged expression of loyalty to ISIS on Jan. 7, 2016.



Las Vegas mass shooting

Austin bomber: A step-by-step presentation at the 2019 Main Convention by Detectives Rolando Ramirez and Richard Mabe tracked the inner workings of the 2018 domestic bombing investigation in Austin, Texas. The suspect detonated a series of packaged explosives around the city before dying by suicide.

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The Police Unity Tour Stories

What started with 18 riders on a four-day fundraising bicycle ride in 1997 from Florham Park to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C., has grown into nearly 2,600 members nationwide making the annual trip. Every mile tells a unique story of a fallen officer and a survivor honoring his or her legacy.

Remember these perfect 10 awe-inspiring stories of riding for those who died.



Wieners' final ride: A few weeks before his retirement, NJSPBA past President Tony Wieners had the honor of leading the pack into the memorial to open Police Week 2014.



Honoring Joe Franklin: Retired Roxbury Township Lieutenant Joe Franklin, a longtime Tour participant, died from injuries sustained in a crash during the first full day of the Tour on May 10, 2016. Members wrote his former badge number — 28 — on their calves to finish the ride and have been doing so every year since.



Original wheels: Police Unity Tour founder Pat Montuore was one of the 18 riders of the 1997 Unity Tour ride, and for the event's 20th anniversary in 2016, he dusted off his original bike to lead the 2,000-plus contingent into the Memorial.



Riding for one who lived: In 2017, Atlantic City Local 24 members rode in honor of one less name on the wall. Joshlee Vadell was shot in the head during a response on Sept. 3, 2016, and survived the catastrophic injury. He was in attendance to cheer on the Local.



The flag guy: Scott Haigh has handed out miniature flags in cities and towns throughout the route every year in honor of his father, Ronald Haigh, a member of Rockaway Township Local 287, who passed away from a heart attack in 2004.



Daughter of the fallen: Fifteen-year-old Adria McMeekin reunited with Atlantic City Local 24 members in 2018. Adria has posted letters to her father, Local 24 member Thomas McMeekin, who was lost in the line of duty on March 4, 2005, at the Memorial wall every year since she learned how to write.



Solidarity ride: For his 11th Tour in 2018, Sussex County Corrections Local 378 member John Bannon donned a bracelet with the name "John Bannon" on it, honoring an NYPD officer who passed away in 1966 — the year after Bannon was born.



For her father: Survivor Anna Miglio, a state correctional police officer, rode for her father in 2018, Wildwood Crest Police Department Officer Eugene Miglio, who was lost in the line of duty in 1995.



An Air Force reunion: Retired Upper Saddle River Local 218 member Emmitt Matel, Edison Local 75 member Dave Tingle, Gloucester County Local 122 member Rich Hanratty and Len Warner of the Mount Laurel Police Department — a quad who served together in the reserves at McGuire Air Force Base — reunited to ride the 2018 Tour together.



A mother of a ride: The 2019 Unity Tour fell on Mother's Day, providing the perfect celebration for Howell Local 228 member Maureen McBride. As she completed her Tour, McBride was greeted by cheers from her husband and three children, waiting for her at the Memorial.



The Police Week Stories

Seeing the hallowed walls of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, hearing names called at the Candlelight Vigil and honoring the nation's Top Cops as chosen by the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) generate some of the most important stories in all of law enforcement.

Here are 10 that truly capture what Police Week means and why every PBA member should attend.



Wall for you: You never forget your first visit to National Police Week, and this 2011 tour of the walls at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial showed how memorable it is. Seeing the mementos that loved ones leave for their fallen reminds that this is a celebration of how law enforcement takes care of its own.

Corrections correction: In 2013, then-State Corrections Local 105 member Wayne Sanderson procured permission from the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial to have the names of nine State Corrections officers who died in the line of duty added to the wall. Through genealogical research, Sanderson found officers who served between 1896 and 1954 who were lost in the line of duty.

Top honor: In 2014, Trenton Detective James Letts expressed how he, fellow Detective Edgar Rios and Mercer County Sheriff's Office Detective Williams Miller felt like they were living a dream when being honored as NAPO Top Cops alongside officers who hunted down the Boston Marathon bombers.

The vigil: Illustrious evidence of the Candlelight Vigil's healing power came in 2016 when Lacey Township Dispatcher Dawn Stephens was there to hear the name of her husband, Ocean County Prosecutor's Office Local 171 member John Scott Stephens, who was killed in an automobile accident on Jan. 21, 2015. PBA members from across the state stopped to hug Dawn to turn her tears into a celebration of her husband's life.

Let there be light: In 2015, NJSPBA President Pat Colligan had the honor for the first time of reading names of fallen officers from New Jersey during the Candlelight Vigil. And when the thin blue line of laser light beamed out from that same podium, the president

noted, "I wish it were a requirement for everybody who pins on their badge to see this."

Magic bus ride: Each April, the NJSPBA sponsors a bus trip for Garden State Concerns of Police Survivors to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. The photo of New Jersey survivors taken during this 2016 excursion, saying "Thank U PBA," expresses how much it means.

Remembrance: Posting a motorcycle fairing with a likeness of Paterson Officer Tamby Yagan where his name was added to the Memorial in 2019 culminated how Local 1 members honored their brother, who was lost in a traffic accident a year earlier. And showed that Police Week confirms that sisters and brothers will never forget.

Best of the best: Linden Local 42 members Angel Padilla Jr., Peter Hammer Jr., Mark Kahana, Daniel Diaz and David Guzman received many honors and accolades for capturing the Chelsea bomber in 2017. But none meant as much as being honored by their own as NAPO Top Cops.

Life saver: Atlantic City Local 24 member Thomas McCabe explained what a Top Cop really does. He and partner Josh Vadell were honored in 2018 for the incident in which Vadell took a bullet to his head. Had it not been for McCabe's quick action, his best friend would have become a name on the Memorial wall.

9/11 hero: Montclair State University Campus Police Sergeant and State Campus Police Local 278 member Christopher Vidro was the last responder to cross the bridge following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11. Vidro contracted cancer from the response and passed away in 2007. Eleven years later his name was finally called at the Candlelight Vigil.





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A PERFECT 10



The Job Well Done Stories

From rescuing residents trapped in fires to stopping a terrorist to preventing a suicide, PBA members seem to go above and beyond the call of duty every day. From so many "Jobs Well Done," here are examples of how nobody does it better than PBA members.



Officer for a day

Stop the terror: In November 2011, Essex County Corrections Local 382 member Eric Schwartz stopped a suspicious woman outside the department's parking lot wanted for questioning by the FBI in different terrorist acts.

For Matlosz: Spotswood Local 225's Michael Zarro, Sayreville Local 98's Douglas Sprague and Middlesex County Sheriff's Local 165's Luis Fajardo hiked Mount Washington in June 2012 to plant a banner honoring Christopher Matlosz, the Lakewood Local 71 member who was lost in the line of duty in 2011.

Burning up: Ewing Township Local 111 members Mike Pellegrino, Jim Caldwell and Fred Dow pulled an 81-year-old woman with a broken leg and her epileptic son out of a burning car in February 2012.



For Matlosz

Oh, baby: After responding to a call about a woman in labor in a parked vehicle, Cranford Local 52 members Matthew Nazzaro, Frank Williams, Robert Jordan and Michael Dubitsky successfully delivered Adam Ramos in August 2012.

Back on the job: Atlantic City Local 24 member Mike Braxton, who was injured in an off-duty motorcycle accident that resulted in the lower portion of his left leg being amputated in 2013, returned to work in June 2014 to a standing ovation from other members and pledged to work on inspiring other amputees.



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Break your fall: Three Mahwah Local 143 members caught 9-year-old Sofiya Doroshenko as she jumped about 25 feet from a burning third-floor apartment balcony in February 2016 and praised her as the real hero for being brave enough to jump.



Back to work

Call for help: After mistakenly receiving an email from across international waters in April 2016, Verona Chief Mitchell Stern prevented a young girl in Italy from committing suicide by contacting the Italian embassy in New York, then Interpol, to get help for the girl in a matter of 20 minutes.



Break your fall

Officer for a day: Verona Local 72 members surprised 4-year-old Micco LaRosa, who has a rare genetic disease and loves police, along with his older brother Leo, by swearing them in as deputies for a day in February 2019.

Autism awareness: In 2019, a missing persons call came from 12-year-old Ryan Paul, who has autism spectrum disorder. He could not locate his beloved teddy bear. Woodbridge Local 38 member Khari Manzini responded and used his autism awareness training to help Ryan through the ordeal.



Autism Awareness

Safe travels: Perth Amboy Local 13 member Lindsey DeJesus, who received a call about a disabled mother and her son stranded without a car or money, paid out of pocket for a 30-minute Uber ride to get them safely home to Monmouth County in November 2019.



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The Special Olympics Stories

With members like George Duffy plunging at the Polar Bear Plunge since the very beginning; like Todd Smith participating in the Plane Pull for his son, an SONJ athlete; like the Ocean County Pigskins team winning the Snow Bowl with none other than renowned Olympian Eric Kish, members from every Local raise hundreds of thousands of dollars every year for Special Olympics.

Members are dedicated to SONJ's mission of bringing pride into the lives of children and adults with disabilities through athletic competition. PBA members have proven that if there is anything that they will get together for, it is Special Olympics, and here is a perfect 10 list of stories that illustrate their commitment to the cause:



Dressing the part: Bay Head-Mantoloking Local 347 member George Duffy started participating in the Polar Bear Plunge in 1993 and adds a year to his pre-plunge robe every year.



Streaking: Northern Valley Local 233 members have multiple streaks for the Polar Bear Plunge, not only with members like Dennis Kane plunging since 1993 and Mike Graham since 1998, but also with their team dressing up in costumes like wrestlers, Mardi Gras revelers and dodgeball players in recent years.

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Styling: Middlesex County Sheriff's Local 165 members always arrive to the Polar Bear Plunge in style — they dressed as Disney characters in 2020 and pro wrestlers in 2019, and they wore rompers in 2018 and Speedos in 2017.



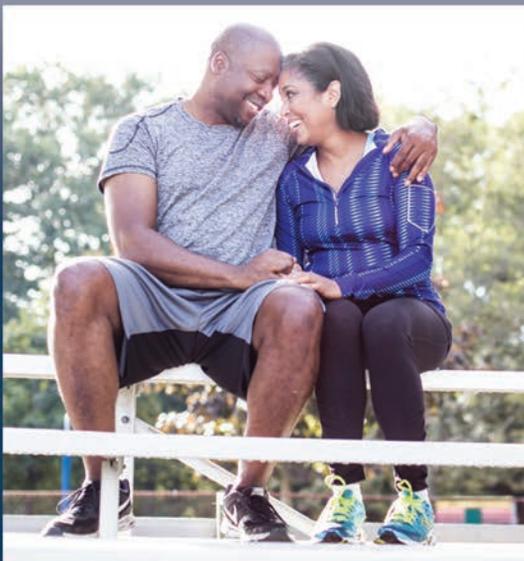
Honoring the fallen: Toms River Local 137's team of 20 officers emerged victorious at the 2017 Plane Pull after pulling a 93,000-pound United 737 aircraft in honor of fallen officer Brett Hansen, who passed away the day before the event.



Tens of thousands: Rumson Local 345 Chief Scott Patterson raised \$34,563 in Polar Bear Plunge donations in 2020.



Family affair: Freehold Township Local 209 member Todd Smith participates in the annual Plane Pull at Newark Liberty International Airport as a volunteer for and with his son, Jake, a SONJ athlete.



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Triple crown: West Essex Local 81's Fairfield's Finest team unofficially won a triple crown at the 2018 Plane Pull, coming in first place for all three phases: fastest pull at 6.96 seconds, lowest combined weight at 1,292 pounds and total money raised.



Victory at last: The Ocean County Pigskins, a mix of talent from five Locals, is the home team for Spotswood resident Kish. He was their x-factor in taking home a Snow Bowl championship for the first time in 2019.



For Moe: The Passaic Local 14 Gladiators, a perennial at the Snow Bowl, scored a 2019 divisional game victory and gave a get-well-soon shoutout to the Local's President, Moe Farallo, who had undergone triple bypass surgery a few days earlier.

It gets competitive, too: Spotswood Local 225 member Adam Sabatino shows the whatever-it-takes spirit of playing for Special Olympics by wearing wristbands with color-coded play cards. Special Olympics events brings out the members' fundraising passion and competitive spirit.





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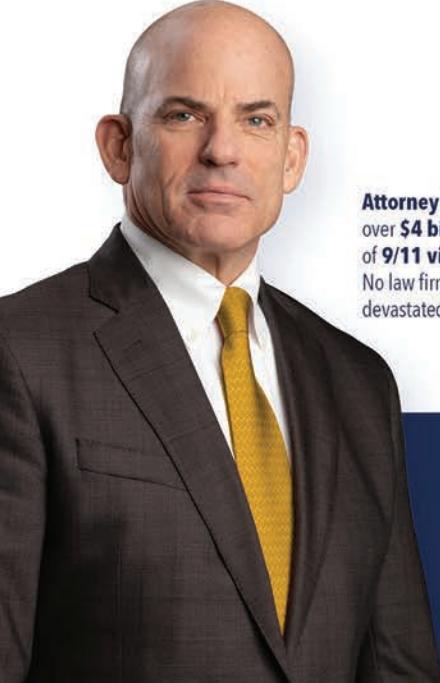
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AROUND THE STATE

News about NJ Cops



Middlesex County Prosecutors member combines sports with charity for children

■ BY ROSEMARY AN

Middlesex County Prosecutors Office Local 214 member Colin Feneis, who used to play on the national police softball league, felt inspired to create a smaller-scale softball event of his own.

“The league mixed fundraisers and hanging out with friends while playing softball,” Feneis recalled. “So I wanted to parlay that and do it at our Local.”

So Feneis organized an annual charity softball tournament that has resulted in more than \$20,000 donated to the Bristol-Myers Squibb Children’s Hospital at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital over the past three years.

And on March 5, Feneis, other Local 214 members and Berkeley Heights Local 144 members presented a \$6,110 check to the hospital.

“My own aunt passed away at the hospital a couple years ago,” Feneis said. “Unfortunately, a lot of people have family members there. And when you’re talking about children, there’s even more soft spots for everybody.”

The 3rd Annual Charity Softball Game, held at William Warren Park in Woodbridge this past September, had eight teams

from different Locals. The Local 144 team won this year’s tournament, which included teams with members from Somerset County Prosecutor’s Office Local 307, Somerset County Corrections Officers Local 177, Hudson County Corrections Local 109, Edison Township Local 75, Woodbridge Local 38 and New Brunswick Local 23.

Local 214 has a long-standing tradition of donating to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, dating back to the late ’90s. But donations from the softball event are even more special because they go directly to the children.

“We thought [the donation] was just going to whatever the hospital needed,” Feneis explained. “But it goes specifically for toys for the children who may be stuck there on holidays, or for parties if it’s one of the children’s birthdays, so it benefits their happiness instead of their medical equipment.”

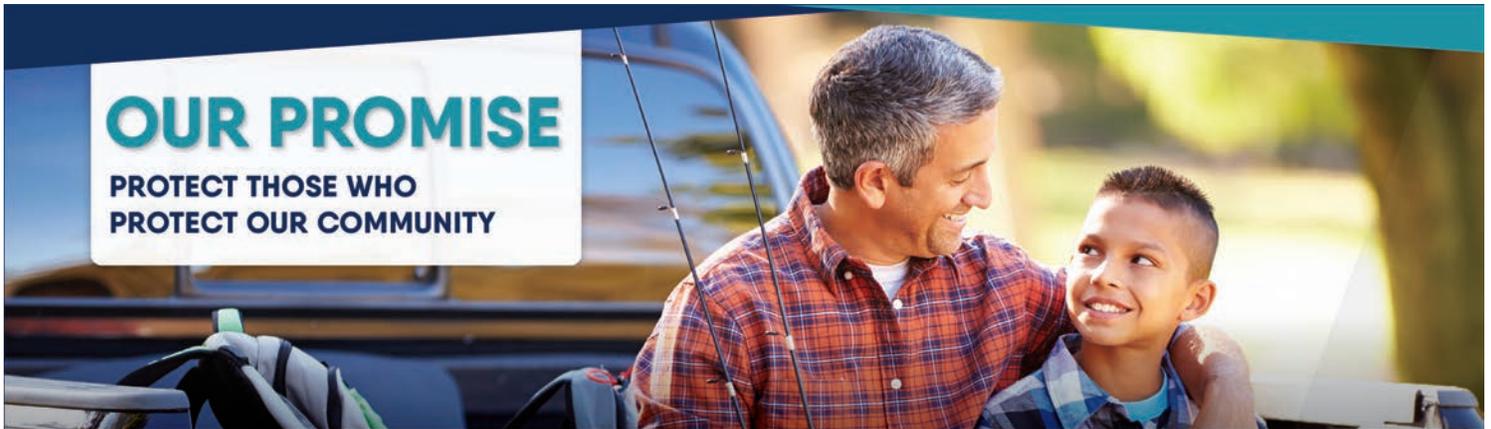
Due to its success, Local 214 wants to continue the charity softball game every fall.

“We thoroughly enjoy supporting the children’s hospital every year,” said Christopher Pennisi, the Local State Delegate. “And we are so grateful for the support we get from other Locals and the county.”

A special gift to the State PBA

Holding its flag, the Italian American Police Society of New Jersey (IAPSNJ), led by IAPSNJ President William Schievella, presented PBA President Pat Colligan with a donation of sanitary wipes in March in front of an NJSPBA Survivor & Welfare

Fund van. The contribution was one of the organization's ways of dedicating resources to supporting healthcare heroes, first responders and law enforcement officers during the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Fanwood promotes two Local 123 members to sergeant

Honored by Lieutenant Marc Gottlick, Fanwood PD promoted Kevin Stomber and Daniel Kranz to the rank of sergeant in March. Stomber was raised in South Plainfield and joined Baltimore County Police in Maryland and South Bound Brook before becoming a member of Fanwood Local 123 in 2002. Kranz grew up in Fanwood and dispatched for the department before joining the Capitol Police Department in Washington, D.C., then joined the Local in 2014.



Six Passaic County Sheriff's Office Local 286 members level up

The Passaic County Sheriff's Office held a promotion ceremony for six officers on Feb. 26 at the Passaic County Technical Institute in Wayne. Sergeants L. Forbes, K. Bonilla and J. Tangora were promoted to lieutenant, while officers J. Tolerico, B. Weitzman and R. D'Ettore were promoted to sergeant. Local 286 State Delegate Patrick Formentin and SOA President Captain Edward Akins commemorated the officers for their new positions.



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More Wonderful Life Insurance

Capital Benefits brings new NJSPBA plan that gives members unprecedented value

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

No NJSPBA supporter seems to serve to protect like Capital Benefits, the New Jersey insurance brokers who initially provided unprecedented service to members in 2018 with the NJSPBA Life Insurance Plan. And just when it seemed like they had served up the best coverage for law enforcement, Joe Ablahani and Eric Murtha from Capital Benefits have come up with an even more protective plan.

These Capital ideas are some of the best yet: a new life insurance product that offers living benefits from which members can claim up to 75 percent of the policy value while still alive. Add to that new wrinkles in the disability insurance program that cover sickness and injury suffered on or off duty.

"It kind of puts life insurance on steroids," Ablahani declares. "We rolled this out a few weeks ago, and when I have explained it to PBA members they are like, 'Yeah, it's a no-brainer.' I think it's a home run for every member."

The virtue of the new life insurance is the living benefits, available for terminal illness, chronic illness, critical illness and critical injury. Here's how it works: If you suffer or have a terminal illness, chronic illness, critical illness or critical injury, you can get up to 75 percent of the value of policy while you are still alive.

So say you have a \$1 million policy, and you have a heart attack or stroke. You can get up to \$750,000 tax-free while you are still living and still have a value of what's left on the policy. If you have cancer or are incapacitated due to an injury, the same benefit is available.

The money can be used to pay for doctors, to pay off a mortgage or even to go traveling. If you suffer a chronic illness and can't perform any two of the six daily living activities like bathing or dressing yourself, you can also collect the benefit, which can be used to pay for a nurse to come to your home or an assisted living facility.

The claim is based on your doctor's assessment, not one from the insurance company. Ablahani relates a case study that really accentuates the value of this policy.

"We had a client who had a \$1.5 million policy on a 30-year term. He had the policy when he was younger, and he was paying about \$1,300 per year," he explains. "After five years on the policy, he had a heart attack and was able to collect \$1 million. He had paid in about \$6,500. But he received the million tax-free, and he's back to work. And he still has a portion of that death benefit in place."

The life insurance plan packs even more security. It's available in 20-year term, 30-year term, whole life and what is known as Index Universal Life. The Universal Life has an investment attached to it based on the Index 500. If the index increases, the policy holder actually makes more than having it on a fixed rate. And there's no medical exam required for policies of up to \$2 million for anybody under the age of 60.

Murtha reminds members that the program can be of great value because the life insurance they get through being PFRS members pays three-and-a-half times their salaries while still on the job. But when they retire, it decreases to less than half.

"So do this while you are younger, because the premium is a lot less," Ablahani notes. "And if you're taking a permanent policy, it locks in at a much lower rate for the rest of your life. The rate is never going to go up on a permanent policy."

And here's the best part. Well, maybe not the best part compared to living benefits, but Capital Benefits reports that approvals are coming almost as soon as the ink on the signature page dries. One member was approved in two hours. The average has been about two days.

The new disability plan from Capital Benefits came after six months of searching for a program. The policy provides that any officer who is out of work for longer than 30 days can collect up to 60 percent of their salary, up to a \$5,000 max.

It covers long-term illness, any accident or injury, whether it comes from playing with the kids in the backyard or chasing down a suspect, and even COVID. Costs are determined by age, with the age groups being 18 to 49, 50 to 59 and 60 to 65.

"I think this is all about peace of mind," Murtha emphasizes about both programs. "And it's not just peace of mind for members but for their families, too, because they can take advantage of it."

To find out about the new programs and living benefits being offered, call Capital Benefits at 973 808-2626.

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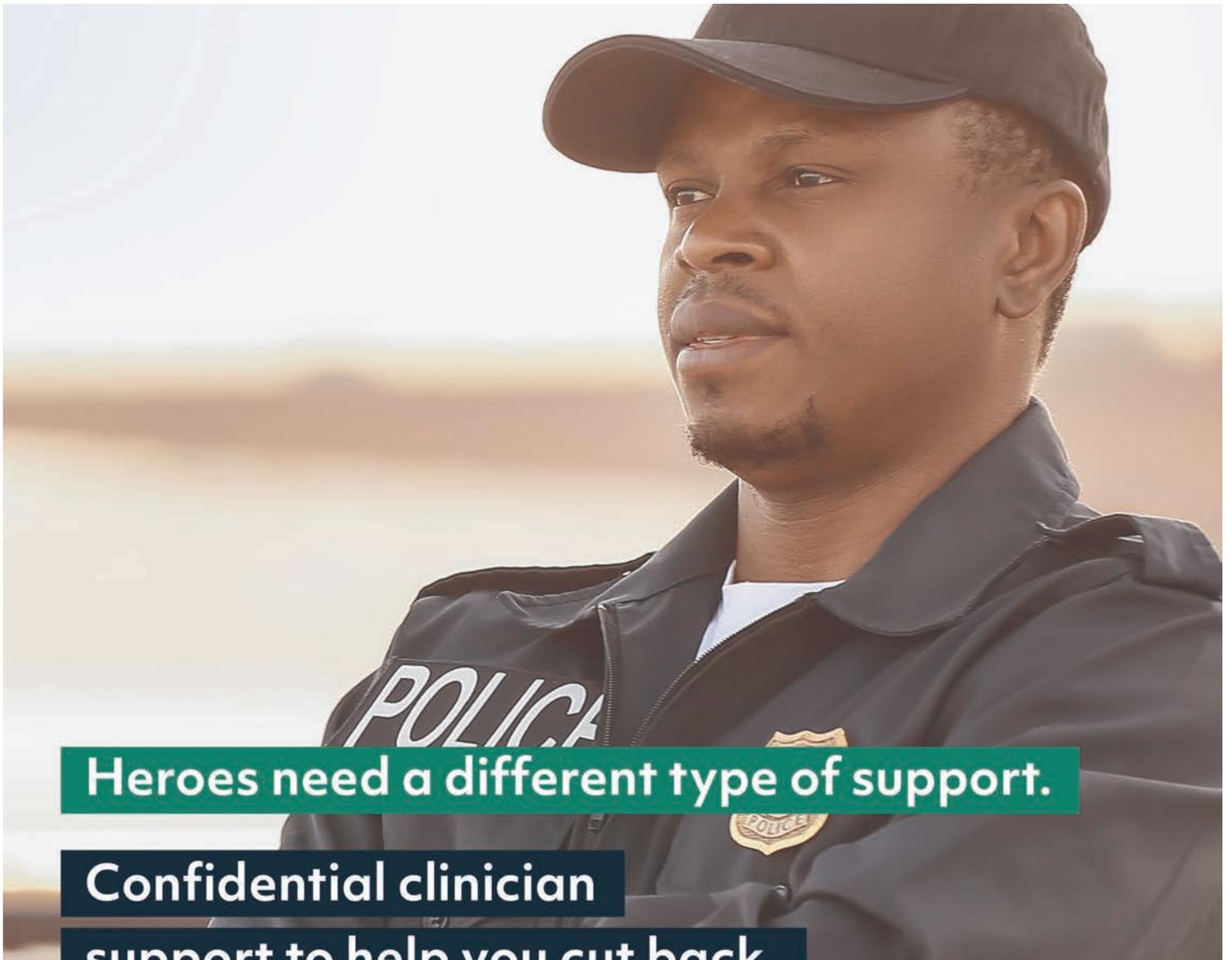
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Springtime reminders around the rails



THOMAS J. JEDIC

Finally, some upcoming “normalcy” in an abnormal world. Even though we are still dealing with our COVID protocols and all of the safety techniques we must remember to employ, the advent of spring will bring some things back we do recognize. People will slowly emerge from their hibernation and start to go

outside. That means our railroad environment will certainly see an increase in activity. We always deal with trespassers, ATV riders, dirt bikers, dog walkers, hikers and many more incidents of people on the railroad who place themselves in real danger. So let’s talk about two things: first, how you can patrol, prevent and recognize signs of trespassers; and second, how you must protect yourself and colleagues when you respond to any railroad incidents.

Let’s address the second topic first. As many of you who have attended one of my rail safety courses can attest, my first and most important advice will never change. Whenever you are dispatched to or find yourself in the railroad environment, before you go near the tracks you must notify the railroad operator to halt traffic. Not a suggestion, but a rule to live by — literally. Trains and the tracks are dangerous environments. Tracks and ballast are not easy to walk over and around, and they’re not designed to be. Bridges, tunnels, trestles and rail yards are not “soft” places. Nothing there is very forgiving. Switches move on their own, tracks are slippery, and if you have to go there, remember: There are moving trains. Taking police incidents and dropping them atop railroad tracks only increases safety concerns. So don’t get comfortable — get tactical. Treat your assets like any other challenging area. Learn it, practice it, prepare for it and never take it for granted. Repeat after me: Never go onto railroad tracks without making sure the railroad is notified and trains are halted.

So, you have plans and tactics covered, what’s next? Spring and summer months

bring a wide variety of issues involving the rails. Learn your areas and those of nearby towns in case an incident spreads out, as in a derailment, a catastrophic event, a search for a person, etc. Familiarizing yourself is not all that difficult; it’s like learning your beat and will absolutely pay dividends in the future. Figure out the best areas to stage, assemble, enter and exit. Know where paths, trails and other access areas lead you. All of these things should be practiced in daylight and darkness hours, as we all know how perception shifts during a 24-hour period.

So, what might you see? Well, for many of you, the foot trespasser is common. But why is that person walking on or along the tracks? Are they having emotional issues? Fleeing from the police? Trying to hide from sight? It could be any number of reasons. One thing is certain: No one other than a railroad employee has a valid reason for being there. So use caution and be prepared, not flatfooted, when you have to approach anyone along the tracks.

ATV and dirt-bike riders generally are there for fun, but the definition can rapidly change when there is a serious injury. No dirt bikes or ATVs are allowed to be used on railroad property. There are too many trackside hazards. Switch stands, ties, extra rails and more necessary items are usually on the ground near the tracks. Tripping hazards can be deadly.

Rail equipment itself can sometimes be hazardous. Rare as it can be, equipment can get damaged. Although the tracks are 4 feet, 8 1/2 inches wide, equipment hangs over 3 feet on each side, making it easily a 10-foot-8 1/2-inch field of contact. Damaged rail cars may stick out farther. Sometimes open freight loads can get loose or jut out, too, and these can be deadly to anyone in their path. The space between tracks is engineered to be just what is needed, and often there is no room for error. The same goes for tunnels, trestles and bridges. They are just not made for people. Be aware of clearances before you get into trouble. Keep your eyes open and keep a safe distance always. Be the eyes and



Be aware of damaged rail cars that may stick out and have open freight loads that can get loose or jut out.

ears of safety. If you watch a passing train and something just doesn’t look or sound right, call the railroad immediately so it can be checked by maintenance staff.

Just remember, the nice weather makes all of us feel a little bit better and at ease. But never let your tactics suffer because of that. Be vigilant around the rails. Be smart: Never go onto railroad tracks without making sure the railroad is notified and trains are halted (repeat).

Be safe and never hesitate to reach out for railroad safety information.

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.

NJ's 'red flag' law burdens LEOs

"[The Second Amendment] guarantee[s] the individual right to possess and carry weapons in case of confrontation." — Associate Justice Antonin Scalia, *District of Columbia v. Heller*



THOMAS ROUGHNEEN

Although it should be the exception, an Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) can be a helpful tool when used properly by law enforcement and judges. Sadly, we are not confident that New Jersey's statute offers sufficient protections from abuse by those with bad intentions. As written, New Jersey's law enforcement officers (LEOs) and government officials will be forced into positions where they have to CYA, to use yet another acronym. We have our doubts that LEOs, prosecutors and judges will be able to apply it consistently, objectively and reasonably before revoking one's rights pursuant

to the Second Amendment.

Tellingly, if an ERPO is ultimately not entered, the statute omits how one recovers their weapon, and possession is nine-tenths of the law.

Any citizen can petition for an ERPO, including your disgruntled child or spouse. For those subject to an ERPO, particularly for LEOs, the issuance of a Temporary Extreme Risk Protection Order (TERPO) will drastically alter their lives. Under N.J.S.A. 2C:58-23, a TERPO can be entered if the respondent "poses a significant danger of bodily injury to self or others by having custody or control of, owning, possessing, purchasing, or receiving a firearm." This statute requires law enforcement to confiscate your private and duty weapons if a court finds that the gun owner poses a danger to themselves and others. If entered against you, you are no longer able to carry a weapon, and ultimately, cannot do your job.

We teach a course at Sheepdog Academy on the Law Enforcement Officer Safety Act (LEOSA), and the federal law encourages trained LEOs to carry off duty and in retirement. Any time a stranger can take a weapon away from a law-abiding citizen or LEO, with or without expedited due process, we need to be cautious. But let's be honest: In anti-weapon New Jersey, it will take a bold LEO and an even bolder judge to decline one of these petitions.

First, the process for filing and adjudicating a TERPO is similar to the process for filing and adjudicating a domestic violence order. One major difference is that the petitioner can also be a law enforcement officer. Under the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, the person filing for the Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) must be a family member, be in a relationship with the defendant or have a child with the defendant. When filing a TERPO, in contrast, the petitioner can be a law enforcement officer, a family member and/or a household member. Therefore, no relationship to the respondent is necessary.

Attached to the petition must be an affidavit stating the facts or incidents contributing to the belief that this person poses a danger. Similarly to the process of obtaining a TRO, a judge will review the petition and, after finding good cause, will issue the temporary protective order. It is important to note that if the petitioner and/or witnesses are not available, the judge may rely on the affidavit filed by the petitioner when issuing the order. Judges must consider a range of factors, including whether

there is a history of "drug or alcohol abuse and recovery from the abuse."

If the judge decides to issue a TERPO, the respondent is then prohibited from having custody or control of a firearm and ammunition. If a TERPO is filed against a law enforcement officer, the agency that employs the officer will be notified, and the agency must initiate an internal affairs investigation. An officer should not be fired during the internal affairs investigation. Any action to be taken will be taken once the internal affairs investigation is complete. In the meantime, no weapons for the LEO.

The outcome of the investigation is to be served upon the county prosecutor for a determination as to whether to refer the matter to the court. Regardless of the decision of the prosecutor, the law enforcement agency is obligated to follow through and implement the findings of the internal affairs investigation.

We would love to hear your feedback at Veteran@CitizenSoldierLaw.com.

Learn more about the law practice of Chrisann Wright, Esq. and Thomas Roughneen, Esq. at www.CitizenSoldierLaw.com

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

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Attorney Edward Marcowitz has unparalleled experience with the James Zadropa 9/11 Health and Compensation Act and the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF). He's proud and honored to serve as the personal attorney for the family of the late NYPD detective James Zadropa for whom the Zadropa Act is named.

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Eyewitness identification procedures revised



ED ESPOSITO

On Feb. 9, the New Jersey Attorney General revised the procedures law enforcement officers must follow when composing, conducting and recording out-of-court identifications made by an eyewitness. The changes were prompted by two separate New Jersey Supreme Court decisions in 2019 that ultimately led to the court adopting revised rules for recording an out-of-court identification (Rule 3:11).

The first case, *State v. Anthony*, 273 N.J. 213 (2019), clarified that law enforcement officers must record identification procedures electronically, preferably by video and audio. If that is not possible, then a contemporaneous written account must be made. As a last resort, if neither of those options is possible, the administrator of the identification procedure is required to provide a detailed summary of the procedure, and they must document the reasons why the electronic recording or contemporaneous record was not possible.

The second case, *State v. Green*, 239 N.J. 88 (2019), set forth new obligations for the state when officers search for an unknown suspect based on a witness's physical description of that suspect by using an old-fashioned, hard-copy "mug book" or a more contemporary digital database of mug shots. In order for this procedure to be admissible in court, law enforcement must now preserve certain photos the witness views when making an identification. When relevant, the state will also have the burden of showing that a witness was not exposed to multiple photos or viewings of the same suspect. The court's decision in this case specifically requires the following photos or images to be retained, thereby enabling an appropriate review in the future:

- The photo of the suspect the witness selected, along with all other photos on the screen or page; and
- Any photo that a witness says depicts a person who looks similar to the suspect, along with all other photos on that screen or page.

The new policy issued by the attorney general now specifies the specific recording requirements of any out-of-court identification procedure. In general, the requirements for live lineups and photo lineups remain the same. In addition, the requirements for providing instructions to a witness and having a "blind administrator" for the procedure remain in place. The same practices are also now applicable when officers are using a physical mug book or a digital mug book.

When using a mug book, preparers should ensure that only one photo of each individual is in the mug book. If feasible, mug shot-identification procedures should be conducted sequentially — i.e., showing one photo or one person at a time to the witness, rather than simultaneously. Officers must also ensure that no writing or information concerning previous arrests will be visible to the witness. The amended court rule governing these procedures now states: "The visual depiction may consist of photographs or images fixed in any medium now known or later developed." This virtually ensures that any advances in technology that will be used for out-of-court identification must follow the same procedures.

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



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What is causing your fatigue and what to do about it?



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A couple weeks ago, two new patients who worked for the prosecutor's office came into our office. They were telling us how normally, when there's no homicide or any kind of significant workload, they're doing OK. They eat well. They sleep well. But as soon as their workload increases, they start feeling like crap, eating like crap and don't get enough sleep.

One of the officers said, "It just becomes my new normal until I just snap

out of that cycle." And that's the hardest thing when you come to the realization that enough is enough and that you have to start cutting out on certain things. When there's a significant issue, that's when people start to question if this type of lifestyle is sustainable. Some may start to think it's time to wind down and that they can't do it any longer. There has to be a better way.

When you go to a doctor and say you're tired, you just don't feel great or things are not the greatest in the bedroom, the most common things a physician would consider is that maybe it's your thyroid. Sometimes you think it could be your kidneys or even take a look at your electrolytes.

Often times, some doctors may look at the most common things. Traditional medicine is constantly looking at disease and illness to explain why you are feeling like this. Is it because there's something wrong with you, as opposed to what can we do to prevent it from getting worse?

Our practice looks at the bigger picture and more natural ways. We focus on the health and wellness aspect of how you are feeling and other potential underlying issues that are causing fatigue.

Fatigue is a great place to start looking at how to improve your health and wellness.

There are lots of issues caused by fatigue. One of the biggest complaints from our patients is interrupted sleep. When you have low testosterone, or low T, you tend to lose depth of sleep, known as REM sleep. That's the stage of the sleep cycle when your body gets restful sleep. During REM, when you're in a deep sleep, that's when you have the biggest release of hormones.

Interestingly, testosterone is really released in your body and produced in your body while you're in deep sleep, which makes quality sleep so important. It's kind of a double-edged sword. If you have low testosterone, you can have an interruption or loss in the depth of sleep. And if you don't have deep sleep, you can't produce testosterone efficiently. This is where hormone replacement therapy can help if you're a candidate.

During a visit with one of our doctors, we talk about many aspects of fatigue. You have fatigue because you don't eat well. You have fatigue because you don't exercise enough. You have fatigue because you have an overabundance of stress. It's a vicious cycle. One week becomes a month, and then it becomes even longer. This is especially true for law enforcement officers and those working in shift work since the unpredictability of the schedule makes it challenging to pursue proper nutrition and the day-to-day stress of the job.

This is where we find the issues start. It's not like you're working 16 hours or a double shift just today or next Wednesday. It's every single day, week after week, month after month and it is a lot for

your body to handle. You may try to convince, "You know what, I have to deal with it." When it comes to work, whether it's a financial reason or you have to cover for your partner, the behavior and feeling bad just becomes chronic. When that becomes your new normal, that's the problem. Once your body gets used to that constant energy-draining abuse, that's when your hormones become imbalanced and your whole body kind of just gets a jolt to it.

These are all cumulative components of why someone may feel mental or physical fatigue. It can go both ways because every person is different. A lot of times people feel more mentally fatigued than physically. We've all been there, and some days are definitely more difficult than others.

That's why it's so important to get a full assessment of what's going on in your body. We're always so habitual and we don't always realize what the cumulative effects are. And then you look in the mirror, and you're like, "Holy smokes. Look at me today. I can't believe what I look like today. This is not the way I was three years ago. What happened?"

What can you do moving forward? Most officers seem healthy because they get traditional or standard lab work from their practitioner. Your testosterone range could go from 250 to 1200. So if you're 251, you're considered normal by some doctors.

That's when going to a specialist makes all the difference. What's normal for one person, may not be normal for another. A specialist in hormones can dial into what the 'right' level is for you, irrespective of what is considered the 'norm' and truly see how your body's responding to daily stresses, rather than just traditional blood work that doesn't always give you in depth information from a day-to-day perspective. That would be the first step toward a solution to be more conscious of how your body's responding to daily stressors.

It's hard, but you have to come to terms that if your fatigue is related to low testosterone, your body is no longer making the amount needed to function well. So you have a choice to supplement your testosterone and experience feeling great. The commitment that goes along with that is to live that lifestyle that includes balanced hormones, good diet, exercise and good quality sleep.

When you achieve that, the most common feedback that we get is that when you wake up in the morning, you're energized. You have a foot on the ground and are ready to really start the day.

When officers walk into our office, most of these guys feel like every day is a Monday morning. But when you have that extra push, that extra oomph in your day and your mood, you want to pursue the day in a more positive way.

Dr. Sachin Shah, cofounder of Advanced Anti-Aging in Riverdale, earned his medical degree from the State University of New York in Syracuse and was trained at New York University Langone Medical Center. Following his extensive training, Dr. Shah began expanding his interests in pain management, venous medicine and, most recently, stem cell application for regenerative medicine. Dr. Glenn Foss is a graduate of New York Chiropractic College. During his 19 years of clinical experience, he has seen how musculoskeletal dysfunction relates to nutritional and dietary deficits, physical deconditioning and hormonal imbalances. For more information about Advanced Anti-Aging's Low T treatment, go to advancedantiaging.com or call/text 973-998-7770.

The complex issue of weight loss

Obesity can have many causes

It is generally understood that people with obesity have higher risks for chronic diseases, including diabetes and heart disease. There is a wide push by health educators, physicians and nutrition experts to help people lose weight through diet and exercise. But according to Deborah Specialty Physicians endocrinologist Navinder Jassil, M.D., while those weight loss tools are important, obesity is a much more complex problem than is often recognized.

“I have seen many patients over the years who are simply dismissed by health care professionals as lazy and unmotivated,” she says. “The perception has been that people with obesity eat too much and do too little.”

This, Dr. Jassil points out, can have serious repercussions.

“If this is the only way we can view obese patients, then they can spiral into an acceptance of defeat and low self-esteem, and not work on a solution,” she says.

Hormones are key

Dr. Jassil said that hormones often play a key role in weight gain.

“There are brain signals that trigger many of our habits — hormones like leptin and insulin, and our sex and growth hor-

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE TIPS



mones that can influence our appetites, and our metabolism which controls the rate at which we burn calories, as well as how our body fat is distributed in our bodies,” she says. “Obesity can occur when over time our bodies take in more calories than we burn. However, it can also be triggered by hormones being out of balance.”

Dr. Jassil notes that obese people (especially those with a body mass index over 30) should definitely talk to an endocrinologist when trying to regain their health.

“There are a lot of things in our toolbox that can help,” she says. “We certainly want to rule out any hormonal imbalances that can be corrected with proper medication. These approaches often support additional efforts with healthy eating and physical activity and make them more effective in producing results. As well, there are many treatment options, like bariatric surgery, that can help someone get back on track with their weight goals.

“The most important thing is to recognize that excessive weight gain can have many causes, and a proper medical evaluation can be the first step in helping pinpoint these,” says Dr. Jassil.

For more information, visit www.deborahspecialists.com.

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ASK THE PHYSICIAN

Navinder Jassil, M.D.

Endocrinologist

Deborah Specialty Physicians

Q: I have been gaining weight over the past few years as well as noticing that I am getting tired. I keep racking it up to getting older, but now my doctor has told me I have stepped over the line into actual obesity. I have been reasonably active most of my life and am not quite sure what happened to me. I want to get this in check, but I feel helpless. Any ideas?

— **Marcia, Bayonne**

A: Marcia, I feel your frustration and applaud you for deciding to tackle the problem.

While I don't know enough about your medical history, a combination of weight gain and fatigue could be a sign that your metabo-

lism is slowing down. This could be caused by the hormonal changes your body goes through as you age and could be contributing to your weight gain. Your body may be burning calories more slowly than it used to.

I think that a comprehensive exam with an endocrinologist can help. This type of medical specialist can confirm or rule out if your hormones are playing a role with your weight. If so, medications can often help. That — in combination with a proper, nutritious diet and targeted exercise plan — can make a huge difference in you shedding pounds.

In any case, getting medical help for your weight condition is imperative. Obesity can lead to many more serious health conditions that can affect the rest of your life. You should see a specialist as soon as you can.

For more information, visit www.deborahspecialists.com.

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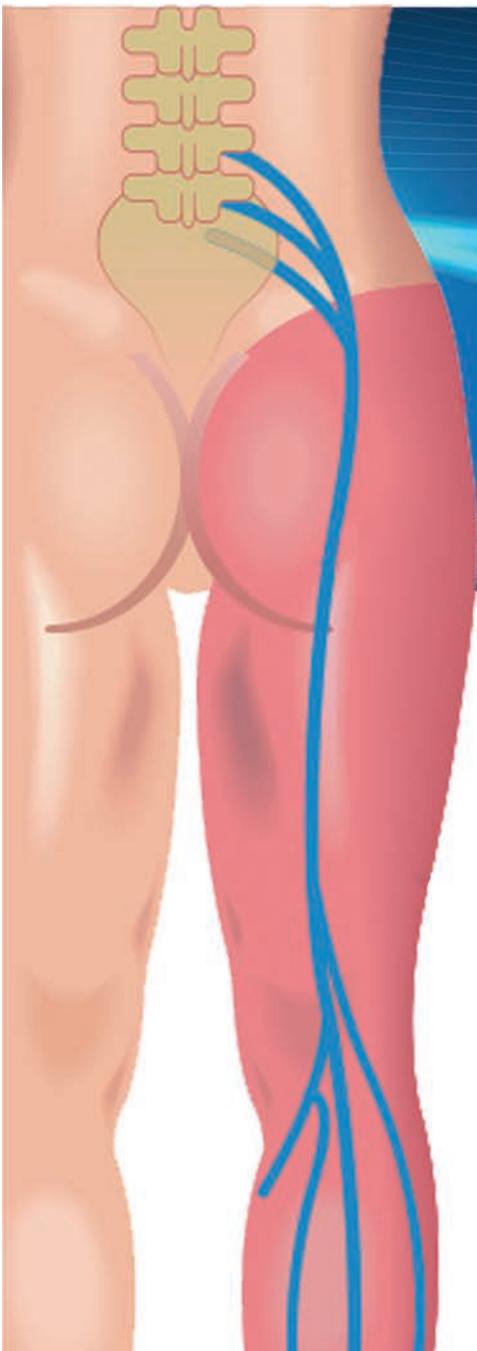
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If you would like more information on joining the PBA or starting a Local, please contact the NJ State PBA Office in Woodbridge at 732-636-8860.

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.

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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.

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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.

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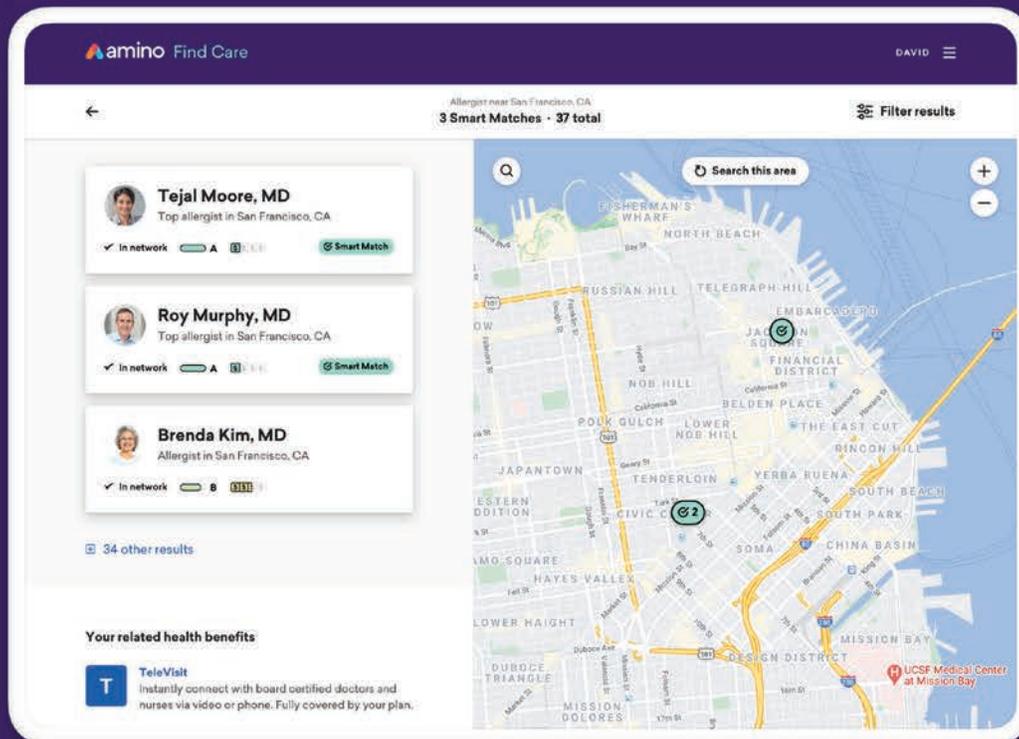
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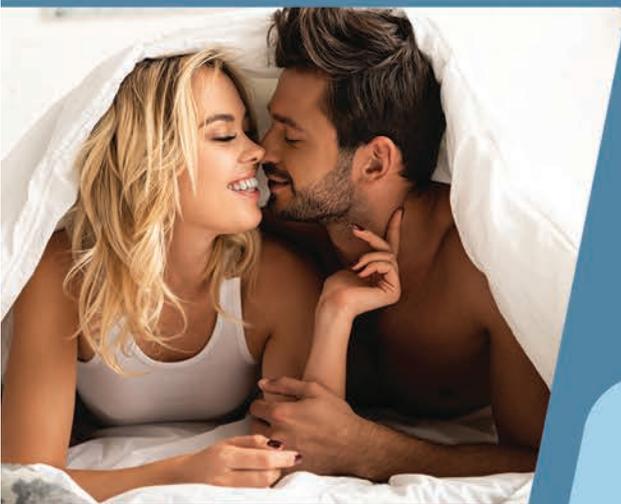
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