

# FDLE Agents Association

## The Voice

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE FDLE AGENTS ASSOCIATION CHAPTER OF THE FLORIDA PBA

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Rick Caplano**

With hurricanes in our own backyards, our neighbors' backyards, and now other states' backyards, we appear to be taking on a whole new job for at least six months every year. What happens now? According to all the same predictions we've been watching, we may be destined to repeated six month combat tours on Mutual Aid duties for the next decade or so. I suggest that it's all part of the ever changing face of this agency. It's the same change that's been going on forever and the same change that'll be occurring in years to come. It's just doing what always has been done. **Theodore Roosevelt** once said, "Whenever you are asked if you can do a job, tell 'em, 'Certainly, I can!' Then get busy and find out how to do it." It's a theory that this agency has always seemed to abide by and one that keeps its bread buttered.

FDLE is in the midst of organizing two gaming squads in Broward County to enforce what I'm told is money laundering issues and possible organized criminal presence within the newly formed Racino industry. Logic dictates that pari-mutuel wagering would enforce video machine gambling and

we are told they will have a prominent place in its structure. We have made a formal request, which was approved by **SAC Amos Rojas**, to be involved in the creation of these units. This will hopefully ease agents' concerns over reassignment, as well as addressing agents' concerns that we are utilized for gaming related investigative purposes rather than becoming Racino floor Guards. We'd also like to make sure that there is a differentiation between these newly assigned duties and potential off-duty employment in the Racinos for local and/or State Police, to include ourselves.

We have been moving forward with negotiations and consultation issues. (See other newsletter articles for more detail.) We have re-worked our legislative package and agenda which is still well on track. We have had a board meeting attended by upper management and continue to meet personally with **Commissioner Tunnell** when all our busy schedules allow. We look forward to an

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*The FDLE Agents Association Board of Directors meet with Asst. Commissioner Scotty Sanderson and Asst. Commissioner Electra Bustle at the recent FDLEAA Board of Directors Meeting in Tallahassee.*

## SPECIAL AGENT OF THE 1ST QUARTER: TOM McLAUGHLIN



*President Caplano presents SA Tom McLaughlin with the SA of the Quarter award.*

The first Quarter FDLE Special Agent of the Quarter is SA Tom McLaughlin of the Palm Beach Field Office. Tom is one of the most meticulous and complete investigators in this agency with an expertise in Fraud that has been highly polished throughout his years in FDLE. Prior to coming to work at the Broward Field Office in 1989, Tom worked as a State Attorney Investigator in Palm Beach County for 10 years. Additional prior Law Enforcement experience includes 2 1/2 years as an Arson Investigator with the State Fire Marshal's Office and a three year

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## SPECIAL AGENT OF THE 2ND QUARTER: ELI LAWSON

SA Eli Lawson has been a member of FDLE for 8 1/2 years. SA Lawson started as an Intelligence Analyst in Tallahassee and was promoted to Special Agent 4 1/2 years ago assigned to Miami. SA Lawson transferred to Pensacola Region Operations Bureau in 2004 and hit the ground running. He was the lead agent representing FDLE in Operation Bean Counter.

Operation Bean Counter, a year long investigation into a Vietnamese trafficking organization distributing cocaine and MDMA (Ecstasy), was worked jointly by FDLE, DEA,

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*FDLEAA Pensacola Representative Velma Springs presents SA Eli Lawson with his SA of the Quarter award.*



## SPECIAL AGENT OF THE 3RD QUARTER: MICHELLE MUNOZ



*SA Michelle Munoz is presented her SA of the Quarter Award by FDLEAA 1st VP Telly Sands and 2nd VP Al Mones.*

Michelle Munoz has been assigned to the Narcotics and Money Laundering Squad in Tampa since becoming a Special Agent Trainee. During this past year, Special Agent Munoz has been assigned as a member of the Polk County based Methamphetamine HIDTA Task Force HIDTA Task Force

The supervisors of the participating task force agencies including, the Polk County Sheriff's Office, Lakeland Police Department, Winter Haven Police Department and the Haines City Police Department, FBI and FDLE have been highly compli-

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## SPECIAL AGENT OF THE 4TH QUARTER: VINCE DELLACCIO

The 4th Quarter SA of the Quarter is Vince Dellaccio of the Sarasota Field Office. As we normally shy away from choosing FDLEAA Representatives and Officers as the recipients of this award, this agent continually goes beyond the call of duty and is truly deserving of this recognition. Vince is the Ft. Myers Regional Representative for the FDLE Agents Association.

Vince has been an FDLE Agent assigned to the Sarasota Office since 1989. Prior to that he was a Deputy Sheriff for 13 years with the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office. Vince has

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*SA of the Quarter Vince Dellaccio receives his award from President Caplano at the Florida PBA Board meeting in Marco Island.*



## **SPECIAL AGENT OF THE 1ST QUARTER: TOM McLAUGHLIN** *Continued from page 2*

stint as a Deputy Sheriff with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.

Tom was case agent on many recent high profile fraud investigations to include the Tomasso Fraud scam that involved a Palm Beach County Pizzeria owner stealing the ID of former employees, filing false unemployment claims and cashing the checks. Also the Comtel Fraud case where a suspect was ordering computers under stolen identities and reselling them to the United States Military, the Antila Fraud Organization that was responsible for the ID theft of over 100

persons, mostly tenants from low income housing they managed, resulting in the seizure of over 1/2 million dollars in assets and a nationally publicized case involving a criminal mastermind Grandmother named Ernestine Williams who from her perch in her wheelchair traveled the Southeast US with an extensive organization of pickpockets.

Tom is a primary reason FDLE enjoys the expertise it is tagged with on complicated Frauds and the reason why he was picked as the 1st Quarter SA of the Quarter by the FDLE Agents Association. ●

## **SPECIAL AGENT OF THE 2ND QUARTER: ELI LAWSON** *Continued from page 2*

Pensacola PD, Escambia County SO, and Santa Rosa County SO. The case involved significant investigative resources to include exhaustive hours on several wiretaps and resulted in substantial asset seizures.

Twenty-two (22) defendants have been indicted on federal charges including Conspiracy to Traffic in Cocaine, Conspiracy to Traffic in MDMA, and Money Laundering.

Most of these defendants are facing minimum/mandatory sentencing guidelines of ten years in federal prison. Twenty (20) have already entered guilty pleas. The remaining two are at large in the Texas/Louisiana area.

Congratulations to SA Eli Lawson for his professionalism and leadership noted in his representation of FDLE on Operation Bean Counter. ●

## **SPECIAL AGENT OF THE 3RD QUARTER: MICHELLE MUNOZ** *Continued from page 2*

mentary of SA Munoz's work ethic, drive, and positive attitude displayed while working with the task force.

In a Letter of Commendation towards Michelle, her boss, SAS Dave Waller, states:

*"For the past year, SA Munoz and SA Nick DelCastillo have been involved in "Operation Green Convoy." This is an investigation into a multi-state marijuana trafficking organization involved in smuggling marijuana from Texas into Central Florida. During this investigation, which involves numerous Hispanic members, SA Munoz has been invaluable.*

*She has used her skills as a Spanish speaker to interview individuals involved in the investigation. SA Munoz's work ethic has been superior. She has quickly learned interview techniques that have enabled her to gather information necessary for such an extensive investigation."*

In recognition of her extraordinary presence and accomplishments on her investigative efforts and her positive impact on the Florida Department on Law Enforcement within the Law Enforcement community, we are proud to name Michelle Munoz the 3rd Quarter Special Agent of the Quarter. ●

## **SPECIAL AGENT OF THE 4TH QUARTER: VINCE DELLACCIO** *Continued from page 2*

worked a variety of criminal investigations since coming on board with FDLE, ranging from Public Corruption to Homicide. His most visible and current work involves the investigation of Computer Sex Crimes relative to On-Line Child Exploitation and he is an active participant in the Child Abduction Response Team (CART).

Vince was the FDLE Case Agent and an integral part of the investigation into the abduction and murder of **Carlie Brucia**, a horrible crime that gained national notoriety with its

videotaped abduction splashed all over national television. Vince's investigative expertise and courtroom skills played a large part in the conviction of Carlie's abductor and the eventual death sentence handed down to him.

In recognition for the true asset he is to FDLE, as well as his professionalism demonstrated in the recent crime against Carlie, Vince Dellaccio is named the 4th Quarter SA of the Quarter by the FDLE Agents Association. ●

## **A Long-Term Trend**

On-duty police officer deaths due to traffic accidents (Sources: National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, usatoday.com):

1975 to 1984 - **342 Deaths** / 1985 to 1994 - **369 Deaths** / 1995 to 2004 - **477 Deaths**

# POLITICS

By Telly Sands, First Vice President



In August of 2005, **Second Vice President Al Mones, Florida PBA Executive Director David Murrell** and I attended a meeting with **Joe McVey**, a staff representative of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. The primary purpose of the meeting was to educate the committee on the need for salary increases for Special Agents and determine a strategy for the funding of the 2% Performance Bonus and the Recruitment and Retention Plan in the upcoming 2005-2006 legislative session. Mr. McVey suggested a joint lobbying effort between **Commissioner Tunnell** and the PBA. He further suggested a presentation to the Ways and Means Committee leadership articulating the specific specialty duties of an FDLE Special Agent and the need to hire qualified experience law enforcement officers to perform these duties. **President Caplano, Ft. Myers Regional Representative Vince Dellachio** and I are tentatively scheduled to meet with **Sen. Lisa Carlton**, the current leader of the Senate Committee controlling our financial fate, on these specific issues in Sarasota, as well as other upcoming meetings during the Legislative process.

I think, based upon my conversations with Mr. McVey, that lawmakers need to be routinely refreshed and re-educated on our mission to better our visibility in the Capitol.

Legislative reassignments, term limits and the shuffling of committee members makes it necessary to focus on the appropriate committees on an annual basis. This will require a more aggressive strategy in FDLE Agents Association lobbying efforts during this session.

Finally, FDLE Special Agents are competing with state law enforcement officers whose salaries are inferior. We are often compared as the top end of State Law Enforcement pay and overlooked as the "more realistic comparisons" being the lower paid within certain Federal Agencies that repeatedly recruit our Agents and more accurately reflect the caliber of cases.

*"It will be necessary for ALL OF US to step up to the plate."*

It will be necessary for ALL OF US to step up to the plate. Special Agents around the state will need to get involved by assuring that Chiefs and Sheriffs in your local law enforcement communities are aware of the professionalism of this agency on our daily dealings with them. We need to especially reach out to the smaller local law enforcement agencies that depend on our investigative expertise and that can help in getting the word out on our efforts.

The PBA lobbyists have suggested that these committees want to hear from and see the Special Agents during some of these meetings arranged by the PBA Legislative Staff on our behalf. President Caplano has pledged personal attendance by either himself and/or additional Board members at these future meetings. As always, we would appreciate any assistance from FDLEAA members on these issues. ●

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *Cont. from Page 1*

interesting year in the Legislature with elections and other factors playing into the decisions that will ultimately affect our pocketbooks.

This is also the beginning of the last year of this FDLE Agents Association Board of Directors elective term. I think it's time some of the membership out there gives some serious consideration into running for any of the officers or representative positions within the State. We are an aging group, as they say. Some of us will likely not be around for another

term. Some have been promoted into management and choose not to run for office again, and some are just very tired. We, the current board of directors, and many before us, have done the legwork and taken the majority of the early headshots in order to form a more perfect union, so to speak. We have established a well funded, politically active association that has the ear and respect of management. Give some serious thought to becoming involved in this organization. It truly has the power to better the role of the Special Agent in the law enforcement community. ●

*"It is the duty of every citizen according to his best capacities to give validity to his convictions in political affairs."*  
~ Albert Einstein

# TAMPA BAY UPDATE

By Telly Sands, First Vice President

I would like to update you on the status of **TBROC Special Agents Larry Benedict** and **Steve Watkins**. Larry continues to remain on extended sick leave while undergoing medical evaluations and treatments. Larry has recently decided to retire after an exemplary law enforcement career. Steve is out on workers' compensation and is undergoing medical treatments from a training injury. I spoke with both Larry and Steve recently and they are doing as well as can be expected.

I'm sure Larry and Steve would appreciate hearing from as many friends as possible.

If you would like to send them a card or letter, feel free to send them to my attention at:

FDLE TBROC  
4211 N. Lois Avenue  
Tampa, Florida 33614

Please keep them your thoughts and prayers. 🍀

## NEWS FROM THE PANHANDLE

By Velma Springs, Pensacola Regional Representative



It appears that PROC was once again in need and the troops responded! I'm sorry I did not get a chance to speak or see you guys, but bravo shift at the EOC in Santa Rosa kept me a little tied down. Hopefully, we can see each other under better circumstances the next time. Speaking of hurricanes, I know we ran into some of the same problems we had last year, housing, communication, driving conditions etc... However, I think the

preparation and planning was better than Ivan, but we still have a long way to go. We need to learn from the after action reports, and then implement. Four wheel drive vehicles in every region would be a nice start.

PROC is still in temporary housing, but hopefully will be settled soon. PROC has never had an ASAC since we became a region, but we are moving up! I would like to say congratulations to our newly appointed **ASAC Steve Desposito**. He still has to do double duty as an SAS, but he is used to it by now! 🍀

## YOUR PBA RIGHTS

By Telly Sands, First Vice President

One of the benefits of being a member of the FDLE Agents Association is your right to PBA representation during an Executive Investigation (EI). If you are notified that EI would like to take a statement from you, understand your coverage under the Policeman Bill of Rights. You are entitled to a copy of the complaint made against you to include statements and tape recordings relative to those complaints prior to your interview. It's important to inquire if the allegations made against you are criminal or have the potential to be criminal in nature.

The next thing you need to do is immediately notify your FDLEAA Regional Representative so that arrangements can be made for a Florida PBA local representative or attorney to be present during the interview, depending on the circumstance. On occasion, members will contact me or the local FDLEAA representative the day the EI statement is scheduled. The Department is usually cognizant to give ample time for proper PBA Representation when being interviewed, so it's important to immediately notify the PBA. Last minute

scheduling due to your delays can result in an inability to have proper and informed representation. If the Dept. fails to give ample time for representation... that is an entire different story and can easily be remedied by the PBA, therefore usually delaying the interview.

In my experience, the EI Inspector will utilize the same interview skills and efforts put forth by any trained investigator in an effort to secure a statement. These statements are taped and become a part of the investigative file. It's important to exercise your right to see all statements, written and taped, prior to offering a statement and not allow a *preliminary inquiry* to develop into a fact-finding mission to "search" for wrongdoing.

At any time, you may contact me, **President Caplano**, or your FDLEAA local representative if you require assistance or guidance.

The Florida PBA attorneys have suggested that you always have a PBA Representative present. It's your right and their privilege! 🍀

# CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

By Rick Caplano, President

During this year's contract negotiations, we have started a procedure that is benefiting both the State and the PBA in these sessions. We have received approval through DMS to negotiate directly with FDLE management. This move has eliminated a DMS "middleman" which was time consuming and ineffective in a working relationship with management. Our last session, attended by **President Caplano, 1st Vice-President Sands and Florida PBA General Counsel Hal Johnson**, was conducted on December 5th at FDLE Headquarters in Tallahassee. **Deputy Commissioner Ken Tucker and General Counsel Mike Ramage** attended on behalf of FDLE.

The PBA presented several issues which were fully discussed. Further negotiations are scheduled for February 9th and, regardless of the eventual outcome, it is clear Deputy Commissioner Tucker and General Counsel Ramage are negotiating in good faith and making all reasonable attempts to balance the needs of management and labor in these efforts. We thank them for that.

The PBA proposed opening three contract items in addition to the pay issue which, historically, will not be settled until literally the last second of the legislative session.

- **PAY ISSUES:** We asked for a 4% Cost of Living Allowance (COLA), Reinstatement of the **Recruitment and Retention Plan**. The current funding request allows for the same distribution at: three years / \$3000, six years / \$5000, ten years / \$4000 and sixteen years / \$3000. People in DROP will not be eligible. We also support the reinstatement of the 2% performance payout plan as well as inclusion in any additional plans supported by the Florida Legislature in respect to compression or other pay issues. *[The issues relative to pay will not likely be resolved until the final week or more likely, the final day of the Legislative Session. We will keep you posted on the progress.]*
- **SUPPLEMENTAL 5% PAY INCREASES FOR SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS:** Currently, some agents qualify for a 5% pay additive for certain assignments such as Field Training Agents responsibilities, acting SAS duties and others. The present method of payment allows for the temporary pay additive to be a 5% increase. What is rarely known is that the additive is based on 5% of the base pay of a starting agent's pay. We have asked for the additive to be based on the actual base pay of the agent receiving the additive. It seems only fair, considering most additives are

NOT given to a starting agent and veteran experienced agents are used for these special assignments.

*[FDLE has responded to the negotiation request that it is their intention to maintain the pay distribution in its current form but will evaluate the financial impact of the request. If our proposal is not cost prohibitive, we will continue to pursue it in future negotiations with FDLE and/or DMS, as deemed necessary.]*

- **UNION LEAVE POOL:** This is a proposal we have fine-tuned over the years to the eventual point of apparent passage. FDLE has tentatively agreed to a PBA pool of leave time to be utilized for certain approved activities. The proposal involves a voluntary donation by FDLE Agents to a

pool of leave time to be utilized only by the FDLEAA President or his designee when lobbying for legislative issues of mutual interest to the Department. Currently, all legislative lobbying conducted by board members is conducted with their personal leave time.

*[FDLE has tentatively approved this plan and we are working out the specifics of the program in order to make it happen.]*

- **CALLOUT TIME INCREASED from 2 hours to 4 hours:** This is self-explanatory.

*[FDLE has no apparent issue with the request with the apparent approval on the issue by DMS.]*

- **IMPROVED COMPULSORY DISABILITY LEAVE:** This specific request was addressed in order to correct a glitch in the system we've noted on more than one occasion. Currently, if a SA is out on disability or light duty status and wishes to return to normal duties, the department will schedule a physical, at their convenience, and upon satisfactory examination, the employee will then return to work. The problem has been the amount of time between the agent's request to return and the actual returning date can get excessive. This new plan calls for all time utilized by an employee from the date he requests to go back to work be charged to the State rather than the employees individual account.

*[FDLE has indicated that it will address the "particulars" of this request through current policy and has initially stated that it appears to be a fair request.]*

In addition to specific contract negotiation issues, we maintain a constant dialogue with management on issues through consultations on specific issues as they arise during the year.

*"... it is clear Deputy Commissioner Tucker and General Counsel Ramage are negotiating in good faith..."*

• **Off-Duty Employment:** Fine tuning, so to speak, of the off duty insurance coverage of vehicles goes on. **Second VP Al Mones** continues to be the point for this issue that, although experiencing growing pains, is steadily moving toward a more streamlined approval system.

• **Hurricane Response duties:** We recognize the size of the project in creating a hurricane response is extremely difficult and may take several years. We commend FDLE on its efforts. We have progressed considerably from the early novice days and look forward to an even more organized response system in the future. It will never run baby butt smooth, but you've got to accept this for what it is—a disaster. Matters of inconvenience will always take a back seat to issues of officer safety.

• Specific concerns noted during the latest response dealt primarily with officer safety issue relative to convoys and preparation times. It appears that, too frequently, a team's departure is not known sufficiently in advance, causing some agents to work a 12 hour day upon arrival after a 12 hour day of travel. FDLE had made considerable gains in this planning stage as personally noted in the response to Mississippi. We had pre-departure dates well in advance as well as duties and role explained.

The convoy issue was clarified once and again relative to responding to scene. The Association has no issue with a team responding in a vehicular convoy for full psychological and/or tactical effect to a scene.

What the Association does have an issue with is the convoying to pre-disaster zone meeting areas. These drives alone can take a full day and encompass the entire State. Somewhere down the line, some managers feel a need to "convoy" throughout the state when traveling from Point A to point B. I'm speaking specifically of the drive to a meeting point to prepare to enter a hot zone—not the needed convoy trip into a devastated area.

While FDLE expressed support of a tactical convoy approach on many circumstances they also understood our Association's concerns over the need to conduct convoys to

reach a general staging area. FDLE stated they would develop written guidance to managers in regard to necessary vs. unnecessary convoy operations, while still leaving much discretion to regional management.

Furthermore, placards are being constructed for placement on your vehicle during Mutual Aid response as a police identifier for your state vehicle. The Association's primary concern remains to be that no Special Agent is placed in an unnecessary safety risk to respond to a non-life threatening situation.

In furtherance of identifiers... we now will have a new mutual aid uniform. We are told the pants will remain the deep navy blue cargo... the shirts will now be a button shirt in tan (khaki). The shirts will have an embroidered badge on the left side and the wordage *Florida Department of Law Enforcement* on the right side. On the back of the shirt will be the words "**Special Agent**". Members of the rank ASAC and above will wear a white shirt. [The FDLEAA had expressed concerns over the word "Police" not being present on the back of the shirt. Management disagreed with the Union and felt Special Agent was a sufficient Police Identifier. The description of the shirt sounded quite comfortable taking into consideration the probable job applications of hurricane details.]

In closing, the Association has also asked the Department to consider alternative vehicle purchase options. We felt a more "job specific" vehicle option could be tailored toward the agents' specific assignments. In short, we want to try to assure variety in the field in a conscious effort to keep a diversified fleet for investigative and logistical reasons. FDLE has determined that DMS policy restrictions keep the options limited, but did state that they do maintain an ability to be diverse in their selections and will keep our request in mind during recent and future vehicle purchases.

Remember to keep in contact with your FDLE Agents Association Representative with issues you feel need to be addressed. ●

***"The Association's primary concern remains to be that no Special Agent is placed in an unnecessary safety risk..."***

## **PBA DEATH AND DISABILITY PLAN**

This is a program, free to members of Chapters and participating Charters, which provides certain death or disability benefits to the member, spouse or dependent children when the member is killed or suffers a catastrophic injury in the line of duty. The benefit originally took effect on April 1, 2005.

On December 1, 2005, the benefit payments have been increased as follows: death benefit increased to a maximum of \$30,000 and catastrophic injury to a maximum of \$15,000.

Please contact the PBA at 1-800-733-3722 for more information. ●

## Legal Advisory!

**POLICE SHOOTINGS,  
IN-CUSTODY  
DEATHS OR  
SERIOUS TRAFFIC  
ACCIDENTS  
~ WHAT TO DO ~**

**STAY CALM**

*Call the PBA  
1-800-733-3722*

**ASK TO SPEAK TO A  
PBA ATTORNEY**

*Do not talk to anyone until  
you have consulted with a  
PBA ATTORNEY*

☆☆☆

**GARRITY RIGHTS**

The following statement should be written as the first sentence on any statement, report, or memorandum an officer is ordered to write when the officer knows or has a reasonable belief that discipline may result:

*It is my understanding that this report is made for administrative, internal police department purposes only. This report is made by me after being ordered to do so by lawful supervisory officers. It is my understanding that by refusing to obey an order to write this, that I can be disciplined for insubordination and that the punishment for insubordination can be up to, and including, termination of employment. This report is made only pursuant to such orders and the potential punishment/discipline that can result for failure to obey that order.*

# CONGRATULATIONS FLORIDA PBA PRESIDENT ERNIE GEORGE!

**G**overnor Jeb Bush has just appointed Florida PBA President and former Palm Beach County PBA President **Ernie George** to the civilian position on the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission. He will serve with fellow PBA Presidents **John Rivera** and **Kevin Durkin**. Our thanks go out to Gov. Bush for his continued support of PBA and its efforts to give a strong voice for rank and file officers.

*Congratulations, Ernie! ●*

## **E-PBA** Get Online to the 21st Century!



NOT AN E-PBA MEMBER YET? Become one! Be the first to know about breaking news... direct to your inbox. Don't wait, sign up today for E-PBA at [www.flpba.org](http://www.flpba.org). Be sure to add [pbamail@flpba.org](mailto:pbamail@flpba.org) to your approved sender list after signing up.

Knowledge about PBA issues is the strength of our Association. PBA will be e-mailing members timely news about what's up at the Florida PBA, helpful information regarding legislative issues, quick tips, and best practices for members.

*Your e-mail address will not be given to any other group or organization and you will receive no advertising from outside sources. E-PBA is available to PBA members only.*

## **Looking for a motorcycle ride with fellow law enforcement officers where the proceeds benefit law enforcement charities?**

Download this newsletter from the FDLEAA website at [www.fdleagents.org](http://www.fdleagents.org) or the PBA website at [www.flpba.org](http://www.flpba.org) and go to the last page to see three rides this spring.

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Have you moved recently, or are in the process of moving? If so, we need your new address! Please notify the PBA office of your change of address so that you won't miss any important mailings.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

New Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

(Your social security number helps us identify you correctly in case of similar names.)

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return to: FDLE Agents Association Chapter of the Florida PBA  
Attn: Marcia Eggers, 300 East Brevard Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301**

# LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

By Rick Caplano, President

We are gearing up for yet another Legislative Session and are preparing a different approach from years past. Combined with the possible flexibility of an election year budget, we go into this venture cautiously optimistic of achieving at least an above average wage increase.

We have altered our Board approach this year and have committed to personal attendance at all relative committee meetings in Tallahassee leading up to the start of the Legislative Session. We will actively pursue joint lobbying opportunities with members of the FDLE Management team to include **Commissioner Tunnell**. We will maintain regular and constant visibility and contact during the Legislative Session and end with a flood of visible support in those dangerous closing days of the session.

We will specifically be pushing for implementation of the FDLE Agents Association Recruitment and Retention Plan. The FDLE Capitol Police will have a similar, but separately funded, plan. We will also be pushing whatever final plan appears to be getting the Legislative stare should a possible attempt at relieving compression pay issues within state police be addressed.

This is an issue that has been actively addressed by the PBA and others in a loose attempt to address this financial problem. The plan most have heard of no doubt is the "\$1,000 per year of service" legislation. I'm all for it, but we feel passage of that proposal is literally impossible within Florida's budget. We are monitoring and adding input on different possibilities which, by the time plans are thrown around, will probably result in one or two similar type bills being presented, perhaps a watered down version of the \$1,000 plan or a totally separate proposal all together. Usually legislators will signal an acceptable dollar amount or a solution, which will ultimately determine what kind of plan could be used. I feel it's too premature to speculate on any specific plan or dollar amount at this time without ever forgetting the real possibility of it not even occurring at all.

The Legislature has already indicated it is operating in the red and it has a few storms behind it to blame for expenditures. Some always feel a COLA is sufficient. But it's also newsworthy that several other sources are defining this budget year as better than originally predicted and a recent Associated Press article was quoted as saying "*Serious crime in Florida dropped for the 13th straight year in 2004 to the lowest rate in 34 years.*"

We will keep you informed during the entire process with *Hotsheets* and a newsletter when practical.

Specific issues being addressed that relate directly to the **FDLE Special Agent** include :

- The standard COLA negotiation which we have offered at **4%** for starters. We additionally asked for the **Special Agent Recruitment and Retention plan** at the previously negotiated payouts [**3 years / \$3000, 6 years / \$5000, 10 years / \$4000 and 16 years / \$3000**] as well as participation in any future programs involving State Officer **Pay Compression Relief issues**.

- The **creation of penalties** for conduct violating the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights by internal affairs investigators.

- **Buyback allowance** for certain state officers who attended a police training academy from 1978 to 1984 under a lesser retirement accrual rate.

- *The Officer Malcolm Thompson Act* is being pushed by

police and fire unions calling for easier access to a disability pension for emergency workers. This change will set the standard more at the officer's inability to perform "law enforcement" duties rather than the current standards which look at the performance of any type of employment.

- **Reducing the Retirement Average Final Compensation from 5 years to 3 years.** - This doesn't have a lot of support in the political circles because of its cost. Its cost was recently reduced by removing the teachers from the bill, but is still probably too steep to get serious legislative action... but you never know.

- **Appeals to the Division of Hearing for Special Risk members** - This bill will allow State Career Service Special Risk members the ability to have their disciplinary appeals heard by an Administrative Judge of the Division of Administrative Hearings for job related issues.

We have, no doubt, been placed behind in our efforts due to work commitments, a special session and once again natural disasters. But, with a planned meeting with **Senator Carlton**, as well as a steady appearance at committee meetings planned from January 9th to February 24th, we remain optimistic at this point for the pendulum to be swinging in our advantage for the time being.

If you desire to become active in your FDLE Agents Association Political Affairs, please contact your Regional Representative or Executive Board member. 🍀

*"We have... committed to personal attendance at all relative committee meetings..."*

**Proud, Professional and PBA**

# A TIME FOR CHANGE

By Rick Caplano, President

At our last FDLE Agents Association Board of Directors meeting in Tallahassee, I started the meeting off by informing my fellow board members of my decision not to run for re-election as FDLEAA President. I was, to say the least, humbled when the entire board spoke out and recommended we attempt to keep the board intact for at least one more term. There are, as they say, things that still need to be done and we, as a board of directors, have overall been very successful in our last decade or so—from our inception as a threat to our eventual development into our current professional standing within the department, as well as the legislature.

I too feel there is much more to be done. We haven't even begun a serious run for a post-employment health insurance plan. I think such a plan is probable in the future and would be a major career benefit. Our pay, although supplemented by Mutual Aid overtime and a series of scattered above average pay increases over the past eight years, is still in need of a drastic overhaul. We are always looking and listening for ways to improve matters in FDLE, as well as the entire law enforcement profession. I suspect and, quite frankly, hope there will always be more to do

My relationship with the FDLE Agents Association over the past 12 years has covered the whole emotional gamut. From the initial victory in forming this union by an overwhelming vote to individual attacks by department managers (some intensely personal), when the actions of this association required paths that were in conflict with routes they preferred. From major legislative victories such as Dignity 2000, the creation of DROP, and restoration of lost retirement multipliers, to disappointment in legislative defeats that, by themselves, were bothersome, but sometimes compounded, by a negligible, but still disturbing, amount of attacks by uninformed and uninformed agents who needed a place to vent.

As your President, I have strived to manage a professional labor union that leads with consistency and fairness to all individual needs, while keeping in sight the needs of management and the membership as a whole. We do not enjoy the professional status we have in the governmental arena by accident. Many people who sat on this board, including some that still do, took the brunt of the fallout that was presented when this organization made its decision to exist. I can say with no regrets though... Yes... It was worth it. It's hard to explain to many of the newer agents the ways of the past versus today. I won't even attempt to. Just ask one of us dinosaurs if you need an explanation. It would also take pages to show the gains we have made in salary, retirement and other internal issues since our inception. To say that I am pleased with the accomplishments of this association is a gross understatement. I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished.

The Florida Police Benevolent Association is a serious labor organization with serious funds, manpower and political expertise. It sits back and consults with political professionals and makes determinations based on a skilled balance of proba-

bilities and possibilities on which candidates to support, or not, on what legislation to pursue, and how the legislation should best be balanced between membership, political leaders and managers to assure passage. Many have recouped a lifetime of dues with one legal representation by the superb legal staff of this organization.

To be a part of that balance has been, and continues to be, an incredible experience and one that I would not have traded for anything. But, it is this balance, combined with the additional juggling skills necessary to maintain unity, effectiveness and credibility in the relationship between the association and FDLE management; in the relationship between membership, the FDLE Agents Association and the State PBA; and finally in the relationship between president and board of directors that is the most demanding challenge of all. It is all these things I've mentioned, combined with the priority of FDLE casework and personal family sacrifice, that for lack of a better word, has exhausted me.

It was **Dr. Martin H. Fischer**, a German physician who stated, "A conclusion is the place where you got tired of thinking." Based on that credible quotation, I have to admit that I have reached my conclusion. I say this not out of any bitterness to any organization or individual. I have the utmost respect for the Florida PBA. I consider it the most effective and professionally run labor organization in the state if not the country. I consider FDLE and the agents in it to be the best in the country and am thankful beyond belief to an agency that allowed me the flexibility to run a labor organization for a decade, work interesting investigations and be a single parent to two wonderful children for 17 years. This would not have been possible in most police agencies. But, like I've said, I have grown very tired.

I am in the closing years of my law enforcement career and have watched my children go on to college and on to their own lives. I have a wonderful new wife and am at a point in my life where I now feel a need to be selfish with my time and my life. It is for all those reasons combined that I have decided not to seek another term as president of the FDLE Agents Association. It is an extremely challenging position that I encourage anyone who has ever considered doing so, to run for, and try it on. It is an incredible position within an incredible organization that has the ability to effect positive change for some truly incredible people and I look forward to its progression under new leadership.

I know of at least two other positions on the board that will also be vacated at the end of this term, which ends the last day of 2006. I tell you all this 10 months before the election so those out there who have thought about it in the past will think about it in the future and bring some fresh new ideas to this board. Give some serious thought to occupying this or any other office on the board of directors. Until that time comes though...we have a challenging last year ahead of us with realistic possibilities for an above average year, so stay tuned for this year's journey and as always, you're always welcome to ride along. ●

# RETIREE NEWS UPDATE

By George Geyer, Retired S.A.



**H**urricane Katrina caused a delay in the Miami Regional Operational Center's annual Thanksgiving Luncheon. It was postponed until December 6th. At 11:30 A.M., all FDLE retirees in South Florida were extended an invitation to the luncheon, however, due to other commitments, many of the retirees could not attend. However, retired agents **Jim Chambliss** and **Sergio Abreu** did attend and enjoyed the luncheon and fellowship with the MROB employees.



Hurricane Wilma's strike at South Florida caused damage to many of the retirees' homes in Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties, however, I am pleased to report no injuries or deaths were sustained by any of the retirees. All are currently busy getting their properties repaired.

On December 13, 2005, the FDLE South Florida Retiree's Association held its annual Christmas Party at the Fort Lauderdale PBA Hall. In attendance were: Retired CIA's **Emma Fern**, **Bill Gibbons** and retired SA'S **Bill Beckerman**, **Jim Buchanan**, **George Geyer**, **Patti Geyer**, **Michael Loffredo**, **Rose Pineda** and **George Vilardi**. Other retiree members could not attend due to other plans, i.e., **Sheldon Satty** was on an ocean cruise and **Sergio Abreu** was in North Carolina.

The next meeting of the FDLE South Florida Retiree's Association is scheduled for March 13, 2006 at 11:30 A.M., at the Fort Lauderdale PBA Hall. All retired FDLE personnel

are invited to attend. The cost of the luncheon is normally \$13 dollars and a no-host bar is available. Please notify **Emma Fern** by phone at 305-653-3010 or e-mail: [frnemma@aol.com](mailto:frnemma@aol.com) in advance if you plan to attend.

**FDLEAA President Caplano** and FDLE retirees **Buck Buchanan**, **Robert Kelley**, **Mike Loffredo**, and **George Vilardi** recently attended the annual Palm Beach Policeman's Ball in Palm Beach at Mara-Lago, the South Florida home of **Donald Trump**. The event raised several hundred thousand dollars for the FOP scholarship fund. **The Donald** himself attended and personally donated \$100,000.00 to the fund. ●



*FDLEAA President Rick Caplano with Retired FDLE Special Agents Robert Kelley and Mike Loffredo at the Policeman's Ball in Palm Beach.*

## RETIRED?

If you have retired, please remember that your payroll deduction to the PBA has been stopped. We urge you to remain a member to support your organization. Remember... your Association has successfully addressed many issues relative to retiree's pensions. Retirement dues are \$27.00 annually. Please contact FDLE Agents Association Membership Secretary Marcia Eggers at 1-800-733-3722, ext. 411 with your request to be transferred to Retired Status.

## FDLEAA OFFICER PROMOTED



*Don Ugliano*

hassee representative while serving as an agent in the Live

**F**DLA Agents Association Secretary-Treasurer **Don Ugliano** has been promoted to Special Agent Supervisor in charge of the Gainesville Field Office. Sec./Treas. Ugliano is one of the original board members of this Association, going well back almost a decade, and has done a commendable job looking out for the needs of the Special Agent. He started his FDLEAA career as the Talla-

Oak Field Office, later running successfully for the statewide office of secretary-treasurer.

Don was an agent in the Palm Beach Field Office for several years before his eventual transfer to North Florida. Prior to coming to FDLE in 1986, Don was a deputy sheriff and a detective with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and a city patrolman with the Boynton Beach Police Department.

Don will continue on as FDLEAA secretary-treasurer until the end of his term in December 2006. He has announced that he will not be running for re-election in 2007. Join us in congratulating SAS Ugliano on a well deserved promotion. ●



FDLE Agents Association of the  
Florida Police Benevolent Association, Inc.  
300 East Brevard Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301-1218

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# FDLEAA

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## OFFICERS

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## REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

<b>Denise Nevers</b> , Orlando	<b>Don Maines</b> , Jacksonville
<b>Vince Dellaccio</b> , Ft. Myers	<b>Dave Broadway</b> , Tallahassee
<b>Velma Springs</b> , Pensacola	<b>Gary Venema</b> , Miami
<b>Tom Colbert</b> , Tampa	

— **PUBLICATIONS SPECIALIST** —  
Bob Peterson

— **PROOFREADER** —  
Marcia Eggers

*The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of this Chapter, its Board of Directors, or the Florida PBA.*

# Looking for a ride with fellow law enforcement officers where the proceeds benefit law enforcement charities? Check these out!



## **“Ride For Pride” Cycle Ride**

**To Benefit OCSO Deputy First Class Adam Pierce  
Saturday, February 11, 2006 ~ Orlando, FL**

**7:30 a.m.** - Registration at the Orange County Sheriff's Office Central Operations Center, 2500 W. Colonial Drive, Orlando (s.e. corner of Colonial & John Young Pkwy.)

**11:00 a.m.** - Ride Departs The Sheriff's Office For A 50-Mile Police Escorted Ride Thru West Orange County and Concludes At “Pointe Orlando” (9101 Int'l Drive, Orlando)

**\$30 per Driver** Includes Meal Ticket, Event T-Shirt, Raffle Ticket & Live Entertainment. Passengers \$20, Non-Bikers \$20.

**Call Central Florida PBA at (407) 522-3696**

## **4th Annual Brevard County “LAWRIDE” Poker Run**

**To Benefit: The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund  
Sunday April 2, 2006 ~ Palm Bay, FL**

**8:30 a.m.** - Starting at the “New” Space Coast Harley in Palm Bay. (I-95 & Palm Bay Rd)

**9:30 a.m.** - 1st Bike out, Last bike out at 11:00 a.m. Ending at The American Legion Post #359, U.S. 1, Titusville, FL

**2:00 p.m.** - Food, Prizes and Raffles. Live music and door prizes.

**Registration:** \$15.00 includes 1st hand & BBQ. Passenger BBQ \$5.00 & 2nd Hand \$5.00

**Contact Jim Pierce @ (321) 383-8975 or Gary Lyons @ (321) 267-2366**

## **3rd Annual Ride To Remember**

**To Benefit the Armed Services & Law Enforcement Memorial Museum and  
Pinellas County Law Enforcement Charities, Inc.**

**Saturday, May 6, 2005, 9 a.m. ~ At Coachman Park In Clearwater, FL**

**8:00 a.m.** - Starting at Coachman Park.

**9:00 a.m.** - Ride Begins. Ends at Ft. Desoto Park

**Registration:** \$15.00 includes grilled lunch. T-Shirts available.

**Contact Mona or Dianna (727) 532-1722**