

**MAMI BEACH POLICE
DEPARTMENT**



MBPD RETIREE NEWS

Unity is strength for a better retirement

Happy St. Patrick's Day!



MBPD RETIREE NEWS

March 2011 Issue

Sam's Corner "A Collection of Disorganized Thoughts"

I start my column on a sad note this month. The murders of two of Miami-Dade PD's finest here in South Florida shook us to the core. The way in which they were killed indicates to me that a trend has been forming in the last few years that I don't think we've seen, perhaps in the history of modern law enforcement. Violent, cold thugs with nothing to lose are taking out not one or two cops at one time. They are "going for the gusto" so to speak, and trying to kill as many as they can. This is something that's been happening all over the country, and it's unexplainable.

As I write this, I recall the incidents in Washington State, specifically Lakewood, where a madman ambushed four officers in a coffee shop in November of 2009. They had just finished a call and

were having their morning coffee while doing paperwork. Another incident happened in Oakland, California in 2009. Two motor officers stopped a felon on parole with an extensive rap sheet (isn't it the same old story?). They were gunned down, and so were two other officers who caught up with him later.

And...Even on the day of the Miami-Dade Officer's funerals, two St. Petersburg cops lost their lives trying to serve a warrant on another scumbag. Not long after, St. Petersburg lost one more; killed by a low life teen that, if gotten arrested, would have been home by that afternoon. Maggots killing cops just because. I don't really know if this is an epidemic, because after all, cops have been killed since the beginning of time, or a sad and disturbing

trend that is reflecting a change in the fabric of society here in the United States. I don't want to see us become like the Middle East, where life means absolutely nothing apparently. Many folks over there think dying while taking out others guarantees them eternal paradise with Allah and their 50 wives. America, for the most part is still the greatest country on earth.

The funeral was heart wrenching, to say the least. I tried to go, but since losing weight, I discovered my "class A's" didn't fit anymore; and of course neither did my suits. So I sat down on the couch and watched the whole thing on TV. Fighting back tears the entire time, it was especially difficult to watch the kids going up on stage and try to express themselves. What little they said, said it all. The speakers did

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Vinny's Breakfast

On February 11th, 2011, a Kevin Graham, Scott Lowe, Cathy Tighe, Pat breakfast was held at Blue Ryan, Pete Bitume, Don Freeman, Alan Skol-Moon Diner in Cooper nick, Jack Mackie, Bobby Jenkins, Carl City with 21 people attending. Ward, Charlie Seraydar, Rick Lonergan, Greg & Retirees attending were as follows: Jason Maritza Strong, Al & Mimi Boza. Active Officer Psaltides, Vinny Aprile, Jack & Amy Tighe, Pat Quinlan also attended.

Sam's Corner

Continued from pg 1

an excellent job, despite the pain they were experiencing.

The best presentation overall in my opinion was that of Miami Dade Police Director James Loftus. I had never seen someone deliver a eulogy that contained such raw and powerful personal thoughts. Thoughts that he drove right to the bone marrow. Stuff that many felt, but could never or would never express. I'm glad I got to see that. That's a guy I wouldn't mind working for. All I can say is, for those of us who were crazy enough to go back to police work after MBPD, let's watch our butts!



And speaking of those who hate police officers and what they represent, I had the occasion to read an article in the MIAMI NEW TIMES that I heard about. It's about a group of again...Maggots who reside here in South Florida along with the giant cockroaches. These low-lives have taken it upon themselves to show up at scenes or follow cops around and film them while they are doing their duties. But not only do they film, they intentionally harass and fire off insulting comments in the direction of the officers. The proliferations of mini-cams and camera phones have given birth to a new breed of radicals who have nothing better to do than to get in the faces of cops who are innocently carrying out their duties and trying to make a living.

Are there bad, dishonest, and brutal cops? By all means. That's a fact of life. If they get recorded or filmed while doing their dirty deeds, then they'll pay the consequences. Among the number one places these filthy radicals go to harass police officers is; guess where? Miami Beach. We all know why. It's the place to go! A world known destination and party spot. If you really want to get your blood boiling, and you have access to a computer, "Google" Miami New Times. When you get to the page, search for "Miami Beach Police" and a bunch of articles will pop up. The story I'm referring to is the third one. Want to keep your blood boiling? Go to "YouTube" and search for "man vs. pig". It's a trailer for a film these fools are making. It features many members of the Miami Beach Police. Know thy enemy!

On the brighter side, I just saw the stupidest Publix commercial on TV, and it cracked me up. They weren't trying to be goofy; it just came out that way. It was a commercial about their bakery, which is actually quite good I think. Some woman was telling the bakery lady that she wanted a loaf of bread that would fit her family's "lifestyle". Now, without actually sitting down with her and talking about her family so she could analyze what type of "lifestyle" they have, the bakery lady picked out a nice 5 grain Italian bread, with sesame seeds of course.

Imagine going into a Publix bakery, or any bakery for that matter and telling them you needed a loaf of bread to fit your lifestyle. What do you think they would say? Who would get Pumpernickel? What type of lifestyle would fit with, say raisin bread? If your life style includes eating lots of bananas, would you get monkey bread? These are serious

questions that I hope you all contemplate as the New Year unfolds. I'd like to see Publix make some more of those commercials, adding the meat, seafood, and produce departments. I'm sure that people buy stuff from there to fit their "lifestyles". Who buys zucchini? Never mind.



And last but not least, congratulations to our most recent retirees, Sgt. James Harley, Officer Marilyn Tepperberg, and Officer Newell "Skip" Wilder III. We wish them the best in their new lives and hopefully will welcome them soon into our organization.





NEWS CAPSULES



MIAMI BEACH POLICE NEW HIRES AND PROMOTIONS



Congratulations to Detective Marlen Rivero, on February 10th, 2011 she was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. In addition, the department swore in eight new probationary police officers. They're names are: Manuel M. Cano, Alejandro Fernandez, Nelson Gonzalez, Eric V. Key, Kevin Lantigua, Robert Sabater, Juan C. Suarez, and Gustavo Villamil. The department also swore in a new Auxiliary Police Officer by the name of Francois "Frank" Betancourt. Their first task will be to find a place to get their "Café Cubano." Best wishes to all the new hires!

OFF DUTY RATE

An interesting tid-bit of information for us "old timers". Chief Noriega raised the off duty rate to \$35.00 bucks an hour for temporary jobs on February 1st, 2011. What was it when you started??

In 1981, I think mine was \$10.00 or \$12.00 an hour.

DEATH NOTIFICATION



Retired Crime Scene Tech Lori Figliolia-Harris lost her husband, Robert S. Harris in February, Robert was a former Code Enforcement Officer with Miami Beach. A "Celebration of Life" gathering was held on February 26th, 2011, and the funeral mass is to be held March 5th, 2011, (over by the time you read this but e-mails were sent out).

PENSION FUND

Thanks to Celia Locke of our pension office for sending us this interesting and valuable tid-bit (I like that word, "tid-bit") of information. The market value of the Miami Beach Police and Fire Pension fund for the Fiscal year which ended 09/30/2010 was \$533,495,516.00. The fiscal year to date return as of 09/30/2010 was 10.66%.

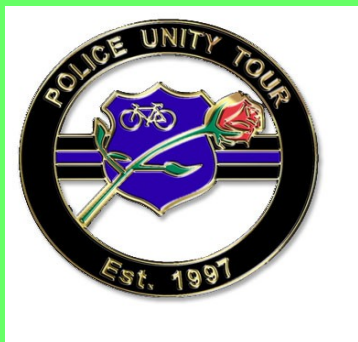
LUNCH



Another tid-bit from the "Phantom", Gene Toreky;

Gene wanted the membership to know that he had lunch in Naples with retiree and current Naples Police Chief Tom Weschler. With them was retired motorman Bill Lamb (who went to the State Department). All are doing well. The location of the lunch was NOODLES ITALIAN RESTAURANT AND SUSHI BAR in Naples. Now I ask you, what the heck do lasagna and sashimi have in common?

POLICE UNITY TOUR



A little reminder from last month, Jim Casey's son, Lt. Sean Casey of the Highlands County, FL Sheriff's Department is looking for donations for his Police Unity Tour. This tour benefits the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. It's a 250 mile bike ride from Portsmouth, VA to Washington, DC. If you'd like to donate, the address is: 5825 Olive Road, Sebring, Florida 33875. Make your checks out to: Police Unity Tour, Florida. All donations are tax deductible. I was going to participate, but my tricycle is shopped.



MBPD Officer Jack Ryder



This photo was received from MBPD Officer Jack Ryder's granddaughter. It was taken in 1924. Officer Ryder is fourth from the left standing in the back row. According to his granddaughter, she was told that officers were laid off after the winter months (during the slower summer season).

There is no other information on the photo.

Chuckle Time

Here are a couple of little stories provided by members that may make you smile, chuckle, laugh out



loud or maybe even gag. The first is none other than Jack Tighe. Jack recalled in a recent e-mail about a deal the Caribe Theater used to offer to police officers; free admission, all you had to do was sign in. Jack went in and signed the log, but the usher told him to use his correct name because he was the fifth "Jack Tighe" signing in for that show. Without hesitation he signed in again, this time using the name "Jesse Webb".

Here's one I heard at the last General Membership Meeting. I was told I could

use the names of the players, I respectfully declined, well, ok I'll use initials. Those who were there during that era will probably know who the players were. It was the early 1980's and Miami Beach was in a serious slump. The "Marielitos" were arriving to stay with us, enjoy the beautiful warm climate and further destroy the

town. A certain training officer (M.B.) and his rookie (T.S.) were called to Piccolos Italian Restaurant at 2nd and Collins to an alarm and open door. Piccolos by now was closed and out of business, but they still had stuff in there. The place checked out fine, but before they left, MB ordered TS to take a box of dinner plates and put them in the trunk of their patrol car. TS hesitated, since he was brand new and didn't like the sound of it; but he complied.

They cleared and drove out to the end of the "old pier". Several other squad members showed up as well. Shotguns came out. They walked to the end of the pier. TS was told to "pull!" He wasn't sure what this meant. "Boy, haven't you ever gone skeet shooting!?" Oh, that's it. The South Squad proceeded to conduct firearms training, right there at the end of the pier at 3 A.M. The nice thing, in those days, there really was nobody around to complain.



General Membership Meeting



General Membership Meeting “After Action Report”

By President V. Aprile

A general membership meeting was held at Ricky's Restaurant in Pembroke Pines on February 23rd, 2011. The attendance was excellent. Carl Ward said a little prayer for us and we got started, discussing the following issues:

64 people attended the holiday dinner. In the contract, 75 attendees were expected, so the organization had to pay approximately \$900.00. The location (Jungle Island, MacArthur Causeway) was changed to accommodate folks from South Dade. The party however was a success as the music, food, and mood were good. I'm looking for constructive suggestions for the next party, so if you have any ideas, feel free to e-mail me at Vin455@myacc.net.

The Wall of Honor ceremony will be held on Thursday, March 24th, 2011, 11:00 A.M. at Police Headquarters. As usual, there will be food, and parking will be on 11th Street (the area will be bagged).

I'm getting ready to order more Outerbanks polo shirts. Anyone wanting to order one or more, please e-mail me at Vin455@myacc.net and send a check made out to the "MBPD Retirees Association". Many colors are available. Prices for small to extra large are \$32.00. 2x and up are \$35.00. The deadline to order is March 20th.

Members were advised to sign and return the letter many received from Miami Beach Human Resources in reference to the Miami Beach FOP Health Trust as it was in our best interest. More on this later.

The dues will be raised from \$25.00 to \$36.00 per year beginning January, 2012 due to rising costs (like everything else).

The FOP would like to combine their picnic with one of our organization. This will be studied more.





FOP HEALTH TRUST CONTRACT INFO

To All Concerned and Interested Retiree Members:

I am herewith providing the emails from the President of the FOP Lodge #8 (Alex Bello) and that of Gary Kluger representing the Health Trust. If you have received the INDIVIDUAL BENEFIT AGREEMENT in the mail, please sign it and return it to the City of Miami Beach Human Resource Division as instructed by MARCH 18th, 2011. If you have not received one, call the FOP Office at (305) 534-2775.

In summary as to why you are receiving this and why it is SO IMPORTANT THAT YOU SIGN IT AND RETURN IT is as follows:

When you retired and became part of the Health Trust, the city paid a percentage of your health insurance costs. This was negotiated as part of prior contracts. The City of Miami Beach effectively could at anytime make changes that were not beneficial to the Retiree by changing their contribution toward Health Care Premiums.

During this most recent FOP Contract negotiations, The FOP Lodge #8 lead by President Alex Bello, took it upon themselves to PROTECT THE RETIREES currently in the system by having the City of Miami Beach make individual benefit agreements WITH ALL RETIREES INDIVIDUALLY that will have the City CONTINUE to make the Contributions at the same rate as before and only those NEW EMPLOYEES coming into employment after July 14th, 2011 would convert to a specified dollar amount contribution (will be \$25.00 per year of Credible Service for a maximum of 25 years).

Therefore, by signing and returning your Agreement, the City is BINDING A CONTRACT WITH YOU that the CITY WILL CONTINUE TO PAY THE SAME AMOUNT INTO THE FUTURE.

I must caution you that if NOT SIGNED AND RETURNED, at any time in the future, the City CAN REDUCE PREMIUM CONTRIBUTIONS AT WILL that will affect you whereas with the signed agreement, they CAN-

NOT. The Executive Board of the Miami Beach Retirees wants to thank the FOP for looking out for US RETIREES in a time when Pension Reforms including Health Costs are seriously encroached upon to solve fiscal problems faced by City and State Governments.

If you have any questions, please email me directly at :
seraydarn@bellsouth.net
or (305) 725-7935

Sincerely,

Charles Seraydar

Treasurer, Miami Beach PD Retirees

And on Behalf of the Executive Board

March Birthdays



Jimmy Booth
Charles Garabedian
Larry Hankoff
Don Hasley
Jim Mahle
Joe Matthews
Michael Miller
Wally Neumann
Billy O' Neil

Timmy O'Regan
Earl Ostreicher
Charlie Reed
Dan Reid
Lou Reilly
Steve Robbins
Tony Sabatino
Jim Scarberry
Judi Sherry

Michael Somberg
Bruce Songdahl
Steve Sulich
Nancy Wein
Robert Wilson



Spotlight on... George Lerra By Jack Tighe (but edited by S. Gam, wink, wink)

We used to do bios on retirees, but it got to the point where so many people were retiring that it became too much, plus, many retirees don't want to provide their bio information in the newsletter for privacy reasons. Hey, we understand, so we get the information in other ways, by hiring private detectives to follow them around, interview their friends and families, and search their trash.

Jack Tighe reached out to George Lerra, my friend as well as a friend to many, and my former co-worker. George has had a very interesting upbringing as well as career at the Miami Beach Police Department. Here is his bio:

George Lerra, or "Georgie" was born and grew up in Boston, Massachusetts in 1958. He played soccer, football, but especially excelled in Karate. He studied Shotokan and Kempo Karate. Although not a great student in high school, he was nevertheless intrigued by the study of Law. After taking a law class in high school, he decided that law enforcement would be his career of choice. At the end of his senior year, George went into the Air National Guard and sent to the Air Force boot camp. He then went to combat training and the Air Force Tech School for Security Police (Law Enforcement branch).

George had no discipline to study before going to boot camp, but upon returning to the civilian world, he had plenty, so he went to college upon completing his active duty training. He started out at Middlesex Community College in Bedford, Mass. And for the first time in his life he became an "A" and "B" student. He was on the student senate and became Captain of the soccer team (he was also the goal keeper).

In 1979, George graduated with an associates in Law Enforcement and went on to get his Bachelors in Science in "Law and Justice" from what is now known as UMass in Lowell, Mass. While attending college, he worked part time at the VA hospital in Bedford for four years while managing to attend all of his Air National Guard drill dates. Whew!

After college, George set out to find a police job in his area, but was unsuccessful due to "Proposition 2 1/2". A tax cut that caused the layoffs of teachers, cops, and firefighters. He was also the "victim" of affirmative action, which ex-

cluded many fine folks from getting jobs in the first place. Their loss was obviously our gain. In 1983, he came to South Florida with a friend to search for a police job. As they worked security for the Miami Airport Marriott Hotel, they applied to numerous police agencies. After much perseverance, George was picked up by MBPD, a day he called one of the greatest in his life.

Of course, the police academy always comes first. George was assigned to "BLE 94", a class made up of City of Miami and Miami Beach recruits. Don DeLucca was the training advisor. His Beach classmates were Bobby Dorigo, Carlos Noriega, Mike Pryor, Jaime McCabe, Stuart Merker, Joe Miller, and Bill Watson. Stuart later moved on to the Fire Department and Joe went to the Metro Dade Police Department. By the way, George was selected "Class Leader."

After the academy, there were no available FTO's for George, so they placed him in the Detective Bureau and Sergeant Buck Griscom became his first FTO. According to George, he had a blast! He still has fond memories of the old Mariel Motel in the old DB. He was finally sent to road patrol and his FTO was none other than the "illustrious Sam Gam" (funny, I don't recognize the name). Sam was on the "third herd", which also became my favorite shift to work throughout my career. From there he went to days and Claudia Myers (Nagel) became his FTO.

After some time, George became an FTO himself; and being from Boston, he became friendly with all of the other "Boston Boys" who came down a year or two before him; especially Richie Pelosi and Dave Allen. They had some really great times back then, both at work... And after work. Alan Solowitz, Jerry Tollefsen, John Millerick, and Tony Pizzo were amongst the Third Herd supervisors that George really enjoyed working for back then. One of the most therapeutic things that George remembers doing after work was "Choir Practice" at the Irish House,

thanks to the boss, Alan Solowitz.

Eventually, George got lucky and moved over to SIU and became a detective, working for Tom Hunker (one of his mentors) and spent 14 years there. During that time, he worked big drug deals, street narcotics, gun runners, hookers, money launderers, and even got his own drug sniffing dog named "Waldo". Waldo became more than a work dog to George; he became a trusted friend and pet. As he says, anyone who worked K-9 felt the same way.

George took the Sergeants test four times before finally making Sergeant. He spent 3 years on afternoons as a patrol Sergeant, and then transferred to the Off Duty unit, working with Lisa Newland. George describes that job as "very interesting" (which is not how I remembered it), but thanks Lisa for always being a lifesaver.

Later on, George got himself promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and went to a newly created fourth shift which he describes as a "bastardized midnight shift". He moved from there and back to the third herd as a Lieutenant where he honorably completed his 26 1/2 year career.

During his career, he received numerous awards and commendations such as "Officer of the Month" and three "Outstanding Service Awards". Upon retirement, the Miami Beach City Commission honored him with a Proclamation naming a day in his honor. Not bad for a boy from Boston.

George now enjoys retirement with his wife Linda. They have time to travel, work out and do whatever they want to do. He thinks he may work again someday, maybe part-time, but he enjoys retirement. We are very fortunate to have worked for such a great police department, not to mention the fantastic benefits and pension. Said George-"There were good times and bad times, but I will always fondly remember the men and women of MBPD. Godspeed!"

Thank you George for providing Jack Tighe (and I) with your information. But we're not done yet, next month some more interesting stuff on George Lerra!



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Dean Adler, Retired MBPD Officer



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Gerry Mackey, Author

Read my latest book, **A Cold Logic**, available through the publisher, Lulu.com, as well as through most major booksellers (Barnes & Noble, Amazon, etc.) You might just recognize some of the fictional South Beach Police Officers. Don't forget to check out my first two books, **A Necessary End** and **Seed of Thetis**.

All books available at:
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