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VOLUME 9 | ISSUE 7

May/June 2015



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The Las Vegas Police Protective Association is affiliated with the following organizations at the state and national level:

NAPO – National Association of Police Organizations, representing nearly 220,000 police officer members in 4,000 police associations nationwide.

"BIG 50" – An informal association of the 50 largest law enforcement associations in the United States.

SNCOPS – Southern Nevada Conference of Police and Sheriffs



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LVPPA Membership

POLICE OFFICER MARK CHAPARIAN

Assistant Executive Director

Just what does the LVPPA do for you, and why are we so important? Allow me to explain. Your membership provides you with 24-hour protection from evils you may not be aware of. The list of services available to you is long and well worthwhile to utilize when the need should arise. Listed below are some of the services your Association provides:

- Collective Bargaining Committee (Negotiates our contract)
- Representation at all Internal Affairs interviews
- Accident Review Board representation
- Assistance with writing and filing grievances related to discipline and contract violations
- Representation at grievance meetings and hearings related to discipline and contract violations
- Representation at pre-termination hearings
- Representation at nonconfirmation hearings
- Representation at Civil Service hearings
- Representation at Citizen Review Board hearings
- NRS 289 (officers' bill of rights) application and interpretation

- Representation at officer-involved shootings and in-custody deaths
 1. A representative and attorney respond 24/7, 365
 2. A representative and attorney participate in all of the follow-up interviews including:
 - A. FIT interview
 - B. CIRT interview
 - C. Use of Force Board
 - D. Tactical Review Board
- Legislative representation and lobbying locally, at the state capitol and Washington, D.C.
- Life insurance policy
- Sponsorship of sport activities
- Cab Ride Home program

As you can see, the list is quite extensive. Your Association acts very much like an insurance policy. You don't think about it until you need it. When you need it, *you need it!* You worked very hard to build and maintain your career and your reputation. We work hard to preserve it. **VB**

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Crossroads

CORRECTIONS OFFICER SCOTT NICHOLAS

Treasurer

Every once in a while, we come to a crossroads in life, and I feel like this is one of those times. I have been on the Board of Directors for the PPA since 2006, and I have been on the Executive Board of Directors since February 2012. I have to say, I have really enjoyed the opportunity to help everyone with their questions, concerns, grievances and investigations. I have taken part in many of the OIS investigations, in-custody death investigations and critical-incident investigations.

The best part of my job is helping all of you. Seeing the stress on the faces of our members and being confident through my experiences that we will be able to guide you through the entire process is all the thanks I need.

I have heard the jokes over the years about long lunches and how fortunate I am to have a fancy office in Taj Mahal. It is true, I have had the pleasure of coming to *your* office building to work every day, but the lunch thing is more like the driver's seat of my POV driving from meeting to meeting around the valley.

The choices I will make regarding my career will be made over the next several weeks. I will be talking to my family, friends and mentors about the path I will choose that will affect the next 10 years of my employment, and I'll make the decision about which road to travel very soon. If I choose

to leave the LVPPA, I wanted to be able to thank all of you for the loyalty P# 6959 and friendships that I have received over the last nine years. You are the LVPPA, and I enjoy (or enjoyed) working for you, the dues-paying members. Be safe, and thank you for your membership. **VB**

CONGRATULATIONS

to the contest winners from the last issue!

March/April

Hidden Symbol Contest (\$250)

Thomas McCombs, P# 0814

P# Contest (\$50)

Michael Foster, P# 13221

Vincent Disparra, P# 14104

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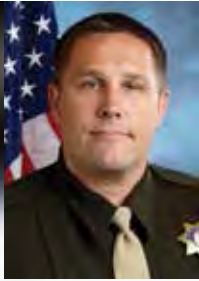
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The Choice to Promote

DETECTIVE STEVE GRAMMAS

Secretary

At some point in every officer's career, the thought of promoting to sergeant has crossed their mind. Now the reasons for promoting will vary. Some do it for the power. Some do it for the money. Some do it just to bump up the three highest consecutive years in PERS. All three reasons, while valid, will set you up, as a supervisor, for potential failure.

If you promote for one of these reasons, I can almost assure you that you will *not* be the boss the troops follow. You will *not* be the boss for whom troops will go to bat. You will *not* be the boss who will be successful. You *will* be the boss that the officers trash talk in the locker room and at home. You *will* be the boss who has their bump list filled out last by all the new officers, because they had no choice but to work for you. You *won't* last in a tightly knit special unit, and you *will* be known by the PPA as "Say no more, we know who your boss is!"

I say, rather than the above-listed reasons for promoting, emulate the best boss you ever had. Promote to give the officers a friendly, knowledgeable supervisor who will do whatever it takes to protect them and support them in their careers. We all had that boss whom we would walk through

fire for, and whom we would support no matter what. That boss who, when you asked for time off, they didn't sigh and say, "Yeah, I guess if you *need* the day." Or that boss who, when you ask for a ride-along with a special unit or to take a class, would give you nothing but attitude or pushback. Or that boss who would act like you were taking their own personal money from their pocket when you worked two to three hours over your shift and asked for the overtime pay — a pocket that the boss can't seem to reach because they have all of a sudden developed arms like a T. rex and can't quite reach into their pockets.

Aspire to be the good boss P# 2192. Be the boss the troops want to work for. Be the boss who takes care of their troops. Be the boss people are upset they can't get on their squad at the bump, because it filled up first.

We all know who those bosses are on our Department. So when you decide to take on the responsibility of being a supervisor, remember the boss you had who really made a difference in your career for their caring, their compassion, and their involvement in not only your career, but in your personal life and well-being. If this is why you promote and this is the boss you will be, prepare to be followed by the troops everywhere you go. **VB**

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Understanding the Discipline Guide

DETECTIVE DARRYL CLODT

Director

Many of you probably know about the Department document called *Managing Employee Performance and Conduct — A Guide for Managers and Supervisors*, but I suspect most of you are not too familiar with what it is and what it says. This is a very important tool that needs to be understood by all of us, whether you are a supervisor or not. It is full of information about how internal investigations into allegations of misconduct are to unfold and how supervisors are to administer discipline.

One of the most important parts of the guide is the section that we call the discipline matrix, which is found starting on page 17 of the guide. The discipline matrix is the table that sets out what the Department deems to be appropriate discipline for an offense that is sustained through the complaint process, whether it is the result of an Internal Affairs investigation, an Accident Review Board, a Use of Force Board, etc. Please take some time to look at this guide so that you become aware of just what the Department can do if an employee is sustained for certain issues. Some of the items listed in the matrix are often referred to as line items and show recommended discipline for a first, second or third offense. Keep in mind, also, that repeated offenses do not mean of the exact same policy violation. Rather, the Department takes the position that if you have a prior discipline for misconduct, a subsequent sustained finding of misconduct will put the employee in the second-offense box for that line item on the matrix.

In the guide, one area I feel that we, as police and correction officers, need to know well deals with contact reports. As you know, this is the term the Department uses to mean documenting a counseling or corrective measure without punishment. This section advises supervisors that most minor issues can be corrected with counseling. This is where the famous contact report was born. It also says that counseling is designed to correct problems at the root and alleviate the need for real discipline.

This obviously makes me wonder why we so often end up in Internal Affairs answering to a seemingly minor allegation before a single contact report or counseling has ever been given. As you can guess, I have a couple theories. For one, I believe supervisors are just not properly taught about the value of this tool and how it can be so useful in correcting small behavior issues, without the stress of a formal investigation and without the effect of

formal discipline and what that does to an employee. I believe if a supervisor knows that this process is available, yet chooses to not deal with an issue and just sends a troop straight to IAB for very minor issues, then that supervisor is not doing his or her job!

On page three of the *Guide for Managers and Supervisors*, it says that counseling is designed to correct problems at the root and alleviate the need for discipline. It also says that supervisors should use this form of nondisciplinary corrective action liberally to ensure that employees will succeed in their current assigned positions. This is to ensure that a supervisor communicates with subordinates, whether it is instruction or praise. It also says that documentation of counseling is not considered disciplinary action, but is instead considered a corrective measure. It talks about using this for minor performance issues, which is much of what we deal with at IAB, and instructs supervisors in certain situations to give two documented counselings before moving to discipline.

In closing, I feel that the Department needs to follow the rules it sets up. Supervisors should be more willing to step in and deal with many of the issues that instead get pawned off on Internal Affairs. They should also provide two counseling sessions before moving to formal discipline. Please find a copy of this guide and be familiar with it. We have some in the office.

Until next time, as always, *stay alert and stay alive.* VB

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Participation

POLICE OFFICER MIKE RAMIREZ

Director

The 78th (2015) session of the Nevada Legislature is currently going on in Carson City, and by the time this magazine goes to print, it will likely be close to the end of the session. The LVPPA and I, as the Director of governmental affairs, had hoped for the session to be completed by the official close date of June 1, but it looks like it may end up going into a special session in order to get the governor's agenda completed. There are two key bills on the table right now that are crucial (or should be considered crucial) to our members. If passed, the bills will affect collective bargaining and our current PERS system. We need your support now, more than ever, to fight these bills. If you think the potential changes will not affect you, think again! This will affect all current employees, new hires and retirees. With regard to PERS, many people tend to assume that all will be OK because it will only affect the new guys ... wrong. This is not just a Metro thing, but affects all public employees and all who have contracts — from the police to teachers to firemen, all the way to electricians and laborers. Our union, as well as every other labor group lobbyist, is working hard in Carson City to protect what we have.

In order to get the members more actively involved, we have been sending out emails to everyone to encourage involvement. We have requested that, if you are available, you please attend the satellite hearings down at the Grant Sawyer building. On March 25, when I was at the Grant Sawyer building for testimony on one of the collective bargaining bills, looking around the room I saw a total of six of our members. We need to show up in large numbers to pull this off; six out of over 2,500 members won't cut it. Back in November, we sent out our endorsement list to all members. We endorse particular candidates who we feel will do the best job in supporting our members' best interests. In this tough battle of protecting our Department, now more than ever is when it becomes clear that our endorsement choices really matter.

The PPA is making headway with the Assembly and Senate folks, but it's not a one-man band, so we need everyone's support. We appreciate those of you who have sent emails or made calls in support of our cause, and please note that it helps! We have a big fight to fight, and hopefully, the outcome is something that we can all live with at the end of the day.

Thanks for your support, and be safe out there. Don't hesitate to call or email me if you have any questions at mramirez@lvppa.com. **VB**



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Military Veterans' Exemption Program

CORRECTIONS OFFICER THOMAS REID

Director

There are more than a few military veterans within our ranks of police, corrections, deputy city marshals and the municipal court marshals who like to look for ways to save money. I want to remind you about a money-saving program that is made possible by Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 361.090. This statute, the Veterans' Exemption Program, allows certain military veterans to pay a reduced amount in either their property taxes or the motor vehicle Government Services tax (GST) during the annual vehicle registration. Only one home or one vehicle that the veteran owns qualifies for this exemption program.

The Veterans' Exemption applies to Nevada residents who have served in the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines and the National Guard or Reserve component during time of war or national emergency. The veteran must have served 90 continuous days on active duty with at least one day falling within the dates listed below:

- April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918
- December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946
- June 25, 1950, to May 7, 1975
- September 20, 1989, to January 31, 1990
- August 2, 1990, to April 11, 1991
- December 5, 1992, to March 31, 1994
- November 20, 1995, to December 20, 1996

Also eligible are veterans who have served on active duty or in support of combat operations in which a campaign medal or Expedition Service Medal was awarded. Some examples are the Global War on Terrorism Service Expedition Medals (GWOT medals), Prisoner of War Medal, Joint Meritorious Service Medal (JMUC) and the Kosovo Campaign Medal. A complete listing of qualified medals is available at the Clark County Assessor's Office or the local Veterans Administration (VA) office. This means that P# 14885 veterans who participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) or Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) qualify for this exemption, even though the dates of these conflicts do not appear in the date listing above.

To see if you qualify for the Veterans' Exemption Program, you must have a valid Nevada driver's license and a copy of your DD214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) or a written statement from the

military that you performed duties in support of combat operations. Lastly, you can attest in a letter, written by you, explaining in detail the military assignments you performed in support of the Gulf War or other combat operations. The Clark County Assessor will review the written information and inform you if your duties and responsibilities qualify you for the Veterans' Exemption.

Currently, the GST exemption on your vehicle is valued at \$125. If you choose to use the Veterans' Exemption on your property tax, the amount is the \$2,500 assessed-valuation deduction, which translates to a savings of approximately \$60 to \$100, depending on the area you live in.

Additionally, there are exemptions for disabled veterans who have a service-connected permanent disability rating of a least 60% and up to 100%. The exemption these veterans receive ranges from \$1,900 to \$23,800 of the home's assessed value. The disabled veteran will have to show proof of disability along with providing a DD214 and valid Nevada driver's license.

More information on the full spectrum of the Veterans' Exemption Program can be found on the Clark County Assessors website or by calling (702) 455-3882. **VB**



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The Future of the PPA in the Wake of AB 182

POLICE OFFICER BRYAN YANT

Director

How does the future look for the PPA after AB 182? Back in November during election time, most of you were not concerned with the State Assembly and Senate races. Typically, most police officers tend to hold more Republican views when it comes to politics. This is fine on a broader spectrum. However, when it comes to protecting your retirement, your right to collectively bargain and support for public service, the local Democrats support you. We published our endorsement list for all of you. Our endorsements were based on who stated that they would support our efforts and views. Unfortunately, things didn't go our way. Now the Republicans own the Assembly and Senate, and there are various bills of reform that could hurt your rights and retirement.

AB 182 is a bill sponsored by Assembly Member Randy Kirner. He has been the primary sponsor on most of the bills that have been submitted that push for reforms to take away many of your rights to collectively bargain and your PERS retirement. We have sent out many emails highlighting the negative implications of this bill. We have asked you all to attend the hearings, to email the committee members stating that you are against AB 182, and to call them stating that you are against AB 182. On March 25, we sat and listened to one

of the hearings regarding AB 182. We had strong support, and I want you all to know that we had local leaders testify on your behalf. We are extremely grateful that Mayor Goodman and County Commissioners Sisolak, Giunchigliani and Collins all testified against AB 182. They were all extremely impressive, and I thank them for their support.

AB 182 would apply to police, fire, school district and any other public employees. As AB 182 stands today, without any amendments, we could lose the right to binding arbitration. Obviously this is bad for all of you. Losing the ability to take contractual issues and negotiations to an independent arbitrator would give bargaining power and discipline power to the employer. The ability to collect dues through payroll would be lost, thus making you responsible to cut a check to your association. What's funny is that this is a line-item deduction on a payroll form, just like a charitable donation. Mr. Kirner doesn't see a problem with those types of line items; however, he complains that a deduction to the association costs taxpayers money. The evergreen clause on contracts would be removed. This keeps your pay at the same rate if a contract expires until a new contract can be reached. Supervisors can't belong to a union or collectively bargain. Lastly, there would be no full-time union representatives paid for by the public agency.

You, as the PPA member, have a huge say in the direction of the PPA moving forward after AB 182, if it is passed and signed into law by Governor Sandoval. There could be many amendments to AB 182, so we have to continue to fight and stand strong together. Your Executive Board is fighting daily to protect your rights and mitigate AB 182. We are not standing silent. If AB 182 passes, the Executive Board and Board of Directors will be looking for your input on how the PPA should proceed in our day-to-day operations. AB 182 will not kill the PPA, but it will not leave us in a position to properly protect and defend your rights. **VB**

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KATHY WERNER COLLINS

General Counsel

Social Media and Its Potential Impact on Your Career

A number of years ago, I wrote an article on the then-new trend of imposing discipline for certain information officers put out on social media. Fast forward a number of years and now this trend is no longer so new. In fact, since I first wrote on this subject, we now have a formal policy pertaining to your use of social media. And over the years, the cases and disciplines stemming from your use of social media have only increased. So here is an update on what you need to know.

At the time I wrote that, I shared with you some examples of where someone had one of their social media posts used against them. These examples included students fined, charged or convicted based upon posts they had made and employees fired over inappropriate messages regarding fellow employees. In the context of law enforcement, I shared the following:

- A state trooper in Indiana was investigated for questionable entries on his Facebook page as well as for whether they were made while he was on duty. The Facebook postings at issue contained references to himself as a “garbage man,” and referred to those he arrests as “trash.” On the page, he also bragged about heavy drinking and included photographs of himself pointing a gun at his head and drinking a beer. Yet another posted picture depicted a crashed police cruiser. He also posted an entry stating that individuals who resist arrest and threaten police officers would “probably end up shot.” The subject officer resigned while the investigation was ongoing. ([Officer.com](#))
- A Florida sheriff’s deputy was fired after an investigation confirmed that his MySpace page revealed his heavy drinking and a fascination with female breasts. ([Independent.co.uk](#), “Facebook can ruin your life. And so can MySpace, Bebo.”)

Since these examples occurred, there has been a rash of cases involving law enforcement in which the consequence of postings made in poor taste on these social networking sites has led to discipline, termination and even criminal convictions. There are some more recent cases that are frequently cited in discussing law enforcement discipline and social media. One involved a New York officer who regularly expressed his views on social media, and even referred to himself on the day of a particular incident that led to this matter as “devious” and said he was watching *Training Day* to brush up on proper police procedures. When an individual he arrested went on trial, the defense attorney used these postings to successfully impeach the officer.

The reality is that today, more than ever, schools, attorneys and current and potential employers are regularly monitoring these pages for what might be deemed inappropriate content, both as to potential new and current employees.

And of course, now the Department has its own social media policy. Here is what you should know about it. To begin with, the policy, 4/103.27, has provisions that speak to “on-the-job use” of social media as well as provisions directed to “personal use” of social media. As it is, the personal use of these forums typically leads to discipline in certain instances, and that is what the remainder of this article will focus on. As you read through the portions of the policy highlighted below, note that there are some “precautionary” portions of the policy as well as some outright “prohibitions.”

Precautions

1. While you are free to express yourselves as private citizens on social media, you are cautioned against impairing working relationships for which loyalty and confidentiality are important, and you are cautioned against impeding the performance of duties, impairing harmony among co-workers or negatively affecting public perception of the Department.
2. You are cautioned that speech made pursuant to your official duties (that owes its existence to your professional duties and responsibilities) is not protected speech under the First Amendment and that it may be the basis of discipline. In this regard, the policy cautions you to assume that your speech and related activity on social media will reflect on your office and the Department.
3. You are cautioned not to disclose your employment with the Department (including the display of logos, uniforms, badges, photos, etc. that would identify you as a Metro officer), nor post information about another Department member without their permission.
4. Other cautionary provisions include being mindful that once a photo has been posted, it can never be purged out of existence, never assuming that information you post is truly protected, and expecting that the Department may access information that you put out on social media without prior notice.

Prohibitions

1. You shall not access your personal social networking sites while on duty.
2. You shall not post or in any way disseminate any information which you have received through your employment without written permission from the Sheriff or his designee.
3. You must be mindful that social media speech becomes part of the worldwide electronic domain, and as such, you are required to adhere to the Department’s code of conduct. In other words, by way of example, you are prohibited from using speech that contains obscene or sexually explicit language, images, speech or statements

that ridicule, disparage or otherwise express bias against a protected class, and speech involving you and other Department members that would reasonably be considered reckless or irresponsible. The policy explains that engaging in these prohibited speeches may provide grounds for undermining or impeaching an officer's testimony in a criminal proceeding and uses this justification as a basis for discipline for this type of speech.

4. You may not divulge information gained by reason of your authority as an officer, nor may you make statements, speeches, appearances or endorsements or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views of the Department without express authorization.
5. Finally, you are advised in the policy that you should be aware that you may be subject to civil litigation for publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group or organization; for publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone without their permission that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not a legitimate public concern, and would be offensive to a reasonable person; for using someone else's name, likeness or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an exploitative purpose; or for publishing the creative work of another, trademarks or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.

So what does all this mean? Good question! I find much of it confusing and lacking in clear guidance. While I do believe that some aspects of this policy could be challenged, especially given the lack of clarity as to what it is trying to prohibit, don't count on any particular aspect of it going away. These policies have become commonplace nationwide, and it appears that courts are finding them acceptable.

Some have complained that it is legally or ethically inappropriate for policing agencies and other employers to use information posted on these sites for investigatory and/or disciplinary purposes. The argument is that, despite your position as a law enforcement public employee, you still

have a right to free speech under the First Amendment. However, you should be aware that the Supreme Court has ruled in favor of government employers limiting private speech of their employees in the past. (*Roe v. City of San Diego*, 543 U.S. 77 [2004])

Others argue that using these postings against the individual who made them is a violation of that person's right to privacy and/or the person's right against unlawful search and seizure. Again, however, it seems unlikely that someone would be able to make a credible argument that he had an expectation of privacy in such a posting given the design of these forums, which, by their very nature, are meant to be public forums that others can use to search you out. With this in mind, not only would it be hard to argue one has an expectation of privacy in what he is posting, it is also doubtful that society will be prepared to recognize an expectation of privacy in this type of social networking as reasonable.

Still think social media is all in good fun, just a simple way to mass communicate with all your friends at one time? Well, you might want to think twice. Don't be fooled into thinking that anything you post on Facebook is private. No matter how seemingly harmless and no matter your intent on who it reaches, often the information gets to many more readers than the original or intended audience. And often it is seen in a different light than you may have intended. Common sense and intelligence dictates what you need to do to avoid a sustained complaint of this nature. Please keep in mind that arbitrators in public sector cases often find it easy to uphold discipline to an employee for off-duty misconduct, as both arbitrators and the courts have tended to protect the government employer's reputation and mission, citing the public trust as the reason. The stakes are high — you could lose your job. Don't become one of the statistics. **VB**

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HIGH ALERT

Shootouts, grim sights, daily stress, public scrutiny — police work is a mental battlefield. How do you fix the tortured mind of a cop?

By Heidi Kyser

Photos by Aaron Mayes

On April 12, about 30 Metro cops headed northeast of Las Vegas to Cliven Bundy's ranch to prevent a potential bloodbath. They'd been called out to help keep the peace between Bureau of Land Management (BLM) officials, who were trying to round up Bundy's cattle, and protesters, who'd gathered to support Bundy and chase away the BLM. The dispute had started over grazing rights and unpaid fees — but then it turned ugly. Militiamen flaunting weapons. Anti-government activists making threats. The BLM was in over its head; it called in the cavalry.

"We didn't show any fear that day," Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Sergeant Tom Jenkins would later tell 8 News Now's George Knapp. "But I'll tell you, in the back of our minds, we thought that could be our last day on earth. If it went bad."

There were people on the scene who were looking for a reason to shoot a cop, Jenkins said. A simple car engine backfiring would have been enough to set off a gunfight. News video showed one rifle-wielding protester saying, "It's going to happen sometime. Might as well happen now."

In the end, the release of Bundy's cattle defused the situation. Saving lives was more important than being right, law enforcement officials said.

Less than two months later, Jerad and Amanda Miller, who'd spent just enough time at the Bundy Ranch to be photographed by reporters before being kicked out for Jerad's illegally carrying a firearm while on parole, walked into CiCi's Pizza on Nellis and Stewart and shot two Metro cops to death. Officer Alyn Beck was 41 and left behind a wife and three children; Officer Igor Soldo was 31 and left behind a wife and baby. The Millers went on to kill a civilian, Joseph Wilcox, at a Walmart across the street from CiCi's and

were both killed in a gun battle with police.

In the wake of the Millers' rampage, the buzz of anti-law-enforcement sentiment stirred up by the Bundy Ranch standoff was drowned out by an outpouring of public support for police. Citizens created an impromptu memorial at CiCi's, covering the sidewalk in front of the pizzeria with flowers, candles and mementos. Radio stations, restaurants — even a tattoo parlor — held fundraisers to benefit the families of Beck and Soldo. The Injured Police Officers Fund gathered so many donations that it was able to give each of the officers' wives a six-figure check.

Another two months later, in early August, Ferguson, Missouri, Police Officer Darren Wilson shot Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old

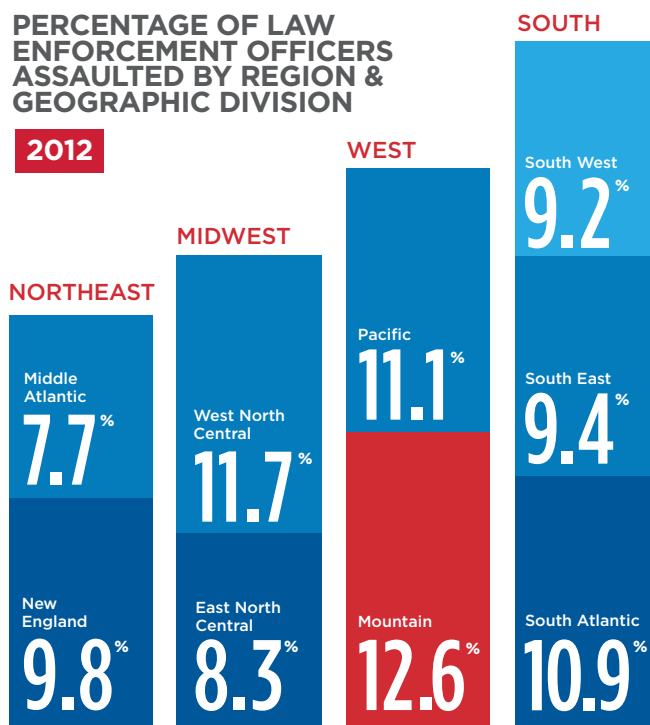
black man. Several weeks of public protests followed, reigniting national discussions about race and police use of force. In North Las Vegas, around a hundred people gathered for a peaceful vigil and rally. But on social media, police-haters churned up the rage, creating hash tags such as #ENDTHEPOLICE to push their message.

In the space of four months, the pendulum of public sentiment about the police seemed to swing from hate to love and back again.

"People don't want you there till they need you," says Brian deBecker, a detective with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. "Then you can't get there fast enough. It's just the nature of the job. It's the nature of the relationship between the public and the police. It's always been that way. ... But it's worse now."

Southern Nevada cops say they're a little more nervous lately than usual. They pull up to stoplights wary of the drivers to their right and left; some have started packing a lunch to avoid eating out while on duty, as Beck and Soldo were doing when they were ambushed. It may just be a low point on the roller-coaster relationship the police have always had with the public, but it's another stressor in a job that was already rife with them. Besides Beck and Soldo, two other local officers, Harold Byron Twigg and Michael Sutton, have died this year. Both committed suicide.

However, a movement is underway to help cops better cope with the unique pressures of their job. Individuals and organizations are trying to raise awareness about the emotional perils of policing and the need for more comprehensive wellness programs. At the same time, younger officers are breaking down cultural taboos — about talking about stress, anxiety and grief — that may have hampered past generations. But in the current climate of increased scrutiny, and hostility, much more could be done.



*Source: FBI Criminal Justice Information Services Division

Trouble Brewing

I would guess that, in my career, I've been to 50 to 100 suicides. There are a lot in this town and, as a sergeant, you have to go to all of them (with your unit). And this one summer day, we had five. ... One was a 13-year-old boy who killed himself over algebra. He was failing algebra. I remember the call coming up on the computer, and I could feel those emotions coming up. ... I could have called someone. I could have called any other sergeant, and they'd handle it. But what would I say? "I'm feeling a little emotional today. Can you go handle this suicide?" So I told myself, "Hey, I'm going to get there, and my part won't take five minutes." ... When I get there, the officer is waiting outside, which is odd when it's 115 degrees. And he says, "Hey, Sarge, this is what I got: Third room on the left, 13-year-old male, got his dad's .45, put it in his mouth." ... When I go inside, there's probably 10 or 12 people in the kitchen, and they're moaning and making sounds like wild animals, you know, probably the way it would sound at my house if my Boo-Bear blew his brains out. Because the top of this kid's head is gone. ... And I remember them looking at me and (my) feeling like they thought I would fix it. Now, I'm sure they didn't actually think that, but that's how I felt. And I wanted to say, "Don't look at me like that. There's nothing I can do."



Boiling point: Clarke Paris says police work brews a seething mental "cop stew."

This is former Metro Sergeant Clarke Paris' recollection of the day seven years ago when his pot boiled over. In his metaphor of police officer stress, every cop starts with an empty stew pot. Over the course of his career, things go into the pot: contact with domestic abuse victims you're unable to help; insults from angry speeding-ticket recipients; negative reviews by supervisors; missed promotions; fights with a spouse. If you're lucky, you retire before your cop stew boils over.

Paris wasn't so lucky. During the time of the incident described above, he was suffering an emotional breakdown, for which he eventually sought help. After just a few months of counseling, he worked through the crisis. He spent five more — much happier, he says — years on the force before retiring.

Metro Lieutenant Erik Lloyd, who is the treasurer of the Injured Police Officers Fund, remembers arriving on the scene of his fellow officer Donald Charles Weese's fatal traffic accident in 1992. While en route to a gun call, Weese had collided with a civilian vehicle and spun into a traffic light pole.

"I was on duty that night and I had to go to the scene," Lloyd says. "I had been in the Academy with (Weese) just a few years earlier. ... He was a massive guy — 6'5", 260, a body builder. I saw him in the vehicle. Seeing him reduced to the way he

was, it was humbling, the power of a car accident. I had to hold a sheet up while they did the Jaws of Life to get his body out. I had to shield his body from the media."

DeBecker will never forget the call he responded to several years ago about a toddler's body in a dumpster. It was a little girl, whose mother and mother's boyfriend had beaten her to death and then placed her in the garbage bin. "She was dressed up and had her stuffed animals around her, as if her mom was putting her to bed," he says.

Looking back on his cop stew moment today, Paris says, "I knew if I got shot but lived, my peers and boss would say, 'I'm glad Clarke got help.' But nobody was shooting at me. I was dealing with stuff that's normal on the job. Why do we call these events 'normal' when they happen to a cop? If another person went through that, they wouldn't be able to forget it for weeks."

Gruesome crime scenes aren't the only potential sources of trauma that cops encounter on a regular basis. According to the FBI's most recent uniform crime report, 12.6% of law enforcement officers in the Mountain West (eight states, including Nevada) were assaulted in 2012 — the highest percentage of any region in the U.S.; 2.4% higher than the national average. About a third of all assaults nationwide happened while officers were

responding to disturbance calls (such as bar fights and family quarrels); nearly 28% of all assaults resulted in injuries. As for fatalities, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund counts 12 total in Nevada from 2004 through 2013: five from auto accidents, four from shootings and one each from beating, drowning and falling.

National firearms-related fatalities are up 63% this year over the same time last year, according to Steve Groeninger, senior director of communications for the Memorial Fund. That percentage was poised to go up, he added, due to some officers being in critical condition from gunshot wounds as he spoke.

Sympathy for cops can be a tough sell. One problem: The number of civilians killed by law enforcement officers easily outpaces that of officers killed by civilians. In Nevada, that ratio is 65 to 4 from 2009 through 2013, according to Fatal Encounters, a website created this year to track officer-caused civilian deaths, and the Memorial Fund. (Note that eight of the civilians killed by officers during this period are unarmed, according to Fatal Encounters' reports.) Another problem is cases of corruption, racism and excessive use of force among certain departments and officers, which garner heavy media attention.

And besides, don't cops know they're signing up for a risky job? They do. In fact, that's part of the career's appeal for some — especially early on. Paris says most young cops will tell you they wish they could do it for free on their days off. But, over time, the gusto diminishes. In some cases, the accumulation of car accidents and dead bodies and threat of bodily harm begins to take a toll.

Several studies have linked alcoholism to the occupational stress of police work, and some evidence indicates cops experience high rates of domestic abuse and suicide as well. "Forty percent of the police do not get help for their problems," writes Neal Trautman in the introduction to his 2005 textbook *Police Work: A Career Survival Guide*. "Almost half of that 40% will assault their children or wives. Nearly 10% of that half will either kill themselves or be killed by a member of their own family. ... Contrary to popular belief, stress harms more cops than criminals do." (Police suicide numbers are disputed and difficult to verify, because the FBI and Department of Justice don't collect data on them.)

Why doesn't that 40% get help? What happens to them between the early embrace of risk and the eventual crush of stress? The making of cop stew is a slow, almost invisible process that even the cops themselves aren't aware of. Post-traumatic

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stress disorder doesn't only come from one major incident, Paris says. A sense of impending doom combined with helplessness to avert it (the hallmarks of trauma) can build up over time with repeated exposure to stressful and violent events. Police psychologists are increasingly studying this phenomenon.

Another factor is a cop-specific catch-22 that also stems from the appeal of the profession. In the introduction to his book, Trautman asks, "What type of person would choose to face daily animosity and ridicule? Who would want to work the long, miserable hours of midnight shift, stand in the rain or cold and direct traffic or live with the discomfort of wearing a bulletproof vest during the summer?"

Some will cite financial security and prestige, but almost all answers include some variation of, "To help people and make a positive difference in the community." In other words, the field attracts idealists.

"A lot of these individuals coming in are young, and they think they have their cape and badge and they're going to change the world," says Sergeant Tom Harmon, the director of the Police Employee Assistance Program, Metro's peer-support group.

Now, put these young, idealistic people in a job where they're repeatedly exposed to the worst aspects of society. It's a recipe for internal conflict, says Douglas Craig, a clinical psychologist who specializes in police and public safety and teaches at the Adler School of Professional Psychology in Chicago.

"Cops learn quickly that the more emotionally invested (in their jobs) they are, the more challenging it is to maintain their composure," Craig says. "A way to compensate for the trauma they experience is to check out. It's a way to cope. I think the general community doesn't see that. They say, 'They look like jerks. They talk to me in a staccato way. They see everyone as future perpetrators of crimes.' They don't see that the more a cop cares about the well-being of others, the less able he is to perform his job."

While emotional disengagement may seem like a professional necessity in law enforcement, it may also stand in the way of personal well-being. Stoicism can mask repressed, unresolved issues and bleed into life outside the job. Officers often say that their job, unlike others, can't be left at the office at the end of the day. They're always cops. For some, this means always working, always maintaining the stiff upper lip.

"That's something ingrained in law enforcement," Harmon says. "There's an underlying thing: You still feel like you have to be tough. We're geared toward helping the world. There will never be enough emphasis on training officers to look in the mirror and say, 'I need to start by taking care of that person, because then, I can be the cop I want to be, the mommy or daddy I want to be.'"



Check your blues: Metro Sergeant Tom Harmon helps keep cops' minds on an even keel.

Toughening Down

Detective Brian deBecker sits at a table in one corner of a Las Vegas coffee shop, facing the door. Over the years, he's worked various divisions of Metro, including a six-year stint on patrol, the job that police veterans portray as the most demanding and yet most rewarding. Now, deBecker is with a special sex offender unit, so he's in street clothes. His steady hazel eyes are a little tired, but hopeful. An occasional tic interrupts his otherwise relaxed manner: Reaching his right hand under his jacket, toward his left side, he quickly scratches his ribs through his T-shirt. It could have something to do with the habit of carrying a gun there. DeBecker's been a cop for 24 years.

In that time, he's seen his share of action. His first of five shootings came while he was still in field training, when a man brandishing a knife rushed him and his partner. In another incident, while he was on patrol alone at 3:30 in the morning, a suspect he'd casually stopped pulled a gun out of his waistband and started shooting. DeBecker says he's what cops call a "shit magnet": Trouble finds him. He believes this is because he's proactive on the job, looking to fight crime instead of just cruising around killing time.

"I love what I do," he says. "As I get closer to retirement, I don't look forward to it as much as I used to."

But he was looking forward to retirement a couple years ago when his entire life seemed like a shit magnet. His crisis was more personal than work-related. In 2011, the mother of two of deBecker's children, among whose family he counts a handful of his closest friends, died. A year and a half later, he lost his 9-year-old son to a rare form of cancer.

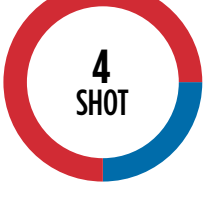
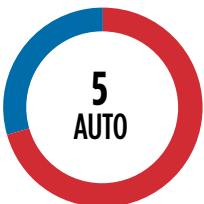
Add this to the usual pressures of being a police officer, and deBecker is a poster child for police stress. And yet, he's doing OK. He doesn't drink too much or abuse his family or consider killing himself. How has he fared so well?

Maybe, partly, because of age and personality. "I guess it's just how life goes," he says. "I've learned that the simpler you can make life, the easier it is." He doesn't get worked up about the Department politics that drive so many other officers crazy. He has a healthy work-life balance. And he spends a lot of time with family, focusing on the daughter he still has at home and the older one living on the West Coast. But deBecker has also had help. He acknowledges the role that the Police Employees Assistance Program, or PEAP, has played in his healthy state. They've reached out to him not only after each of his critical incidents on the job, but also as soon as they heard news of his personal crises. In fact, deBecker says, it was PEAP who called to tell him of his ex-wife's passing while he was traveling out of town. They wanted to make sure he heard the news from a friend, rather than on the evening news.

Metro's confidential peer support crisis intervention program began in 1984 when former officers Ed Jensen and Jerry Keller (who went on to become Clark County Sheriff) convinced former Sheriff John Moran that the Department needed to offer an outlet for officers to deal with the aftermath of critical incidents. In its 30 years, it's grown not just in staff, from two to seven full-time employees, but also in acceptance. Harmon's team is routinely called to critical incidents such as shootings and fatal car accidents, and, more and more often, supervisors on a crime scene will

NEVADA LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER FATALITIES BY PRIMARY REASON

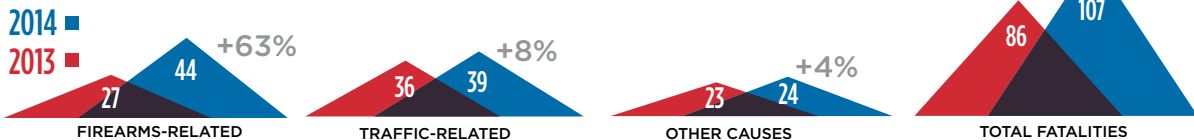
2004-2013



*Source: National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund

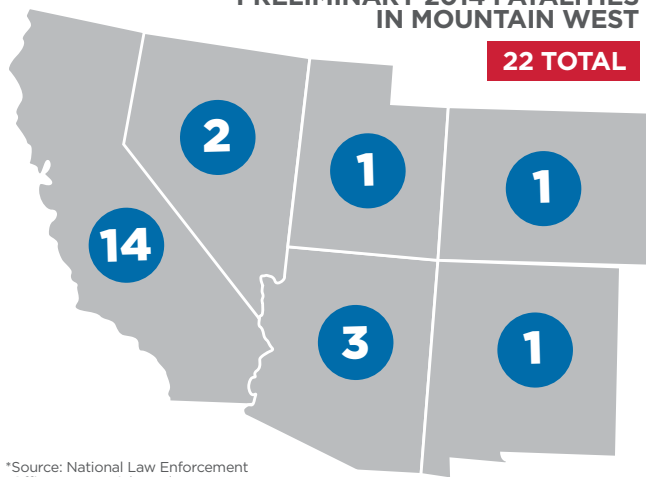
PRELIMINARY 2014 LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER FATALITIES

Please note these numbers reflect total officer fatalities comparing Jan. 1 through Nov. 17, 2014 vs. Jan. 1 through Nov. 17, 2013



*Source: National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund

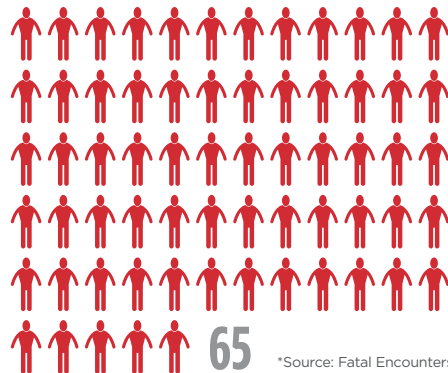
PRELIMINARY 2014 FATALITIES IN MOUNTAIN WEST



*Source: National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund

NEVADA CIVILIAN-POLICE DEATHS

Civilians killed by police, 2009-2013



*Source: Fatal Encounters

Police feloniously killed by civilians, 2009-2013



*Source: National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund

elect to have PEAP there in noncritical incidents too, when they feel there's trauma potential for the officers involved. PEAP staff helps the officers through the shock and its immediate aftermath. In addition, any employee of Metro, civilian or sworn, can call PEAP any time for help — whether the matter is job-related or not. And supervisors

can refer PEAP to unit members who they believe are in need of assistance (although it's up to the officers themselves to accept the help). PEAP representatives are trained in peer counseling, not psychological services. They don't diagnose disorders or prescribe treatments. If someone needs more than a sympathetic ear, PEAP refers him or her to a therapist.

This month, Harmon retires after 20 years with PEAP. Lead Coordinator Melissa Causey, who has 14 years of experience of her own on the team, says the departure of Harmon — who is practically synonymous with PEAP — will be tough, but she expects the program will continue to thrive. She helped organize Metro's first Wellness Week, which took place in early November and included an FBI workshop on stress management, Paris' seminar on PTSD and suicide prevention, and a fitness fair.

She hopes to make the event annual and expand on it next year.

"Officers are required to maintain 24 hours of training per year, and they're always looking for classes to take," Causey says. "We're looking for additional tools to give them, wellness skills."

"We live in a world where there are so many priorities," Harmon adds. "Paying attention to that one area (stress management) is a challenge because of everything else they need to do to learn their job. There will always be more that needs to be done in that area."

Indeed, only a small fraction of Nevada's law enforcement job training is spent on self-care. Metro's Police Academy, for example, includes around 800 hours of training per officer. Of that, recruits get one hour on health and wellness; one hour on stress management; one hour on the impacts of policing; a two-hour video on emotional survival; and a three-hour class by PEAP on officer-involved shootings. Eight hours total.

Leading organizations have begun to admit that law enforcement agencies are falling short when it comes to mental health services and taking steps to remedy the problem. The International Association of Chiefs of Police worked with the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing to bring together experts and stakeholders for a national symposium in July 2013. Named "Breaking the Silence," it addressed "the mental health stigma within law enforcement as well as the critical issue of law enforcement suicide," according to the resulting report and website, where departments can get resources for devel-

oping their own internal programs.

One such program that's been held up as a model is the San Diego Police Department Wellness Unit, which Police Chief William Lansdowne founded in 2011 in response to a spate of officer misconduct allegations, including drunk driving, domestic violence and sexual assault. At the time, Lansdowne said the department may have allocated too few resources for employee well-being.

The SDPD Wellness Unit isn't that different from PEAP. Located off-site from the police department, it is staffed by four police officers and oversees chaplains, peer counseling, a crisis hotline and addiction recovery support groups. It also coordinates with a contracted psychological services provider. In the year following its establishment, journalists from the local ABC News affiliate reported that the Wellness Unit had made 352 contacts with department and family members, successfully heading off countless behavioral problems before they happened.

"Back when PEAP started, I felt like it was ahead of the curve," deBecker says. "For many years, police work was: You'd go to work, get in a shooting and go home. There was no outlet to talk about it. I don't know what I would've done without follow-up."

Still, more can be done, believes Minddie Lloyd, Erik's wife and the director of the Injured Police Officers Fund. Through her 18-year marriage and the support she's offered the spouses and other family members of killed

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and injured police officers, Minddie Lloyd has taken a personal interest in officer wellness. Like Clarke Paris, she believes law enforcement trauma still isn't accepted and understood broadly enough, and she'd also like to see more awareness and training related to the role of the family, beyond the few optional hours offered during the Academy and continuing education.

"A lot of these spouses love being married to cops, and their kids come first, but there isn't a connection between them," Lloyd says. Too many men, she believes, won't talk to their wives about what's going on, because of the fear of being misunderstood or a burden; some wives don't want to hear it, either.

Erik Lloyd adds that police thinking on work-life balance needs to evolve, a concern his colleagues echoed. Discouraged by the discomfort and stigma experienced when socializing with civilians, many cops fall into the trap of only hanging out with other cops. Too often, their preferred way to unwind is with a drink.

"After a while, that's all you do: drink and tell stories to other cops," says former Metro Officer Robert "Bobby G" Gronauer. "It's always best to get away and have friends outside the Department, people you can talk to who aren't cops.

And you have to know how to go on vacation — more than two weeks — and really go away when you go away. These guys just want to work all the time. It's not good."

"Chicago police has a furlough program that's been successful," says Douglas Craig, the Adler School psychologist. "You get 30 days off once a year. ... I think it would help more to have greater resources for departments to provide healthy space and support to use paid leave for self-care. I'm not bashing police departments; the majority of large P.D.s see the need for them, but we're in the infancy of seeing the importance of those services play in the functioning of departments themselves."

Shifting Culture

North Las Vegas Police Officer Ann Cavaricci murmurs a line of code into her radio, flips on her sirens and floors the gas pedal of her black-and-white Ford SUV. On her way to an armed robbery at a mobile phone store, she calmly notes drivers' failure to move out of her way. Zigzagging through a maze of cars blocking an intersection, she resumes her story about the stressors she's faced in her job — a mix of those that every cop deals with and some that are unique to women. Arriving at the crime scene, she parks near the entrance to the strip mall where the phone store is located and hops out, murmuring more code into her radio and drawing her gun. Posted at a tree in sight of

the store's front door, she waits for backup, as the suspect may still be in the area. Her fellow NLVPD Officer Shane Forsberg, who's recovering from gunshot wounds sustained October 7 in a traffic stop gone bad, undoubtedly hovers in the back of her mind. Other officers soon arrive and within 15 minutes, they clear the store and surrounding area. No one is hurt; the robber is long gone with a few hundred bucks in cash.

In his seminar, Paris touches on sexism in law enforcement, paraphrasing one commonly cited source of frustration among females: "If you have short hair, then you must be a lesbian. If you have long hair, then why are you a cop?"

A pervasive undercurrent of machismo in cop culture can undermine both men and women. Women have to work harder to earn their peers' respect; but they're also more likely to have an outside support network. If a woman cries at work, she's seen as weak; if she doesn't, she's trying too hard. Either way, though, it's considered less shameful than a man crying. In short, nobody has it easy when it comes to stress management.

But that culture of stoicism is shifting. Cavaricci — at 34, the youngest of the 10 officers interviewed for this story — displays her femininity unabashed: She wears makeup, has long blond hair and a French manicure, and carries her water in a pink Victoria's Secret bottle. She balances appearing as strong and authoritative as her male

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counterparts with using her more feminine skills — one moment drawing her gun and shouting, “North Las Vegas Police! If you’re in there, come out with your hands up!” into a church where an intruder has tripped an alarm; the next, having a motherly talk with a young boy who’s walked out into a busy street (albeit in a crosswalk) without heeding oncoming traffic.

“I like interacting with the community,” Cavaricci says. “I think it’s important to let people know that we’re approachable.”

Although Cavaricci has availed herself of NLVPD Employee Assistance Resource Representatives’ (EARR) services to vent fear and frustration during her 10 years on the job, she says, she has no problem talking about work with her husband, a Metro traffic cop, and mother, who’s proud of her career choice. Like a majority of cops, Cavaricci loves her job and is in good mental health.

Older officers find their younger peers more open to counseling and less bothered by things (e.g., same sex relationships) that would’ve raised eyebrows in old-school locker rooms.

Harmon says PEAP has seen a steady rise in need, from 15 to 20 after-hours callouts for emergencies per year in the mid-’90s, to 65 to 75 such calls today. It’s not unusual for his team to make 10,000 contacts a year now, including everything from a five-minute conversation to an all-day intervention. He believes the increase

is due in part to the growth of Southern Nevada’s population and police force, and in part to rising acceptance of counseling services.

“Now that I’m back on patrol, I’m 47 and I’m in briefing, I see 23-year-olds who are like me back when I started,” Erik Lloyd says. “When I was their age, I used to think, ‘Man those guys are old.’ I look at these kids now and think, ‘Man, these guys are really good cops.’ They’ve been exposed to more through the Internet. They’re more on the ball than we were back then.”

The nature of police work is changing, he says. There’s more emphasis on community-oriented activities, such as Metro’s monthly First Tuesday public forums P# 3836 at area commands, occasional Coffee with a Cop socials at cafés around town and the Every 15 Minutes anti-drunk-driving campaign in local high schools. Police psychologists applaud such efforts, insisting that they’re the key to building mutual cooperation and understanding between the police and public.

“Vegas used to be rough and tumble,” Lloyd says. “Now, I have 17 officers at Southeast who have body cameras.”

Perhaps because so much of their lives are online, younger officers seem to embrace public accountability for their actions. “If you talk to people who’ve been on the job for a long time, there are more rules, a closer look at what they’re doing,” says PEAP’s Harmon. “Rightfully so. Even

when we’re doing a good job, there need to be checks and balances to make sure we’re doing the right thing. With a lot of authority comes a lot of responsibility.”

Some feel there’s much work to be done in this regard. “Holding a barbecue once a month isn’t going to fix the systemic problems,” says Kelly Patterson of Nevada Cop Block, a group whose goal is to draw attention to use-of-force issues and police accountability. Referring to the highly contentious killing of Erik Scott outside a Costco store in 2010, Patterson says, “Everybody saw how they were covering things up. People spent about a year reforming the coroner’s inquest, working through the system, and as soon as the election was over, the new management came in and overthrew it.”

It’s up to recently elected Sheriff Joe Lombardo to manage this controversy now, while meeting the day-to-day demands of running a 5,000-person force. Observers hope that PEAP and EARR won’t get lost in the shuffle, and that Lombardo will support their efforts to expand wellness services.

“The harder the job gets,” Harmon says, “the more they need us.”

This article originally appeared in the December 2014 issue of Desert Companion (desertcompanion.com). Reprinted with permission. VB

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK 2015 EVENTS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

- May 12** Police Unity Tour Arrival Ceremony, 2:00 p.m. at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial
- May 12** 22nd Annual Top Cops Awards Ceremony, 7:00 p.m. at the Marriott Marquis Washington, D.C.
- May 13** 27th Annual Candlelight Vigil, 8:00 p.m. at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial
- May 15** 34th Annual National Peace Officers’ Memorial Service, 11:00 a.m. West Front of the U.S. Capitol
- May 15** National Peace Officers Memorial Day



CALENDAR

- April 30–May 2 16th Annual Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Run from Las Vegas to the Memorial in Carson City
- May 10 Mother’s Day
- May 21 Southern Nevada Fallen Officers’ Memorial
- May 25 Memorial Day
- June 4 General Membership Meeting, 5:00 p.m. (come and stay for pizza)*
- June 14 Flag Day
- June 21 Father’s Day
- July 4 Independence Day

* General Membership Meetings are quarterly rather than monthly. If you need to present something before the Board prior to a regularly scheduled General Membership Meeting, please contact the PPA office so you can be accommodated.

Fit for Duty

POLICE OFFICER II DAVID TILLEY

Member

David Tilley writes regularly for the Vegas Beat to highlight the importance of fitness and to share with us some of our members' fitness routines and secrets. If you would like to be highlighted, feel free to reach out to him at david.tilley@yahoo.com.

Highlighted Member

Shellie Clark, P# 4261

Height: 5'3"

Weight: 120

Years on the Department: 23 1/2

I understand you compete in triathlons. For those of us who are unfamiliar with a triathlon, it is made up of swimming, running and cycling, and it's considered one of the most physically and mentally demanding competitions in the world. How long have you been competing, and how much of it is physical and how much of it is mental?

I have been competing for the last nine years. After completing a few marathons, I thought it would be fun to try a (sprint distance) triathlon. This consists of a leg that is a 1/2-mile swim, a leg that is a 12- to 14-mile bike ride, finally followed by a leg that is a 3.1-mile run. I considered myself to be in good shape because I regularly worked out two hours a day. How hard could it be? Well, I had a rude awakening. I practiced my swim in a pool, purchased a bike a week before the race and thought I was ready. I never practiced my swim in the lake, and when I jumped in the cold water, I had a panic attack. I literally doggy paddled the entire swim. I was the last one out of the water and was exhausted. I didn't know how to change my gears on my new bike to climb the first hill. It was a three-loop course, so as I was getting passed, other competitors were yelling for me to "gear down" on the bike. I managed to pass one person on the run, and I finished second-to-last.

I have come a long way since my first race. I still learn something from every race I complete. I would say it is 50% physical and 50% mental. When you put in the work, you gain the mental strength you need to continue. You don't have to be an athlete to do a triathlon. You just need to commit to the training. Anyone can do it. I've seen people competing in all shapes and sizes. If you want to get inspired, go watch the finish line at a long endurance race. I am always in tears watching people finish their event. It is hard to describe the feelings you have during those long training hours. I have cried a lot of tears, but I am not one to give up. It is amazing P# 1789 what your body is capable of doing.

How do you train for an upcoming competition? Do you incorporate other methods of training like weight lifting or other types of cardio?

I actually hired a trainer who provides me with a weekly schedule of my workouts that I can look up online. This usually entails six days of workouts consisting of three to four hours of swimming, six to 10 hours of cycling and up to three to seven hours of running throughout the week. I also do strength training two to three days a week, focusing on my core strength. Building your core is so important to prevent

injuries and help with the long hours on the bike. I used to have the mindset that I needed to train as hard as I can every day in order to improve. I have learned you don't have to go "all out" every day. My trainer has me use a heart-rate monitor now to help me with this. For example, on my long run days, I try to run at a two-minute-per-mile pace slower than my normal race pace. It's all about getting the miles in your legs and working on faster leg rotation. Rest days are just as important. This is something I've really had to work on, but I'm learning to listen to my body. There are some days where I skip or shorten my workout if I feel really tired. Your body needs that recovery time.

It is also important to incorporate brick runs, which means running after you get off the bike. This is where I really have to work on my mental toughness. I am usually tired, and believe me, I want to quit, but I just tell myself to keep moving my legs. My schedules vary, but typically one day a week is my long day when I usually put in a three- to six-hour day. For an ironman, it builds up to an eight-hour day. (This is only for a few short weeks). It is really not as bad as it sounds.

How does your diet now compare to your diet when preparing for a triathlon? Do you take any supplements that help with your training?

Dieting is the most difficult for me. I try not to get too crazy with my diet. When I am training for an event, I like to drop an additional five pounds. I try to cut out breads and pastas to lean myself out. My diet usually consists of protein shakes, salads with chicken, quinoa with steamed vegetables and either chicken or fish. The most important thing is to cut out sugar and empty calorie snacks. Basically, I like to make sure some protein is included in my snacks, such as almonds or yogurt.

On race day, I like to make oatmeal with almond milk. I add almond butter, which is similar to peanut butter, bananas and raisins. I still allow myself a skinny vanilla latte and an occasional glass of wine.

I do take supplements daily, and when I'm putting in a lot of training hours, I take them twice a day. I also use doTerra Essential oil vitamins and supplements. I also use the oils to help me with the stiffness and soreness. Deep Blue (similar to BenGay) is the best!

Fats are still important in your diet. I just try to make sure they are healthy fats, such as avocados, coconut oil or almonds. On my long training days, I don't worry too much about what I eat. Sometimes some salty potato chips get you through the ride. I cannot say no to carrot cake, either. I do have my weaknesses. I try not to have the sugary snacks in my house. If I know it is there, I will probably eat it!

What is your next fitness goal? Do you have any upcoming competitions?

I am currently training for the Lake Tahoe Ironman, which is scheduled in September. An Ironman consists of a 2.4-mile swim in the lake, a 112-mile bike ride, followed by a 26.2-mile run. I was supposed to compete in this event last year, but was seriously injured while training on my bike two weeks before the race. I crashed on my bike while traveling about 25 miles per hour and flew off the bike about 20 feet, landing directly on the top of my head. I'm sure my helmet saved my life. When the doctor told me I broke my neck, I couldn't believe it. I didn't feel



any pain. It just felt like whiplash. I remember crying when the doctor gave me the news. All I could think about was all the countless hours of training. I felt like I did it all for nothing. Then the doctor said something to me that put it all into perspective. He said, "You need to focus on what is important here. I am here to see two patients. You are going to walk again, but the other patient is not." He then said the fact that I was in such great shape from my training is probably why my injuries weren't more severe. My neck healed on its own without any surgery. I had to wear a neck brace for eight long weeks. I had a hard time just lying around, so I did a lot of walking. I also rode the stationary bike and used the stair climber at the gym. I felt better just to be moving. When I was able to remove the neck brace, I started doing yoga. This really helped me get my mobility back.



we work holidays and different shifts. Out in patrol, sometimes we get stuck on calls and miss our lunch. It's easier and cheaper to make poor choices in the food we eat. I have seen officers go into the 7-Eleven and eat the free hot dogs and sodas. I would suggest packing healthy snacks, so when you do miss your lunch time, you have healthier choices. Eat smaller meals throughout the day to keep your metabolism moving. There is no secret pill to take. It takes some work, but it is so

worth it. Working out should be like brushing your teeth; it should just be part of your daily routine. I like to sign up for events because it keeps me motivated to keep training. If I know I have a race coming up, I will get up early to get my run in. If you need motivation, there are Meetup groups, so you don't have to do it alone. There are so many options available.

If you were the Sheriff, how would you incorporate fitness into the Department?

When I first hired on to the Department, we had gyms in the stations. This has all been taken away over the years. I don't understand why fitness is not a priority with this job. When we all hired on, we were required to complete a fitness test. I don't understand why we are not required to maintain this level of fitness. We should be required to pass a basic fitness test. We get incentive pay for having a degree. I think it would be a good idea to provide some type of incentive to remain fit. It doesn't need to be money; it could be additional bonus time or even a fitness pin, like something similar to our shooting pin. I think the Department has done a great job with promoting different fitness events, such as Baker to Vegas, the Brass Challenge and several other 5K events. I've been called the day before an event asking if I will fill in for someone who had to cancel to run seven miles. I love knowing that I am ready anytime! I'm always looking for people to run or bike with. I would love to help anyone who is interested in trying a triathlon. You will be glad you did! **VB**

I recently competed in an Olympic distance triathlon, six months after my accident. I realized what a blessing it is that I am physically able to swim, bike and run. It poured rain during the entire event. I felt so alive to be on the bike again. The run is always the most painful, because you are always so tired by the third leg of the race. Instead of focusing on how tired I was, I focused on how lucky I am that I can still run. I ended up having one of my fastest run times.

I plan on competing as long as I physically can. My ultimate goal is to qualify for the Kona World Championship. Basically, you compete against other athletes in your general five-year age group. Different ironman races usually offer 50 qualifying spots for Kona. They determine how many slots they give to each age group according to how many people sign up for the race. Sometimes it is only two spots, which means you need to place first or second to qualify. If one of those athletes does not take the spot, it rolls down to the next-place finisher. I competed in a full ironman in Arizona back in 2013. I placed eighth out of 120 in my age group. I realize this is going to be a tough goal, but I believe I can do it. If nothing else, maybe I'll qualify when I'm 70 (there are usually only five competitors in that age group, so my odds will be better!).

How has being fit helped you to be a better police officer?

I believe it should be mandatory that every police officer remains fit. I have always felt added pressure being a female. When I entered the Police Academy, I made sure I was prepared physically. Although I have never had an issue with anyone telling me a woman cannot do this job, I believe there are still people out there who don't like us out there. I make it a priority to stay as fit as possible, so if I ever have to fight for my life or to help my partner, I know I physically can. I also believe we should take pride in our job and look good in our uniform. Whether we like it or not, we are being looked at and being evaluated constantly. It is not easy carrying an extra 25 pounds of gear in full uniform, but I still made it over those walls during foot pursuits when I was back in patrol. I think a lot of injuries could be prevented, if we all focused on building our core strength.

What advice would you give officers looking to adopt a healthier lifestyle?

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As Law Enforcement Memorial Day approaches, we look forward (although sometimes with heavy hearts) to many of the upcoming associated events that occur locally, as well as in our state capital and in Washington, D.C.

The LVPPA is proud to be a willing sponsor of many of these great events. So you know where some of your membership dues money is going, here are some of the events associated with Law Enforcement Memorial Day that we are honored to support:

- The Association made a \$1,250 donation to the Nevada Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Commission to help cover the cost of the memorial service this year in Carson City, where Officers Alyn Beck and Igor Soldo will be honored.
- The Association made a \$5,000 donation to the group of Southern Nevada law enforcement officers that is riding with the tour on their trip from New Jersey


into our nation's capital in the annual Unity Tour, which raises money for the upkeep of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. Sponsorship of the Unity Tour riders has generated more than \$8 million for the NLEOM Fund over the years of its existence.

- Covering the cost of airfare and hotel accommodations for the officers who have been nominated to accept the Top Cops award on behalf of our entire agency for their heroic efforts in response to the tragedy that occurred on June 8, 2014, when we lost two fellow officers. (As an aside, the LVPPA nominated our agency to receive this award.)

Again, we are proud to sponsor these worthy events and will be keeping the families of Officer Beck and Officer Soldo, as well as all officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice, in our thoughts throughout National Police Week. **VB**

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