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Representing Las Vegas Metro Police Department Officers and Deputy City and Municipal Court Marshals

VOLUME 15 | ISSUE 5

January/February 2021



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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 over 241,000 law enforcement officer members in more than 1,000 police associations nationwide.

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

**UCOPS** – The United Coalition of Public Safety





# President's Message

**DETECTIVE STEVE GRAMMAS, PRESIDENT**

## What Will 2021 Have in Store for the PPA?

I wanted to open 2021 with some of the events and issues that the LVPPA will be facing this coming year.

February 1 will start the 2021 legislative session. Scott Nicholas and I will be the primary representatives at the session for the PPA, with John acting as a third arm of our approach to the session. Scott and I will be splitting the week so that one of us is always at the session and the other is still here in Vegas handling the day-to-day operations of the PPA. John will come up on occasion to fill in for Scott and me when schedules demand us both to be home. We will be hoping to pass some additions to legislation, along with fire, to increase some Heart and Lung issues as well as some PTSD issues. I assume we will also be facing several issues related to police reform. Some of the intel we are getting is that there will be more attacks on our profession, and we will be focusing our time at the session on defending against those attempts.

The PPA will also have contract negotiations for LVMPD and the City Marshals/Court Marshals group. As we are all aware, we will be dealing with the impact of COVID-19 on our economy. We will also work diligently on finding all available money, if there is any to be found, and making sure we keep our officers well compensated. These negotiations are not like our

normal negotiations in the manner that we will only bargain COLA, health insurance and clothing allowance. These negotiations will be for the last two years of the current contract that we have with LVMPD. Our brothers and sisters at the City will see us undergo a total contract negotiation, as we have been working outside of contract for several months.

The PPA will also be actively negotiating all the issues surrounding COVID-19. I am hopeful that we will come to an agreed-upon resolution, but we stand ready to take the issues to an arbitrator for a final decision. Hopefully, our country begins to move toward a day where we do not need masks, social distancing or other requirements. Until then, make sure you all take care of yourselves and P# 16149 your family.

We also hope to be able to get back to our normal events for our members. 2020 took a toll on us all and trying to bring back the fun and entertaining things we used to do is a priority for the PPA.

As every year does, we will have plenty of fights and issues come up that we cannot prepare for. But, as usual, whenever these issues arise, we are always ready to bring the fight to anyone that we need to.

Thank you all for your continued membership and trust in the PPA. Have a great year and stay safe. **VB**



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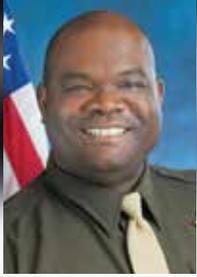
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# Lead by Example and Inspire Others to Follow

## CORRECTIONS OFFICER MYRON HAMM

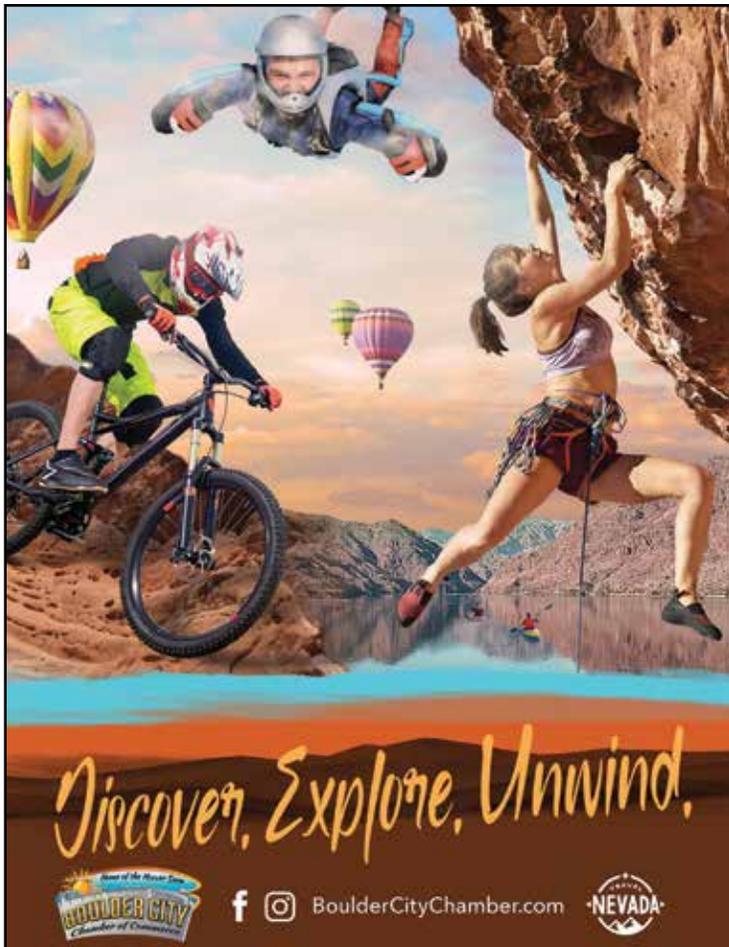
Director of Corrections

What are the trademarks of a true leader? A leader is someone who inspires us to strive for greatness or someone who leads by example. I have witnessed many people promote within the LVMPD, and some have moved up the ranks to become outstanding supervisors. In my opinion, people who promote fall into one of three categories: the group that promotes and hopes they never have to make a critical decision or get involved in an uncomfortable situation; the group that has never done the job well and wants to promote so they don't have to perform a job they were never qualified for; and lastly, the group that people want to follow and are willing to work an undesirable location or shift for because they know their supervisor is looking out for them and ensuring they are headed in the right direction. Whether you are supervising on Patrol or at CCDC, the theme should be the same — lead by example and inspire your troops to do the job the correct way.

I recently observed someone on the promotion list taking a lunch break on the 12th floor of CCDC. This individual had removed their duty belt and was enjoying their lunch break. My question is, how would you respond

quickly if a code were called? This individual is on the list to be promoted, and in my opinion, this is a horrible example to set for the rank and file. I wonder what reaction this person would have if they were to observe one of their troops doing the same thing. Simply put, lead by example. In another instance, I was informed by a patrol officer that upon arriving to change in the locker room, a supervisor came into the locker room and called the officer a profane name. If there was an issue, why not go to the officer's supervisor instead of humiliating the officer in front of everyone? But in this instance, the supervisor wanted to show everyone how big a man and tough guy he is. Unfortunately, all he succeeded in doing was showing his true colors and his lack of respect for anyone.

So how do we get to a point where we treat each other with decency and respect? We are expected to go out into the public and treat people with respect and courtesy, but our own supervisors do not adhere to this standard. That being said, I will admit that I get to deal with supervisors and it is a very pleasant experience. We have some truly fine representatives on the supervisor side, and I would be remiss if I did not state this as a fact. Unfortunately, we also have some who are petty and seem to enjoy showing just how much the world needs them. Just remember that supervisors were once the rank and file, and I think they struggled with the same things that officers are being chastised for today. It is so easy to judge and demean, but imagine if instead, you helped or attempted to teach. The responsibility of being a leader should be treated with a high level of commitment and dignity. Supervisors calling subordinates names and being rude to them should never happen, and when it does, it just demonstrates how that supervisor is not suited to lead. We are facing times in which our profession is under attack, we have officers questioning each other and, quite frankly, not trusting each other. This is a time where the younger officers look to their supervisors for guidance and leadership. It is a shame that some are only concerned with themselves and their over-inflated value of self-worth. A wise man once said, "Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others." **VB**



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# Protect Your Career

## DETECTIVE BRIAN GRAMMAS

Treasurer

Would you ever consider driving without insurance? How smart would it be to own something and not take the steps to ensure it is protected? Banks insure your money, and we pay insurance on our homes for occurrences such as floods, earthquakes and fires. We even insure our lives to ensure our families are taken care of in the event of an untimely passing. People will purchase warranties and insurance on appliances, electronic devices and property.

When I began my career with the LVMPD over 20 years ago, I had a co-worker tell me to make sure I protect my career. He said, "I expect 20 years from now for you to tell some new, young officer the same thing I am telling you." I soon learned that he was giving me sound advice because just a month past field training, I received a phone call from a detective who stated he was with Internal Affairs. He read me a notice and informed me that I was the subject of an internal investigation arising from a suspect complaining about my actions during an arrest. He stated that I was being admonished and could speak to no one about this except my representative. I don't mind saying I was visibly shaken; the detective told me I would have to answer questions under the threat of termination. I think I slept about two hours that night. I was scared.

The next morning, I received a phone call from an officer stating he would be my representative. We met for breakfast and he went over the policy and procedure pertaining to the investigation process. He assured me I would not be alone and that he would get me through the entire process. I had a million questions and he answered them all. I found out he was just like me and had gone through the Academy a few years prior to me. I

mentioned that my partner was under investigation and asked if he would be representing him as well. He said no and informed me that my partner had chosen not to be a member of the LVPPA.

My interview came and my representative met me there. It only lasted about 20 minutes. My partner had his interview a day before mine and elected to attend with a friend who had never been a representative before or had any formal training. During the course of his interview, he made a statement that caused another allegation to arise from a different circumstance. Upon learning this, I was relieved to have my representative, and the \$60 I was paying monthly seemed like a bargain.

Fast forward to today and I am now the representative, and it is funny how things don't change. I have been on numerous scenes where an officer had to use deadly force and I have had the displeasure of telling nonmembers of the LVPPA that we could not represent them. Imagine pulling the trigger or utilizing force that results in death and you are now the subject of intense scrutiny and second guessing. The LVPPA employs lawyers and representatives to ensure your career P# 7743 is protected. I have heard many people state, "I will never get in trouble, so why should I pay for nothing?" Just like the insurance on your home or car, you should consider the LVPPA as your lifeline in case the inevitable happens. **VB**

## RETIREMENTS

10/8/20	Dolphis Boucher	P# 4636	PO II 26 years
10/21/20	Anthony D. Rhodes	P# 6440	PO II 14 years
10/22/20	Gary P. Torsky	P# 6751	PO II 20 years
10/26/20	William E. Alberson Jr.	P# 8562	PO II 15 years
10/28/20	Robert W. Lonsdorf	P# 5614	PO II 23 years
10/30/20	Candice Kitchen	P# 13660	PO II 12 years
11/3/20	Raul A. Herrera	P# 5920	CO II 22 years
11/4/20	Michael M. Anderson	P# 6196	PO II 21 years
11/13/20	Rafael M. Ramos	P# 5815	PO II 22 years
11/13/20	Cory A. Estes	P# 5129	PO II 24 years



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# The Department's COVID-19 Protocol Is Overreaching

## CORRECTIONS OFFICER DANIEL COYNE

Director

If any of you have had a COVID-19 exposure and contacted Health and Safety, you've probably been told all about the CDC mandates that prohibit you from coming to work or even leaving your home. This all seems legitimate until you do a little bit of research and discover that these so-called CDC mandates don't exist. The CDC's guidelines for law enforcement agencies do not mandate employees to stay home after an exposure. Under these guidelines, the CDC recommends that employees who are exposed to COVID-19 come to work, wear a mask and socially distance whenever possible if they are not symptomatic. When the Department quotes these CDC mandates, they are flat-out lying to you. The CDC is not mandating anything; they are only offering suggestions.

The Department has now forced well over 2,000 perfectly healthy, non-symptomatic officers to stay home and threatened them with discipline if they come to work. These officers are not symptomatic and want to come to work, but the Department is telling them to stay at home and to not leave the house for two weeks, and depending on where the exposure occurred, they want the officers to cover this time off P# 18507 with their own sick

leave. I would expect to see these types of restrictions in some third-world communist country, not in the LVMPD, which prides itself on "I CARE" values. I mean, what makes an employer think they have the right to restrict your movements on your time off? Any logical person would agree that if you want to force a perfectly healthy, non-symptomatic employee to stay home against their will and restrict them from leaving their house, then you should not only pay them for their work hours, but also compensate them overtime for every hour they are forced to stay at home outside of their shift. Your employer should have to pay you 24/7 if they are placing you on "house arrest" under threat of discipline.

You would think that at a time when the violent crime in this community has been skyrocketing, you would want all hands on deck, right? I guess that's just not the case. Under the Department's current COVID-19 policy, officers and the public are suffering. Here are the results of the Department's COVID-19 policy:

- Employee morale is down, as they are being forced to fight for their time back if they are placed on quarantine.
- Employee morale is down due to being threatened with discipline by the Department if they don't report a stuffy nose or allergies to them.
- Officers' workload has gone up due to thousands of officers being placed on quarantine.
- Officers' jobs are becoming more dangerous, since fewer officers are on the street and backup is not as readily available.
- Crime has gone up as a result of fewer officers on the street.

All these problems can be solved if the Department would just follow the CDC's law enforcement critical infrastructure guidelines and let our cops come to work. We have argued these points with the Department, but they refuse to be reasonable. This issue will now be decided on by an arbitrator, as the LVPPA has filed a complaint since the Department has refused to see reason on this issue. **VB**

Howdy! We all have to do our part so... mask up, stay safe, play safe.

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# LVMPD's COVID-19 Policies

## OFFICER JOHN ABEL

Secretary

As the year winds down and 2020 draws to a close, LVMPD's COVID-19 rules have reached a level that is not only costing officers money and earned sick time, but also causing some officers to receive discipline.

A few years ago, the LVPPA informed officers that they have the right to request a union representative if they feel any conversation they have with a supervisor can result in discipline. This rule also applies if you are having a conversation with Health and Safety about your actions after you report potential COVID symptoms to employees who are assigned to that office, even if they are civilians. It is the LVPPA's position that the Department is violating the contract by forcing officers to stay home when they can come to work. Many officers have reported having regular back pain and headaches for years, but have come to work even with those ailments. Now imagine telling Health and Safety that you came to work with back pain and a headache and then testing positive for COVID and then being placed on administrative leave for coming to work sick. This is what we are dealing with.

We believe that the Department is not accurately following the CDC guidelines and is forcing officers to quarantine even when they don't have to.

Corrections officers at CCDC are assigned to jail modules where COVID-positive inmates are housed and have regular exposure to those inmates, but because they wear masks, they are not made to get tested for COVID or quarantine unless they develop symptoms. This same rule should be applied Department-wide. There is a minimum staffing hard number of officers that I am sure LVMPD has to adequately maintain, and if staffing were to get below this number, regardless of a COVID exposure, they would make COVID-exposed officers come to work. This tells me that it's more about saving money in sick time benefits than it is about safety. Also, although hard to prove, all of these officer COVID quarantines could have caused an uptick in crime around Las Vegas.

It will be interesting to see how the Department will treat officers who refuse to be vaccinated once the COVID vaccine is available, because there will undoubtedly be officers who will not trust the vaccine and will refuse to take it. I am not trying to get under the skin of LVMPD command staff, I am only asking that a fair set of rules be established that make sense and apply to everyone equally. LVMPD cannot put PO IIs on administrative leave for violating COVID policies but only give supervisors a written reprimand when they violate the same policies. LVMPD has the ability to place officers on administrative leave who never get sick or test positive for COVID but only have a COVID exposure, but they will not do it because it saves them money in holiday pay when they carry officers "off in lieu of" on a holiday when they are quarantined. Just like we have since the beginning, we will continue to track COVID grievance cases. If you have any questions, please give me a call at (702) 468-0766 or email me at [jabel@lvppa.com](mailto:jabel@lvppa.com). **VB**



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## CONGRATULATIONS

*to the contest winners  
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**P# Contest (\$50)**

**Terry King, P# 17007**

**Dawn Lauro, P# 7119**

**Michael Rose, P# 15212**

# Now There Are **500** More Reasons Why It Pays to Read



This issue contains **TWO** ways to win your share of **\$500 CASH**

## Giveaway #1: One **\$250** prize

Members who find the hidden  in this issue of Vegas Beat and register through [www.LVPPA.com](http://www.LVPPA.com) will be entered into a drawing for \$250. You must enter by Monday, February 8, 2021, to be considered eligible. Telephone entries will not be accepted. Visit our website for more details.

## Giveaway #2: Five **\$50** prizes

We've hidden **five personnel numbers** within this issue of Vegas Beat. If your number is among them and you call (702) 384-8692 to let us know that you found it, you'll win **\$50**. If you didn't find your number this time, try again in the next issue where we'll hide five more!

Excludes P#s listed in the Retirement section of Vegas Beat

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**DAVID ROGER**  
General Counsel

## Stand By — the Biden–Harris Department of Justice Is Coming

Whether Republican, Democrat or Independent, every police officer should read President-elect Joe Biden’s plan for police and criminal justice reform at [joebiden.com/justice](https://joebiden.com/justice). Many officers will conclude that law enforcement will face dark days ahead; others may be more optimistic.

During the Obama–Biden administration, Vanita Gupta was appointed deputy assistant attorney general and head of the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. Gupta was responsible for overseeing the prosecution of police officers. Her previous jobs included deputy legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union and assistant counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. Don’t be surprised when she resurfaces in the Biden administration.

Here are some of the Biden–Harris administration’s plans:

- **Expand and use the power of the U.S. Justice Department to address systemic misconduct in police departments and prosecutors’ offices.** Using authority in legislation spearheaded by Biden as senator, the Obama–Biden Justice Department used pattern-or-practice investigations and consent decrees to address circumstances of “systemic police misconduct” and to “restore trust between police and communities” in cities such as Ferguson. Yet, the Trump administration’s Justice Department has limited the use of this tool. For example, under the Trump administration, consent decrees between the Justice Department and police departments must now be signed off on by a political appointee from the Department. And, the Justice Department has set an arbitrary limit on how long such consent decrees can remain in place regardless of whether an end to the agreement is warranted. Under the Biden administration, the Justice Department will again use its authority to root out unconstitutional or unlawful policing. The Biden administration will reverse the limitations put in place under President Trump, and Biden will appoint Justice Department leadership who will prioritize the role of using pattern-or-practice investigations to strengthen our justice system. In addition, Biden will push for legislation to clarify that this pattern-or-practice investigation authority can also be used to address systemic misconduct by prosecutors’ offices.
- **Establish an independent Task Force on Prosecutorial Discretion.** Law enforcement officials’ decisions regarding when to arrest, when to charge and what charges to bring are critical decision-points in our criminal justice system. The charges, for example, can dramatically impact not only what sentence someone ends up with, but also whether they

are compelled to take a plea bargain. The Biden administration will create a new task force, placed outside of the U.S. Department of Justice, to make recommendations for tackling discrimination and other problems in our justice system that results from arrest and charging decisions.

- **Invest in public defenders’ offices to ensure defendants’ access to quality counsel.** To create a fairer criminal justice system, we must ensure that individuals who cannot afford counsel have quality representation. And, access to counsel should be available starting at the moment someone appears before a judge. But, right now, defenders’ resources and support are too decentralized and too hard to access. And, as Vice President Biden knows from his own experience leaving a law firm to be a public defender, the wage disparity for prosecutors and defenders limits the ability of defenders’ offices to recruit the best and brightest. As president, Biden will expand the Obama–Biden effort to expand resources for public defenders’ offices.
- **End cash bail: Cash bail is the modern-day debtors’ prison.** The cash bail system incarcerates people who are presumed innocent. And, it disproportionately harms low-income individuals. Biden will lead a national effort to end cash bail and reform our pretrial system by putting in place, instead, a system that is fair and does not inject further discrimination or bias into the process.
- **Eliminate mandatory minimums.** Biden supports an end to mandatory minimums. As president, he will work for the passage of legislation to repeal mandatory minimums at the federal level. And, he will give states incentives to repeal their mandatory minimums.
- **Stop corporations from profiteering off of incarceration.** Biden will end the federal government’s use of private prisons, building off an Obama–Biden administration’s policy rescinded by the Trump administration. And, he will make clear that the federal government should not use private facilities for any detention, including detention of undocumented immigrants. Biden will also make eliminating private prisons and all other methods of profiteering off of incarceration — including diversion programs, commercial bail and electronic monitoring — a requirement for his new state and local prevention grant program. Finally, Biden will support the passage of legislation to crack down on the practice of private companies charging incarcerated individuals and their families outrageously high fees to make calls.
- **Use the president’s clemency power to secure the release of individuals facing unduly long sentences for certain non-violent and drug crimes.** President Obama used his clemency power more than any of the 10 prior presidents. Biden will continue this tradition and broadly use his clemency power for certain non-violent and drug crimes.

- **Defeat the National Rifle Association — again.** Biden's plan to reduce gun violence will address not only mass shootings, but also daily acts of gun violence that don't make national headlines. Biden has defeated the National Rifle Association (NRA) on the national stage twice before. As president, he will defeat the NRA again by banning assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, requiring background checks for all gun sales, closing the "boyfriend loophole" and "hate crime loophole," and tackling urban gun violence by investing in evidence-based community interventions. And, he'll invest in healing the trauma that impacts survivors of gun violence and their communities. Read Biden's full plan to end our gun violence epidemic at [joebiden.com/gunsafety](http://joebiden.com/gunsafety).

To be fair, you should read the entire plan to decide whether law enforcement officers should worry about their future. You should draw your own conclusions about whether our community will be safer than before during the next four years.

Regardless, the PPA is committed to defending your rights. **VB**



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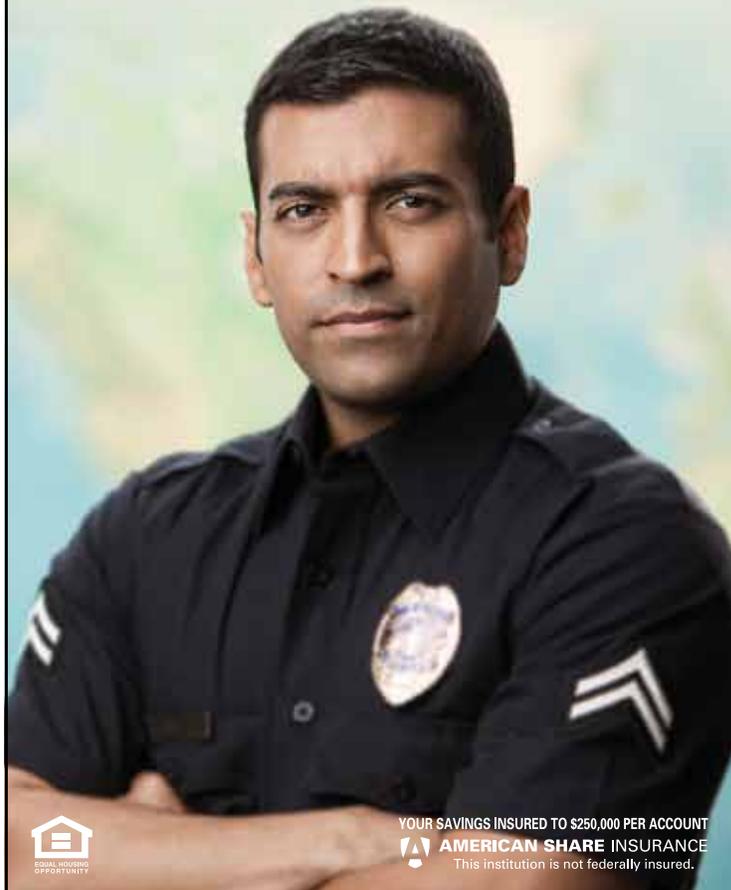
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# INTRODUCING

# THE NEW LVPPA MOBILE COMMAND CENTER

## **CORRECTIONS OFFICER SCOTT NICHOLAS**

Vice President

## **POLICE OFFICER BRYAN YANT**

Sergeant-at-Arms

Since our time on the Executive Board of the LVPPA, the way we have responded to critical events and officer-involved shootings has changed. In the beginning, we responded with one or two of us and an attorney. Once we arrived on scene, we all got together somewhere on the scene, either outside exposed to the elements or inside one of our vehicles. Clearly, this was not the best situation and did not provide a comfortable environment for officers in one of the most stressful times of their careers. In 2017, the Executive Board and the Board of Directors created a committee to acquire a vehicle for the LVPPA to use as a mobile command center for critical events and officer-involved shootings. The committee provided several options to the Board, and with the recommendation of the committee, the LVPPA purchased a 2017 Thor RV. Many of you have seen or utilized the RV on scenes that greatly impacted and benefited our officers. However, now with more reliance on de-escalation and slowing the momentum on scenes, and the availability of more officers and resources on critical events, the RV has not been able to meet the needs and expectations of our team and officers. On an average year, the RV is deployed more than 20 times, and would often be packed with involved officers and witnesses. The Executive Board saw a clear deficiency in the service we were able to provide to the membership with the RV.

Steve Grammas gave Scott Nicholas and me (Bryan Yant) direction to start exploring a new vehicle we could use as our mobile command center.



There were very specific needs that the new vehicle had to meet. The obvious must-have items for the vehicle were room inside to seat up to 20 officers, extremely cold air conditioning, a private office and a bathroom. Scott and I got started working right away on several options and vehicle types. Once we had several options narrowed down, the Executive Board began talking with the Board of Directors, discussing the issues with the current RV and providing statistics on the number of events and those involved with the limitations of the current RV. The Board of Directors gave Scott and me the

(continued on page 16)







## NICHOLAS AND YANT

Continued from page 14

go-ahead to start exploring these options further and getting multiple potential bids on the vehicles.

Scott and I presented to the Executive Board and the Board of Directors a 40-foot Freightliner diesel executive coach bus from LGE Coachworks. The bus would be custom-built for our needs and include an office, bathroom, seating for 25-plus officers in full gear, several built-in TVs with satellite, interior lighting, two industrial air conditioning units, a countertop prep area and storage. After several weeks of designing the bus and options with LGE Coachworks and getting all the designs and bids from other vendors, the Executive Board and Board of Directors were presented with the options. After eight weeks, our new mobile command center vehicle was built and ready for us.

Steve Grammas, Scott Nicholas, Eric Solano and I flew back to Erie, Pennsylvania, to LGE Coachworks to drive the bus back to Las Vegas and have it ready for our officers. Throughout the build process, we



*The bus is going to be a valuable asset for our members for many years to come.*

received pictures of and updates on the bus multiple times per week. I can tell you that I was extremely excited P# 16527 and could not wait to acquire the bus because I knew what a valuable asset and an upgrade it would be for our members. The owners of LGE Coachworks were amazing to work with, and they are extremely law-enforcement-friendly. Once we arrived at LGE Coachworks, the folks at the shop and the bus exceeded our expectations. After going over the bus, the team at LGE gave us an amazing send-off, and we were escorted out of town by several Pennsylvania Highway Patrol troopers — one of whom was former LVMPD Officer Brandon Huffman (# 9797) — for our long journey across country.

After several days on the road, we finally had the bus back in Las Vegas and ready for action. One day later, the bus was put in use on a barricade and in-custody death. Since then, we have had the bus out on



eight critical events. The bus is going to be a valuable asset for our members for many years to come. When you are on a scene, please come on over to the bus and check it out, or at any time, come to the LVPPA office at 9330 W. Lake Mead Blvd. **VB**



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# CHOOSE YOUR HARD

*You have the power to choose how you respond to life's hardships.*



**CHAD LYMAN**  
LVPPA Director

**Y**ou have agency to choose for yourself during this mortal life. Life is hard. Choose your hard. This is a concept I have believed in, promoted and lived for most of my adult life. However, I have not closely considered or dialed in just what this means until I began reflecting on 2020 and all the amazing fun this year has brought to us all.

Growing up, I have been taught a couple of core principles at home and through my faith on a consistent basis. One principle is that I have been granted agency and the right to choose by my God. I was taught that this is a precious gift given to me by my Father in Heaven so that I could

act and not be acted upon. Another principle is that anything that is hard for me is for my own good and growth.

Early on, I bought into the fact that I could choose for myself. I could choose my daily activities, whether I would listen to my parents, as well as what my attitude and outlook would be day by day. My parents taught me that I could choose for myself, but I could not choose the consequences of my choices. My choices can either bring me good things and general happiness or challenges and negative outcomes. Learning this early on has been a blessing to me throughout my life.

I also experienced hardships in my life. My birth dad left our family when I was young and my parents divorced. My mom had three young children at the time. I was blessed that she met a wonderful man and married him after the divorce, and he raised my siblings and me as his own. Other challenges included financial struggles for my family, the general challenges of being a teenager and severe childhood asthma.

While I wholeheartedly bought into the idea that I had agency and I experienced hard things, as everyone does (this is not a “woe is me” story), I did not fully grasp or buy into the idea that hard things were for my own good.

Another aspect of hard things being good for me was that my parents taught me that if I were to “bear it well,” I would experience blessings, growth and, ultimately, happiness as I came through the hardship. I was willing and committed to work through challenges, but I felt this was probably a “grin and bear it” scenario. I thought, “I don’t even know if this will ever lead to happiness, but at least I can choose to work through it,” so that was still better than letting whatever the problem was crush me. I didn’t realize the hidden symbiotic relationship between exercising agency and hard things. That relationship has revealed itself over time, and as I have matured, I have learned that my actual growth and happiness depends on going through difficult experiences.

One way I learned this lesson was through my battle with asthma. I received daily shots for my asthma as a young child. I got shots so often that my parents learned how to administer them to me. I don’t like shots to this day. A couple of winters my asthma got so bad that I had to live part of the winter in a bubble protected from others and germs. As this was happening, my brother and my friends were out running around in the park, riding bikes and playing sports. I loved watching sports, but I didn’t think I could play them with asthma. My parents encouraged me to try. They moved me to a desert climate to help me deal with the severe reactions I had to cold winters and encouraged me to get out and get to it. Slowly, I learned to regulate my breathing and do more with less. My parents have told me that they were worried for me, as at times my lips would turn blue, but we worked with coaches and on learning to control my breathing to keep as much oxygen as possible flowing. Once I started playing, I never stopped. I am still extremely active today, and I still have to deal with diminished lung capacity. The feeling of a tight chest, having to consciously control my breathing (to include specific techniques I have learned over the years) and being short of breath is familiar to me. So are all the joys and memories of competing and striving to improve. Sitting out while everyone else played was hard. Working through my breathing issues and pushing anyway was hard. But only through pushing through did I grow and gain all the positives from competing and exercising.

A LEO example of agency and hard things occurred for me in the LVMPD Academy in 2004. Prior to LVMPD, I was a police officer at the Portland Police Bureau, but I wanted to move back to the southwestern part of the U.S. I was blessed to get offered a job with Metro (no lateral program) and joined the Academy in February 2004. My TAC officer at the time was Chief Andy Walsh.

In week five of the Academy, I tore my ACL in my right knee. When I tore my ACL, I felt it pop, and I knew I had hurt myself but didn’t realize how bad it was. We were practicing low leg kicks on a focus mitt with a partner. I kept training as I felt I could manage the injury. I reported the injury, but thought I was good and kept training.

The next day in inspection I had to run grinders. My knee was heavily swollen and became unstable as I ran. I was referred to a doctor and it was determined that I had completely torn my ACL. My doctor said as active as I was, and due to the knee being unstable, I would need surgery. However, due to my athletic background and my overall attitude of believing I could keep forging ahead, my doctor asked if I wanted to brace the knee up and complete the Academy. The doctor said that as long as I could manage the pain, I would be able to push through. At any point I couldn’t finish, I could just have the surgery that was coming anyway.

Initially, the Department was not receptive to me working through a serious injury that would require surgery to fix. Chief Walsh was a key advocate to upper staff allowing me to attempt to complete the Academy on an injured knee. Over the next several months, I tore my meniscus on the same knee, but completed both the Academy and field training before getting surgery.

In the Academy in 2004, you could miss or fail a certain percentage of the physical activity, to include our team runs. A teammate had “done the math”

*The key is to realize and accept that “easy” is a myth. Nothing is easy, and it isn’t supposed to be. Through struggle and opposition come growth.*



and suggested to me that I could opt out of a certain number of workouts and still graduate. I don't know that number to this day. I immediately rejected the idea that I could sit out anything required of my teammates. I felt that any time my team ran, I ran. At this point in my life, I understood the power of choosing, hardship and bearing it well. I knew that running with my team, even if I was diminished, and doing it well would give me strength for the times in the future when someone would try to finish me, and that even if I were hurt, I could fight back. (Trust me, we "waited" for some while we ran, and some even quit ... but it wasn't me ... I never finished first, but I never finished last.) I knew that by finishing, and finishing well, I would earn the trust of my teammates. I never even thought of trying to find a way to get out of the physical activity I knew would hurt. In fact, the only time I argued with staff was when I was told I could not participate in or complete a physical activity due to the injury. Not finishing the Academy due to an injury would be hard. Finishing the Academy on an injured knee was hard. One has no growth; the other forced growth. Choose your hard.

I give the two above anecdotes P# 17212 as examples of my experience with the concept of agency and doing hard things, and for no other reason. It is not to toot my own horn. Anyone who accomplishes things in their life does so with resistance and challenges. One of my church leaders once said, "If you were to treat everyone as though they were fighting and trying to win an internal battle you know nothing about, most of the time you would be right." The key here is, if you are facing challenges, how do I help you? An even bigger question is, how do you help yourself?

Now understand, I am talking about what I can do for another, or what I can do for myself. What I am capable of doing day to day may not be enough. I may need help, and the hard choice may be asking for it and then accepting it. There are severe problems well beyond "just toughing it out," but there are lots of things we can work through, too. The key is to realize and accept that "easy" is a myth. Nothing is easy, and it isn't supposed to be. Through struggle and opposition come growth. Sometimes, to get through that opposition we need help. I was assisted multiple times by teammates in the Academy, and any "victory" I experienced was a team victory. My parents and my personal faith instilled in me that challenges, that hard things, are normal and are good. This knowledge does not protect me or keep me from hard things. It does not mean that if a challenge pops up I can just overcome it alone. What it does is prepare me to deal with such things so that I am able to work through these issues, either with the help of others or on my

own. The point is, I have the knowledge and belief that hardship is normal, that it is good and it is for my growth. That knowledge gives a different perspective to the problems that come into my life. No matter your view or interpretation of what challenges are, they are coming for you. Everyone has storms in their life. What the storm means and how you deal with it can vary widely from person to person. There are times I am in the storm and I think it is a good day for rain. There are other days the rain is drowning me, and I am grateful for a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a doctor providing an umbrella (or just getting wet with me, lol).

I can face any challenge more effectively through preparation. Whether that is a shift internally with consistent personal preparation (like me believing and instituting family and faith-based things I was taught) or personal preparation combined with professional help from a doctor, I will take trained over untrained any day. I teach these things to my children within the walls of my home, and I attempt to share lessons I have learned via opportunities to teach and social media. 2020 has sharpened the focus of my lessons learned during trying times.

Once you accept that there are no "easy lives," and you accept that you can choose what hard you will endure well, and that ultimately the hard things you work through will benefit you, then those hard things can gain new significance and meaning.

Life is hard, but it is for your own good. Once you *know* that, see it, believe it and accept that you have been given the gift of *choice*, then you know, *you really know*, you are simply choosing your own hard, to your own benefit. While life is hard, you can choose how, why and what that will mean for you. At the end of the day, choose your hard.

- Being fit is hard. Being obese is hard. Choose your hard.
- Being married is hard work. Being divorced is hard. Choose your hard.
- Not being complacent or routine as a cop is hard. Being complacent and then being attacked is hard. Choose your hard.
- Being financially disciplined is hard. Being broke is hard. Choose your hard.
- Being a police officer with PTSD and asking for/accepting help is hard. Having PTSD and not getting help is hard. Choose your hard.
- Finding time, money and/or motivation to train as a cop is hard. Getting into a physical fight at work with no training is hard. Choose your hard.
- Accepting that hard is good and choosing your hard is hard. Thinking life is easy or should be easy and then experiencing hard is hard. Choose your hard. **VB**

# THE PPA PODCAST IS LIVE!

**ADELLA SOLANO**  
Events Coordinator

If you follow LVPPA on social media, you may have noticed that in November we unveiled the *PPA Podcast*. The podcast is something I have been wanting to do for about a year now. The idea came while I was listening to a podcast, and I thought to myself, "The PPA needs a podcast." The idea behind it is to talk about law enforcement topics locally and nationally and add a little humor as we do it. Las Vegas has such an allure about it; people love to watch or listen to what is going on here in Sin City.

I knew Steve Grammas would make a great host of the show, but pairing him with the right co-host was key. Daniel Coyne recently came up to the PPA, and right away I knew he would be the best fit to co-host with Steve. The two will host each episode, providing commentary on law enforcement issues, sharing association news and interviewing special guests. On occasion, some members of the Executive Board will join in to discuss certain topics.

I am working on getting special guests who



*Steve Grammas, Las Vegas City Councilwoman Michele Fiore and Daniel Coyne*

are of interest to our listeners. So far, we have welcomed Las Vegas City Councilwoman Michele Fiore (Episode 1) and former UFC heavyweight champion Frank Mir (Episode 2) into our studio. If you know anyone who would be



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Steve Grammas and Daniel Coyne in the LVPPA studio



Steve Grammas, former UFC heavyweight champion Frank Mir and Daniel Coyne

good to feature on our podcast, please email me your suggestions at [asolano@lvppa.com](mailto:asolano@lvppa.com).

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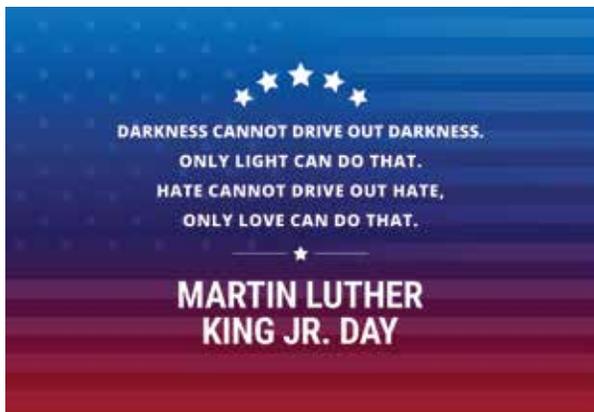


# CALENDAR

**January 18**  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**February 14**  
Valentine's Day

**February 15**  
Presidents Day



## EDITORIAL POLICY

1. Opinions expressed in *LVPPA Vegas Beat* are not necessarily those of the Las Vegas Police Protective Association.
2. No responsibility is assumed for unsolicited material.
3. Letters or articles submitted shall be limited to 500 words and must be accompanied by writer's name but may be reprinted without name or address at writer's request.
4. Freedom of expression is recognized within the bounds of good taste and limits of available space.
5. The Board of Directors reserves the right to edit submissions and/or include Editor's Notes to any submitted material.
6. The deadline for submissions to *LVPPA Vegas Beat* is approximately 30 days prior to the issue date.



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