



The Call Box



Official Publication of the Retired Seattle Police Officers Association

September, 2023 Volume 4, Issue 5

“NOT JUST A CIVILIAN”

A Conversation with Ila Birkland & Penny Randle

Editor’s Note: Anyone who has spent any amount of time working for the Seattle Police Department knows that the department could not function without the dedicated work of the administrative personnel. In this issue, we chat with two of the longest serving department admins, Ila Birkland & Penny Randall, who are both now retired. If you know any other admins who would enjoy being interviewed, please let me know.

Ila Birkland #3199

Hired: I was hired in 1966 at City Light and hated it. I told a friend who worked at SPD that I was quitting. She said there was an opening where she worked and to come down. I went down during lunch and met Sgt Harry Schneider, who interviewed me. We walked all around the building and he said when can you start? Two weeks later I was working at SPD. It was 1969.



Job Title When Hired: Clerk Typist 2

First Assignment for SPD? I started on the 5th floor in the Investigations Bureau Business Office. I worked with Sgt Harry Schneider, Gloria Gustifson and Vesta Dentler.

Other Assignments? In 1971, I was recruited by Auto Theft and Homicide. I chose Homicide, where I stayed until I retired in 2014.

Most challenging part of the job? Not sure if it falls under challenging, but going from typing about kilowatt hours at City Light to transcribing statements with “Mother F***er” was sure different! I was so naïve that I actually asked Supervisor Vesta if it was capitalized. She actually went to Homicide and asked them. For a long time, I was known as “Capital MF.” I transcribed statements and listening

Penny Randall #3861

Hired: 1972 under the EEO program and became full time in 1974.



Job Title When Hired: Admin Support Assistant

First assignment for SPD? I was the first Captain’s secretary for the whole department. I worked out of the Georgetown Precinct, which used to be home to the Fire Department and was a city hall before that.

Other Assignments? I worked my entire 46 year career out of the South Precinct.

Most challenging part of the job?- It was a wonderful career. When I started, I used an Underwood manual typewriter. Eventually, I went to an IBM electric typewriter and ended with the early computers which was a challenge after using typewriters.

Memorable stories? When Captain Swindler would challenge sergeants and officers to a game of pool. The pool table was outside the Captain’s Office. I was also in the Georgetown precinct when a certain person, (Tom B) mistakenly thought his gun was unloaded and dry fired. He shot out the mirror right by the officer’s mailboxes. No one was hurt.

The Call Box



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President's Message

By Jerry Taylor, President, RSPOA



Sometimes, things seem all messed up and confused. I think it is partially a symptom of age. My great doctor retires, and my only new choice is some kid who just graduated from Grenada's medical school. He looks to me to be about 14 years old and I am not convinced he can spell his own name—of course I can't either. The pattern continues everywhere. My favorite restaurant is out of business and has been replaced by some corporate entity that can't cook good food.

On a more personal level, we are seeing the City of Seattle appear to crumble from inattention, with the police department being sucked into destruction. It hurts to put in an entire career with an organization like SPD, only to see it being ripped apart by inattention and purposeful attacks.

It has been a long time coming, but slowly and on every front that effort has continued. It started with the morphing of our city leaders, from the old Seattle norm of moderate liberals, to aggressive progressives. The forfeiture of SPD to the consent decree was the first major change. It amounted to an agreement by the city that the doctored statistics of the DOJ were correct and justified, which turned over the management of law enforcement to federally appointed monitors with no responsibility to the citizens. We knew the statistics citing excessive use of force were wrong, but our leaders rolled over and accepted the allegations. Seattle is but one of fifteen or more police departments subjected to consent decrees. The action against Seattle began in 2012 and it is not yet over. Only just now have we seen some pushback. I hope it is not too late.

Like the doctors or restaurants or public safety it just seems like the product of the changes is worse than what came before. To some extent, we must accept that this is a common perception held by seniors and looking back is common to all generations. Still, I know that in earlier days, our streets were safer and the kids in our schools learned to read. We were doing something right in those days and we need to return to those values and practices at some level.

Even RSPOA is subject to changes. We have attempted to grow the organization by recruiting membership and improving our meetings to provide better lunches and interesting speakers. As we moved from simple meetings to luncheon meetings, our purpose of encouraging the socialization of members has improved. We have gotten involved with the legislators to seek protection for our members and pensions. For us, these years of change have been

to suspects tell ,without any feelings, how they killed a person was tough. In one statement, a suspect said he killed his girlfriend and baby daughter, that she was holding, because "it wasn't a boy." There was also a 911 call, where I could hear person in the background being killed. While the subject matter of work was not happy, I thoroughly enjoyed working in Homicide. Over the years, I worked with great men and women.

Memorable Stories? There was a suspect in the interview room and he wouldn't talk. I was told that when the door opened, to just say, " that's him!" When I did that, the suspect confessed! Then there was a woman with mental issues who wouldn't leave our receptionist alone. I came out and, told her she had to leave and she refused. She believed the jail served people burgers on Fridays. I told her I was calling the police to take her to jail and I faked a call. I said you know today is Friday and they are serving people burgers. She fled. They threw me two surprise birthday parties and I almost blew one when I called in sick for the day! So many great memories.

Best Bosses? Sergeants Ivan Beeson, Dave Ritter, Gerry Yates, Don Cameron, Gary Nelson, Ed Streidinger, Lt. Ernie Bisset, John Gray, George Marberg, Emmett Kelsie, Mike Kebba, Capt Mike Slessman, Larry Farrar, and many more! Most treated me as a person and not " just a civilian." I felt respected.

Best Chief? In my personal opinion, the best chief was Kerlikowski. No ego and seemed to be for the men and women under his command.

Anything you would have done differently? Retired sooner than I did!

In Retirement? I had great plans about what I was going to do when I retired. Unfortunately I didn't get to them, except for going to the Oregon Coast for vacations. I just enjoyed life day to day, went to Golden Gardens daily and maybe had lunch or breakfast at a favorite restaurant. This year though has been very trying. On the night of January 30th, I fell as I was going inside. I had one leg out the door and my other leg tucked under me inside. I apparently developed severe hypothermia and kidney failure. My darling sweet dog, Willow, detected something was wrong and ran up and down my side yard barking. A neighbor knew I don't let her bark like that and figured something was wrong. I was found that night. I was told if Willow hadn't alerted my neighbor, I would have not have made it another hour, My own Lassie, saving Timmy from the well. I have been in a facility doing physical therapy, working on my walking. The worst part is I miss Willow and being at home. Sadly, my wonderful little cat, Pickles, got sick at the end of March and passed away.

Editor: Thank you Ila for this interview and thank you for your service. We all wish you a speedy recovery.

LAST CALL FOR TICKET RESERVATIONS FOR THE RETIRED OFFICER'S BANQUET

79th Annual Retired Officer's Banquet is Wednesday, September 20th.

Location: The SPAA Range Pavilion

Doors Open at 4:30pm!

Last Date to Reserve a Ticket is Monday, September 11.

NO TICKETS AT THE DOOR!

To reserve a ticket, call John Nordlund at 206-465-6252 or Nick Bulpin 206-919-6425

RSPOA Members with current dues, your ticket is FREE!

Guests and Non-RSPOA members, tickets are \$35 each.

FREE SHUTTLE FROM THE NORTHEAST: Call Eric Michl to reserve your seat 206-799-6536

FROM THE PENSION OFFICE

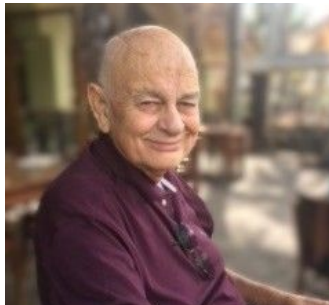
1. The Board Trustee election was held in June 2023 and the ballots have been counted. John Nordlund ran unopposed and received 230 votes, securing the Board Trustee position through May 2025.
2. The 79th Annual Retired Officer's Banquet will be held on Wednesday, September 20, 2023. The Doors & Bar open at 4:30 pm; Buffet opens at 6:15 pm. The event will take place at the SPAA Range Pavilion, 10030 East Marginal Way S, Tukwila, WA 98168. The cost: \$35 for guests, active officers and non-RSPOA members; FREE to RSPOA Members with current dues. Do NOT delay in getting your ticket reservations, they are required, and no tickets will be sold at the door! Ensure your spot is reserved by contacting either John Nordlund at 206-465-6252 jkenneth2909@gmail.com or Nick Bulpin at 206-919-6425 bulpin@comcast.net
3. Reimbursements for out-of-pocket expenses. Please remember that the US Mail is taking longer to arrive than normal. If you send in a UMR Simple Reimbursement Request, please make sure you are using the correct Simple Reimbursement Request Form. The only address UMR uses is their PO Box: UMR, Attn: Plan Advisor Team for Police Pension, PO BOX 546, Bothell, WA 98041. You can also fax your request to UMR at 1-866-859-1112. Always keep a copy for your file! *UMR is experiencing staffing shortages, like everyone else. Please be patient when calling and let Jan know if your issue is not resolved. Be sure to note the name of the person you spoke with as well as the date and time of your call. This is helpful if we need to follow up on your issue.
4. There are life events that often require retirees to verify their monthly retirement income, they may include buying or re-fi of a home mortgage, estate planning and/or Senior housing. As a reminder, if you are looking for an income verification letter for your state pension, you can obtain those directly from your DRS Account. If you don't have a DRS account, you can register one at WWW.DRS.WA.GOV. The DRS income verification letter does not include any escalator pay (city check) that you may receive. For an income verification letter regarding your city check, you can contact Lisa Porter at 206-256-5127 or lisa.porter@seattle.gov.



Last Ring



William Fenkner #2482, Retired Seattle Police Patrol Sergeant, passed away on March 4, 2023, at 89 years of age. Hired: 5-10-65, Class #49, Assignments: Patrol, Traffic Motorcycles & Motorcycle Drill Team, 1971 promoted to Detective, Juvenile Unit, 1980 promoted to Sergeant, Patrol West Precinct, Police Pension Board, Sergeant's Association. Retired: 9-22-93 after 28 years of service. Bill is survived by his wife of 31 years, Christine; brothers Al and Donald; sister Kathleen; daughters Laurie and Lisa; stepson Eric; nine grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.



Kenneth Baker #2325, Retired Seattle Police Officer, passed away on April 3, 2023, at 83 years of age. Hired: 3-4-63, Class #47, Assignments: Patrol, 1969 suffered a career ending injury attempting to arrest suspects off-duty at a drive in. Retired: 12-6-72 after 9 years of service. Ken is predeceased by his son Scott and is survived by his wife Nancy, son Jason, daughter Lisa, and four grandchildren.



For Complete Obituaries, go to:
www.rspoa.net

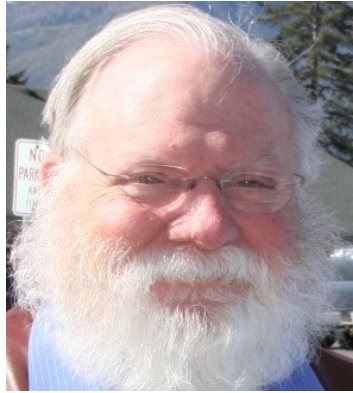


Last Ring



David Severance

#2381, Retired Seattle Police Patrol Officer passed away on April 11, 2023, at 79 years of age. Hired as Police Cadet: 12-16-63, Hired as Patrolman: 7-20-66. Class#51. Assignments: Patrol, Academy Defensive Tactics Instructor. Retired: 3-



1-94 after 30 years of service. Dave was predeceased by his brother, Mike #2866. He is survived by his twin sister Lynn, his children Tracy, Kelly, and David as well as four Grandchildren.

Al Rasmussen #1608, Retired Seattle Police Lieutenant, passed away on April 27, 2023, at ninety-four

years of age. Hired: 1-3-55, Class #34. Assignments: Patrol Georgetown Pct, Traffic, Detective Auto Theft, Juvenile, Advanced Training Unit, Marching Drill Team. Retired: 8-14-85 after 30 years of service. In 2017, his wife of 69 years, Ann, passed away. Al is survived by his daughter Virginia, son James and two granddaughters.



Linda Murphy, wife of deceased retired Seattle Police Lieutenant Pat Murphy #1653, passed away on July 26, 2023, at the age of 79.

Friends:

Marian Asaba, retired Seattle Police Chief's Secretary passed away on April 11, 2023, at 88 years of age.

And Until We Meet Again, May God Hold You in The Palm Of His Hand.



Spouses:

Billy Vinup, wife of deceased retired Seattle Police Officer Charles Vinup #1125, passed away on June 10, 2023, at the age of 94.

Helen Allen, wife of deceased retired Seattle Police patrol officer Harold Allen #1643, passed away on June 27, 2023, at the age of 88.

Betty McFarlane, wife of deceased retired Seattle Police Officer Richard McFarlane #1646, passed away on July 19, 2023, at the age of 94.

Polly Haley, wife of deceased retired Seattle Police Officer Dennis Haley #432, passed away on July 29, 2023, at the age of 99.



generally good. Along the way, we have made adjustments and some mistakes. We have kept our meeting luncheon costs at ten dollars—first with a free drink, then with no drink. We have worked to keep it at that price, even as the food service grew to exceed that cost. Recently, we have been challenged by changes. The Nile changed caterers and fee structures and we have sought out new venues and moved to the Shoreline Elks. Both the Nile and the Elks have been most gracious and have stretched to provide meeting rooms and food in our price range. That is economically no longer possible. Anyone who occasionally goes out to lunch knows that twenty dollars per person is seldom enough. We are challenged to find a fee level that will not decrease attendance, but will meet the costs we are now seeing. While we have a strong treasury, a significant proportion of that is held in reserve to provide legal services to protect our pensions. Over the years, some of that money has gone to subsidize luncheon and annual banquet costs. We have been blessed with bequests and donations from time to time and we are able to meet the costs. Inflation is quickly catching up with us and actually, outpacing us. In like manor, the Relief Association is also facing the impact of changes. Their membership has declined and their costs have increased. Last year was the first year that they stepped back from the lead for the Annual Retired Officers Banquet. They have continued to provide generous financial support, but RSPOA has assumed production duties and underwrites the expenses. Rich and Kevin O'Neill have put together this year's event with help from Nick Bulpin and John Nordlund. This year we have returned to the Range. Putting this together has been a big job. Be sure to thank them.

I started this article as a diatribe against the impact of change. The destruction of Seattle and the impact of inflation on our luncheons are all a part of the cascading impact of change. Let us hope we can find the strength to change back when needed and to recognize the positive element where they are present.

It won't happen, but grumpy old me would still prefer to turn the clock back.

War Stories

By Detective Cloyd Steiger, SPD Retired, #4313

In 1991, I was working as a precinct detective at the East Precinct of the Seattle Police Department. I was assigned a stalking case. A man had broken into the home of Ann Wilson of the musical group Heart, while she was out of town. She lived on Interlaken Avenue, near the Montlake area of Seattle.

He stayed in her house for several days, throwing several things including expensive clothing, out into her yard. The sprinkler system came on ruining everything.

Her assistant went to the house and saw what had happened. He called the police. The patrol officers arrived and arrested the guy. I went to the house and interviewed the assistant. I then went to the King County Jail to interview the suspect. He was about 5'4" and slim. He had long wild hair and a full beard with crazy eyes. He reminded me of Charlie Manson.

"I'm Nancy Wilson's son," he claimed, referring to Ann's sister, also a member of Heart. He seemed delusional as he described his attempt to contact her.

I interviewed both Ann and Nancy Wilson about this guy. Neither had any idea who he was. Nancy told me how old she was: eleven years older than the suspect.

I wrote my report. Because of his appearance, I listed his AKA as Charlie Manson.

He was charged with Burglary and Stalking. He pled guilty.

Several years later, I was working in Homicide.

I went to a scene at the Seattle Center. An elderly woman had been walking on the center grounds when a male ran up behind her and rammed her with his shoulder. She flew into a wall, striking her head. She was killed.

Patrol had detained the suspect.

It was the same guy who'd stalked Ann Wilson.

Small world.

I was in my office and ran his name in my computer. His record showed an AKA as Charlie Manson.

I have no idea where that came from.

Best Bosses? Herb Swindler, Ron Noble, John Mason, Mike Nolan, Tom Byers and John Hayes. All were pleasant to work with and very fair to me and all of the officers.

Best Chief of Police ? Chief Tielsch and Patrick Fitzsimons. Both stood up for the officers and helped in any way they could.

Anything you would have done differently in your career? I would not have done anything differently.

In Retirement?

I retired four years ago and have stayed living on Vashon Island. I just love our place. Because of Covid, I have not done any traveling. I hope to buy a trailer or motor home soon and do some traveling.

Editor: Thank you for this interview. As someone who started my career in the Georgetown Precinct in 1980, it didn't take me long, to figure out that it was Penny who really kept everything running smoothly. Thank you for your service!



Penny started her career in the old Georgetown Precinct in 1972.



Penny served for 46 years, retiring out of the current South Precinct.

From the Police Museum

By Officer Jim Ritter, SPD Retired, #4710,
President: Seattle Metropolitan Police Museum



For all of the former patrol wagon drivers out there, be glad that you weren't employed 124 years ago. The photo shown here was taken in 1900 in front of the old "Katzenjammer Castle", otherwise known as police headquarters.

The old wooden wagon was used to transport officers to and from their beats, respond to emergency situations, transport prisoners to jail, and served as the city's ambulance.

The large doors face what is now Third Avenue, south of the current King County Courthouse, and housed the wagon and stables.

The horses, Billy & Nig were led by SPD Patrol Driver John Weedon, grandfather of SPD Officer Garth Weedon (deceased). When Garth and I worked out of the East Precinct in the 1980's, he would often share stories with me regarding his grandfather's era.

Many thanks to the multiple generations of Weedons who proudly served the SPD for over nine decades.

If you have any historical SPD artifacts, photos, documents, or uniform items you would like to share, sell, or donate to the Police Museum, please contact me at jamesSritter@gmail.com, or at #206-949-9143.

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Where Are They Now?

Vinette Tichi Serial #4980

Date of Hire: 3-2-81 Class # 134 Date of Retirement: 6-5-2005

What were some of your memorable SPD assignments and why?

I loved working in patrol for ten years. Working all precincts gave me insight on a diverse population in Seattle. I came on the department at the age of 32. I wasn't naive to the ways of the world, social and cultural situations. The best part was going home at night and not stressing about the case load for the next day. When I went to detectives in the Special Assault Unit, the work was never done. I would come home and worry how I could investigate my old cases at the same time being assigned new ones.

Who were some of your partners and supervisors?

Early on, working with Jodie Higgins was always fun. She had a great sense of humor. I remember going to a domestic disturbance at the Downtowner. The man and woman were screaming, the music was full blast. Jodie started dancing and I followed along. Soon, the couple stopped arguing and started yelling at us to get out! We got out of there and cleared the call! I have many memories of the partners I worked with. I pretty much liked all my supervisors. I was treated fairly in my career and was judged by my work ethic and not my gender.

Who was your favorite police Chief and why?

I would definitely say Chief Fitzsimons. I was the Public Information Officer for three years. This was my only contact working closely with a Chief. I got to know him personally and knew how much he really cared about the front line officers. He had a brisk and aloof persona on the outside, but I was shown another side of him. There were many days he struggled with discipline situations that were fair without destroying an officer's career.

What do you miss most about SPD?

I really miss the day to day conversations, gossip and friendships with officers I worked with.

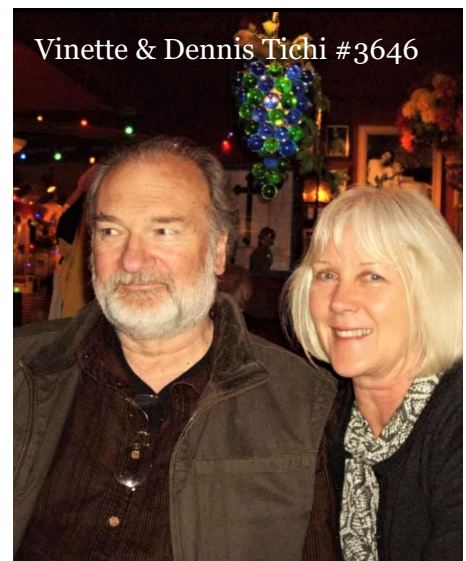
LIFE AFTER SPD:

What did you do, where do you live?

I live in Woodinville, WA for the past 35 years. Dennis and I have ten acres with a quarter acre pond. In the past, we have raised cows, pigs, chickens and 17 peacocks! Long story on the peacocks. Let's just say they multiply fast. Currently, we just have a naughty yellow lab named Treeva. At any given time, we see deer, bears and bobcats roaming around our property. There is lots of work to do, but we pace it out with other activities.

Tell us about your family?

Dennis Tichi and I got married in 1988. We both worked patrol in Queen Sector for five years before we even started dating. He had a son and



daughter and I had a daughter before we got together. We have a great blended family with several grandchildren.



Hobbies and Activities?

I'm pretty active still, I walk everyday with a group of women, swim and bike several times a week. I usually do a triathlon a couple times a year with retired Officer Michele Vallor. We love to go out for burgers and beers the night before. Pre-race fuel, it works! On August 5th I participated in the Lake Tye Sprint Triathlon. I placed 2nd in my age group. I recently joined Ladies Golf League at Echo Falls Golf Club. Retired Lt Christy Batdorf Robbins is in the league too. I love golf and hope I can play for many years to come. Dennis and I have an RV and do several camping trips a year. We also have done a few Alaska Cruises.



Vinette with Retired SPD Michele Vallor #4980

I don't miss the job but many of the great friends I have worked with over the years. The current officers certainly have a challenging job working in Seattle. There is little appreciation and respect from the department and city government. I pray for their safety often. With that, I'll end with a favorite quote of mine, not sure of the author: "When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive, to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love"

RAP SUMMER PICNIC

On Thursday, August 10th, a nice crowd of retired and active officers gathered at the SPAA Range outdoor picnic area for the annual RAP Summer Picnic. A good time had by all!

Photos by John Nordlund



Pepper Prahmus setting things up



Time to eat!



Cigar Time



Let the games begin!



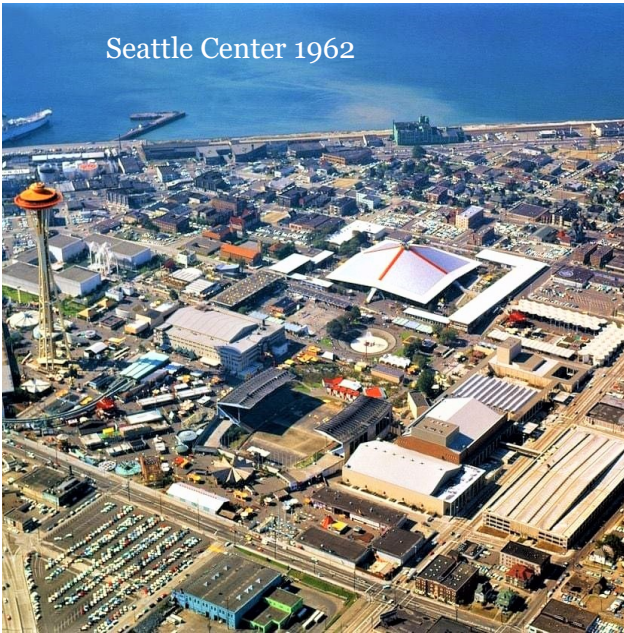
Game Concentration



Great Conversation with friends



Seattle Center 1962



Picture Quiz

Can you guess who these two Sergeants are who are taking a break during Seafair Hydro races? Answer is at the bottom, upside down.



RSPOA CALENDAR

Retired Banquet Sept 20 4:30pm SPAA Range

Monthly Meeting Oct 11 11:30 Shoreline Elks
(Guest Speaker: Cole Langdon, Lynnwood Chief of Police)

Monthly Meeting Nov 8 1130 Shoreline Elks
(Guest Speaker: Dave Reichert)

RAP meets every Thursday at the Nile, 11am.

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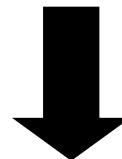
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Picture Quiz Answer



Motor Sergeants Jack Hanson #2869 and Jules Werner #3276



Fallen SPD Officers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the months of August and September.



AUGUST

- Harold E.S. Williams 8-21-1931**
- Joselito A. Barber 8-13-2006**

SEPTEMBER

- Albert C. Shaneman 9-14-1913**
- Matthias H. Rude 9-24-1910**
- Edwin Wilson 9-24-1919**
- Robert L. Litsey 9-25-1924**
- Lyle F. Tracy 9-8-1928**
- Emory R. Sherard 9-15-1928**
- Eugene W. Perry 9-12-1930**
- Walter G. Cottle 9-29-1930**
- Ralph H. Ahner 9-13-1932**
- David P. Richards 9-1-1967**
- Dorian L. Halvorson 9-24-1976**

Editor's Corner

**By Rich O'Neill
SPD Retired #4451**

Have you made your reservation to attend the 79th Annual Retired Seattle Police Officer's Banquet? It will be held on Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at the SPAA Range Pavilion! The doors open at 4:30pm (along with the bar!) The delicious meal will be served, buffet style, at around 6:15pm. As the years roll by, it is more important than ever to take the opportunity to come together and see old friends. There will be door prizes \$\$\$\$, live entertainment and other new things on the program this year. Don't wait. The deadline to reserve your ticket is September 11. Don't wait! **No tickets will be sold at the door!** There is even a FREE shuttle for those who live in the north end. Call Eric Michl to reserve your seat on the shuttle which will depart North Seattle Church, 2150 N 122nd St at about 3:30pm on September 20th. Eric can be reached at 206-799-6536. Space is limited.

On September 11, 2001 our country was attacked by terrorists. We all can remember where we were when we heard the shocking news. The country united and both political parties even held hands on the Capitol steps and sang God Bless America! Of course, that spirit of cooperation and oneness didn't last very long, but it was awesome to witness it when it happened. Twenty-two years later, our country is bitterly divided. A year from now, we will be electing a President. We will also be electing a new Governor for our state. Most polls show that the overwhelming majority of Americans feel the country is headed in the wrong direction. Is there someone who can rise above the political rancor and unite people over common ground? Is there someone who doesn't carry so much "drama baggage?" Is there someone with common sense and who can speak intelligently without reading from a teleprompter?

President John F. Kennedy once said, "Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer! Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past-let us accept our own responsibility for the future!"

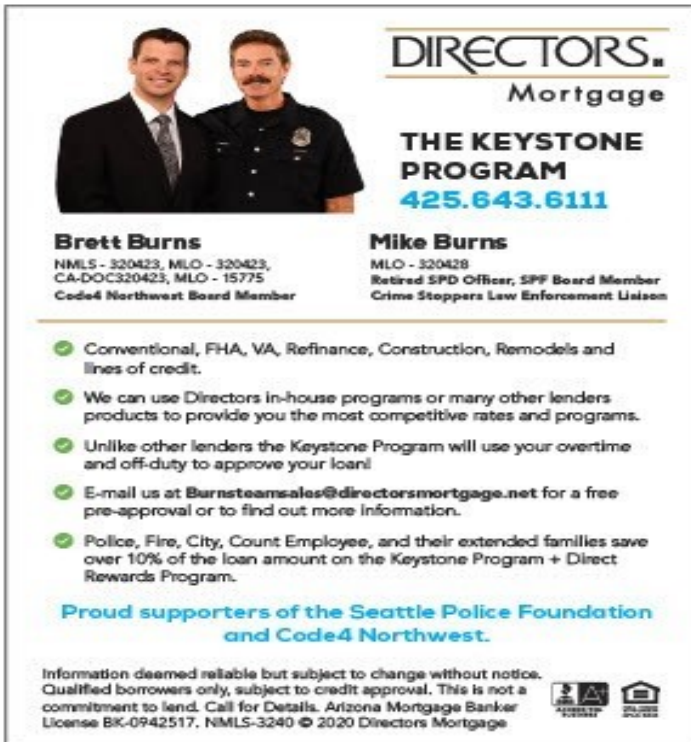
I don't expect both sides to hold hands and sing patriotic songs, but we certainly can't continue on the road we are on. Let's hope voters make the right choice!

I hope to see you all at the banquet on September 20th.

RSPOA

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