



# The Call Box



Official Publication of the Retired Seattle Police Officers Association

**May 2025 Volume 6, Issue 3**

## RETIRED CAPTAIN NEIL LOW

**HIRED: Cadet 7-31-68, Officer: 7-17-71, Class #69, RETIRED: 7-31-18**

### *Looking Back on Fifty Years in Policing!*

**Q. Neil, where did you grow up and what did you do before joining the SPD?** I was born on the mean streets of Ballard in the late 1940s. We moved to North Fremont in '51, and then to the Shoreline area in '52. I went to St. Luke's School and then St. Edward's Seminary (two-years) before figuring out the importance of girls in my life. I was recruited out of Shoreline Community College to become a police cadet in 1968.

**Q. What made you want to be a police officer?** I was impressed with the professionalism of Deputy Sheriff Dan Nolan, who went to our church and dealt with several kids I knew. He was a great role model, and later, he worked an off-duty gig for me at the Kingdome – where I got to thank him personally for his influence on my life and career.

**Q. When you were hired, did you go to the academy right away?** I went to Vietnam as a police cadet, but I had already taken the police officer's exam. When my Navy time was up, the department assigned me directly to the street. It was six months later before I went to class.

**Q. Where was the academy held and who were some of your classmates?** I received the 3-day police orientation at Providence Heights in Issaquah, but then my academy was held in the incredibly awful portables at the Police Range. Classes were frequently interrupted by the take-off and landing of big planes. I commuted from the Green Lake area with Dennis Bradley, Bob Hoff, and Dennis Tichi. Others in the class were Bruce Williams, Walt Manning, Bob Condit, Bruce Pearson (short career), Ron Rispoli, Don Thompson, who died young, and Marcus Taylor. Rusty Campbell trained us with the help of Meryl Carner, Al Citron, and Romero Yumul. Ken Crow and John Gray took turns as our FTOs.



**CLASS #69 Jan 24-June 23, 1972**

Top: (L-R), D. Tichi, **N. Low**, D. Thompson, D. Rogge, B. Larsen, R. Rispoli, R. Williams, Center : K. Crow (Tac Ofc), M. Taylor, D. Bradley, W. Maning, R. Hoff, J. Van De Bogart, G. Vasin (UW), H. Kelly, J. Gray (Tac Ofc.) Bottom: F. Shelling (Bellingham), T. Homad, (Brier), B. Pearson, R. Condit, K. Alum (UW), P. Petroulis (UW), C. Tyron (UW)

# The Call Box



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## President's Message

By John Nordlund, President, RSPOA



Earlier this week I was able to set aside my concerns about what the State Legislature intends to do with the LEOFF 1 pension, to play in the golf association's annual opening day Spring Scramble. This year the tourney was held in Auburn. Thanks to Jeremy Farkas for holding the Scramble on a day he knew would be warm and sunny. And many thanks to Jeremy for all his insightful work in continuing to make the police golf association successful. Now back to the number one concern for me and all retirees. Senate bill 5085 and House bill 2034. By the time the Call Box is received, the legislature will have adjourned, or they might very well be trying to pass a budget in a special session. SB-5085 rests in a House committee. SHB-2034 is the real problem, a total rewrite of LEOFF 1. SB-5085 will probably die as the legislature cannot have two competing bills that have the same purpose of tearing about the LEOFF 1 pension system. Will SHB-2034 pass the legislature and be signed into law by Governor Ferguson? Hopefully all your calls and emails sent to your district representatives opposing SHB-2034 had the desired effect. The RSPOA has already joined forces with the retired state firefighters by retaining The Wagner Law Group to offer us legal advice in challenging any change to the LEOFF 1 pension. If the state can access surplus monies in LEOFF 1 to help balance the budget, it is likely that changes to LEOFF 2 will be coming. Who owns the 2-to-3-billion-dollar pension surplus? The state thinks it is their money. But in 2022 the legislature unanimously passed SSB-5791 giving all of us at least \$30,000 from the pension surplus fund. Maybe the surplus belongs to us retirees. According to Wagner, our best avenue in challenging changes to LEOFF 1 lies in the I.R.S. Code under the exclusive benefit rule. The Wagner attorneys tell us that the result of all the firings, the I.R.S. is in a state of flux. Any ruling for or against us is years down the road. Just getting the legal opinion cost \$27,500. That amount was split between us and the firefighters. Any litigation is going to cost thousands of dollars. So, if a legal fund donation request is sent, please generously contribute.



Bruce Wind



Scott Kawahara

Jeremy Farkas

### Spring Scramble Winners



**Q. After the academy what were some of your first assignments?** I went right back to third watch at the Central Precinct. I worked both East and West, focusing mostly on Queen Sector with a veteran crew of great guys. I think Jim Sleeth, Joe Bouffiou, Dick Schweitzer and I might be the only survivors from that era. We loved working for Herb Johnson.

**Q. Walk us through your career with your assignments and promotions.** Herb Johnson asked me to work street vice as a patrol officer, when Charlie Royer became Mayor and shook things up. I ended up being quite good at it and stayed there for two years, working for Al Sorenson. Tim Dillon and Walt Furler joined us. My partner, Mike Miller, and I rotated back to patrol, working George 2. After a stretch there I applied for detectives and landed in Juvenile, which I worked for about five years with Dick Rovig, Bob Vane, Al Citron, Tom Fitzgerald, Bob Brown, Phil Gaylord, and Tommy Helms. While there, I got tapped to work the Wah Mee Task Force, which protected Wai Chinn, the lone survivor of the China Town Massacre. I promoted to Detective/Sergeant and worked in Internal Investigations for two years, and then I transferred to the Gang Unit, which I had designed for Major Herb Johnson while a Juvenile detective. I went to East Precinct to work for Captain John Pirak, one of several stints I had working for him. I transferred to the Advanced Training Unit for four months before making lieutenant. Then, Harv Ferguson had me join him in the South Precinct as a Watch Commander until I was drafted back to the East Precinct as the Operations Lieutenant. From there, I went to the North Precinct, before I was pulled back into Juvenile as the unit commander. From Juvenile, I went to the Sexual Assault Unit and was then promoted to captain to run the entire unit, which included Domestic Violence and handling registered sex offenders who couldn't be trusted to register as they'd promised. Before becoming a captain, I returned to the University of Washington, where I wrote for the school paper, The Commons, while studying creative writing and storytelling. I graduated cum laude and became a School Trustee for two years, repping it at events with alumni who had become celebrities and/or politicians. Big surprise: My Senior Thesis was the "Seattle Police Department's Response to Domestic Violence." I was named a UW Distinguished Alumnus in 2018.



As Captain, I commanded (sometimes more than once) Metro and Homeland Security; Homicide, Robbery, Fugitive, and Assault; Advanced Training; Internal Investigations; Ethics ; Special Planning; Metro which included SWAT, Horse Patrol, K-9; the Night Commander (first permanent full-time position) for five years, and then the Night Commander again, my final two-years before retiring, for a total of seven in that position. I loved being the boss at night more than any of the other slots I commanded. I worked 4 x 10s, had far fewer meetings, and didn't have to do employee reviews – unless I saw a need.

I had been planning to retire on March 31, 2018, which would have been just shy of fifty years so that Arnie McGinnis could continue to hold onto the perfect record. But then Jim Ritter told me there had been an officer long ago who had served fifty-four years or more. Since I had turned in my papers and said my "goodbyes" – and the Chief needed to double-bunk my office with other captains, I had a medical procedure performed that I had been delaying. So, I burnt my excess time.

In the final months before I retired Communications called my number after my shift to inform me that "Greenwood Has Just Exploded!!! They can see the flames in Bellevue!" Me in my downtown apartment: "Tell me more; I haven't gone to bed yet." A whole block and more in the 8400 block of Greenwood had gone the way of a huge explosion. 9-1-1 was taking calls from miles away regarding the blast. I told Radio to advise the On-call Duty Commander – but to also tell them I would be responding – since I knew it would take anyone else hours to get there, which would be long after our most important role in this situation needed to be addressed. "Let them get their sleep; I'll get mine when this is done."

As I neared the gas explosion scene, I found broken shop windows blocks away from the blast sight. SPD had officers in all the right places for containment and traffic control, so we were good. I approached FIRE's Command Post and prepared to liaise with several high-level commanders. Battalion Chief Gordon Vickery, Jr., saw me approach, so he stepped up to greet me. Between us, we figured we had over 104 years of City service, and we couldn't help but laugh about it. "Why are you here?" he asked; and after I told him I was awake and lived sort of nearby, he told me he lived nearby and heard the blast. "C'mon, you just wanted to see what was going on!" I said. This applied to both of us. He introduced me to several other battalion chiefs on the scene, leading off with my 50-year SPD tenure. None of them could figure out why we both were still on the job, wanting to help in some way.

**Q. Who were some of your partners and supervisors?** My partners, almost in order, were: John Guich and Steve Sundstrom before the academy, and then Al Gustin and Dick Schweitzer after the academy; Ross Carmen teamed up with me until I went into Street Vice with Mike Miller, where we worked closely with Walt Furler and Tim Dillon. In detectives, I partnered with Dick Rovig, Al Citron, and Debbie Allen. My supervisors included Denny Zimmisky and Sam Meln before the academy, and Jim Williams and Herb Johnson afterward. In Street Vice, I worked for Al Sorensen and then Pat Moriarty, when I returned to Patrol. Since Pat and I were both former seminarians and sailors, I got along with him very well. I used to love catching him near the end of the shift and talking about whatever came up. He had a double doctorate (English Lit and Psychology), so he loved to talk as much as I did. He had great memories and stories to share about the old days when his dad walked a beat.

**Q. Which supervisors did you enjoy the best and why?** Paul Knapp was a brand-new sergeant who im-

# FROM THE PENSION OFFICE

BY STEPHANIE COLEMAN, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

**New Prescription Plan:** We notified all LEOFF1 members, via a separate white envelope in your reporting forms marked in red as URGENT, of an upcoming change regarding your prescription drug coverage. Over the next few months, we will transition to a new Prescription Drug Plan called an Employer Group Waiver Plan (EGWP, pronounced “Egg-Whip”). This transition will be seamless, as the Medicare Part D plan will be managed through our office with Optum, and these changes will take place behind the scenes without affecting your benefits or how you access your prescriptions.

## Why This Change Is Happening

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 gave Medicare the ability to negotiate drug prices, reducing costs for prescription medications. By transitioning to an EGWP, our plan can take advantage of these savings, leading to lower overall costs while maintaining the same level of benefits for you.

## What This Means for You

Your prescription benefits remain the same. You will continue to have coverage for all medically necessary prescriptions as prescribed by your doctor.

You will receive a new UMR/Optum Rx card in mid-June. This card will replace your current one and should be used starting July 1, 2025. Make sure to update your pharmacy with this new information.

You will receive several letters from Optum. Medicare requires these letters to be sent, but you do not need to take any action. Some letters may mention "opting in" or "opting out"—please ignore all of these notices. If any action is needed from you, we will contact you directly.

**The DRS LEOFF1 COLA percentage for 2025** is 3.61%, effective April 1, 2025. You will have seen this change on your DRS LEOFF1 April 30 paycheck. Remember: Those retired LEOFF1 members who have dual entitlements that are receiving an “excess benefit” or monthly check from the City of Seattle Police Pension Fund are reminded that your excess benefit will decrease proportionately when your State DRS LEOFF1 COLA increase takes effect. There is no “excess benefit” increase at this time, as both SPOG and SPMA are in negotiations. When we hear anything about a contract, we will notify you. If you have questions, contact Lisa at 206-256-5127.

**The 2025 Reporting Forms** have been mailed out! If you have not received yours, please contact Cassidy at 206-684-3375 or [policepension@seattle.gov](mailto:policepension@seattle.gov) Help us stay in 100% compliance with the State Auditor by completing these forms and returning them to us as soon as possible!

**Change of address information.** Please contact Lisa at 206-256-5127 or email her [lisa.porter@seattle.gov](mailto:lisa.porter@seattle.gov)

**\*\*Notice: Seattle Police Pension Board Nomination Period Open\*\*** The nomination period for one elected Trustee position on the Seattle Police Pension Board is now open until May 22, 2025. The term runs from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2028. Eligible candidates are active or retired sworn members of the Seattle Police Department classified as LEOFF 1 or Pre-LEOFF. Candidates must commit to attending meetings and handling fiduciary responsibilities, with no compensation provided. Nomination forms have been mailed to all LEOFF 1 members. If you need one, please contact the Pension Office at 206-348-8018, by fax at 206-470-6900, or via email at [stephanie.coleman@seattle.gov](mailto:stephanie.coleman@seattle.gov). Forms must be endorsed by five members and submitted by 3:30 p.m. on May 22, 2025. Elections will be held via U.S. Mail from June 2 to June 26, 2025, and all ballots must be returned by Thursday, June 26, 2025. Ballots will be mailed to you by June 2nd.

**Remaining LEOSA Dates for 2025:** May 23, June 16, August 4, September 15, October 6, November 14, December 9. All are at 1000 hours and 1400 hours. To schedule your shoot time please contact Emily White in SPD HR at 206-684-5454 or [Emily.white@seattle.gov](mailto:Emily.white@seattle.gov) or you may not be able to shoot.

## Retiree Groups & Gatherings

Every Thursday: RAP, 11am at The Nile

Every 2nd Thursday of Each Month: RSPOA Luncheon Meetings 11:30 at Nile

Every Monday Morning: Coffee Group 9:30am Plum Delicious 3212 NE Sunset Blvd Renton

Every Thursday at SPAA Range Pavilion, 11:30am Cigars, Lunch, Libations

SERG South Enders Retiree Group: Contact Bruce Wind [bawind@comcast.net](mailto:bawind@comcast.net)

SPD Women's Alliance: [www.spwalliance.org](http://www.spwalliance.org) (sworn active & retired women)



## LAST RING



**Timothy Hubbard #2925**, retired Seattle Police Detective, passed away on August 4, 2024 at seventy-seven years of age. Hired: 6-11-68, Class #58, Assignments: Patrol, Helicopter Observer, Pioneer Square Walking Beats, 1981 promoted to Detective, Anti-Fencing Unit, Narcotics, DEA Task Force, SEAFAT. Retired: 6-11-96 after 28 years of service. Tim is survived by his devoted wife, Sandy, with whom he shared 19 beautiful years, as well as his son David and daughter-in-law Nicole, and his cherished grandchildren, Austin and Riley.



### Legal Beneficiaries:

**Denise Thomas**, widow of retired Seattle Police Officer Richard Thomas #2075, passed away on March 12th at eighty-five years of age.

### Spouses:

Marlene Brice, wife of retired Seattle Police Sergeant Orville "Riley" Brice #1826, passed away on March 12, 2025 at the age of 90.

Until We Meet Again, May God Hold You in the Palm of His Hand!

For complete obituaries please go to [www.rspoa.net](http://www.rspoa.net).

**A BETTER  
ROOFING  
COMPANY**

4126 Airport Way S.  
Seattle, WA 98108

**206-935-1575**

**Christian MacMillan**

CONT. LIC. # BETTERC052DT  
[abr@abetterroofing.com](mailto:abr@abetterroofing.com)

## Recent Deaths

Last Ring for each of these officers will be coming soon. Please contact Stephanie Coleman with information on these officers. 206-256-5128

**Marty White #3956**, February 15, 2025.

**Paul Knapp #2160**, February 23, 2025.

**Douglas Fritschy #2033**, March 20, 2025.

**Leroy Habryle #2199**, March 23, 2025.

**Ronald Schimke #2315**, March 29, 2025.

**Neil Swenson #2339**, March 29, 2025.

**Alfred Fenkner #2873**, April 11, 2025.

**Robert Fabry #1926**, March 29, 2025.

**Dave Emerick #4941**, April 10th, 2025.

**Gary Kuenzi #4406**, April 12, 2025.

## 81st ANNUAL RETIRED OFFICERS' BANQUET



*"Keep the Tradition Going!"*

**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20, 2025**

**AT THE RANGE PAVILION**

**\*Doors will open at 3pm\***

**\*\*New Reservation Procedure will open soon using E-Invite & Zelle!\*\***

**OVER 400 ATTENDED LAST YEAR**

**This year we will highlight and honor the many officers who served on the**

**SPD Motorcycle Drill Team!**



**Helpers Needed: contact Kevin (206) 218-8920 or Rich O'Neill (206) 992-9516**



pressed me with his knowledge of how things worked. Herb Johnson exemplified class and integrity. Pat Moriarty and his family had a police history, and he loved to tell stories and jokes. Jim Fletcher was quietly confident and trusted me to write a good report. Harv Ferguson was quiet and competent, and John Pirak was well-regarded as "John the Good." At higher levels I enjoyed working for Director Sam Pailca, Chief Pat Fitzsimons, Gil Kerlikowske, Kathy O'Toole, and Carmen Best. I've also quoted Norm Stamper directly in my legal consulting work, where the concerned city needed a solid base to understand the broader concept of Community Policing. I remain convinced that these are all quality people we were lucky to have on our department.

**Q. What was your favorite rank and why?** I loved being a Captain because of the autonomy you realize at that level. More is expected of you, but you can affect more people in a positive way.

**Q. You worked for many police chiefs. Who was your favorite and why?** This is such a difficult question because I liked and learned from them all. Slightly off-topic: without knowing who she was at the time, I quoted Gil Kerlikowske's wife, Dr. Anna Lazlo, in my research paper on domestic violence, only to end up sitting next to her at a luncheon. This only added to the aura around Gil and his humanity outside of his police career. Another story I picked up from him came from Alison, one of our police reserves, whose family owned The Four Seas in Chinatown. When Gil and Anna were new in town, they were having dinner there. The Chief overheard a couple nearby talking about their tight finances. Without telling anyone who he was, Gil asked Alison for the couple's tab, and he quietly paid for it – never knowing that Alison was a police reserve and would tell me about it. So that moves Gil up high on my list of great people.



Gil Kerlikowske

**Q. What is the best advice you ever got as a young officer?** Lt. Bob Holter told me to never stay in one place for more than three years. He said that I would no longer be learning anything new; I would only be repeating old lessons. I took that to heart and dared to move and advance. Best advice I gave: I used to meet with the new academy classes when I worked in Internal Investigations. I would tell them that they should find a mentor who they idolize or look up to, so that when they're in a situation that's way over their heads, they can imagine what their mentor might have done. For me, I told them that it was "John Pirak." When I was up against it, like I was during WTO, leading multiple platoons at times on the world stage, I asked myself, "What would John Pirak do here?" I would imagine how he would handle this mess ethically, with class, and then I would do my best to imitate him. After one of these class briefings, a young recruit approached me and said he knew John Pirak and was best friends with his son, Duke. He agreed with me that John was a terrific role model and someone to admire. I've since told this story to John.

**Q. Any memorable calls or cases that you were involved with, that you would like to share?** How about WTO??? I was the Juvenile Lieutenant when WTO came to town. Somehow, I had become very involved in The Greater Puget Sound Domestic Violence Conference that was being held down in Tacoma for two days. I think I was the chair or co-chair. At any rate, I was glad I wasn't involved in WTO, which was scheduled to appear in Seattle in the following days. I received a call from Deputy Chief Harv Ferguson the day I returned to Seattle.

He said he was putting together a platoon of detectives and officers who had otherwise missed the WTO callup. He wanted me to command them and lead them on a "Christmas Beat" through the business district, spreading good cheer and letting people know they were safe. We didn't have any Ninja-turtle riot gear, nor had we participated in much of the briefings and drills. We weren't on the Christmas Beat for more than fifteen minutes when we had to run up Pike Street to the Sheridan Hotel to help out on the day's first HELP THE OFFICER call. After that dustup settled, it was clear that the city would need our small unit to provide security outside of the Sheridan Hotel, which of course, takes up the whole block. I made Det. Steve Macomber and acting sergeant, and had him take half of our troops (not nearly a platoon, more like twelve officers total). He took six to one corner and I took my six to the other. We worked an extremely long Monday dealing with a crowd that far exceeded our ability to make them behave. We were on scene at 0600 and were quickly surrounded by protestors pouring into the streets and filling them. At some point in the morning, we were directed to use the necessary force to open the blocked roadway for buses with delegates to get in and out. We met resistance and used force to accomplish our goals. At one point, I had assistance from SWAT, and a small platoon from the Sheriff's Office joined us for a spell. The hotel reported that rioters were coming through the garage entrance and raising hell inside the hotel, where we had officers assigned. With the Sheriff's help, we swept out that garage ramp, cleared out Sheridan's overflowing entry, and pushed all the protestors/rioters down closer to Pike Street. We received much praise and thanks from the officers trapped inside the Sheridan, who felt like we rescued them. I've never been so proud of my fellow officers than on this day. To me, this was SPD's equivalent of D-Day, and we did our best and then some to protect this city.

WTO with  
Chief  
Stamper

**Q. You are an author and have written many books. Tell us how and when you got involved in writing and do you have a favorite book that you have written?** While in the academy, Dan Oliver had us read a couple of Joe Wambaugh's books. I loved them and wanted to write like Joe. The problem was I didn't have any experiences yet and had been recruited out of college to join the police ranks. I needed experience and more education. My dad died of a sudden heart attack during the 1980s. I was sharing that with Sgt. Al O'Brien over coffee one morning, and he told me that his dad had died in his arms during the late 1940s, down off Denny Way. I asked him if "we" the police had solved it back then. He said, "We, the police, are probably who killed my dad." Me: "Say what?" Al: "It was a different time back then. It had something to do with union troubles. Dad's buddies dropped him on our steps, and he died in my arms with his head caved in." I stewed over what Al had told me for a while, and after I graduated from UW, I decided this would be the topic I would explore. I wanted to capture a young man who becomes a detec-

tive so he can solve his dad's murder. That became **THICK AS THIEVES**, which has been my best seller until recently. I followed **THIEVES** with **SIGN OF THE DRAGON**, which picks right up with a tale that sweeps through Japan Town and Chinatown. I try to stage all my novels in old parts of Seattle to showcase Seattle's rich history and geography, some of which has disappeared. **UNHOLY ALLIANCE** is based on the real death of Charlie Legate, the great-uncle of Penny Legate. His body was discovered inside a locked garage at 13th and South Main. Despite being shot twice in the face, his death was ruled a suicide. I beg to disagree and wrote about it. **UNREASONABLE PERSUASION** is based on a real murder, where Captain Tennant persisted with a Harbor-led search and found the woman's body in a trunk in Lake Union. **DEADLY ATTRACTION** is about a young woman's body found in Green Lake, across from the library. It was a scandalous story that drew national attention. **THEATER OF THE CRIME** involves traveling magic shows that appeared in Seattle theaters, where I showcase local theaters and explore magic tricks of the era that went wrong on stage. There is also a strong connection to the Russian Royal family, which had been murdered two decades before. (This took me the longest to research and it might be my favorite). **WAGES OF SIN** explores a robbery in the Bremerton area that went horribly wrong. Seattle Criminologist Dr. Luke May is called upon to help the Sheriff solve their case. **CRAZY LOVE** is a Quentin Tarantino-type look at Kurt Cobain's suspicious death. I re-imagine what might have happened in a Tarantino world. **CAPTAIN'S LOG** is a compendium of short stories I've written over the years based on actual stories I was involved in handling. So, although it's largely true, there are elements of fiction in every story – some more than others. These were written for entertainment purposes, not to tell my life story. **CAPTAIN'S LOG** will be released shortly, and I'm busy again writing additional shorts for a sequel.



**Q. What did you do when you retired?** I've done some legal consulting with and/or because of Leo Poort. I like the short-term jobs because I'm losing the enthusiasm to punch a clock. Of course, I still write. I have a few projects all moving forward at the same time, but I can do them on my schedule now. My wife and I like to travel while we still can. We've driven across the country three times and have chased the coastline south on a few occasions.

**Q. Tell us about your family?** I dated my wife when I went through the academy fifty-some years ago. She dumped me to become a hippie, while I wanted a police career. She caught up with me a few years ago, during my divorce, and proposed to me – **FINALLY!!!** We've been married seven years. I also have three daughters and three grandkids who live in the area. My middle daughter is getting married this year.

**Q. Any advice that you would give to a young person today thinking about a career in policing?** I would tell anyone thinking about police work that it's a fabulous career with lots of potential for lateral movement. Education is great to have, but since mine was long and continuing – with a few breaks – it means the world to me. I'm so glad I returned to school after being recruited out of it. I would also recommend acquiring a military background. It pays dividends. Those who stayed active in the Guard had a very keen understanding of the Incident Command System, tactics, deployment, teamwork, fitness, and dedication. I was always particularly pleased to learn that someone I was going to have to rely on was a military veteran. (Okay, my brother-in-law is a retired Marine Colonel, so I am particularly impressed with Marines.)

**Q. What do you miss most about being on SPD?** Everybody always says: "I miss the people," and by gum that's true. I was just reminiscing with my wife about this, and I told her that I also miss the people we interact with, like prosecutors, judges, nurses, doctors, city council members, private attorneys, college professors – **AND** – probably the ones most taken for granted: restaurant owners, managers, and wait staff. I'm thinking not only of guys like Gene Willard from Ships but also of several owners of Chinese restaurants in the I.D., whom I would visit as the Night Commander. They would set a table aside for me and have me try food they were making only for their staff, which was very authentic. "Here, try this, Captain! It's very good." I felt very included -- like I was overseas again. I enjoyed their community and gracious hospitality.



Younger Days



Neil finds his first patrol car!

**THANK YOU NEIL FOR THE INTERVIEW**



## War Stories

By Detective Cloyd Steiger, SPD Retired, #4313

In the late 90s, myself, Mike Ciesynski, and Dick Gagnon were working a serial murder case. We arrested Dewayne Lee Harris for the murders of three prostitutes that happened over four months. His M.O. was that he tied them up with their shoelaces.

We eventually went to trial. Jeff Baird and Barb Flemming prosecuted the case. Harris was represented by John Hicks, a private attorney who took state cases.

The trial was long and contentious. It wasn't going well for Harris.

At one point in the trial, there was a recess. I sat at the prosecution table. Harris was about to be removed by the jail staff, but he leaned in and whispered something to Hicks.

I saw Hicks' face turn red. After the jailers led Harris away, I spoke to Hicks.

"John, he didn't just threaten you, did he?"

"That son of a bitch", Hicks said. "If he comes anywhere near me, I have a gun!"

"Wow," I said. That's like the movie, Cape Fear. You don't think that could happen to you in real life?" I was seriously jerking his chain.

A few weeks later, Harris was convicted on all counts.

"Let's go have a beer," Baird suggested.

We all agreed.

Hicks was packing up his things, a sullen look on his face.

"John," I said. "Come have a beer with us."

Hicks was taken aback but said okay.

It was just before Christmas.

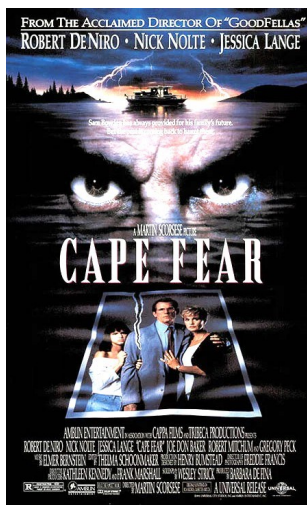
We walked to the Merchant's Café. We just got our beers when I looked at Hicks.

"John," I said, "Mike and I were thinking. You did a good job of defending Harris, but you didn't play any silly games. We got you a gift."

I handed him a package. The bow was made with shoelaces. He opened it. Inside was a VHS tape of the movie, Cape Fear.

"Oh, you guys!" Hicks said, laughing. He knocked over our beers when he did.

Good times.



## From the Police Museum

By Officer Jim Ritter SPD Retired, #4710

### SEATTLE'S PARK POLICE

The City of Seattle has always taken pride in its natural beauty and parks. As early as the 1890s, the region's "Queen City" made monumental efforts to offer its citizens a variety of wilderness areas that provided the community with beauty, relaxation, and recreation. Woodland Park was the first and most popular of these preserves that could easily be reached by a brief trolley ride from the downtown core.

In addition to providing the public with opportunities to escape from the bustle of the city, these parks also provided criminals endless opportunities to further victimize unsuspecting nature lovers. To address the increases in park crimes, the city was forced to bolster the small presence of regular officers on horseback with Park Police officers. These officers were not members of the Police Department, but rather special patrolmen hired by the Park Police Commissioner. These officers were given special police commissions, armed, issued uniforms, and were responsible for augmenting regular patrolmen by enforcing the park code by issuing citations and making arrests.

Since its inception, the Park Police in Seattle experienced ongoing internal and external controversies. These scandals, in conjunction with pushback from the police union over body of work issues, eventually led to the abolishment of the Park Police by the early 1960s.



The Seattle Park Police Badge (pictured) was issued in the 1920's.

If you have any historical law enforcement 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



## MARCH/APRIL RSPOA MEETING

For the March meeting our dedicated Pension Office staff gave a great presentation on processing claims and benefits. In April, the new CEO of the SPD Foundation, Ian Adair, gave a very interesting talk on his background and how he wants the foundation to continue to support SPD officers.



Jan Brandes speaks about the work of the Pension Office.



Police Foundation CEO, Ian Adair



Cassidy Fitzsimmons, Jan Brandes, Lisa Porter and Executive Secretary Stephanie Coleman

## ARIZONA SPD 931

Retired SPD Officers residing in Arizona gathered for their annual "931" on April 10th at the Icon Sports Grille in Gilbert, AZ.



The Place was packed with SPD!



Mike Chin, Butch Cason  
Jeff Sacks

## MORE FROM ARIZONA SPD 931, 2025



Dan & Sally Bryant



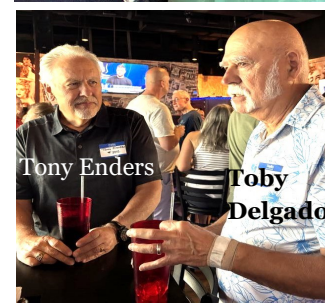
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## MARK THE NARC

By Officer Mark E. "Buzzy" Katzer, SPD Retired #3159

(On going stories from his days as a cadet)



We made plans for another approach. We decided that I would go back one day during school hours and try to make another buy. We figured all the kids would be at school and he'd have to do the deal. So a few days later, I drove back and parked my car right in front of his house. I was facing south, on the west side of the street. Two Detective units with two aboard parked nearby in view. I went up to the door and knocked. No answer. I went back to my car and sat on the hood, laying back on the windshield. About ten minutes later, I went to the door and knocked again. This time an older woman answered. It apparently was Gary's mom. After I introduced myself, she said wait here and went to summon Gary. A few minutes later Gary showed up. He was disheveled and looked like he just woke up. I asked him about getting another baggie of marijuana. He said okay and shuffled away and came back with a baggie. I handed him the ten dollar bill (we had recorded the serial number) and then said thanks and left. I got to my car and made the indiscreet signal to the Detectives that I had made a buy. I drove away and parked around the corner. The Detectives drove up and knocked on the door. They were finally admitted, by the mom. Gary was in the bathroom flushing drugs down the toilet. Gary later said that as soon as he met me he suspected something. The Detectives told Gary that he was under arrest and if needed they would get a search warrant and tear his Mom's house apart until they found the ten dollar bill. He relented and turned it over to them to spare his Mom from having to clean up the mess. He had hid the bill in a dictionary. He went to jail. Later, while I was in the academy, I was subpoenaed to testify against Gary. We had a slam dunk case against him, but the jury acquitted him. The prosecutor queried some of the jurors later and asked why. Evidently during testimony by the Detectives they reported that I was parked on the other side of the street or some such thing, thus the City's case was somewhat contradictory. What a bunch of BS! Gary will be mentioned later in this account.

Back to Nathan Hale and after-hour expeditions. We got a call from a citizen about dooper activity at a house in north Seattle. It was in the 14700 block of Meridian

Ave. N. And it was therefore out of the city limits of Seattle but legal minds decided we could act on it. So one evening, I went to the house, with a couple of two-man Detective cars perched nearby and once again did my "cold" knock and bullshit story. The house was owned by a woman and she had two male roommates. She agreed to get me some cocaine (\$25.00 worth) but I would have to wait, and then be directed to meet one of the guys at a parking lot of a big store in the area at a later time. The date and time would be provided later. She didn't want to make a sale out of her house. I accepted these terms and awaited further contact. I made contact again with her and was told to meet the guy at the described parking lot. It was a cold evening. I rode my motorcycle to the parking lot. Incidentally, it was the bike I had recently bought from Danny Melton, a 450 Honda. One of the other Detectives used his personal pick-up camper to provide back up. The Detectives got to sit in warmth while I sat on my bike awaiting delivery. Anyway, the guy showed up and I made my buy. It was later determined that we would sit on this buy and try to make another buy at a later time, conforming to our procedure of wanting to make two buys from a dealer to substantiate our cases regarding adults.

To be continued.....

## Detective Van Brunt #6719 Line of Duty Death Ceremony



On April 11, 2025, the Seattle Police Department formally recognized Detective Bryan Van Brunt's death as a Line of Duty Death with a ceremony at

SPD Police Headquarters. Detective Bryan Van Brunt, #6719, was hired on 3-26-2001. Bryan served in a very complex and dangerous undercover assignment for many years. Bryan died, as a result of suicide, on 9-13-2019.

Former SPD Legal Advisor, Mark McCarty assisted the family in finally gaining recognition for Bryan. Bryan's name was added to the wall at headquarters.







**Fallen SPD Officers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the months of April and May.**



**APRIL**

<b>Thomas L. Roberts</b>	<b>4-10-1898</b>
<b>Dale Eggers</b>	<b>4-23-1985</b>

**MAY**

<b>Fred Ivey</b>	<b>5-10-1928</b>
<b>Robert D. Ward</b>	<b>5-15-1969</b>
<b>Kenneth L. Davis</b>	<b>5-11-1995</b>

**Peace Officer's Memorial Day**

**May 15, 2025**

Established by President John F. Kennedy in 1962 to honor law enforcement officers who have been killed or disabled in the line of duty.

**"Never Forget!"**

# Editor's Corner

By Rich O'Neill, SPD Retired, #4451

It's May and there is a lot going on! Last issue, I urged everyone to get involved in contacting their representatives in Olympia and voice opposition to a few bills being proposed. I'm happy to report that one of the bills, HB 1816, was defeated. It was proposed by a "police abolitionist" and would have stripped the Seattle Police Guild of their right to bargain on the Civilian Response Team. In labor talk, it was a "body of work" issue. The other bill was SB 5085 and this is the one that goes after the pension surplus in Leoff 1. As, I write this column the pension bills are still alive. The federal government raided social security years ago and never paid back the funds. Every few years, we hear how Social Security is underfunded and may run out of money. Well, the same could happen to our pensions if we let them touch the pension surplus. If they do move forward and take some of the surplus for their "out-of-control general fund spending", then we will need to fight in court. That is costly. Former RSPOA President, Jerry Taylor, told everyone, a few years ago, when we all got "enhancement" checks that we should set aside some funds in case of a legal fight in the future. Everyone got a minimum of \$25,000. If needed, I hope everyone will contribute at least \$1,000 for the legal fight. It will be a small price to pay to protect our pensions! I hope it is not needed and the legislators leave the pensions alone. Stay tuned!


On April 11<sup>th</sup>, I had the honor and privilege to attend a Line of Duty Death Ceremony at SPD Headquarters for Detective Bryan Van Brunt. His name was officially added to the memorial wall at headquarters in front of his family and a large crowd. I learned, at the ceremony, how Bryan was involved in extremely dangerous undercover work involving arms dealers and terrorists. Bryan died, as a result of suicide, on 9-13-2019. With the help of former SPD Legal Advisor, Mark McCarty, the family overcame many legal and procedural issues to finally gain recognition for Bryan. Mark never charged the family a penny for his work! I'm proud to call Mark a friend.

My brother, Kevin, and I are getting busy with preparations for the Retired Officer's Banquet on September 20. "Many hands make for light work" so, if you can help us with the preparations, we'd love to hear from you. (Especially if you have connections with companies who like to donate and support the police!) Have a great Spring!


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