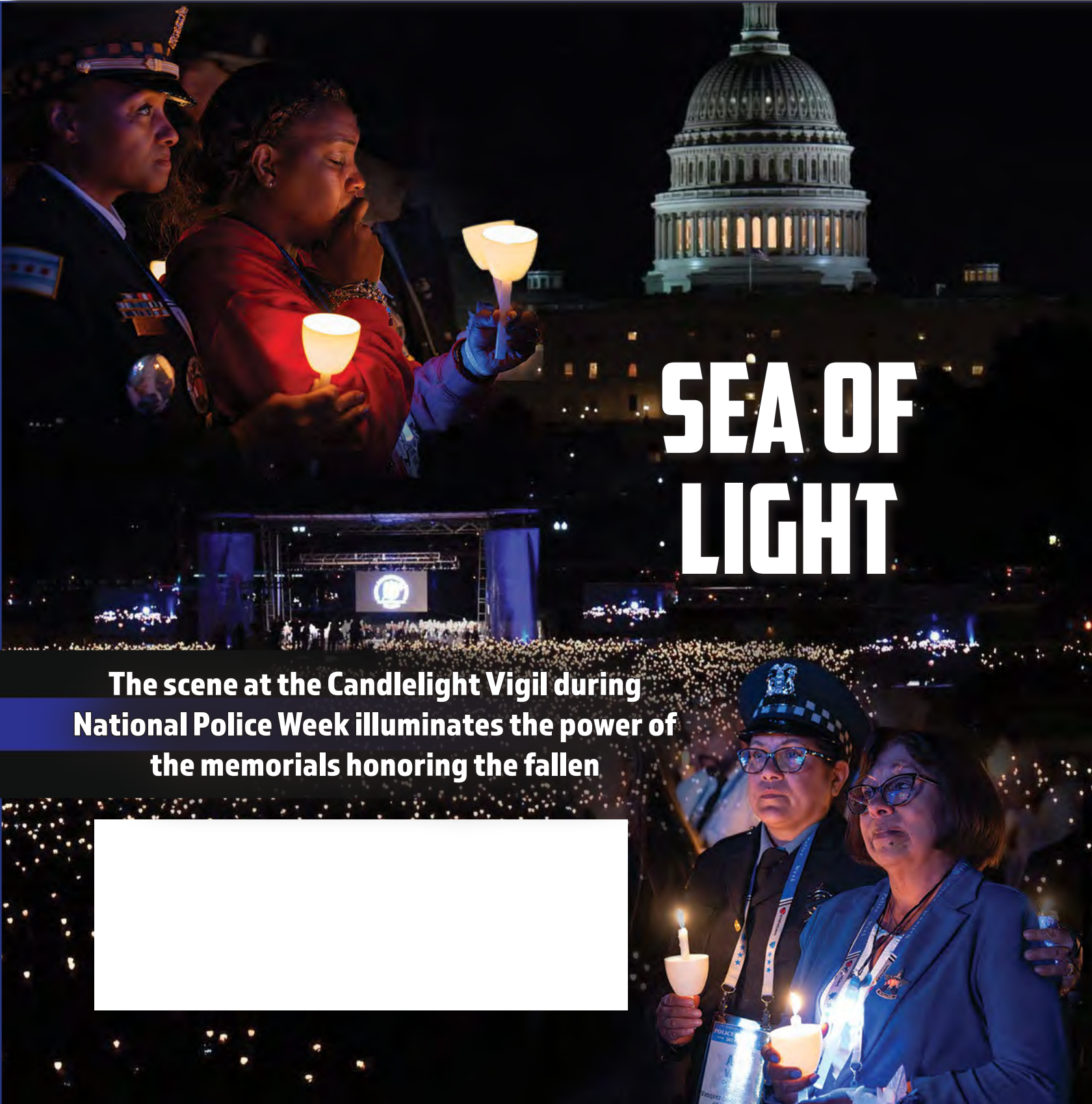




Fraternal Order of Police

CHICAGO LODGE 7

Official Magazine • June 2024



SEA OF LIGHT

The scene at the Candlelight Vigil during National Police Week illuminates the power of the memorials honoring the fallen



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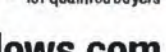
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Let There Be Light

Nearly 30,000 law enforcement officers from around the world, family members of fallen officers, friends and members of the public who support the police gathered on the National Mall in Washington D.C. for the Candlelight Vigil to honor officers lost in the line of duty on May 13. As they raised candles to culminate the Roll Call of Heroes commemorating the officers lost during 2023, the light shined on how much the memorials mean to their family members. This was one of many memorials honoring the fallen, and our special report on the May memorials features:

- Continuing to feel the love for Officer Aréanah Preston...**Page 28**
- The feeling of pride from the honors for Officer Andres Vasquez-Lasso...**Page 30**
- How much the honor means to the family of Todd Gillerlain...**Page 32**
- A riveting speech inspiring survivors to move forward from Elizabeth French...**Page 34**
- The celebration of life at the Lodge 7 Memorial service...**Page 37**
- A special presentation commemorating the fallen from the CPD Honor Guard...**Page 38**
- The CPD Pipes and Drums once again playing its tributes...**Page 40**
- A retired CPD Honor Guard member tells a special story of honor and remembrance...**Page 41**

MESSAGES FROM LODGE 7

President's Report	Page 5
First Vice President's Report.....	Page 8
Financial Secretary's Report	Page 10
Retired Members	Page 12
Deceased Members	Page 13
FOP Labor Report	Page 14
FOP Legal Report	Page 16
Compliments of Rabbi Moshe	Page 18
From your Directing Chaplain	Page 20



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CHICAGO LODGE 7

Official Magazine
President's Report



The guiding lights of National Police Week



JOHN
CATANZARA
JR.

Photos showing the scope of the lights at the Candlelight Vigil during National Police Week provide perspective about how powerful that night is, especially for officers who have never been there. Even though I have been there to experience it live many times, it's always an awe-inspiring moment to have that many people all at once remembering, caring, supporting.

More than 30,000 people pack the National Mall for the Vigil. They each hold up candles after names of all the fallen officers from the previous year – including Andres Vasquez-Lasso, Aréanah Preston and Todd Gillerlain this year – are read during the Roll Call of Heroes.

The Vigil is just one of the cathartic moments of National Police Week. The National Peace Officers Memorial Service that takes place each year on May 15 is a bit heavier, especially as we all form an escort line for the Gold Star families to pass through on their way to the lawn in front of the U.S. Capitol, where the service is held.

Sharing here some of the experiences from Police Week and all the memorials during May hopefully can shed some light on how cathartic — and how vital — it is to remember.

The power of the Wall

This year, yet again, a totally random crossing probably led me to another moment of, I don't know, wonder, awe. Just kind of framed a level of loss that I think most officers don't comprehend until you see somebody like Riverside County, California, Sheriff's Deputy Darnell Calhoun, who was killed in the line of duty on Jan. 13 with less than a year on the job.

I had gone to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial to place the stars we had made on the Wall where the names of some of our officers are inscribed. I started doing this for the historical anniversaries commemorating five, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years since they were lost. They are these little steel stars with the officer's picture in the middle, and we place them on the panel where the officer is inscribed.

As I was sitting there where Aréanah Preston's name is inscribed, we got word that her family was leaving the hotel to come to the Wall for the first time. I decided just to hang out there and wait for them.

At the panel next to where Aréanah's name is, there were maybe eight members from Darnell's family, and you could see the level of grief. As they were putting stuff honoring Darnell on there — pictures, a giant Philadelphia Eagles flag and one item after another — I was just kind of listening to the conversations and picking up tidbits about what had happened to him. What his widow said just put a chill up my spine: that at the time Darnell was killed, she had a 5-year-old, a 3-year-old, and she was seven months pregnant. And he wasn't even supposed to be working in that substation, but he was filling in because they were short-staffed due to another murder of a Riverside deputy three weeks earlier.

You start wrapping your head around that, and then you look, and that baby she was pregnant with is now a 1-year-old and has no clue what's going on. The 3-year-old, who is now pushing 5, yeah, he remembers little bits and pieces of his dad, but all they know is they need Mom's attention.

Mom never, ever had the ability to grieve. She has to keep raising kids. At one point, she sat down across from his name and looked so drained. I felt compelled to get up, talk to her and say, "Can you please tell me about Darnell?" She said, "I don't even know what to say," and I'm like, "Just tell me some good things about Darnell. I don't want you to go through this alone." I just wanted to keep her mind occupied, trying to remember some happy thoughts. Even though it's been a year, it never gets any easier. We all know that.

So it was a 15-minute conversation about how they became Eagles fans in California. And then just kind of pledging that we're going to do everything we can. He was a big fan of Eagles quarter-

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President's Report continues on Page 6

Do the right thing

So a falling-out has taken place with the superintendent since the funeral for Luis Huesca. We have not heard from him directly since the debacle of the Department's insistence on pushing for the mayor to be at the funeral and the Lodge's position that the family's wishes are going to come first every single time, no matter whose feelings get hurt.

It is what it is, but I sleep well at night knowing I didn't do anything that other Lodge leaders haven't done and wouldn't do across this country. Being in D.C. for Police Week and speaking to National FOP Second Vice President John Hoyt, he made it very clear that Philadelphia, where he's from, has been doing that for quite some time. He found it shocking that this was the first time the mayor was told not to attend.

There is no choice but to move past it. I mean, for the better part of a year now, we've talked about collaboratively putting the membership first. So I mean, if he's planning on staying, I'm not going anywhere for three years. If there's going to be a collaborative effort, I don't know what to make of what's going on because there

have been some strange happenings even after the funeral.

Like the Department's unilateral decision to put the Central Bike Team on 10-hour days without negotiating, even though they've admitted that they knew that that's what they had to do. And I told them that's what we had to do because it is a schedule change, and you are obligated to bargain that. They claimed to understand it, but they just decided to jump the gun and put the whole bike team on 10-hour days three weeks ago.

They knew that that was a subject of mandatory bargaining. That does not fall under management rights. If you want to have labor peace, then follow the contract, and if you don't, then I guess do whatever you're going to do. They don't really seem to be too concerned about unfair labor practice filings or victories for the Lodge saying that the City and Department violated labor time and time again.

The City is run by a bunch of Democrats who are supposed to be pro-labor. Well, their actions and the way they consistently ignore collective bargaining rights say anything but pro-labor.

The good fight

You might think the continual battles the City creates are starting to wear on us. Never gonna happen because I crazily live for these. Number two, I love shining a light on stupid people and stupid policies.

I hear it so many times, so many different places: "Hey, you're the guy that represents the police. Keep doing what you're doing. We're behind you." And these are non-police people.

All it ever has been is speaking common sense about what the average person is really thinking and putting that into words on their behalf, whether they're police or not. And I'm talking every part of the City, suburbs, even parts of the state and even out of state. I've heard this from every demographic, every gender, you name it. It happens very frequently and more and more recently,

which is kind of interesting. But people are just getting fed up.

Especially our members. That's always going to be my No. 1 concern. What matters for the members frequently overlaps with society's needs and wants because, at the end of the day, our members are coaches, brothers, wives, sisters, clergy, whatever you want. They serve so many integrated positions within their communities and show they are more than just a badge and a gun, regardless of what some idiot politicians want to label us.

We will see how the political climate can change drastically once Judge O'Neill Burke gets in as Cook County state's attorney. There's going to be a big come-to-Jesus moment once they realize the policy changes are going to basically translate to safer streets, and all of a sudden how pro-law and order all these people will become.



The CPD Honor Guard once again kicked ass in the Steve Young Honor Guard Competition during National Police Week.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

back Donovan McNabb — a Chicagoan, of course — and I told her when they are ready, and if they ever make a trip to Philly, I'll do everything I can with the connections I know within this organization to make sure they get to an Eagles game.

So it's just moments like that, when you meet a Gold Star family from across the county at the Memorial and just try to listen to their story. We know our stories very well about those we lost in the line of duty, but not everybody has the resources that we do. So when some of these families come there, I just try to find somebody I think could benefit from another ear, a shoulder or just a hand to hold.

Yeah, I mean, sometimes it's that shoulder that makes you feel better than somebody local, because it's too hard. I think that those moments at that location are so raw. For Darnell Calhoun's wife, the fact that she never really had the opportunity to just grieve the loss of her husband because she's got kids to raise and there is no way around it — you see how it's so tough for spouses like that who just have to champion on.

I just know the heartbreak our families experience, and I'm humbled that I was part of those moments. But also, they're moments I wish I never was part of because of the tragedy that caused



Taking a photo with the recruits we once again sponsored to attend the state memorial on the steps of the state house and Dionne Mhoone, Aréanah Preston's Mother, Melina Vasquez and Regina Gillerlain.

it all. So the mission is to make sure that they have everything they need and want and maybe even some things they never realized they need or want.

What we need to remember is just being there, which is why we should all go to Washington, D.C., for Police Week and be at the Memorial with the families of our fallen.

Aréanah's name is on the west side of the Wall, and we had a chance to spend some time with her family. Then, it was nice to see Melina Vasquez and Andres' mom, sister and brother at the east side, where his name is. They are definitely coping better, which is good.

And you can see some of the inexplicable things that happen at the Wall. In a strange twist of irony, Todd Gillerlain's name was put on the same panel as Chicago Police Officer John Knight's, and it was the 20th anniversary of his loss. John Knight and Todd were friends. Now they're on the same panel together.

A dinner to remember

After our opportunity to be at the Wall with our Gold Star families on the Sunday of Police Week, we hosted a dinner for them that night. Regrettably, the Gillerlain family already had obligations, and they couldn't join us. But we had Andres' family and Aréanah's family, along with a Lodge 7 contingent, leaders from the Illinois State Lodge and others.

The original plan was to take the CPD Honor Guard members to dinner. We wanted to start a tradition to thank them for all the hard work they do on behalf of our members, not only at the line-of-duty funerals, but also memorial services for anniversaries as they pop up, doing those roll calls and everything else they do.

That was the original plan, and then I thought we should probably include the Gold Star family members along with the CPD Honor guard because they're so intertwined. Regrettably, the honor guard ended up having a function scheduled that evening that they weren't aware of originally.

So they ended up not coming to dinner, but they ended up kicking ass in the national honor guard competition a few days later, so that was great. I mean, it definitely is an above-and-beyond effort by our guys and girls, no doubt.

A moment at Lodge 7

As part of our coverage of all the memorials during May, you will read about the Lodge 7 ceremony held on May 8. Usually, we have

our service first, followed by the state memorial in Springfield and then National Police Week. But the rotation changed this year, putting ours in the middle.

I pledged to Dionne Mhoone, Aréanah's mother, in Springfield that our memorial would be more on the lighter side and more about the life than the loss, because D.C. is such a long, heavy week for the families. I didn't want to just keep that mindset going from Springfield to Chicago to there. That's a lot of drain on the family. So we tried to make it a little more upbeat, I guess, or as upbeat as you can.

Knowing that the memorials started with the state and having that somewhat heavy presence there, it felt even more appropriate to keep ours a little more on the positive side of life and service as opposed to loss.

And more intimate, as we gathered around the families in the courtyard where our memorial wall is located. We wanted to give them a chance to unveil the names of their loved ones inscribed on our wall themselves and celebrate their lives.

Thanks to everyone who came out for a very, very solid turnout. And thanks to the Lodge 7 crew: Joseph, Adriana and Patrick, along with Kathy, Laura and Maria, who organized the event. All the work getting the courtyard to where it needs to be and all of that, they did a phenomenal job getting it squared away and looking better than ever, which I think makes it that much more special with the vibrancy of it all.

Another bright light

A final note regarding how Elizabeth French knocked it out of the park with an inspirational speech at the state memorial like I've never heard.

If anything good comes from tragedies like what happened to her daughter, Ella, it's finding someone so unique and inspirational like her, and Carlos Yanez Jr., for that matter, to come out of that same situation. She definitely wanted to come out there, even though she had such a heavy memory from two years prior, and show how you can move forward. Now, you're a couple years removed, you're not as numb, you get to absorb a little bit more and be a little more introspective.

And she showed that to us. It was fun just kind of seeing a little bit more of Liz and not Ella's mom, if that makes sense. Thank you, Elizabeth, for your continued strength and showing us the light that can come out of every memorial.

Confronting Mental Health Struggles in Law Enforcement



**MICHAEL
METTE**

As police officers, we confront some of the most challenging and harrowing situations in society. Every day, we deal with the aftermath of violence, tragedy, and human suffering. This exposure, combined with the stressful nature of our work, places us at an increased risk for mental health struggles, including depression and, tragically, suicide. It's time we address this issue head-on and ensure that no officer feels alone in their struggle.

The statistics are stark and sobering. According to Blue H.E.L.P., more police officers die by suicide each year than in the line of duty. In 2019 alone, the number of law enforcement officers who took their own lives surpassed the number of officers who died while performing their job. This trend is not only alarming but calls for immediate attention and action.

Several factors contribute to the high rate of suicide among police officers:

1. **Exposure to Trauma:** Regularly witnessing traumatic events can lead to cumulative stress and emotional exhaustion.
2. **High-Stress Environment:** The pressures of law enforcement, including long hours, shift work, and the constant readiness required, can take a toll.
3. **Stigma Around Mental Health:** There is often a cultural stigma within law enforcement that discourages officers from seeking help for mental health issues.
4. **Lack of Support:** Feeling unsupported by peers or the institution can exacerbate feelings of isolation and helplessness.

It's crucial to be aware of the warning signs that someone might

be struggling with suicidal thoughts. Here are some signs to look for:

- Expressing feelings of hopelessness or having no purpose
- Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and colleagues
- Increasing use of alcohol or drugs
- Displaying extreme mood swings or sudden changes in behavior
- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself

Creating a supportive environment starts with breaking the stigma around mental health. Here are some steps we can take:

1. **Encourage Open Conversations:** Normalize discussions about mental health. Encourage officers to speak openly about their struggles without fear of judgment.
2. **Peer Support Programs:** Implement and promote peer support programs where officers can talk to trained colleagues about their issues.
3. **Mental Health Resources:** Ensure all officers are aware of the mental health resources available to them, including counseling services and hotlines.
4. **Regular Check-Ins:** Supervisors should conduct regular check-ins with their teams to gauge their mental well-being and offer support.
5. **Training and Education:** Provide training on recognizing the signs of mental distress and how to respond appropriately.

Seeking Help is a Sign of Strength

It's essential to recognize that seeking help is not a sign of weakness but a testament to an officer's strength and courage. Just as we



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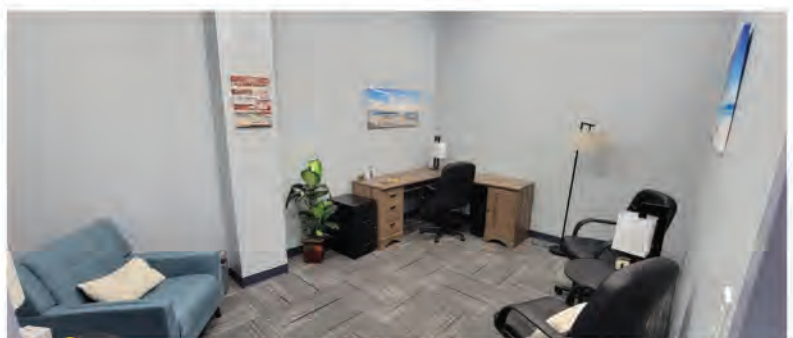


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Dr. Carrie Steiner
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take care of our physical health, we must be proactive about our mental health. Professional help is available and can make a significant difference.

The FOP and our department offer several resources for officers in need:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP): Provides confidential counseling services for officers and their families. 312-733-0378 EAP now has 3 locations, North, South and Central.
- Chaplains' Unit: Offers spiritual and emotional support to officers. 312-738-2831
- Peer Support Program: Connects officers with peers who are trained to provide support and guidance. 312-733-0378
- Hotlines: The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) and Copline (1-800-COPLINE) are available 24/7 for immediate assistance. Text 988 for 24/7 suicide and crisis hotline.
- FOP wellness partner First Responder's Wellness Center: Provides confidential counseling services for officers. Locations include Lombard, Lincolnshire and here at the FOP on the second floor. 630-909-9094

As we continue to serve and protect our city, we must also protect each other. If you or someone you know is struggling, please reach out. Together, we can create a culture of support and understanding, ensuring that no officer feels alone in their battle.

We must remember that it's okay to ask for help. Our strength lies not just in our ability to face danger, but also in our ability to support one another through the toughest times. Let's commit to looking out for each other, today and always.

By addressing this critical issue openly and with compassion, we can help save lives and ensure that our fellow officers have the support they need to thrive, both on and off duty.

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Honoring Our Fallen Through the St. Jude March



JIM
JAKSTAVICH

Hello again, officers, both active and retired. I would like to start by acknowledging the St. Jude March and some special observations and encounters that I made while marching with the Chicago John Dineen Lodge No. 7. For those that are unaware, the St. Jude March was returned to Michigan Avenue after more than 15 years. Although this location was a mainstay for many of us, I heard some younger officers offer their questions and opinions, including "Now where are we supposed to park" and "Why did they move it?" Believe me, many of us felt the same way when it was transferred to Gold Star Memorial Park, and we were making similar statements such as, "This is a slap in the face, the mayor is hiding us from the public," as we were assembling all the way to the Adler Planetarium, nowhere near the public's view. Well, I have come to realize that questioning the department's motives is fruitless, but we as Chicago police officers march for the fallen – our brothers and sisters in blue who paid the ultimate sacrifice – regardless of the location.

I had the opportunity to see a former co-worker and Gold Star Family Member, retired Detective Martin Darcy, marching just in front of us with the Gold Star Family Members and retirees. As we passed the recruits holding the pictures of the fallen officers, I could observe retired Detective Martin Darcy walk over to the recruit holding the picture of his father. I could see him tell the recruit that that was his father, Police Officer Martin E. Darcy Jr. End of Watch

Sept. 27, 1982. This is the reason why we march. I am grateful that this young recruit had the honor and privilege of meeting a Gold Star Family Member during the march, especially one that became a police officer after his father was murdered on this job. I would be remiss in not mentioning retired Chicago Police Officer Patricia Darcy, sister of retired Detective Martin Darcy and daughter of murdered Police Officer Martin E. Darcy Jr., thank you both for your friendship and your service.

The retirees marched just ahead of us as well. They marched proudly as they passed the onlookers and young recruits holding pictures of the fallen. When we finally passed the stage where the command staff and dignitaries were assembled, we broke ranks and went to the sidewalk to watch the rest of the St. Jude March. I ran into another retiree that I knew, retired Captain Thomas Faragoi Sr. Captain Faragoi informed me that this was his 63rd year in attendance of the St. Jude March, and that he hasn't missed one yet. He flew in from Florida specifically to be here for the march and to uphold his continuous streak. Tom's son, Thomas Faragoi Jr. is also a retired Chicago police officer. Captain Thomas Faragoi Sr. stressed the importance of the St. Jude March and continuing the tradition of "Honoring Our Fallen." Tom also made a point of telling me that the monthly magazine delivery is messed up and that he gets his and his son's magazine! I'm working on correcting that, sir! Hopefully it will be remedied before you read this article. I was honored to attend this year's St. Jude March and glad to see so many of my former co-workers and fellow officers from my BLUE family. Stay safe and God bless.



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Honoring Retired Members

April 2024

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Mark Bean	Officer	018	26	Mark J. Ladzinsky	Officer	261	29
Mark E. Biedrzycki	Officer	002	26	Samuel E. Lewis	Officer	171	29
Michele M. Blaszczyk	Officer	189	26	Christina J. Loughney	Officer	008	23
John T. Bryja	Detective	620	30	William C. Mallek	Officer	640	23
Paul J. Burns	Officer	018	24	John R. McNerney	Detective	630	33
Sheila Butler	Officer	050	32	Tammy M. Panek	Officer	008	30
Carlos C. Cannon	Officer	277	24	Dominick Parisi	Detective	630	32
Frances Cifuentes	Officer	167	22	Evelyn Perez	Officer	025	21
Irma V. Coutinho	Officer	196	30	Cheryl Pontecore	Detective	650	33
Barry E. Earls	Officer	177	27	Angelo P. Ramundo	Detective	650	33
Dietrice L. Ellens	Officer	171	27	Joseph L. Riley	Officer	128	29
Timothy J. Felmon	Officer	022	30	Robert J. Schaack	Officer	016	25
John M. Gibbelina	Officer	016	25	Phillip N. Singto	Officer	020	24
John C. Haggerty	Officer	009	30	Qwon L. Spencer	Officer	050	29
Ziad D. Hamideh	Officer	050	27	Todd E. Witulski	Officer	001	22
Barbara A. Jotautas	Officer	188	28	Correction from Previous Issue			
				Name	Rank	Unit	Years
				Catherine S. Skol	Officer	059	31

Retiree Meetings

Check the contact info listed with each location to confirm meetings are being held

North First Tuesday of the month @ 9 a.m. D'Agostino's Pizza and Pub 7530 W. Oakton St., Niles Steve Marchfield 773-771-0877	Bomb and Arson Second Monday of month @ 9 a.m. Fiesta Tapatia Restaurant Chicago Ross Horne, 312-613-9182	Survivors Lunch Second Saturday of month @ 11 a.m. Beverly Woods Restaurant Chicago	Arkansas Retirees Third Friday of month @ noon Elks Lodge Mountain Home, Arkansas Bob Zdora, 870-405-5407	Northern Illinois/Southern Wisconsin Retirees Second Thursday of month Herner's Hideaway N202 Williams Road Genoa City, Wisconsin
The Northsiders' Luncheon Third Wednesday of January, April, July, October @ noon Suparossa, Chicago Paul Vitaioli, 312-402-1040	12th District Retirees and Alumni First Thursday of month @ 10 a.m. Southern Belles Restaurant Bridgeview 12retirees@comcast.net	Public Housing Unit (North, South and Administration) First Wednesday of month @ 10 a.m. George's Restaurant, Chicago Maurice Brown, 773-577-0154	Florida Retirees First Wednesday of month @ 1 p.m. Cop Shop, Cape Coral, Florida Tom Faragoi, 239-770-7896	Hellenic American Police Association Northsiders Retiree Breakfast First Monday of month @10:00 a.m. Burgundy Restaurant 5959 W. Irving Park Rd., Chicago
South Second Wednesday of month @ 10 a.m. Jedi's Garden, Oak Lawn	Crime Lab, ETs, Forensic Services and Mobile Unit First Tuesday of month @ noon Flap-Jacks Restaurant, Oak Lawn	Arizona Retirees Third Thursday of month @ 11 a.m. Eagle Buffet at Casino Arizona 524 N. 92nd St. Scottsdale, Arizona Brian DuFour, 623-521-6146 or bdu4@aol.com	Michigan Retirees First Thursday of month @ 8 a.m. Macks on Main 101 W. Cedar Ave. Gladwin, Michigan John Nielson 989-324-0877 jnnielson@gmail.com	Hellenic American Police Association Southsiders Retiree Breakfast Second Monday of month @10:00 a.m. Valois Cafeteria 1518 E. 53rd St., Chicago
8-Ball Luncheon Last Wednesday of month @ noon Les Brothers, Oak Lawn Dorothy Piscitelli, 773-972-0139	Orland Park Law Enforcement Organization Third Thursday of month @ 7:30 p.m. Orland Park Civic Center Orland Park			

Honoring Sisters and Brothers who have passed

Name	Status	Age	Date of Passing
Daniel McGrory	Retired	87	January 29, 2024
Ronald J. Caliendo	Retired	77	March 17, 2024
Leonard Barbarone	Retired	80	April 12, 2024
John Palmer	Retired	86	April 12, 2024
Bradley Getman	Retired	78	April 15, 2024
Richard Heinrich	Retired	90	April 22, 2024
Frances Zaglifa	Retired	68	April 24, 2024
Michael A. Weaver	Retired	82	April 26, 2024
Gerald T. Cushing Sr.	Retired	84	April 26, 2024
Gregory Klichowski	Retired	68	May 1, 2024
Kevin Dwyer	Retired	59	May 4, 2024
Norbert C. Rajewski	Retired	83	May 4, 2024
Mitchell Zawada	Retired	95	May 14, 2024
James Nixon	007/124	29	May 16, 2024
Joseph Pinzine	Retired	82	May 19, 2024



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The Fund has discovered a pension contribution shortfall affecting approximately 3,000 active Tier 2 members. The shortfall occurred based on a fiscal year discrepancy with the City of Chicago because the City counted the retroactive salary contract payments members received 1/1/2022 towards the 2022 annual salary cap. (Tier 2 members are subject to an annual salary cap each plan year in accordance with Section 40 ILCS 5/5-238(b) of the Illinois Pension Statutes.) As a result of the City application of the amounts received toward the 2022 annual salary cap, the City did not withhold the correct 9% of members' salary and duty availability pay for the required payment to the Fund and instead paid that amount directly to the members. In adherence with Section 40 ILCS 5/5-169(a), the Fund is required to collect the missing contributions including statutory interest of 3%. If the members' missing contributions go unpaid until the time of their retirement, then the amount due (including accrued interest) will be withheld from their future annuity payment. Affected members will be notified by mail by June 30, 2024.

Time Is Always Of The Essence



PAT
FIORETTO

Recently, in yet another blow to COPA, Arbitrator Sonneborn issued an arbitration award in which he highlighted the department's due process violations, its flawed logic, and the outrageous discipline recommendation it sought to impose on a police officer. In this latest case, my colleagues Catherine Chapman and Destiny Collins succeeded in having the grievant officer's original 90-day suspension reduced to a 10-day suspension.

The incident in question occurred nearly four years ago, on July 19, 2020, when the grievant officer and his partner responded to a call in the second district regarding a potential battery. Upon arriving at the scene, the grievant officer spoke with the female victim who stated that she had gone over to a neighbor's house (a male) after being invited. However, when she arrived, an unidentified woman (not her neighbor) met her and demanded to know why she came over. The unidentified woman proceeded to push the victim by placing two fingers on her forehead and stated, "Bitch, I'll fuck you up. Don't be messing with my man." The victim then returned to her apartment and called the police immediately. When the grievant officer and his partner arrived, the victim expressed her concern for her and her disabled son's safety and asked the police officers to resolve the dispute.

The grievant officer sought to resolve the issue by deescalating the situation and proceeded to knock on the neighbor's door. In response to the knocking, the grievant officer heard a female's voice saying, "we good." The grievant officer stated that he had just wanted to talk, at which point the male neighbor opened the door and asked the officer if his BWC was on and then abruptly stated, "Thank you, have a good rest of your day." The grievant officer, worried about the safety of the victim and her disabled son, continued to ask about the earlier interaction between the two women. At that point, the male neighbor stated, "You see what I am doing," and proceeded to start to close the door. As the door slowly began to close, the grievant officer placed his hand on the doorknob and shut the door abruptly. The male neighbor screamed, opened the door and showed the grievant officer his right hand on which the tip of his right index finger had been severed accidentally. The grievant officer immediately rendered aid and instructed his partner to call an ambulance.

Not surprisingly, the complainant later filed a lawsuit against the city seeking damages for his injuries. Upon learning of the lawsuit, COPA investigated the incident and recommended that the grievant officer be suspended for 90 days. Then-Superintendent Brown agreed with

both COPA's findings and the recommended penalty, which the department then sought to impose.

Based on the evidence presented at the hearing, Arbitrator Sonneborn quickly pointed out some major flaws in the department's case, particularly in the imposition of such a harsh penalty after a lengthy investigation. First, Arbitrator Sonneborn noted that it took four years to finish the investigation and impose any form of discipline. Although delays alone, in general, do not automatically warrant dismissal of the charges, the arbitrator did look to the impact of the delay in the investigation or imposing penalties to determine ultimately if the employer met its burden of proof. Specifically, he found:

If there is an unreasonable amount of time between the misconduct and the imposition of a penalty, the penalty can no longer be said to be corrective, but rather only serving to punish. Discipline in the context of just cause in remediable cases is supposed to be designed to improve an employee's behavior, not merely to punish it. Allowing years to pass without a reasonable cause for the delay before imposing a suspension renders the suspension unjust."

Most arbitrators agree with Arbitrator Sonneborn: Discipline is meant to be corrective, rather than punitive. Any grievant cannot seek to correct behavior if the penalty is served many years after the fact – it defeats the purpose.

Arbitrator Sonneborn also criticized the department's lack of reasoning for implementing the 90-day suspension. Particularly, Arbitrator Sonneborn commented that rather than disciplining the grievant officer for his alleged misconduct, the department instead disciplined him for the complaint's accidental injuries and opined:

The penalty is determined by the degree of injury. What is the Department to do with an officer who commits a severe act of misconduct, but no one is injured, and there are no collateral consequences? For example, what if an officer intentionally fired his weapon in the locker room, but no one else was in the room with him, and there were no injuries or property damage? Should the fact no one was injured by such an irresponsible act of misconduct serve to lessen the penalty to be imposed? It is the level of misconduct itself which must primarily dictate the penalty. The degree of injury alone cannot drive the penalty. Of course it is a factor to consider, but it cannot be the sole or primary determinant. For that one must look to what was the Grievant's conduct – simply put, what did he do wrong?

As such, Arbitrator Sonneborn found the 90-day suspension unwarranted and reduced the discipline to a 10-day suspension.

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Search Based Upon Smell Of Cannabis



TIM
GRACE

There is a lot of confusion regarding a search of a vehicle that is based on a strong smell of cannabis. Recent court opinions have given different approaches to this area of law which is new to Illinois. The answer is not simple and you may say the answer to the question is deep in the “weeds.” While I would like to claim credit for that fancy pun, I cannot. I mostly give credit to Justice Hordridge of the Third District Appellate Court who entitled the analysis portion of his decision “In the Weeds of Cannabis Law.” I

don’t want to be accused of plagiarism or not giving the comedic props where they’re due. The issue of the validity of the search is truly case sensitive and a good officer who can articulate the facts will be in a good position.

Typically, an officer will make a traffic stop on a vehicle and upon approach will detect a strong odor of burnt or fresh cannabis. Prior to Jan. 1, 2020, cannabis was classified as a controlled substance under both federal and Illinois law and was thus illegal. Furthermore, any concentration of cannabis in a person’s blood or urine was enough to trigger a charge of driving under the influence of drugs. The courts found that the mere odor was enough to detain and search the vehicle. However, in 2020 Illinois, ever so openminded, became the 11th state to legalize marijuana for adults and recreational use under the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act 410 ILCS 7-5/1-1. While highly regulated and taxed, the business of cannabis has become a very expansive and potentially profitable industry in our state. However, the statute did place conditions on your ability to get that Rock Mountain high. The amount one can possess cannot exceed 500 grams of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and delivery of any amount is illegal and subject to the criminal code. Furthermore, and to the point of this discussion, it cannot be possessed in a vehicle unless it is reasonably secured in a concealed container and inaccessible while the vehicle is in motion. A person cannot ingest while in a vehicle or drive if the person has, within the two hours, a THC concentration in their blood or urine the threshold level for driving while under the influence of drugs. Unfortunately, that leaves a lot to the imagination to try and decipher to determine if a search is constitutional. You just have to love how the legislatures passes laws and have very little understanding of the effect of it on police officers. These restrictions ignore the problems that arise with the people who want to act constitution-

ally and do their job. Shouldn’t surprise anyone there.

Once again to address the search we must look to the fourth amendment of the United States Constitution. The Fourth Amendment prohibits unreasonable search and seizure absent a warrant. A less strict standard for a brief detention and search is our favorite reasonable articulable suspicion or when you reasonably believe that a crime has or is about to be committed. In these cases, due to the legalization, the reasonable belief is sometimes put to task. However, probable cause is assessed with by looking at the totality of the circumstances not just one factor. It “requires only a probability or substantial chance of criminal activity, not an actual showing of such activity.” *People v. Harris*, 2023 IL App (2d) 210697. Yes, cannabis is legal but it is also illegal in certain circumstances. At what point have we passed the line where there is enough probable cause to begin a search of the vehicle, or have we exceeded the U.S. Constitution as the facts do not allow for a search? It is a tricky question, and a question that has caused a split in the Illinois courts. Some courts throughout the state have found that the smell is not a substantial part of the totality of the circumstances analysis as it is a legal substance. Other courts have found that the odor is a big factor. The Illinois Supreme Court has yet to weigh in on the issue, however a convoluted answer should be coming soon. This author’s opinion is that we should look at the odor as a factor in the “totality of the circumstances” analysis but should also be able to point to other factors that establish a law was or is about to be committed. This with \$2.50 will get you a ride on the L.

There is some hope in the above Harris case that came out of Boone County in western Illinois recently. In the Harris case, the defendant was pulled over for a minor traffic violation and the officer detected the odor of cannabis. The state troopers then performed a search of the vehicle and located cocaine. The defendant went to trial and was convicted. Prior to trial the defense filed a motion to suppress the stop, claiming that merely the smell of cannabis was not enough to justify a search of the vehicle. This was denied and the ensuing trial occurred resulting in the conviction. On appeal Mr. Harris argued that the trial judge erred, and the cocaine should have been suppressed based upon an illegal search. The appellate court recognized the historic history of cannabis in Illinois and the new “position in society” it has morphed into. The court then analyzed the stop in the contexts of the fourth amendment and held that “given that the laws of this state deems its possession and use in a

a car a crime in some situations, then it follows that the smell of cannabis in a car still forms the basis for probable cause.” Hence, since the search of the car was justified based upon the smell, the motion to suppress the narcotics was properly denied. However, other appellate cases have held that the smell alone is not enough. The Supreme Court is going to have to take this issue up sooner than later.

The question is where does that leave us in Cook County? Based upon where this is going and knowing the leanings of our appellate court, it appears that the smell alone may not be enough. You will need additional factors to justify a search. Plain view? Suspect DUI? Odd behavior of the occupants of the vehicle? But if your probable cause is the smell alone, at least in Cook County, the evidence may be suppressed. The more information you have for the totality of the circumstances the better off you will be.



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Reflecting on the Past/ A Tribute to Fathers



RABBI
MOSHE WOLF

While standing around and chatting at a recent wake, one of our members remarked, "There are many challenges in life that we are faced with, but we can never lose our faith in the Lord and each other that tomorrow will bring with it sunshine, hope and healing for our soul."

He reached into his pocket and handed me the following poem, I think written in part by George Carlin, read and let your soul smile.

"Reflecting on the Past and Looking to The Future"

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less, we buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom. We have multiplied our possessions but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things. We've cleaned up the air but polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more but learn less. We plan more but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits, and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one-night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill. It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom. A time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just hit delete.

Therefore, let us reflect on the following

Remember, please spend some time with your loved ones because they are not going to be around forever.

Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side.

Remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you every day, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart, and it doesn't cost a cent.

Remember, to say, "I love you," to your spouse, partner, chil-

dren and loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you.

Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again.

Give time to love, give time to speak! And give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind.

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER:

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away. Last but not least: find something to make you smile about each day, even if you have to look in the mirror.

As June has a special day in which we honor and pay tribute to those special people in our lives that proudly wear the title "Dad." I dedicate the following poem to these honored heroes.

"What Is a Father?"

A father is a person who is forced to endure childbirth without an anesthetic. He growls when he feels good and laughs very loud when he is scared half-to-death.

A father never feels entirely worthy of the worship in a child's eyes. He is never quite the hero his daughter thinks. Never quite the man his son believes him to be. And this worries him sometimes. (So, he works too hard to try to smooth the rough places in the road of those of his own who will follow him.)

A father is a person who goes to war sometimes and would run the other way except that war is part of his only important job in his life, which is making the world better for his child than it has been for him. Fathers grow older faster than people, because they, in other wars, have to stand at the train station and wave goodbye to the uniform that climbs on board.

And, while mothers cry where it shows, fathers stand and beam -- outside -- and die inside. Fathers are men who give daughters away to other men, who aren't nearly good enough, so that they can have children that are smarter than anybody's.

Fathers fight dragons almost daily. They hurry away from the breakfast table, off to the arena which is sometimes called an office or "The Streets." There, with callused hands, they tackle the dragon with three heads: weariness, works, and the public. And they never quite always win the fight, but they never give up and go out every day starting all over again.

Knights in shining armor, fathers in shiny trousers. There's little difference as they march away each workday. I don't know where a father goes when he dies, but I've an idea that, after a good rest, wherever it is, he won't just sit on a cloud and wait for the girl he loved and the children she bore. He'll be busy there too -- repairing the stars, oiling the gates, improving the streets, smoothing the way.

May God bless all those men in our lives that proudly wear the title of father, dad or those that fill the role, **THEY ARE SPECIAL AND LET THEM KNOW IT!**

And before we close, how about a little humor from the "Moshe Files" to keep you smiling.

"With Age Comes Wisdom"

A guy is 72 years old and loves to fish. He was sitting in his boat

the other day when he heard a voice say, "Pick me up." He looked around and couldn't see anyone. He thought he was dreaming when he heard the voice say again, "Pick me up."

He looked in the water and there, floating on the top, was a frog. The man said, "Are you talking to me?"

The frog said, "Yes, I'm talking to you. Pick me up, then kiss me and I'll turn into the most beautiful woman you have ever seen. I'll make sure that all your friends are envious and jealous because I will be your bride!"

The man looked at the frog for a short time, reached over, picked it up carefully, and placed it in his front breast pocket. Then the frog said, "What, are you nuts? Didn't you hear what I said? I said kiss me and I will be your beautiful bride."

He opened his pocket, looked at the frog and said, "Nah, at my age I'd rather have a talking frog."

With age comes wisdom. On behalf of all the chaplains, may G-d bless you, keep you safe, and always keep you in His loving care. Should you need an ear to listen or shoulder to lean on or perhaps have some good humor to share, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

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FATHER DAN
BRANDT

One more shout-out to all who attended the sold-out Police Chaplains Ministry fundraiser at Klairmont Collections at the end of April! I am grateful to all our volunteers and raffle prize donors, who made this event such a great success. We raised some funds and had a lot of fun supporting our outreach to the Gold Star Families. What a cool museum this is, right on the northwest side of Chicago! If you haven't been there, I highly recommend a visit. You'll find a link on our website.



I would like to also recognize Binny's Beverage Depot and LaVilla Pizzeria for the generous discounts they gave us on food and drink. Thank you to the bagpipes and drums of the Chicago Garda, and The Road Taken, a VERY talented – especially their guitarists! – rock and roll band made up entirely of CPD members. The band accepts bookings and can be easily found on social media.

Thanks, also, to all who participated in the St. Jude march last month! It was so nice to return to the downtown area. After many years of being tucked away on Museum Campus Drive,

I am thrilled to share our pride of service with ALL of Chicago, as well as tourists. Judging by the much larger contingent of officers marching this year – some dedicated members on furlough, vacation, or even medical leave – this change of venue was very welcome!

Also last month, Rabbi Moshe Wolf and I had the annual privilege of presiding over the Chicago Gearheads car blessing at Bunker Hill Woods Forest Preserve. It was a beautiful morning and a great opportunity to memorialize deceased members while praying for safe travels this hot-rodding season.



If you'd like information about the Gearheads, you can visit their link on our website.

On Memorial Day, St. John Cantius Parish hosted a wiffle ball game between their priests and some local 012th district offi-

cers. Both vocations are programmed the same, so how fitting is it that these servants of God should compete on the baseball (wiffle ball) field?!

Thank you to ALL our parishes who so regularly and generously show their support of our men and women in blue! For a list of parishes who invite me to offer Blue Masses, see the police masses link on our website. If your parish is not listed there, feel free to ask your pastor to be added!

This month Police Chaplains Ministry hosts hundreds of our beloved Gold Star Families on their 27th annual luncheon cruise aboard the Spirit of Chicago. If you would like to help underwrite the cost of this outing, feel free to donate via our website or by mailing a check to Police Chaplains Ministry, 1140 W. Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, IL 60607.

This was an unfortunate yet nice sign to stumble upon.



Thank you to our friends at St. Catherine of Alexandria Catholic Church in Oak Lawn for remembering our brother Luis and for their constant support of the police!

The next Upper Room Club session, where we discuss current events as they relate to our faith and profession, will be held Thursday, June 13, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the northwest side back yard of one of our “regulars.” If you’re interested in attending, please let me know so I can share details.

On Sunday, June 16, we will celebrate our annual Father’s Day Mass at 10:00 a.m. at Gold Star Families Memorial and Park. As it is an outdoor venue, if the weather looks questionable, please call (773) 550-2369 that morning to make sure the Mass is on. You are welcome to bring folding chairs or a blanket and even a picnic lunch for after Mass.

I will be offering a Blue Mass at St. Giles Parish in Oak Park on Sunday, June 30, at 10:30 a.m. Another is scheduled on St. Michael’s feast day on Sunday, Sept. 29, at 9:30 a.m. at St. Benedict Parish in Blue Island. As always, all are welcome (no matter your faith tradition) to join us in praying with and for our officers.

Keep up with all of the above and LOTS more on our website (www.ChicagoPCM.org).

Thank you for doing God’s work! I leave you with this Irish blessing: As you slide down the banister of life, may the splinters be pointed DOWNWARD!

Fr. Dan Brandt, Directing CPD Chaplain

773/550-2369 (cell/text)

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Nominated by
Police Officer Daniel Lopez #3477
Police Officer Sean Murray #13686 010th District Unit Rep

In the early morning hours on Oct. 29, 2023, at the location of 1258 S. Pulaski Ave, units responded to a Shot Spotter alert of gunshots. As units began to arrive on scene, security related that rounds were fired inside the bar after a male subject was asked to leave the party. While on scene, more gunshots were fired outside the location prompting units to call a 10-1. OEMC related that multiple callers reported a short man was observed retrieving a firearm from his vehicle and shooting in the direction of the bar. The offender was then observed fleeing the scene southbound in the alley. After a brief foot pursuit, the offender was placed into custody and a FN FNP-357, semi-automatic handgun with a defaced serial number was recovered from the offender's front pants pocket. A show up was conducted,



and the offender was positively identified by witnesses and victims on scene. Fifteen gunshot victims were transported to area hospitals from the scene. The follow-up investigators conducted hours of interviews with the victims. They presented the case to felony review and the offender was charged with 15 Counts of Attempted Murder, 15 Counts of Agg Batt/ Firearm, 1 Count UUW by a Felon, 1 Count of Unlawful Discharge of a Firearm into a Building. Amazingly the offender did not possess a valid FOID card or CCL.

It is with great appreciation that Chicago John Dineen Lodge #7 presents the Distinguished Service Award to these officers. Thanks for a job well done.

Chicago Lodge 7 Awards



Nominated by
Lieutenant Jason Brown #668 009th District

On Sept. 10, 2023, at the location of 1200 W. Pershing RD, units responded to an OEMC call of attempted suicide in progress. The caller related that a male subject was hanging over the bridge and could jump. Officers Martinez-Guzman and Rodak arrived on scene and observed the male subject dangling from the overpass 60 feet above traffic. The officers notified EMS and quickly took up a dialogue with the subject. Officer Rodak utilized her CIT training and Officer Martinez-Guzman translated when needed. The officers continued to speak with the male subject until he stepped back from



the ledge at which point Officer Rodak bear hugged the subject and pulled him to safety. The officers turned the male subject over to the hospital at which point they learned that he had previous suicide attempts by slashing his wrists and a debilitating form of dementia. Due to the officers' quick actions a communication skill, the sanctity of human life was preserved that day.

It is with great appreciation that Chicago John Dineen Lodge #7 presents these officers with the Life Saving award.

Chicago Lodge 7 Awards



Nominated by
Sergeant Gabriel Campos #2153

On Aug. 20, 2022, at the location of 615 W. 89th Street, officers arrived on scene to an assault in progress job. The officers entered a chaotic scene with multiple gunshot victims. The officers began to assess the victims' injuries while attempting to gather information about the offender. The officers applied a chest seal to one gunshot victim and a quick clot gauze to the second victim. The officers continually assessed the second victim and performed CPR on him when his condition deteriorated. These officers were met with a large crowd and maintained the presence of mind to triage and



render first aid but also to keep the scene under control, locate a weapon for processing and recovery and gained crucial information on the offender involved. Although the second victim succumbed to his injuries, these officers followed the department's core values of sanctity of life.

It is with great appreciation that Chicago John Dineen Lodge #7 presents these officers with the Distinguished Service Award.

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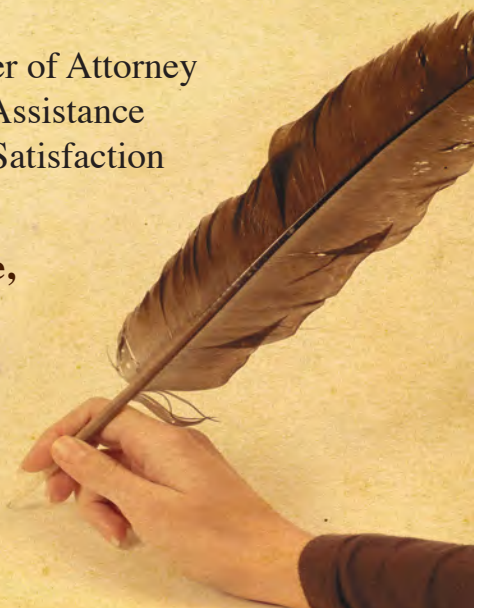


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Chicago Lodge 7 Awards

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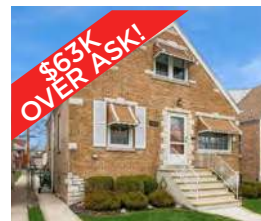
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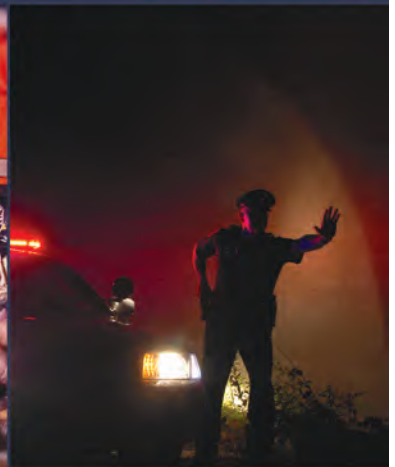
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Memorial Service

The two-week run of memorial events in May means so much to the families of those lost in the line of duty and those officers who will honor them forever

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

From the intimate gathering at the Lodge 7 memorial, from the hundreds who attend the Illinois Police Officers Memorial and from the nearly 30,000 in Washington, D.C. for National Police Week, compassion comes in an overwhelming supply. And that compassion can be an elixir for family members of officers lost in the line of duty, those whose names are added to the memorial walls in any and all of these venues.

Having seen what transpires at the memorials of May, Kenyatta Gaines can attest to the effect of the compassion. She has escorted family members when she was assigned to special functions. She has shared her ultra-sweet singing voice at performances throughout National Police Week, like the stage at the Candlelight Vigil in front of the 30,000 people who attend each year. And she has offered specially chosen tunes of honor for Lodge's 7 memorial.

So allow Gaines to articulate why the memorials are so powerful, why members do attend and why they need to attend as often as possible. Why that compassion means so much to the families of the fallen.

"These families experienced a loss, and the gap that is created from the loss is so devastating that they are rarely able to compartmentalize how they really feel," she explains. "So within this month or within the acknowledgement of Police Week, there are so many people that they feel very loved upon and supported, and the loss is no longer just their loss."

All officers should know that they give these families somebody to lean on, and that is reinforced during the May memorials, which also include the annual Saint Jude Parade and the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation's Run to Remember. The love and honor from the profession help them get through their pain and grief and let them know that their fallen officers will always be remembered for that sacrifice.

As one who has been through it, Gold Star Families Chair Ma-

ria Marmolejo relates that the presence at these memorials provides the honor that makes them special.

"You do remember the types of ceremonies, and even though some people will never understand the type of loss that I've gone through, they remember that I lost somebody very important," she adds.

Attending a memorial — being there — meets the request all officers would have if they are ever lost in the line of duty: Take care of my family.

But it also shines a light on a fallen officer that can be eternal. And makes it personal for the family members with all the honor.

And if any officer has a doubt about how far that compassion goes, consider the text message that retired CPD Commander Maureen Biggane, the director of operations for the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation, received after speaking at the Lodge 7 memorial on May 8.

"The family member said, 'Your words were so heartfelt, I truly felt them,'" she reports. "I said, 'I hope that you know, I'm just a representative of scores and scores of people who feel for you, who support you, who love you.'"





Etched for Her Memory

Feeling the love for Aréanah through the memorial tributes finally being called and inscribed

Dionne Mhoon sees the name of her daughter Aréanah Preston inscribed on the Wall at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, where she wrote a special message.

BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

During National Police Week, the Wall at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial overflows with artifacts and tributes of honor, remembrance and recognition for those lost in the line of duty. Especially the fallen from the past year, including etchings that family members make of the names of their loved ones inscribed on the Wall.

The true start of Police Week 2024 fell on Mother's Day, and that's when Dionne Mhoon and her family first visited the spot on the Wall where the name of her beloved daughter Aréanah Preston is inscribed. Dionne left a mark there that so poignantly captured the love Aréanah spread to everybody she ever met.

Above a yellow etching, the words are written:

"The one who first called me mother."

And with "Mother's Day" and "5/12/24," it is signed, "Love Mommie."

"There were a lot of emotions. I couldn't believe her name was up with all these other people," Dionne explained. "I think it reflects what I've poured into her and she was just trying to pour into the world."

Almost a year after losing Aréanah, here we were, falling in love with her all over again. From the Illinois Police Officers Memorial to the Lodge 7 Memorial to the events of Police Week in Washington, D.C., Dionne of course shed some tears, missing Aréanah and sharing "how I'm not supposed to be here."

But the essence of the memorials touched her, too. Seeing

Aréanah's name inscribed at each of these memorials seemed to elevate Dionne and her family, knowing that her police family will forever remember, love and revere her daughter as the star beyond the stars.

"It's amazing how they've organized this. It's amazing how many people are a part of this, and all these officers deserve that," noted Dionne as she sat with her family under a setting sun, waiting for the Candlelight Vigil at Police Week.

In a couple of hours, Aréanah's name would arise again when read during the Roll Call of Heroes with the others lost in 2023. And that seemed to provide the family with a perspective on how she will be remembered.

"All of them deserve to be honored big like this," Dionne added. "They made the ultimate sacrifice to lay their lives on the line for us, so they deserve all of this and more."

Sitting next to Dionne were her daughters Amyrah and Amiyah Preston, Aréanah's twin little sisters.

As she observed the thousands of other family members gathering for the Vigil, Amiyah indicated that it reminded her about how Aréanah "wanted to be a police officer. She was so true.

She was in it for the difference-making."

Being amid the law enforcement memorials inspired Amyrah to recall how her sister loved waking up and getting ready to go to work. How she put on her vest and headed out to make connections with other officers and the community she was so devoted to. And that smile that was Aréanah's calling card.



"When I see her smile, I think of all of the jokes she's cracked, Amyrah described. "I think of just what a ball of light she is. So, yeah, every time I see it, I feel like I get reminded of the ball of light that she is and just her energy to be around."

Amiyah was able to feel the power of Police Week and the memorials when she saw her sister's name on the Wall. This is what every officer should, and most likely does, feel when being here.

"It's definitely life-changing," she said. "I really have no words."

Amyrah did have some words.

"It is really beautiful, and just seeing how so many cops are behind cops and how it is a big family," she complimented. "I mean, I feel that unity, and it just makes me feel, in a sense, at home and closer to Aréanah for sure."

Chicago Police Officer D.J. Smalarz escorted Dionne and her family through all the memorials. He was Aréanah's partner when she was lost, and being a part of all this enabled Smalarz to see a part of his profession that added to the light coming out of the loss.

"Being here, it's been amazing. We're all police officers, and we all come from that family. So it's like we understand and see the same thing, and it's amazing," he related. "So, yeah, definitely for the new officers, come check it out because you never know what the next day could give you."

The memorials make everybody miss Aréanah, of course. As the Candlelight Vigil loomed and more than 30,000 candles would soon be raised for her and all those lost in the line of duty, it helped remind how Aréanah was dedicated, motivated, strong, undefeated and optimistic.

"She was worth a million, a million lights," Dionne praised with a smile she obviously bequeathed to her daughter. And as these weeks confirmed to her how Aréanah was so very powerful in her words and actions, and so determined, Dionne shared how this all made her feel.

"If there's another word for proud, we'll use that," Dionne said. "I'm uber proud."



Aréanah Preston's family with the CPD Honor Guard by the reflecting pool in front of the U.S. Capitol.



Dionne Mhoon places a flower by Aréanah's name at the Illinois Police Officers Memorial in Springfield.



Dionne Mhoon is escorted into the National Police Officers' Memorial Service.



Milena Vasquez shows the shirt she had made to wear to the Candlelight Vigil.

Pride Along

Vasquez-Lasso family feels the tributes flowing through the police memorials

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

Rising from the somberness of the police memorials — bursting, really — came the exultation emblazoned on the shirt Melina Vasquez had custom-made to wear to the Candlelight Vigil at National Police Week on May 13.

“Honoring My Husband. My Hero. Andres Vasquez. EOW 03/01/23.”

Along with the shirt, adorned with stars and stripes and a thin blue line underscoring “My Hero,” Melina showed her beautiful smile and let some pride accessorize her ensemble. The pledge of “Always remembered, never forgotten” that Milena declared in her tribute to Andres at his funeral certainly reverberated with this moment, and with all that Milena, Andres’ mother, Rocio Lasso, and the rest of the family experienced at the Illinois Police Officers Memorial, the Lodge 7 Memorial and throughout so much of National Police Week in Washington, D.C.

“Yeah. I think it’s kind of emotional because you just remember your loved one, but also I’m so happy to be here to honor him,” Milena shared after the state memorial in Springfield. “It is important because we remember all the fallen officers. And it’s important to remember the sacrifice they made for us, for our families, for the City and for the country.”

Being part of the events that Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) hosted for family members of the fallen in D.C. led Milena to see the custom shirt being made. To her amazement, it took about four minutes to print it, just in time to wear it to the Vigil.

The Vasquez-Lasso family’s strength and kinship were infectious during the memorial events. In Springfield, State Comptroller Susana Mendoza reached out to the family during her speech with a personal greeting in Spanish and a hug for Melina afterward. At the Lodge 7 Memorial, Rocio and Andres’ sister, Carolina Vasquez, knelt at the Wall in the courtyard to peel back that blue tape, seemingly with the appreciation for the way the FOP, the Department and the City continue to honor Andres.

Throughout the events of National Police Week, the Vasquez-Lasso family seemed to revel when the CPD Pipes and Drums played and the CPD Honor Guard performed a special tribute to them. It was hard to tell what brought more smiles to the group: the barrage of hugs from officers or the many photo ops with the banner the Department had made showing Andres and his star #7649.

“They describe him all the time like he was, so they make me feel happy, those people,” Milena confirmed.

The day before the Vigil, the family made its first visit to the Wall at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. On panel 31 East, Andres’ name is inscribed, and they made etchings of it along with posting tributes to him, as is the tradition of National Police Week.

“It’s emotional to see his name there,” Milena added. “But it was good.”



The CPD Honor Guard with the Vasquez-Lasso family at the U.S. Capitol. Lasso Peace Officers Memorial: Rocio Lasso, left, and Milena Vasquez, right, are escorted into the National Peace Officers Memorial Service.



Some family members will say they can feel the presence of their loved ones at the Wall. Milena shared that she feels that presence every time she sees a Chicago Police Department beat car.

"I don't know how to describe that, but I feel something," she explained. "I feel, like, something in my stomach."

Andres' presence seems to be omnipresent. While chatting at the Vigil, Milena shared how the dog that he brought home for them has taken on some of his personality. Nala, named after the character in the "Lion King," is always on the go with crazy energy, just like Andres.

"He wanted a big dog who could run with him," Milena detailed. "Now, she is in training to become a service dog."

Rising from somberness, Milena and the Vasquez-Lasso family found more reasons to be proud of Andres and his profession. She noted how beautiful it was that each family member at the Vigil received a rose and how much it meant to her to represent alongside all the family members in the country.

She acknowledged that hearing his name during the Vigil's Roll Call of Heroes, which names all the fallen officers, would be emotional and that she had to be prepared. But within it was the legacy that Andres created.

"I know he's watching," Milena declared. "And that he's so proud to be a policeman and serve."



Milena Vasquez receiving a special greeting from Comptroller Susana Mendoza.

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An Emotional Journey Years in the Making

Detective Todd Gillerlain's family feels the honor of his name finally being called and inscribed

■ BY DAN CAMPANA

Known as the anchor of his family, Chicago Police Detective Todd Gillerlain left an undeniable hole in the lives of his loved ones when he died in 2020.

Making things more difficult for his wife, Regina, his siblings and many others was that Gillerlain's death occurred in the early stages of the pandemic. That meant no wake and no funeral services — just a procession past the family home and an online memorial.

Only 48 years old, Gillerlain succumbed to complications from an on-the-job injury he suffered toward the end of his 23-year career. Within weeks of the fourth anniversary of Gillerlain's passing, he was officially honored as part of the ceremonies at the Illinois Police Officers Memorial in Springfield, the National Police Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C., and at Lodge 7.

"It's overwhelming," Regina Gillerlain said of the recognition for her husband. "But it's beautiful. It's very touching. It's a great honor to be here and see him being remembered now."

In the simplest sense, Todd Gillerlain loved being a cop, helping people, and the sense of brotherhood with his blue family. His selflessness and a well-known sense of humor were what stood out among those who knew him best, something that Regina and the rest of Todd's family heard about in abundance during the three memorials.

"It was fun to hear the stories from his workmates that painted a picture of his character and showcased his desire to help people. He cared more about others than he did himself," Tim Gillerlain shared about his brother.

In Washington, D.C., hours before Todd's name would be read during the 36th Annual Candlelight Vigil, Tim looked around at the hundreds of families gathering to remember their fallen officers. He described realizing how many fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters had been taken too soon as an "oddly comforting" feeling.

"I thought [the] Illinois [memorial] was overwhelming. Then, to come here and see this many more people share this common bond that none of us wanted, it's made me find emotions I didn't know I had. The fact this exists proves there's good people in the world," Tim explained.

Teri Gillerlain said the passage of time between her brother's





death and his being memorialized provided a unique perspective for her and others on their journey of grief.

"I'm super grateful that we've had a little bit of time to heal so we can handle this with a little bit more grace and a little deeper appreciation," Teri offered. "Todd is not a front-and-center guy, so it's perfect that he's historical."

Reflecting on the total experience in the nation's capital — from seeing Todd's name on the Memorial, to the Vigil, even arriving at the airport — Tim and Teri said they walked away feeling an even greater connection to the police family their brother valued so much. But they each continue to cope with the thought that none of this is real.

For Teri, the Illinois memorial proved to be a shock to her system because she carried this "unrealistic hope that maybe I wake up in this bad dream and he walks through the door."

"It wasn't until after Springfield, when I was driving home, that I was like, 'He's not coming home,'" Teri added.

The prolonged journey and fresh feelings of grief were tempered somewhat by the embrace of the law enforcement families, including those taking part in the somber events, which don't focus on how an officer died, but how they lived.

"The love and support from others who have gone through it or from CPD is just amazing, and I'm so grateful for it. I knew this was a big deal, but I didn't know it was this big a deal," Teri noted as she prepared for the Candlelight Vigil.

Todd being honored multiple times over two weeks both at home and nationally evoked bittersweet emotions that were evident on Regina, Tim and Teri's faces. He might have been one of 282 names read at the Vigil that night, but he was special — a difference-maker, a pillar of the neighborhood and a rock for his family.

"He was one of a kind, and he was amazing. I miss him," Tim stated.



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Speaking volumes at the state memorial

The words that come when it's no longer just the grief talking

■ BY DAN CAMPANA

The Illinois Police Memorial, with the sun reflecting off its black marble facade that bears the names of the fallen, drew a steady flow of visitors, as it usually does on the first Thursday of May.

Among the grieving family members, onlookers paying their respects and police officers from around the state in their dress uniforms who paused at the memorial, Elizabeth French approached with a yellow rose in hand.

"Hey, baby girl," she said as she placed the rose by the engraved name of her daughter, Ella French.

That simple yet heart-wrenching greeting put the day into context for the hundreds who gathered on the Capitol lawn to honor officers lost in service to their communities. Two years earlier, Elizabeth French was seated in front of the stage as Ella was enshrined on the memorial, but this year she took the podium as the keynote speaker to deliver a powerful message of love, grief and support for police who carry on the watch for their brothers and sisters in blue who were taken too soon.

As any proud mother would, French highlighted Ella's journey to becoming a Chicago Police Officer. Ella, she praised, was an outgoing, independent, loving child who could be a "drama queen" and tested her mother's patience during the challenging high school years yet had a personality that connected with anyone and an inclination to help people.

The Springfield audience saw French's pride well up when she talked about Ella joining CPD in 2018. French's tone shifted as she spoke of August 2021 and the day Ella died and how she has been able to move forward.

"Since Ella's death, I have learned a few lessons," she stated. "The first lesson is only two words ... grief sucks. Another lesson I learned — I will never forget Ella on that metal table that night, but that loss was not the worst feeling in the world. Missing her every day for the rest of my life is much, much worse than that."

From there, French shared the poignant words of a police officer's poem about Ella and recited lyrics from the song "Everything I Own" by Bread to express the depths of the hole left in her heart after losing Ella. She struck a different chord as she spoke about, and to, the police officers who have supported her — and every officer who continues doing the job amid immense challenges and pressure.

"When Ella became a Chicago Police Officer, I knew that she had joined a family, but another thing I have learned since her death is how amazing a family the Chicago Police Department, all law enforcement and first responders really are," she told the crowd. "The love and support I have received has given me the strength to move forward and is something I will never be able to repay."

Her words then turned reassuring.



"So many people from all walks of life have reached out to tell me that the service of men and women in law enforcement is appreciated. You are supported and you are loved. Please take pride in yourselves and your commitment to make the communities that you serve a safer place," French shared.

Then, in her parting thoughts, she spoke directly to officers about being there for their peers and never taking for granted the important people in their lives.

"I ask the women and men here to encourage and support one another," she said. "Let the people who you serve with know how much you appreciate them. And I ask you, all of you, to tell your loved ones how much you love them every day. I am forever grateful that my last words to Ella were 'I love you.'"

Following the ceremony, French lightheartedly mentioned that Ella would have been laughing at her because public speaking is "so out of my comfort zone." Yet French earned praise for her courage to step up with a message of inspiration amid her pain.

"I wanted these men and women to know, it seems bad ... but there are more people that support them than they realize," French reminded.



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A Celebration of Lives

Lodge 7 memorial accentuates how fallen Chicago Police Officers continue to live on

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

The celebration of life known as the Chicago Lodge 7 memorial service had reached a point of contentment, maybe even satisfaction, when family members of fallen officers hung out at the Lodge well into the afternoon. The 90-minute ceremony had passed, the only moment of shedding tears when the family members of Andres Vasquez-Lasso, Aréanah Preston and Todd Gillerlain pulled the blue tape on the Lodge memorial wall to reveal the names of their loved ones inscribed from here to eternity.

The conversations spoke of a personalized experience that not only acknowledged the passing of each of these heroes but the lives that were lived. Something maybe only given at the Lodge 7 memorial event, or at least best given on this May 8 afternoon.

"The families get to understand that not only will my office be remembered nationally and statewide, they will be remembered here at home," explained Kanyatta Gaines, the Lodge 7 field rep who once again added to the pomp by performing a rousing rendition of the National Anthem. "Having something tangible and local that they can drive to and say, 'You know what, this sacrifice is visible to everyone that comes across it here at home, too. I think it does a lot for them.'"

The way the names of these officers are etched in stone at Lodge 7 elevates the way they are etched in memory. Maria Marmolejo, the chair of Chicago's Gold Star Families whose hus-

band, Eduardo, was added to that wall five years ago, attests to how the Lodge 7 memorial gives families a comfort from their loved ones always being honored.

"Because, in our eyes, they're never, ever going to be forgotten," she declared. "Freaking ever."

Maria related how so much of that comes from the way family members are treated and the way their officers are honored. She added that Lodge 7 President John Catanzara has an acute understanding of the loss they feel, and that led him to wanting to having family members speak during the service as part of this celebration of life.

"Most often, some of them don't want to speak," she said. "But when they do, oh my God, is it powerful."

Members of the Gillerlain, Vasques-Lasso and Preston families were featured speakers on a program that included an honor roll of those celebrating their service. Retired CPD Commander Maureen Biggane, now the director of operations for the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation, Caitlyn Brennan, the executive director of the 100 Club of Illinois and the superintendent each added praise for these officers who made the ultimate sacrifice, but also extolled the family members for their strength.

The expressions from the family members were not about reliving the tragedy. Rather, they were part of the celebration by allowing some grief to pass and carrying on with the Lodge's support, and really, that of the entire Department, City and pro-



Dionne Mhoon, right, Rocio Lasso, center, and Carolina Vasquez stand in the courtyard at the Lodge 7 memorial service.



fession.

"It's 'I just refuse to let this define us,'" Maria stated. "And I think that's where my advice always is for any organization or people coming out for support. Let's try and inspire or even empower each other by giving each other choices and grace."

Having watched these family members and other Gold Star families at Lodge 7 memorials, Maria has seen how humbling the experience is and what it gives them.

"Man, my husband's name is on the wall, and that ain't going anywhere," she described. "The amount of support that I felt from them was beyond what I could ever expect from a stranger. It comes with the job, but it also comes into what means something to you, the encouragement and the empowerment from fellow officers that never knew my husband."

And, of course, one more indelible gift comes from an event like this.

"You get the local perspective, where you can actually unveil the name yourself," Maria added. "That has a special feeling to it, too."

When Biggane stepped to the podium, she started with comments about showing the Gold Star families that the sacrifice that their "warrior" made will never be forgotten. And that their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

Then, she saw something from that podium that enabled Biggane to witness what makes this service so important, so endearing.

"You look at them and you start to believe you know their loved one," she illuminated. "You know that officer because you see the strength in their family, you see the resilience and you see the courage. And that's inspiring to us."

Seeing the courage and resilience made this event a celebration of life as much as the remembrance. And made a statement that the Lodge will join, if not lead, the Department, the City and the profession in helping the family members shoulder the weight of their personal loss and carry on.

Which prompted Biggane to make another observation about the Lodge 7 memorial service.

"It's absolutely a celebration of life, seeing the officers continue on in their beautiful family members," she maintained. "We are all partners in the promise to uplift the families."



The name of Chicago Police Officer Todd Gillerlain inscribed on the wall at Chicago Lodge 7 is unveiled.



Dionne Mhoon reveals the name of her daughter Aréanah Preston inscribed on the wall at Lodge 7 memorial.



At the Lodge 7 memorial service, Rocio Lasso pulls back the tape to reveal the name of her son, Andres Vazques-Lasso, inscribed on the wall the FOP.



Another Stirring Performance

CPD Honor Guard once again delivers an unforgettable message about remembrance in Police Week competition

■ **BY DAN CAMPANA**

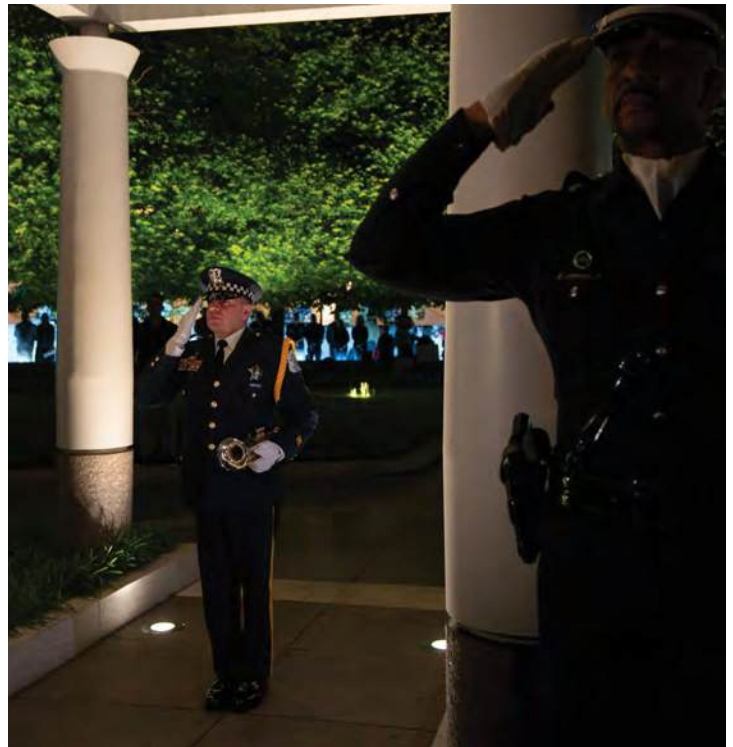
In a ferocious tone driven by emotion, Will Riga spoke of sacrifice and remembrance.

His words, forceful by design to leave a lasting impression, captured the attention of all watching. Pacing intently and raising his voice for emphasis, he made sure the words of the Chicago Police Honor Guard's tribute to their fallen brother and sister — Officers Andres Vasquez Lasso and Aréanah Preston — reached the heavens.

"We remain to carry on. We take their place. We save that place. Their sacrifice is a guiding light in the fog. We must carry on this fight," implored Riga, his voice echoing across Capitol Hill during the Steve Young National Honor Guard Exhibition and Tribute held during National Police Week.

The team's performance in the freestyle exhibition part of the competition included displays of Lasso and Preston's service vests and work boots, the raising of Chicago and American flags and a "Battlefield Cross" in honor of fallen military police. But it was the riveting monologues by Riga about Preston and by Rich Robles about Lasso that brought tears to the audience. These "fans" formed multiple rows lining all sides of the performance square because they always want to see what CPD has to offer to truly make a statement about the significance of their presence at National Police Week.

And the stirring tribute earned the Chicago Police Honor





Guard the Chief Judge Award.

After exhaling deeply and huddling with Preston's family, Riga once again used his eloquence to describe what it all meant.

"The competition is just a venue for us to express our love for our fallen officers and those that have given everything. That's what this is about," explained Riga, who has been on the honor guard for 15 of his 16 years with CPD. "If we win a medal, win a trophy, that's great, but ultimately our job here is to tell a story. It's to tell the story about the life of Aréanah and Andres."

To tell Lasso's story, Robles researched Lasso's own words from social media, while also incorporating something Lasso's wife, Milena Vasquez, said about her husband at his funeral: "Always remembered, never forgotten."

"We really dedicate ourselves to honoring our fallen officers and the connection that we have with those families over time," Robles shared. "We've been there for them at their worst time. And even months and years after that, we're still with them. So,

you feel that connection. We're part of a family now."

The hugs and tears shared with the Lasso and Preston families post-performance appeared cathartic for everyone. The honor guard missed the 2023 competition to be part of Preston's services, which further shaped the concept for this year's freestyle tribute.

Honor guard member Jordan Casey called it a full team effort to create the moving performance that exemplified the "Chicago Way" of storytelling. Casey credited Riga and Robles for stepping up without hesitation to be the voices that carried the tribute.

"We have a great crew, a great group of honor guard members," Riga explained. "You need to have the heart and soul of a warrior and the heart and soul to remember why we are here — it's for those Gold Star families and those members that made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty."





Tuning Up

CPD Pipes and Drums bands together to present rousing memorial performances

■ BY JULIA RICCIARDI

By the time the CPD Pipes and Drums May memorials tour hit Washington, D.C., for National Police Week, the band was smaller by a few players. One of the pipers was subpoenaed to testify in a murder trial. Another was recovering from surgery. And one of the drummers had rolled his ankle so bad that he might have torn some ligaments.

But their sound was no less reverberating. Even with only three pipers, a drummer and a bass drummer, the CPD players knew the need to hit a high note for the National Police Week Memorial Pipe Band Competition in front of the U.S. Capitol reflecting pool on May 14.

"Every year, when I play at this competition, I'm playing to reach out," proclaimed Amy Prohaska, a piper who has been on for 10 years and works in 005. "I don't have any words. I just have my music, and I hope it touches the families."

Playing for the families was the reason the CPD Pipes and Drums went on with the show. With just five players, they were not eligible to compete. So the judges decided that the CPD band should take the stage first and get everybody warmed up for the event.

The exhibition of their talents featured a three-song set of "La Boum," "Lord Lovat's Lament" and "MacPherson's Lament." Their performance showed that when it comes to playing for a memorial, you can't keep a good band down.

"All in all, the day is not about the competition, but about the families who we are here to represent," declared William Schield, the drum major, who is a retired sergeant and has been with the band since 2007.

Winning the competition was not important to the players. They were grateful for the opportunity to play to remember those who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

"It means a lot to me," expressed Joe Gallardo, a drummer with the band since 2003. "Especially to be here, playing in this type of an environment, because we're not just representing our band and the City and the CPD, but all the Gold Star members and their families on top of that."

Gallardo explained that since they were playing in front of pipes and drums bands from around the country, this performance was especially nerve-racking. But once they marched in and began playing, the stress was gone and the performance came naturally. Playing for the families of their fallen brothers and sisters at National Police Week was all the inspiration they needed to give a stellar performance.

"The larger picture is, we are a family of like-minded people," Schield noted. "We are not doing it because we are all Irish. We are not doing it because we are bagpipers. We do it because we are family. It is just an honor to be able to use the talents that we have to honor our families."

The CPD Pipes and Drums were there to honor the families of the fallen at the state memorial in Springfield on May 2. As the family members exited the service at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, the band had formed a circle in the street in front to accompany the procession.

On May 8, the band hit another high note by playing at the Chicago Lodge 7 Memorial Service. After performing the "Anthem Set," they culminated the service with a tribute to the families by playing "Amazing Grace."

"I hope they can hear me and know that I'm here, and we're all here, and we all put in our time and donate our time to be there for them, and we just hope they hear that," Prohaska added. "I hope they hear me and know that we're all here for them."





Sung for the Heroes

Ostrowski provides exclamation points to state memorial

■ BY DAN CAMPANA

Across his years with the Chicago Police Department, including serving above and beyond with the CPD Honor Guard, Mike Ostrowski attended nearly 100 police officer funerals, including those of two friends, academy classmates who died within three years of graduation.

To continue that commitment, Ostrowski continues to take part in the Illinois Police Memorial Ceremony. This year, Ostrowski spoke during the event, using his moment at the podium to point out who the real heroes are — even calling out elected officials seated onstage to look into the crowd to understand better the people who protect our communities.

“All of you are behind me so you can see the uniforms in front of you. Nice sharp uniforms, nice sharp stars. There’s more to it. What makes that uniform click is the individual inside,” declared Ostrowski, speaking with no notes and right from the heart as always. “That’s a human being with heart and drive.”

Denouncing the notion that athletes are heroes whose physical prowess is equated to courage, Ostrowski praised the families of fallen officers seated in the front rows for the heart they show as they carry on after losing their loved one.

“It takes a lot. Your hearts are crushed, but you show the drive to be here, the heart to be here,” Ostrowski said pointedly. “As an honor guard member, I got to see what real heroes are. They’re not our athletes, far from it. They’re our Gold Star families.”

Ostrowski shared a story of standing watch at Gold Star Memorial Park during the annual 24-hour vigil by the Chicago Police Honor Guard. During that post, the elements threw everything at him — driving rain, a forceful wind whipping the memorial’s water at him and the rolling thunder of the storm pounding above him. Then the sprinklers turned on to further soak him wetter than wet. But his purpose in that moment outweighed any personal discomfort.

The story culminated with an opening in the sky letting light

through. Ostrowski equated his waterlogged march to the storm every police officer faces.

“The political winds will blow you around. However, because of who you are and what you stand for, you will keep moving forward,” Ostrowski submitted. “You will get drenched with criticism and insult, but because of who you are and what you stand for, you will keep moving forward. And up high, make no mistake, that opening in the sky, that’s all of you. You are the brightness in the storm.”

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Run For Their Lives

Chicago Police Memorial Foundation Run to Remember is once again a bright day for families of fallen officers



Taste of FOP

■ BY MIKE GARZA

■ BY GEORGE F. GILL II

On Wednesday May 22, the Lodge hosted another Taste of FOP event, and it was impressive! There were many Police organizations with a wide selection of food, being a thorough investigator, I tried to sample everything presented. The Lodge set up a large tent in the courtyard and the weather gave us a beautiful day to indulge our appetites. My first stop was at the Shomrim table and they brought hot dogs and fries, the hot dogs were nice and snappy and the fries had what we call in the business "good grease". I next got a corned beef sandwich from Emerald Society table, nice thick pieces that I threw some mustard on, good stuff. Next, I tried the spicy catfish and jerk chicken that NOBLE had brought, the catfish was moist and firm with a medium spice. They also had a nice cabbage mix, I saw carrot and greens mixed in there too. It was absolutely delicious, I wish I got more. The Polish American Police table had all the first-rate stuff I always expect, Polish sausage and sauerkraut with perogi. Good stick to your ribs food. The Puerto Rican Police Association presented Arroz Con Gandules (rice with pigeon peas) and Lechon (slow roasted pork). This is a delicious dish that you cannot get too often, I really enjoyed the deeply aromatic and tender pork. The Italian Police Association had sausage and peppers and a tray of meatballs, Phil Tenerelli, who was sitting there said he made everything himself. I got to be skeptical with Phil, besides being of great assistance to all FOP events, he's too busy to be slaving over a hot stove. The food was really excellent. The German Police had some nice tasty sausage featuring two types, of those two I really liked the veal sausage, delicately spiced with a buttery flavor. A side dish of German potato salad and my plate was complete. I went to the Hellenic American Police table and had Greek fries (covered in feta cheese) and a pork skewer and also the chicken skewer, cut nice and bite sized, served on a stick, you gotta love it. The pork was tender and juicy with light seasoning. The Assyrian American Police association served up a huge plate of Chicken shawarma, falafel, rice wrapped in grape leaves, and so much more. A gorgeous display of traditional foods, delicious and impressive. The Romanian American Police had little bites of everything, I especially liked the small meaty sausage they had, reminded me of the Serbian cevapi I ate for years living on the Eastside. Everyone at this table were really pleasant and friendly, I could see they were happy to be involved in our wonderful event. Now in all this eating there had to be some sacrifice, I saw the tasty meat being cooked and then everyone said the tacos were great, but I could not fit in anymore. Thank you HISLEA and LAPA for your participation. I was already bursting at the seams with the variety of super delicious foods. If I missed anyone, forgive me and I need to take a nap now. Thank you everyone for participating in the Taste of FOP, see you next year!



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