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PPOA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS OPEN MARCH 1

SEE PAGE 7



**CONTRACT
NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY**
SEE PAGE 5

**RETIREMENT
PLANNING WORKSHOP**
SEE PAGE 19

**HELP
PPOA MEMBERS
TRAGICALLY
IMPACTED
BY WILDFIRES**

SEE PAGE 15

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Star & Shield is the official publication of the Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Association (PPOA). Opinions expressed by individual Board members or contributing authors in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the entire Board.

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Contents **STAR & SHIELD**

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025



11

Leadership

4 The Star & Shield Foundation: An Extension of Our Care | **Steve Johnson**

5 Contract Negotiations 2025 | **Wayne Quint**

6 Courage and Dedication Help Altadena Station Confront Catastrophic Wildfire | **Joe Walker**



14

Also Inside

8 Advocacy at the State Capitol

9 PPOA Board Welcomes Newest Director

10 Does Your PPOA Bulletin Board Need Attention?

11 PPOA Welcomes New LASD Sergeants

12 Proud to Support First Responders

14 Support for Members at the Department of Medical Examiner

16 Leadership Resources for PPOA Unit 612 Members

17 Fraternal Order of Police Reps Attend President's Inaugural Ball

18 Retirement ... Now What?

20 In Memoriam

21 End of Watch

24 The 2025 L.A. County Wildfires: A Test of Strength and Unity

25 Calendar of Events

25 Retiree Events

26 Don't Rely on Luck at Tax Time

27 Classifieds

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The Star & Shield Foundation: An Extension of Our Care

As a part of PPOA's Tradition of Success, we proudly take care of our members in numerous, unique ways. One way we extend care to our members is through our Star & Shield Foundation. Established in 2001, it has proudly raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to support charitable organizations and important causes, primarily focusing on the families of fallen officers. The emotional and financial obstacles family members confront in the face of a peace officer suddenly killed in the line of duty can be unfathomable.

It is an honor to serve as the chair of the Star & Shield Foundation's Board of Directors. Our capacity and function as a board are effective only because of the contributions of its directors, who dedicate countless hours throughout the year toward its success. Additionally, our key sponsors are essential partners in the execution of all the roles we undertake. Not only does the Foundation provide immediate and short-term funds to the survivors of our fallen, but it also helps them during the demanding schedule of memorial ceremonies at the county, state and national levels.

As PPOA president and chair of this Foundation, I have had the privilege of personally escorting family members to these events, including the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service in Washington, D.C. We assist the families with expenses such as travel and lodging, and quite literally,



Steve Johnson
PPOA President
Lieutenant, LASD
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whatever they need to make the experience heartfelt, memorable and dignified.

In January, we were all impacted by the catastrophic Eaton and Pacific Palisades wildfires. There were many fatalities, and thousands of structures were totally lost due to the severity of the fires, which were exacerbated by high winds. In addition to our support of the families of our fallen personnel, the Star & Shield Foundation exists to aid members experiencing other hardships, such as natural disasters. Within hours of these wildfires commencing on January 7, PPOA received the unfortunate news that several of our members endured the complete loss of their homes. We were able to quickly contact these members to offer our condolences for their loss.

We acknowledged to each member our profound relief that they all evacuated safely.

Through our Foundation, we provided immediate relief and support where needed. PPOA and the Star & Shield Foundation were beyond proud to support their initial road to recovery and

THROUGH OUR FOUNDATION, WE PROVIDED IMMEDIATE RELIEF AND SUPPORT TO MEMBERS AFFECTED BY THE EATON AND PACIFIC PALISADES WILDFIRES.

will continue to offer assistance through a multitude of resources available to us. Additionally, through our Foundation, we were able to respond to staging and Command Post locations throughout the county, where we provided personnel hot beverages and hot meals during their grueling 12-hour shifts.

In short, the Star & Shield Foundation is a pivotal part of the larger PPOA family and an extension of the care and concern we all share. Please don't hesitate to contribute to this incredible arm of support for our noble members at starandshieldfoundation.org/donate.

Until next time, be safe, look out for one another and we will see you very soon. 🇺🇸



PPOA staff members were honored to bring the PPOA barbecue trailer to the Zuma Beach Command Post on January 18 in order to provide support and freshly grilled meals for first responders working the Palisades fire. See more photos on page 12.

Contract Negotiations 2025

Every one of PPOA's labor Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) contracts with the County of Los Angeles expires this year.

By now, the PPOA Bargaining Unit (B/U) 612 (Sergeants and Lieutenants) MOU has expired, effective January 31. To be certain, the existing PPOA MOU for B/U 612 will continue to be valid as long as good-faith bargaining continues, which is presently the case between PPOA and the County. In fact, PPOA's sixth and seventh bargaining sessions (January 22 and February 3) will have occurred by the time you read this message. Please make sure to read each Saturday morning's Week in Review email for negotiation updates. If you are not receiving the Week in Review, please make sure you call the PPOA office and provide us with your non-LASD/LADA BOI email so we can input it into PPOA's database.

The Unit 612 negotiations team, chaired by President Steve Johnson, began the contract process with internal meetings with the PPOA negotiations team in April 2024. One of the first orders of business by the team was to receive valuable input from PPOA's LASD and LADA BOI Sergeants and Lieutenants. The team was committed to relying on their fellow B/U member responses to assist them in formulating contract proposals. An electronic survey was sent to our 612 members in July 2024, and in September 2024, PPOA and the County of Los Angeles held its first bargaining session to negotiate a successor MOU to the 2022–25 contract.

One welcomed change from the 2022–25 contract negotiations is that PPOA and the County will resume traditional, across-the-table, in-person collective bargaining. The last contract negotiations were, for the first time in PPOA's then-71-year history, conducted virtually due to pandemic concerns. To date, all seven bargaining sessions for our successor 2025 MOU have been in person. A respectful reminder: Contract negotiations with the County are confidential, so don't believe the many rumors that circulate during negotiations. PPOA — and *only* PPOA — will be your sole source of reliable and credible information throughout contract negotiations.

As we continue into 2025, PPOA's other B/Us will engage in good-faith negotiations:

- Unit 614 (Coroner and LASD): Criminalist, Criminalist Lab Technician, Forensic ID Specialist I and II, Senior Criminalist (expires September 30, 2025)
- Unit 621 (LASD): Civilian Investigator, Court Services Specialists, Crime Analyst, Custody Assistant, Law Enforcement Technician, Public Response Dispatcher



Wayne Quint Jr.
PPOA Executive Director
wquint@ppoa.com

I and II, Public Response Dispatcher Specialist, Security Assistant, Security Officer, Supervising Public Response Dispatcher (expires March 31, 2025)

- Unit 631 (Coroner): Coroner Investigator (expires September 30, 2025)
- Unit 632 (Coroner): Supervising Coroner Investigator I and II (expires September 30, 2025)

PPOA anticipates meeting with the B/U 621 negotiations team in March and the other B/Us in early summer.

Additionally, PPOA has already joined the other 14 County unions, consisting of 30,000-plus members who belong to the Coalition of County Unions (CCU), in negotiating a successor MOU to the 2022–25

Fringe Benefits contract, which expires March 31. Each union affiliated with the CCU has a maximum of three representatives at the CCU Fringe Benefits bargaining table. The CCU bargaining team negotiates with the County to determine the

PPOA WILL BE YOUR SOLE SOURCE OF RELIABLE AND CREDIBLE INFORMATION THROUGHOUT CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS.

County's financial contribution to the Choices Plan (medical, dental, etc.); the County's match to our Horizons Plan (deferred compensation plan); and paid time off and other provisions that fall outside of the respective unions' individual MOUs. Please access your B/U PPOA MOU and the Fringe Benefits MOU in the Contracts section of the members-only area at PPOA.com.

The working women and men of L.A. County deserve wage and benefit increases that allow them, at a minimum, to counter their significant losses in wage and medical purchasing power.

The County began its preliminary FY 2025–26 budgetary process in December. It is absolutely imperative that the Board of Supervisors recognizes and addresses as one of its most urgent priorities fair and reasonable successor MOU agreements for its represented employees. ♥

Courage and Dedication Help Altadena Station Confront Catastrophic Wildfire

Nothing could have prepared Altadena Station Crime Analyst Virginia Bustos for what she faced on January 8.

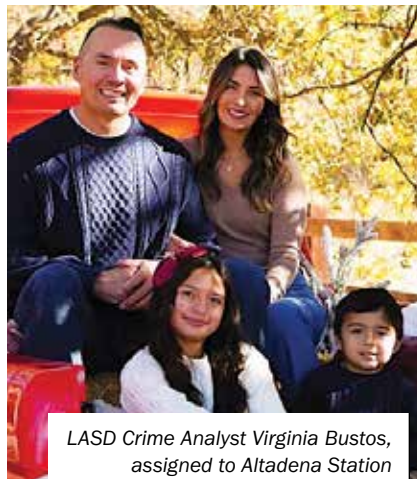
The longtime Unit 621 member has been an integral part of the Altadena Station Detective Bureau since 2009. During that time, she has worked with dozens of her sworn brothers and sisters to provide critical case support and help station personnel identify crime patterns, catch crooks and ensure the deputies at her station are fully equipped to fight crime and protect the citizens of Altadena.

Bustos is no stranger to being flexible about her job duties, and indeed, she has had one of the most colorful and interesting careers of any Unit 621 member. She worked for a couple years at the Sherman Block Building (the old Crime Assessment Center for us Department history nerds!), where she learned the ins and outs of the Crime Analyst job. When Altadena Station announced an opening in its Detective Bureau, she updated her already impressive resume and scheduled an interview.

Let me digress ... I later learned that we were both interested in the same position.

I had gone on a couple of ride-alongs at Altadena Station from my days as an RTO (PRD) and liked the fast-paced yet small intimacy of the place. Being the history buff that I am, I loved how old the building was and, most of all, welcomed the short commute. By pure coincidence, MTA Line 267 literally ran from in front of my home in Temple City to the front of the station. I could actually ride the bus to work! What a perfect job!

I underestimated how long it would take to get to the station, and in the pouring rain, I wandered into the station lobby soaking wet and 20 minutes late. I passed Virginia in the hallway and thought to myself, "She doesn't have a chance! I am way more experienced than her," and was sure I had a lock on the job.



LASD Crime Analyst Virginia Bustos, assigned to Altadena Station Detective Bureau



Joe Walker
PPOA Second Vice President
Crime Analyst, LASD
jwalker@ppoa.com

Well, the interviewers were not impressed with my plan to take the "267 bus" to work every day and may have been less than impressed that they had to dry themselves off with paper towels due to my failure to bring an umbrella. (Rule #1: Never water your interviewers.)

As you have already guessed, she got the job and recently celebrated 16 years at Altadena. In 2019, she was the guest of the government of the country of Chile, where she spoke on the importance of a 9-1-1 system and how data is used to combat crime. She taught Santiago police personnel many of the same skills she learned as a Crime Analyst with LASD.

The main Eaton fire started on Tuesday, January 7, and as Virginia ventured home, she could see smoke enveloping the 210 Freeway. On Wednesday, the fire got even closer, and the risks continued to grow. Soon, the station power was completely cut off, and she reported to nearby Crescenta Valley Station on Thursday. There, she accessed all available databases to assist Homicide Bureau with the grim task of searching homes for missing persons in the conflagration. She went house by house, cataloging the names of the residents and helping to identify the living and the lost — or worse.

As of this writing, Altadena Station is still without power, and our brave Unit 621 CAs, LETs and Crime Analysts are working tirelessly to serve the community. More on their efforts in future issues.

Questions or comments? Email me at jwalker@ppoa.com. 🇺🇸



The Eaton fire devastated the communities of Altadena and Pasadena, burning more than 14,000 acres and destroying over 7,000 structures.

PPOA



2025 College Scholarship Program

We are proud to announce that 12 scholarships will be available to help further education for PPOA members and their dependents.

Criteria and applications will be posted by March 1 on *PPOA.com*.

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 19.



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Advocacy at the State Capitol

President Steve Johnson and fellow representatives from the California Contract Cities Association (CCCA) met in Sacramento in January for the Annual CCCA Sacramento Legislative Tour. This event takes place in early January to coincide with the start of the new legislative session and provides CCCA members with an invaluable opportunity to meet with state legislators, leaders and constitutional officers. The CCCA represents 80 cities in and around Los Angeles County. Currently, 42 cities contract with LASD, which brings \$315 million in annual revenue to the Sheriff's Department.

President Johnson also met with fellow California Coalition of Law Enforcement Associations (CCLEA) representatives for their annual Executive Board Meeting and Legislative Reception. The reception provided labor leaders an opportunity to meet with senators and assemblymembers who author and vote on crucial legislation related to law enforcement.

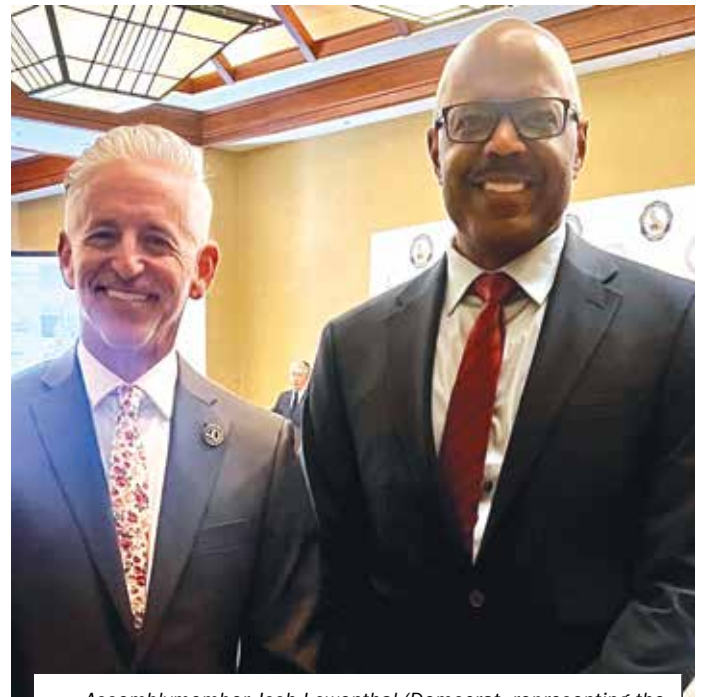
CCLEA is the state's largest law enforcement organization, representing more than 40 law enforcement associations and 150,000 peace officers. 🇺🇸



President Johnson, Assemblymember Jeff Gonzalez (Republican, representing the 36th District) and Executive Director Quint



Assemblymember Tom Lackey (Republican and former peace officer, representing the 34th District, including the Antelope Valley) and President Johnson



Assemblymember Josh Lowenthal (Democrat, representing the 69th District, including Carson and Avalon) and President Johnson

PPOA Board Welcomes Newest Director

Lieutenant Robert Weber was sworn in to a two-year term at the PPOA Board of Directors meeting in January. The 33-year County veteran brings a wealth of experience to the Board and is currently assigned to the Sheriff's Communication Center. 🇺🇸



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Does Your PPOA Bulletin Board Need Attention?

Have you checked the PPOA bulletin board at your unit recently? We want to ensure that the information posted on bulletin boards is relevant to our members. If your PPOA bulletin board needs attention, please send an email with your name, employee number and work location to rescalante@ppoa.com.



MYSTERY PHOTO



The first PPOA member to correctly identify where this photo was snapped will win a PPOA prize pack. One guess per member. Please email your answer to info@ppoa.com.

MEMBERS CAN WIN!

IT PAYS TO READ

STAR & SHIELD

THREE \$100 PRIZES

Every issue of *Star & Shield* will feature a different hidden word. The word will be used only once in the entire magazine — your challenge is to find it!

Members who find the hidden word and register through our website (PPOA.com) by the end of this month will be entered into a drawing for one of three \$100 prizes. Contest ends March 31, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. PT.

This month's hidden word is:

Unfathomable

Incapable of being fully explored or understood

Online registration only. Please do not call the PPOA office to register for contest.

PPOA Welcomes New LASD Sergeants

PPOA representatives proudly welcomed more than 30 newly promoted Sergeants to this Association on January 3. The Department's newest supervisors reported to Biscauiluz Center to pick up their new badges and were joined by President Steve Johnson and PPOA staff members to answer questions and ensure the Sergeants would be protected by union representation. 🇺🇸



Proud to Support First Responders

PPOA staff members were proud to bring the union barbecue trailer to the Zuma Beach Command Post in January in order to provide support and freshly grilled meals for PPOA members and fellow first responders from numerous agencies working tirelessly to safeguard residents and communities impacted by the Palisades fire. 🇺🇸





SAVE THE DATE!

PPOA

17TH ANNUAL

**Peace Officer
Memorial Golf
Tournament**

Monday, June 2

FRIENDLY HILLS COUNTRY CLUB, WHITTIER

Visit PPOA.com for
details and registration.



Support for Members at the Department of Medical Examiner

PPOA was proud to fire up our barbecue trailer for Department of Medical Examiner personnel. This yearly tradition of providing lunch is our way of acknowledging the invaluable work of our members at that Department, including PPOA Executive Board member/Coroner Investigator Joyce Kato. ❤️





Support PPOA Members **IMPACTED BY WILDFIRES**



PPOA extends heartfelt thoughts to all who have been affected by the devastating fires in Los Angeles County. A number of PPOA members have lost their homes, and President Steve Johnson has been able to contact and/or visit with them to provide support from this Association.

PLEASE VISIT
starandshieldfoundation.org/donate
to help us support PPOA members
who have endured tragic loss.

Donations to the Star & Shield Foundation are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law (Tax ID: 95-4752410). Every donation helps provide much-needed relief to our impacted PPOA members and their families during this difficult time. Include the following note on the donation form: "For personnel impacted by L.A. County wildfires."

Leadership Resources for PPOA Unit 612 Members

The PPOA Board and staff are thankful to members of this Association who joined us in January to help package leadership books for Unit 612 members. These publications and an upcoming series of specifically tailored webinars are provided by the Unit 612 training fund, a byproduct of contract negotiations between PPOA and the County. The valuable resources come from Echelon Front, a widely respected leadership development organization that has recently partnered with the Unit 612 Training Committee in order to support PPOA members in that bargaining unit. ♥



Fraternal Order of Police Reps Attend President's Inaugural Ball

PPOA President Steve Johnson joined National Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) President Patrick Yoes and fellow FOP representatives in attendance at the Liberty Ball for President Donald Trump following his inauguration at the U.S. Capitol on January 20. President Johnson serves on the California State FOP Lodge executive board as the sergeant at arms and represented the California delegation at this event. 🇺🇸



National FOP President Yoes and PPOA President Johnson

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Retirement ... Now What?

Don't Go in Without an Ops Plan

This article is reprinted by permission, with edits, from the January 2025 issue of American Police Beat.

As the critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) ended, the officers got up from their seats, said their thank-yous and meandered over to the spread of cold cut meats, cheese, coffee and sourdough bread. (First rule of a CISD: Bring food. Second rule: Bring coffee. Third rule: Know what the hell you're doing.) As the officers finished their eats and went their separate ways, the department peer support team and I stayed back to debrief the debrief. I remember saying to one of the peer team leads, "What you said about therapy was really profound. I think the comment was well-placed and a lot of people in the room took notice." He looked at me, smiled and said in his gruff, undercover-beardy, SWAT-guy, knuckle-dragging tone, "You know, Doc, I'm about six months away from retirement myself. Maybe I should give this therapy stuff a try, huh? I make it sound good..."

I paused and weathered the impulse to shove my heel up his butt — thankfully, the moment was fleeting — and then I felt a bit of sadness. Here we are again: these guys say all the right things to take care of everyone else and yet don't put their words into action for their own well-being.

My response to him was simple: "You've said you've got the next three days off. Take your pick; I'll send you the address of my office."



civilian, you might just be setting yourself — and your family — up for failure.

When was the last time you took off a few days in a row? More than three? For most cops, the first day off is a complete and total wash. You're exhausted, physically, mentally and sometimes emotionally. That's because the hormones and chemicals that pump through your body to help you maintain situational awareness and hypervigilance need time to exit your system (so to speak), sometimes taking up to 18 hours. Now let's transpose this concept of *it takes time to decompress* onto a 25-year career of running and gunning, stress and trauma, politics and departmental theater, and you think that putting your badge in a shadowbox is going to make it all go away? Now, I get it — there are varying degrees of resilience and a myriad of factors that play into whether the transition to retirement will be successful or not, but what is true for everyone in this profession is all the "stuff" (smells, sounds, images, memories) tends to surface when it gets quiet. Retirement can get quiet. Oh, and you wouldn't hit a house without an ops plan.

THE SILENCE IS DEAFENING

One of the good things about work is that sometimes it's hard to think about anything else. If you're pushing a black-and-white, it's damn near unsafe to be thinking about or processing the call from two days ago. As a cop, you are trained in the art of compartmentalization, a psychological mechanism in which thoughts and feelings are kept separated or isolated in the mind. Compartmentalization is a superpower, allowing you to go to the next call and the next call while putting those thoughts and feelings into some storage container in your brain. When you are off duty, that storage container tries to relieve some of the

“**WHAT MAKES RETIREMENT SCARY FOR A LOT OF COPS IS THAT THERE CAN BE A LOT OF UNKNOWN.**”

I have many friends and patients in law enforcement nearing retirement. Most are starting to make big travel plans with their families, put out feelers for their encore careers (if they don't get the next promotion, anyway) and wonder what it's going to be like to not have to be tied to the radio, do the paperwork or wear a gun belt for 40-plus hours a week. The thought alone might be intoxicating (or terrifying), but it deserves focus and attention regardless. If you think you're going to retire Friday and be bright eyed and bushy-tailed Monday, ready to fully embrace life as a

pressure and starts to leak. You start remembering what the barrette looked like, or you start feeling the anger or sadness associated with the incident. Sometimes these feelings and thoughts are uncomfortable and overwhelming, so, naturally, you might try to distract yourself. House projects, kids' sports, Netflix marathons and overtime are all ways to get out of your head — at least until you go back to your days on.

In retirement, you have no days on to go back to. Maybe you have an encore career lined up, but it's likely not as engaging as working patrol, in the sense that your situational awareness and hypervigilance aren't as necessary. The consequence is that your brain is less busy and has time to wander. What I want for you is to enjoy the quiet and the calm in retirement when you choose to. I don't want you enduring a 25-plus-year career only to spend your first year away from it finding yourself desperate to separate yourself from your thoughts and feelings and looking for your answers in a bottle, in a brothel or down a barrel. So, what's the answer?

YOU WOULDN'T HIT A HOUSE WITHOUT AN OPS PLAN

Think of retirement as an operation. You know the mission (enjoy your time as much as possible with minimal residual turmoil from the job), the target (you), the location (your mental, physical, psychological, spiritual and social well-being), the operators (your family, therapist, personal trainer, friends and other support system personnel) and the potential problems/blind spots (finances, unprocessed trauma, spousal drama, boredom). What you need to come up with are where to put your operators and when to call on them, contingencies for when problems arise,

and a way to measure the mission success or failure. Sounds like a big op — and not one you would plan only a day or two before execution. Think of your mental, physical, psychological, spiritual and social domains as separate locations. You may want certain operators to help with specific problems; you may want to hit all the locations at once or one by one over a period of time.... Look, I'm a psychologist, not a SWAT operator, but you get the point.

Relying on what you've learned from the job and applying it (the good parts, not the choir practice stuff) to your home life is not just about having a superpower — it's about using it. What makes retirement scary for a lot of cops is that there can be a lot of unknowns. That is a *solvable problem*.

It takes you months to prepare to be a cop, and more months (or years) to become a good one. The same is true of the transition to life without the badge. It'll take some training. It'll take some guidance. It'll take some hard lessons — but you will be stronger and be successful if you put the work in. You just need the ops plan and the discipline to execute it.

Dr. Cherylynn Lee is a police psychologist and works full-time for the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office as the Behavioral Sciences manager, overseeing the mental health co-response teams, CIT training and Wellness Unit, including Peer Support. As part of her duties, Dr. Lee is a member of the county's threat management team and serves on the crisis negotiation response teams for both the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office and the Santa Barbara Police Department. Dr. Lee has a private practice in the Santa Ynez Valley where she sees first responders exclusively, specializing in trauma, post-traumatic stress, mindfulness and job performance improvement. She can be reached at cr15034@sbsheriff.org. ♥

JOIN US!

PPOA RETIREMENT PLANNING WORKSHOP

Saturday, March 8

8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

PPOA Conference Center



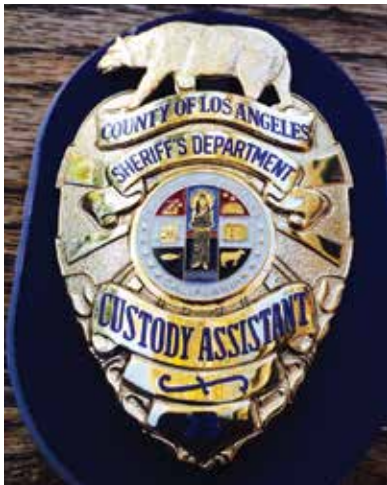
Our panel of experts will share the essential information you need to prepare for a well-earned retirement.

Visit PPOA.com for details and registration.

Sheriff Security Assistant Elmer Mercado

EOW: January 6, 2025

→ Sheriff Security Assistant Elmer Mercado was a 10-year LASD veteran assigned to Court Services Bureau West at the time of his passing. He is survived by his wife, two daughters and a son. ❤️



Custody Assistant Jeffery Mc Donald

EOW: January 18, 2025

→ Custody Assistant Jeffery Mc Donald was a 33-year LASD veteran assigned to CRDF at the time of his passing. ❤️



Support Your Foundation!

Help PPOA's Star & Shield Foundation support families of fallen officers and those truly in need. Donate online today at starandshieldfoundation.org/donate. If you would like to contribute by phone, please call (323) 261-3010.

Your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law. The Star & Shield Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization. Tax ID #95-4752410.

END OF WATCH

PPOA extends our sincere condolences to the families and friends of the following members who passed away in December 2024:

Retired Deputy
Willard Morris

EOW: December 1, 2024
LASD 1970-2003

Retired Sergeant
Travis Kelly

EOW: December 2, 2024
LASD 1990-2024
Academy Class #273
Last assignment: Santa Clarita Station
U.S. Marine Corps veteran

Sheriff Security Assistant
Antonio Cruz Jr.

EOW: December 9, 2024
LASD 2001-2024
Assigned to Whittier Court at time of passing

Retired Member
Harry Lewin

EOW: December 27, 2024
LASD 1982-1991

Sergeant
Nelson Collado

EOW: December 28, 2024
LASD 2001-2024
Assigned to Food Services Unit at time of passing

Retired Lieutenant
Paul Patterson

EOW: December 29, 2024
LASD 1986-2020
Academy Class #233
Last assignment: Century Station



Retired Sergeant Travis Kelly
(EOW: 12/2/24)



Sheriff Security Assistant
Antonio Cruz Jr. (EOW: 12/9/24)



Sergeant Nelson Collado
(EOW: 12/28/24)



Retired Lieutenant
Paul Patterson (EOW: 12/29/24)



PPOA Committees and Staff

2025 STANDING COMMITTEES

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> Chairman Johnson

Communications

> Chairman Chapman

Finance

> Chairwoman Kato

Insurance

> Chairman Lee

Legislative

> Chairman Reddy

Membership

> Chairman Arcos

612 Negotiations

> Chairman Johnson

614 Negotiations

> Chairman Lee

631 Negotiations

> Chairwoman Kato

632 Negotiations

> Chairwoman Kato

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> Chairman Schallert

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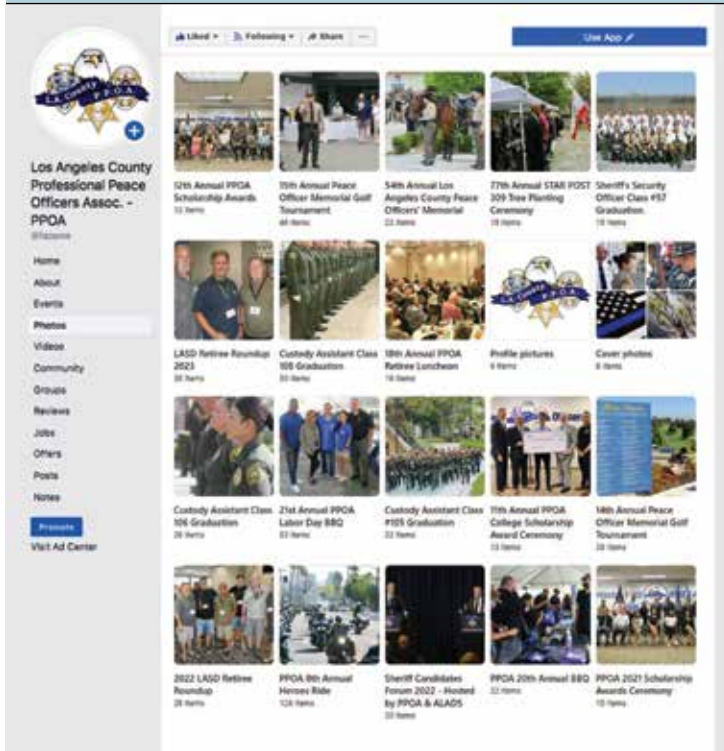
Executive Administrative Assistant

LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVES

Lang, Hansen, Giroux & Kidane

Visit PPOA.com to read about PPOA's position on legislative bills proposed in the current session.

FOLLOW LAPPOA ON FACEBOOK



In addition to breaking news and announcements, the "LAPPOA" Facebook page features more than 2,000 photos and videos from events, graduations, memorials, dedications, ceremonies and other noteworthy occasions. We're honored to document the diligent work of PPOA members and meaningful moments for our law enforcement family.



www.facebook.com/LAPPOA



STAR & SHIELD

Congratulations to the following PPOA members for winning the “Find the Hidden Word” contest in *Star & Shield*. If your name is listed, that means your entry was drawn as one of the winners for that month’s issue. Please call Greg Torres at (323) 261-3010 to claim your \$100 check.

CONTEST WINNERS

\$100 PRIZE WINNERS

(January issue — the hidden word appeared on page 7)

Teri Lowe, Law Enforcement Technician

Richard J. Martinez, Retired Member

Samantha Stott, Criminalistics Laboratory Technician



MISSION STATEMENT

The Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Association is committed to continuing a “Tradition of Success” in serving a satisfied membership through an effective and expanding professional association. We are a proactive and imaginative organization working in union with employers and other professional groups for necessary changes in policies, laws and legislation that are conducive to the well-being of our members. We will promote the professional interests of our members and the law enforcement community by protecting and enhancing their individual and collective rights.

PPOA Set to Host Annual Cigar Night at Retiree Roundup



We are proud to announce that PPOA will once again host Cigar Night on the patio at the LASD Retiree Roundup. Join us as the sun goes down and the cigars light up on Tuesday, April 8.

PPOA members: If you’ll be at the Roundup (we encourage you to experience it!) and plan to light up a stick, please email Moon Mullen at moon5252@gmail.com so we can get a proper head count.

By Bob Giroux

Lang, Hansen, Giroux & Kidane, PPOA Legislative Representatives

The 2025 L.A. County Wildfires: A Test of Strength and Unity

The devastating wildfires that swept through Los Angeles County in January marked one of the most challenging natural disasters for the region and in U.S. history. Dry conditions combined with powerful Santa Ana winds created the perfect storm, and flames ravaged the very communities PPOA members live in and the communities they serve.

The wildfires, which included the massive Palisades Fire, Eaton Fire and Hughes Fire, collectively burned through tens of thousands of acres. Over 16,000 structures were destroyed or damaged, and at least 29 lives were lost. Entire neighborhoods were reduced to ash, and hundreds of thousands of residents were forced to flee their homes. The intensity of the fires, fueled by winds exceeding 100 mph, posed extreme challenges for containment and evacuation efforts.

Yet amid the chaos, the swift and coordinated efforts of police, firefighters, paramedics and other first responders stood as a testament to their courage, expertise and dedication. As the fires spread, firefighters worked tirelessly to contain the infernos and protect lives and property. Peace officers played a critical role in evacuation efforts and public safety, assisting residents in fleeing before the fires reached

legislation had specific allocations as follows:

- **\$4 million** for the Department of Housing and Community Development to expedite building permits
- **\$1 million** to rebuild schools
- **\$250,000** to the Division of the State Architect
- **\$750,000** to the Office of Public School Construction

State and local agencies can utilize the remaining funds for shelter provisions, hazardous waste removal and air quality testing. The relief funds will be drawn from the state's reserve fund of \$8.3 billion, with federal reimbursement expected.


The funding is in addition to other state and federal government relief efforts, such as extending tax filing deadlines and placing a moratorium on evictions to provide further assistance to affected individuals and businesses.

Governor Newsom has issued multiple executive orders that directly complement and enhance the legislative relief package. These include:

- **Streamlining rebuilding efforts:** Expedited permitting for homes and businesses, aligning with the \$4 million allocated to the Department of Housing and Community Development.
- **Accelerating debris removal:** Authorized federal teams to initiate cleanup operations, which supports state-funded hazardous waste removal efforts.
- **Fast-tracking temporary housing:** Enabled rapid establishment of housing for displaced residents, building on the broader shelter provisions in the relief package.
- **Protecting public safety:** Ensured law enforcement support for secure returns, complementing legislative focus on community recovery and safety.
- **Mitigating secondary disasters:** Implemented erosion control measures to prevent landslides and flooding, reinforcing the environmental restoration funded by the package.

The wildfires have caused insured losses exceeding \$20 billion, leading to coverage challenges. In response, the state has implemented the following measures:

- **Advance insurance payments:** Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara ordered insurers to provide upfront payments to wildfire survivors.
- **Moratorium on policy cancellations:** A one-year moratorium prevents insurance companies from canceling or non-renewing policies in affected areas.

While the road to recovery will be difficult, your communities, like many others in California, are resilient and can and will rebuild. Our hearts go out to all those impacted by the wildfires. We are grateful for your public service, and we stand ready to assist PPOA in Sacramento to aid in the recovery of your communities. 

THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE APPROVED A BIPARTISAN \$2.5 BILLION RELIEF PACKAGE TO SUPPORT EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY EFFORTS.

their neighborhoods. Law enforcement also managed road closures and directed traffic away from danger zones, preventing congestion that could impede emergency vehicle access. Paramedics and other medical professionals were instrumental in treating injuries sustained by both residents and emergency personnel.

Governor Gavin Newsom and the California State Legislature have taken swift and significant action to support affected communities, expedite recovery efforts and stabilize the insurance market through legislation and budget action.

The California Legislature approved, and Governor Newsom signed, a unanimous, bipartisan \$2.5 billion “bridge funding” relief package to support emergency response and recovery efforts. The

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

These events and more can be found on PPOA's online calendar at **PPOA.com**. Do you know of a Department-related event we can help promote? Email details to **info@PPOA.com**.

February 18

PPOA Delegates Meeting

5 p.m.

Luminarias, Monterey Park

Eligible delegates:

RSVP to (323) 261-3010

February 18

Final Day to Receive Unit 621 Runoff Election Ballots

February 19

Unit 621 Runoff Election Ballot Count

8:30 a.m.

PPOA Conference Center

March 8

PPOA Retirement Planning Workshop

Visit PPOA.com for details

March 12

PPOA Board of Directors Meeting

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Members are invited to attend

with RSVP: (323) 261-3010

March 31

Cesar Chavez Day

The PPOA office will be closed in honor of the County holiday

April 2

Let's T.E.A.M. Up

Together for Education, Awareness and Mental Wellness: Bridging the gap between community, resources and first responders!

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Industry Hills Expo Center

Visit Eventbrite (tinyurl.com/3ajdwsp) for details



RETIREE EVENTS



Annual LASD Retiree Roundup

April 6–9

Riverside Resort & Casino

Laughlin, NV

Cigar Night Hosted by PPOA at LASD Retiree Roundup

April 8

Riverside Resort Poolside Patio

Laughlin, NV

RSVP: moon5252@gmail.com

25th Annual Former L.A. Deputy Sheriffs in Texas Luncheon

May 17 at 11 a.m.

Kreuz Meat Market

Lockhart, TX

Retired Guys & Gals Breakfast Club

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.

Mr. D's Diner, Placentia

Info: kamohagen@aol.com



ANNUAL LASD RETIREE ROUNDUP

April 6–9, Riverside Resort & Casino, Laughlin, NV

Desert Heat Retirees Luncheon

First Wednesday of

each month at 11 a.m.

Elks Lodge, Lake Havasu

Info: Lnx1993@yahoo.com

Rogue Valley Retiree Lunch

Last Wednesday of each month at 11 a.m.

Grants Pass Golf Club

Grants Pass, OR

Info: michaelbuschke@charter.net

Temple Station Monthly Alumni Luncheon

Last Thursday of each month (except Nov./Dec.) at 11:30 a.m.

Peppertree Café, Glendora

Info: ricksummers@verizon.net

Don't Rely on Luck at Tax Time

Is tax time a big mystery to you, the results of which feel like a crapshoot? Do you cross your fingers and hope the calculations come out in your favor? If you do a bit of prep work for tax time, you won't have to hope you get lucky — you'll have a good idea of how much you'll get refunded or have to pay.

REVIEW YOUR WITHHOLDINGS

If you are employed, at some point, you filled out form W-4 to tell your employer how much tax to withhold from your paycheck. When completing a W-4, the more allowances you claim, the bigger your paycheck will be, as fewer taxes are deducted. However, what you don't pay during the year, you'll owe when you file your tax returns.

Conversely, if you have too much tax withheld, you are giving the government a free loan. You will receive a refund — without interest — at tax time.


Fortunately, the IRS website has a withholding calculator (see [tinyurl.com/35x2h2em](https://www.irs.gov/individuals/income/withholding-calculator)) you can use to make sure you're on the right path. If you decide you want to make changes, complete and submit a new W-4 to your employer.



AFFORDABLE CARE ACT AND THE PREMIUM TAX CREDIT

The federal tax penalty in the Affordable Care Act for not having health insurance was eliminated in 2019. However, some states have their own requirements for health insurance. If you purchased your own health insurance plan through the Marketplace (see [tinyurl.com/5n8udz67](https://www.tinyurl.com/5n8udz67)) and are receiving advance payments of premiums, you must keep the Marketplace updated with life changes that could affect those payments. If the Marketplace determines you are receiving more assistance than needed, you will have to pay it back when you file your tax return.

At tax time, there is no such thing as luck. As your circumstances and tax rules change, review and tweak your tax situation. Plan ahead, talk with your tax advisor and prevent surprises on your next tax return.

Help and resources are available at [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov), or you can ask a POPA Federal Credit Union representative to put you in touch with one of their licensed financial advisors at LPL Financial. If you require assistance, call us today at (562) 229-9181, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. 

PLAN AHEAD, TALK WITH YOUR TAX ADVISOR AND PREVENT SURPRISES ON YOUR NEXT TAX RETURN.

PAY YOUR ESTIMATED TAXES

If you expect to owe more than \$1,000 in taxes, you may need to pay estimated taxes four times a year — usually on the 15th of January, April, June and September. Be sure to save money for these payments. If you do not make these payments, you could face penalties.



S&W SHIELD 9MM/SIG P229 9MM

S&W: CA model w/ Kydex holster and 4 mags: \$450. Sig: CA model w/ Kydex holster and 3 mags: \$850. (323) 597-6059. (0724)

BACK HOUSE STUDIO FOR RENT

A 690-square-foot addition, which features studio living, a bathroom with a shower, walk-in closet, washer/dryer and one driveway parking space. One occupant, and no pets are allowed. Rent is \$1,950, which includes water, gas and trash. Call (323) 236-1739 or email dgathright1984@me.com. (0724)

ROSE HILLS PLOT FOR SALE

Rose Hills (Whittier) cemetery plot located in the Garden of Prayers near the main entrance. \$15,000 or OBO. Call (909) 243-3002 or email rjramirez0618@gmail.com. (0824)

16" SCROLL SAW FOR SALE

Central Machinery 16" variable speed scroll saw table tilts 45 degrees for bevel cuts. Table size: 10" x 16" — pre-drilled holes for table mount. Air pump function. \$60 (was originally \$80). Call Pat: (909) 596-3508. Pictures available upon request. (0524)

1974 TOYOTA LAND CRUISER FJ40

Runs well, in-line six cylinder motor, four-speed manual transmission, partially restored, ready for full restoration. Asking \$23,500 obo. Email Ryan for pictures or questions: blaint28@hotmail.com. (0225)

1957 CHEVY BEL AIR FOR SALE

Good running condition with original paint. 4-door, new white walls, seat upholstery. Too much to list. Needs someone to finish minor restoration. \$18K. Photos can be emailed. Call/text Sam at (562) 572-2462 and mention *Star & Shield*. (0924)

TIRES/RIMS FOR SALE

Four BF Goodrich (white letter) radial tires mounted on American Racing mag rims. Two 215-60-15 and two 255-60-15 tires — 3 years old with only 1,000 miles. \$850 or best offer. Call Richard at (562) 858-8936 and leave message. (1024)

LAGUNA OCEAN FRONT RENTAL

For Laguna Surf Resort: Ocean front unit for rent. Check in: 06/20/25 Check out: 06/27/25 Check in: 10/10/25 Check out: 10/17/25 1 bedroom, plus Murphy bed, sleeps 4, 2 baths, fireplace, kitchen, 1 covered parking space. Visit LagunaSurf.org for pics. Contact: (360) 301-0277 or jasewards@me.com. (1024)

RIVERFRONT VACATION RENTAL

Stunning riverfront views from a Parker Strip, Arizona, 4-bedroom 2-bath home, featuring a full kitchen, ice maker, washer-dryer, boat ramp, private boat and jet ski dock, and much more. First responder and military discount. Call Robert at (858) 688-3670 or Chuck at (323) 470-9827, or email rmos@mosmag.com. (0125)

1965 PORSCHE SPEEDSTER REPLICA FOR SALE

Convertible, replica. 2-door, black with tan interior and tan top. 4-speed manual transmission, 1600cc, build of a Volkswagen Karmann Ghia chassis. Asking price \$25,000. Contact (626) 484-8301 or mianico5@gmail.com. (0924)

SLOT MACHINE FOR SALE

Mills "Break the Bank" nickel slot machine. Good working condition with stand. \$1,500. Contact Wayne at (626) 422-0555 or email waw296@gmail.com. (0924)

GREEN VALLEY LAKE CABIN

Beautiful cabin in the "hidden gem" of the San Bernardino Mountains, Green Valley Lake. 1532-sq.-ft., 3-bdrm, 2 baths, 2 fireplaces, pool table. Short 3-min. walk to the lake. Sleeps 6. \$190 per night + cleaning fee. Call Tom at (909) 957-8036. (1023)

2020 FORD RANGER FOR SALE

XLT Super Crew. 37,000 miles. Excellent condition. New tires. \$28,500 obo. Contact: steveday212@yahoo.com. (0924)

HUGE FURNISHED STUDIO/BEDROOM IN QUARTZ HILL, CA

Queen bed, flat screen TV, Wi-Fi and streaming services, kitchenette with sink, refrigerator, microwave, coffee maker, window A/C, power recliner, large bathroom with shower. \$1,250/month, including utilities. Contact MikeMartinez2000@gmail.com or (408) 693-9404. (0225)



PPOA classified ads are free and available only to PPOA members (one per month, 25 words max). Private party only, no business ads allowed. Send your ad to: *Star & Shield* Editor, 188 E. Arrow Highway, San Dimas, CA 91773 or email to gtorres@PPOA.com.

New submissions are added on a first-come, first-served basis each issue.

Please send within first week of each month to ensure timely inclusion.

Sellers are encouraged to list price of each item listed. No work numbers or County email addresses may be used in ads. Submissions must be made in writing, not over the phone. Ads run for three months. PPOA is not responsible for any claims made in a classified ad.



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**DISABILITY
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SAFETY MEMBERS**

We have a pension department that specializes in this area and have successfully obtained disability pensions for *thousands* of safety personnel under PERS, County 1937 Retirement Act and other county and city systems.

PERSONAL INJURY

Our personal injury department has successfully litigated or tried over 5000 claims for automobile injuries, products liability, medical malpractice and other negligence areas.

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