



The Informer

Volume 4, Issue 3

Wishing All A Merry Christmas And A Safe New Year!

December 2004

Special Points

• NEXT MEETING

MONDAY December
13th 7:00 p.m.



- Christmas Party
- Books for Crooks
- Glock contest reminder
- Evolution of "911"
- Corner of History
- Hero spotlight
- Last meeting highlights
- Float to Honor Soldiers
- Ralph Hudson dies
- FYI
- Editorial

"Welcome Aboard! To our new members."

We would like to extend our wishes to all our members during this holiday season and especially to our brothers and sisters who may have to work during Christmas. May we not forget the root word "Christ" in our Christmas celebrations.

Christmas Party Saturday, December 11th

Merry Christmas



This year we will be hosting a Christmas party at the lodge. It will be on Saturday, December 11th at 7:00 p.m. The event will be dress casual, adults only. Brother Harold Phillips and his committee have done an excellent job in preparations.

The event will feature holiday music, heavy hors'doeuvres, door prizes and as always great fellowship. There is no cost or tickets to buy to attend. We continue to grow as a lodge and we always seek to improve our camaraderie both on and off the streets. Bring yourself and significant other for a fine Saturday evening. Hope to see you there!

Glock Recruitment Drive



Only (2) two meetings left to get your name in the pot for the chance to win a brand new *Glock* handgun - this December meeting and the January meeting. On our February meeting we will draw a name and present the *Glock* to one lucky winner. The process for contest entry is simple: sponsor a new active member to be read at the meeting. Your name will be placed in the pot once for each new member you sponsor. Each new member you sponsor will also have his or her name added once to the pot. Good luck!

Books For Crooks



The Charleston County Detention Center has been holding steady for the last couple years with an inmate population hovering between 1400 - 1500. "Stacked like cord wood" according to some. The officers keeping a lid on the place literally have their hands full in every respect. Recently, the idea was hatched to create an inmate library. On its face it may sound "soft" until you realize the potential of the idea.

Foremost, it will give the inmates something to do. Perhaps cut down some of the unwanted incidents, ease the burden a little on the detention staff. Secondly, we could introduce books of good moral subject matter. Religious themes, self motivation type stuff, a sort of indoctrination camp of good values. It may or may not work, but it is certainly worth an effort.

We are soliciting on behalf of the Charleston County Detention Center (*paperback only) books for their library. We welcome any contributions, however we would point out that books on subjects such as locksmithing, improvised weaponry, heavy violent or erotic themes would be counter-productive and prohibited. Books on all reading levels (see Jane run etc...) are needed. If you can assist, bring your donations to lodge meetings. The project will be ongoing.



The meal for the evening was an eclectic spread of culinary delights. Brothers David Lee and Jim Ward provided hams and fried turkeys. Attending members brought a wonderful variety of side dishes and desserts. Two trips with full plates couldn't sample it all... Great job by all for a memorable holiday meal!

9 names read for new active membership. 1 for associate membership.

V. Pres. Blackmon reports that our lodge website had 16,856 "hits" the previous month. Also, successful K-9 training class held at the lodge drawing students from several out of state agencies.

Brothers Reggie Sharpe and Matt Woodall won the prizes in the recruitment drawing.

Christmas party allotted budget and set for Dec. 11th. At 7:00 p.m. Brother Harold Phillips to chair. Good head start reported already for door prizes.

Motion made to reimburse Brother Rick Keys for expenses associated with Police Christmas parade float.

Secretary solicits input for nominations for awards ceremony. Deadline for submissions will be end of January 2005.

Motion made to proceed with erection of permanent lodge sign on the grounds, design submitted and approved pending final bid.

The legal defense program (State Level) will soon be switching banks from a limited local bank to larger widespread Bank of America. Participating members to be notified as it occurs.

The lodge mourns the passing of Brother Ralph Hudson (Chas. Co. Sheriff ret.) Prayers out also to Brothers Steve Ptak, Hurshel Tanner and Mikey "O" who are battling ailments. Prayers out also to Chris Waters of Hazmat fame, recently diagnosed with cancer. May all the pains be light and recoveries be quick.

Parade Float to Honor Soldiers in Iraq



Brother Rick Keys (N. Chas. P.D.), with assistance from Sister Dana Herron (Chas Co. Sheriff) have collaborated with several dept. Honor Guard units to provide a float for Lowcountry Christmas parades. The past couple years Brother Keys has participated in local Christmas parades on a float, offering song all the way.

This year's float theme will be "letters from home" where the float will be decorated with mail bags along with lights etc.. A few children will be on the float appearing to be writing letters. In the background will be a huge envelope addressed from "home" to a "soldier." Our FOP Banner will also be flown from the parade float.

All agencies have been greatly affected by their officers being called up for active duty. This float is to honor those officers called to stand in harm's way abroad. In speaking with those officers upon their return, many expressed their biggest joy was receiving "letters from home."

It is with regret this publication could not afford a more timely "heads up" for the parade schedules. That being said, the schedule:

North Charleston - Sat. Dec. 4th @ 5:30

City of Charleston - Sun. Dec. 5th @ 2:00

Summerville - Sun. Dec. 5th @ 6:00

Mt. Pleasant - Sun. Dec. 12th @ 6:00

We are proud to support this endeavor as a lodge. If you need additional information or if you can possibly assist, contact Rick Keys 452-1379 or Dana Herron 442-1990. Kudos to both for their heartfelt tribute!

Evolution of the "911" System by Frank Nigro Jr.



The ability to dial a single number to report emergencies was first used in Great Britain, in 1937. The British could dial 999 to call for police, medical, or fire departments, from anywhere in the country. In 1958 the American Congress first investigated a universal emergency number for the United States and finally passed the legal mandate in 1967. The very first American 911 call was placed on February 16, 1968 in Haleyville, Alabama made by Alabama Speaker of the House, Rankin Fite and answered by Congressman Tom Bevill.

The new emergency number had to be three numbers that were not in use in the United States or Canada as the first three numbers of any phone number or area code, and the numbers had to be easy to use. The Federal Trade Commission along with AT&T (which held a monopoly on phone services at that time) originally announced the plans to build the first 911 system in Huntington, Indiana. Bob Gallagher, President of Alabama Telephone, was annoyed that the independent

phone industry had not been consulted. Gallagher decided to beat AT&T to the punch and have the first 911 emergency service built in Haleyville, Alabama.

Gallagher consulted with Bob Fitzgerald, his state inside-plant manager. Fitzgerald let Gallagher know that he could do it. Gallagher moved quickly getting approvals from Continental Telephone and the Alabama Public Service Commissioner, then gave a press release on February 9, 1968 announcing that the Alabama Telephone Company would make history.

Fitzgerald examined all twenty-seven Alabama exchanges choosing the Haleyville location, then engineered the new circuitry and made the modifications needed for the existing equipment. Fitzgerald and his team worked around the clock to install the first 911 emergency system in under one week. The team worked their regular day jobs in Fayette, traveling each night to Haleyville to do the 911 work during off-peak hours. The work was completed on February 16, 1968, at exactly 2 p.m. celebrated with a team cheer of "Bingo!"

Lowcountry Hero Spotlight



Joel M. Robertson

Charleston County Police Department

End of Watch: Thursday, May 4th, 1978

On Thursday, May 4, 1978, warrants Detective Joel Robertson, age 39, was traveling on Highway 17 near Whitehall Terrace. Mark Prelip, age 23 was traveling the opposite direction through an area of highway that was under construction. The vehicles collided head on killing both instantly.

May his sacrifice not be forgotten!

Farewell Brother Hudson

This month we lost Brother Ralph Hudson. He was retired from the Charleston County Sheriff's Office. Brother Hudson served with distinction many years with the Sheriff's office after having retired from the Air Force. This last year saw his health plummet.

Brother Hudson was a vital and active member with our lodge. He was honored several years ago when we sent him to Washington, D.C. to the National Peace Officer's Memorial. A truly kind soul who always had a word of encouragement and forever willing to help. It is with sadness we mourn his passing, but indeed he was a Christian cop who set an example to all who had the pleasure to know him.

Godspeed Brother Ralph!

A Cop's Christmas by Sgt. Stan R. Kid (Long Island) **BILL VANHORN'S**



Corner
Of
HOLIDAY

One of the first things a new police officer learns is that cops work on holidays. It's a fact of life. Crime never takes a holiday.

In 1974, when I first joined the police department, I knew there would be special occasions my family would spend without me. Knowing that didn't make the task any easier. The celebrations I missed during those first years depressed me and sometimes made me feel bitter. Working on Christmas Eve was always the worst. It felt like a thankless job. On Christmas Eve in 1977, I learned that blessings can come disguised as misfortune, and honor is more than just a word.

I was riding one-man patrol on the 4:00 p.m. to midnight shift. The night was cold. Everywhere I drove I saw reminders of the holidays. Families were packing their cars with presents. Beautifully decorated Christmas trees in living room windows and roofs adorned with tiny sleighs made me feel even more sorry for myself.

The evening had been relatively quiet. There were calls for a barking dog, a minor auto accident, a false burglar alarm. There was nothing to make the night go faster. I thought of my own family and sank more deeply into depression.

Shortly after 10:00 p.m., I got a radio call to the home of an elderly cancer patient. I stopped in front of a simple Cape Cod style house. First-aid kit in hand, I walked up the path to the front door. As I approached, a woman who seemed about 80 years old opened the door. "He's in here," she said, leading me into the back bedroom.

We passed through a living room furnished in a style I had come to associate with older people. The sofa had an afghan blanket draped over its back and a dark, solid colored Queen Anne chair sat next to an unused fireplace. The mantle was cluttered with an eclectic mix of several photos, some porcelain figurines and an antique clock. A floor lamp provided soft lighting.

We entered a small back bedroom where a frail looking old man lay in the bed with a blanket pulled up to his chin. He wore a blank stare on his ashen, skeletal face. His breathing was shallow; he was barely alive.

The trappings of illness were all around the bed. The nightstand was littered with a large number of pill vials. An oxygen bottle stood nearby, its thin plastic hose, with facemask attached, rested on the blanket.

I asked the woman why she called for the police. She simply shrugged and nodded sadly toward her husband, indicating it was his request. I looked at him and he stared intently into my eyes. He seemed relaxed now. I didn't understand the suddenly-calm expression on his face.

I looked around the room again. A dresser stood along the wall to the left of the bed. On it were the usual memorabilia--ornate perfume bottles, a white porcelain pin case and a wooden jewelry tray. There were also several photos in simple frames. One caught my eye and I walked to the dresser for a closer look. The picture showed a young man wearing a police uniform. It was unmistakably a photo of the man in the bed. I knew then why I was there.

I looked at the old man and he motioned with his head toward the side of his bed. I walked over and stood beside him. He slid a thin arm from under the covers and took my hand. Soon, I felt his hand go limp. I looked at his face. There was no fear there. I saw only peace.

He knew he was dying; he was aware his time was very near. I know now that he was afraid of what was about to happen and he wanted the protection of a fellow cop on his journey.

A caring God had seen to it that His child would be delivered safely to Him. The honor of being his escort fell to me.

Since that night, I have considered it a high honor to be present at the moment of a person's death. As a cop, I have had that honor many times and feel I have been given a very special responsibility: ensuring someone's safe passage home to his or her Father.

I no longer feel sorry for myself for having to work on Christmas Eve. I have chosen an honorable profession. I pray that when my time comes to leave this world that there will be a cop there to hold my hand and let me know I have nothing to fear.

I wish all my brothers and sisters who have to work this Christmas Eve all the Joy of the Season. (used with permission Copyright Stan Kid)

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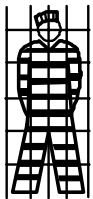
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We are on the web!
www.scfop3.org

Tri - County Lodge # 3

"Serving The Lawmen of the Lowcountry"



FYI Misc. jail populations for Nov. 30th, 2004.

Horry Co. - 563 inmates
Florence Co. - 358 inmates
Charleston Co. - 1520 inmates
Richland Co. - 932 inmates
Dillon Co. - 108 inmates



The Tri-County Lodge (founded in 1976) is chartered to serve those law enforcement officers working in Charleston, Dorchester and Colleton Counties. Currently we have 466 active members and we are steadily growing. Our mission - both local as well as national, is to better our profession through fraternalism and legally by way of legislation. We work from the bottom to the top and value the ideas and opinions of all our members.

The "Informer" is an evolving lodge endeavor. Any comments, criticisms, ideas for improvement or member submissions are welcomed. ****Disclaimer**** This publication does not necessarily represent the views of any or all of our members or affiliated lodges. Editorial comment solely that of the editor.

The Last Laugh?



Early in my rookie days, I encountered my first "crack house." A literal concentration of filth and depravity. Acting on a tip from a concerned sibling, I rescued her fifteen year old sister from this house festering in crime. She was pale, thin, sickly looking - like a face from a concentration camp photo. I contacted the girl's father (who seemed very appreciative and concerned) and turned the girl over to him. He vowed to get her some help. A month or so later, I ended up arresting the same father and daughter for crack possession. I was sickened to discover that she had been performing fellatio at ten bucks a throw in this "crack house" and daddy had been brokering the deals all along. That still bothers me to this day. I resolved to find out who ran the place and give him what amounted to be a declaration of war.

I went to the guy who owned the crack house, introduced myself in no uncertain terms and presented him with my business card. I informed him that so long as I was around, he "was my mission." I further advised him to "remember my face" that mine would be the one he sees when he is looking around for cops. I meant exactly what I said, so I launched my one man war. I spent many hours between calls doing reports in front of his house. It lay at the intersection of two streets that also allowed me to hide while viewing. I later enlisted the aid of my fellow officers. The house became known as the "fishing hole." We hit everything that moved in or out of the residence. We made many arrests there: drugs, warrants, stolen property, you name it - we could always "catch" something at the "fishing hole." I would methodically pull in front of his house at the end of my shift and give a series of flashes from my blue lights. Just to let him know I was still out there.

Eventually, I left patrol and moved on. In time, the crack house got raided by our metro unit and my "buddy" finally got some time for drugs and possession of a sawed-off shotgun. I was glad to hear the news and over the years he eventually faded from my memory. Until recently, when I ran across a bench warrant with his name on it. The spark was lit and the flame ignited. I had his warrant and I had his number. I got a few officers together, shared my story and off we went. I got him. But, what I got wasn't what I'd hoped for.

I didn't have any thrill or real satisfaction. He was aged and his brain addled from the years of drug use. He was a shell of a man who reeked of rotted teeth, stale beer and urine. He was unsteady on his feet and could hardly string words together to form a sentence. Perhaps Christianity has altered my views, or maybe it is experience or maturity. Amazing that I once would have cheered at his funeral, yet somehow I no longer felt seething hatred. Sorrow would be more descriptive. It was if he had sold his soul and the devil had already started collecting. I don't know if he remembered me or not, I couldn't bring myself to ask. I just kept thinking to myself over and over "you reap what you sow."

- R.E. Sharpe