Mr. DiCiccio, your email blasts across the Valley have made it clear that you’re concerned about “services to libraries, seniors, children and parks” and how budget restraints have negatively impacted them. Like you, Unit 4 members (the police officers the City has a contract with) and their Association have made a commitment to our community partners. This commitment was the reason Citizens for Phoenix partnered with PLEA, and at the direction of Phoenix Police Officers, PLEA agreed to 3.2% in wage concessions and supported a temporary 2% food tax. We, like you, thought it was vital to come to the aid of the vulnerable in our community during difficult economic times.

Mr. DiCiccio, you have supported Phoenix Police officers on a variety of non-economic issues over the years, to include support on controversial use of force incidents, some legislative issues, and more equipment i.e. patrol rifles. Still, you are quite comfortable bashing public safety because, in your world view, those who risk it all everyday have too many benefits and get paid too much. Mr. DiCiccio, you seem to forget that 10 years ago those in the private sector were riding high on the hog and government workers were at the bottom of the heap. Did you bash the private sector because they had too many benefits? Were you railing against private corporations because they were making double or triple what those in government service were making? No....the silence was deafening. It’s only when the tables are turned and people in the private sector are on hard times that government workers become easy political targets.

Even with concessions and temporary taxes, the phone is still answered when people dial 911. The same concessions and

It seems, prior to and outside of negotiations, you’ve made your mind up as to the value of Phoenix Police Officers – no raises.

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temporary taxes haven’t stopped the vacancy rate in the Phoenix Police Department from approaching 600. Within the past four months, two Phoenix Police Officers have been shot in the line of duty. If you need the details surrounding our injured officers, ask Mayor Elect Greg Stanton – he and his wife visited with them and their families in the hospital emergency rooms. This dangerous “at home” reality sheds a unique light on a national problem. The following news item was released during the last week of December 2011:

“According to preliminary data released by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 177 officers were killed during 2011 — up 13 percent from 153 line-of-duty deaths in 2010. For the first time in 14 years, firearms deaths outnumber traffic-related fatalities…”

The report continues by saying: “Especially troubling, 68 officers were shot and killed during the past year, an increase of 15 percent over the 59 killed by gunfire in 2010. A majority of these fatalities occurred as police officers were attempting an arrest, responding to domestic disturbance calls, or investigating suspicious persons or circumstances. ‘Drastic budget cuts affecting law enforcement agencies across the country have put our officers at grave risk,’ declared NLEOMF Chairman Craig W. Floyd.” Perhaps there’s a good reason wages, rights, and benefits are important to front-line first-responders.

It seems, prior to and outside of negotiations, you’ve made your mind up as to the value of Phoenix Police Officers – no raises. One wonders if the Goldwater Institute considers this “bad faith bargaining.” In assisting with pension and illegal immigration issues, Goldwater Institute reporters had no problem utilizing PLEA’s expertise while at the PLEA office. You also seemed comfortable when you visited us in an effort to garner our support and input. In case you or the Goldwater Institute have forgotten, you’re more than welcome back to the PLEA office to see the photos of the 36 dead police officers you passed by when you walked in. You know, those officers who gave their lives in pursuit of the rule of law.

With all this said, when the next Phoenix Police Officer is killed or injured in the line of duty, would you please consider and be willing to help us at the hospital, the morgue, or the funeral in telling the widow and other families members that their loved ones get paid too much money and, in addition, should never have been allowed to ride on a City bus for free? Also, in looking at the line-of-duty death graph, please let us know what you believe is an acceptable casualty rate as it relates to pay raises. One more thing - why not take the time to come out and ride with first-responders to get a slightly different perspective a City Hall office or the Goldwater Institute just can’t provide. Things look a little different at three in the morning in a dark alley at 24th Ave. and Van Buren St. And Mr. DiCiccio, just so you know, if you, like police officers, leave the safety of your home and go to dark and dangerous streets of Phoenix, you too could get hurt. Bad guys don’t care how much money you make. But that’s OK isn’t it? Don’t we pay City Council Members taxpayer money to risk their lives also?

It is our goal this new year that Phoenix Police Officers will continue to be top law enforcement professionals as they serve the residents of Phoenix and above all, STAY SAFE.
Given what you know about the economy, your personal savings, and the projected costs of living in retirement, you may want to do more to prepare financially – but how?

Nationwide Retirement Solutions, the administrator for the city’s 457 and 401(a) Plans, wants to ensure that you know that the maximum annual contribution limits for those Plans has increased for 2012. The annual limit for 457 plans is $17,000 (or an additional $5,500 for those age 50 and over) and the limit for 401(a) plans is $50,000. Most workers can’t afford to contribute the maximum allowed by law, but you may be able to afford more than you know.

Secondly, when you make eligible contributions to either of the city’s Plans, you may be able to take a tax credit called the Saver’s Credit. The amount of the credit you can claim on your federal income tax return is based on the contributions you make and your filing status. Participants with income up to $57,000 may qualify. Be sure to keep this in mind when you file your taxes.

Plan representatives are Registered Representatives of Nationwide Investment Services Corporation, Member FINRA.
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JAMES P. ABDO was born in Omaha, Nebraska. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Rochester in 1984 and his Juris Doctorate from the College of Law at Arizona State University in 1991. Mr. Abdo served as an Assistant Attorney General for Arizona before entering private practice as a partner at two major Phoenix law firms, where his practice focused on commercial litigation of all types. He has extensive experience both representing government bodies appearing before numerous state, county and city agencies in numerous licensing, procurement and labor/employment matters. His practice also includes the formation, counseling and representation of business entities, the drafting of a wide variety of real estate and other contract documents in addition to litigating disputes arising out of contracts.

In addition to the full services provided to PLEA members to protect their careers, the Law Offices of Michael Napier P.C. provide the following:

- **Personal injury recovery** (on or off duty); experienced representation at a reduced fee;
- **Reduced fees** for matters not covered by the PLEA legal plan;
- **Free probate** of officer’s estate for line-of-duty death;
- Free consultations to members on any matter, and
- **Referrals** to attorneys or specialists for matters not handled by the firm.

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As officers, we are issued many types of equipment and are responsible for the care and maintenance of it. Our supervisor wouldn’t allow us to go out on the street wearing a torn or ripped uniform. They wouldn’t knowingly allow us to go in service after a briefing with less than our full complement of ammunition for our handgun, or without a Taser or pepper spray. The bottom line is that we have to be properly equipped able to function effectively when going out to do our job.

Not only are we responsible to show up with the proper equipment, but we are also responsible for keeping it properly maintained. Clean guns save lives and a dirty or damaged one can get you killed when it fails to perform at that critical moment in time.

Maintenance of equipment is important for two main reasons: performance, and in some cases to have the ability to project a professional image. The ability to look sharp and project a professional image can mean a lot in how we interact and deal with the public. Don’t think so? Just ask PLEA board member Jerry Gannon who is PLEA’s voice on the department’s uniform committee. He can tell story after story about how a variety of uniform items over the years have routinely been shot down because they didn’t “cultivate a professional image.” Forget the fact that the item may have been very common sense and very functional. With our department, more often than not, it has always been more about style over substance. The person usually making the final call on approving an item usually sits in a fourth floor office that is air conditioned in the summer and heated in the winter. Most of these types have long forgotten what it’s like to pull a 10 hour shift in a patrol car.

Knowing this, I was surprised when one of our officers working the recent Occupy protests came into the PLEA office with photos of a bunker shield that had been pulled out of the back of a supervisor’s patrol car. Supervisor’s often carry this type of equipment to have it readily available for use at large scenes in the event that things get a little rough and extra protection is needed. The particular shield I was shown pictures of would have made whatever cop that had to deploy with it a laughingstock. The photos show a shield severely deformed, with portions of the front that are split and cracked. The edges were also apparently split open judging by the liberal application of duct tape all around.

Maybe there is just no ownership of the “community equipment” found in most supervisors’ vehicles. Maybe most supervisors feel that since more than one sergeant uses the vehicle, that it’s “just not their problem”. To be fair, it’s also possible that a sergeant or two may have reported the condition of the bunker or even suggested it be replaced.

It reminds me of the days when the squad sergeant was responsible for carrying the 12 Gauge shotgun in the trunk of their vehicle to have on hand when needed. Having had to deploy with one of these on a few occasions, I can attest to the poor conditions that many of these guns were allowed to fall in to. Broken sights, rusted barrels, unserviceable, or missing ammunition, and guns with rounds shoved in the loading tube backwards were just a few that I remember.

We’ve all seen department equipment that gets a scratched and banged up from years of use. Minor wear and tear of this type is to be expected. However, to expect an officer to deploy with equipment that is in an extreme state of dis-repair or damage is unconscionable and possibly negligent. Professional image aside, what type of ballistic integrity remains with a shield that is this damaged? Are we really going to put an officer in harm’s way knowing they very well might take hostile fire with something like this? My personal comments aside, I guess if it’s all you’ve got then it’s all you’ve got. Having no other choice, deploying with this bunker is better than running around with a garbage can lid.

Maybe a quick way to fix the problem is to bring the bunker to the next uniform committee meeting and seek approval for every squad to have one just like it. “My God, we can’t have officers carrying these beat up things around in public. It’s just not professional.” Problem solved.
Off Duty DUI’s, Epidemic or Societal Change?

by Ken Crane
PLEA Vice President

For many valley law enforcement agencies, a first time DUI is a terminable offense. Here on the Phoenix PD the going rate for a first time DUI is trip to the DRB and an 8 hour suspension. Comparatively speaking, that’s some pretty nice discretion. The thought process behind this is that it takes a lot of time and money to field an experienced police officer which raises the question; should we flush one’s career down the toilet over a misdemeanor offense? The next question is; how long will it last? As of late we have had a rash of off duty officers that have been arrested for DUI. It’s pretty bad when it gets to the point that one of the running jokes going around refers to having ignition interlock devices installed on patrol cars.

Regardless of your position on the issue, things will more than likely just get tougher. There is talk on the department about imposing harsher discipline at the DRB for first time offenses; possibly a 40 hour suspension with a last chance agreement (think of it like a class 6 open with the provision that if you screw up a second time you’ll be terminated). For years now, there have been some on the AZPOST board that have been of the opinion that any officer convicted of a DUI should have their POST certification revoked.

A few parting words of advice; be cautious, be careful and think before you drink. Utilize a designated driver, call a cab and above all, if you’re in doubt as to your level of sobriety don’t take the chance. The way things are going it might not be too long before the simple mistake of getting behind the wheel when you shouldn’t will cost you your career.
Concerns of Police Survivors, (C.O.P.S.) Inc. provides resources to assist in the rebuilding of the lives of surviving families and affected co-workers of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty as determined by Federal criteria. Furthermore, C.O.P.S. provides training to law enforcement agencies on survivor victimization issues and educates the public of the need to support the law enforcement profession and its survivors.

Since 1984, Concerns of Police Survivors' mission has been to “rebuild shattered lives” of the surviving family members and affected co-workers of law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty. They help the officers’ survivors by providing emotional support and healing programs needed to cope with a sudden, violent death. C.O.P.S. is a non-profit 501(c)3 national organization with 52 chapters throughout the United States whose membership is made up of more than 15,000 surviving families. Unfortunately, that membership continues to grow as statistics reflect that approximately 140-160 law enforcement officers are killed every year in the line of duty. C.O.P.S. does not charge survivors for any program or services they provide; they have already paid too high a price.

On March 10-12, 2011 Concerns of Police Survivors will hold its inaugural COPS Walk Southwest to bring together survivors, friends, and the law enforcement community to support their hands-on programs.

The journey will start in South Mountain Park, one of Phoenix’s thirty one Points of Pride, and continue along the Salt River Project Canals into Papago Park, another Point of Pride, and through other scenic and urban areas of Tempe and Phoenix. The goal is to raise funds so C.O.P.S. can continue helping to rebuild the shattered lives of those who lost a loved one in the line of duty. The walk provides a physical challenge and the opportunity to spend time with other survivors and friends walking in memory of loved ones.

If you have any questions, please contact Patty Friend, Development Assistant, at 573-346-4911 or send an email to patty_friend@nationalcops.org
Membership meetings are the last Tuesday of each month at 7:30, 12:30, and 5:30.

Board meeting is held the 3rd Tuesday each month and members can attend at 8:30 am.

**BENEFITS TO MEMBERS**

Aflac Rep, Debby Tornberg, is available to meet with members at a place and time convenient to them. *She can be reached at 602.214.4686.*

Hester, Heitel & Associates Exclusive group insurance offers to PLEA Members only for homeowners, and auto and liability. *Please call Mark or Loretta at 602.230.7726*

Tom Jonovich Financial & Retirement Planning Sessions
3rd Thursday each month at PLEA Office
10am - Noon
602.954.5025 or 602.989.3560
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If You Have A Grievance

FIRST:
Attempt to resolve the matter informally with your supervisor.

SECOND:
If you cannot resolve this with your supervisor, contact one of the representatives above.

REMEMBER:
There are time limits to initiate a written grievance.

If You Are Being Investigated

RECORD:
All interviews once you have been given an NOI.

COPY:
All memos or paperwork related to the investigation.

TRUTHFULLY:
Answer all questions related to the investigation.

If you are called by Professional Standards Bureau or any police supervisor regarding an investigatory interview or interrogation, you may have PLEA representation during that interview. Call for representation as soon as possible. For your convenience, a PLEA board member and representative are available 24/7.