



August 2025

THE FRONT LINE

A Southern States PBA Newsletter

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Virginia Division welcomes new Fairfax Deputy Sheriffs Chapter

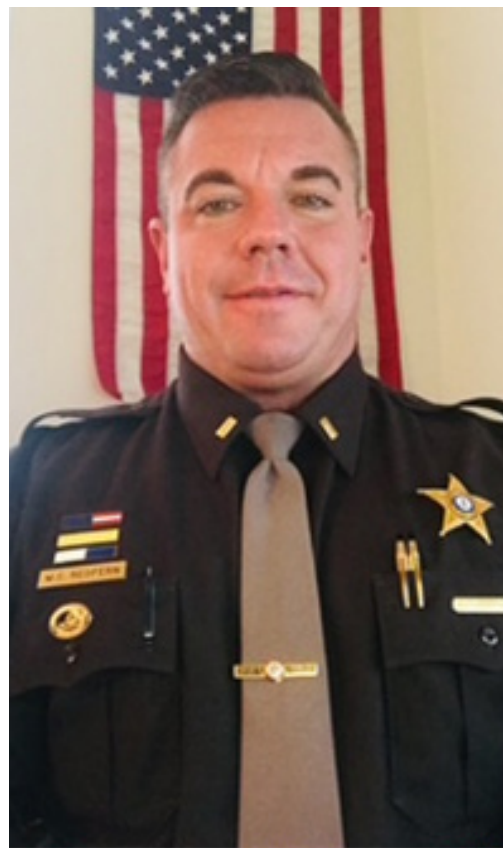
By RICH GOSZKA
VA/WVA FIELD REPRESENTATIVE FOR SSPBA

The Southern States Police Benevolent Association proudly announces the formation of the Fairfax Deputy Sheriffs Chapter of its Virginia Division, officially established in June 2025.

This milestone marks a significant step forward in giving a stronger voice and greater representation to deputy sheriffs serving in the Fairfax County and City of Falls Church sheriff's offices.

The newly formed chapter already boasts an impressive 102 members and a 10-member board, with clear signs of enthusiasm and commitment among deputies to advocate for meaningful change, professional growth and enhanced workplace protections.

At the helm of this new chapter is Second Lt. William "Red" Redfern, a veteran law enforcement officer with the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office. Red has served the citizens of Fairfax County since 2001 and has been a



Second Lt. William 'Red' Redfern

dedicated SSPBA member since 2013. His leadership, vision and tireless advocacy were instrumental

in bringing the chapter to life.

Under his guidance, the chapter is positioned as a powerful force for good within the law enforcement community of Fairfax County, Va. Red's deep commitment to service is reflected throughout his distinguished career. He has earned multiple accolades for his work, including the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce Certificate of Valor and the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office Meritorious Action Award.

Beyond his local impact, Red is also a retired U.S. Navy Reserve veteran with 22 years of honorable service. He completed three combat deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and the Global War on Terrorism, serving as a patrol leader and tactical craft coxswain.

He later assumed the role of command senior enlisted leader for three Virginia Beach-based commands during the final nine years of his military service.

Now, as president of the Fairfax Deputy Sheriffs Chapter, Red is focused on empowering fellow deputies and advocating for their rights and interests within one of the largest sheriff's offices in Virginia.

"The Southern States Police Benevolent Association is the strongest and most trusted voice for law enforcement officers," Red said. "Rooted in experience, driven by unity and built to protect those who protect others. For the men and women of the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office, the PBA isn't just a professional association; it's our safeguard, our advocate and our collective power to be heard, supported and defended."

The SSPBA congratulates the Fairfax Deputy Sheriffs Chapter on its formation and looks forward to standing alongside its members in the months and years to come.

With strong leadership, a dedicated board and an engaged membership, the chapter is well-positioned to make a lasting impact on the future of law enforcement in the region.

Welcome to the family, Fairfax Deputy Sheriffs Chapter. Your voice just got stronger.

BEHIND THE BADGE SEMINAR PTSD AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Facts:

- More officers die each year by their own hand as opposed to being killed by an assailant.
- Relationship issues are the No. 1 reason for officer suicide.
- Each day an officer makes the choice to take his/her own life.
- The effects of law enforcement suicides are long lasting to the officer's family and the department.
- Most officers have little or no training on combatting our No. 1 killer: ourselves!

Join us at one of our upcoming seminars:

September 22 - Morgantown, WV
November 17 - Flowery Branch, GA
November 19 - Augusta, GA



Scan the QR code
or visit PBFI.org for
more info!

119th U.S. Congress Legislative Updates

The following links will take you to the lists of federal legislation we are currently monitoring. The lobbying software we are using will allow you to be informed and help you to track bills important to your profession.

SSPBA Tracked legislation:

[U.S. 119th Congress Police Related Benefits Bills](#)

[U.S. 119th Congress Firearm Related Bills](#)

[U.S. 119th Congress Police Labor Related Bills](#)

[U.S. 119th Congress Police Working Conditions Bills](#)

MSPBA member Coda Medlin helped save our son's life

By MARK LITTLE

RETIRED FROM SOUTHAVEN POLICE DEPARTMENT
FORMER NORTH MSPBA CHAPTER PRESIDENT

On Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2025, I received a phone call at 4:09 a.m. It was a call that changes your life. It was one of our 20-year-old son's dormmates.

"Mr. Little, you need to get here now," he said, voice shaking. His other dormmate grabbed the phone, "Jacob stopped breathing in his sleep, and we started CPR as soon as we heard him making a moaning sound, but I don't know how long this was happening, he was blue when I checked on him."

The paramedics arrived while we were talking, and my wife and I headed to an emergency clinic in Senatobia, Miss. The dormmates were waiting for us, along with Officer Coda Medlin of the Northwest Mississippi Community College Police Department. As the ER clinic worked to stabilize Jacob, the story began to unfold.

Jacob and his dormmates were up late gaming. School was out the next day because of weather. About 3:30 a.m., the dormmate near Jacob woke to what he described as moaning. He used his phone as a flashlight and could see Jacob was blue. He called for the other dormmates to help.

One dormmate was enrolled in a first aid class where he learned CPR. He began compressions while another dormmate called 911. Moments later, Officer Medlin made the scene. He assessed Jacob and then took over CPR until the ambulance arrived.

He stayed with them and continued treating Jacob until they were able to load him in the ambulance and transport him to the emergency clinic in Senatobia.

Coda was there when we arrived and briefed us on the situation. Jacob's dormmates, along with Officer Medlin, were vital in saving our son's life that night. They are all true heroes in our eyes, and we will always feel a special bond with them.



From left, Jacob Little, his two dormmates and Officer Coda Medlin

Jacob was taken by ambulance to Baptist Hospital in Oxford, Miss., and admitted to the ICU. His heart output was only 10% to 15%, and his kidneys had stopped functioning.

He was out on a respirator and doctors suspected he may have gone too long without oxygen and suffered brain damage. The next morning, the cardiologist performed a heart catheter and found Jacob's heart had almost completely recovered.

As he progressed, we were thrilled to learn that there was no brain damage, and his kidneys were recovering. All this good news was the result of Jacob's dormmates and Officer Medlin's timely actions that night.

Officer Medlin spent a lot of time with us at the hospital in Oxford – off the clock – to know Jacob was stable. This is where I learned that he also works part-time for the Panola County Sheriff's Office and serves as fire chief for the Pleasant Grove Volunteer Fire Department. He also trains the fire department in first aid and CPR.

He was recently named Officer of the Month at

Northwest Community College and Fireman of the Year for 2024 at his fire department. In our eyes, these



Deputy Winston Knox and Officer Coda Medlin



Northwest President Dr. Michael Heindl and Officer Coda Medlin

recognitions are well deserved.

Officer Medlin will forever hold a special place in our hearts, and we are so thankful for his quick arrival on scene and commitment to doing all he could to rescue Jacob until the ambulance arrived.

Jacob continues to make a full recovery and is back in school, off dialysis, and has been released by doctors to return to play soccer for NWCC Rangers.

We can't wait to see Jacob return to the field, and when he does, we will certainly feel an enormous amount of gratitude for Officer Medlin for helping save our son's life.

Next issue of FRONT LINE
will focus on these divisions



If you have story ideas from these
divisions, please email

jblackburn@sspba.org · rbyrd@sspba.org

To read past issues
of the FRONT LINE,
please scan.



Meet Katie Kuykendall, WVPBA scholarship recipient



Katie Kuykendall

By CINDY BAUGHER
COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT COORDINATOR

It is easy to see why Katie Kuykendall, who was recently named a PBF Division Scholarship recipient for West Virginia, was selected for the honor.

She finished her high school years with an impressive 4.4 cumulative GPA and extracurriculars such as National Honor Society, student council member, and West Virginia Theater East member to her credit. She also was able to work as an intern at an optometry practice during her senior year.

Katie has proven to be just as busy and well-rounded in her college experience as well. She has maintained a GPA of 3.949 while also interning at a lumber products business and participating in the honors program.

She was named the 2022-23 outstanding student at Potomac State College and was awarded the John Philip Spoerl Scholarship for her dedication and hard

work in her business classes. She volunteered to assist with a bilingual reading project to increase literacy in elementary-age children and volunteers her time with her church.

Now, as a student at West Virginia University, Katie has accepted a role with the West Virginia University Foundation where she works closely with various university departments on fundraising. She also works part time as a sales associate in a retail store, even while taking a full load of seven courses this semester.

And that's not all of her involvement at WVU.

"I was also lucky enough to be selected by the Communication Department to serve as a McConnell Chair COMMbassador for the 2024-2025 academic year," she said. "This is an unpaid position. COMMbassadors serve as a point of contact for prospective and current students, parents, department faculty and graduate students, and the WVU community at large. This se-



Katie and her father

mester I was also inducted into the Lambda Pi Eta Honors Society, the national undergraduate honor society for communication studies majors. I am a part of the American Marketing Associates chapter at WVU, as well as a member of the Undergraduate Communication Association."

Katie is majoring in promotional marketing and organizational communication. She's always known that she wanted to be involved in the business world, since she enjoys discovering creative solutions to problems and diving deeply into the projects with which she's involved. She's also eager to travel and explore all options available to her.

Because of her deep love for reading and its power to expand people's lives, she initially thought she'd work with the marketing aspect of the publishing industry. However, she's now looking beyond that field and exploring different career options. Because of her coursework exposure to various business roles, she's found a fascination with all of the hats to be worn in the corporate world.

Katie has high praise for her parents in shaping her into the person she is today. Her mother instilled in her the love of reading that has molded her in so many ways.

"She has always been supportive of my dreams and has done everything she could to help me succeed," Katie said.

Her father, a police sergeant with West Virginia National Resources and a 25-year veteran law enforcement officer, imparted to Katie the value of honesty, diligence and hard work. She calls him her protector, adding, "He is the protector of me, the community and of the wildlife."

One of Katie's favorite movies is the 2005 adaptation of "Pride and Prejudice." She especially relates to the main character in the novel and movie, Elizabeth Bennet. She admires Elizabeth's ability to stand up for herself and finds her demonstration of self-worth and



Katie at the Communications Department table



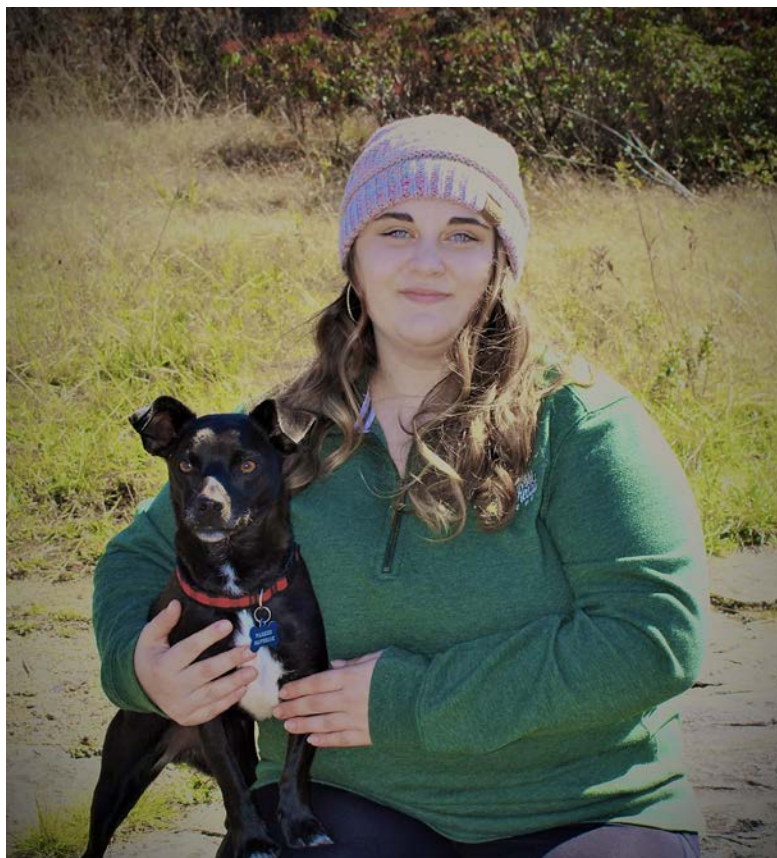
Katie and her family at her high school graduation

her challenge of societal expectations to be “incredibly empowering.”

The movie is also the source of Katie’s favorite quote, from the Elizabeth Bennet character, which seems to mirror Katie’s own determination to succeed: “There is a stubbornness about me that never can bear to be frightened at the will of others. My courage always rises with every attempt to intimidate me.”

Being awarded this scholarship is an honor that Katie is excited and grateful for. There are two courses she must complete over the summer term to graduate – courses she must pay for out of pocket. However, now that she’s earned the scholarship, she’s been relieved of some of the stress she’d had about paying for those classes.

“I am sincerely honored to have been selected as a recipient of the Police Benevolent Foundation Scholarship,” she said. “I would like to thank the Foundation for its gracious generosity, which is aiding me to thrive successfully in my academia endeavors. I am overwhelmingly ecstatic to accept this amazing award.”



Katie and her dog

NCPBA member recognized for making DWI cases

By KATHARINE JEFCOATS
EDITOR

If you follow certain rules, you need never meet Kinston police Officer Blake Davis – and he's good with that.

With less than three years under his utility belt, Davis was honored in 2024 with DWI Officer of the Year, the Ronnie Sutton Traffic Award and Officer of the Year.

As honored as he is to be recognized in his profession, Davis said there are no good reasons for driving while impaired cases to be made in the first place.

"I have always seen impaired driving as a senseless decision that jeopardizes innocent lives on the roadway," said Davis. "So many people are injured or killed in collisions every year at the hands of a drunk driver. It's a selfish decision that can be so easily avoided by catching a ride or drinking responsibly."

Making sure the roads are safe has been on Davis' radar since he joined the Kinston Police Department. It's a goal shared by other officers on his shift.

"The shift I work with also played a big part in this award," he said. "They know the passion I have for DWI investigations and will assist me in finding impaired drivers in the city."

The Ronnie Sutton Traffic Award is given to the officer who led the department in traffic enforcement actions, DWIs and wreck reports. In 2024, Davis investigated 124 wrecks and made 46 DWI cases.

"I enjoy the complexity of wreck investigations," Davis said. "The other officers on shift allow me to take lead on a lot of the wrecks in the city, which I'm very appreciative of."

The Officer of the Year Award is a peer honor, as it is voted on by all members of the department.

"I'm very thankful for everyone at KPD who respects me as an officer and a person and the work I do enough to check my name on the voting sheet," said Davis.



Kinston police Officer Blake Davis



"The shift I'm on received the Distinguished Unit Award. Throughout the course of the past year, (the) A Shift has overcome many adversities, maintaining a strong work ethic and continuing to thoroughly do our jobs through all the tough situations we were put into this past year.

"I'm appreciative of every single officer I work beside every day and the leadership and guidance my supervisors provide us all with," he continued.

Davis was born and raised in Wayne County, surrounded by family in Goldsboro, the son of a farmer and accountant. He has two biological siblings and one non-biological brother.

When he was in middle school, the family moved to Lenoir County, where he graduated from high school in 2020.

He was a middle linebacker at North Lenoir High School and was honored with several athletic awards. Davis also rode bulls as a teenager.

"After high school, I worked as a mechanic full-time and went to college online for a bit," he said. "I decided I wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement and paused my college education."

With college in his rear-view mirror, Davis considered his admiration for an uncle, who is a retired North Carolina trooper, and his passion to serve others, and focused on making a career in law enforcement.

"Law enforcement has been a career where every day is something new, you never know what challenge the next day will bring to you," he said. "It's a very tough but rewarding career."

In addition to his uncle, Davis said he's been blessed by having good leaders in his life, all of whom played a crucial role in shaping him into the man he is today.

Davis was assigned to the patrol division, but developed a passion for traffic enforcement, earning the required courses to be a collision reconstructionist. He nabbed the Rookie of the Year and DWI Officer of the Year in his first year in uniform.

"The award that means the most to me is the DWI Offi-



Davis talks to elementary students during a lunch break

cer of the Year," said Davis. "I believe every drunk driver taken off the road is a life saved."

He is also proud of his siblings. His biological brother is working on an engineering degree. His sister has been accepted to college to begin her studies for occupational therapy assistant. His non-biological brother just received his bachelor's degree.



Davis plays musical chairs at a community event

"My mother and father are very supportive of my career and my dreams for the future," said Davis. "Although I'm not married, I do have a beautiful girlfriend who will become a registered nurse, (having finished) school in May."

Davis also joined PBA for a reason shared by thousands of fellow officer-members.

"I became a PBA member for peace of mind," he said, "knowing that if anything were to ever happen on shift, I would be taken care of."

When he isn't taking impaired drivers off Kinston roads, Davis enjoys playing piano and drums, duck hunting and wake boarding.



SCHOLARSHIPS

Help us congratulate the 19 recipients of 2025 PBF scholarships. We're proud to showcase their efforts.

The window to submit applications for 2026 funds opens Dec. 1.

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Tennessee police officer soars in his career as OOTY

BY KATHARINE JEFFCOATS
EDITOR

Germantown police Senior Patrol Officer Matthew Dia has his career by the tail, having achieved several accolades in less than four years on the job, including Officer of the Year.

Hailing from Maryland, Dia moved to Memphis as a child and graduated from Lausanne Collegiate School in 2017. His mother is a social worker at St. Jude and his father is a behavioral therapist. He has a sister who graduated from NYU law school and is a clerk in Washington, D.C.

Moving to the South was an adjustment for Dia.

"I was born in Frederick, Md., which is just outside of Baltimore, and it was special to me due to the majority of my family living in that area," said Dia. "It was hard moving to Memphis and being so far away from them."

In high school, Dia played lacrosse and served as captain of the team in his junior and senior years. During those years, Dia was awarded All-Region and All-State honors.

Dia began his foray into law enforcement when he decided he wanted an exciting and fast-paced career that would allow him to help others. After joining the Germantown PD in December 2020, he attended Memphis Police Department Regional Academy in 2021, graduating second in his class. Dia also earned the Physical Fitness Award.

He was not done with his education yet, however. Dia attended the University of Tennessee, graduating in 2022 with a degree in criminal justice. In October 2022, he married Lauren, whom he met in college. She is a registered dietitian with a master's degree in sports nutrition.

Dia said he has sky-dived three times. However, he hit the ground running as a police officer, earning accolades and prestigious assignments.

He has been recognized as Officer of the Month three times, primarily serving on the afternoon shift, known as Charlie shift. Dia is an integral member of the Honor Guard team and earned his CIT certification from



Dia (second from left) with his OOTY award



Dia is a member of the Germantown Police Department Honor Guard.

the Shelby County Sheriff's Office in December 2022.

He also serves as a field training officer, having received certification from the Memphis Police Department in July 2023. In the same month, Dia joined the department's SWAT team and completed tactical training with the Mississippi/Tennessee Tactical Officer Association in Holly Springs, Miss., in November 2023 and completed the Shelby County Sheriff's SWAT School in September 2024.

His most recent award honors him as Officer of the Year at Germantown PD.

"Each year, our command picks one officer who has been previously nominated that year as Officer of the Month," said Dia. "From that pool of 12 officers, they pick Officer of the Year. I had the highest number of felony arrests, along with constant proactive police work. I was commended for serving the community beyond what was expected."

Dia became a PBA member because he said he supports its mission and knows that the organization has his back. He enjoys taking his dog, Dakota, to the dog park and running with a run club.

Dia wasn't raised with law enforcement in his immediate family, but he developed mentors.

"My greatest influence in my career has to be my primary FTO, Robert Schenk," said Dia. "He was as well-rounded

as they come and showed me how to better myself and those around me.

"The most significant leader in my life would have to be my SWAT commander, Capt. Davis Herndon," he continued. "He's somewhat of a legend in our department yet he's extremely down to earth and willing to go above and beyond for his people. He instills the standard of what a police officer should be, and he upholds that standard every single day without fail."

The examples upon which Dia is basing his career may be exemplified by his favorite quote, from the late legendary actor John Wayne, "Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway."



Dia has received many awards since joining law enforcement in 2020

AL members praise advances by PBF in PTSD awareness

BY KATHARINE JEFCOATS
EDITOR

Imagine you're a law enforcement officer and a coworker has been killed in the line of duty.

What do you do? How do you handle the aftermath of grief and loss?

For modern-day officers, the choices are numerous and varied. However, for veterans with decades of service, pickings were slim in their rookie days.

Lee County, Ala., sheriff's Capt. Tammy Lee Booth has put in 30 years serving her community. She remembers the days of working out the losses of fallen officers pretty much on her own.

Booth was one of dozens of Alabama and Georgia LEOs who attended a Behind the Badge PTSD and Suicide Awareness Seminar in Columbus, Ga. The free classes are sponsored by the Police Benevolent Foundation, businesses and individuals.

Officers and their families are invited to attend and hear information presented by former LEO and public speaker Tim Rutledge. Guest speakers also share stories of survival and loss.

Jeremy Peterson of the Alabama State Bureau of Investigation is closing in on 25 years in law enforcement. Prior to going to Alabama in 2005, Peterson spent five years in Simpsonville, S.C.

He also attended the Columbus seminar and remembers how little attention was given years ago to help officers with PTSD and suicidal ideations.

"There was no peer support in 2007," he said. "We didn't know what to do. We had lost three officers up to that point. We created memorial bracelets to memorialize and never forget them. It was our coping mechanism.

"That and challenge coins," continued Peterson. "This is how we coped."



Lee County sheriff's Capt. Tammy Lee Booth and Jeremy Peterson of the Alabama State Bureau of Investigation

Booth experienced similar treatment.

"Back then, we talked amongst ourselves and were supposed to go on," she said.

However, it was obvious "the old school way wasn't working," said Booth.

"It's changed a lot for the better," she added. Booth said she sees an improved future for rookie LEOs struggling to handle stress and thoughts of suicide.

"This gives us hope for females and younger officers who don't have to be told to just 'toughen up,'" she said. "Officers can be willing to get out of their heads and ask for help."

She also expressed regret that training to handle PTSD and related disorders isn't offered in basic training.

Peterson praised Rutledge's approach to teaching. "The classes are helpful," he said. "He uses humor to get the message through."

Tybee Island police officer enjoys the beach life



Tybee Island police Officer James Bishop

BY KATHARINE JEFACOATS
EDITOR

Police Officer James Bishop can honestly say his job is like a day at the beach and he loves every minute of it.

Bishop was honored with the Tybee Island Officer of the Year in 2024. As a certified police officer and trained EMT, Bishop could take his career skills anywhere, but why should he with the beautiful Tybee Island, Ga., right in his backyard?

"I chose the Tybee Island Police Department because I grew up in the area and love the community," he said. "Also, my fellow officers and command staff are wonderful people who are compassionate, professional and morally sound."

The three-mile island is home to about 3,111 residents

and is flooded with thousands more either visiting or staying in second homes during the warmer months. The barrier island, traditionally referred to by tourists and locals as simply Tybee – a Native American Euchee word meaning "salt" – is a magnet for families and singles alike.

There are bikes to rent, a popular fishing pier, restaurants for most tastebuds, quaint seashore shops and lots of clubs for fun after the sun sets.

"The bar scene on Tybee Island can be rowdy at times, but most potential situations can be diffused with mediation," said Bishop. "Arrests are typically made if a subject is extremely intoxicated or violent."

Bishop, a two-year veteran, said he and his fellow officers want all visitors to have fun on Tybee, but there are limits to the frivolity, especially when substances are abused to excess.

"We deal with many serious infractions such as DUIs, domestic disturbances and drug-related crimes," he said. "We get in a few funny situations every now and then, especially when a subject has had way too much to drink. We want tourists to understand that there are many families on this island and, although this is a popular vacation destination we urge them to drink responsibly and conduct themselves respectfully."

"We love our beaches and wildlife and would like to keep the beaches clean and safe for everyone to enjoy," continued Bishop. "There are many historical and unique aspects to explore on the island."

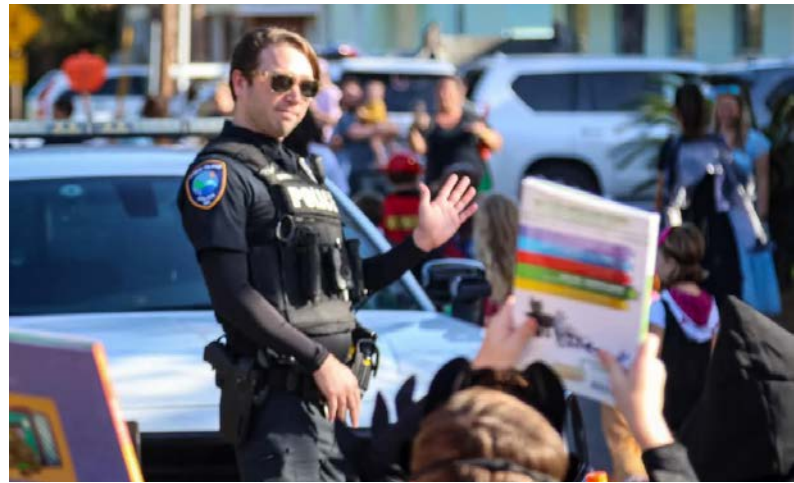
When he's not working, Bishop, who described himself as a "total nerd," participates in Muay Thai Kickboxing, Society for Creative Anachronism armored combat, and attends renaissance fairs.

A typical shift on the island involves monitoring traffic safety, neighborhood patrols and foot patrols in commercial areas.

"We are very busy during the spring and summer but see fewer calls for service in the cooler months," he



Bishop with his Officer of the Month Award



Bishop controls the crowds on the busy island



Bishop makes friends with the island's bird population

said. "Our marked patrol units are utilized mostly. We no longer have a bike unit."

Until recently, Bishop worked nights, keeping parties safe. Now on days, he said he enjoys interacting with the community, even if he sunburns easily.

After getting a GED at 17 to finish high school, Bishop attended technical school to become a nationally registered advanced EMT.

In fact, before he put on a LEO uniform, he was a part-time EMT with Chatham County EMS and a barback and bouncer at a local bar. He's married to a paramedic and lifeguard, who also serves and protects the community.



Bishop with fellow officers and a 'polar bear'

But Bishop was hearing a calling from another avenue of public service.

"I became a police officer to serve and protect the community," he said. "I was also inspired by my uncle and mentor, Walter Bishop, who is a retired police sergeant out of Atlanta."

Bishop said he believes he was awarded Officer of the Year due to his focus on teamwork, honor and loyalty.

"There is nothing I would change about my job, I love it," he said. "I have made great friends here and consider my fellow officers as family. I would not consider myself the top officer, for many of the officers here surpass me in knowledge, training and experience."

SCPBA member Mara Anderton named OOTY at Clover PD

BY CINDY BAUGHER
COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT MANAGER

Clover, S.C., police Officer Mara Anderton has been awarded 2025 Officer of the Year by the Clover Optimist Club.

When presenting her recognition, Chief Randy Grice cited Anderton's dedication to the department and her fellow officers. Her leadership skills, knowledge and support she exhibited when assisting other officers were also mentioned.

The chief added that her willingness to frequently take overtime and dispatch shifts helped the department to meet its needs.

After graduating from Sultan High School in Washington state in 2000, Anderton served six years in the U.S. Navy where she was a master-at-arms (military police) and served on the USS Carl Vinson following 9/11 during Operation Enduring Freedom.

She later served at NAS Sigonella in Sicily, Italy. Her specialty assignments while in the Navy included FTO, investigations and SWAT, in addition to being fully qualified as a watch commander.

Anderton earned a Bachelor of Science in criminal justice in 2009 from American Intercontinental University online once her Navy enlistment was complete. She then became a dispatcher for police, fire and EMS for Snohomish County Sheriff's Office in Washington state before transferring to York County Sheriff's Office in Rock Hill, S.C.

In April 2024, once she completed rookie school in Columbia at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy, Anderton became an officer with Clover PD. She also joined the PBA. Combining her time in the Navy, as a dispatcher and as an officer with the Clover PD, Anderton now has 21.5 years of law enforcement experience under her belt.

When considering her Officer of the Year award, Anderton is quick to share praise for her colleagues in



Clover PD Chief Randy Grice presents Anderton with her Officer of the Year Award.

Clover PD.

"I work for a great department," she said. "I wouldn't be doing as well as I am in my career if it weren't for the people around me. They're so good, I am very lucky. It's an awesome department, partially because it's a small town, but that doesn't necessarily mean you're going to have good people around you. I have been fortunate throughout my career to have excellent teachers and mentors around me. There are so many that I don't want to name just one."

Anderton is a single mother of three children, two daughters, ages 17 and 15, and a son, 5. She chose to go into law enforcement because she likes to help people as much as she can. She acknowledged that it sounds clichéd, but she enjoys public service.

"This job is about serving people," she said. "That's the whole thing. The key to it is just to make sure that your heart's in the right place with things. You're doing it because it's what's going to be safer for everybody else or what's right according to the law. I try to help people, not let them get off with stuff."

"But, too, sometimes arresting somebody helps them the most," continued Anderton. "I arrested one lady and now she's gotten sober because that was like her rock bottom. But it really kind of pulled her out and she's doing really well. I'm proud of her. And, obviously, that's not



Anderton at the S.C. Academy where she graduated in April 2024.

everybody. (People have to want to change.) But, you know, even if it's just her for the next 10 years, that's a great feeling to know that you helped somebody. Even though it was a tough way to do it, but sometimes that's what is needed."

Like most in this profession, Anderton has a treasured hobby unrelated to law enforcement that helps her decompress from the demands of her day-to-day job. She is a horse trainer and enjoys helping clients prepare to show their horses, particularly Egyptian Arabians, although she loves Saddlebreds, National Show Horses and Appaloosas. Her training, show prep jobs and work as a farrier help to provide a supplemental source of income while at the same time allowing her to spend time with horses, a pastime she has had since childhood.

"I kind of grew up with horses," she said. "I did 4-H when I was younger. I think I started in middle school and my best friend's family had horses. So, I borrowed one of their horses and started showing with them. And they knew so much.

"And I'm lucky there's always been people around me – both career-wise and horse-wise – that have just really known their stuff and been willing to mentor me," continued Anderton. "In terms of the horses, I certainly couldn't afford lessons or anything like that. Everything was self-taught or taught by people who were kind enough to share knowledge."

Realizing the impact of the horse wisdom that was shared by her mentors, Anderton said she is passing that on to her daughter.

"My middle (child) is 15, so she actually will go with me to some of the clients and work with me," she said. "She wants to do something similar when she gets older. So, one day I want to get a farm and open a boarding business."

The main parallel that Anderton draws between her side work with horses and her regular law enforcement job is the problem-solving that it entails.

"Well, it's challenging, but it's also relaxing and it's nice, kind of solving the problems," she said. "I guess that's how it relates, but obviously my work at my day-to-day job (in LE) is a lot more stressful. Solving horse problems is less stressful. It can still be dangerous, but the horses aren't just being mean, it's just that they don't understand. They're like children and they're prey animals."

No matter if she's policing citizens or training horses, Anderton's favorite quote from Oscar Wilde is relevant to either, "Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future."



Anderton and her daughter, Payton, at a horse show with a friend's Arabian stallion.