

THE TEXAS POLICE STAR

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Innovation, new direction, internal restructure deliver new members, new focus at CLEAT

By John Moritz
CLEAT Public Affairs

"It's our job to prove up the legacy of CLEAT by doing more, by being innovative and by never backing down," Charley Wilkison, CLEAT Executive Director, told employees at the

new semi-annual meeting at the University of Texas last quarter.

"This is your time," he said.

Since then, CLEAT has grown larger than any time in its history, representing the most police officers, the most deputy sheriffs and the most county correc-

tion officers of any statewide union in Texas.

The new focus of building a better union has not only created a tremendous growth in membership across the state,
(Continued on Page 2)

CLEAT, SAPOA stay on offensive in San Antonio

With the San Antonio city manager hunkered down in her my-way-or-the-highway negotiating stance, CLEAT is pushing the effort to educate the public on why the city's police officers deserve a decent compensation package.

The centerpiece of the campaign is an emotional short film written and produced by CLEAT about Officer Jolanda Sanchez, her fallen brother Rocky Riojas, and a critical incident in San Antonio.

Officer Sanchez and her part-



ner were called to a Super 8 Motel where they were engaged with an active shooter. Officer Sanchez's partner was shot in the head.

Even as Officer Sanchez was

under fire with her critically injured partner she had the added stress of the memory of her fallen brother Rocky, who was shot and killed in the line of duty. Instead of being paralyzed by fear and loss--she placed her own life at risk and heroically saved the life of her partner.

"It has to be in your heart, it really does. It has to be in your heart," Sanchez says in the video about why she serves her community, despite the danger and despite the unwillingness
(Continued on Page 8)

CLEAT, La Marque Police Association expose wrongdoing at City Hall, force official censure of racist city council member

LA MARQUE – When the La Marque Police Association was presented with evidence that some of the city's top decision-makers were allowing their own racism affect public policy, they could not just turn a blind eye and let it pass.

Instead, association leaders reached out to CLEAT, and the two organizations decided to shine a bright light on the unfortunate circumstances by bringing it to the attention of the U.S. Attorney's Office.

The result was the firing of the city's Planning and Zoning Commission chairman, the censuring of a councilwoman whose racist remarks were recorded and the defeat of one of that councilwoman's political allies by La Marque voters.

"When hate language goes beyond words and actually becomes a
(Continued on Page 3)



TMPA's spa day makeover delivers only confusion

By Todd Harrison
CLEAT President

Remember about a year ago when the Texas Municipal Police Association announced with so much chest-beating that it was going to "unite" all of the law enforcement labor groups?



They called their new baby the Texas Law Enforcement Council, or TLEC for short. But truth be told, it was a vehicle to remake their image as an organization that will do or say anything to gain attention.

TLEC is run by TMPA, check the charter.

But all that happy talk about "unity" was soon drowned out by a thundering stampede of mixed messages, false starts and turf wars. And some of it happened in the high-profile Republican primary for Texas Attorney General.

TMPA endorsed state Rep. Dan Branch and claimed to be the state's largest law enforcement association under its TLEC tent.

TMPA forced two of its locals to later rescind their endorsements of Sen. Ken Paxton in the race.

The attorney general's GOP primary eventually went into a runoff, which gave TLEC/TMPA more time to run in circles while shooting themselves in the feet.

TMPA pushed news stories during the campaign raising legal and ethical questions about Paxton that involved him being fined by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

But rather than waiting for the dust to clear and having all facts on the table, TMPA called Paxton a "criminal" and demanded that he quit the race.

The TMPA noise machine had little effect on GOP voters, however. Paxton easily won the runoff, which makes him the heavy favorite in the November election.

That means TMPA will probably find itself in the awkward position of having to deal with an attorney general that it publicly called a criminal.

But the story doesn't end there.

A few weeks ago, TMPA issued a desperate plea for money to fund their new politi-

cal action committee.

Make no mistake, CLEAT PAC and our affiliated PACs are rock-solid.

But even if that weren't the case, we'd still find a way to carry on the fight for the rights of Texas police. We will never quit fighting.

That's why we're here.

Perhaps this lack of solvency in the TMPA PAC is why the organization chose to accept \$50,000 (*69% of their total PAC contributions) in contributions from liberal special interests.

Then TMPA PAC filtered this money into the campaign accounts of political candidates who lost!

CLEAT members know we dominate the political landscape without liberal special interest money. We don't need TMPA or its "spa day makeover" called TLEC.

Instead, we fight for cops without being conflicted by government grant money or secret PAC contributions from liberal special interests. There is no confusion with CLEAT - we stand and fight.

**Percentage number from the Trail Blazers Blog with the Dallas Morning News.*

The 2014 CLEAT Convention will be Nov. 5-8 in San Antonio on the Riverwalk. Visit www.CLEAT.org for more information and to register.

Continued ... Resource allocation underscores CLEAT's big changes, new focus

(From Page 1) and with the new executive director, has come a new expansion of projects and personnel. Now, CLEAT is bringing in the big guns where the battlefield is most treacherous.

In Fort Worth, CLEAT is now funding a battle in federal court against the city's ill-advised efforts to slash officers' pensions. CLEAT has hired pension lawyers to prove that the city is guilty of contract impairment, violation of due process, unlawful taking of property and violating both the U.S. and Texas constitutions by reducing pension benefits for future service.

And, CLEAT is backing an intense media offensive against the hostile San Antonio city manager who appears hell bent on drastically rolling back the hard-won benefits earned by the city's police officers.

This summer, CLEAT opened a Lubbock field office. Staff attorneys and reps from Field Services are staffing the new office on a rotating basis.

And with new regional attorneys in place across the state to ensure that members will have real-time representation when they need it most, CLEAT now has legal backup in every region.

In January, Wilkison announced that he was doubling the training budget so members would have more access, opportunities and career protection.

In September, Wilkison reorganized the CLEAT Legal Division. The General Counsel is permanently moved to Austin. CLEAT staff attorney Robert Leonard is promoted to Assistant General Counsel. Longtime CLEAT staff member Carol Whitfield has been tapped to run the CLEAT wills pro-

gram. Veteran law enforcement labor attorney Morris Munoz has been hired for a newly created staff attorney position in San Antonio. The legal services in the Corpus Christi office have been restructured.

Previously this year, Wilkison brought on former TMPA attorney Terry Porter and former TMPA Field Representative Tracy Chance.

There are more examples:

More lawyers and a deeper budget for legal services; more organizers in the field to bring in new members, new communication and data systems streamlined for both internal and external projects; and upgrades at the State Headquarters.

"These are significant investments that underscore our commitment to make sure that every CLEAT member has world class representation," Wilkison said.

New “Right on Crime”, “Smart on Crime” initiatives are really soft on crime

By Charley Wilkison
CLEAT Executive Director

After years of being marginalized as the nutcase enemies of the police, the far left and far right are now converging with a brand-new scheme.

Across the country comes the various “Right on Crime” and “Smart on Crime” initiatives that have at their core a sweeping plan to neuter law enforcement.



After failing at successfully bringing for-profit prisons and jails to the mainstream, the same crowd now aims to tear down the structure and bring your arrest powers, the number of police, the equipment you use, your job and your pension all down in one fell swoop.

Remember a short time ago the businesses that pushed for a massive overhaul of the criminal code? Changes to juvenile code, enhancements of federal immigration law?

These movements spurred a massive buildup of private, for-profit prisons and county jails. As time has gone by the political tides have turned and public distrusts for profiteering in prisons has become less appealing. Also the raw scandals behind many of the prisons have come to light.

Now that it’s clear that the criminal justice system will never be a long term profitable venture — the bottom feeders and vultures have moved on toward finding new money.

They are now eyeing the costs of law enforcement, calling for a wholesale reduction of criminal penalties. This thinly disguised attack on law enforcement is a political game changer in that it is an bad idea wrapped in reasonableness. The sneakiest of the sneak plays.

The powerful people who helped lure millions to this country to lower labor costs have decided to send them home. The people who bankrolled the private jail industry now want the money from public safety budgets in your city, your county diverted away.

They also look at your pension, your retirement, your health care benefits and now believe you’re your benefit package is too rich and needs to be destroyed.

Open insults from the public regarding your risk, your sacrifice, your service to your community are just part of the overall new norm. Claiming that the police mentality in this country is anti-minority, becoming militarized are new tools in the public relations arsenal to switch you from “good guy who risks all to protect and serve” to “testosterone-pumped racist with anger issues.”

It’s clear that your profession, your rights and you as an officer are now under full scale attack.

Claiming that your job is not all that dangerous after all combined with the massive plan to decriminalize makes the current political climate very volatile.

The demographics of Texas are experiencing a hyper explosion.

People from across the globe are pouring in to Texas and with very different attitudes toward basic issues connected to law enforcement.

It’s clear that your profession, your rights and you as an officer are now under full scale attack.

You have to be more discerning than ever in your political connections as an officer, union member and citizen.

This next statewide election is very important and the next legislative session in Austin is of even more importance.

That’s why we have developed a brand-new legislative strategy that will be unveiled to members and local union leaders at our biennial workshop held in conjunction with our convention in November in San Antonio.

Changing political conditions deserve new strategies and tactics. We’ll be ready.

Stay tuned.



Gandy, Harrison tee off to help Project Blue

CLEAT President Todd Harrison and Region 6 Director Forrest Gandy competed in the Project Blue Golf Tournament, which helps officers who face serious illness or injuries outside the line of duty and fund criminal justice scholarships.

Continued ... Racist policies by La Marque city councilwoman exposed by CLEAT, LMPA

(From Page 1)

basis for public policy, that has the effect of denying people their civil rights,” CLEAT’s Executive Director Charley Wilkison said at a news conference in front of La Marque City Hall.

By making the evidence public, CLEAT and the police association forced the La Marque City Council to hire an outside law firm to examine the matter. The firm, Olson & Olson, agreed that Councilwoman Connie Trube had allowed her racial prejudice to guide her public policy initiatives.

“The evidence establishes that these statements were made by Trube and there was an inappropriate racial aspect to them.” Olson & Olson attorney Brian Begle said in an official report.

The report cites the affidavits and recordings provided by CLEAT and the local association, plus interviews with several witnesses who heard Trube using disparaging language concerning African-Americans.

Outside meddling undermining Arlington officers' salaries

By John Moritz

CLEAT Public Affairs

The misguided effort by the Texas Municipal Police Association to divide the labor force in Arlington is costing all officers in the city money.

During the years when the CLEAT-affiliated Arlington Police Association provided the unified voice on behalf of officers, their compensation package typically ranked second among law enforcement agencies in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

But after TMPA's local affiliate elbowed its way in, the pay scale for rank-and-file officers in Arlington nose-dived in just about every category.

According to a recent survey by the City of Arlington, the pay rate for an officer after one year of services ranks 10th among the 13 D-FW cities surveyed. The pay rate is nearly 7.5 percent lower than average among the 13 cities.



APA President Becki Brandenburg

And it doesn't get much better for rank-and-file officers with more experience in Arlington. After 5 years, they come in 7th and after 20 years, they slip back to 8th place.

That's why CLEAT is committed to keeping the APA the designated meet-and-confer agent in Arlington.

"When we speak with one voice in labor

negotiations, all officers benefit," said CLEAT Executive Director Charley Wilkison.

But compensation isn't the only casualty of TMPA's divisive tactics. This spring, its local affiliate actually filed a lawsuit seeking to force the city of Arlington to hand over to an unaccountable third party the home addresses and phone numbers of all Arlington police officers.

CLEAT and the city are fighting this irresponsible demand because it's a clear violation of state law – a state law that CLEAT fought to

enact 35 years ago because we understood the dangers of what can happen if private information finds its way into the wrong hands.

"If they are successful, they will leave everyone, including their own members, vulnerable to anyone who wants to know where we live," said APA President Becki Brandenburg. "There are serious repercussions to their actions."

Longview's James Mathis planning to stay active in post-retirement life

James Mathis retired this summer after more than three decades in law enforcement, but his career in public service will continue.

Mathis, who spent 18 years as a board member of the Longview Police Officers Association, won the Democratic nomination for a Justice of the Peace seat in Gregg County this spring and has no Republican opponent in November.

He said he wants to use his law enforcement experience, especially the time he spent as a school resource officer, to help divert young people on the path to juvenile delinquency and to strengthen ties between the local districts and police agencies.

CLEAT Executive Director Charley Wilkison, who has been friends with Mathis for more than 20 years, took part in the retirement ceremony at Longview Police Headquarters.

Mathis' association with the Longview department dates back to 1982 when he became a reserve officer.



LPOA Vice President Chris Clayton, left, CLEAT/LPOA member Jacky Hiles, Mathis, and CLEAT Executive Director Charley Wilkison.

CLEAT helps fallen officers' kids win four-year battle for survivor benefits

Four years after their father was killed in the line of duty, the children of Reeves County Deputy Jacob Rayos finally received the benefits that initially were denied to them.

Deputy Rayos, a father of five, was killed in a rollover accident while pursuing a fleeing suspect on the Interstate 20 service road before dawn on April 10, 2010.

Due to an error in the autopsy report, Reeves County denied workers' compensation benefits.

The county also failed to file a claim with the

Employees Retirement System of Texas.

The family contacted CLEAT's Chris Jones.

Working through the POMF, Jones took up the fight for Deputy Rayos' children.

Jones was able to get the autopsy report corrected and found attorneys to represent the family in the workers comp claim.

After a workers comp hearing, the children were awarded death benefits that had been unjustly denied for four years..



Deputy Jacob Rayos



Porter is back as 'of counsel' to CLEAT Legal

FORT WORTH – Veteran labor lawyer Terry Daffron Porter has rejoined CLEAT and working on behalf of peace officers in Tarrant County and across North Texas.

“I believe in aggressive and zealous representation of my clients,” said Terry. “You must start fighting for your client from Day One.”

Terry, a native of Rockwall who graduated from SMU Law School, has 18 years experience working on behalf of law enforcement personnel. She has represented officers and deputies in more than 300 appeals and arbitrations. She also has worked over 30 critical incidents and litigated more than 1,500 civil hearings and trials.

Not long after earning her law degree, Terry was a staff attorney for CLEAT. She went into private practice in 2001 and also worked for the Texas Municipal Police Association.

This year, she decided to come back as “of counsel” to CLEAT.

CLEAT scores big victory for officers working in the El Paso County Jail

An effort by El Paso County Sheriff Richard Wiles to radically alter the state-required correctional officer-to-inmate ratio was unanimously rejected by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards after CLEAT strenuously objected.

“You’ll put everyone’s life at risk if you do this -- both the sheriff’s officers and the inmates,” CLEAT Executive Charley Wilkison told the commission during a meeting in Austin.

Wiles and the El Paso County Commissioners Court were seeking the panel’s permission to abandon the long-held ratio of 48 to one in favor of 61 to one.

Both Wilkison and Jose Marrufo, President of the El Paso County Sheriff’s Officers Association, laid out a strong case showing how unwise and dangerous such a change would be.

Among their points were:

Time-sensitive checks of inmates by officers would be compromised.

With more inmates to look after, fewer officers would be available in the event of a crisis.

Officer turnover rates would rise, meaning more overtime pay and more costly recruiting and training effort.

Additionally, Marrufo said, the El Paso Jail is already housing dangerous gang-affiliated inmates as the jail population increases.

Even after Wiles attempted to explain that the variance would remain in place only until a new jail annex comes on line by 2016, the commission was unconvinced.

Members said if such a move would be made for El Paso, more counties would be tempted to seek changes in their ratios.

“That’s a lot to ask,” said Commission Chairwoman Donna Klaeger, who is the county



Jose Marrufo, President of the El Paso County Sheriff’s Officers Association, urges the Jail Standards Commission not to change the ratio.

judge of Burnet County. “I feel it would put an undue safety (risk) on your staff.

When Klaeger asked for a motion on the matter, the request was swiftly shot down.

“This is a huge victory for our officers in the jail,” Marrufo said after the vote.

“Our guys are working 12-hour shifts. This means they’ll at least have back-up in an emergency.”

“You’ll put everyone’s life at risk if you do this -- both the sheriff’s officers and the inmates.”

– Charley Wilkison

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US Border Patrol golf tourney raises \$4,000 for POMF

Chief Patrol Agent Robert Harris of the U.S. Border Patrol Office in Laredo recently sent a check for \$4,076 to CLEAT.

The amount was half of the money raised May 3 during the first South Texas Corridor Classic, a charity golf tournament organized by the federal agency's sector headquartered in Laredo.

The money was donated to the Peace Officers Memorial Foundation of Texas. The balance raised during the tournament was donated to the federal memorial.

"Thank you for all you do to support our fallen heroes and their families," Chief Harris said in a handwritten note to CLEAT accompanying the check.

The foundation honors the fallen by providing assistance and support in a line of duty death.

The foundation also offers college scholarships, sponsors the biennial Memorial Service at the State Capitol and supports research to find and honor all Texas Peace Officers who throughout history have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Chief Harris said the Border Patrol's Laredo Sector plans to make the South Texas Corridor Classic an annual event.

Fort Worth pension lawsuit headed to trial in federal court next August

CLEAT legal team fighting city's effort to dismiss case without even holding trial

A trial date is set for August 2015 in the CLEAT-backed lawsuit to prevent the city of Fort Worth from effectively dismantling its long-established police pension plan.

Staff Attorney Vincent Wisely said the city filed a motion this summer seeking to have the federal lawsuit thrown out without even a trial.

But the legal team representing Fort Worth POA President Rick Van Houten and former POA President Steve Hall is actively fighting that motion.

At the heart of the lawsuit is a challenge to city policy adopted in 2012 that mandates deep cuts in the pension plan.

The city is trying to argue that the new rules would affect only newly hired police officers.

But Van Houten and Hall point out in their suit that the new rules weaken the entire pension plan, which harms all officers in Fort Worth.

Because what happens in the Fort Worth case could ultimately affect all Texas law enforcement officers, CLEAT is investing heavily to protect police interests.

Florida-based labor attorney Robert D. Klausner, who has a victory in the U.S. Supreme Court on his resume and has for



FWPOA President Rick Van Houten, left, and former President Steve Hall have been fighting the plans to cut pensions since 2012.

nearly two decades been listed in the publication, "Best Lawyers in America," is heading the legal team.

Wisely expects that Senior U.S. District Judge Terry Means will likely hear arguments late this year on the city's motion to toss the case.

But CLEAT is committed to doing whatever is necessary to make sure Van Houten and Hall have their day in court. And we'll keep you up to date on the progress of this important case.

Lubbock field office now serving membership in CLEAT Region 5

LUBBOCK – CLEAT's new field office in Lubbock opened Tuesday, July 15, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the facility that will serve the members of Region 5.

CLEAT President Todd Harrison, Executive Director Charley Wilkison and General Counsel Mike Rickman joined several staff and leadership members at the ceremony. Starting out, the office at 2201 University Ave. will be staffed rotating in from the Field Services and Legal divisions. Vince Wisely and David Kilcrease will be the principal staffers in the rotation.

Members benefitting from the new field office will be from Amarillo, Midland, Midland County, San Angelo, Sweetwater and Lubbock -- along with other cities and counties in Region 5.



LEGAL VICTORIES

Jopling wins job back for El Paso deputy constable

Alfredo Nava was not the first deputy in El Paso to get railroaded by his boss.

Fabricated evidence, trumped-up charges, perjury and witness intimidation seem to be perfectly acceptable methods for elected constables to deploy when firing their deputies. That's because each termination must survive the Civil Service Commission's scrutiny.

But this constable's case could not survive real scrutiny.

As if firing his deputy under false pretenses was not enough, the Constable gave

Deputy Nava a dishonorable discharge on his F-5, effectively ending his law enforcement career. But when CLEAT staff attorney Jim K. Jopling stepped in, that all changed. After a 1-day hearing, the Administrative Law Judge dressed down the Constable's case, point-by-point.

Not only was there no basis to support a dishonorable discharge, the Judge found there was no basis to support discipline at all. The Constable was ordered to change the F-5 from "Dishonorable" to "Honorable."



Alfredo Nava and Jim Jopling

It remains to be seen whether the Constable will comply, CLEAT will be there to enforce the order in court.

Midland detective who took down gunman is cleared by grand jury

An off-duty Midland police detective who saved countless lives when he shot and killed a gunman who was attempting to rob a local restaurant in late June was cleared with the help of CLEAT Legal services by a grand jury.

Detective James Cox and his family were among the customers eating at Midland's La Bodega Restaurant on June 27 when 35-year-old Nyocmus Garnett pulled a gun in the kitchen and squeezed off several rounds.

According to Midland police, Cox drew his weapon and ordered Garnett to drop his.

Instead of obeying the command, Garnett pointed his gun at the detective. Cox fired and killed him.

No customers or restaurant employees were harmed.

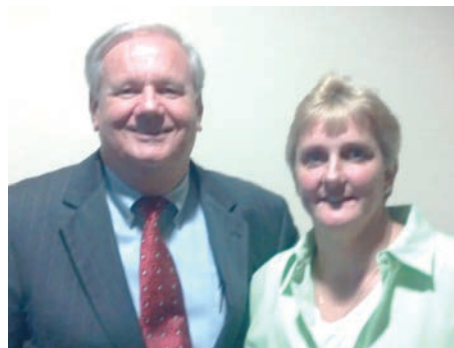
Patrons and workers hailed the detective as a hero.

"He kept a traumatic event from being worse, the crowded restaurants, the employees, just the circumstances," Midland Police Chief Price Robinson told reporters after the incident.

"I hate to think of what could've happened."

Cox was placed on administrative leave, a routine move whenever there is an incident like this.

But with the help of CLEAT staff attorney Jim Jopling and regional attorney Brian Carey, Cox is back on the job.



Bob Thomas and Cathy Braneff

CLEAT helps Vidor officer clear her name

CLEAT staff attorney Bob Thomas helped Vidor Officer Cathy Braneff win 19 months of back pay and benefits and the ability to gain an honorable discharge after officials sought to wrongly terminate her employment.

The matter was resolved after the Vidor City Council approved a negotiated settlement with Officer Braneff. Once the settlement was reached, Officer Braneff withdrew her appeal and submitted a letter of resignation.

Bad F-5 upgraded to 'Honorable' thanks to CLEAT

A Texas Administrative Law Judge has reversed an unfavorable F-5 report for Officer Patrick Zee.

The officer worked for Alabama-Coushatta Tribe Police Department in Livingston in East



Patrick Zee

Robertson fights to get Nueces deputy reinstated

Nueces County Deputy Constable Richard Morrisey has his job back, thanks to CLEAT Staff Attorney Celeste Robertson.

Despite the fact that Deputy Morrisey suffers from a serious medical condition, he was fired because the constable said he failed to call in sick an hour before his shift.

This so-called policy was issued by the constable even though it is in direct conflict with the Nueces County Civil Service Rules.

Deputy Morrisey was reinstated.



Celeste Robertson, Richard Morrisey

Texas.

As a result of the judge's decision, the report was upgraded to an Honorable Discharge.

The action came after a one-day contested evidentiary hearing in Houston.

Zee was represented by CLEAT Staff Attorney Bob Thomas.

Big victory for CLEAT: Anti-police city managers in Del Rio and Alice are fired

CLEAT and the Del Rio Police Officers Association scored a major victory when the Del Rio City Council voted to fire the city manager.

The termination of City Manager Robert Eads after police-backed candidates for mayor and the city council finally forced action to reign in a destructive and vindictive Police Department administration. In the spring, CLEAT publically called for the firing of Police Chief James Von Debrow.

“It’s obvious that Chief Debrow is the town bully,” CLEAT Executive Director Charley Wilkison said after the chief’s policies resulted in cutting the police force in half and firing Sgt. Mark Guerra, the president of DRPOA.

“He wrongfully terminated officers and arbitrators later ordered him to put them back on the job.”

Del Rio Mayor Robert Garza, who took office after the May city elections, held the city manager to account for the chief’s irresponsible behavior.

CLEAT has never been hesitant to call for

top officials to pay a high price for working against the best interests of law enforcement officers.

Late last year, the Alice City Council fired City Manager Ray De Los Santos after CLEAT and the local police association shone a spotlight on the secretive bidding process that resulted in a doubling of health insurance premiums for Alice police officers.



Sgt. Mark Guerra

CLEAT President Todd Harrison said the firing of De Los Santos “helped remove a black cloud that’s been hanging over city government of Alice for awhile.”

Meanwhile, in Del Rio, CLEAT attorneys are working diligently on the appeals processes to win reinstatement along with back pay and lost benefits for the officers who were wrongfully fired.

And CLEAT continues to press the case for the removal of Chief Debrow.

Continued ... We’re not backing down in San Antonio

(From Page 1)

of the city manager to work toward a fair contract.

“It’s fitting that Officer Sanchez comes from San Antonio, Texas, where certain city leaders are attempting to cut police pay and benefits,” said CLEAT Executive Director Charley Wilkison.

“Police officers like Jolanda Sanchez have helped to create the prosperity of San Antonio, Texas,” Wilkison said. “Generations of police families have protected San Antonio and continue to pay a great price for simply doing their jobs.”

The video’s message is being bolstered by a multi-media assault by the San Antonio Police Officers Association that includes billboards along heavily traveled San Antonio highways, a special public-education website called PublicSafetyFacts.com and the aggres-



‘Everyone in the state of Texas is looking at San Antonio. If San Antonio falls, they all fall.’

– SAPOA President Mike Helle

ive use of social media. And the fight is also being carried person to person. SAPOA President Mike Helle said members are prepared to go door-to-door with the message, to the courts if necessary and on the campaign trail.

“We will only help candidates who support public safety,” Helle said in a message to members. “We will be involved in every council and mayor race going forward.”

And the key to the strategy, he emphasized, is unity.

“We all must stick together and remember we are in this fight for each and every one of our own families,” he said. “Everyone in the state of Texas is looking at San Antonio ... if San Antonio falls, they all fall.”

Retiree Assn is signing up new members

The CLEAT Retiree Association is signing up members at a brisk pace.

The new association is now accepting applications. The cost is \$14.50 a month.

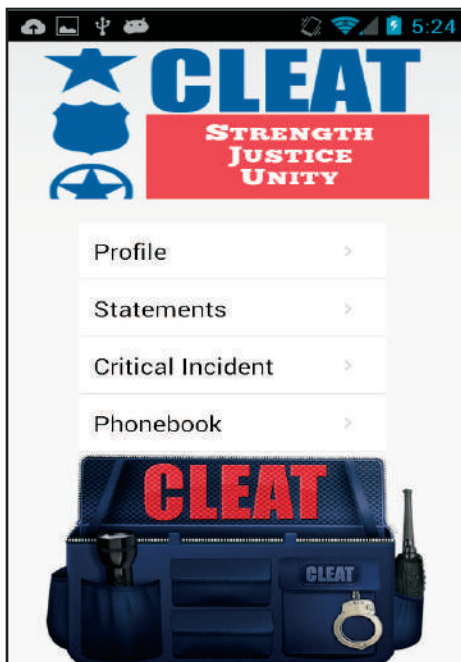
Membership benefits include:

- Legal consultation and coverage
- Free probate of your will by CLEAT attorneys
- \$1,000 life insurance benefit
- Eligibility for CLEAT dental and vision plan participation
- The Texas Police Star newsletter
- Customized “CLEAT Retired” stickers and pins
- \$500 Ford vehicle discount
- Room rate discount at La Quinta hotels
- Insurance rate discount from California Casualty.



Leo Castro signs up with the new CLEAT Retiree Association

To become a member of the association or for more information, contact CLEAT Membership at 512-495-9111 or 800-252-8153.



Rookie FW officer finds tactical bag app is good backup

A rookie Fort Worth police officer who downloaded the CLEAT Tactical Bag app to her smart phone while still a cadet earlier this year recently became the first law enforcement professional to use the exclusive technology in a critical incident.

She had been on the job only seven weeks when the incident took place.

Staff Attorney Craig Driskell received the “robo call” as well as vital the digital information from the officer involved.

“Craig took care of our member and all is well,” said CLEAT President, Sgt. Todd Harrison.

Added Driskell: “Pretty cool way to get a callout and gives us so much more info before we get to scene. Half of the time I don’t know what’s going on till I get to scene using previous method.”

Harrison said the app “will play a real role in creating a giant competitive edge” for CLEAT and its local associations. The critical incident feature of the Tactical Bag is trademarked and the source code is patented.

“Bottom line: We are going to save jobs by getting our lawyers on the scene faster and armed with more vital information,” he added. “For our rivals who openly claim in the field that our app doesn’t work, we have to say that’s just another one of their lies that won’t stand up to reality.”

Fort Worth’s Jim Lane started out representing Vietnam-era soldiers

FORT WORTH – After Jim Lane joined the Army as a recent law school graduate, he found himself defending GIs who found themselves at odds with the military justice system.

Among his clients during his Vietnam-era service were some of the soldiers accused in the infamous My Lai massacre of March 1968.

“It made me mad that the government was prosecuting these young men for things the government had ordered and trained them to do,” Lane said during an interview at his office not far from the Fort Worth Stockyards.

It was natural, then, that after returning to civilian life, Lane made a career defending police officers and firefighters – both in the courtroom and at the bargaining table.

One of Lane’s most recent victories working with the CLEAT legal staff came when the grand jury in Tarrant County cleared a young Fort Worth police officer in a headline-grabbing deadly force incident. The officer was forced to open fire after a homeowner refused their commands from the officer and his partner to relinquish his weapon.

Lane said that even though there was a public outcry for the officer to be punished, the facts laid before the grand jury demon-

strated that the officer and his partner acted appropriately. And, he said, most people understand and appreciate the difficult work performed by police.

“There needs to be a special place in the hearts and minds for people who get up every morning to save your life or mine,” he said.

Lane, who served a dozen years on the Fort Worth City Council and made an unsuccessful run for mayor, decried the growing trend in politics of attacking public-sector pensions and benefits.

“This is a sophisticated and violent world we live in, so if we don’t recruit and retain the best police officers we will pay a much higher price in the long run,” Lane said.

The chief investigator at Lane’s law firm is Fred Pendergraf, a retired Fort Worth police officer and one of the founders of CLEAT. And Lane said that everyone at his firm works as a team on behalf of law enforcement officers and all of the other clients.

His experience at City Hall and in his law practice has demonstrated the need for law enforcement officers to be united and well represented.

“That’s how you hold folks accountable,” he said. “Nothing is more important than being held accountable.”



Back row from left: Tim Choy, Attorney; Jim Lane, Attorney; Fred Pendergraf, Investigator. Front row from left: Stormi Garza, Paralegal; Martha Reyes-Hewitt Sr., Paralegal; Mary Lou Martinez, Receptionist.

ALL AROUND TEXAS



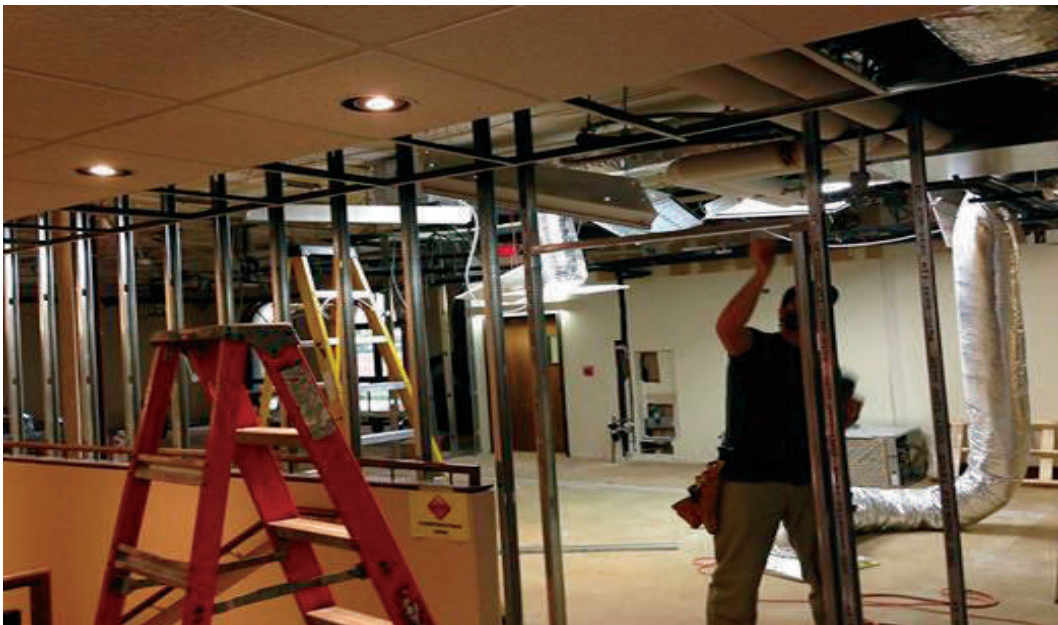
Chris Jones at the Williamson County Deputies Association picnic.



Jerry Staton teaches an Excited Delirium class.



Craig Driskell training with the National Guard.



CLEAT Headquarters in Austin undergoes a major summer makeover.



Field Services' Danny Arrendondo and daughter, Dani at CLEAT HQ.



CLEAT endorsed Sen. Ken Paxton for Attorney General. From left, Charley Wilkison, Paxton, Melinda Griffith, Rep. Phil King and Todd Harrison.



Front: Melinda Griffith, Attorney General Greg Abbott and Priscilla Sandoval. Back: Speaker Joe Straus, Railroad Commissioners Christi Craddick and David Porter.

Experts forecast future of law enforcement

CLEAT brings top-flight panel of professionals to Leadership Academy

Law enforcement labor movement experts warned CLEAT leaders that collective bargaining rights, public-sector pension plans and even the concept of publicly employed law officers are at risk in the current political environment.

“Financial crisis became a political opportunity,” Dr. Elaine Bernard, an educator and author on labor rights said at the CLEAT Leadership Academy in Austin in June.

Bernard was among several state and national experts brought in by CLEAT for the two-day event. She recapped how the Great Recession that started with the 2008 financial collapse emboldened some officeholders to target the public-sector unions. Noting that private-sector union membership and benefit plans have been declining for many years, Bernard said those political leaders were able to tap into the resentment of private-sector workers.

Bernard called it “pension envy.”

She said that in 2011, after the first wave of Tea Party candidates gained

power nationwide, some 700 measures were proposed in states and local governments nationwide. Many of them succeeded and those that didn’t will likely be tried again.

She said that organizations like law enforcement associations must fight the narrative that the public sector is a threat to the private sector and a burden to taxpayers.

Dr. Ted Hunt, a retired police union leader from Los Angeles, pointed out examples of privatizing law enforcement operations dating back to the Pinkerton days of the Old West. In modern times, he said, the city of Camden, N.J., disbanded its police force and reconstituted it as a county agency.

But the officers were paid far less and enjoyed fewer benefits under the new organization, Hunt said.

Kim Vickers, a former Abilene police officer who now runs the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, talked about ways to bring rank-and-file officers closer to the communities they serve.

He explained it as the “warrior mentality” vs. the “guardian mentality.” Vickers said there is a need for both in modern law enforcement, but cautioned against any tendency to lean too far to the warrior side.

“We become less and less approachable to the public,” said Vickers, who spent 34 years as a police officer. “And if we’re not approachable, we lose their support when we need their support.”

Dr. Ana Yanez Correa, who heads the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition also touched on the theme of community support. She urged police organizations to support alternatives to arrest and incarceration for non-violent, as a way of lessening the overall burden of law enforcement and lowering incarceration rates. Correa pointed out that many new Republican lawmakers are straying from the party’s long-held tough-on-crime message and have embraced policies designed to lower the cost of government across the board.

Some law enforcement professionals at the Academy told her that her ideas would

force police to act as “social workers.” The comment touched off a lively discussion, with CLEAT Executive Director pointing out that Correa was laying out the reality of the Austin political landscape heading into the 2015 legislative session.



TCOLE Executive Director Chief Kim Vickers



Dr. Ana Yanez Correa



Retired police union leader Ted Hunt discusses the checkered history of police privatization.



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CCPOA dedicates Peace Officers Memorial Highway

Pushed by the Corpus Christi Police Officers Association, a stretch of a State Highway 358 is now a permanent memorial for officers who gave their lives in the line of duty.

In July, the section of SH 358 between Interstate 37 and State Highway 286 was officially dedicated the Peace Officers Memorial Highway.

The local association, working with state Reps. Abel Herrero and Todd Hunter and state Sen. Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa, secured passage of legislation needed to make such a designation for local officers.

Then the police group took it upon itself to raise the private money needed to make and install the highway signs. A sign was placed eastbound and westbound on SH 358 at Agnes in between SH 286 and the interstate in remembrance of Lt. Stuart J. Alexander, who was killed in that area in March 2009.

“I am honored to have co-authored legislation last session to help make this possible,” said Rep. Herrero in a post on his Facebook page about the ceremony.

The bill and signs were constructed to pay reverence to all peace officers who have died in the line of duty.

Coming in the next edition of the Texas Police Star...

Contracts

Details of the new contracts for: Abilene Police Officers Association, Brownsville Police Officers Association, Beaumont Police Officers Association, El Paso County Sheriffs Officers Association, El Paso Municipal Police Officers Association, and the San Angelo Coalition of Police.

Honors and awards

CLEAT staff members were among

those present in September when 27 Texas police officers who were killed or badly injured were honored with the 2014 Star of Texas Awards by Gov. Rick Perry for their service and bravery.

Convention and gatherings

We’ll have photos and a highlights from a four-day gathering in San Antonio, and from the POMF Barbecue.

2015 Legislative Session preview

Texas government will have a whole new group of leaders after the November elections, including a new governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general and several new faces in the Legislature.

Keep up with CLEAT ...

As always, you can keep up with us on CLEAT.org. And follow us on Twitter and like us on Facebook.