

# The Call Box



Official Publication of the Retired Seattle Police Officers Association

**January 2021**

**Volume 2, Issue 1**



## A Little Bit of History A Conversation with Phil Cruse

### **Q. When were you hired by SPD?**

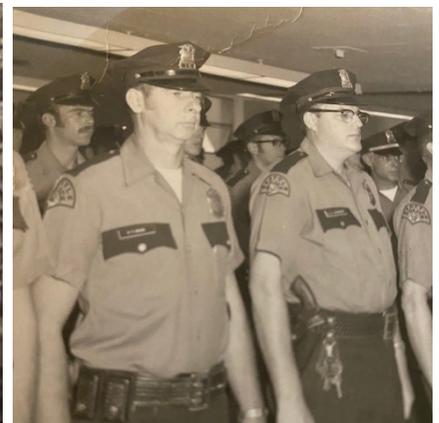
I was hired on October 16, 1951. I went for an interview 2 weeks after getting out of the Marine Corps for the second time. I was interviewed by Don Trapp, head of personnel for SPD. We talked and he asked me if I could type. After confirming that I could, he told me to report to the patrol captain at 8 PM that evening. My serial number was 1287. I took the clerk 2 test and passed it. I discovered that a police officer was making \$25 more a month than I was (\$200 per month), so I took a test for patrolman in December of that year and passed it. I was sworn in as a patrolman and was given a badge and a gun. I didn't go through the academy (located at that time in in the PSB) until the spring of 1952 in class #26. John Hoberg and I are the only surviving members of that class.

### **Q. Who was the police chief when you were hired?**

The police chief at the time I was hired was George Eastman.

### **Q. What was your first assignment?**

Just out of the academy, I worked in the jail for 6 months and then worked patrol downtown with Jack Walsh, and Lace Knechtel. I also walked a beat on first avenue with one of the really "old timers", Grimsey Halson, who had been on the department about 40 years at that time.



### **Q. Tell me about your memorable assignments?**

My favorite assignments were ten years in Special Detail. Not only did I investigate traffic deaths. I taught use of the breathalyzer at the academy and to other law enforcement agencies, as I was the only certified instructor at that time. I also gave demonstrations to business and organizations on the use of the breathalyzer.

One story I recall, was that of a minister that was killed in a "hit and run" pedestrian accident on Queen Anne hill. The investigation, went on all night. The next morning, a Seattle police woman, who lived on Bainbridge Island, told me that she happened to see a vehicle on the beach that was covered with sticks and brush. She said it had not been there the day before.

The vehicle matched info we had received from witnesses at the accident scene. We took a ferry ride to Bainbridge Island and went to the location of the vehicle. After pulling the brush off, we observed the damage on the vehicle that would

(Continued on Page 3)

# The Call Box



**RSPOA**  
**P.O. Box 25268**  
**Seattle, WA 98165**

**President**

**Jerry Taylor**

**[jerryt@rspoa.org](mailto:jerryt@rspoa.org)**

**Vice President**

**John Nordlund**

**[john@rspoa.org](mailto:john@rspoa.org)**

**Secretary/Treasurer**

**Nick Bulpin**

**[nickb@rspoa.org](mailto:nickb@rspoa.org)**

**Trustees**

**John Sullivan**

**[johns@rspoa.org](mailto:johns@rspoa.org)**

**Terri MacMillan**

**[terrim@rspoa.org](mailto:terrim@rspoa.org)**

**Dan Melton**

**[danm@rspoa.org](mailto:danm@rspoa.org)**

**Jeff Caldwell**

**[jeffc@rspoa.org](mailto:jeffc@rspoa.org)**

**Joe Bouffiou**

**[joeb@rspoa.org](mailto:joeb@rspoa.org)**

**Dan Oliver**

**[dano@rspoa.org](mailto:dano@rspoa.org)**

**Rich O'Neill**

**[richO@rspoa.org](mailto:richO@rspoa.org)**

## President's Message

By Jerry Taylor, President, RSPOA



The election is over--Washington remains pretty much the same. The new legislative session begins on January 11th. As of now we know of no plans to attack our pensions and do not expect anything. Still, there is a LEOFF 1 surplus of 142% and a LEOFF 2 surplus of about 110%. Given the need the legislature sees for money those pensions represent a tempting target. We remain convinced that any raid would be illegal. Even their own lawyers say so. We are working with our legislative contacts and will keep you informed.

To get the latest updates, please subscribe to our email list at

<https://rspoa.org/index.php?email-notices-1>.

Hopefully we will be through with COVID before the next issue and we can again see one another at meetings and lunch.

## Purse Strings

By Nick Bulpin RSPOA Secretary/Treasurer

### **A wise investment made by many**

In January 2001 I succeeded Mike Slessman as Secretary/Treasurer. At that time dues were \$.50 a month or \$6.00 per year. The RSPOA treasury was adequate but the board decided a dues increase was necessary to keep up with RSPOA costs. Many members were not current with dues because we did not send out bills but posted dues reminders in the Guardian.

The board decided to raise the dues to \$12.00 annually and offer a one-time opportunity to purchase a lifetime membership. \$100.00 would bring a member up to date and become a permanent RSPOA member. If the member was retired for over ten years the member could get the same for \$50.00. The response was well received and many members seized upon this opportunity which helped bring the RSPOA treasury back into health.

The RSPOA membership adopted the 2009 revised by-laws from 2004 that raised the annual dues to \$20.00 and upped the lifetime opportunity to \$175.00/\$75.00. The lifetime program ended in 2015.

The RSPOA became more active with increased membership attendance at monthly meetings, annual banquet costs, political involvement, etc. These increases came with costs eventually

raising our current annual dues to \$36.00

Thanks to the effort of President Taylor the RSPOA was able to have dues deducted from state DRS checks and many members opted for that program.

(Continued on Page 9)

From Page 1,- Cruse

match this accident. There was no license plate on the vehicle but after taking the VIN, we discovered the name of the owner. On the way back to the ferry we crossed a small river and I said "lets just take a look in the water". Sure enough, there was a license plate in about 2 feet of water and it matched the vehicle. After locating the owner, we got a statement from him and he admitted to the accident.

My next assignment was in Auto Theft, where I spent 4 years. My partner Jerry Boyer and I worked on major "chop shops" and interstate transportation of stolen vehicles. in several of these cases we were sent out of state to testify at some of the trials. Every day was fun to go to work and very productive, as well . Boyer and I broke up a group that were stealing some of the new Mustangs that were coming out (the mid 60's). Large amounts, as many as 40 at a time, were being stolen in San Diego, SF, Portland and Seattle. We developed information from inspecting the vehicles that we passed on to Spokane PD auto theft, as we figured they were probably next on the west coast to be hit. Due to our information, Spokane PD was able to catch the gang members in the process of altering some of the new Mustangs.

About this time Chief Neil Maloney decided that detectives could only spend two years in any unit so I was transferred to a new unit called General Assignments. He told me all of the fire deaths and explosives were being given to me because of my experience with the South King County Fire Department, where I was I was Chief of District #30 (a volunteer fire department, where I served 28 years).

Probably the best story from my time in the bomb squad when I was called to a grocery store in the north end. Several people, including the store manager could hear a coconut "ticking." A new SPD sergeant was at the scene and he could also hear the ticking coconut. I was called at the office and tasked what should be done with it. I told the officer I would meet him at the police range. After observing the coconut, I hit it with a hammer and it was just a plain old coconut. I asked the two officers if they had drank their lunch and we all got a good laugh out of it. We all ate pieces of the "ticking coconut"

**Q. What was the biggest change in police work while you were on the department?**

The biggest change is the Leoff 1 pension that we now have and the wages have changed drastically. When I started working the salary was so low that most police officers had to maintain a second or third part time job.

**Q. Who was your favorite Police Chief ?**

My favorite police chief was Bud Vanden Wyer. He was probably one of the nicest men I ever met. He was a true gentleman. I worked patrol with him in the early 1950's.



**Q. Who was your favorite supervisor ?**

I would have to say that it was Rod Jackson when I was in the Bomb Squad. While he didn't have any bomb training, he let those of us that did, do our jobs without getting overly involved. He respected those of us who were trained in handling explosives do the work and get the job done. I went through the Army Explosives school in Huntsville Alabama in 1971

**Q. When did you retire?**

I retired on August 2nd 1977.

**Q. What did you do after retirement?**

As soon as I retired I went downstairs in the PSB to work in the Warrant unit (under the Muni court at this time) , where I worked for 16 years. I had worked in the warrant unit (under SPD )back in 1953 when I had broken my foot in a motorcycle accident so I was on light duty. The first day working in warrants I met Sally and she swept me off my feet. We were together 7 days a week, 24 hrs a day from 1980. We married in 1984, when I had saved enough money to buy her a ring with a big diamond. I also started buying and selling antiques. Sally and I traveled across the US many times taking "buying trips" and just fun trips. On one of the trips we hauled our 35 ft fifth wheel trailer all the way to Bar Harbor Maine. We had to use the showers in RV parks along the way because our bathtub / shower was full of antiques and "good junk." We regularly sold at some of the big antique shows, gun and knife shows in the northwest. At one point in time I had over 5,000 antique knives in my collection.

(Continued on Page 6)

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

**CORY NESS** Serial # 4441 Academy Class: 81

**Date of Hire:** May 1980, Lateral from Mtlk Terrace PD

**Date of Retirement:** August 8, 1995



**What do you miss most about SPD?** Each day was potentially a fun new day, unlike most private sector jobs. The laughs with my co-workers. I was fortunate to work in a time when we were appreciated by City Hall and the citizens of Seattle.

**What was your most memorable SPD assignment and why?** Probably the most laughs I had was in Traffic; DUI Squad, Motorcycle Drill Team and PM enforcement, working with some great people. Doing a good job for the citizens while having a good time working different events throughout the year, Seafair parades, Hydroplane Races and Presidential Escorts.



**Life After SPD. What did you do, where do you live?** I was a crane operator for the family business, Ness cranes. I had forgotten how hard a job that was. I started out there as a teenager. The cranes had gotten bigger, the equipment heavier and I was now one of the oldest guys doing it. I had an opportunity to work at the Seattle Federal Courthouse as a contract employee for the US Marshals Service and I spent 12 years there, then went to Snohomish County Sheriff's Office as a marshal for a couple years, then retired for good in 2010. My wife, Kathy retired in 2013 from the Federal Courts and we began to travel.

We visited Singapore, Tahiti, South Pacific, Alaska and Central America on about 18 cruises. We also travelled in our RV and did motorcycle trips, one memorable trip to Sturgis, SD. Now we are building our dream retirement home in Northern Idaho, still close enough to drive back for RSPOA luncheons! However we may not make too many RAP meetings! But we look forward to seeing our friends again when the luncheons resume in the future.

If you would like to be featured in a future WATN article send an email to [richO@rspoa.org](mailto:richO@rspoa.org)



## Hobbies & Activities?

Jet Skiing, boating, ship cruising (someday soon again). Enjoy our 3 teenage grandchildren, and "grand dogs." Our son, Brehon has been with SPD for 22 years, SWAT for 18 of those years. He has always loved his job but is looking forward to retiring in Idaho near us!



# FROM THE PENSION OFFICE

Medicare Part B Reimbursement Forms for LEOFF 1 retirees have been mail to each retiree. Also a electronic copy is available for down loading at RSPOA.org - please NOTE there will NOT be the required NOTARIZED FORMS this year due to Covid-19 and working remote. We will send them out late Spring or Summer.

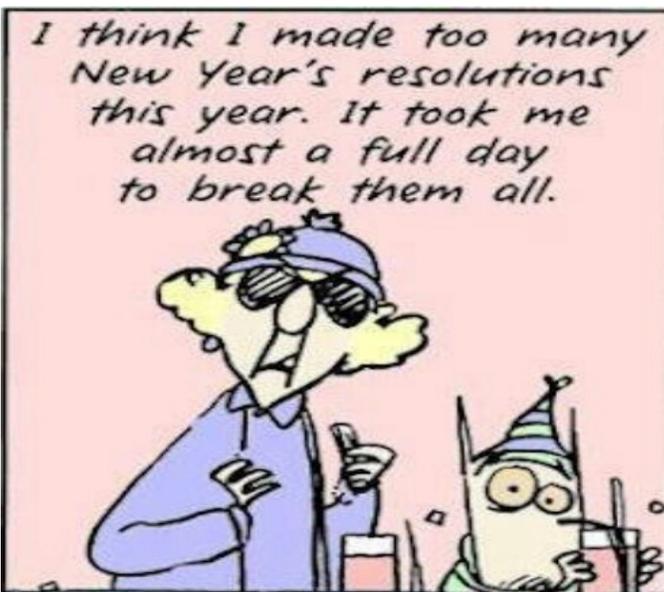
The new address for the **Relief Association** is, 11030 E Marginal Way South, Tukwila, WA 98168. Phone number is (206)726-9095.

LEOFF 1 retirees do NOT send any requests for reimbursements to the Relief Association or RSPOA. Medical reimbursements must be sent to UMR on a Simple Form. Medicare reimbursements please send to the Pension Office.

The 2021 Reporting Form Packet will be mailed out to Plan 1 retirees and surviving spouses in the Spring of 2021.

Happy New Year

Premium share for those 10 retirees that work full time for an employer that provide medical coverage, or their spouse works for an employer that provides medical coverage and list them as a dependent on the medical plan is now requested for June – November 2020. Proof of premium sharing for the months of June 2020 through November 2020 must accompany the request for reimbursement directly to the office, PO BOX 94729 Seattle, WA 98124-4729.



## Last Ring



**Richard L. Hutchison #2074**, Retired Seattle Police Officer passed away on October 5, 2020 at the age of 90 years old. Richard was hired on July 25, 1960 and retired on July 28, 1984 after almost 25 years of service. Richard is survived by his wife of 68 years, Georgia. There will be no services at this time.

**P. Craig Vandeputte #2246**, Retired Seattle Police Lieutenant, passed away on October 13, 2020 at 82 years of age. Craig joined the Department on March 21, 1962, rose up through the ranks and spent time in many units, including Homicide. He retired on January 8, 1986. Craig's wife of 53 years, Betty advises there will not be a service at this time.

**Roy Wedlund #2154**, retired Seattle Police Lieutenant passed away on November 29, 2020 at the age of 85. Roy was hired on October 2, 1961 and retired after 44 years of service on April 1, 2006. Roy's wife of 30 years, Carroll advises there will be a memorial in the distant future and the Pension office will be sure to make that information available.

**Donald O. Hartwig #2176**, Retired Seattle Police Patrol Officer, passed away on Saturday, December 5, 2020 at his home in Nampa, Idaho. Don was 86 years of age. Don was hired on October 2, 1961 and retired on December 12, 1984 after 23 years of service. Phyllis, Don's wife of 57 years plans to have a Memorial service in the distant future.

**Evelyn Meece**, widow of deceased retired patrol officer Warren Meece #1501, died on November 12, 2020 at the age of 92 in Yakima, Washington.

**Joyce Ann Baker**, wife of retired Traffic Sergeant Dix Baker #1760, passed away March 5, 2020 at the age of 79.

**Ouita Jackson**, wife of 73 years to retire Lieutenant Rod Jackson #1196, passed away on October 15, 2020 at the age of 93.

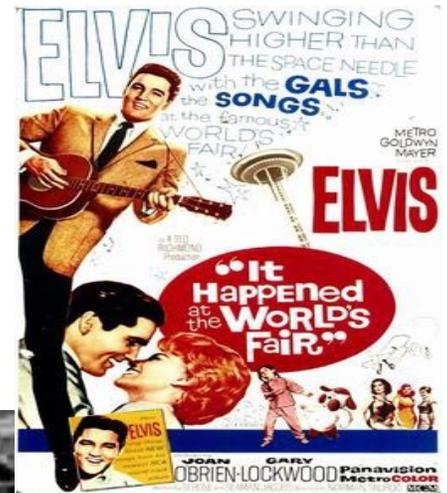
**Joyce Johnson**, wife of almost 60 years to retired Chief of Police Herb Johnson #2414, Passed away on November 30, 2020 at the age of 82.

From Page 3-Cruise



## VINTAGE SEATTLE

Seattle police provide security for Elvis Presley in 1962 as he was filming his movie, "It Happened at the World's Fair" at the Seattle Center!



We have spent many winters in Arizona, Maui and California and have traveled all over the United States, as well as some of the Caribbean islands and parts of Mexico. One time we left our home in Federal Way and headed east. We meandered all across the US and just wandered for five weeks until we ended up in Narragansett, Rhode Island at Sally's sister home. We stayed off the major freeways and enjoyed seeing small town America.

I also climbed to the top of Mt Rainier twice, as that was on my "bucket list."

**Q What advice would you give to someone contemplating police work right now?**

Being totally honest, I would have to say to "go to the Fire Department". While police officers in today's world are being vilified and disrespected, everybody loves a fireman. They love seeing the big red truck when there is trouble. Having worked in both worlds, a fireman gets the most respect.





## Editor's Corner

By Rich O'Neill  
SPD Retired

### Fallen SPD Officers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the months of December and January.

#### December

**Arthur K. Ruchhart**

EOW: 12-27-1914

**Lawrence E. Kost**

EOW: 12-12-1915

**Ellsworth W. Cordes**

EOW: 12-31-1932

**John T. Clancy**

EOW: 12-28-1949

**Nick B. Davis**

EOW: 12-18-1984

#### January

**Volney L. Stevens**

EOW: 1-14-1921

**William T. Angle**

EOW: 1/21/1921

**Neil C. McMillan**

EOW: 1-21-1921

**James O'Brien**

EOW: 1/21/1921

**Arthur B. Luntsford**

EOW: 1-20-1923

It would be an extreme understatement to say that 2020 was an odd year! The crazy year ended with an even crazier national election. On election night, I went to sleep about 12:30 and the incumbent president was ahead in most battleground states. I awoke about five hours later to see that everything had flipped. So, as I write this, it appears that we will have a new administration with the oldest person ever elected to the highest office. All I can say is, I can't imagine doing the most stressful job in the world at the age of 78. Oh well, it should be interesting!

Closer to home, we learned that the Seattle mayor has decided not to run for another term at the end of this year. I think the "Summer of Love" was her undoing! A mayor's first job is to protect the citizens and provide for their safety. That safety was not provided this summer. No one on the current city council will improve the safety of the citizenry, so the candidate needs to come from outside city hall. We can only hope that a formidable candidate emerges who will stop the "social experiment" that is going on in Seattle. We also hope that the candidate can get elected.

At the state level, I hear that legislation will be proposed that will drastically impact our active officers. Rumors are swirling to change the RCW that deals with police union negotiations. For instance, they hope to impose the SPD Use of Force policies on all agencies in the state. Agencies would be barred from investigating their own police shootings. They also hope to make it difficult or impossible to overturn a police chief's discipline order by curtailing the authority of an arbitrator. As SPOG president, I participated in numerous discipline appeal cases. On the ones that we got overturned, it was because the city's case was so poorly presented and the facts didn't justify serious discipline. Several of the cases involved imposing discipline for "political reasons." If an officer loses the ability to appeal discipline and "have their day in court", it will basically make Washington a "Right to Work" state. It will also make recruiting and keeping new officers even more difficult. Stay tuned as we may be called upon to bombard the legislators with calls and emails.

I'd like to thank everyone for all the encouraging words about The Call Box. You can help by encouraging those who don't get it to subscribe. Just \$36 a year! Also, if you know a business, encourage them to take out an ad. I'm delighted that Brett Burns and Sue Hammermaster are our first two advertisers. Check out their ads on the last page. Lastly, send me old pictures, articles, and "war stories." Send them to Richo @rspoa.org. Let's hope we will soon be meeting in person again. HAPPY 2021!

# From the Police Museum

By Officer Jim Ritter, SPD Retired, #4710, President: Seattle Metropolitan Police Museum

## The Broken Chain of Custody

In the modern era, professional policing standards are at the forefront of any criminal justice organization. Proper evidence collection, storage, transfer of custody, scientific laboratory analysis, retention and preservation are critical in the effective prosecution of criminals. At least that's today's expectations. Back in the "old days" of Seattle's justice system, not so much.

To say things were run "loosely" back in the day would certainly be an understatement in regards to the handling of evidence by Seattle area criminal justice officials.

Case in point, this Seattle Police evidence envelope (pictured) was found by a citizen in 2001 after purchasing an old house in South Seattle. It was 1 of nearly 100 items from that period of time kept in old boxes that included personal property, evidence, glass plate negatives from crime scenes and a variety of other related items from multiple Seattle, and King County criminal cases spanning a ten year period around the 1930's.

One of the envelopes in this collection was of particular interest to the Police Museum since it involved the on-duty murder of Seattle Policeman Walter G. Cottle, who was killed on September 30, 1930 by unknown assailants. The manila SPD envelope contained one of two spent

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE FOR  
SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT DETECTIVE DIVISION  
EVIDENCE NO. .... D.D.NO. ....  
IN CASE OF: .....  
DESCRIPTION AND LIST OF CONTENTS:  
One fired bullet.  
TAKEN FROM (SEE ALSO DETAILED REPORT)  
Body of Policeman Walter G. Cottle  
TAKEN BY: Dr. P. C. West  
AT: Butterworth Mortuary.  
TIME: ..... M.  
DAY 30 MONTH Sept. YEAR 1930  
REMARKS: This is one of two bullets  
fired into body of Officer Cottle  
by unidentified man, killing Cottle.  
PLACED IN ENVELOPE AND SEALED BY:  
IN PRESENCE OF: .....

bullets removed from Cottle's body by Dr. P.C. West of Butterworth Mortuary. Upon checking SPD cold case homicide files, several suspects were identified during that time that were likely responsible for Cottle's death, however due to lack of evidence they were never prosecuted. Little is known about the journey this bullet took prior to, or following the SPD officer's murder, or who was responsible for its final resting place in a dusty Georgetown basement.

If you have any historical information and/or artifacts you would like to share and/or contribute to the Police Museum's efforts in preserving SPD history, please contact me at 206-949-9143 or at [jamesSritter@gmail.com](mailto:jamesSritter@gmail.com)

(From Page 2-Bulpin)

Some RSPOA members still receive City pension checks and the \$36.00 dues are deducted from their January check. Dues can always be paid by check made out to RSPOA.

**For those wise investors who made the one-time investment to become a lifetime member, I salute you.**

The RSPOA sees no need to raise dues at this time as the involvement of members has kept our treasury healthy. However, with the Guardian no longer available as we knew it, we saw a need to provide an avenue of communication outside of our web site. Rich O'Neill has taken on the task of presenting the Call Box. As a former editor I understand this daunting task and the related costs. We plan on having the Call Box in your home every two months. Each issue with printing, mailing and postage runs about \$2750.00 (last issue)

The RSPOA is looking for assistance in defraying some costs via advertising and subscriptions and we'll see how well that works out. But for now, we are receiving universal support and gratitude from our members.

Happy & Healthy New  
Year from RSPOA!



Reach all SPD  
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For More  
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