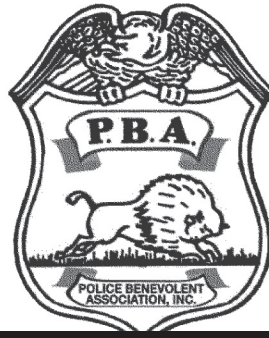


## UPCOMING EVENTS

May 8 -- Awards Ball

June 24 -- Open House

# The BLUE



# LINE

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VOLUME 2, No. 1

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FIRST QUARTER 2026

## From the President

John Davidson

The first quarter of a new year has come and gone and there has been a lot of change. We have a new mayor. We also have a new, albeit interim, commissioner. We have no deputy commissioners, which is new. We have a deputy mayor of police in our building, which is also new.

What is old? Well, we still don't have a contract. As of this writing it has been 277 days since the contract expired. What else hasn't changed? Good question. Here is the answer: The dedication of the members of the Buffalo PBA. Crime continues to drop. What crime still exists is often closed by arrest after diligent work from our Detectives and Detective Sergeants. This is being done in spite of a continued lack of support from many stakeholders in the City of Buffalo, and unfortunately even the ones that support us, do so quietly.

What is your reward for such heroic efforts. Being told you are greedy, overtime hungry pigs. What is the reality? The reality is that we have officers in the Bravo District that won't get a single weekend off this year. They will either be scheduled to work or they will be forced in on overtime on their days off, to cover the many details that are needed to keep a city the size of Buffalo safe. The reality is we have detectives that would love to read their children a bedtime story instead of reading the results of a coroner's report or the findings of a rape kit. The reality is we have supervisors who would much rather take in one of their kid's hockey games instead of working a 1:30am-6:00am overtime shot because there aren't enough supervisors in this department and the next promotional test won't be given for a few months. Maybe after the tests are scored, the oral portion of the test are given and then scored, a list is generated, a promotional ceremony approved, then you can make junior's playoff game. Tell your kiddo there's always next season?

Overtime may be up. That might be true. I am not sure though because the Mayor's office and the media are reporting that the reported numbers in Buffalo have been funny for some time now. But what is down? Hiring numbers are down. 12 cadets were hired in 2025. 9 of them made it to the street. 5 cadets have been hired this year, but we have yet to see how many will join us on the streets. That's no way to combat 47 Retirees in 2025! What else is down? Crime! Crime was down to historic lows in 2025. Your hard work continues that to trend in 2026. Shootings are down 57% and murders by another 88%. Rape is down an additional 35%. Burglaries 20%.

You should be proud of yourselves. But the question is this; when does the rubber band snap? Better results with less cops, well of course there is going to be overtime. How much longer can our members be stretched this thin? It is not going to be pretty when officers can no longer sustain this work load. We are in need of a new contract to promote a better work/life balance. More officers need to be hired. Promotions need to be made. Support has to come back. Politicians cannot continue to flaunt our hard work as their successes while simultaneously blaming us for their budgetary missteps.

We will be working on it.

*In the meantime work safely, get some much needed rest whenever you can, and God Bless.*

**More officers need to be hired.  
Promotions need to be made.  
Support has to come back.**



The entire Executive Board has been to Albany several times this year and participated in talks revolving around what to prioritize this year when comes to police specific legislation and Bill agenda. If you have been coming to the general membership meetings you should be up to date on most of those discussions but we would like to go over some of the bigger ones here in the Blue Line.

First, Albany is hopeful that this will be the year that the Military buy back will go from 3 years of service to 4 years of service. If you give 4 years to your country you should be credited for all 4, rather than only 3.

Next, Tier 5 and 6 improvements. At this time it seems that the improvements are being focused on Tier 6 with the intent to improve Tier 6 so much that it cannot be denied that Tier 5 is no longer a superior benefit and should be rolled back. On the table this year would be a decrease in the percentage individuals pay into retirement and an increase in the amount of overtime that can be calculated into a pension.

The final item we would like to discuss here is a proposed "HALO" law. This would give first responders the ability to inform those on a scene of a 25 foot perimeter that they cannot enter. Once this is requested, entering that perimeter could result in an arrest.

This is not a pipe dream idea. This has already been enacted in Florida as passed Bill 184. One cannot impede, threaten, or harass first responders inside of that 25 foot halo. Many states have begun the process of enacting their own HALO laws. It is yet to be seen how long it will take for such a Bill to gain support in New York. It will likely be met with resistance by soft on crime politicians and pro crime "reform" groups. This is a battle that we believe is worth fighting and we hope through diligent work in Albany it can gain some steam.

In the meantime please remember that it is our position that being a pro union politician who draws the line at public safety labor is a fatal flaw and cannot be supported by the Buffalo PBA.

## RIPPLE EFFECTS of



By ... Andrew Moffett

We've all seen the blips/moments/screenshots of an individual saying or doing something that has ultimately ended the individuals' career and/or their livelihood. Cancel culture often thrives on viral social media moments, where complex situations are reduced to short posts, screenshots, or clips. As a result, important context may be ignored. A single comment, sometimes taken out of context or from years in the past, can trigger widespread condemnation. Cancel culture can deepen core beliefs by encouraging people to view disagreements in moral absolutes. It is at this point that people then tend to care more about the punishment of the individual rather than its context. That context can be the grey area between implicit bias and criminal profiling/crime patterns. And in today's world, that grey area seemingly becomes what you wish to believe to be true rather than the totality of circumstance.

Criminal profiling was developed in the 1970s through the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit. This unit played a significant role in the apprehension of big-named serial killer such as George Metesky, Dennis Rader and Ted Bundy. Early profiling practices often relied heavily on generalized assumptions about demographics, personality types, and social backgrounds. However, over time critics argued that these assumptions could reinforce systemic bias within policing and investigations. If a criminal profile relied too heavily on demographic assumptions, it could unintentionally guide investigators toward certain communities while overlooking other possibilities.

Relative to today's policing, because of the fluctuation of cancel culture, policing and society is all but reduced to reacting to incident rather than preventing them. That fear of scrutiny, that fear of being wrong, and most of all the fear of lawsuits drives our leaders to kneel to common sense. Society cannot call out obscure, irrational behavior anymore without being ostracized, police officers cannot search a suspicious person without articulating their possible involvement in a crime and there are not and will never be enough resources for the growing, insurmountable amount of mental health crises. The voices for pro-criminality have been the loudest in the last 5 years and currently are the only ones making legislative changes to assist criminal behavior.

It will always be easier to take the political route and say that we are always doing everything we can in our power to make our communities safer, but I can guarantee that mindset changes if the victims become your own loved ones. In terms of gambling and hypotheticals, government will always prioritize their budget over the mere possibility of losing human life. It simply comes down to what they feel comfortable arguing in court and the likelihood of winning that case. Lawsuits have become the standard of American society but the need for prioritizing safety over hurt feelings can and always should come first. It is impossible and impractical to appease everyone. However, it is and should be practical to make sound decisions based on past practices and experiences regardless of outside noise.

# WARMER WEATHER

By ... Robert Grande

As March comes to a close and with spring coming fast, warmer weather is right around the corner. Calls multiply, tempers flare faster, and the City demands more from each and every one of us. This can make shifts feel longer and potentially make everyone slightly more irritable, including the public towards us.

One thing we have to remember is that we are all here for each other. Every one of us that work together took an oath to the City of Buffalo and to the safety of the public. The camaraderie that comes with being a police officer is a special bond that cannot be found in many other jobs. Having each other's back in dangerous situations is a promise that should never be broken.

Working in a mostly blue state can be difficult as it seems that New York has mostly given up on putting criminals behind bars and instead will allow criminals to run wild. In these times we need to know the union has our back at all times, and I believe that they do.

Could you imagine having to make a split second decision if you didn't have the backing of a union. Most of this department would be fired or at least hung out to dry at the hands of some combination of the media, the public, or politicians. Standing together as Union is crucial to us maintaining the discretion that is meant to be afforded a police officer.

This is still the best job in the world and we should be proud that we could wake up every day and put on the uniform and perform our duties to the best of our ability. No matter what civil service rank you hold in this department you still wear a badge that says City of Buffalo Police and the Buffalo Police Benevolent Association backs that badge. So as we face the busy months ahead, let's keep our heads held high and recommit to what makes us different: professionalism, pride, and genuine support for our brothers and sisters in blue. When we take care of each other, we take care of Buffalo and we represent the union that makes us stronger every day.

# In Memoriam

## P.O. Daniel Watkins

DOB: 07/17/1953 Appointed: 08/17/1981  
Retired: 10/30/2010 Deceased: 01/02/2026

## Lt. Michael J. Flowers

DOB: 11/10/1951 Appointed: 08/17/1981  
Retired: 12/31/2013 Deceased: 01/15/2026

## P.O. Karen Krzyzkowski

DOB: 12/08/1958 Appointed: 03/31/1986  
Retired: 11/24/2003 Deceased: 01/21/2026

## Lt. Timothy Scioli

DOB: 03/11/1943 Appointed: 09/22/1969  
Retired: 06/04/1995 Deceased: 01/22/2026

## P.O. John J. Farszmil, Jr.

DOB: 08/05/1950 Appointed: 10/07/1969  
Retired: 12/18/2001 Deceased: 02/19/2026

## Det. Thomas J. Juskiewicz

DOB: 01/16/1942 Appointed: 09/13/1966  
Retired: 12/15/1986 Deceased: 02/19/2026

## Capt./DPC Mark Blankenberg

DOB: 02/10/1954 Appointed: 09/04/1979  
Retired: 03/28/2005 Deceased: 03/02/2026

## Inspector Daniel E. Redmond

DOB: 08/28/1939 Appointed: 09/11/1962  
Retired: 08/31/2001 Deceased: 03/04/2026

## Inspector John Battle

DOB: 10/15/1955 Appointed: 09/04/1979  
Retired: 12/22/2017 Deceased: 03/09/3036

## Det. Timothy Meegan

DOB: 01/18/1944 Appointed: 02/20/1967  
Retired: 12/24/1988 Deceased: 03/20/2026

## Det. Sgt. Joseph R. Borodzik, Jr.

DOB: 07/19/1930 Appointed: 06/15/1953  
Retired: 01/15/1974 Deceased: 03/20/2026

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- ✓ **Job Changes:** Understand options for old 401(k) & help understand benefits offered by new employer
- ✓ **Rollovers & Transfers:** Assisting with the opening of personal accounts with dedicated purposes and how to fund them
- ✓ **Young Professionals:** Enroll in work benefits, coaching on how to look at the options and considerations therein
- ✓ **NYSDCP Planning:** Much like a 401(k), the NYSDCP has many options to consider when looking at new employment
- ✓ **Life, Disability Income and Long-Term Care Insurance:** Helping to understand why insurance is a large part of a financial plan
- ✓ **Pension Planning:** Understand how to maximize the PFRS benefit you are eligible to receive
- ✓ **Pension Tier -** Understanding your pension tier and how it affects you
- ✓ **Newly Married:** Planning for financial goals together and protecting household
- ✓ **Growing Family:** Life insurance and college planning needs
- ✓ **Divorced or Widowed:** Review current situation to help ensure lifestyle remains the same
- ✓ **Survivor Benefits:** How the survivor benefit in PFRS works
- ✓ **Military Buyback:** Process to buyback military service towards your state pension
- ✓ **Individuals 5-10 Years from Retirement:** Create goal-oriented plan to protect nest egg and timeframes associated with receiving certain benefits
- ✓ **Endowment Planning & Tax Strategies:** Investment planning and tax mitigation strategy review
- ✓ **Retirees:** Help implement distribution strategies to continue current lifestyle and minimize taxes, RMDs
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**Lt. Michael Maritato . . . . . 1st Vice President**  
**Lt. Mark Goodspeed . . . . . 2nd Vice President**  
**Lt. Meghan Sullivan . . . . . Recording Secretary**  
**Lt. Robert Danner . . . . . Treasurer**

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**Robert Grande, Co-Editor**      **Andrew Moffett, Co-Editor**  
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*The Blue Line is the official newspaper of the Buffalo Police Benevolent Association and is published for the interest of Buffalo's law enforcement community. Send all correspondence to:*

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*Articles that appear in the Blue Line do not necessarily reflect the official position or opinion of the Buffalo Police Benevolent Association, Inc. (PBA)*

## Retirement Party - John Dooley Evans -

I would like to thank the PBA for putting on this year's Retirement party!! It was a great night seeing the other retirees enjoying a night out with their families and fellow retirees! Realizing the work that goes into these events, I would like to thank Rob Danner, Meg Sullivan, Mark Goodspeed, Mike Maritato and of course John Davidson. On top of them I'd like to acknowledge Bobby Grande, Andrew Moffett, and Brianna Gilhooly all of whom did a great deal behind the scenes to make it a memorable evening!!

**THANK YOU ALL!!**



## THE THIN, BLURRED LINE - By John Bannister

The ability to take pride in your own work is one of the hallmarks of sanity.

I think most members of our department took this job as a calling. You push through the long civil service process. I still remember parts of the interview — sitting at a table with five or six top brass while they asked:

“Why do you want to be a cop?” Without a second thought, I answered: “I want to help people.”

Then came fingerprints, polygraphs, psychological exams, and background checks until finally you get that call:

“Be here Friday to be sworn in.”

After that, the rest of the instructions barely register because your mind is already racing. You made it. Then comes the academy. If it was anything like mine, it started with standing in line in a suit because Buffalo's grays hadn't come in yet while every other department already had theirs. That was the first crack.

Then came the lessons, and instructors stopping mid-class to say:

“Buffalo, disregard this.” • “You don't have these.” • “You won't use that.”

That's when doubts started creeping in — why did it feel like Buffalo was being held to a different standard than the surrounding agencies sitting beside us?

I felt those eyes at ECC thirteen years ago, and I didn't like it. I didn't like feeling like our department was being laughed at.

And I told myself then: I'll be damned if I'm ever the reason someone else feels that way because of me.

There are certain things from the academy that stayed with me. One of them was simple:

“Try to leave people better than you found them.” (Gene Rac said that.)

That became my compass. Then the academy ends, everyone passes, and the real test starts — actually doing the job. That's where the rubber meets the pavement.

Nobody is perfect right away. Some people find their place early, others take longer.

Some become strong report writers. Some are good at calming people down. Some know how to project force when needed. Some find their niche in guns, V & T, or something else. Whatever it is, it means you cared enough to sharpen your calling and bring something useful every time you put the uniform on.

To those officers, I say thank you. Thank you for taking the job seriously. But not everyone does. Some never seem to find that place. Some fight with everyone they encounter. Some treat people like they're beneath them. We all know the kind of officer I mean — the one you hate hearing is headed to your call because instead of helping, they usually bring chaos, negativity, and more work for everyone else.

The kind planted in front of a TV most of the shift, taking the long way to calls, moving like every problem belongs to somebody else. Then others are left cleaning up what never had to happen. You hide behind a salty exterior like you've earned some pass from doing the job right.

But not everyone wearing that attitude has earned it. Some officers have been through the wringer. Some show up hurt every day and still work. Some people have earned frustration. Not everyone has earned bitterness.

Let me be clear — I'm about as far from perfect as there is when it comes to being a cop. I've made mistakes. I've fallen into traps that life and this job set in front of me. I've had my ego checked. I've let hubris turn one bad decision into another. I've said the wrong thing, made the stupid mistake, been too quick with my hands, and been caught by nuance that more seasoned officers probably would have seen coming. Most of those mistakes were mistakes of judgment, not of heart.

And I've felt the shame of having to crawl back to center and pick myself up again.

But I didn't stop caring. I didn't stop wanting to be a cop. I still felt like I had more to give to the community. I remained teachable, even if I wasn't always the best learner.

If you feel like this piece is about you, then prove me wrong. And to the hard workers who keep showing up every day and carrying this job the right way — you keep proving me right.

Don't pretend to be a cop — be one. Care about the people you're supposed to help.

Care about the city you're supposed to protect. Start being the hero your family thinks you are when you go to work and put that tin on. Start being the hero you have the opportunity to be every single day. Be the hero in your own police career story. This isn't a dress rehearsal. You owe it to yourself, and you owe it to the people out there.

This job gives you a chance every day to leave people better than you found them.

I'm tired of defending what shouldn't need defending. Our department already faces enough outside scrutiny without our own members creating more mistrust through apathy or arrogance. It's our job to hold each other to a standard and keep one another accountable. Our department does not have to be the clown show of Erie County. We can be better than that. It starts with lifting one another up, taking pride in how we carry ourselves, and taking pride in our words and actions.

~ God bless, work safe, and thank you.

## Retirement

Congratulations to our most recent retirees, and thank you for all that you have done for the City of Buffalo.

- Capt. Derrick Banaszak . . . . .12/19/2025**
- P.O. David O'Brien . .12/19/2025**
- Lt. Darren Labeledz . . .12/21/2025**
- Lt. Mark Cyrek . . . . .12/22/2025**
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- Capt. Scott Blesy . . .12/29/2025**
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- Insp. Ronald Jentz . . .12/30/2025**
- Capt. Patrick Humiston . . . . .12/31/2025**
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- P.O. Matthew Richards . . . . .12/31/2025**
- P.O. Roscoe Henderson . . . . .12/31/2025**
- P.O. Alicia Latini . . . .12/31/2025**
- Det. Judith Walker . . .1/30/2026**
- P.O. Jae Murphy . . . .2/11/2026**
- Lt. Douglas Kopp . . . .2/28/2026**
- P.O. Cleveland S. Wilson, Jr. . . . . . .3/3/2026**

## “IT’S IN THE JENES”

By ... *The Fashion Police*



So you thought it was a good idea to wear jeans to Internal Affairs and court.

That makes you a special kind of stupid.

Not in a Jeff Foxworthy “you might be a redneck” sort of way. More like the kind that makes the rest of us shake our heads and wonder how someone could be so completely blind to the responsibility that comes with this job.

Wearing the uniform is not a chore. It is not an inconvenience. It is not optional when it suits your mood.

It is a symbol of the oath you took.

Every time one of us puts it on, we represent every officer who came before us and every officer standing next to us today. The public may not know our names, but they know that uniform—and they judge all of us by the way it is worn.

Showing up to Internal Affairs or court dressed like you’re heading to run errands isn’t just lazy. It’s disrespectful. Disrespectful to the profession, to the department, and to the officers who take pride in what this badge represents.

And when you do things like that, the problem doesn’t stop with you. It lands on the rest of us. Other officers end up having to answer for it, defend it, or make excuses for behavior that never should have happened in the first place. No one should have to explain away someone else’s arrogance or lack of professionalism.

If wearing the uniform feels like a burden to you, then maybe you chose the wrong profession.

There are plenty of honorable ways to make a living swinging a hammer, digging a trench, or waiting tables. Those are respectable jobs. But they don’t carry the responsibility, authority, and public trust that comes with a badge and a gun.

Policing is a calling. And with that calling comes a standard.

I’ve seen plenty of people who were never meant to wear the uniform. Pretenders. People going through the motions. But even many of them managed to do the bare minimum: show up squared away, project professionalism, and demonstrate a basic understanding that this job is bigger than themselves.

When we put on that uniform, it should feel like an honor.

If it doesn’t—if you can’t be bothered to show the pride, discipline, and professionalism the job demands—then do the rest of us a favor.

Turn in your gun and shield. *This calling isn’t for you.*

## THE CITY CANNOT HAVE IT BOTH WAYS

By ... *Joe Stojek*

For years, rank-and-file patrol officers have been bound by strict residency requirements—mandated to live within city limits as a condition of employment. The justification has been repeated often and emphatically: officers should live in the communities they serve. It was framed as essential to building trust. That standard has not been optional. It has been enforced.

Yet, with the hiring of Erika Shields as Police Commissioner, an out-of-state appointee, those same principles appear to have been quietly discarded at the highest level. The message is unmistakable: residency matters, until it doesn’t.

City leadership may argue that experience and outside perspective justified the decision. Perhaps they do. But that argument only underscores the inconsistency. If outside talent can be prioritized for the most powerful position in the department, then why has that same flexibility been denied to patrol officers. Why is proximity to the community deemed essential for patrol, but negotiable for command?

This is more than a policy discrepancy, it is a credibility problem. When standards are applied selectively, they cease to be standards at all. They become preferences, enforced on some and waived for others. That is not leadership; that is a double standard. And in a profession built on accountability, perception matters. We notice it. The public notices it. Trust, once strained, is not easily repaired.

There is a practical reality that cannot be ignored. Expanding residency flexibility would immediately broaden the department’s recruitment capabilities, allowing Buffalo to draw from local communities. The city should not be looking to Atlanta or Louisville for officers and leadership when Amherst and Lackawanna may already have them. That contradiction is as inefficient as it is indefensible.

The city must choose. It can maintain a consistent standard applied equally from the commissioner’s office to the newest recruit—or it can abandon the pretense altogether and reform the policy to reflect reality. What it cannot do is continue to demand one set of rules for some and another for others. City Hall the choice is yours. Do the right thing or continue to do your own thing.

“The Blue Line” is the official newspaper of the Buffalo Police Benevolent Association, Inc., and will be printed quarterly. It is distributed to law enforcement agencies nationwide, Federal, and State Governmental agencies at the local level, as well as throughout the Buffalo Metropolitan area.

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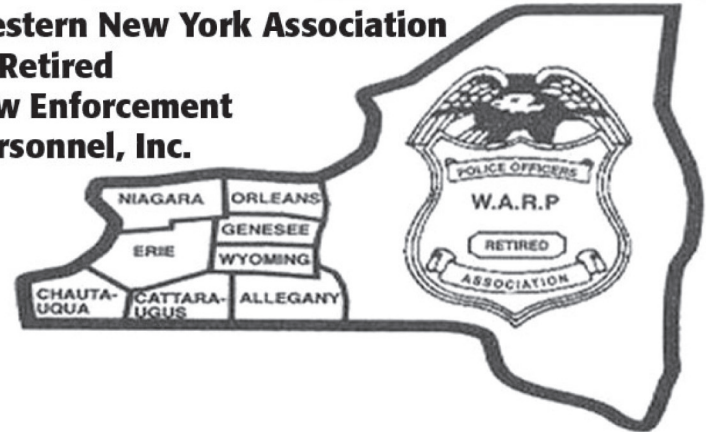
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