

INSIGHT

Portrait of a Professional

by Bradley J. Fairchild, President, Cumberland County PANJ Local 200. This article is the third of a series dedicated to local and state PANJ leaders who consistently demonstrate the highest levels of commitment and dedication to this organization and to the Probation profession.

To observe the energy and enthusiasm of youth is truly a beautiful thing. To watch these forces at work for the benefit of PANJ and it's 2,500 members give all of us great hope and confidence in the future.

In just a few short years since graduating from Rutgers University, Hudson County Probation Officer Fernando Uribe, age 27, has achieved impressive post graduate academic success, was appointed to one of the most critical caseloads in the Probation system, and was elected Vice President of one of the largest PANJ Locals in New Jersey.

In addition to these accomplishments Fernando received the 2002 Probation Officer of the Year award at our November Conference in Atlantic City. Fernando is deeply humbled by this recognition and is especially grateful to have been nominated for the award by co workers Mariza Hernandez and Cynthia Ferrer.

Mr. Uribe's parents, Mr. Fernando Uribe Sr. and Sira Uribe, immigrated from Cuba and Colombia in the 1960's. Fernando credits his family as his primary source of guidance and inspiration throughout his life. Fernando's father was a bank official and active union member for the Depository Trust Company in New York City during a 26 year career. Fernando is thankful that many family members have remained in the Union City and Hudson County area. Fernando's wife Yvonne shares her husband's commitment to education and public service as she is a teacher and Master's student at New Jersey City University. (Continued on page 2)

(from page 1) Upon graduating from Rutgers University in 1998 Mr. Uribe was quickly hired by the Hudson County Probation Department as an Officer in the Child Support Enforcement Unit. In the fall of 2000 Fernando was selected to supervise the Megans Law caseload in Adult Supervision. Fernando is particularly grateful to Hudson County VACPO Chris Stanecki for giving him the opportunity for such a critical assignment.

Mr. Uribe is aware of the challenges facing him but he strongly believes that his role is to help facilitate an environment where individuals can reinvent themselves and "self modify" their behaviors. Fernando maintains a fiery belief that Officers can "make a difference" in the lives of the people they supervise and people have the ability to make positive changes.

Fernando is acutely aware of the support he has received from colleagues and fellow PANJ members. Hudson Local 115 President Alex Marin has been a critical source of guidance on Union issues and Fernando insists that the daily council of coworkers Cenia Crespo, Lilia Valencia Almeida, and Anthony Persico has been invaluable to his professional development.

As Vice President of a PANJ Local with 131 members Fernando is responsible for guiding numerous shop stewards and advocating for fellow members in grievance and discipline proceedings. In addition to his Union responsibilities, Fernando recently received his Masters' degree from the Rutgers/Newark School of Criminal Justice and is awaiting acceptance as a PHD candidate from the same academic institution.

Mr. Uribe expressed disappointment in the Judiciary's failure to implement S 950 (The Probation Officer Community Safety Act) Fernando believes that to delay implementation does a great disservice to the citizens of New Jersey. Mr. Uribe strongly maintains that the highest public policy priority for residents from Jersey City to Cape May "is to feel safe and secure as they live their lives each day." The additional resources and critical training for Probation Officers that are at the centerpiece of the legislation would greatly improve the quality of Probation supervision and protect citizens.

World events over the last two years have challenged many of us to reevaluate our priorities. As a first generation American Fernando believes that these challenges have made him more grateful for the liberties and opportunities that all of us enjoy but too often take for granted. Mr. Uribe asserts that although he has always been proud to an American, he now possesses a higher sense of pride and commitment.

The values of pride and commitment so deeply ingrained in our young Mr. Uribe, combined with his many attributes listed previously, will make him a valuable member of our PANJ family for many years to come.

Village Initiative Health Improvement Project

by Donald E. DeHart, Passaic County

It is just after 9 o'clock on a winter afternoon and Doctor James Pruden is about to make house calls. But first; he must strap on his bulletproof vest These are the first few lines in an article featured in the health, section of the Star Ledger on Wednesday January 15, 2003.

The *Star Ledger* article featured our new partnership with St. Joseph's Regional Hospital. The result is the "Health Improvement Partnership". Over the years since the inception of the Passaic County Village Initiative Project, it has become clear to the members of this project regarding the necessity to connect health care to their target population. In the words of Vicinage Chief Probation Officer, John V. Krieger, "this additional component adds to more of a holistic approach that not only addresses crime and justice, but also the medical needs of the population that we serve". The St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center joined the project with little hesitation.

This unique opportunity allows the medical Community a platform to deliver their healthcare message to a community that had learned to trust the police and probation officers coming into their homes at all hours. Generally, the families have no problems allowing the teams into their homes. The results of the programs are still early to measure, however, our Assignment Judge, the Honorable Robert J. Passero, commented "it's too early to assess the end results, but if you don't try something you'll never know if it works."

As the program continues, we look forward to developing funding sources that will allow additional resources from the participating agencies and hospital.

The participating team members are the Paterson Police Department lead by Sgt. Spano VCPO John V. Krieger, VACPO Rashad Shabaka, CSS II Donald E. DeHart, PO Sonia Valentin, MPO Victor Urgo, SPO Martin McCoy, JC1 Amin Jihad, Dr. James Pruden, and Nurse Barbara Koegel.

This program has gained local and national attention. In addition to the news article in the *Star Ledger*, CBS News has created a story for broadcast and NJN News will be developing a story in the near future.

PANJ-EF CONFERENCE

by Dorothy Robinson, Northern Reg. VP

Hurray! Hurray! Hurray! It is that time of year again when your thoughts turn not lightly to Spring but to yes, dare I say it the PANJ Conference 2003. We at the Conference Committee are gearing up to deliver another spectacular Conference at Trump Plaza on November 23rd through 25th, but to do so we need your help. To that end here are a few reminders and facts you need to know.

The registration packets will be coming to you after the June 26th State meeting. They will be given to the Local Presidents so be sure and get yours. Scholarship Applications will once again be in the capable hands of John Koerber and myself Dotty Robinson. They will be available on our website www.panj.org effective June 30th. The Applications must be completed and submitted to the PANJ Office no later than

September 15th. There is a lot of material to cover and John and I appreciate having the time to do so.

Also, please remember there are three scholarships available, the third being the Kimberly Cuzzo Scholarship. This is open to any Officer or Supervisor continuing their education. If no Officers apply it will be open as the other's are: to a relative of a Probation Officer or any other member of PANJ. Remember though "You've got to be in it to win it"

As far as the Conference we all had a fabulous time last year and this year looks to be even better. To achieve this there are just a few things that have to be kept in mind.

Early Registration saves you money and helps us plan better. Also, the rooms at Trump's go fast so you want to get your reservation in as soon as possible or it is going , going , gone. Also if you share a room you can cut the cost and double or triple or even quadruple your fun . Beyond that I can't even imagine. More importantly we will be once again requiring I.D'S to get into all of the events i.e. the Sunday night Cocktail Party, the Monday Luncheon ,and of course the Monday night Party These I.D'S are provided in your registration packet and must be picked up before the Registration Table closes on Sunday night if you wish to attend the Sunday Night Party. If you know you are going to be late ask a friend to pick yours up for you cause no one will be admitted without it, and we all want to enjoy ourselves.

We are working on a new system to make it even easier access for you but like the saying goes "NO TICKIE (I.D) NO SHIRTIE" We are working really hard to ensure a successful Conference, but we all have to cooperate.

I would also like to mention the Awards Nominations for Officer of the Year, Supervisor of the Year and of course the Prestigious John Augustus Award. These should be submitted no later than October 15th to Stuart Martinsen at the PANJ Office in Brielle.

If you have any questions you can reach Stuart through the PANJ office (732)223-1799. Stuart puts a great deal of time and energy into these awards but they don't happen if you don't send in the nominations.

OK enough said I look forward to seeing you all at the Conference and yes I will be the one checking those I.D'S along with my partners Thea Condry and John Koerber. So register early and come on down for great times, great classes and a chance to mix and mingle with your fellow compatriots.

NEW JERSEY: The Arming of

Probation Officers:

When Will the Courts Place Safety First?

(Authors and credentials at end)

The Criminal Justice System has several major components including police, courts, corrections, probation, and others. In New Jersey the Probation Association of New Jersey (PANJ) has long opposed the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), on this issue. Judges who determine such matters have been heretofore somewhat "out of touch" with the realities of what the officer in the street faces today. Perhaps they should think about descending from the bench, and walking a mile in one of the inner "blight" stricken cities, where brave officers both men, and women serve the public at their own peril.

As society changes so changes the American system of justice. The police make arrests, the courts decide innocence or guilt, and other components of the system execute orders of the court. If a sentence indicates a term of incarceration corrections implements it, if a term of probation is ordered the Probation Division effects supervision. Today due to a myriad of reasons overcrowding of prisons being one, Probation Officers are called upon to supervise very violent offenders that would have been in prison only 10 years ago. What the court expects from today's Probation Officer is not comprehensible, as more and more violent individuals are placed on probation and little if any resources are sent forth from the AOC, either in funding or personnel. Currently in New Jersey when an officer leaves the division they are most often NOT replaced. The AOC views thus responsible fiscal accountability. They appear to extend little concern for the officers who remain, regarding workload or safety. If one were to interview Judges who make decisions in Trenton, regarding the advancement / enhancement of the Probation Division in New Jersey, experiences of the past suggest they would provide lip service to issues, but nothing of substance. Venture behind chamber doors, and you will find many are only concerned with public image, finding ingenious ways to skirt real issues of the day.
(Cont'd on page 3)

(New Jersey, from page one) Although many first time offenders find themselves eligible for some type of diversion program, statistics reflect a horrendously high recidivism rate of almost 80% depending on the length of time examined. The availability of weapons has reached epidemic proportions in this country. Therefore, a question arises. Should we permit Probation Officers to protect themselves as our police are permitted to do?

Pundits engage in a variety of interesting dialogue, discussing what the proper role of the Probation Officer should be; should they be counselors, should they be considered enforcement? Many of these "learned individuals" have never been on the street or even spoken to a dangerous violent individual whom officers are required to supervise, and sometimes arrest in often stressful and extremely dangerous environments. Is it assumed that all individuals placed on probation will cooperate? Are we protecting the unselfish officers who serve to protect us all from convicted offenders? In New Jersey, safety of the officer is long down the list of priorities at the AOC.

PANJ has led the cause for arming Probation Officers in New Jersey. Media accounts of numerous incidents involving officers in harms way, may be found in the archives of

newspapers across the state. Probation Officers are required to have a college degree when hired. Upon assignment officers are involved in all types of training so they are able to carry out the job they were hired for. Arrest, search, and seizure are all part of the function an officer engages in during normal, routine execution of duties. These job duties come with little in the line of protection for the officer. They may carry a variety of authorized agents for self protection and handcuffs, but when face to face with a potentially armed or dangerous individual who does NOT want to go to jail, the officer has nothing. Even in a courtroom the Judge, and counsel are well protected by a number of armed court officers. Yet the Probation Officer is expected to face these same individuals on the street with no serious form of protection.

It is time for the AOC to look at these matters with a protective eye not only for the officer who serves the court, but also for the individual citizen who expects to be protected from dangerous felons in their community.

Interesting headlines in past years; Cuts, Law Shackle Probation Officers... State Senate Measure Would Allow Probation Officers To Carry a GUN... Probation Association Supports Weapons Bill... Probation Officers Want Right To Carry Guns For Protection... Unarmed Probation Officers Deal With People Who Can Be Violent... Probation Officers Are Up In Arms...

The articles mentioned above were all written to expose a serious, potentially dangerous situation, with hopes of support from those who sit in judgment in the courtroom. Other than rhetoric, little meaningful action has been taken to help those who by oath (like police officers) protect us. An officer who is properly equipped and trained is an officer that will protect the citizen he or she serves, and do so with proper protection to themselves.

In recent years the public has had an increase in desire for harsher punishments, imprisonment in particular. Yet as this cry goes out, prisons are full, and officials are required to find alternative placement for individuals who otherwise would be incarcerated. Probation has become the "dumping ground" for the court. Increased caseload size, more, and more violent offenders, an expectation from the public to be protected is all in the volatile mix.

As officers go to work each day, it is time for the "powers that be" the Judges in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) in Trenton to wake up, get in touch with the realities of the streets, and get involved with a dimension of the court system that is carrying more than its fair share, when examining issues of public safety, the safety of those sworn to uphold the laws of the state, and effectively protect its citizens, the Probation Officer. It is time for officers to be armed, with proper, and ongoing training. If the Judiciary, inclusive of managers, and leaders would provide adequate, ongoing training to arm officers, this will serve to assist the officer in the discharge of duties, required by the state at time of hire and instill confidence in a public that expects and deserves protection.

Authors:

William W. Johnson, Sr., M.S.

William Johnson currently serves as Chief of Police for the city of Gloucester, New Jersey. Chief Johnson teaches both undergraduate, and graduate courses at three Delaware Valley area colleges; Fairleigh Dickinson University, Camden County College and Cumberland County College. His interest is combining practitioner, and academic approaches to the police profession. He has presented at the "ACJS" annual meetings for the past four consecutive years. Chief Johnson also is a certified police instructor, and instructs at the New Jersey West Point Command Leadership Program.

Charles Kocher, M.S.

Charles Kocher is currently Coordinator for Criminal Justice Studies at Cumberland County College, Vineland, New Jersey. Mr. Kocher served in all ranks up to Deputy Chief for Camden, New Jersey, retiring after 28 years of service. He has presented at the "ACJS" annual meetings for the past four consecutive years. Mr. Kocher continues to pursue research on the use of force, and leadership development for criminal justice.

Richard P. Mason, M.S., CSW.

Richard Mason's professional background includes over twenty five years as an administrator in the criminal justice system in the State of New Jersey. He has worked on many projects, and very recently completed extensive research on at risk juvenile residential facilities in New Jersey. Mr. Mason is also President of Tomorrow's Youth Incorporated, a firm in New Jersey, and serves as a consultant for institutional services and private security. A recently retired Probation Officer, Mr. Mason teaches criminal justice courses at four colleges; Camden County College, Burlington County College, Cumberland County College, and Kean University. He is an accomplished speaker, facilitator, and has presented at the "ACJS" annual meetings for the past four consecutive years.

*Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) is an international organization established in 1963 to foster professional and scholarly activities in the criminal justice field.

Editor's note: The views of the authors are not necessarily those of PANJ.

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Deneen Hohman

Hello everyone!

I hope to clarify any questions about dues cards in this article. The dues cards are available at the PANJ office if you need more.

For all new hires and officers who transfer to a new county they must sign a new dues card (every county has a different code). The card is then taken to the local Human Resource person. HR then signs/stamps and makes a copy. Please make sure HR has the correct amount in the left bottom corner. The original is given back to the local. The local now sends it to the PANJ office. Once the card is received it's recorded and forwarded to my residence. After I receive the card, it's checked and sent to the state payroll person. This whole process unfortunately takes some time.

For people who are paying dues to the wrong unions, stop dues cards and new dues cards need to be signed with the same procedure as outlined above.

For officers who are promoted from the Line Unit to the Supervisor Unit a new dues card needs to be signed (every unit has a different code). Then follow the above outlined procedure.

Hopefully every few months I will be able to provide the locals with lists of full members and non- members. I need the President of every local to review the lists to make sure all officers are accounted for. If anyone is missing please visit them with a dues card.

I also, need all the local Presidents to send me the name and address of where the reimbursement checks for the Local Associations are to be sent.

Thank you for you time and patience. I hope to hear from the local Presidents as soon as possible.

Support Groups as a Resource

by Joanne Rohach, NJ Self Help Clearing Hs.

The New Jersey Self-Help Group Clearinghouse, a department of Saint Clare's Health System, provides contact information to over 4,000 support groups in New Jersey, and over 1,100 national group headquarters, model groups, and online groups. These support groups cover a broad spectrum of stressful life situations and adversities such as

addictions, gambling, childhood abuse, anxiety, depression, parenting, spouse abuse, mental health, disabilities, grief, smoking, illness and much more. The Clearinghouse also maintains contact information on over 200 helplines, hotlines, and psychiatric emergency lines. Easy access to this information is assured through a toll free number, **1-800-367-6274**, Mondays through Fridays, 8:30am _ 5:00pm.

Another important component of Clearinghouse services is the development of new self-help groups. Consultants provide free assistance with the "nuts and bolts" of starting a group such as: finding a meeting space, reaching prospective members, creating a flyer, writing a press release, or establishing guidelines for a group.

In response to a growing need for anger management programs, the Clearinghouse is seeking individuals interested in starting no-fee support groups for anger management. Pathways to Peace, a non-profit self-help group program that helps members to understand and manage their anger, provides a workbook composed of four parts. As part of this initiative the Clearinghouse will be sponsoring a full day conference on September 20th, 2003. Anyone interested in either helping to start New Jersey's first PTP group or attending the conference should contact the Clearinghouse at **1-800-367- 6274**.

Legislative Update

by Rob Nixon Princeton Public Affairs Group, Inc.

PANJ has been active in Trenton recently preparing legislation to improve the safety and security of Probation Officers. Most importantly, we have been working with PANJ Legal Counsel David Fox to draft legislation to remove the management of probation from the Judiciary and place it under the Executive Branch. The bill draft, which involves the complicated transfer of both officers and budgets, is currently under review. PANJ has obtained commitments for sponsorship from members of the Assembly and Senate and legislators have repeatedly expressed their dismay that the Judiciary continues to ignore Chapter 362 (The Probation Officer Community Safety Act).

In addition, PANJ has proposed strengthening the assault laws to provide greater protection to Probation Officers. We continue to support Assembly Bill 1172 (Previte) to make the throwing of bodily fluids at a Probation Officer an aggravated assault. The bill is awaiting consideration in the Senate Law and Public Safety Committee. We have also reviewed statutes from other states to seek amendments to the current criminal justice laws to provide greater protections to Probation Officers and stronger penalties for those who would threaten or attack a Probation Officer.

Please contact the PANJ Legislative Committee by E-mail or letter at the PANJ office in Brielle if you have any questions or comments.