OUR VISION
Our vision is a safer Highlands County where citizens and law enforcement are joined together; the rights of all persons are respected; and community values are reflected.

OUR MISSION
The Highlands County Sheriff’s Office is committed to protecting life, property, and individual rights while maintaining peace and order.

OUR PROMISE
Our promise is to deliver ethical and effective services to all of Highlands County in a professional and responsive manner that demonstrates our commitment to honoring the public trust.

Vol. 3, Issue 2
2nd Quarter, 2021

Sheriff Paul Blackman

School may be out, but that doesn’t mean there is a lot of work happening on campus. The School Safety Team, made up of HCSO Crime Prevention Practitioner Sgt. Kimberly Gunn, School Board Director of Safety and Security Timothy Leeseberg, and Sgts. Dusty McGee and Chris Bates of the School Resource Unit have been touring every campus and updating the School Safety Assessments.

The Safety Team toured every campus in June,

See SCHOOLS, page 3

Schools in Highlands County have greatly updated security measures since 2018. This summer, the School Safety Team has been working to see what improvements have been made and what still needs to be done to ensure schools are secure.

Deputies got some outstanding ambush defense training from FDLE staff in May. Deputies practiced firing from a vehicle, both through the windshield and out each side. They also worked on shooting from atypical stances, such as prone and from their sides while on the ground. The training was led by Pete Souls and Tim Stanley. Souls survived a 1997 ambush in Jacksonville where he was shot five times.

By Shirley Johnson
HCSO Volunteer Coordinator

Melinda Brown and Sharon Single

This quarter’s Volunteer Spotlight is on two amazing Volunteers that truly touch lives just by their existence: Pastor Melinda Brown and Church Administrative Assistant Sharon Single, both of

See SPOTLIGHT, page 3
Quarterly Statistical Information

ADMINISTRATION AND COURT

New Member Hires
Civilian ......................................... 5
Sworn .......................................... 6
Part-time civilian ......................... 3
Part-time sworn ......................... 0
Applications received ............. 41
Applications processed .......... 30
Payroll transactions processed... 2,187
Payable checks processed...... 655
P-card purchases ............... 1,027

Court-Related Services
Information Services requests ....... 974

Cases in court ......................... 3,269
Inmates taken to court......... 1,358
Arrests by bailiffs .................. 20
Persons through security ...... 11,602

Judicial/Civil Process Services
Received .................................. 1,534
Served ...................................... 1,458
Active ....................................... 76

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Administrative calls.................. 41,498
911 calls ...................................... 13,921
Offense reports........................ 2,194

Computer Aided Dispatch......... 35,177
HCSO (60%) ..................... 21,315
SPD (15%) ................................ 4,938
HCFR (15%) ....................... 5,332
LPPD (7%) ............................. 2,430
SCFD (1%) ................................ 494
APFD (2%) ............................. 735

Warrants
Received/Processed .............. 165
Served ................................. 318
Active .................................. 1,691

Items into evidence ............. 3,053
Evidence items disposed ...... 2,214
K-9 searches/reviews .......... 251
Arrests by patrol .................. 406
Traffic citations issued ....... 1,466
DUI arrests ...................... 13

Investigations Assigned Cases ... 105
Investigations open (total) .... 187
SOU narcotics arrests .......... 91
Crime Scene lab cases ......... 103
Crime Scene call-outs ......... 75
Cell phones/computers processed .... 122
SVU cases from DCF .......... 256
SVU cases open ................. 80
Current sex offenders/predators .... 195/22
Career offenders .................. 29
Juvenile sex offenders (incl. in total) .... 220
Offender registrations .......... 248
COPS Unit offense reports .... 82
COPS Unit arrests ............... 36
Business/Residential security surveys .... 23
Crime Prevention presentations .... 41
SafetyNet contacts .............. 17
Crime victims served .......... 176
Victims’ Advocate Services .... 744
Animal Services calls .......... 1,426
Animals impounded ............. 802

DETENTION

Inmates booked ...................... 722
Inmates released .................... 723
Average daily jail population ... 455
Alcohol breath tests .............. 28
Instructional program hours .... 902
Inmate transport miles.16,197
Transports to state prison .... 22
CMP participants .................. 1

Dollars saved in labor .......... $2,082.60
Dollars collected in fees ....... $0
Net commissary earnings ...... $38,721.19

Inmate meals served .......... 124,339
Avg. food cost per day per inmate .... $1.97
Medical fees charged ........ $123,176.34
Medical fees collected ........ $5,800.56
Subsistence fees charged .... $66,858
Subsistence fees collected ... $22,452.21
Inmate per-diem charged ..... $14,600
Inmate per-diem collected ... $9,584.89
Inmate labor hours at SO ..... 28,224
Inmate labor hours other ... 3,096
Inmate labor hours saved .... $270,918.00
meeting with school representatives as a follow-up to the in-depth school assessments conducted in 2018 in the wake of the Parkland shooting. Since that time, every campus has greatly upgraded its security, installing fences and other measures that help control entry onto the school grounds.

The follow-up survey was to determine what, if any, improvements have been made since 2018 and to determine what concerns were still present. The focus is on fencing, cameras, secure front offices and overall campus access. Sgt. Gunn is compiling a comprehensive report that will be used as a guide to the next steps in making our students as safe as possible.
**JULY**

Alejandro Gamez  1
Johnathan Knight  1
Samuel Jacobs  1
Michael Dean  1
Cameron Armstead  1
Arianna De Arce  2
Jeremy Ahrens  2
Ryan Davidson  3
Wesley Jones  4
Oral A. Holmes  6
Ryan Davidson  3
Paul Finneran  7
Nathan Nichols  7
Jillian Kingery  8
Darin Hood  9
Samuel Wilson  9
Robert Roe  10
Judy Watkins  10
Latoya Walton  11
Paul Bogaert  11

Robert Copeland  13
Oliver Worley  13
Lindsey Reinhart  14
Justin Clemmons  16
Connie Rousseau  17
John Weed  18
Crystal Brackett  18
Darlene Sizemore  18
John Lott  19
Christopher Smith  21
Darin Hood  22
Dale Vaughn  22
Alycia Tate  28
Curtis Ludden  30
Bonnie Gregg  38

**AUGUST**

Hunter Ritenour  1
Caleb Lott  2
Destiny McCartney  2
Jose Acuna  3
Ashlee Robitaille  3
Larry Meinke III  4
Eddie San Miguel  4
Tamarra Neale  5
Royce Marlow  5
Timothy Albright  5
Thomas Wishart  5
Robert Stowers  7
Travis Dunn  7
Larissa De Arce  8
Corey Snell  8
Jorge Martinez  10
Katrina Thomas  10
Kelly Waldron  10
Dustin Bennett  11
Steven Ritenour  13
Kathleen Perez  14
Toni Crawford  16
Michael Huften  16

**NEW HIRES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>HIRED</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robin R. Ballard</td>
<td>04/07/21</td>
<td>Telecommunicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyler W. Hodge</td>
<td>05/05/21</td>
<td>Deputy Sheriff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Y. Simmons</td>
<td>05/05/21</td>
<td>O.P.S. Registered Nuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garrison L. Yarbrough</td>
<td>05/05/21</td>
<td>Deputy Sheriff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael W. Brod Jr.</td>
<td>05/05/21</td>
<td>O.P.S. Computer Technician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raney L. Sebring</td>
<td>05/19/21</td>
<td>Licensed Practical Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana L. Stevenson</td>
<td>05/19/21</td>
<td>Telecommunicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori A. Beck</td>
<td>06/07/21</td>
<td>Human Resource Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aidan W. Border</td>
<td>06/07/21</td>
<td>O.P.S. Computer Technician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theresa D. Lethbridge</td>
<td>06/16/21</td>
<td>O.P.S. Registered Nuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexander R. Hill</td>
<td>06/23/21</td>
<td>Deputy Sheriff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvin A. Hinson</td>
<td>06/23/21</td>
<td>Detention Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward J. O'Connell Jr.</td>
<td>06/23/21</td>
<td>Detention Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relene K. Torres</td>
<td>06/23/21</td>
<td>Deputy Sheriff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SEPTMBRE**

Andrea Pelletier  1
Karen Lentz  1
Jacklyn Fertig  3
Jose Acuna  3
Brandon Owens  3
Joy Murfield  5
Jose Robles  5
Ruben Carranza  5

**ACADEMY GRADUATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ACADEMY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Hill</td>
<td>06/09/21</td>
<td>Graduated SFSC Law Enforcement Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvin Hinson</td>
<td>05/27/21</td>
<td>Graduated SFSC Corrections Academy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

~FOR SALE~

2018 ~ Road King Special ~
< 15,000 miles ~ a lot of add-ons ~
Serious inquiries only ~ $19,500.00

~Detective Wesley (613) 603-7382/ (613) 373-6688~
We said goodbye May 14 as Lt. Greg Pearlman wrapped up a great career. He worked for the Avon Park Police Department for many years before joining us in 2006. He worked in investigations, the Special Victims Unit and finished up as the head of the Court Security Unit. Thanks for everything, Greg, and enjoy your retirement!

On Sunday, May 16, 2021 a call came in for a missing elderly male. The call taker, trainee Robin Ballard and her trainer, Danielle Burnsed were relating the details of the call as they were typing in the CAD notes. The dispatcher for the South channel, Alison Hoffner, gave the information over the radio for the South units to BOLO for the vehicle at Lt Ludden’s request. As a result of the deputies hearing it on both North channel as it was dispatched and over South channel as a BOLO, the missing man’s truck was quickly spotted by DS Moseley. They performed a traffic stop and was able to keep the man from traveling so his family could retrieve him. This a perfect example of how “it all comes together” and the result was a happy ending!

-- Heather Silver

I would like to take a moment to recognize Detention Bureau Administrative Aid Deb Owens. Deb regularly goes above and beyond here in the jail. Deb visits classification on a daily basis and asks if we need any help processing court documents. There are days that the classifications unit is extremely busy with a heavy court docket and other duties. We can always count on Deb to step up and help take on the extra responsibilities that go over and beyond her regular duties. Deb is a great asset to the sheriff’s office and we greatly appreciate her.

-- Sgt. Michael Morse

### Promotions & Transfers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>MOVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowanda Thompson</td>
<td>04/07/21</td>
<td>Promoted to Telecommunications Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Ahrens</td>
<td>04/07/21</td>
<td>Transferred as Sergeant to Uniform Patrol Division within LEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin Taylor</td>
<td>04/21/21</td>
<td>Promoted to Telecommunicator II in the Communications Division within LEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bret Hinkle</td>
<td>05/05/21</td>
<td>Transferred as Sergeant to Criminal Investigations Unit in CID within LEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebekah Tyson</td>
<td>05/05/21</td>
<td>Promoted to Human Resource Administrator in Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Mulligan</td>
<td>05/05/21</td>
<td>Promoted to Sergeant in the COPS Unit within the Special Operations Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulier Ortega</td>
<td>05/19/21</td>
<td>Transferred to NARC Detective in the Crime Suppression Unit within the Special Operations Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Godinez</td>
<td>05/19/21</td>
<td>Transferred to Detective in the Crime Suppression Unit within the Special Operations Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seth Abeln</td>
<td>05/19/21</td>
<td>Transferred to Detective in the Crime Suppression Unit within the Special Operations Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelby Wilde</td>
<td>06/02/21</td>
<td>Promoted to Central Records Specialist in the Records Division of Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larissa DeArce</td>
<td>06/16/21</td>
<td>Promoted to General Services Manager in the Business Services Division of Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis Ludden</td>
<td>06/16/21</td>
<td>Transferred as Lieutenant to the Court Security Unit in Court Related Services Division within LEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jody Stowers</td>
<td>06/30/21</td>
<td>Transferred to Deputy Sheriff in the Uniform Patrol Division within LEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takesha Augustine-Smith</td>
<td>06/30/21</td>
<td>Transferred to General Services Specialist in the Business Services Division of Administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Former Sebring Police Department officers Garrison Yarbrough (left) and Kyler Hodge (right) were sworn in by Sheriff Blackman May 6.

We added four new members to our family June 25. (From left in group pic) Detention Deputies Edward O’Connell Jr. and Alvin Hinson, along with Deputies Realine Torres and Alexander Hill, were sworn in by Sheriff Blackman.

Thank you to Stephen Hawkins of Captain Hawk Designs in Sebring for donating this custom-made wooden sign to Sheriff Blackman May 25.

We’ve got a pretty good clay shooting team here at the HCSO made up of Sheriff Paul Blackman, Capt. Keith Starling, Capt. John Barcinas and Lt. Brian Kramer. Recently, they went to McDill Air Force Base and won the inaugural Law Enforcement Sporting Clays Competition. Sheriff Blackman tied for the best individual score overall, too! They were presented their plaques June 8. Picture in the first photo are (from left) Carl Gingola of the Air Force Security Forces Association, Capt. Barcinas, Lt. Kramer, Captain Toyre Hudson of the 6th Security Forces Squadron at McDill, Sheriff Blackman, Capt. Starling, MSgt. Aaron Medina of the 6th Security Forces Squadron and Tom Falone IV of Florida Bullet.

Sheriff Blackman enjoyed lunch May 28 with Daniel Marquith, executive director of MADD Central Florida. They were talking about a fundraiser walk planned for sometime in December.

Thank you to Commissioner Kathy Rapp for honoring our Animal Services staff on April 12. Commissioner Rapp made a motion to declare that week “Animal Care and Control Appreciation Week” in Highlands County. Commissioner Rapp toured the Animal Services facility at 7300 Haywood Taylor Blvd. recently and was so impressed by what she saw that she wanted to honor the Animal Services staff. Several of the animal rescue groups in the county showed up to the meeting to join the county in honoring Animal Services.
We had the pleasure of handing out three scholarships May 12. Lake Placid High School’s Brianna Pratts (top photo) was the big winner of the $2,247 Deputy William J. Gentry Jr. Memorial Scholarship, which is funded by the Gentry family and Alan Jay Wildstein. Brianna plans to study health sciences at the University of Central Florida. The scholarship amount represents the badge number of Deputy Gentry (2247), who was killed in the line of duty in May of 2018. New this year is the Trooper Nicholas G. Sottile and Deputy William J. Gentry Jr. Scholarship, which is funded by Ron Shiflet of Ron’s Automotive. Two students won $1,000 scholarships: Hannah Loomis (middle photo) of Avon Park High School, who will study neuroscience at the University of Florida; and Madison Casey (bottom photo), who will study elementary education at South Florida State University. The scholarship honors Deputy Gentry as well as Trooper Sottile, who was killed in the line of duty in January of 2007. Join us in congratulating these fine students and wishing them well on their future academic goals!

Sheriff Blackman and the HCSO were honored June 15 for their work with the Emergency Operations Center at the local vaccine points of distribution. The EOC also gave challenge coins to be given to deputies who worked at the locations.

Major Tim Lethbridge was the guest speaker for the SFSC Academy graduation June 9 and was also honored for his service as interim director of the academy for four months while the search for a new director was being held.

We enjoyed having a delicious Florida-grown steak lunch April 30 with the leaders of our agricultural community at the Florida Farm Bureau Highlands County Judicial Luncheon. Thank you to Rafter T Ranch for hosting us and to Heartland National Bank, Alan Jay Fleet Sales, Florida Grove Hedgers and Everglades Farm Equipment for sponsoring the event.
Detectives Tevin and Benji Toney, cousins who played football for Sebring High School, went to a Blue Streak football practice in May at the invitation of coach Lavaar Scott to talk to the players about traffic stops. They told the teens, most of them new drivers or soon-to-be drivers, how they should react if they get pulled over. They showed them how deputies conduct stops and also let some of the players act as deputies and do “stops” to see it from the other side.

We added several new members over the last quarter, but none of them as cute as K-9 Waylon. The bloodhound was just 9 weeks old when he came to us from Sumter County Correctional Institution in June. He is partnered with new K-9 Unit member Deputy Tyler Bumby, so the two will be learning a lot together in the coming months before they hit the road as a team.