



# Suncoaster

## Suncoast Chapter

### Society of Former Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation

#### Tampa Bay, Florida – March, 2008



### Suncoast Chapter Tampa Bay, FL

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## Chairman's Message

Dear Chapter Members and Friends:

On February 12, 2008, the Suncoast Chapter held its annual Valentine's Luncheon, at which time we honored our special sweethearts, and the very special ladies of the chapter who add such a wonderful dimension to our regular monthly get-togethers. The event was well-attended by 55 members and guests, and we were especially honored with the presence of Tampa SAC Steve Ibson and his delightful wife, Beverly. The ladies each received a beautiful red rose and a candy heart, and the meal was especially tasty, and delightful in its presentation. The chapter did not forget to honor our wonderful servers, Jeanne and Mary, with candy, roses and our sincere thanks for a job well done! The program that followed lunch included vignettes by some of our chapter members and guests as to how they met and fell in love, and thereafter entered into long and successful marriages. The stories were both touching and interesting, and thoroughly enjoyed by one and all. A bottle of champagne was presented to Elmer and Joan Raper for having achieved the greatest number of years of marital bliss of those present, while Richard and Lee MacClary received a similar prize for being our "newlyweds" with two years of marriage behind them (essentially still on their honeymoon)! Congratulations are in order for both of these fine couples. During the selection process for the prizes, it was truly heartwarming and inspirational see the number of members and special guests who have been married for so many, many years. It speaks volumes for the wonderful character and devotion of those who comprise the FBI family. Needless to say, a great time was had by everyone present.

On February 18, 2008, a group of Suncoast Chapter members attended the Gulf Coast Chapter luncheon in Sarasota, which featured a presentation by Lin DeVecchio. Lin gave an interesting and informative overview of his legal ordeal in New York, and ultimate exoneration by virtue of the dismissal of all charges against him. This unjustified legal entanglement left Lin and his family with over a half-million dollars in personal debt, and anyone who

## Coming Events

April 15<sup>th</sup> - Luncheon Meeting - Speaker is a DNA Analyst from FDLE - Beth Ordeman

Topic is DNA for Real, not CSI.

After this you can speak with authority on DNA to your friends

April 22<sup>nd</sup> - Day at the Races - Tampa Bay Downs

is so inclined to do so is encouraged to make a contribution to his defense fund. Lin contacted me following the luncheon, and thanked the Suncoast Chapter for having a delegation at his presentation, and likewise expressed his gratitude for the moral support and monetary donations afforded him by Suncoast Chapter members.

The February 29, 2008 edition of the Tampa Tribune features a news release concerning the formation of an independent commission to study the policies, practices and procedures of the Orient Road and Falkenburg Jails. Anyone who "still has a pulse" is aware of the recent problems that have plagued the Hillsborough County Detention facilities in recent weeks, and Sheriff David Gee has wisely created this commission, comprised of only the most knowledgeable and capable law enforcement professionals and civic leaders in the community, to identify problem areas and deficiencies, and recommend appropriate remedies to correct them. The commission meetings will be held publicly, and a final report is to be prepared within 180 days. Suncoast Chapter member Brian Kensel has been appointed to the commission, which certainly speaks volumes for his outstanding professional law enforcement expertise, and the great esteem in which Brian is held by Tampa Bay law enforcement and civic communities. Congratulations, Brian! The chapter is extremely proud of you, and certain that you will represent the highest traditions of your FBI training in exemplary fashion while serving in this capacity.

Many of us by now are familiar with the touching story of Mark Desmarais, a youngster who had his dream of someday becoming an FBI agent cut short at the age of nine after a courageous battle with childhood cancer. A tribute on the FBI website noted that Mark's plight was brought to the attention of the FBI through one of its now-retired Tampa agents. This tribute further indicated that Mark's bright spirit and enthusiasm for the FBI touched the hearts of those who came to know him in the Tampa field office. Because of the thoughtfulness and compassion of the aforementioned Tampa agent, as well as other onboard FBI employees, the FBI and the Tampa field office extended many wonderful kindnesses and tributes to Mark, his family and his school, both prior to, and following his tragic and untimely death. These kind and thoughtful gestures show a lot of class and compassion on the part of the FBI and the Tampa field office, and truly represent the spirit of "family" that our FBI has always demonstrated.

Some of our members might remember J. Allison Conley, who was the Tampa ASAC from 1969 to 1970, and retired FBI Inspector and Deputy Assistant Director (DAD). DAD Conley passed away in New Jersey in February 2008 after a long and colorful FBI career.

As a reminder to our chapter members, there is an IRS exclusion for law enforcement officers of federal health benefit program premiums of up to \$3000 for 2007, if the premiums are deducted directly from your annuity payments. The reduction of taxable annuity income will generally be listed as an exclusion at line 16b of IRS Form 1040, with the notation "PSO" next to the appropriate line where the reduced taxable amount is set forth. IRS Publication 721, Page 16, provides additional information about this welcomed tax advantage.

On March 06, 2008, Co-chair Barb Madden received a solicitation in the mail from the FBIAA for the purchase of an FBI 100th Anniversary Commemorative Glock Semi-automatic pistol. Barb advises that the weapon must be ordered by April 11, 2008, and will be shipped to an approved federal firearms dealer, rather than directly to the purchaser. Barb coordinated an effort with Brian Kensel to identify dealers who will serve as points of delivery for all chapter members who want to purchase this weapon. Barb sent a message providing the federal firearms dealers to those chapter members who indicated their intention to purchase a pistol.

As mentioned during the February luncheon, chapter Secretary Dennis Hughes would like to encourage all of us to contribute to the Suncoaster, our monthly newsletter. This is, after all, our primary means of communicating with one another on any topic of our choosing. Such contributions might include helpful hints about things that affect our daily lives, or anything else that might be of interest to the general membership. Let's all try to make the Suncoaster a more rewarding endeavor by contributing to it, whenever possible!

After a careful analysis of the chapter's financial situation, and following much "soul searching" by the executive board, we have reluctantly concluded that it will be necessary to increase our monthly luncheon pricing from \$12 to \$15, commencing with the April 15, 2008 chapter meeting. As of March 01, 2008, our treasury had a balance of \$1250, following payment of a deposit of \$625 for our upcoming Christmas party, and a \$150 deposit for our Day at the Races. It is noted that the current cost of our luncheon is \$11.95, plus tax and gratuity of \$3.11,

for a total of \$15.06 per person. The chapter has, therefore, been subsidizing our luncheons at a rate of about \$3 per person, or about \$150 per month, on average. By raising the price to \$15, we will be able to break even, more or less, on our monthly luncheons. Our only dependable source of income is our annual dues of \$25 per member, and this simply will not cover the minimal cost of chapter activities and events if we continue to subsidize our monthly luncheons. I am hopeful of your understanding in this matter, and encourage anyone who has any reservations about the increase to bring them before the membership at our next meeting in April. I also urge anyone who has not yet paid your chapter dues, to kindly do so by sending a check for \$25 to chapter Treasurer Bob Ulmer, 17031 Dolphin Drive, North Redington Beach, Florida 33708.

Our last chapter event was the baseball game on March 17, 2008, and we will not have a luncheon during the month of March. This will be followed by a Day at the Races on April 22, 2008, and I encourage everyone to support and attend this wonderful event. We will have our usual chapter luncheon on April 15, 2008 (Taxes Due Date!), in addition to this event. The chapter has also booked a reservation for our annual Christmas party for Sunday, December 07, 2008 at Maggiano's Little Italy, so please mark your calendars now so you will not miss out on this great annual event!

As in the past, I again wish to thank everyone for your great attendance at chapter luncheons and your participation in chapter events. I also again wish to thank your dedicated and hard-working chapter officers for the wonderful support they have given me in conducting chapter business and activities during my tenure as your chairman! Please contact me personally if you have any concerns or suggestions as to how we might serve you more effectively.

Sincere best wishes to one and all!

Doug deWolfe

### **Change in Membership Procedure**

Currently it takes an average of three months from the time a qualified former agent applies for membership to the Society to the applicant's acceptance as a member.

Posting the names of the applicants, as required in the by-laws, is the most significant delay in the application process. It takes from 45 to 60 days to publish the list in the Grapevine and allow time for response. To shorten that time between application and membership card, the Society Board of Directors instituted a pilot program to the Society application policies and procedures. For a period of time, the names of the applicants will be listed both on the web site and in the Grapevine until we can measure the success of the program. The Society ceased using U.S. mail for notification since it costs \$3,000 in postage alone each time something needs to be mailed to each member.

Our ultimate goal is to publish the names of applicants on the Society web site every Friday. The applicants' names will remain on the web site for two weeks. Barring unusual circumstances, the applicants will be recommended for Society membership. The Society accepts 99 percent of all applicants. Since most of our applicants have recently separated from the Bureau and have used computer technology in their jobs, we anticipate that their contemporaries are also computer / Internet literate and already use the Internet as their first resource.

You are encouraged to visit the Society web site weekly not only to see which former colleagues have applied for membership but also for interesting new tidbits of information. When the Society's new and improved web site is running at full speed, it will be the timeliest resource for what is happening in the Society.

The applicant list can be found on the Society web site in the Member Directory. Log in to the web site, click once on the MEMBER DIRECTORY tab in the left navigation. When the right window opens click once on Applicants. Click once on the link provided for the list that you are interested in. The list(s) will appear in .pdf format. The document will be printer friendly if you would choose to do so.

The Board of Directors

### **Retirements**

SSA Sergio Q. Sanz will retire on 3/29/2008

## Membership Update

Dear Member,

It is time again to update your information for the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI. This annual information gathering ensures that our information is up-to-date and ready for your networking convenience.

Often when members update their postal addresses, email addresses and phone numbers are overlooked. Please be sure to check over your home and business information as well as your snowbird address, if it applies to you. Remember also to check your Specialties and Occupations box. Correct information here will allow others to find you by your expertise.

To verify your contact information, please go to the Society web site at [www.socxfbi.org](http://www.socxfbi.org). In the upper right hand corner click once on the MY PROFILE link. You will be prompted to log in. Once logged in, your personal profile will open. All of your contact information will be displayed. On the right-hand side of the window will be three boxes with blue top banners. The third box will be labeled Update Personal Info. Any information that needs modification will have a link in this box.

If you need assistance please contact me at [hilary.shampine@socxfbi.org](mailto:hilary.shampine@socxfbi.org) or call 800.527.7372 x 1

Hilary Shampine

Membership

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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

