



## President's Report

Brothers and sisters,

What a strange last few weeks. The next few weeks will perhaps be even stranger. Let us all hope and pray we all come out of the COVID-19 pandemic healthy. Yes, I use that term because I drink a Corona from time to time and the beer is getting a bad rap. You are all to be commended for taking all the necessary steps to keep yourselves safe while serving and protecting the good citizens of Akron. The last few weeks have been a huge spotlight on the process by which decisions are made that affect us all. Answers we receive one day are not the same on another day. Some of it is the nature of the beast when dealing with this pandemic. However, be assured, the FOP has been advocating for you especially concerning safety and PPE issues.

### **Time Off**

It is my opinion the order to not allow anyone a day off other than a RDO was premature at best. I voiced opposition immediately and continued to advocate for relaxing this order. While trying to curb the spread of the virus, it didn't make sense to be functioning at full capacity. As long as calls for service did not get out of hand, running with minimal staffing would seem more prudent. Many of you agree. It is not that you are upset because you wanted to stay home all day. Many of you missed child birthdays, anniversaries, and other special engagements. Thankfully, after going through the long process involving many, the mayor made the decision to relax the time off restriction. Hindsight is always 2020 but so too is the spotlight always clear.

### **Self-Quarantine**

We continue to fight the city's position members use their own time when ordered to self-quarantine. About 10 members were already on vacation when the no fly order was issued by the mayor. All members returned home with no symptoms yet were not allowed to return to work for 14 days. Anyone forced to self-quarantine should be placed on paid administrative leave. There is no immediate cost to the city. The only cost is the difference between what we are paid an hour today and what we are paid when time is used or cashed out at retirement. I was notified on a Thursday, these members would not have to use their own time by the deputy mayor. The very next day I was informed the deputy mayor was over ruled and these members would have to use their own time. There's that spotlight again on the decision making process for the department.

Our Labor attorney told me to continue to be relentless on the issue of paid administrative leave for all mandated to quarantine. Incidentally, the federal government has passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. It requires employers to provide employees with paid leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. This act provides funding. Unfortunately, the provisions of this act apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. The city is currently refusing to offer paid leave for those mandated to quarantine prior to April 1, 2020 despite the City of Akron Press Secretary telling the Akron Beacon Journal on April 3 that "first responders mandated to quarantine will be provided new paid sick leave and won't have to use other paid time off they have accumulated." Again, all officers who are mandated to self-quarantine regardless if they are covered by a federal government hand out or not should be placed on paid administrative leave. If common sense does not prevail, I am confident our grievances before an arbitrator will.

We will continue to fight that and other fights. Time constraints for grievances are relaxed. The union will file those when things return to near normalcy. Continue to notify the FOP Office with any concerns, problems, and grievances. Notify your chain of command also. Let the union and the city administration argue these differences. I want you to concentrate on keeping yourselves safe and keeping your families safe. I don't get tired, I don't get discouraged, I just keep stating our positions. I talk to the Deputy Mayor of Labor Relations Randy Briggs daily. I regularly speak with the chief and deputy chiefs. They know our positions and our concerns. Some of your concerns and suggestions have been accepted. The city allowed the use of accumulated sick time and frozen sick time until the mandated quarantine issue is finally resolved. Thankfully, I am also being kept informed by captains, lieutenants and sergeants. I have conveyed your concerns to them all.

### **Wolter Park Cancellations**

One of the strangest things to have occurred concerning our lodge is cancellations. Never would I have imagined our monthly business meeting would have to be cancelled not just for April but for May also. The Executive Board was able to meet through a conference call on March 30. Thirteen out of sixteen executive board members participated. The conference call meeting went very well. During this declared emergency and until we are able to meet as a union, all lodge business will be conducted through the Executive Board. The board will cast any necessary votes. The next Executive Board conference call meeting is May 4.

It is with great sadness the FOP Akron Police Memorial Service scheduled for May 6 will be postponed. It is hopeful we will be able to reschedule this event sometime in the fall. As of this writing, the governor's order for social distancing and prohibiting meetings runs through April. With the business meeting and Memorial scheduled just days after, the prudent course of action is to cancel and postpone. It is likely the governor's order will again be extended into May. Let's all hope some sense of normalcy returns and we are able to have our monthly meeting in June. When we are finally able to have our monthly meeting, drink tickets will be in order.

As of this writing, The Musicfest is still on the schedule for Saturday, June 13. The band booked for Musicfest is the Journey tribute band E5C4P3. The only other date the band has available is October 10 but there is another event scheduled for the pavilion. If the Musicfest has to be cancelled on June 13 because an extension of the governor's order, we will attempt to reschedule it for another date later in the summer but it will require booking a different band. Fundraising for this event has obviously taken a hit. Our hope is our yearly contributors will again do so when the governor's order is finally lifted.

### **Always a bright side**

One bright side to all of this is the lodge is in the process of being thoroughly cleaned, painted, and improved through projects such as better lighting. Our lodge employees have been able to do much of the work and get paid while the lodge is closed. Thank you to Lodge Manager Sister Debbie Stalnaker, The lodge trustees, the lodge employees, and all those who have volunteered their time to help with these projects and improvements. I can attest, volunteering is worth it just for the sloppy Joes lunch prepared by Auxiliary President Mary Davidson! Contact Sister Stalnaker if you want to volunteer for a project. All social distancing precautions are taken.

Finally, when I took the oath as your lodge president one of my main goals was to improve the communication between the FOP office and you the members. This has been extremely difficult with our lodge meetings being cancelled and roll calls being held outside of the building. I have attended some roll calls and will continue to do so. When I say I am available by cell phone 24/7 I truly mean it to address your concerns. Especially during this health crisis. If I can, I answer calls immediately and return text messages and emails promptly. You can also voice your concerns to any executive board member who will forward the information.

Please concentrate all of your attention on keeping yourself and your families safe. Let the union work to address your concerns, problems, and grievances. Stay in touch. See you in a roll call. Hope to see you at an FOP meeting soon.

Faternally,

*Clay*

**Just Saying**...WOW what a difference a month makes. It is like we woke up in a really bad Sci-Fi movie. I pray that this month's news letter finds you in good health. Lets do everything we can to keep it that way. I know these protocols are a pain in the ass, but do what you can to protect yourself and your families.

I have been banished to the first floor of the Polsky Bldg. It's like an episode of the Walking Dead. All of these classrooms are empty and no one is around. I about shit myself the other day when a custodian came out of one of the rooms. Now, I could lie and say "I was tactically prepared and withdrew to a point of cover to evaluate the threat". To be honest, I almost tripped and squealed like a little girl, while doing all I could to keep from losing my bowels in my shorts. Well if you can't laugh at yourself...laugh at me. Stay safe and look out for each other.

Remember the restrooms at the lodge are open and the main pavilion can be used if you want a place to sit and eat. There are some patio heaters out there for the colder nights.

Fraternally,

*Ben Surblis*

## **In Memoriam**



### **Robert Ipe**

**Appointed: December 31, 1970**

**Retired: October 15, 1998**

**Passed Away: March 9, 2020**



### **Raphael Caprez**

**Appointed: July 1, 1986**

**Retired: February 25, 2017**

**Passed Away: March 19, 2020**



## Businesses Owned by Members, Family and Friends

Please support theses businesses and let them know you found them in the Newsletter.

**Custom Auto Body Inc.** This business is owned by the father of Officer Tietze. They specialize in collision repair, auto body repair, rustproofing, detailing, dent and glass repair. They have mobile estimates and car rental available. Web site: <https://customab.com/> Phone number (330)499-8922

Located at: **7726 Whipple Ave NW, North Canton, OH 44720 .**



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