



The Seventeenth

The Online Newsletter of the State Attorney's Office, 17th Judicial Circuit

MARCH 2010



County moves ahead with new courthouse

The most preliminary of work has begun on construction of the new courthouse.

Surveyors have put down orange and red marks across the floor of the West Garage to show where core samples will be taken to determine the condition of the soil under the planned 20-story building that will replace the garage.

The Broward County Commission approved the \$328-million project last month. It will provide 74 new courtrooms and 1,300 parking places. The old central wing will be torn down.

Actual construction is not expected to start until 2011. By then, temporary parking for West Garage parkers will be provided.

State attorneys, FBI address public corruption

Two South Florida State Attorneys told more than 125 people at the Tower Club Forum in Fort Lauderdale last month that state law-enforcement needs a stronger law to fight public corruption.

Palm Beach State Attorney Michael McAuliffe and Broward State Attorney Mike Satz told forum attendees that there are several laws under which public officials can be prosecuted.

Those laws, however, often don't fit the circumstances of the alleged corruption and are difficult to prove.

The proposed new law, called



FBI Agent John Gilles, Palm Beach SA Michael McAuliffe and SAO's Mike Satz addressed corruption forum at Tower Club.

the "Restoring Faith in Public Office Act," is being sponsored in the Florida Senate by State Sen. Dan Gelber of Miami and in the House by State Rep. Ari Porth, who is also an ASA here.

See FORUM page 3

Employee reimbursement deadlines are upon us

SAO employees who have medical and/or dependent care reimbursement accounts have two more important dates that are fast approaching.

Monday, March 15 is the last date that you can have services and claim them on your 2009 reimbursement accounts.

Thursday April 15 is the deadline for filing medical and/or dependent care claims

for your 2009 account.

Claims with postmarks, fax dates or time stamps after midnight April 15 will not be honored. Any money in your 2009 account left after eligible claims have been processed will be lost.

The FSA Reimbursement Claim Form and other forms are available at:

<http://www.myflorida.com/MyBenefits/>



Legislators, SA's push law

State Attorney Mike Satz & Palm Beach State Attorney Michael McAuliffe, with Monroe State Attorney Dennis Ward, unveiled their proposed new public corruption law at a press conference in the former SAO training room. A full contingent of media listened as ASA/State Rep. Ari Porth, right, along with State Sen. Dan Gelber, explained the proposed law's value.



The SEVENTEENTH is the online newsletter of the State Attorney's Office, 17th Judicial Circuit. Employees and the public may request a printed copy of the newsletter by contacting Kim Fontana in ADM1. To offer story ideas, please contact editor Ron Ishoy or Kim at ext. 7910.

State Attorneys, FBI convince forum they'll dig out public corruption here

FORUM from page 1

The bill was unveiled at a press conference at the Broward courthouse (see page 2).

The bill was endorsed by The Miami Herald in an editorial on February 15:

State law requires prosecutors to prove that a bribe or other benefit in exchange for an official's vote or favor actually occurred. The prosecutors say this hamstring attempts to root out public corruption. They propose a (more precise) standard that would require them to prove that a public official failed to disclose a potential benefit or conflict of interest behind a vote -- even if the official didn't actually vote on the issue.

If the benefit wasn't disclosed it would be a criminal offense with tougher penalties than currently apply. Mr. Satz used the example of an officeholder pushing for approval of a particular contract who "takes a bathroom break just before the vote to avoid declaring a conflict."

At the Tower Club Forum, Mr. Satz said he favors creation of an independent Inspector General overseeing county government rather than assigning an assistant state attorney. The Inspector General could root out unethical behavior and then forward actual criminal behavior to SAO.

"It's the best money ever spent," Satz said.

Roy Rogers, vice chair of the Florida Ethics Commission who helped plan the Tower Club Forum, said he believed that the forum audience came away with a better understanding of the scope of the problem. They also better understand just how seriously law-enforcement is taking the issue of public corruption.

"I think we turned the corner with the forum," he said. "People are beginning to understand how important this is."

Agent Gilles, in charge of the FBI's South Florida office, told the audience that public officials must put their decisions to a three-prong test: Is the action I'm considering ethical and legal? Is the action fair to all parties concerned? And how does this action make me feel about myself if it's disclosed to the public?

Every public official, he said, must also remember that "the worst day at work is better than the best day in jail."



ASA Brian Cavanagh was the emcee for the Kids in Distress annual Duck Fest Derby party. Friends of KID signed up to sponsor some of the 20,000 rubber ducks that raced down the New River to raise money for KID. One of Brian's best duck jokes: What does a duck like to eat with soup?

Quackers !



Photos: Kate Doyle

AvMed's stolen data

The state's Department of Management Services Division of State Group Insurance learned February 3 that the state's largest HMO insurer, AvMed, had data stolen from its offices.

Two laptops were stolen that contained personal health information for 20,181 current State of Florida employee subscribers and their dependents. Another 21,215 State of Florida employees/retirees and their dependents who had AvMed coverage since 2003 may be impacted.

Since AvMed notified DMS, DMS worked to understand the situation, and to secure 24-month identity protection provided by AvMed.

If you are or were an AvMed subscriber, expect to receive a letter from AvMed and Debix. Debix is the company AvMed secured to help protect your identity. The protection is not automatic – you will need to take action, and the letter explains how to activate your Debix account by phone or online.

AvMed has set up a toll-free hotline at (877) 263-7998 to provide affected members with what specific personal information may have been exposed.

Good Food for a Good Cause



ADM-1



The Valentine's Day bake sale to benefit the American Cancer Society's Relay for life was a huge success thanks to all of you. We are planning another bake sale for some time in April, so please stay tuned. The American Cancer Society Relay for Life of Deerfield Beach/Lighthouse Point will be held May 1 and 2 at Quiet Waters Park, and there's still time to join our team!

Our team name is "Kim's Crew," in honor of ASA **Kim Anderson**, who is courageously fighting back against this disease. I have volunteered to be team captain. Our goal is to have at least 20 participants, and our fundraising goal is \$1,500.

We hope you will join us in support of Kim and all others we know who have been affected by cancer. The Relay for Life is an important and powerful event that gives participants a chance to celebrate the lives of people who have battled cancer, remember loved ones lost, and fight back against the disease.

To learn more about Relay for Life, join our team, or make a donation, please click on the following link:

www.relayforlife.org/dblpfl

Thanks for your support,
Kim Fontana



It's that that time of year placed second in the Govern- again! Last year the SAO had ment category (a close second a dynamite running team of to the Turnpike, whose fancy about 15 or so that ran in the toll booth shirts probably gave the Mercedes Benz Corporate Run. them the edge).

We were cheered on by Mr. Morton and our expert timer, Norman O'Rourke. This year's race is after work on April 1. The cost is \$25, and that includes a tee shirt.

Team SAO completed the after-work 5K race with a few thousand other participants through the scenic streets of downtown Fort Lauderdale. If you'd like to be a part of this year's Team SAO (*and you do!*), let me know by March 4.

Our women's team even Hope to see you on the team!

Victoria Watson
SBU

SAO 2010 Holiday Calendar

2010 HOLIDAYS	DAY OF WEEK	OBSERVED BY	OBSERVED BY
HOLIDAY	DATE	SAO	COURTS
New Year's Day	Friday, January 1	a	a
Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday	Monday, January 18	a	a
Presidents' Day	Monday, February 15		a
Good Friday	Friday, April 2		a
Memorial Day	Monday, May 31	a	a
Independence Day (observed)	Monday, July 5	a	a
Labor Day	Monday, September 6	a	a
Rosh Hashanah	Thursday, September 9		a
Veterans' Day	Thursday, November 11	a	a
Thanksgiving	Thursday, November 25	a	a
Day after Thanksgiving	Friday, November 26	a	a
Christmas Day	Friday, December 24	a	a

Prosecutors fight Michigan's freeing of violent offenders



Hundreds of Michigan prison inmates convicted of violent crimes -- including 40 killers in Wayne County alone -- are eligible for release in the next two months as the state accelerates paroles to cut costs.

A recently compiled list of thousands of potential parolees obtained by The Detroit News provides a snapshot of who is on deck as the state seeks to trim its corrections budget by 6 percent in 2010. It includes some of the state's worst criminals, as well as hundreds of sex offenders, drug dealers, drunken drivers and bank robbers.

The list, demanded by Metro Detroit prosecutors and released only after a judge's order, provides a rare glimpse inside a process that has been going on routinely for years -- but is now under fire from law enforcement officials worried they don't have the time or resources to

challenge potential parolees they believe pose a threat to public safety.

Oakland County Prosecutor Jessica Cooper led the fight to sue for the information because she said her office was repeatedly denied information about planned interviews of parole candidates in sufficient time to appeal certain cases.

The state argued that names of eligible parolees were only available a month in advance, but it was later determined the Parole Board's database included interviews scheduled months ahead of time.

"The Michigan Department of Corrections says 'trust us' in releasing criminals on parole to save money," said Cooper. "If (state officials) are so trustworthy, why did we have to sue them to obtain the list of individuals they are seeking to release?"

Attorney General Mike Cox has initiated a Parole Objection Project to oppose parole of violent offenders he believes remain a threat to the public.

Among those scheduled to be paroled: a 61-year-old man doing 30 years in prison for raping two 8-year old girls.

—DETROIT NEWS

Around the Seventeenth by Kim Fontana

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to **Mike Satz**. He was presented the University of Miami Law Alumni Association's "Alumni Achievement Award" this week at the association's Broward Judicial Reception at the Tower Club. Mr. Satz graduated from UM's law school in 1967.

WELL-DONE

The Casual Day blue-jean fundraiser for Haitian relief was a great success. SAO collected \$341. Together with another \$631 from the PD and court administration, contributions totaled \$972 . . . The Valentine's Day bake sale (see page 3) for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life took in \$810 . . . and Mothers Against Drunk Drivers director Randy Rogers sent us a note saying SAO was the top fundraiser among law-enforcement agencies at the Walk Like MADD fundraiser. TEAM Satz raised nearly \$3,500 in pledges.

ORPHANAGE UPDATE

JVU's **Frances Ortiz** reports that the children in the Haitian orphanage that her church group, Haiti's Hope, have been supporting have resumed their normal lives. Her group has been able to get hundreds of pounds of extra food and truck parts to the orphanage. "Things are fairly normal," Frances says. "No more problems than usual."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

MARCH 1-Tony Loe (CCU); 3—**Brenda Spony** (FCF), **Justin Griffis** (SBU) & **Anthony Watt** (ARC); 4—**Michael Hosford** (JVU) & **David Frankel** (HTU); 5—**Koreen Anderson** (JVU) & **Tim Bronson** (INV); 6—**Carlos Carmona** (FTU) & **Ori Silver** (EAU); 7—**Jacqueline Campell** (CCT-W), **Kim Ramasir** (JVU), **Morgan Rood** (APU) & **Tara Horvitz** (FTU); 8—**Aladdin Diaz** (INV); 10—**Victoria Watson** (SBU); 12—**Adriana Vane-gas** (CCT) & **Necey Murray** (CCT); 14—**Christine Adler** (SBU), **Linda Scopa** (JVU) & **Juviza Meneses** (SBU); 15—**John Fernandez** (CCT) & **Judith Figueroa** (CCT-W); 17—**Patricia Dudley** (HTU) & **Jaime Jenkins** (DTU); 18—**Jacqueline Edmund** (FCF) **Scott Gebert** (WLU), **Cassim Perez** (VAU) & **Carrie Smith** (CCT); 19—**Kathleen Bogenschutz** (CCT) & **Shannon Drehner** (FTU); 20—**Melissa Vaughan** (EAU) & **Nicole Mahabir** (JVU); 21—**Bob Grimm** (INV), **Kajuanna Durden** (RCU) & **Jonathan Bridges** (CCT-W); 22—**Jared Silver** (FTU); 23—**Liby Bain** (FTU); 24—**Bob Gerlach** (INV) & **Cynthia Almeida** (JVU); 25—**James Harris** (DVU), **Lindsay Carrier** (FTU) & **Nicole Gardner** (CCT-S); 27- **Samantha Munnial** (FCF); 28- **Vivette Bryant** (FCF) & **Jordan Erickson** (CCT); 29- **Frances Ortiz** (JVU); 30 - **Jeannette Camacho** (SPU).

WELCOME

The SAO welcomes **Nikki Gadson** who was hired as our sixth-floor receptionist ... and **Wendy Gorden** (CCT).

AND FINALLY . . .

JUDGE: You claim that you robbed the grocery store because you were starving. How come you didn't just take the groceries instead of the money in the cash register?

DEFENDANT: Your honor, I'm a proud man. I make it a rule to always pay for what I eat.