



***BROWARD COUNTY PBA
DAILY CLIPS***

September 28, 2016

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Changing of the (BSO) guard in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea

BYLINE: Larry Barszewski

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/broward-politics-blog/sfl-changing-of-the-bso-guard-in-lbts-20160927-story.html>

STORY: A change at the top is coming this week for law enforcement in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, which is served by the Broward Sheriff's Office.

Capt. Fred Wood, the district commander who serves as the town's chief, is retiring Friday after more than 26 years of service with BSO.

Wood will be replaced by Lt. Tom Palmer, who is being promoted to captain.

The two received congratulatory words from the Town Commission at its meeting Monday. The commission also approved a new five-year contract with BSO.

Lt. Bill Wesolowski is being promoted to executive officer for the district, filling the position being vacated by Palmer. Wesolowski's most current assignment has been in BSO's division of internal affairs and public corruption, Town Manager Bud Bentley said.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Sherwood, Ladner vying for Hollywood's District 6 commission seat

BYLINE: Susannah Bryan

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-nov-guide-hollywood-district-6-20160927-story.html>

STORY: Political rookie Jeff Ladner is taking on incumbent Linda Sherwood, a longtime commissioner who has been representing the south-central neighborhoods of District 6 since 2008.

Sherwood says she has the experience and know-how to keep Hollywood on course. Ladner says he can bring new eyes to old problems.

Ladner says Hollywood's budget needs a complete overhaul to accommodate rising salaries and pension costs without a tax increase.

If elected by District 6 voters, Ladner would create a task force to study every aspect of the city's finances. But if possible, he'd increase the pensions back to pre-existing levels or better, he said.

"I would do everything in my power not to raise taxes," Ladner said. "Hollywood has one of the highest tax rates in Broward County. If it gets higher, why would anyone want to live in Hollywood?"

Ladner says he'd look at city contracts and staffing levels of upper management to help cut costs.

"Hollywood has some challenges," he said. "That's why I'm running. The city needs someone to come in with fresh ideas and new perspectives."

He'd also focus on beautifying neighborhoods by requiring developers to plant and maintain landscaping and holding residents accountable for code violations.

Sherwood says City Hall needs to control spending to avoid raising the tax rate as it has done in years past.

Sherwood says she joined her fellow commissioners in making the tough decisions when Hollywood declared financial urgency in 2011 in the face of a \$38 million shortfall.

"The city is still in recovery and cannot make a misstep," Sherwood said of her opponent's plan to increase pension benefits.

Hollywood may be forced to take out a bond to pay for Hollywood's F-rated pensions, Sherwood said.

"It's something to worry about," she said. "Bargaining with the unions is of utmost importance to get it under control."

Hollywood will collect \$98 million in property taxes next year. Most of it will be gobbled up by \$53 million in pension costs and \$28 million in health care for current and retired employees, Sherwood said.

Sherwood says her opponent lacks the political experience of serving on a city board or even attending commission meetings.

"I have the experience to move this city forward," she said. "I know where we were, where we are and where we can be. I lived through the draconian decisions that we had to make to keep this city out of bankruptcy. Those decisions took grit, courage and faith. These qualities are what will continue to be needed to get this city where it needs to be."

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Lauderhill commissioner faces same opponent for third straight time

BYLINE: Larry Barszewski

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/lauderhill/fl-nov-guide-lauderhill-seat-3-20160929-story.html>

STORY: Mae Smith is challenging incumbent Lauderhill Commissioner Margaret Bates for the third time, concerned that the city's appearance is worsening and that some neighborhoods are being neglected.

Smith sells houses and said she knows there's a problem when clients start telling her they're not interested in buying in the city.

"I hear it too often and it's really embarrassing as a realtor when your clients who can't afford a \$200,000 home tell you, 'Don't show me Lauderhill,'" Smith said.

The Seat 3 commission race could be the last for Bates, who would be term-limited from running again if she wins. Commissioners are elected citywide.

Bates said she is not ready to call it quits because she has more left to accomplish. She wants to make sure the \$44.5 million for new park, public safety and road projects city voters approved in August is done right. She'd also like city government to take greater advantage of computer technology and have it work with the Lauderhill Chamber of Commerce to develop programs that will grow small businesses.

"I'd just like to continue with the improvements that we're making in the city," Bates said.

Bates, an early supporter of the Lauderhill Performing Arts Center that opened this year, isn't satisfied that it is being marketed well enough and wants to see it also used for family reunions and community meetings.

"I don't want to have a white elephant. I want to have activities there six days out of the seven days a week," Bates said. "I know that's a giant goal, but that's my objective."

Smith lives in a neighborhood the city annexed more than a decade ago and said the annexed communities still aren't being treated fairly — including with the recently approved bonds.

"All the things that are slated for us on the current bond was what was initially promised to us on the original annexation issue," Smith said.

She said she's just as concerned that sections on the west side of the city also have unaddressed needs, such as dealing with flooding and park deficiencies.

Smith would like to see senior programs at the Sadkin's Center sometimes moved around to other locations so more residents can participate — or for the city to provide better transportation.

"We have to find a way to service our entire city," Smith said. "We need to make sure all of our residents have a chance to take advantage of the services."

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Lauderhill Seat 2 race pits home-builder against home-seller

BYLINE: Larry Barszewski

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/lauderhill/fl-nov-guide-lauderhill-seat-2-20160928-story.html>

STORY: The challenger in the Lauderhill Seat 2 City Commission race sees the election as a tale of two professions: his building homes and Commissioner Ken Thurston's job selling them.

"The realtor depends on the commission, they don't care about the people," said Ferdinand Bristol, a first-time candidate. "I am a constructor and I need to share ideas about what is the best for the people."

Thurston, on the commission since 2010, disagrees. He has worked to bring businesses into the city since he took office, organizing about 10 Lease Lauderhill bus tours over that time to show outside businesses what the city has to offer.

"I'd like to see the development of businesses in the city increasing," Thurston said. "Each time we have taken folks out, somebody has taken space in Lauderhill."

The election is open to all city voters.

Bristol's campaign site has headings for "better schools," "more jobs" and "safer communities," but provides no details.

"We need to bring money, we need to bring jobs, we need to bring a second chance to those who need it the most," Bristol said. "Everybody needs to have a roof over their heads."

He said he is concerned about code enforcement liens that are placed on properties and put the cost of them out of reach for typical city residents. He also wants to give a second chance to people in danger of losing their homes.

"I need to have everyone become homeowners," Bristol said.

Thurston said the city has struggled to recover from the economic hit it took following the 2008 recession, when it lost roughly half its taxable value. He's ready to see a turnaround completed.

"We've gone through a period where there was not much money to accomplish what we wanted to do," Thurston said.

He supports enhancing the city's police services and lowering the tax rate. He points to city accomplishments, such as the completion of the Lauderhill Performing Arts Center.

He wants to have a hand in overseeing how the city spends the \$44.5 million bond voters approved in August. The bonds are supposed to pay for police body cameras and a range of park, public safety and road improvements.

MEDIA OUTLET: Broward Beat

HEADLINE: Broward Politics: Is Irish The New Jewish?

BYLINE: Buddy Nevins

LINK: <http://www.browardbeat.com/broward-politics-is-irish-the-new-jewish/>

STORY: If a voter considered the experience of two Broward Circuit Court candidates, it would be a contest between a lifetime prosecutor and a lawyer who has handled many civil cases.

That's not how Broward Circuit Court Group 15 will be won.

The campaign pitting longtime Miami-Dade homicide prosecutor Abbe Rifkin against veteran labor lawyer Barbara Duffy will be a name game.

The reason is lamentable but understandable: Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

Every voter is focused on Clinton and Trump. It is the only politics they talk about. It is the only campaign they think about.

A down ballot judicial campaign will get little attention....from anybody. No amount of mail or other advertising will change that fact.

Ignoring low profile races for judge is nothing new.

In 2012, roughly one fourth of Broward voters did not even bother to vote in the three judicial races.

Now four years later, the situation is the same. Most who vote in the judicial races will choose a candidate with a name they find pleasant. They will choose someone they can relate to. Someone with a name that sounds like a member of their family, church or ethnic group. Someone like them.

In the name game Duffy has an advantage, according to campaign consultant Mike Ahearn, who is advising her.

At one time a Jewish name on a Broward judicial ballot was a sure fire way to victory. Those days have passed like many of the Jewish condo seniors.

Ahearn calls Irish the new Jewish.

"Irish names do well in Broward County," Ahearn said.

Under his theory, there is virtually no bias against Irish candidates. Sadly some bias remains against blacks, Jews and Hispanics.

Ahearn points to the easy victories of three judicial candidates in the August primary – Barbara McCarthy, Michael Lynch and Kathleen McCarthy.

Not so fast.

The presidential ballot is different than any other voting scenario because of the added turnout.

The Broward turnout in the 2012 presidential election was 762,345 — roughly 67 percent.

The turnout in the August primary was 188,217 — around 16.6 percent.

Even with one fourth not going down ballot, that’s a lot of added voters expected to cast ballots in November. The primary has no correlation with the presidential general election.

Let’s go back to the last judicial campaigns on a presidential ballot.

The November 2012 lacked a candidate with a clearly Irish-sounding name. The two candidates with non-ethnic sounding names had split decisions – Robert Nichols lost, while Laura Marie Watson won.

It’s a mixed bag leaving no clue to how the Irish-sounding Duffy or the Jewish-sounding Rifkin will do in the election.

Voters who do educate themselves about the candidates will find that both have great experience, although in different arenas. Rifkin has a wealth of criminal experience, while Duffy has done a great deal of work in civil court.

Duffy, 50, largely represented working people who believed they were wronged. Many of these clients were municipal union members because she was a lawyer for the Police Benevolent Association and for AFSCME Hollywood unit.

Rifkin, 59, has been one of Miami-Dade’s top murder prosecutor for a generation. She is responsible for locking up some of the most dangerous bad guys in the state.

Since advertising for local candidates will have little effect in November, grass roots work could swing this race. On paper, Duffy seems to have an advantage.

She was born and raised in Fort Lauderdale. She graduated St. Thomas Aquinas High, a school with an active alumni group. Her law degree is from Nova, a Broward university with another active alumni association.

Plus, there are 2,000 police officers and 600 municipal workers Duffy represented for many years.

Rifkin has lived in Broward for roughly 35 years. She raised her children here. Plus, she received the endorsement of the Sun-Sentinel, the biggest Broward media outlet.

Bottom line: Both are great candidates with a lot of plusses.

A bettor on Duffy vs. Rifkin can expect even money.

This one is a tossup...despite the Irish name.

MEDIA OUTLET: Miami Herald

HEADLINE: Ferrari-loving cop convicted of stealing county fuel

BYLINE: David Ovalle

LINK: <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/crime/article104620461.html>

STORY: A Ferrari-loving Miami-Dade cop has been convicted of stealing county fuel.

A jury late Tuesday took a little more than two hours to convict Miami-Dade Police Sgt. Emil Van Lugo of theft and organized scheme to defraud.

Lugo, 47, remains free on bail as he awaits sentencing later this year. He faces up to five years in prison.

At trial, prosecutors said that Lugo made weekly trips to a county fuel depot in Southwest Miami-Dade, gassing up his patrol car — and also two spare red gas cans.

Detectives secretly began video recording him at the depot and at his West Kendall home. At trial, prosecutors Trent Reichling and Terry Livanos showed jurors two videos of him filling up his wife's BMW with a gas can believed to be filled with county gas.

“He’s on video on all those days at that fuel site to steal,” prosecutor Terry Livanos told jurors.

Lugo and his defense attorney, David Edelstein, have long insisted that he used the gas cans to top off his own patrol car, never for his personal vehicles, including three Ferraris he owned at the time. He insisted he kept high-octane fuel in similar-looking gas cans inside his garage to fuel his Ferraris and occasionally fill his wife's BMW.

The trial lasted more than a week.

Edelstein said he believes Lugo can win an appeal because a judge refused to allow a Ferrari mechanic to testify about the fuel habits of car enthusiasts.

“He was devastated by the conviction,” Edelstein said.

MEDIA OUTLET: New Times

HEADLINE: Broward Activist Allegedly Beaten and Tased Five Times in Police Custody

BYLINE: Jess Swanson

LINK: <http://www.browardpalmbeach.com/news/broward-activist-allegedly-beaten-and-tased-five-times-in-police-custody-8114306>

STORY: A Broward activist was allegedly beaten and tased at least five times at Broward County Jail last February. Stephanie "Billie" Auguiste was released after fewer than six hours, bruised and cut up. Though it has been more than seven months since the incident, the 30-year-old is still suffering from nerve damage, flashbacks, and panic attacks.

"We feel that police force was excessive," says Auguiste's lawyer, Barry Butin with the ACLU. "I would think once [with the Taser] would be more than enough. She's not a footballer for the Dolphins, just a woman of average height and weight."

Photos posted online show multiple scabs on Stephanie Auguiste's stomach and chest. The puncture wounds, which look like fang bites and are about 2 centimeters apart on a straight line, are consistent with being repeatedly shocked by a Taser. As the City of Fort Lauderdale brings forward criminal charges for trespassing, resisting arrest without violence, and disorderly conduct, Auguiste and other activists hope to raise awareness about the oft-unreported incidents of police brutality in jail.

"The way BSO treated Billie [Auguiste] is indicative of how society feels about inmates — that they're not human and shouldn't be treated with respect," says Jasmen Rogers, an organizer with the Black Lives Matter Alliance of Broward. "It's not just happening counties or states away; it's happening right here and BSO needs to take these complaints more seriously."

Broward Sheriff's Office spokesperson Veda Coleman-Wright says that Auguiste never filed a complaint against the officers and pointed out that only one officer fired the Taser at Auguiste. Though police records confirm that Auguiste was Tased five times, there is no mention of a beating. The officer that deployed the Taser reported that Auguiste was "combative" and "erratic" and grabbed a detention deputy's "arm and refused to let go."

It all started on February 2, when Auguiste refused to leave Fat Cats, a downtown Fort Lauderdale bar. Cops made the arrest for trespassing, resisting arrest without violence, and disorderly conduct. Police records state that Auguiste had to be carried to the patrol car and then taken to Broward County Jail.

According to police records, Auguiste was put in a booking search cell at around 1:30 a.m., then started banging, kicking, trying to remove hand restraints, and making threats to staff. When Auguiste grabbed a deputies' arm and didn't immediately loosen the grip, another officer fired a Taser at the abdomen area. Auguiste collapsed onto the floor screaming and crying, then tried to remove the prongs and stand up. The officer Tased again.

Police records state that Auguiste agreed to behave and the officer with the Taser listened outside the door during the strip search. Records state that Auguiste said "I'm going to get my period blood on all you bitches!" and hurled a bloody pad at a detention deputy. The officer with the Taser returned and deployed the Taser a third time. Auguiste tried to remove the probe again, but the officer "stunned Auguiste an additional two times."

Afterward, the activist complied, was dressed in a jail uniform, and was medically assessed by a nurse, then transferred to another facility for psychiatric treatment. Bond was posted a few hours later in the morning. A trial was set for November on trespassing, resisting arrest without violence, and disorderly conduct.

For the past seven months, Auguiste's friends in the Broward activist community have been trying to raise funds. They say Auguiste has done amazing activist work in Fort Lauderdale and Chicago, "supporting other activists who have been wrongfully imprisoned and those that have been targeted because of their race, gender, or class."

On an online fundraising site, activists says that since Auguiste has a 120-pound frame, deploying a Taser five times in a span of a few minutes was an "obvious attempt to try to kill." So far, friends have raised \$1,385 for the legal case.

Though attorney Barry Butin agrees the force used against his client was excessive, he says that legally police officers are protected under qualified immunity against civil liabilities "insofar as their conduct does not violate clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person would have known."

Auguiste's court date against the City of Fort Lauderdale is slated for November 8.