

## **ASSEMBLY BUDGET COMMITTEE**

Submission by Peter J. Barnes Jr., Chairman  
New Jersey State Parole Board

April 15, 2008

The New Jersey State Parole Board is New Jersey's lead reentry agency, and works to ensure ex-prisoners return to society as law-abiding citizens. As required by law, the appointed Parole Board Members and staff initiate and conduct more than 19,000 hearings per year, solicit input from victims, and decide parole matters.

Our sworn parole officers supervise more than 15,000 offenders statewide. In addition, we are New Jersey's primary law enforcement agency responsible for sex offender supervision. Our parole officers also are active partners with multiple Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies and task forces. While the number of parole hearings for State prison inmates has been relatively consistent over the past five years, the parole population has grown from 12,799 in Fiscal Year 2004 to the current total of 15,419.

Finally, our Community Programs Unit partners with government, non-profit and private agencies to connect ex-prisoners with vocational, mental health and related services, targeted to break the cycle and risk of crime. In planning for an ex-prisoner's successful reentry the State Parole Board subjects parolees to general supervision by sworn parole officers, to supervision with specialized conditions such as drug testing or Electronic Monitoring, or to treatment at a Day Reporting Center, Halfway Back residential facility or other community-based program.

The State Parole Board's reentry programs are an important investment for New Jersey's families, for two important reasons. First, research in New Jersey and nationwide indicates effective community-based reentry programs are associated with positive outcomes for recidivism (please see the Bibliography of this report for specific references).

Second, the numbers show that parole and reentry save money to New Jersey's taxpayers. It costs about \$3,506 per year to keep one individual under State Parole Board supervision, or about \$9.60 per day, with additional costs for those subject to community-based day-reporting or residential programs. By contrast it costs approximately \$36,000 per year to keep one individual in prison.

The Governor's Fiscal Year 2009 budget proposal for the State Parole Board builds on this proven success. The State Parole Board's proposed budget of \$105,276,000 will enhance public safety. It will put more parole officers on the streets, invest in effective reentry programs, and invest in proven methods for sex offender supervision.

This budget proposal will generate a significant net savings to the State, due to the proposed investment in Residential Assessment Centers (RACs) and expansion of the Halfway Back (HWB) program, to save taxpayer dollars that would otherwise be spent incarcerating technical parole violators. As a result, this budget will generate a net reduction of \$2.2 million for the State of New Jersey in FY 2009, and an estimated net reduction of \$14 million in FY 2010.

With the exception of these two cost-saving investments, the State Parole Board's FY 2009 budget was lower than the previous budget, due to operational efficiencies our agency successfully identified.

However, the enactment on December 27, 2007 of S1979, legislation that passed unanimously in both houses of the Legislature to restrict certain sex offenders' access to the Internet, requires an expansion of our effective methods for sex offender supervision. These expenditures, representing a direct outgrowth of S1979, are described on Page 3 of this report under the heading, "Sex Offender Internet Monitoring."

### **Residential Assessment Centers (RACs)**

The RAC proposal will put 12 more parole officers on the streets, and allow for the promotion of two parole officers to the rank of Sergeant, at a net savings of \$1.1 million in FY 2009 and a net savings of \$12 million the following fiscal year. Further savings may be realized through a decrease in recidivism, which would prevent costs related to property damage, victim injuries, the legal process and incarceration.

As proposed, two RACs will target technical parole violators – parolees temporarily returned to custody for violations that did not lead to new criminal charges and did not create a substantial public safety threat. State Parole Board data shows most technical parole violators are returned to incarceration for failure to report to a parole officer, failure to obtain the officer's approval for a change of address, or drug-related technical violations that do not warrant new criminal charges.

Currently, technical violators are held in county jails prior to a parole revocation hearing and prior to any determination of the risk factors that led to their violation of the requirements of supervision.

The RAC facilities will serve as a "triage unit" for parolees who have committed technical violations that fall short of new crimes. Immediately upon arrest by a parole officer, the technical violator will be held to a 14- to 30-day lockdown in one of the two proposed RACs. During this period, the State Parole Board will subject the parolee to an intensive barrage of clinical assessments, to determine the exact problems that led to the parolee's failure. This in turn will lead to recommendations as to which of the State Parole Board's many community-based reentry programs will be best suited to treat and address those problems.

The State Parole Board's community-based reentry programs have proven effective at reducing recidivism. We believe these programs will prove even more effective with a "triage unit" such as the RAC, to more effectively focus specific reentry resources on specific parolee risks and needs.

In FY 2007, approximately 2,365 parolees were sent back to prisons and jails for technical parole violations – not new crimes – at an estimated total cost of \$66.9 million. The RAC proposal would divert 720 of these individuals per year from entering a county jail, and ultimately from entering State prison, by using the clinical assessment. In addition, the 14- to 30-day lockdown will ensure that the time immediately after the parolee's arrest is spent in a productive manner to aid in reentry.

Costs of the RAC proposal include the expansion of Electronic Monitoring (EM) for supervision; hiring of additional parole officers; and costs associated with program beds and transportation. The RACs will be operated in a secure manner at existing facilities. They will not require new construction costs.

### **Halfway Back Expansion**

The FY 2009 budget also includes a proposal to expand the Halfway Back program by 33 beds to enable an annual reduction of 100 county jail placements. This investment of \$800,000 will result in a net savings of \$1.1 million in FY 2009, and continued savings in FY 2010.

The Halfway Back program has proven effective in reducing recidivism. A recent State Parole Board study compared the re-incarceration rates of ex-prisoners three years after their release in 2004. The study found that individuals who left prison upon maxing out their sentence without parole supervision had a 46 percent re-incarceration rate; while parolees released to a residential Halfway Back facility had a 17 percent re-incarceration rate.

### **Sex Offender Internet Monitoring**

As a direct outgrowth of S1979, legislation unanimously passed by the Legislature to restrict certain sex offenders' access to the Internet, the FY 2009 proposal requires an expansion of the State Parole Board's effective methods for sex offender supervision. Specifically required are the hiring of 12 additional parole officers and promotion of two officers to the rank of Sergeant, as well as additional polygraph testing equipment and related expenses.

The New Jersey State Parole Board has one of the largest sex offender caseloads in America: more than 4,600, with a net increase of about 45 new sex offenders each month. This is mainly due to the advent of Supervision for Life sentencing guidelines for sex offenders. Under State law, the vast majority of sex crimes committed on or after October 31, 1994 will result in lifetime supervision under the State Parole Board's

jurisdiction. Prior to the introduction of this mandate, sex offenders made up less than 5 percent of the agency's caseload. Today they make up nearly one third.

To meet the needs of this vitally important public safety responsibility, the State Parole Board has adopted the Containment Approach to sex offender supervision, based on guidelines recommended by the National Institute of Justice. The Containment Approach includes intensive parole supervision (including GPS monitoring of New Jersey's highest-risk sex offenders) and intelligence sharing with criminal justice agencies at the local, State and Federal levels. It includes sex offender-specific psychological treatment to help control sex offenders' impulsivity, and includes the recent addition, as of December 2007, of polygraph testing.

A March 22, 2008 Star-Ledger editorial described the State Parole Board's use of the Containment Approach as the "Right Path for Sex Offenders" and called our methods "proactive," "responsible," "comprehensive" and "sane ways to tackle the problem."

The following recent examples illustrate ways the Containment Approach intercepts violations by sex offenders under the State Parole Board's jurisdiction.

In Cumberland County, a parole officer became aware of warning signs regarding a sex offender. When the parole officer visited the sex offender's residence, a forensic search of the offender's personal computer indicated the sex offender had been downloading child pornography. The State Parole Board shared intelligence with the Cumberland County Prosecutor's Office and FBI on this investigation. The sex offender pleaded guilty to a Federal charge of Possession of Child Pornography and is pending sentencing. Upon completion of a sentence he will return to the community to resume his ongoing term of State Parole Board supervision for life.

In a North Jersey county, police received tips that an individual was using library computers for questionable purposes. Local police suspected the individual was a sex offender under State Parole Board GPS monitoring. Our parole officers worked with local police and prosecutor's investigators, and learned the sex offender visited the library on multiple occasions with his wife, who would access the Internet for him. GPS tracking data confirmed that the sex offender was at the library at the times in question. The sex offender is now facing a criminal charge for violating the conditions of Community Supervision for Life.

In Atlantic County, the State Parole Board received an anonymous tip that a registered sex offender was using the Internet at a library. A parole officer was dispatched to conduct surveillance. When the parole officer determined the sex offender was using social networking sites (prior to enactment of S1979), the State Parole Board enlisted the help of the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office Cyber Crimes Unit. Through their investigation, the sex offender was arrested and charged with Endangering the Welfare of a Child, Attempting to Lure a Child, and a Violation of Community Supervision for Life.

In Sussex County, GPS tracking data revealed that a sex offender was repeatedly staying at an address other than his registered address. The unauthorized address turned out to be the residence of his girlfriend, who had an infant in the home. This data was turned over to the Prosecutor's Office. The sex offender was investigated and charged with violations of Megan's Law for failing to stay at his approved address.

### **Budget Reductions**

The State Parole Board's Fiscal 2009 proposal includes reductions in positions in the form of programmatic layoffs, elimination of funded vacancies and attrition. The proposal also includes efficiencies we have identified in various non-salary and special purpose accounts.

This proposal also includes a reduction in spending for the GPS monitoring of sex offenders. The Sex Offender Monitoring Act authorizes the State Parole Board to subject New Jersey's highest-risk sex offenders, including all Tier III offenders, to GPS monitoring. Based upon current and projected caseloads it is expected that GPS monitoring of sex offenders will not exceed 200 cases during Fiscal Year 2009, allowing for this reduction.

### **Ongoing Achievements: Reentry**

In the year since the State Parole Board last testified before this Committee, we have achieved remarkable successes in accountability, efficiency, reentry and public safety.

The Parole Board Members' commitment to reentry and public safety extends beyond their responsibility of conducting parole hearings. Board Members have established Parole Accountability Conference Teams (PACTs). PACT meetings, held during evening hours on a monthly basis, enable parolees to discuss their successes, struggles and related reentry issues with the State Parole Board officials responsible for setting parole and reentry policy. The PACT groups also encourage positive attitudes among the parole population. Discussions held with parolees during PACT meetings have encouraged new policies. For example, these discussions helped inform the State Parole Board's decision to hold our contracted Day Reporting Center providers responsible for finding and developing employment opportunities for parolees, to aid in their successful reentry.

To enhance the State Parole Board's launch of Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) for supervision, we have committed to an enhanced use of graduated sanctions and rehabilitative community programming for technical (non-criminal) parole violations, as appropriate. We have committed to enhancing the enrollment of parolees into the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's One-Stop Operating System (OSOS), as well as the use of Case Plan Agreements holding parolees accountable for taking the steps necessary for successful reentry, and the use of LSI-R assessments of parolee risks and needs.

We have appointed the State Parole Board's "Job Czar" and Employment Resource Officers in Camden, Newark and Trenton, to increase the employment rates of parolees, cultivate relationships with potential employers, and generate job referrals for parolees. The Job Czar has identified union locals who have expressed interest in providing meaningful training and employment to parolees, through their apprenticeship programs. The Job Czar is working with our parole district offices in Camden, Newark and Trenton to identify parolees who meet the qualification requirements for union apprenticeships.

Our agency launched partnerships with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Social Security Administration, to overcome obstacles that have kept parolees from providing the documents needed to obtain Veterans or Social Security assistance. By ensuring that qualified parolees receive the appropriate Federal assistance, these partnerships help ensure that State reentry resources are focused on those ex-offenders who truly need them.

These are just a few of the commitments the State Parole Board has made in support of "Another Chance," the reentry demonstration project created under Governor Corzine's Strategy for Safe Streets and Neighborhoods.

### **Ongoing Achievements: Law Enforcement Partnerships**

Consistent with Governor Corzine's Strategy for Safe Streets and Neighborhoods, we are enhancing the level to which our sworn parole officers share intelligence with other law enforcement partners.

For example, during the past year we have launched Police-Parole Partnerships with the municipalities of Irvington, Camden and Trenton, and we plan to expand these partnerships into a statewide model. Under these partnerships, our parole officers and municipal police officers team up to engage in joint field operations, including street patrols and related missions. They also engage in direct data sharing. This helps hold parolees accountable for their reentry, and serves as a vital resource for law enforcement investigations. These partnerships create no new or additional costs to the taxpayers of the municipalities or the State of New Jersey.

We are also expanding the parole officers' partnerships with law enforcement agencies including the FBI. We have launched partnerships between each State Parole Board district office and local field offices of the FBI, for intelligence-sharing and street gang suppression issues.

In addition, this July, Captain Steven Tallard of our Sex Offender Management Unit will become the first parole officer from New Jersey to attend the prestigious FBI National Academy (FBINA) in Quantico, Virginia. He will join a group of law enforcement officers from around America and the world, chosen to receive specialized training and bring that knowledge back to their respective agencies, to train their fellow officers and enhance the agencies' law enforcement standards. This 10-week training is fully funded

by the Federal government. Participation in the FBINA is by invitation only, through a nomination process.

The State Parole Board's Street Gang Unit members provide gang education and recognition training for municipal police departments, healthcare professionals, universities and public schools. The unit has partnered with the New Jersey Hospital Association to launch a statewide violence prevention effort for emergency room professionals. Participants learn to read tattoos and other signs of possible gang membership, and determine whether individuals should be separated within the hospital due to possible membership in rival factions. The training allows hospital officials to prevent violence and address the street gang presence in New Jersey, while continuing to provide for all patients. The Street Gang Unit also provides Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) for elementary school students.

We have overhauled the training provided to new parole officer recruits, by moving the training for our 2008 recruit class to the Somerset County Police Academy. For the first time, new parole officer recruits are being trained alongside municipal police officer candidates during a 24-week training program that will culminate this June. Reflecting the increasing demands placed on the Division of Parole in areas such as criminal investigations, gang suppression, sex offender supervision, homeland security and various task force assignments, the parole officer recruits are being trained to secure crime scenes, secure and transport evidence, prepare criminal complaints and testify in criminal proceedings. Each of these new training components has been provided to New Jersey's current parole officers in in-service training. The agency will reap great dividends by providing this training to new recruits and all future parole officers.

### **Ongoing Achievements: Accountability and Efficiency**

We have involved all levels of senior management in inspecting the process and operations of our Community Programs Division and our third-party contract providers of day-reporting and residential reentry services. As a result of our expanded monitoring of all contracted programs, the State Parole Board has secured favorable reconciliations of invoices from contract providers, totaling \$40,000.

Additionally, we have reorganized our Special Investigations Unit into the new Office of Professional Standards, to take on the responsibilities of quality assurance and investigations into our contracted services, and ensure ever-greater accountability for New Jersey's taxpayers.

The State Parole Board's Information Certification Unit (ICU) completed an unprecedented audit of sentencing and parole release data in 80,000 inmate cases at 13 institutions. The audit included a thorough review of inmates' parole eligibility data, by searching several databases and sorting through the complexities of concurrent sentences, consecutive sentences, and the ways sentencing laws changed since many inmates were first incarcerated. With this audit complete, the ICU began the next phase of its existence, as the unit responsible for maintenance and verification of all parole

eligibility data for New Jersey inmates and parolees. This will enhance the State Parole Board's ability to meet statutorily mandated timetables for parole hearings.

With the Governor's and the Legislature's continued support, the New Jersey State Parole Board intends to continually enhance its successes in protecting New Jersey's public safety, and helping ex-prisoners make sustainable, positive contributions to society.



## **Bibliography: Reentry Research**

The following is a sampling of studies, in New Jersey and nationwide, that indicate effective community-based reentry programs are associated with positive outcomes for recidivism:

Andrews, D.A., Bonta, J. and Wormish, S. (2006). The Recent Past and Near Future of Risk and/or Need Assessment. *Crime & Delinquency*, 52(1), 7-27.

Aos, S., Miller, M. and Drake, E. (2006). *Evidence-Based Public Policy Options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

Fretz, R., (2006). What Makes a Correctional Program Effective: Do the Risk, Need and Responsivity Principles (RNR) Make a Difference in Reducing Recidivism? *Journal of Community Corrections*.

Fretz, R., Heilbrun, K. and Brown, D., (2004). Outcome Research as an Integral Component of Performance-Based Offender Treatment. *Corrections Compendium*.

Fretz, R., Mims, A., and Erikson, J.. (2007). Reentry Programming and Female Offenders: The Case for a Gender-Responsive Action. *Journal of Community Corrections*.

Latessa, E.J. & Lowenkamp, C.T. (2006). What Works in Reducing Recidivism? *University of St. Thomas Law Journal*, 3(3), 521-535.

Lowenkamp, C.T. and Latessa, E.J. (2002). *Evaluation of Ohio's Community Based Correctional Facilities and Halfway House Programs* [Technical report]. Cincinnati, OH: University of Cincinnati.

Lowenkamp, C.T. and Latessa, E.J. (2005). Increasing the Effectiveness of Correctional Programming Through the Risk Principle: Identifying Offenders for Residential Placement, *Criminology and Pub. Policy*, 4(2), 263-277

Lowenkamp, C.T., Latessa, E.J. and Holsinger, A.M. (2006). The Risk Principle in Action: What Have We Learned From 13,676 Offenders and 97 Correctional Programs? *Crime and Delinquency*, 51(1), 1-17.

Ostermann, M. *An Analysis of New Jersey's Day Reporting Center and Halfway Back Programs: Embracing the Rehabilitative Ideal Through Evidence-Based Practices*. Under review for publication, *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*.

Schlager, M. and Robbins, K. *Does Parole Work – Revisited: Reframing the Discussion of the Impact of Post-Prison Supervision on Offender Outcome*. Pending publication.

# The Star-Ledger

SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 2008

---

## OPINION

---

### EDITORIALS

## Right path for sex offenders

**W**hen Megan's Law of 1994 was enacted one of the chief complaints was that requiring police to alert residents of convicted sex offenders in their neighborhood wasn't enough. More needed to be done, critics said, to prevent recidivism.

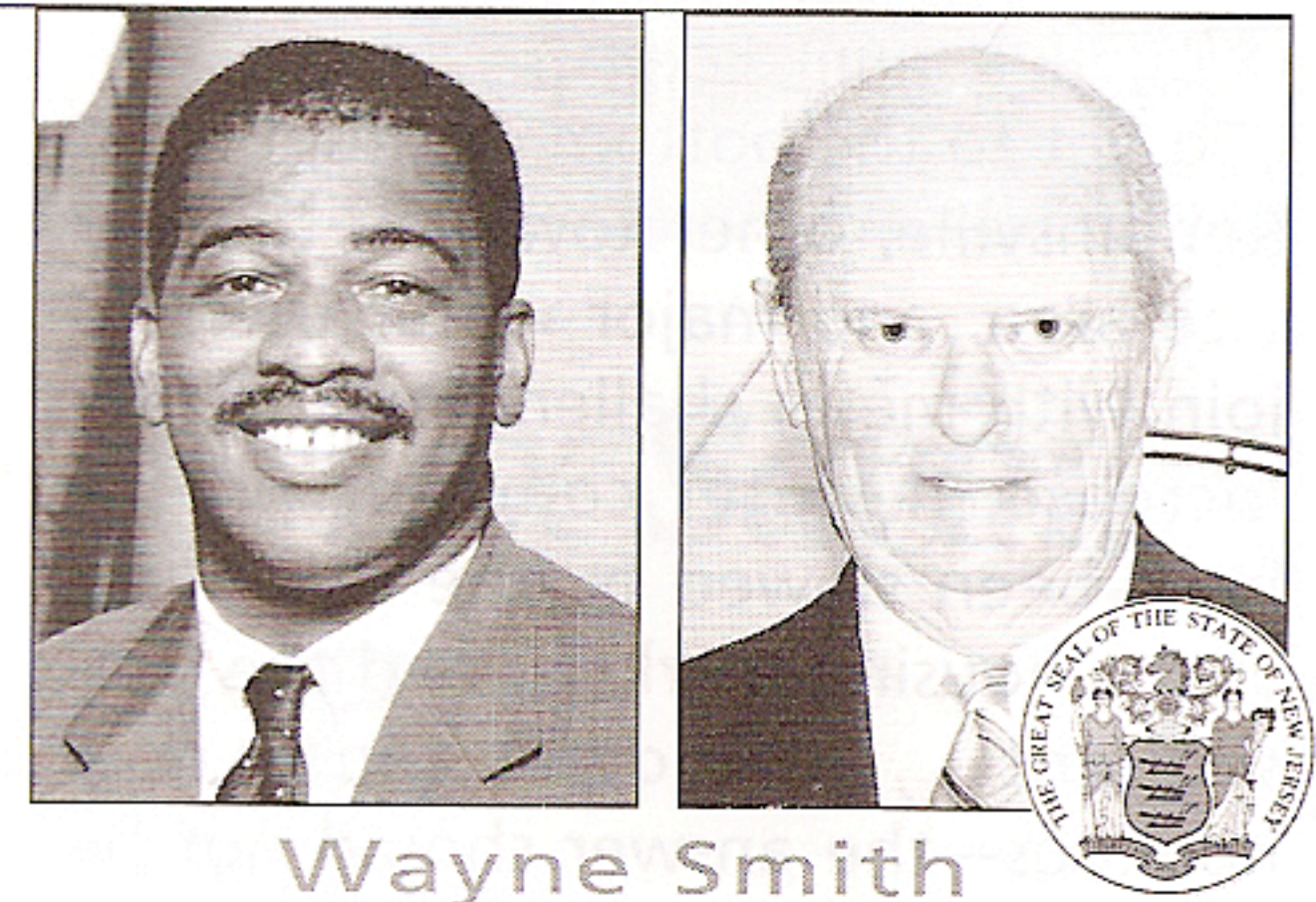
The state parole board's recent decision to take a more proactive role in monitoring sex offenders responds to that criticism in a responsible way. Among the steps taken is a requirement that paroled sex offenders participate in weekly therapy sessions run by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, which will be paid for, at least in part, by the parolees. The convicts also will be required to submit to polygraph tests if there are signs they are violating parole by, for example, lurking around a playground.

And finally, the parole board is bringing local, county, state and federal law enforcement officers together with parole officers to share information to help identify sex offenders who may be on the brink of committing a new crime. A conference was held this week in Camden and another is planned for next week.

Together these efforts represent a comprehensive approach to what is a complex and growing problem. Currently, there are 4,600 sex offenders on life-time parole in New Jersey — the largest sex offender caseload in the United States. Another way of measuring the depth of the problem here is that one-third of all parolees in the state are sex offenders. And that number grows by 45 every month.

The recidivism rate for the worse sex offenders is extremely high. Reversing that trend is going to require more than simply posting a picture on a website. Combining therapy with lie detector tests while beefing up information-sharing are sane ways to tackle the problem.

# Police-Parole Partnerships AN ECONOMICAL PUBLIC SAFETY RESOURCE



Wayne Smith  
Mayor, Township of Irvington  
& Peter J. Barnes Jr.  
Chairman, New Jersey State Parole Board



State Parole Board Executive Director Joseph M. Shields (left), Chairman Peter J. Barnes Jr. and Irvington Mayor Wayne Smith, at the January 18, 2008 public signing of Irvington's Police-Parole Partnership.

With violent crime a continuing concern and local budgets as tight as ever, New Jersey's municipalities must be creative in getting more out of existing law-enforcement resources. As Governor Corzine stated in his Strategy for Safe Streets and Neighborhoods, the solution must come in the form of intelligence-sharing and operational partnerships between municipal police departments, and their counterparts at the state and federal levels.

The Township of Irvington was one of the first to adopt this model, by partnering with the State Police, FBI and Drug Enforcement Agency in 2003. "Most communities don't ask for help," Mayor Wayne Smith said at the time, "but we saw no need to be proud and arrogant." Irvington has already benefited from these partnerships.

In January, Mayor Smith and Township Police Director Michael V. Damiano signed a new public safety agreement with Chairman Peter J. Barnes Jr. and Executive Director

Joseph M. Shields of the New Jersey State Parole Board. This agreement was the first of a new model of Police-Parole Partnerships that gives municipal police officers and state parole officers better eyes for investigation, and longer arms for enforcement, with no new or additional costs to the taxpayers of the township or state.

The State Parole Board and Irvington Police Department are engaging in direct data sharing, which gives municipal police an up-to-the-minute awareness of the parolees in their community, the addresses where they reside, the rehabilitative services used to address their specific risks and needs, their criminal background and details of their current offense, and the conditions under which they are supervised.

**Parole Officers: "Part Cop, Part Social Worker"** The State Parole Board is New Jersey's lead reentry agency, with parole officers who serve a unique law enforcement role as "part cop, part social worker." Each year, nearly

16,000 adult and juvenile offenders are released from state correctional facilities, back to the communities from which they came. More than half will be subject to a period of supervision by a state parole officer. Those officers work to fulfill the State Parole Board's mission of helping ensure these ex-prisoners "reenter," or return to society and become law-abiding citizens.

FOR TOO LONG,  
MUNICIPAL POLICE  
DEPARTMENTS WERE NOT  
TAKING ADVANTAGE  
OF THE RESOURCES AND  
INFORMATION AVAILABLE  
IN THEIR LOCAL PAROLE  
DISTRICT OFFICE.

Many offenders face large obstacles when they leave prison. They face barriers to employment, often including poor education, few marketable skills, a limited job history, and the stigma of a criminal record. Many face chronic physical and mental health problems, including addiction. If they are unable to overcome these obstacles, many ex-prisoners revert to the same activities that led them to prison in the first place.

The State Parole Board works with government and non-profit agencies to connect parolees with vocational programs, substance abuse treatment and related services, targeted to break the cycle and risk of crime.

In addition to their reentry role, state parole officers have unique law enforcement powers and responsibilities. With 405 sworn officers, the State Parole Board is one of the largest police agencies in New Jersey. It is the second-largest, after the State Police, to deploy officers on the streets with statewide law enforcement jurisdiction.

Parole officers supervise parolees who are still serving a sentence, with strict conditions that can result in a return to incarceration. These offi-

cers have the power to make unannounced home visits, and interview parolees' families and employers. In many cases they subject parolees to nightly curfews or random drug tests, and prohibit them from associating with gang members.

While most police interact with offenders only while investigating a crime, parole officers interact with the parolees on their caseload, and with their families and support network, on a regular basis. This gives

them a unique level of intelligence about the goings-on of communities in which, unfortunately, crime takes place, gang members recruit youngsters and drug deals are made.

For too long, municipal police departments were not taking advantage of the resources and information available in their local parole district office. They were not benefiting from the wealth of criminal intelligence and law-enforcement manpower the State Parole Board represents.

# Tools of choice

## for city projects

FROM BINDER MACHINERY COMPANY



Like private contractors, local, city and state governments depend on reliable, productive equipment to provide excellent results. As a longtime heavy equipment dealer, Binder Machinery Company knows all about durability, productivity and value in equipment. We carry a full line of small machines too, ideal for small road, playground and park projects.

The list of manufacturers Binder represents reads like a "Who's Who" of world-class equipment companies — Komatsu, Wirtgen/Hamm, Mahindra, Pequea and ASV.

Whether you need a skid steer for moving mulch and rock, a tractor for mowing, a chipper for clearing, a compact excavator for digging or a trailer to haul them around, we've got what you need. And we've got the trained service professionals to keep those machines up and running, so all you have to worry about is doing your job.

Call or stop by our South Plainfield or Winslow Township locations today and find out how Binder Machinery and our extensive lineup of equipment can make your job easier.

2820 Hamilton Blvd.  
South Plainfield, NJ  
(800) 562-0012

**BINDER**  
**MACHINERY COMPANY**  
The Product Support Company  
[www.bindermachinery.com](http://www.bindermachinery.com)

201 North Route 73  
Winslow Township, NJ  
(800) 624-3752

**Smart Use of Public Safety Resources**  
Fortunately, we are leading a change. Chairman Barnes, a veteran FBI special agent and former Director of the Edison and East Brunswick Police Departments, has spearheaded intelligence sharing partnerships between the FBI and each State Parole Board district office, to take on issues including gang suppression.

The Police-Parole Partnership in Irvington, and similar partnerships we have built in communities including Camden and Trenton, enable the State Parole Board and the municipal agencies to mutually benefit from better intelligence, and from direct manpower assistance in joint field operations.

**Joint Home Visits and More** Because they accompany parole officers on joint home visits and warrant executions, municipal police now can rec-

ognize individual parolees and identify whether they are violating a curfew, or hanging out with known Bloods or Crips. They can then report this information to parole officers, who are authorized to take action against these technical violations that may indicate the parolee is at risk of committing a new crime.

Helping municipal officers get to know parolees in a non-confrontational manner can also help with parole's reentry mission, by reinforcing the message that society wants to help these ex-prisoners stay away from negative influences.

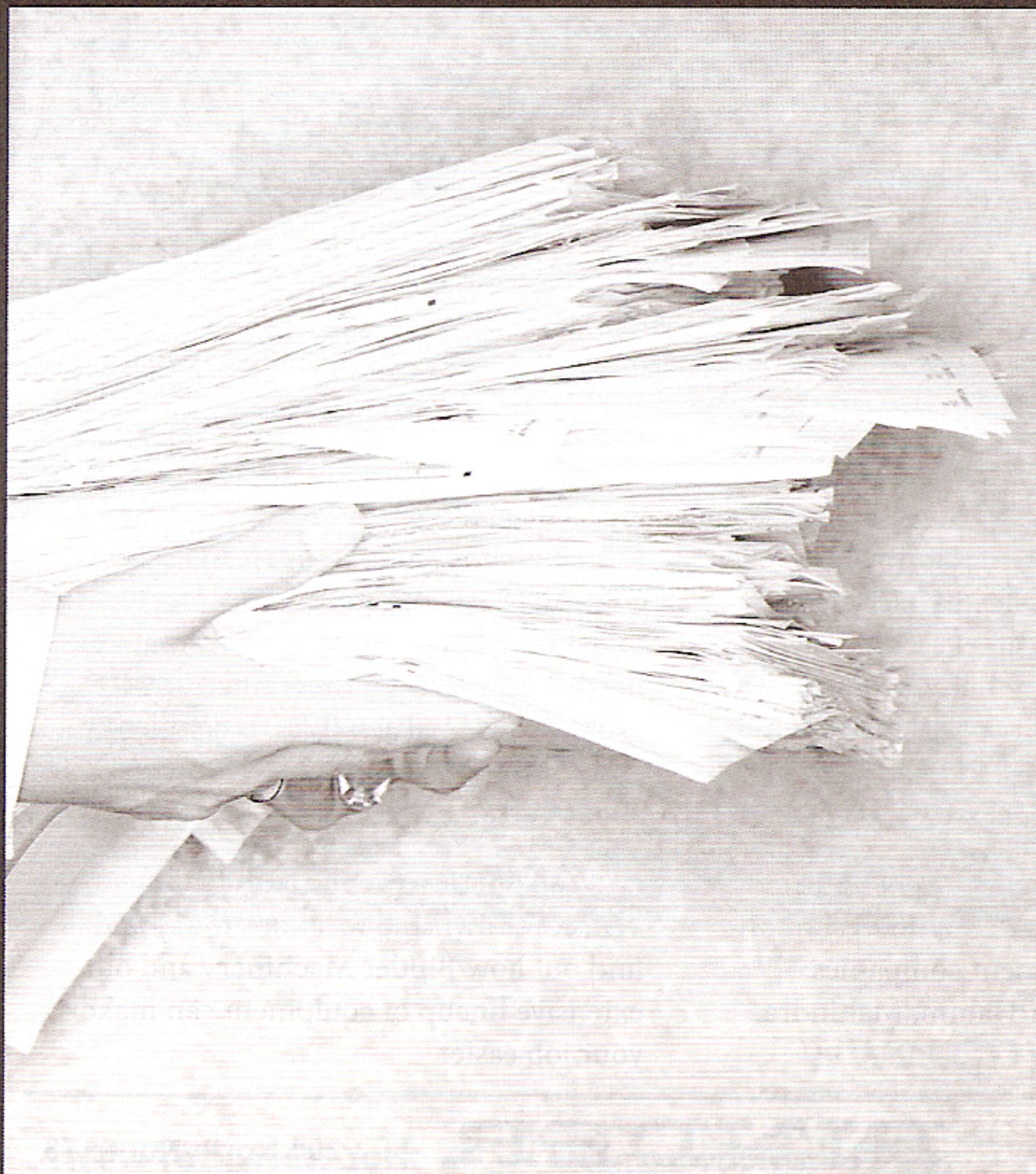
By working together on joint field operations, both the state parole officers and the municipal police officers benefit from serving on larger teams that can accomplish more during one shift. This is especially important with today's budget realities, in that it

comes with the addition of no new costs, just a smarter combination of currently existing state and municipal manpower and services.

As President and Chairman of the New Jersey Urban Mayors' Association, Mayor Smith urges New Jersey mayors to join with the State Parole Board in forging new Police-Parole Partnerships to enhance the safety and security of their communities. Chairman Barnes and the State Parole Board stand ready to join with mayors and municipal police departments, to promote public safety and help ensure ex-prisoners reenter society as law-abiding citizens.

Mayors and police departments interested in forming a Police-Parole Partnership with their parole district office should contact Director Thomas James of the State Parole Board's Division of Parole, at 609-633-3918. ▲

## JUMP FROM PAPER.



### It's easy with FileBank.

FileBank wants to take you on a wonderful journey into the future of document management. We are industry leaders in providing solutions and systems for all of your document management needs – for files from yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Our six-step process is unparalleled in keeping your valued documents safer, better organized, more secure, more accessible – and more cost effective than you think.

Call FileBank today at 800-625-7163, and we'll send our "Jump From Paper" packet.

**The future is here. Jump in.**



23 THORNTON ROAD • OAKLAND, NJ 07436  
PH: 800.625.7163 • WWW.FILEBANKING.COM

[Back](#)

---

# Ex-offender program in Camden tailored to meet women's needs

By YOLETTE ROSS  
For the Courier-Post

Last year, some 14,000 people were released from New Jersey prisons. About 42 percent were released at the expiration of their criminal sentence or for related reasons. The rest were released under the State Parole Board's supervision.

The Parole Board plays a vital role in the transition of inmates from prison to community life. Many ex-prisoners re-enter society without job skills, employment contacts or a legitimate work history.

Many don't know how to fill out a job application or present themselves during an interview.

Many lack basic education or face addiction or mental health issues.

## Crime deterrent

Without training, education and counseling, these individuals will remain a danger to society. Fortunately, the numbers show the Parole Board's community-based programs improve public safety by reducing rates at which offenders are incarcerated for new crimes after release from prison.

In our continuing crime-prevention effort, the State Parole Board is giving new attention to female ex-prisoners.

In August, we will launch FORGE-Camden -- or Female Offender Re-entry Group Effort -- at Volunteers of America Delaware Valley Garrett House, a community release program in Camden.

FORGE will provide a gender-specific, one-stop location for rehabilitative services aimed at female parolees already in Camden. Staff members and female parole officers will connect them with state Department of Labor and Workforce Development career programs, which include resume writing, job search classes and job referrals.

FORGE will tackle the full range of factors that lead to new crimes, with links to mental health and addiction counseling, social services and Rutgers University Law School legal resources.

## Unique issues

Such programs are not unique, but exist for parolees across the state. So why a parole program exclusively for women? Women returning to society face unique challenges, with needs that are different from males who are released from prison.

Their most important needs involve childcare. For obvious reasons, after leaving prison, many must overcome significant hurdles -- such as proof of a legitimate income and stable life -- if they are to regain custody of their children.

Criminal conviction creates a Catch-22 for individuals without a viable work history. On one hand, ex-offenders with families have a hard time making a living wage. On the other, conviction may restrict them from subsidized housing or other public assistance. Providing quality childcare becomes nearly impossible in such situations.

Added to these issues, many female ex-prisoners report a sense of stigma, saying once a woman is labeled a convict she will amount to nothing else. Female parolees in nongender specific programs have said the presence of male offenders can strengthen the feeling of no escape.

Safety improved As a gender-specific location, FORGE-Camden will inspire hope and responsibility, factors crucial to successful rehabilitation.

Helping these women turn away from crime is more than a service for the women. It also helps their children and families, saves untold taxpayer costs in criminal investigations, victim injuries and incarceration, and enhances the safety of families across New Jersey.

The writer is vice chairwoman of the New Jersey State Parole Board.

Published: June 29, 2007 3:10AM

# State Parole Board: Efficiency and Accountability

The State Parole Board's internal audit of contracted programs resulted in the recovery of \$40,000 in invoice reconciliations from contract providers during Fiscal Year 2008.

The attached check represents \$15,557.52 of that total.



**COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS, INC**  
FOUR GRIFFIN ROAD NORTH  
WINDSOR, CT 06095-1511  
(860) 683-7100

**CONNECTICUT BANK & TRUST COMPANY**  
GLASTONBURY, CT 06033  
51-1069/119

DATE  
3/19/2008

33802

AMOUNT  
15,557.52

PAY Fifteen Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Seven Dollars And 52 Cents

TO THE ORDER OF  
NEW JERSEY STATE PAROLE BOARD  
171 JERSEY STREET BUILDING #2  
TRENTON NJ 08625

VOID AFTER 90 DAYS

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS, INC  
Community Solutions, Inc.

33802

33802

VENDOR ID	NAME	PAYMENT NUMBER	CHECK DATE	Account #				
[REDACTED]	NEW JERSEY STATE PAROLE BOARD	[REDACTED]	3/19/2008					
OUR VOUCHER NUMBER	YOUR VOUCHER NUMBER	DATE	AMOUNT	AMOUNT PAID	DISCOUNT	WRITE-OFF	NET	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	3/19/2008	15,557.52	15,557.52	0.00	0.00	15,557.52	

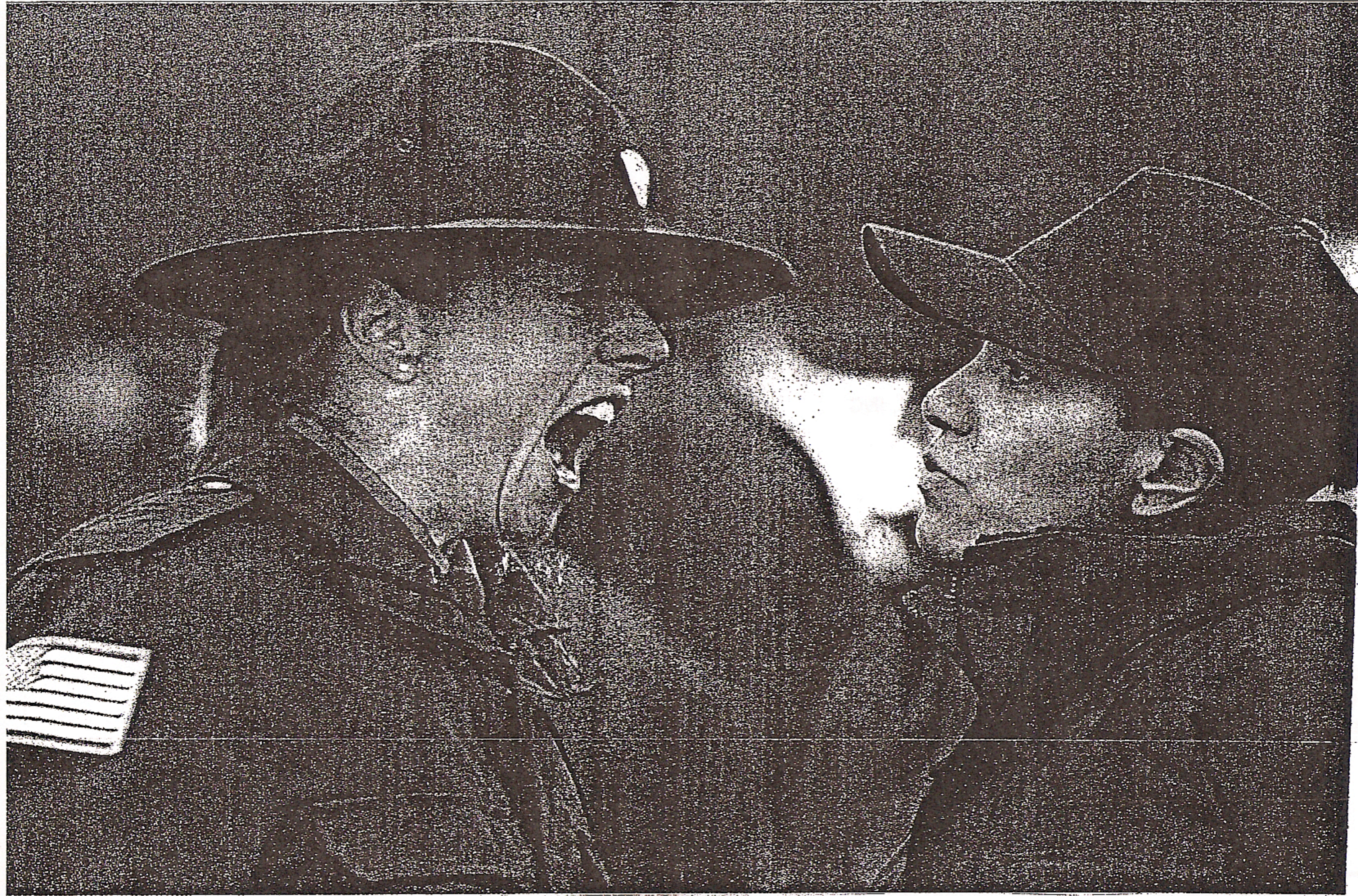
15,557.52      15,557.52      0.00      0.00      15,557.52

COMMENT

# The Star-Ledger

1/16/08

## TRAINING THAT'S FAR FROM BASIC



MATT RAINEY/THE STAR-LEDGER

Instructor Sgt. Lisa Gilmurray gives state parole officer recruit Luz Villafane of Newark an earful Monday on opening day at the Somerset County Police Academy in Branchburg, where parole officers trained alongside municipal police and county corrections officers for the first time.

## Police academy drills parole officers

BY NYIER ABDOU  
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

In the dim, cold twilight, the instructors could be heard before they were seen.

They came marching down the road in two tight formations, briskly crossing the parking lot at Raritan Bay Community College in Branchburg and fanning out among recruits reporting for their first day at Somerset County Police Academy.

Among the Monday lineup were 20 state parole officer recruits — 12 men and eight women — forging the first class of New Jersey parole officers to be trained alongside municipal police and county corrections officers.

"A parole officer has a lot more responsibility than a member of a local police department," state parole board Chairman Peter Barnes Jr. said at lunch days earlier with the recruits.

Parole officers increasingly are being asked to step into more traditional police roles in the areas of homeland security, street gangs and supervision of sex offenders, said Barnes, a former Middlesex County assemblyman who served 26 years with the FBI.

"More and more, as they go into homes, they're finding drugs and firearms," said parole board director Thomas James. "They have to know how to secure those scenes."

The screaming began on cue — in-your-face, relentless, unsparring. Recruits scrambled in all directions, grabbing duffel bags from their cars, stashing and retrieving papers, sputtering, "Sir! Yes, sir!" and, "Ma'am, I don't know, ma'am!"

"What are you doing? Get out of the cars! Line up now! Get your bags up! Pick them up! In your left hand! Your left hand! Get it off your shoulder! It's not a purse! Why are you moving? Stop moving!"

As the first cracks of light broke on a dreary winter morning, car alarms were added to the cacophony. Instructors threw unlocked car doors open, popped

[See **PAROLE**, Page 16]



# PAROLE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

## Nothing basic about this training

unks, set off alarms. "Outstanding! All these vehicles are unsecured!" one yelled.

"We have to engineer stress," said the academy's director, Richard Celeste. "They're going to be going out to an environment that's stressful and they're going to be able to think a lot more clearly."

Recruits shifted uncomfortably under the weight of their the duffel bags, which sagged conspicuously.

"Why are you putting that bag down?" roared senior parole officer Jeffrey Eget, who served two Army tours in Iraq. "Do you lack the physical strength to lift that bag? Why don't we take a little nap?"

Everything, from the almost comically cruel dressing down of recruits, to the unlagging attention to detail, connects to a "performance objective," Celeste said.

Parole recruit Luz Villafane, of Newark, was separated from the pack and castigated for failing to remember her papers. From the sidelines, Lt. Kevin Fowler and parole board director James sipped coffee and watched.

"It transfers to the job," Fowler said. "You think you have your gun and you don't. Or you think you have somebody's warrant."

"You can bet she'll remember her papers tomorrow," James said. "Fix your button — that one, right there," Eget could be heard screaming. "Attention to detail, people. I miss nothing!"

The importance of details wasn't lost on the recruits.

"I know you have to wear two hats," said recruit and former Marine Eric Brady, 29, of Marlton, in Burlington County. "You have to be a good listener, give good advice. But you also enforce the law."

Increasing demands prompted parole board officials to move training from the Correctional Staff Training Academy in Sea Girt to the Somerset County Police Academy.

The 24-week course — 10 weeks longer than before — incorporates police work new to parole officers,

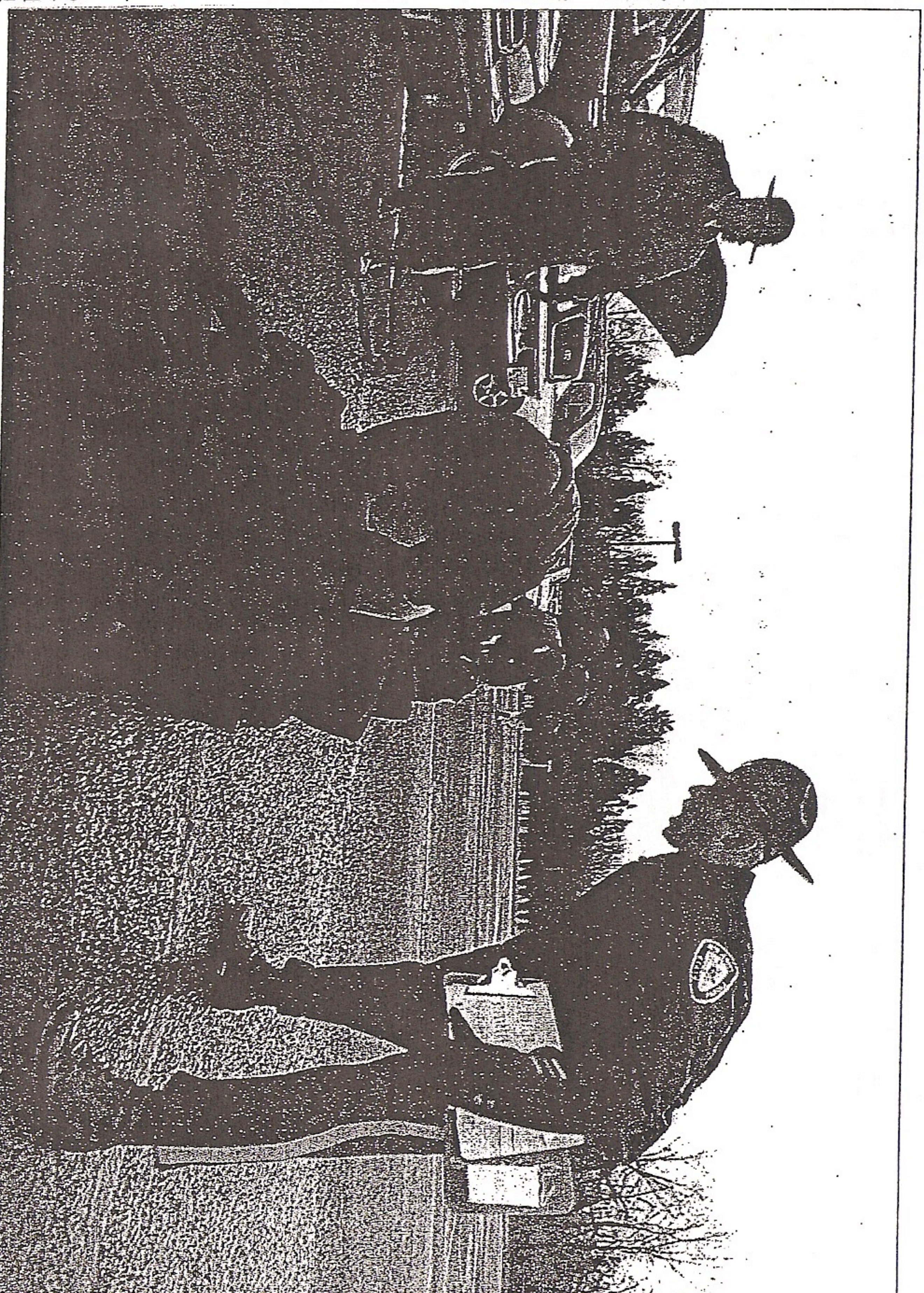
**"We have to engineer stress. They're going to be going out to an environment that's stressful and they're going to be able to think a lot more clearly."**

RICHARD CELESTE, director, Somerset County Police Academy

including securing crime scenes, transporting evidence and testifying in court. Officers will be trained in clearing buildings, hand-to-hand combat and water safety.

The rest of the state's 405 sworn parole officers are acquiring the same skills over time through in-service training.

Parole officers were not always sworn law enforcement officers and worked in the Passaic County Probation Department's Office before deciding to become a parole officer. A 12-week course. It was later incorporated into a 12-week course. It was later incorporated into a 12-week course.



**"Why are you putting that bag down?" senior parole officer Jeffrey Eget, right, who served two Army tours in Iraq, roared to a recruit in one exchange. "Do you lack the physical strength to lift that bag? Why don't we take a little nap?"**

MATT RAINEY/THE STAR-LEDGER

creased to 14 weeks.

Sheila Espinal, 35, of Paterson, worked in the Passaic County Probation Department's Office before deciding to become a parole officer. A 12-week course. It was later incorporated into a 12-week course.

gress in criminal justice and psychology to the job, but she has never been through anything like basic training. "I'm nervous," she admitted.

Back at Parking Lot 5 on Monday, a gaggle of future colleagues

gathered to watch the early morning humiliation. One carload of Hunterdon County police officers even brought binoculars to make sure they didn't miss one wince.

Watching the recruits struggle to hoist their bags, one man said

the bags just keep getting heavier with time. "They weigh like 90 pounds," he said. "The stuff accumulates and the straps break."

Nyier Abdou may be reached at [nabdou@starledger.com](mailto:nabdou@starledger.com) or (908) 429-9925.

# Parole Officers train in Somerset

BY KAREN DEMASTERS

As the responsibilities of state Parole Board officers increase, the training required to become a parole officer also is increasing, and the first class of recruits subject to nearly the same training as municipal police officers is midway through the course.

A class of 12 men and eight women who aim to be parole officers is going through a 24-week training course at the Somerset County Police Academy that began in January. The class is about average in size and gender breakdown for the parole officers, but the training they are receiving replaces a 14-week course previously conducted at the Corrections Staff Training Academy in Sea Girt.

The recruits will go through the same physical training as municipal police officer recruits and also will take classes in such things as report writing, crime scene investigation and chain of evidence. They will be required to complete first responder training and will be trained in fire suppression and water rescue.

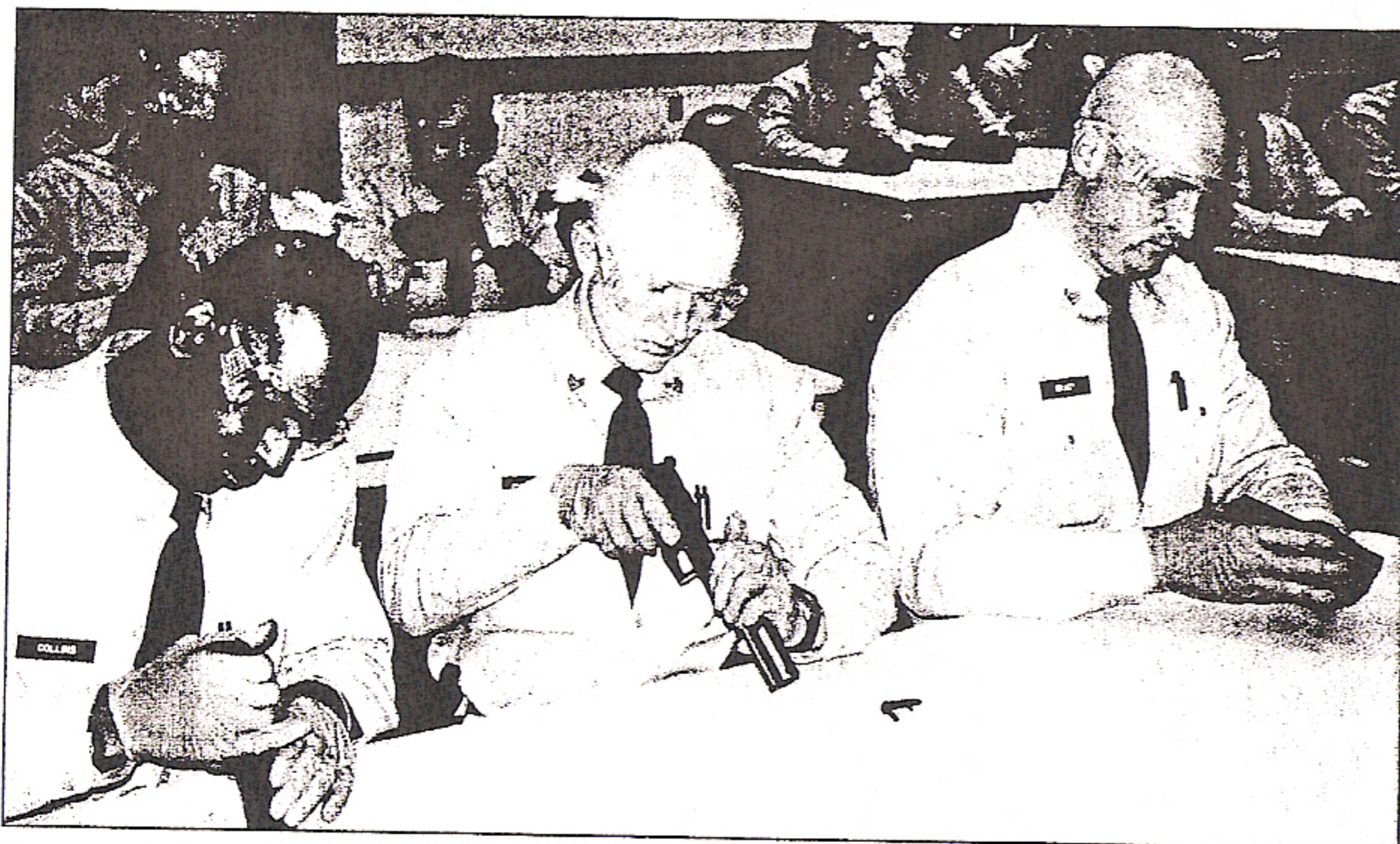
Parole officers now accompany municipal police in dealing with parolees in some communities. They also are assigned to the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force and the U.S. Marshals Service New York/New Jersey Regional Fugitive Task Force and are partners in local and state law enforce-

ment investigations. They oversee 15,000 parolees, including being responsible for the Global Positioning System monitoring of the state's highest-risk sex offenders and for the containment approach to sex offender supervision.

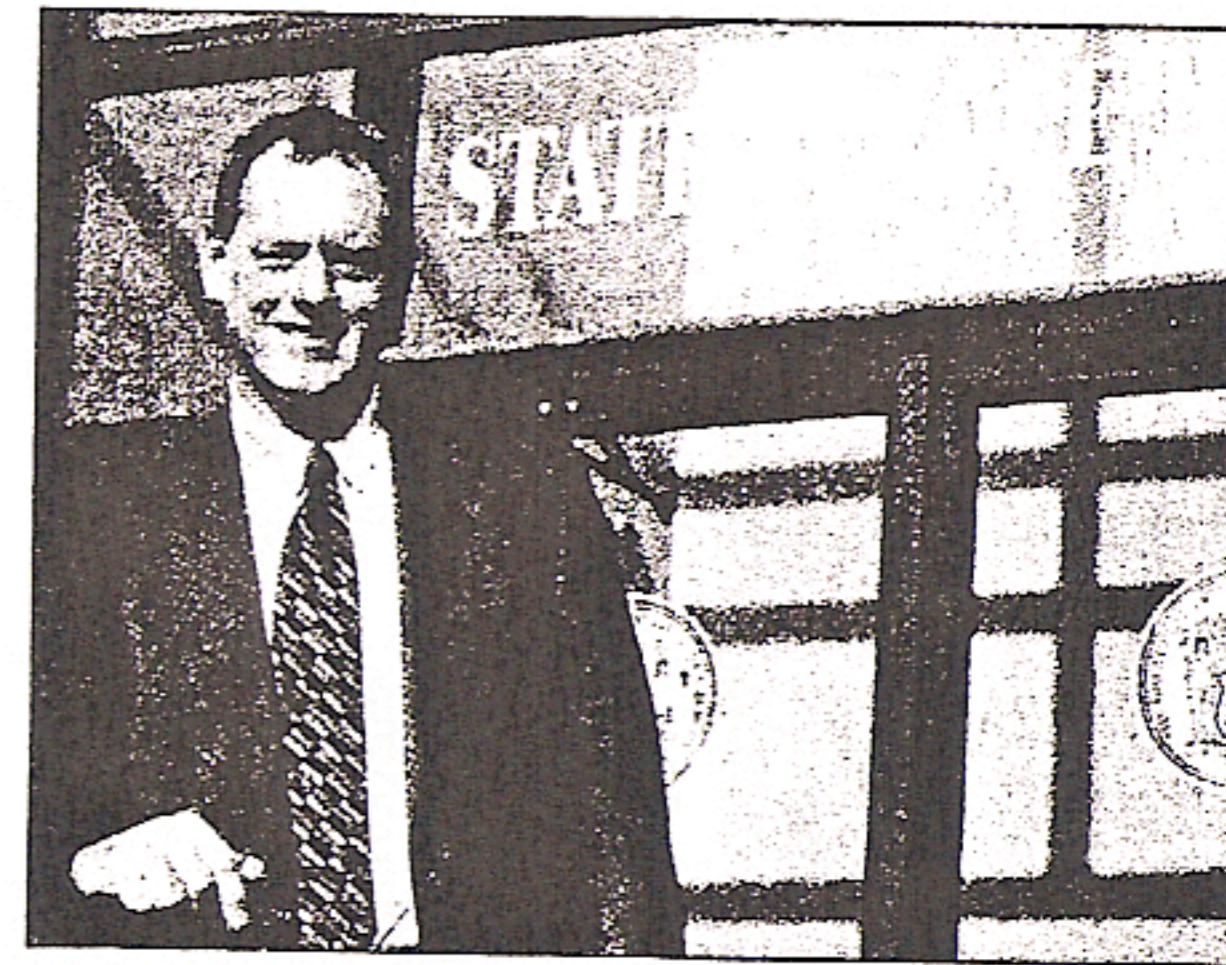
Woven into the public safety and law enforcement aspects of the training will be training by experienced parole officers and parole board staff members on case management, IT resources, offender supervision, the use of graduated sanctions and evidence-based procedures.

"Parole officers often work side by side with police officers, particularly on nights and weekends and we help support the terrorist task force and assist the U.S. Marshals," said Parole Capt. Sean Asay. "This is exhausting training, particularly since some of the parole officer candidates are older. We require a bachelor's degree and many parole officer candidates are second career people, but we have not lost anyone (from the recruit class) yet."

"As our responsibilities have increased, we needed to have training to match. Many of our veteran officers have returned for in-service training," Asay added. "Our core curriculum has not changed because that is governed by the Police Training Commission but a lot more material has been added."



Parole Officer Recruits Eddie Collins, David Cunningham and Eric Brady during firearms training.



## Specialist to train at Quantico

BY KAREN DEMASTERS

Capt. Steven Tallard, a sex offender supervision specialist for the state Parole Board, has been selected as the first parole officer to attend the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Va., this summer for a 10-week course.

The training is part of the Parole Board's activities under Gov. Jon Corzine's state-wide anti-crime initiative. Tallard, a resident of Freehold and 11-year veteran as a parole officer, will train other parole officers upon his return.

Tallard is the principal sex offender supervision specialist for the Parole Board, which is the state's lead sex offender supervision agency. He helped create the agency's Sex Offender Management Unit and he is now unit commander of the Sex Offender Management Unit South, which is responsible for nearly half of the 4,400 sex offenders currently under the Parole Board's supervision.

"The State Parole Board has entered a new era with parole officers focusing more intensely on intelligence sharing partnerships with the FBI and U.S. Marshals Task Force, sex offender supervision, street gang suppression, criminal investigations and homeland security," Tallard said. "I look forward to this challenge and to bringing the best insights from the FBI National Academy to enhance the state Parole Board's public safety mission."

Tallard has been instrumental in developing the Parole Board's containment approach to sex offender management and in developing guidelines for Parole Board use of GPS tracking for the highest risk sex offenders. He also serves on the Department of Corrections' Special Review Board which reviews sex offenders eligible for parole.

## An emotional campaign to keep Seton Hall arsonists behind bars

Sunday, March 23, 2008

**BY BRIAN T. MURRAY AND KELLY HEYBOER**  
Star-Ledger Staff

The letters began trickling into the state parole board offices in Trenton just after the start of the new year. First, they arrived a few envelopes at a time. Then, they started pouring in by the dozens.

They came from friends, students, business owners, teachers, priests, housewives and soldiers. Some were handwritten. Some were printed on fancy stationery. Some included photos.

All were related to the same case: the possible parole of two former students who set the fatal Seton Hall University dormitory fire.

Joseph T. LePore and Sean Ryan were sentenced to up to five years in prison last year after admitting to setting the Jan. 19, 2000, fire that killed three of their classmates and injured 58 other students.

The pair, known as inmates 570191 and 570192, are scheduled to appear before the parole board for the first time March 31. If granted parole, they could get out of the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility in Chesterfield Township, Burlington County, in May, after 16 months behind bars.

Their parole hearings will be closed to everyone, including the inmates' families, their lawyers, the victims' families and the press.

But that hasn't stopped hundreds of people from writing emotion-filled letters pleading to the parole board to keep the former students in prison.

"We have received approximately 300 letters," said Neal Buccino, a spokesman for the board.

"Every letter that is received will be provided to the board members," Buccino added. "Victim input interviews and letters do help put a face on the crime."

The letters include passionate pleas from survivors of the fire, the victims' families, childhood friends, neighbors, teachers, coaches, classmates and strangers who have followed the case. Most argue 16 months is too short a punishment for a fire that took three lives and affected hundreds of others.

The parole board also has received a smaller, but equally passionate, pile of letters from supporters of LePore and Ryan, arguing the lifelong friends from Florham Park have served their time and deserve to be let out of prison.

Parole board officials declined to discuss details, except to say the former students will appear in separate parole hearings before a panel of two board members who will decide whether each has met the guidelines for release.

The board declined to release the letters, citing parole privacy rules. However, the attorneys for LePore and Ryan and the victims' families provided copies of the letters to The Star-Ledger.

"I'd like to think the parole board will be impressed by the number of letters going in," said Joe Karol, the father of Aaron Karol, one of the freshmen killed in the fire.

Karol, of Green Brook, helped organize the letter-writing campaign along with the families of Frank Caltablotta Jr. of West Long Branch and John Giunta of Vineland, the other two students killed in the fire. Because Ryan and LePore pleaded guilty to third-degree crimes, the victims and their families are not permitted to address the parole board in person.

All three families say they hope the sheer volume of letters from friends and strangers will help persuade the board to deny LePore and Ryan parole.

"This letter-writing campaign has boosted my confidence. It's made me optimistic," Karol said.

### **SERVING THEIR TIME**

Lawyers for LePore and Ryan sent the parole board their own letters stressing the men, now both 27, have been model prisoners.

Both inmates have served as teachers' aides in the youth prison, according to documents sent to the board by their lawyers. Ryan also is serving as an assistant to the prison chaplain. LePore has completed stock market courses and behavior modification programs and was recently elected president of the prison's Toastmasters program.

LePore, who is engaged to his longtime girlfriend, has a job waiting for him at NYC Beauty, a beauty supply distributor in Passaic, according to a letter sent to the parole board by the company's president, a family friend. Ryan has job offers waiting at Wigder Chevrolet, a car dealership in Livingston managed by a family friend, and Pazzo Pazzo, a Morristown restaurant where he has worked in the past, according to other letters.

The attorneys urged parole board members not to allow the emotionally charged pleas from the families and fire victims to cloud the issue of whether the inmates have met the criteria for parole.

"Essentially, they are dissatisfied with the sentence that was agreed to by the prosecutor and imposed by the court and want more punishment," wrote Salvatore Alfano, LePore's attorney.

The pair denied for years that they set fire to a banner in the third-floor lounge near their room in Boland Hall on the South Orange campus. LePore and Ryan were arrested in 2003 after one of the most extensive criminal investigations in Essex County history.

They reached a last-minute plea deal with prosecutors on the eve of their 2006 trial. Under the deal, LePore and Ryan admitted for the first time they set the fire as a "prank" after a night of drinking.

If the case had gone to trial, the former students could have received 30 to 60 years in prison if convicted on the most serious charges. But prosecutors admitted they had no eyewitnesses or physical evidence that directly linked Ryan and LePore to igniting the fire.

Under the plea agreement, the former roommates pleaded guilty to arson and witness tampering and received a maximum of five years in prison. They never admitted intentionally trying to hurt anyone and did not plead guilty to any charges related to the deaths or injuries in the fire.

Both prosecutors and defense attorneys knew it was unlikely LePore and Ryan would ever serve the full five-year sentence. Under state parole guidelines, the maximum most well-behaved first-time offenders serve on a five-year sentence is 20 months.

The Essex County Prosecutor's office agreed not to oppose Ryan's and LePore's parole as part of the plea deal.

"This office will not be taking a position before the parole board," the prosecutor's office said in a statement. "However, the victims and victim families are free to express themselves to the parole board, as they did to the court at the time of sentencing."

Some of the fire victims have also decided to stay out of the parole decision. Dana Christmas, a Seton Hall student who was severely burned while trying to evacuate classmates from Boland Hall, will let the board make the decision on whether LePore and Ryan have served enough time behind bars.

"Dana is operating under the aegis of Christian forgiveness," said Cynthia Matheke, Christmas' attorney. "She's forgiven them. She's moving on."

*Brian T. Murray may be reached at [bmurray@starledger.com](mailto:bmurray@starledger.com) or (973) 392-4153. Kelly Heyboer may be reached at [kheyboer@starledger.com](mailto:kheyboer@starledger.com) or (973) 392-5929.*

© 2008 The Star Ledger

© 2008 NJ.com All Rights Reserved.