

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



The NTOA's 33rd Annual Tactical Operations Conference and Trade Show in Louisville, Kentucky, was our largest conference to date, with almost 1,000 attendees and more than 240 vendors. It was gratifying to see the camaraderie between participants, and to witness firsthand the spirit, dedication and excellence that we know is representative of the law enforcement

community. They came to work hard and learn, striving to grow in their profession. Our detractors may disagree, and the media may not often portray this aspect of our careers, but we know better and this truth was visible every day of the conference. I was honored to be a part of this amazing gathering of committed professionals. I am equally proud of our staff and instructors, who always work so hard to make the conference a success.

This year, the conference included classes that dealt with current challenges like "Contemporary Tactical Policing in a Post-Ferguson Era" and "Ethical Leadership Under Fire." Our seminar offerings have grown and we will offer even more courses, seminars, symposiums and webinars in 2017.

We partnered with the Make-a-Wish Foundation to grant the wishes of three children who have been diagnosed with a life-threatening medical condition. As you may be aware, Make-a-Wish was started by several police officers in Arizona in 1980. In Louisville, CEO Doug Kelly of Make-a-Wish Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana, brought three families with him to our conference, and the three children became SWAT officers for a day. The smiles on their faces were priceless. The NTOA will be partnering with the foundation on a national basis, so you may be getting a call from us to provide a wish to a child in your area. We are honored and humbled to facilitate the dreams of the true heroes who battle life-threatening illnesses on a daily basis.

NTOA members voted on and approved several changes to our bylaws at the conference. One significant change was the addition of a new "associate" category that will allow for a more diverse and expansive membership. This non-voting membership will allow criminal justice college students, instructors/researchers, and civilians working in law enforcement, private security and similar positions to become members of the NTOA with limited benefits. Watch for more information on our new associate membership in future e-newsletters and on our website.

We recently added a new digital option for our members. In this age of "right now" technology, many of our members prefer to have access to *The Tactical Edge* online, instead of waiting for a hard copy in the mail. You can now be an individual member, with all of the standard benefits, for only \$25 and receive your magazine in a digital format the day it is released.

The James Torkar Educational Scholarship application period opened November 1, and information and the application is accessible on our website until April 1, 2017. For the past several years, the NTOA has awarded deserving students with significant financial assistance and we are so proud of their accomplishments! Take a look at the success stories of our past recipients on page 10 of this issue.

Our profession has faced significant tragedies in the past year, including the Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting, the murder of five Dallas police officers and the wounding of nine, and the killing of three Baton Rouge officers and the wounding of three others. The courage shown by our brothers and sisters in blue during these difficult times is a testament to the fortitude and dedication of all who wear the uniform.

Our Chairman Emeritus Phil Hansen expounds upon these virtues and the need for values-driven leadership on page 56 of this issue. I hope you will take the time to read this inspiring article and share it with your colleagues. It is during these difficult times that we need each other more than ever. ■

Be safe and God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Lomax". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Lomax