

MONTANA NARCOTICS OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
A NEWSLETTER PRODUCED ESPECIALLY FOR OUR MEMBERS

Dear MNOA Members:

An Executive Board meeting was held on October 27, 1999 at the Department of Justice in Helena, Montana. The minutes of that meeting and the topics discussed are in this newsletter. Included in the topics was the current status of former Secretary/Treasurer Vance Gehringer and our current financial standing.

As most of you are aware, Vance Gehringer is no longer the Secretary /Treasurer for the Montana Narcotics Officers Association.

Gehringer was recently charged with several counts of Felony Theft and is no longer employed by the Lewis & Clark County Sheriff's Office.

In addition to alleged thefts from several drug funds related to his work, Gehringer had access to and control over MNOA funds.

It is apparent that a large sum of money is missing from this account and Gehringer has been charged with the theft of funds from MNOA. A preliminary estimate of the amount of funds allegedly taken from MNOA is approximately \$9,200. This amount was determined through audits. An ongoing investigation is being conducted by the Montana Department of Justice and this amount could be even greater.

In response to this unfortunate incident, the Executive Board has initiated several changes and policies to ensure that this type of action will not be repeated in the future.

Among the changes that were instigated by President Lee Cornell and others is that all future access to funds in the MNOA account will require a minimum of two signatures.

In addition, a number of accounting and auditing measures have been initiated, and in the future, the Secretary/Treasurer will be required to make regular reports to the Executive Committee and to the members at large.

There will also be regular audits of funds reported to be contained in the MNOA account, and bank statements will regularly be reviewed by all members of the Executive Committee.

During the October 27th meeting, the Board nominated and approved that Brian Buschini of the U.S. Customs Service in Great Falls will take over as Acting Secretary/Treasurer until an election by the members can be held during the annual conference.

Buschini has initiated some immediate changes to the record keeping for MNOA business. These changes include the following: a regular financial record keeping system is now in place and a monthly balance sheet will be reconciled with monthly statements from the bank.

In addition, all checks, deposit slips and other bank documents will be maintained in a ledger book. This book will be presented at every Executive Board meeting as well as the annual conference. These records will also gladly be made available for review by any member who wishes to view them for any reason.

It will also be the policy of the MNOA that regular audits involving reconciliation of the ledgers and funds maintained in the MNOA account be conducted by at least two members of the Executive Board.

In addition to the financial record keeping changes, there are several additional changes including the keeping of minutes of all MNOA conferences and Executive Board meetings.

There will also be strict record keeping related to attendance of training conferences, sales of MNOA merchandise, and other MNOA activities. MNOA receipts will be obtained and payment to MNOA will require that a receipt be issued and those funds

accounted for.

It is hoped that these changes, along with other changes currently being implemented, will ensure the integrity of MNOA funds and records. Your suggestions and input is welcome and should be addressed to Brian Buschini, Acting Secretary/ Treasurer, P.O. Box 69, Great Falls, MT 59403, or call (406) 727-8750, Ext. 204, or any other Executive Board member.

*Sincerely,
Brian Buschini*

1999 MNOA CONFERENCE

The MNOA annual training conference is scheduled for January 18-21, 2000 at the Townhouse Inn, 1411 10th Avenue South, Great Falls. The telephone number for room reservations at the Townhouse Inn is 761-4600.

The fee for the conference is \$75.00, if received prior to January 1, 2000, and \$85.00 after that date. MNOA membership is included for those attending the conference.

For those of you who plan to attend, please forward your registration fees, along with the registration form, at the end of this newsletter to: MNOA, P.O. Box 69, Great Falls, MT 59403-0069.

If you have questions concerning the conference, please contact Acting Secretary/Treasurer Brian Buschini at (406) 727-8750, Ext. 204, or any of the MNOA officers. Please make all checks payable to MNOA.

There will be numerous topics for us to cover this year at the conference. In addition to the training, your attendance and participation is appreciated.

This year's scheduled training promises to be one of the best conferences we have ever held and we hope all members as well as new members will plan to attend. The training schedule this year includes the following:

Tuesday, Jan. 18th:

Registration will start at 6 p.m. with a hospitality room provided by various vendors at this conference.

Wednesday, Jan. 19th:

8:00-9:00: Opening comments and introductions.

9:00-11:00: Legal update

11:00: ATF will present a class on various firearms violations as well as officer safety issues.

12:00-1:00: Lunch

First Class:

1:00-2:00: Drug identification course.

2:00-5:00: Mobile methamphetamine labs.

Second Class:

1:00-3:00: Drug record keeping, ledgers, etc.

3:00-5:00: Installation, monitoring and use of pen registers related to narcotics investigations.

5:00: Hospitality room hosted by MNOA and the various vendors.

Thursday, Jan. 20th:

8:00-10:00: ATF will instruct a course on various Abooby traps@ and safety issues related to narcotics investigations.

10:00-12:00: Asset identification and money laundering class instructed by the U.S. Attorney's Office.

12:00 - 1:00: Lunch

1:00-5:00: DOJ will teach a course on search warrants. This class, which takes a comprehensive overview of all aspects of search warrants, will include the gathering of probable cause, affidavit writing, planning and execution of a search warrant, and photography and collection of evidence.

7 p.m.: MNOA awards banquet.

Again, we are looking forward to a great conference and hope that all of you will make plans to attend.

If you are unable to attend the MNOA conference and are interested in becoming a member, please complete the attached MNOA Application and submit it to Brian Buschini at the address on the form.

BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

October 27, 1999

By nomination of Mark Long, and approved by a majority of the members present, Brian Buschini was approved as the Acting Secretary/Treasurer until elections can be held at the annual conference.

Discussion was held regarding the current status of the MNOA accounts. The current balance is \$1,753.18. There is currently an outstanding debt of \$100 which needs to be paid to the Glacier County Sheriff's Department. It was also determined that MNOA needs to update its tax free status with the state of Montana.

It was agreed to update the current MNOA membership roster and mailing list, and to obtain a new address in Great Falls for MNOA. It was also agreed that minutes and notes from each Executive Board meeting needed to be maintained and documented. Copies of these records will be maintained by the Secretary/Treasurer.

It was agreed that new receipt books need to be obtained for MNOA and records need to be maintained as to payments made to MNOA for attendance at training and for the purchase of MNOA merchandise.

It was determined that there is no current inventory of MNOA merchandise. An inventory will be conducted and a future inventory will be maintained. Any member taking merchandise to be sold at meetings or training seminars will need to sign for the merchandise and keep receipts and records for all sales and attendance fees paid.

Vice-President Scott Rogstad will attempt to recover any Amisplaced@ MNOA merchandise which may be outstanding.

Those members attending the Executive Board meeting were: President: Lee Cornell, Past-President: Kent Funyak, Mark Long, Jeff Faycosh, Roy Tanniehill, Greg Tadman, Joe Wodnik and Brian Buschini.

There is currently one nomination for MNOA officer of the year. More nominations are requested and should be received no later than January 1, 2000.

It was decided by voice vote that a plaque would be purchased for the officer of the year award and not to exceed \$50.00. Vice-President Rogstad is to contact local vendors for the purchase of the plaque.

It was agreed by voice vote to obtain \$50.00 gift certificates for Mike Batista and Joe Thaggard in appreciation for their lobbying efforts during the last legislative session.

It was agreed by voice vote to send a letter of appreciation to Senator Hargrove.

A letter will be sent by the Secretary/Treasurer to Dawn Allen at American Federal Bank, identifying all MNOA officers.

Vice-President Rogstad has been obtaining donated items to be raffled at the upcoming annual conference.

Past-President Funyak will be contacting vendors regarding sales booths and sponsoring hospitality rooms for the annual conference.

The MNOA conference schedule was set. There was discussion about arranging conference facilities at the Town & Country Motel in Great Falls to be coordinated by Mark Long.

It was approved by voice vote that the Officer of the Year Award would be selected by the executive committee. This selection will be for this year only and was

necessitated by short notice. In the future, Kent Funyak moved that a committee of members be selected to select the award from submitted nominees. This motion was approved by a voice vote.

The registration fee for the annual conference will be \$75.00 prior to January 1, 2000, and \$85.00 after that date.

By a voice vote, it was approved that Mark Long purchase a Glock to be raffled at the conference. The cost to be less than \$500.00.

Roy Tanniehill suggested an upcoming simmunition/officer survival training to be held prior to the conference. Tanniehill will coordinate the training and notify via teletype the various agencies throughout the state. The fee for this training was agreed at \$60.00 and will be held either in Great Falls or Helena, depending upon available training locations.

President Cornell has contacted Senator Burn's office and the Senator is attempting to schedule a speaking appearance at our annual conference. Cornell will know in the next two weeks.

Secretary/Treasurer report will be made to all members at the conference.

It was agreed to pursue civil remedies in addition to pending criminal charges against Vance Gehringer for lost funds from MNOA. Current audits and investigation indicates that the amount of lost funds is at least \$9,200.00. Lee Cornell will contact Mike McGrath's office to determine any legal restrictions or problems related to civil remedies including a lean on Gehringer's home.

Mail expenses will continue to be handled by DCI - Missoula and reimbursed by MNOA. Paulette Miller will continue to send out newsletters using current format.

New vendors for MNOA merchandise were recommended.

It was agreed that minutes from the Executive Board meeting will be included in the upcoming newsletter. All information for the newsletter will be forwarded to Paulette as soon as possible.

The next Executive Board meeting will be held on November 30, 1999, at 10:00 a.m. at the DOJ - Helena.

Secretary/Treasurer will notify Executive Board members approximately one week prior to the meeting.

Meeting closed.

Brian Buschini
Acting Sec/Treas

Any member wishing to attend the board meeting is encouraged to do so, and any member who can not make it, but would like input, should contact any of the board members listed in this newsletter.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

1999

President:

Lee Cornell, Agent
D.C.I.
P.O. Box 31094
Billings, MT 59107
(406) 896-4383

Vice-President

Scott Rogstad, Agent
D.C.I.
P.O.Box 8357
Missoula, MT 59807-8357
(406) 721-8305

Acting Secretary/Treasurer:

Brian Buschini, S/A
U.S. Customs Service
P.O. Box 69
Great Falls, MT 59403

(406) 727-8750, Ext. 204

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Past - President:

Kent Funyak, Undersheriff

Cascade Co. S.O.

3800 Ulm N. Frontage Rd. Great Falls, MT 59404

(406) 454-6820

REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Region 1:

Bill Buzzell, Deputy

Roosevelt Co. S.O.

201 4th Avenue South

Wolf Point, MT 59210

(406) 653-1061

Counties: Sheridan, Daniels, Roosevelt, Richland, McCone, Valley, Garfield, Phillips, Blaine, Prairie, Wibaux, Dawson and Petroleum

Region 2:

Jeff Faycosh, Agent

DCI, P.O. Box 31094

Billings, MT 59107-1094

(406) 896-4376

Counties: Carbon, Stillwater, Sweetgrass, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Yellowstone, Treasurer, Rosebud, Powder River, Carter, Custer, Fallon and Big Horn

Region 3:

Roy Tanniehill, Officer

Helena Police Department

221 Breckenridge

Helena, MT 59601

(406) 442-3855

Counties: Butte Silverbow, Powell, Deer Lodge, Lewis & Clark, Jefferson, Meagher, Broadwater, Beaverhead,

Madison, Gallatin and Park

Region 4:

Greg Tadman, Deputy

Cascade County S.O.

3800 Ulm N. Frontage Rd.

Great Falls, MT 59404

(406) 454-6820

Counties: Cascade, Teton, Choteau, Pondera, Glacier, Toole, Liberty, Hill, Judith Basin, Fergus and Wheatland

Region 5:

Mark A. Long, Chief

D.C.I.

P.O. Box 8357

Missoula, MT 59807

(406) 721-8305

Counties: Lincoln, Flathead, Lake, Sanders, Mineral, Missoula, Ravalli and Granite

FOR SALE

MNOA caps and T-shirts are available at all MNOA sponsored training and from Acting Sec./Treas. Brian Buschini. Give Brian a call if you are interested.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Anyone wishing to submit articles for the newsletter, please contact any of the MNOA officers listed in this newsletter, or send them to Acting Sec./Treasurer Brian Buschini.

OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award will go to any officer, agent, or investigator that does an outstanding job. This can be for any one incident or from one person that shows an outstanding work ethic by consistently doing an excellent job. This does not have to be a drug case or a large case, it can be in any area of law enforcement, local, state or federal.

If anyone has any nominations for people to be considered for this award, you will need to submit a letter outlining why you think that this person should receive this award and give some examples of what this person has done.

We will be accepting nominations through January 1, 2000. Please keep this in mind throughout the year, and if you have someone in mind, please send it to Acting Secretary/ Treasurer Brian Buschini, U.S. Customs Service, P.O. Box 69, Great Falls, MT 59403-0069.

Once all nominations are in, they will be voted on by all attending MNOA members the first day of the September conference, and the award will be handed out on the final day of the conference. It should be noted that all nominees must be current MNOA members.

MEMBERSHIP AND BENEFITS

MNOA is an association that was formed for all levels and areas of law enforcement. This includes patrolmen, detectives, administrators, corrections, state wildlife officers, state land officers, highway patrol, and federal agents from all branches.

Established in 1995, the MNOA has subsequently grown in size to include over 100 members from throughout Montana.

During the past couple of years, the MNOA has sponsored numerous training seminars, as well as two annual conferences which have resulted in providing various types of training to over 100 law enforcement officers within the state.

This is not an organization devoted solely to law enforcement officers who are full-time narcotics investigators. All of us in law enforcement become involved in narcotics investigations at some time.

Let's face it, each and every traffic stop is a potential drug bust.

Also drug use and sale has become such an omnipresent part of life today, that all law enforcement officers must possess some degree of expertise in this area. This organization is designed for all of us in the field of law enforcement.

MNOA offers invaluable training for all of these areas of law enforcement. Types of training include, but are not limited to traffic interdiction and safety, handgun retention, raid planning and execution, interview techniques, drug identification, legal updates, along with numerous other formats that may come up. Anyone having any training suggestions, can contact their regional officer or any of the board members.

MNOA was also formed to attempt to make any necessary changes that may be due to change the current state laws. This attempt is made through several resources and is ultimately taken to the legislature for proposal.

MNOA also offers one of the most important tools that law enforcement can have and that is networking with all areas of law enforcement throughout the state and sometimes into other states. This is made largely possible through the regional schools and the yearly conference.

By being a member of MNOA and attending the schools that are hosted and co-hosted by the MNOA members, we are able to share valuable information with other members. It is imperative that we, as law enforcement officers, have a better communication network than that of the people we deal with.

Past and present members, who are unsure of their current status, are reminded to check their membership cards to determine if they are current members. Those without cards, or whose cards do not have >99 stickers on them, need to check with Brian Buschini as they are probably not current.

1999 MNOA CONFERENCE/TRAINING

Great Falls, Montana

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME: _____

AGENCY _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ **TELEPHONE** _____

FEE: _____ \$75.00 (Prior to Dec. 31)

_____ \$85.00 (After Dec. 31)

**Send registration form & payment to: Brian Buschini, S/A (MNOA
Acting Sec./Treas.)**

U.S. Customs Service

P.O. Box 69

Great Falls, MT 59403-0069