

Retired Law Enforcement Officers Now Living Their Dream

By Eddie Molina

Every Officer in law enforcement entered this field for his or her own reasons. Whatever the motivation, one thing remains true for everyone- looking forward to retirement!

Many retired Officers find themselves working a low stress job while earning an additional income. Others move out of state to warmer climates. But every once in a while, you come across a retired Officer who is doing something much different. They are, instead, living out their dream and spending their days doing something they have a passion for and truly love.



I reached out to the public forum online in search of retired Officers who are living out their dreams. The individuals I came across below are the most interesting ones.

[Larry Balla, Galloway, OH](#)

A lot of Officers ride motorcycles as a form of stress relief. Most riders equate it to a sense of freedom like no other.

But retired Sergeant Larry Balla, Grandview Heights, Ohio, Police Department, has taken it to an entirely new level. Larry tells Blue, “Since 2011, I have traveled over 150,000 miles by motorcycle.” Larry is currently planning his *third* motorcycle ride to Alaska, and plans to ride the entire Route 66 and down to Key West.

“The best part about being retired is not have to worry about getting the time off approved. After 32 years of police work, that’s a great feeling.” Said Larry.

Michael Johnson, Wildwood, NJ

There's nothing quite like a good beer and great barbeque- a perfect culinary marriage. So retired Officer Michael Johnson, North Wildwood Police Department, ended up mastering the craft of BBQ *and* beer.

"After I judged a BBQ competition in 2001, I set out to learn the art of cooking barbeque. I then competed and won trophies. Once I retired from North Wildwood Police Department in 2011, people started asking me to cater, and I agreed." Michael tells Blue.

It didn't end there. Officer Johnson then learned to brew his own beer right at home. Michael said, "After some old friends of mine fell in love with my beer, we decided to start our own brewery."

When asked what he loved doing more, beer or BBQ, Officer Johnson replied, "It's hard to say. What I do know for sure is that I love what I do, so I don't have to work a day in my life."

Visit www.COHObrewing.com to see for yourself.

Fred Stoldt, Euclid, OH

Officer Stoldt isn't quite retired yet, but is so far into his hobby that he knows exactly what he's doing the moment he retires- more hot sauce.

"When I was in the Army years ago, one thing never changed- the bad food. I learned to put tabasco sauce on everything."

When he returned to civilian life, his rule of using hot sauce on every meal continued. "As a patrol officer, we often ate at the same spots and I grew tired of the same flavorless table top salty vinegar hot sauces. So I set out on a mission to make my own hot sauce." Said Ofc Stoldt.

And that's exactly what he did. After some trial and some painful errors, Officer Stoldt developed a delicious hot sauce to take along while on duty. Eventually word got out that his hot

sauce was spot on. “My co-workers pushed me to sell my hot sauce. I now make and carry over 40 hot sauce-related products which I sell in person and online.”

Officer Stoldt could easily expand his business but is limited by available time. “When I retire in a few years, the first thing I want to do is purchase a large farm in Kentucky so I can grow my own hot peppers.” It sounds like the sky’s the limit for Officer Stoldt... and his hot sauce!



[Steve Bell, Galloway, NJ](#)

Retired Officer Bell, Pleasantville, NJ, enjoyed watching his father play the role of Santa Claus during the holiday season. “My father was the most prolific Santa for my nieces, nephews and my two daughters. As a family, we visited hospitals and nursing homes in our area. He taught me how important it was to simply put a smile on someone’s face,” recalled Officer Bell.

However, the tradition ended after Officer Bell’s father passed away in 2008. But it wasn’t long before that changed. “My wife convinced me to carry on the tradition. She and my daughters purchased a new Santa suit and I took over the role the following Christmas season.”

When asked if he liked the job, he replied, “Seeing a kid smile is the greatest thing in the world and it fills my heart every time.” See you next Christmas Santa!