



SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

Summit County Prosecutor

Newsletter

March 2008

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Message from the Prosecutor



Prosecutor
Sherri Bevan Walsh

Last fall, the Department of Justice awarded the City of Akron a \$666,041 federal grant under the Targeting Violent Crime Initiative for the Akron/Summit County Gang Initiative. A portion of that funding pays for two assistant prosecutors, Kevin Mayer and John Green, who will be handling cases with gang elements as well as cases involving the manufacturing of methamphetamine among eight courtrooms.

I imagine that some citizens associate gangs with cities like Los Angeles, New York, and Miami, and scoff at the idea that Akron has a gang problem. Although it may seem difficult to believe, violent gangs are very much a part of life in Akron.

I have been actively fighting gangs while also trying to educate the community about the dangers and challenges they pose. Last spring, I hosted a forum on juvenile violence. The overwhelming response told me that this problem is infecting our communities. Professionals and community leaders recognize the signs and are eager to work together to try to solve the problem and save children from this violence – either as gang members or as victims.

My Office also received a federal grant this year to establish a local Gang Resistance Education and Awareness Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program. Through this program, two juvenile prosecutors teach the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum to local elementary and middle school students and will be reaching even more children through our Families Component and Summer Program.

Meth labs are a huge concern to residents in Summit County. The health and safety risks associated with labs are monumental. It is important to note that meth labs are not “labs” in a technical sense. Individuals have been known to cook meth – which requires pseudoephedrine, various chemicals, matches, tubing, and a stove or hot plate – just about everywhere, from homes to motel rooms to vehicles.

The byproducts of meth – the gas and vapors – are toxic and linked to a host of health issues. Unfortunately, innocent people, and oftentimes children of meth cooks, are unknowingly subjected to these dangerous byproducts. After cooks make meth, they often bag the waste and dump it in fields, on the roadside, or in dumpsters, again exposing others to risks.

I am grateful that my Office can take part in the city’s initiative to fight both of these problems. With the collaboration of the city, the county, and law enforcement agencies, my hope is that we can make Summit County a safer and healthier place to live and work.

Tough Prosecution

On March 17, Cameron Williams was sentenced to **69 years to Life** in prison for charges related to the murder of Darion Polk and kidnapping of Williams’ ex-wife. Williams was sentenced to 30 years to Life for Aggravated Murder, but Judge Hunter then made the sentences for the other charges – a total of 39 years – consecutive. Congratulations to Assistant Prosecutors Mike Carroll and Susan Manofsky!



Williams

On March 14, David Hardges was sentenced to **63 Years to Life** in prison on numerous charges stemming from the rape, kidnapping, and attempted murder of an Akron woman near Summit Lake. He was also classified a Tier III Sexual Offender. Congratulations to Assistant Prosecutors Greg Peacock and Brian Stano!



Hardges

Marshal Congratulates Office for Fugitive Safe Surrender Work!



U.S. Marshal Peter Elliott presents Melanie Hart with a certificate for her work on FSS.

Peter J. Elliott, U.S. Marshal for the Northern District of Ohio, visited our Office on March 11 to thank us for our efforts with the Fugitive Safe Surrender (FSS) Program.

Our Office, in a partnership with the U.S. Marshals, helped coordinate the program last summer at The House of The Lord.

At the end of two days, 1,125 people had surrendered, and Akron became a model city for future surrender programs.

Marshal Elliott commented, “I thank you for your partnership and commend you for the significant contribution you have made to community safety and the future of this vital initiative. Akron’s program was one of the most successful surrender programs and many of your tactics are now being used in other safe surrender programs around the country.”

He also presented the FSS team with certificates: Sherri Bevan Walsh, Mary Ann Kovach, Brad Gessner, Brian LoPrinzi, Becky Doherty, Kevin Mayer, Beth Aronson, Felicia Easter, Heaven DiMartino, Laurie Cramer, Mark Anderson, Dennis Balogh, Chad Van Orman, Melanie Hart, Merle Payne, Chris Mellion, and Lisa Jones.

Thank you, everyone, for making FSS a success!

Questions? E-mail Laurie Cramer:
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We're on the Web!
www.co.summit.oh.us/prosecutor

March Top Cops



Officer Bernard Cirullo
Tallmadge Police Department

Officers Adam Lemonier and Chris Crockett
Akron Police Department (Clandestine Lab Enforcement Team)

Nominated by: Assistant Prosecutors Beth Aronson and John Green

On March 18, 2007, **Tallmadge Police Officer Bernard Cirullo** initiated a traffic stop on a vehicle in which Michael Smith was a passenger. While searching the interior, Officer Cirullo found empty Sudafed packages in the area where Smith was seated. He then searched Smith and found 54 Sudafed tablets in his sock. On March 17, Smith was convicted of Illegal Assembly (an F-3). He faces a minimum of two years in prison when he is sentenced on April 23.

On July 9, 2007, **Akron Police Officer Adam Lemonier** arrested Smith – who was out on bond from the previous incident – and Vincent Varner. Officer Lemonier was investigating a possible burglary when he encountered Smith exiting a residence. He immediately detected the telltale odor of chemicals used for manufacturing methamphetamines. Officer Lemonier entered the house and found Varner in the basement with an active meth lab. On February 19, Varner pled guilty to Illegal Manufacture (an F-2) and was sentenced to three years in prison. Smith pled guilty to the same charge and awaits his April 23 sentencing date. He faces a mandatory minimum three years for this charge.

On January 4, 2008, **Akron Police Officer Chris Crockett** arrested Smith and Varner – both on bond for the previous meth lab case – along with Varner's girlfriend Theresa Dodig. Officer Crockett was investigating a possible meth lab at Varner and Dodig's residence. They consented to a search and Officer Crockett found the three Defendants and Varner and Dodig's two young children inside. During his search, he found chemicals and meth, which were all accessible to the children. Smith faces a mandatory minimum four-year sentence for this Manufacturing charge, a first-degree felony. Varner pled guilty to Endangering Children (an F-3) and was sentenced to three years. Dodig will be sentenced March 31, and faces a minimum of two years for Endangering Children.

Assistant Prosecutors Beth Aronson and John Green prosecuted these defendants and nominated Officers Bernard Cirullo, Adam Lemonier, and Chris Crockett as this month's Top Cops. These Officers employed their instincts, training, and judgment to help get this team of meth cooks off the streets.

Way to go, Top Cops!

MEET ASSISTANT PROSECUTOR JOHN GREEN

Position: Assistant Prosecuting Attorney

Hire date: March 2007

Hometown: Dayton

Law degree: Duquesne University 2006

Years as an Assistant Prosecutor: One



Little known fact: Prior to working at the Prosecutor's Office, I was a sergeant on the Steubenville Police Department for 13 years.

Most memorable case: I tried a case over the summer in which a man stayed at a local hotel for over a month and left without paying the bill. Just prior to the jury coming in for the start of trial, the Defendant started cursing at the detective who arrested him. Throughout the trial, he continued glaring and, in a low voice, continued to make derogatory remarks about the detective in front of the jury. After he was convicted, the Defendant appeared at sentencing and glared at the judge and told him to send him to prison. The judge obliged.

GUILTY!

Congratulations to Assistant Prosecutors who each had juries return GUILTY VERDICTS at trials in February! Mike Carroll, Jessica Didion (2), John Green (2), Greta Johnson, Margaret Kanellis, April Keller-Drumm, Susan Manofsky, Greg Peacock, Justin Richard, Jennie Shuki, Colleen Sims (3!), Brian Stano, Mike Todd, Michael Tripi, and Nicole Walker.

GREAT JOB, ASSISTANT PROSECUTORS!

That's Outrageous!



Two members of the Kaika Klan Outlaws gang will be spending a long time in prison to rethink their career choices.

On February 20, **Ronald Lewis, 22**, was sentenced to **eight years** in prison for Aggravated Robbery and Participating in a Criminal Gang. Two days later, his accomplice, **Damien Stafford, 28**, was sentenced to **nine years** for the same charges, with the additional year added for violating his probation. In August 2007, they robbed a Barberton man at gunpoint, taking his jewelry and money.

At his sentencing hearing, Stafford told the judge that he had left the gang life and was changing his ways, in the hopes of getting some leniency. Prosecutors pointed out that a convicted member of the Kaika Klan Outlaws was sitting in the back of the courtroom. The individual was identified by APD Officers Don Schismenos and Rod Criss, who worked closely with my Office—as they often do—to help us get the convictions.

Great job, Margaret Kanellis, John Green, and Justin Richard, in prosecuting this outrageous case!