



FROM THE OFFICE OF
SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR
SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

A MESSAGE FROM PROSECUTOR WALSH
GOODBYE TO 2020!

2020 is almost gone. Phew! I know a lot of you are glad to see 2020 go away. It has been a difficult year and we all hope 2021 has better things in store for all of us.

For me personally, I'm glad 2020 is over. As you may know, I caught the COVID-19 virus, even after being very cautious. I wore a mask and significantly limited my interactions with others. But I still contracted the disease.

For nearly a month I battled several severe symptoms and spent a few days in the hospital. I had a fever, unbearable headaches, overwhelming fatigue, and nausea unlike anything I had ever experienced before. That includes undergoing chemotherapy and treatment for breast cancer. I'm doing much better now, but COVID can really impact your life and the lives of your family and friends.

So as 2020 comes to an end, your vigilance to stop the spread of COVID must not. Ohio has recently seen a big jump in the number of COVID cases. Ohio is seeing thousands of new COVID cases daily. Our hospitals are slowly reaching capacity and might soon be at the point where there are no beds left for the sick. We must do all we can to stop the spread.

That's why I urge you to continue to wear a mask and limit your interactions with people. I know that can be difficult, especially during the holidays, but our lives depend on it.

2020 also had a number of positives, which I don't want to forget.

One of those achievements was you re-electing me as Summit County Prosecutor. Thank you to each and every one of you who believe in me and what my office is doing to make the community a better and safer place to live.

I am about to start my sixth term as Summit County Prosecutor and I am more passionate than ever to lead the office. I am so proud of all of my employees who work extremely hard to do what's best for Summit County.

My Criminal Division continues to fight for victims and hold criminals accountable. Two of my assistant prosecutors were recently part of the county's first jury trial conducted under strict COVID protocols. The courtroom had large dividers and everyone was six feet apart.



Jurors eventually found the defendant, Erica Stefanko, guilty in connection with the 2012 murder of Ashley Biggs. Stefanko lured Biggs to an unoccupied business in New Franklin where Chad

Cobb killed her.

Cobb and Biggs had a prior relationship and were in a contentious child custody battle. Stefanko and Cobb were married at the time of the murder. Cobb is currently serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole. Stefanko faces life in prison when she is sentenced on January 11th.

My office continues to work hard to inform the community of the latest crimes and scams. Alerts are emailed and posted on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The last page of this newsletter lists how you can follow us on social media.

I hope you have a happy and healthy holiday and a wonderful new year.

As always, stay safe.

Sherri B. Walsh



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HOLIDAY HELP

The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted all of our lives. It has also limited our ability to inform the public about all the positive and innovative programs the Summit County Prosecutor's Office provides the community.

Prosecutor's Office employees are still working hard, providing information to help keep the community safe.

Here's a look back at a few of our events.

Each year we take part in the Salvation Army's bell ringing campaign.

You might see bell ringers around town, but because of COVID, there are fewer locations and they have to abide by specific guidelines.



You can still help by donating to the Salvation Army's kettle program by clicking on <https://fillthekettle.com/>

The Summit County Prosecutor's Office also helps make the holidays better for people who come to our office as victims of crime.

Office elves usually buy, wrap, and deliver gifts for families who have been impacted by crime.



This year, we're still spreading some holiday cheer to four local families. To limit interactions with people and help stop the spread of COVID, we are sending items directly to the families instead of hand delivering them.

We hope the gesture brings some joy to what was already a difficult year for a number of Summit County families.

From our work family to yours, we wish you and yours a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season.



CHILD SUPPORT HONOR

More recognition for Prosecutor Walsh's Child Support Enforcement Agency. CSEA has once again been honored by Ohio's Office of Child Support for outstanding performance.

In the most recent Awards for Outstanding Performance, Prosecutor Walsh's Child Support Enforcement Agency was recognized with the following achievements:

- **Best Performance Paternity Establishment in the Metro Caseload Division for 2020**
- **Best Performance Collections on Current Support in the Metro Caseload Division for 2020**
- **Best Performance Collections on Cases with Arrears in the Metro Caseload Division for 2020**
- **Best Overall Performance in the Metro Caseload Division for 2020**

This is the fifth year in a row Prosecutor Walsh's Child Support Enforcement Agency has received the Best Overall Performance in the Metro Caseload Division from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

"This is truly an incredible honor and shows the dedication of my Child Support Enforcement Agency to help families, especially during a global pandemic. CSEA employees overcame significant hurdles to support people who need it the most," said Prosecutor Walsh. "Thank you to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The awards recognize the hard work my child support staff do every day."

The Summit County Child Support Enforcement Agency collects over \$74 million annually and handles more than 45,000 child support cases.



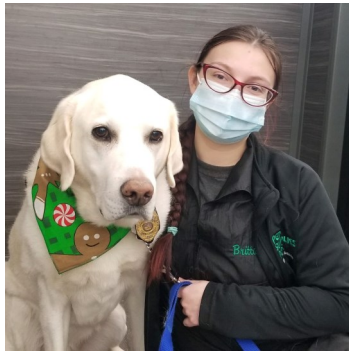


AVERY'S CORNER

DRUNK DRIVING AWARENESS

It's always a good idea to look your best—especially with the holidays coming up.

I love being "paw-pered" by my friends at Pet Supplies Plus. That's Brittany who helped make me look all pretty.



Do something for yourself this time of year. I guarantee it'll help you feel better!

I love this time of year so much. It's fun to see all the decorations while I play outside in the snow! But I want to make sure your four-legged friends are safe during the holidays.

- Make sure your Christmas tree is anchored. That way one of my furry friends won't knock it over!
- Also, even though they smell nice, keep mistletoe and holly away from pets. They can cause tummy trouble and sometimes worse. Fake plants are the way to go!
- Who doesn't love the glitter of tinsel! I know my kitty kat friends do. They love to swat at it and chew on it. But it's bad for them. You don't want an emergency trip to the vet to ruin your holiday.

Holiday Pet DON'Ts



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Help Us Go Green!

Contact Melanie Hart at hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net to receive this newsletter by e-mail



2020 has been an interesting year to say the least. Many people have different ways of coping with the stresses and anxiety associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

That includes drinking alcohol. Liquor sales in Ohio have seen a jump since last year. But before you take a sip, make sure you stay at home.

December is National Impaired Driving Prevention Month.

Every day, almost 29 people in the United States die in alcohol-impaired vehicle crashes. That means one person every 50 minutes. Drunk-driving fatalities have fallen by a third in the last three decades; however, drunk-driving crashes claim more than 10,000 lives per year.



Don't become a statistic. Get a designated driver or call for a ride. Or better yet, just stay home!

We want you to be safe during the holidays. Although many of you shopped online, others are still going to stores to find that perfect gift. Don't let criminals be a scrooge and steal your joy.



Remember these 12 tips for shopping safely:

- Be Alert & Aware
- Keep Your Keys Ready
- Keep Valuables Close
- Get in Your Car and Go
- Shop with Friends & Family
- Beware of Distraction Theft
- Place Valuables in the Trunk
- Shop During the Day
- Limit Use of Cell Phones
- Avoid Parking Near Large Vehicles
- Park in Well-Lit Areas
- Ask Store Security for Help

Happy Holidays!

TOP COP

RICHFIELD POLICE DET. RYAN KELLACKY

NOMINATED BY ASST. PROSECUTOR ZACHARY NEUMANN

Financial cases are many times the most difficult to prosecute. They are very time consuming, especially sophisticated schemes in which the thief goes online to hide their identity. However, the crimes pose a serious threat to the financial well-being of people. Many times, the main obstacle is proving who stole the money.



Without the hard work of Richfield Police Detective Ryan Kellackey, we would not have been able to prosecute a case where the defendant was accused of stealing close to \$130,000 from hard-working people in Summit County. That is why I nominate Det. Kellackey as this month's TOP COP.

Katherine Graver worked for a payroll management company. Through his investigation, Det. Kellackey discovered Graver created separate fake accounts for real employees and then would divert payroll funds into those fake accounts.

Det. Kellackey followed the funneled money until he discovered a majority of the funds were being withdrawn through frequent trips to various bank machines. The next steps Det. Kellackey took were vital to our prosecution.

Det. Kellackey reviewed surveillance footage from the ATM locations, matching the video to the date and time of the withdrawals.

Once the case came to the Prosecutor's Office, all the records were collected proving a crime had been committed as well as the exact amount stolen. Det. Kellackey showed tremendous attention to detail with each fake account and ATM withdrawal categorized by date and time combined with the corresponding video surveillance.

Katherine Graver was convicted and ordered to pay back the stolen money.

Great job & thank you Det. Kellackey!!

REMEMBERING JUSTIN WINEBRENNER

In the history of Akron Police Department, 26 officers gave their lives while performing their duty.

One incident is still fresh on the minds of the Summit County Prosecutor's Office. It has been six years since Officer Justin Weinbrenner was shot and killed.

On November 16, 2014, Justin was with friends at Papa Don's Pub when another customer, Kenan Ivery, returned with a gun after being asked to leave.

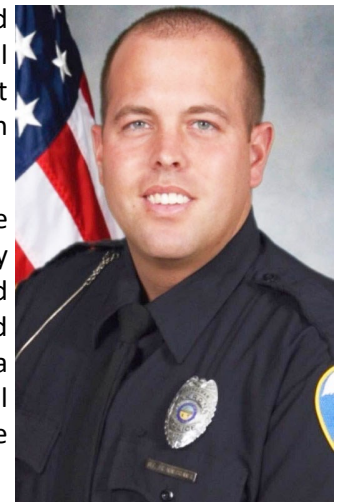
After seeing the gun, Justin, along with two others, confronted Ivery and tried to get him outside and away from the crowd of people inside the bar. Ivery opened fire and shot Justin twice. Justin collapsed in the parking lot and died a short time later. But his actions undoubtedly saved the lives of others inside the bar. Ivery is now serving a life sentence with no eligibility for parole.

Each year at this time, we take a moment to remember Justin and pause to say thank you for his heroism.

For many, that one moment and one sacrifice is how Justin will be remembered. As a hero. But Justin did, and was, so much more.

Prosecutors say Justin was more than a police officer. He truly cared about his community and his family. His smile and boundless energy could fill a room. Justin was and will forever be remembered as one of the good guys.

Thank you Justin for your vigorous pursuit of justice tempered with reason and compassion. Justin was always well prepared, which ensured the best possible outcome for the residents of Akron. **EOW 11/16/2014**



WHY I'M A PROSECUTOR

ZACHARY NEUMANN

"Why I'm A Prosecutor" gives our prosecutors the chance to tell their own story and why being a prosecutor is so important to them.

Assistant Prosecutor Zachary Neumann, who works in our Criminal Division, talks about why being a prosecutor is so important to him.



• WHY DID YOU BECOME A PROSECUTOR?

I've always been interested in criminal law. My favorite book is "To Kill A Mockingbird" and one of my favorite movies is "Anatomy Of A Murder". After law school I had several internships and I realized the best way to have an active role in criminal law was through being a prosecutor. Thankfully Prosecutor Walsh hired me right out of law school and I've never looked back. People always ask me what my plans are moving forward and my response is I just love my job right now and I can't think of doing anything else.

• WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF BEING A PROSECUTOR?

The best part of being a prosecutor is the relationships with people involved in the process. You're talking with everyone, including the investigators, the eyewitnesses, and the victims. As a prosecutor, you try to make sure everyone's voice is heard and to find a solution to the problem.

• WHAT'S THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF BEING A PROSECUTOR?

Working as a prosecutor is sort of like solving a puzzle. The most difficult part of being a prosecutor is when essential pieces of the puzzle are missing. We may believe a victim but understand we also have to convince a jury that not only did a crime happen, but the person charged is responsible.

You can watch Zachary's complete video on our website, Facebook and YouTube page.

DECK THE HALLS AT STAN HYWET

If you're looking for some holiday cheer (and truthfully, who isn't!) check out Stan Hywet Hall and the Deck The Hall display.

The dazzling display allows you to enjoy the spirit of the holidays while still following health protocols.

Deck The Hall at Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens runs from 5p-8p on various dates through the month of December.

Stan Hywet suggests buying tickets in advance.

For more information—head to the Stan Hywet website—

<https://www.stanhywet.org/events/deck-hall-2020-very-merry-christmas>



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