



SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

Summit County Prosecutor

Newsletter

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Message from the Prosecutor



Prosecutor
Sherrri Bevan Walsh

The headline a few weeks ago was that violent crime was up in Akron. FBI statistics showed that while we continue to be one of the safest large cities in Ohio, the number of violent crimes increased slightly in 2009 for the third year in a row.

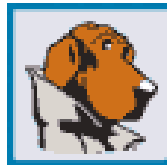
On a national level, the rate of violent crimes actually decreased by just over five percent. The article quoted a number of experts that discussed the current crime statistics and what impacts crime rates.

One expert commented that there is a connection between crime rates and the economy; however, he also said the problem isn't from when the economy slows that more people commit crimes. Rather, his theory is when the economy slows there are budget cuts and less money is spent on crime prevention programs and police crime prevention measures.

Others believe that when the economy slows there are more robberies, domestic violence, and aggravated assaults from people who grow restless with the economic conditions.

It is likely a combination of many factors that impact crime rates. Ultimately, we all have a responsibility as individuals and as a community to support crime prevention. I have written numerous times about what to do as an individual to prevent becoming a crime victim, but as a community, we also can pull together to reduce crime. October is actually **Crime Prevention Month** and reminds us all to:

- Join and be an active member of your Neighborhood or Apartment Watch Group;
- Support your local police and alert them if you see suspicious activities;
- If you witness a crime, come forward and tell police what you saw;
- Watch out for each other and help a friend walk away from a volatile situation;
- Help local government do their job by reporting nonworking street lights, abandoned houses, missing street signs, and other problems. They can't help if they don't know the problems;
- Work with churches, civic groups, law enforcement, local schools and businesses to help clean up areas that invite crime such as littered lots, graffiti, and darkened areas that need lighting. These groups also support youth activities to keep kids safe and off the streets.



*McGruff The
Crime Dog is 30
years old this*

Congratulations for Grants Won to Support Programs!

Two new grants will help fund initiatives in the **Criminal Division's Domestic Violence Unit (DVU)** and the **Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA)**.

Thanks to the **Akron Community Foundation** for its ongoing support of a program that trains first responders in evidence-based prosecution — or prosecuting cases based on evidence collected vs. relying on victim testimony — in domestic violence cases. DV victims often downplay assaults and minimize situations thinking they have no options. Carefully prepared cases can show otherwise and help to prosecute the abusers.

Since May of 2008 the DVU has trained more than 900 first responders in the best approach to gathering evidence and gaining convictions in DV cases; responders include court staff, hospital professionals, police, fire/EMS, and other agencies that respond to violence against women.

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**Our Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA)** won a grant this week from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. CSEA will partner with Domestic Relations Court, Jobs and Family Services, the Man 2 Man Fatherhood Building Program, and Legal Aid of Akron to provide a program targeted at low income families in need of child support services. Called **Positive Solutions**, the program will divert families involved in contempt proceedings for non-payment of support based on either the obligor being unemployed or the receipt of current public assistance benefits by the child (ren) or obligee. In lieu of punitive contempt sentencing, the Court will direct both parents to participate in an educational seminar to explore a variety of factors that may affect compliance with the support order.

Questions? E-mail Laurie Cramer  
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We're on the Web!

www.co.summit.oh.us/Prosecutor/Index.htm

## Top Cops!

**Top Cops:** Sgt. Tony Starvaggi, Akron Police Department Juvenile Unit, Patrol Officers Brent Heller and Justin Ingham, Akron Police Department



**Special Nominee:** Annette Lucarelli, Children Services Board Caseworker

**Nominated by:** Assistant Prosecutor Greg Peacock  
*Ohio vs. Michael Winland and Stephennie Murphy*

In 2009, disturbing allegations of child sexual abuse were brought forward by a 9-year-old girl. Acting quickly, Summit County CSB worker **Annette Lucarelli** went to the Winland and Murphy home in Akron to check on the welfare of the children in the home. She was accompanied by **Officers Heller and Ingham**. The two officers learned of an outstanding warrant for Winland and arrested him. He was taken to the Akron police station where he was interviewed by **Sgt. Starvaggi**. Following up on what the 9-year-old said, Starvaggi learned from Winland that there may be child pornography on his computer. Starvaggi quickly relayed this information to Heller and Ingham who were still at the Winland and Murphy home. Heller and Ingham spoke to Murphy and were able to get consent from her to remove the computers from her home. Those computers contained evidence that led to the conviction of Murphy and Winland that sent them both to prison for 50 years each.

These four individuals used their instincts, good judgment, and years of experience to legally obtain and secure crucial evidence in this case and saved four child victims from further abuse.

**Way to go, Top Cops!**



## GUILTY at TRIAL!

**Congratulations** to Prosecutors **Teri Burnside, Tom Kroll, Joe Fantozzi, Kevin Mayer, Mike Rickett, Dan Sallerson, Colleen Sims, Ryan Stickel, and Nicole Walker** who had **GUILTY** verdicts at trial in August.

**Great Work, Prosecutors!**

## MEET ASSISTANT PROSECUTOR STEPHEN NEUMEYER CRIMINAL DIVISION

**Hire Date:** September 2007

**Hometown:** Cuyahoga Falls

**Law Degree:** The University of Akron

**Background:** I have been married for 10 years and we have four kids; I graduated from Springfield High School (the one in Summit County) and attended The University of Akron for my undergraduate degree.

**Little Known Fact:** I took on an F-150 and won... I was walking across the street when I was hit by a Ford F-150 – the truck sustained damage but I did not.

**Most Memorable Case:** While working in the Juvenile Dependency and Neglect Division, a mother was accused of taking drugs and passing out while her young children were wandering around the neighborhood unsupervised. A neighbor called the police. The police responded and were let inside the home by one of the mother's small children. The mother would not wake up when the officers yelled her name while they were in the house. She woke up only when they began shaking her. During the trial the mother fell asleep and woke up when her attorney began to shake her. Mother later admitted to passing out after taking too many prescription drugs that she was addicted to.



## That's Outrageous!

Two murder cases recently in adjacent courtrooms started with the exact same defense. Defense attorneys claimed in opening statements that the defendants were just innocent bystanders who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time....when two people lost their lives.

Kenneth Wilkins, 22, of Akron was an accomplice in the murder of Darrington Griffin, 23. He and an unknown man went to Griffin's house to allegedly buy drugs and Griffin wound up shot to death by the unknown man.

DeAnthony Smith helped to lure a father and shoe salesman to a location where Abdulmahdi Al-Garawi was later found dead. Smith and his co-defendant stole the victim's van and shoes and ran.

The juries disagreed with the "innocent bystander" defense. **Wilkins is serving 18 years to life and Smith is serving 21 years to life for their part in these murders.**

**Coincidence or Outrageous?**