



Sherri Bevan Walsh Summit County Prosecuting Attorney

Issue III

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In This Issue

- Message from Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh
- Murderer Denied Parole
- Meet Assistant Prosecutor Aaron Howell
- Top Cops: Summit County Officers lost or harmed this year
- That's Outrageous: Do you Move Over?

Attention: Help us go GREEN!

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Hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net



Message from the Prosecutor

Teen sexting – sending nude or partially nude photos with a cell phone – is a topic of great concern to parents, teachers, guidance counselors and prosecutors. My office has spoken to over 12,000 youth in Summit County about staying away from the legal and life consequences that come with this behavior.

Summit County Assistant Prosecutor Michael D. Todd recently represented my office and the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association by presenting testimony to the Ohio House of Representatives about proposed legislation to change Ohio's "sexting" law.

While we agree that clarifying our "sexting" law is important, we want to ensure legislators' efforts do not impede our ability to prosecute the most egregious of these cases. Some of the highlights of Assistant Prosecutor Todd's testimony included:

- Most teens know that engaging in sexting is morally wrong, but very few understand the long term consequences of their actions. Being able to tell them there are very serious consequences **does** have an impact on them.
- We have found that the stiffer the **potential** consequences the more likely teens were to view sexting as a serious offense with serious consequences and not engage in the conduct.
- The law should include the potential of having to register as a sex offender and the **possibility** of a felony level conviction for egregious conduct to stress the seriousness of the conduct.
- Decriminalizing sexting and similar actions sends the wrong message to the wrong population for the wrong reason. Ohio County and Juvenile Prosecutors intend to protect the victims of sexting and use their **discretion** to **appropriately** prosecute offenders.

Similarly, several county leaders recently gathered at **Close Up** – which was part of Children Services' Family Child and Awareness Month activities – to discuss the topic of bullying.

My office participated in Close Up and outlined that while our first approach is to work with the schools to resolve bullying problems, we are willing to apply the legal tools we have to put a stop to hurtful bullying. Currently, there is no specific crime in Ohio called “bullying.” Juvenile prosecutors prosecute for Assault, Aggravated Menacing, or Telecommunications Harassment *if* the bullying crime fits these specific charges.

According to Bullying.org, there are three aspects of this hurtful behavior that almost all experts agree on – in bullying there is a **difference in power** between those being hurt and those doing the hurting; it involves hurtful behaviors that are **repeated** and **intentional**; and **bullying** is not about a conflict that needs resolving.

Just like sexting, bullying can have life altering consequences for teens and their families. Without serious legal consequences, we may not be able to put a stop to the most egregious offenders.

I will continue to be a part of the discussions on these very important topics as we determine the best way to reach and stop youth from engaging in these harmful behaviors.

Tough Prosecution: Thomas Gilbert



In the late summer of 1981, parents locked their children indoors in fear of an unknown monster that had brutally raped and murdered a young woman and teenage girl. The murderer – Thomas Gilbert – was convicted in October 1981 of Aggravated Murder and was sentenced to 55 years to Life.

Gilbert was up for parole this month. The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office along with the victims’ families and countless community members spoke out against Gilbert being paroled. **The Ohio Parole Board this week denied Gilbert’s parole stating that he will not be seen again until 2021.**

The fact that Gilbert was scheduled for parole set off alarms throughout Summit County. Thomas Gilbert must never get out of prison; not only because of his threat to the community, but in memory of the young woman and teenage girl he tormented and brutally murdered some 30 years ago.

During the early morning hours of August 12, 1981, 19-year-old Sandy Jo Hogue was working her shift at an all-night convenience store when Gilbert entered. He robbed her, stabbed her, dragged her out of the store, and took her to a desolate area. She raped, stabbed 26 times, and died drowning in her own blood.

On August 14, 1981, Gilbert abducted 14-year-old Joan Shafer as she walked down a suburban street. He took her to a field near a local high school where he raped and then stabbed her to death.

This office will continue to fight against violent criminals being released from prison. Thank you to everyone who wrote letters and made calls to the parole board opposing Gilbert’s release. It made a difference!

The fact that Gilbert was scheduled for parole set off alarms throughout Summit County.

Link: [Ohio Department of Corrections](#)

Link: [Ohio.com on Gilbert](#)

GUILTY AT TRIAL

Congratulations Assistant Prosecutors **Teri Burnside, Greta Johnson, Tom Kroll, Katherine Milane, Greg Peacock, Mike Rickett, Jennie Shuki, Colleen Sims, Brian Stano (3), and Chad VanOrman** who obtained

GUILTY verdicts at trial in March!

More than 150 U.S. law enforcement officers have been killed since 1999 after being struck by vehicles along America's highways, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund.

Meet Assistant Prosecutor Aaron Howell



Hire date: August 2010

Hometown: Canton, OH

Law Degree: University of Akron

Background: Assistant Prosecutor, Stark County Prosecutor's Office 2006-August 2010. Prosecuted Juvenile Delinquency, Adult Felony and Appellate Cases.

Little Known Fact: Played shortstop on Walsh University's baseball team as a freshman and sophomore.

Most Memorable Case: A murder case that involved an armed robbery of a drug dealer that went wrong. Our two eyewitnesses were the drug dealer that lived (who denied dealing drugs), and the Co-Defendant (who gave several different stories about what happened). I reached out to the Defendant's best friend hoping that he knew something about the planned robbery. The friend denied any knowledge of the robbery but admitted he was with the Defendants prior to the robbery. I put the friend on our witness list hoping that the Defendant would react on the jail calls. The Defendant did, and unfortunately the friend's home was shot at a few days later. The friend then came forward and admitted he knew about the planned robbery and also knew where the Defendant disposed of the gun. We put the friend and his family in protective custody until the trial. The friend's testimony sealed the case. The Defendant was found guilty after a jury trial and the Judge sentenced him to 33 years to life.

Top Cops



Jonathon V. Bastock, Stow Police (Died from work-related injury, February 2011)

Captain Dan Stiles, Uniontown Police (Died when vehicle struck him when directing traffic, February 2011)

Patrolman Mark Dodez, Springfield Police (Recovering after driver hit him while he searched the roadway for evidence, April 2011)

Summit County mourns the loss of police officers Bastock and Stiles and is praying for the full-recovery of Patrolman Dodez. Thank you for your service and dedication to the citizens of Summit County.

Thank you, Top Cops!

Move Over America!

When you see officers on our roadways doing their jobs MOVE OVER or SLOW DOWN to protect them...It's the law!

Link: [Move Over America Website](#)

Link: [Ohio Move Over Information](#)

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Link: [Prosecutor - Summit County](#)

53 University Avenue
Akron, OH 44308
(330) 643-2800

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Email Melanie Hart at
Hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net

That's Outrageous!



Move Over or Slow Down to Protect Our Safety Officers

Two of our Top Cops were hit by vehicles. Jarod Dean, of the Boston Heights Police Department, was killed by a car in 2009 when he was picking up debris off the roadway. Tragedies occur when motorists are not cautious around safety officers. Ohio is one of more than 40 states that have **Move Over** laws. These laws require that "motorists move over or slow down when approaching emergency vehicles with their lights activated."

New York recently passed this law and on April 20, of the 75 tickets written, 50 were for violating the Move Over law. When you see officers on our roadways doing their jobs MOVE OVER or SLOW DOWN to protect them...It's the law!

Disobeying the *Move Over* law is Outrageous!

