



December 2013

# News from the Criminal Division

## Message from Prosecutor Sherrri Bevan Walsh

From the time we are young children, we are taught that drugs are bad.

Sadly, not everyone says no to drugs. When people become addicted to drugs, the lives they destroy are not only their own. Drug abuse also wrecks the lives of family and friends of the addict.

It also hurts the people who are robbed, beaten, raped and murdered because of drugs.

Drugs are at the root of many of our cases, even when the charges are not specifically drug-related. Thieves often commit robberies and burglaries to get money to buy drugs. People who are high on drugs or desperate to get more frequently commit violent crimes.

Sadly, these crimes often result in someone's death. One woman recently pleaded guilty to two counts of Involuntary Manslaughter after two men overdosed and died on the heroin she bought them.

However, it is occasionally the defendants themselves whose lives are lost because of drugs. Every year we dismiss cases because the defendant died. Sometimes the death is due to illness or suicide. Occasionally the defendant is murdered by another defendant.

This year we've seen a spike in the number of defendants dead of an overdose or drug-related cause, such as organ failure caused by long-term drug use. This mirrors what is happening throughout Ohio.

My office has dismissed six cases this year because the defendant overdosed on drugs and died while their case

was pending. That number is well over the number for 2012 and previous years.

We agree with the Ohio Attorney General that there is a heroin epidemic in Ohio. Heroin overdose deaths in Summit County more than doubled from 2011 to 2012. This year is projected to be just as bad.

The Attorney General recently announced the creation of a Heroin Unit to fight the crime, addiction and overdose deaths related to heroin.

I applaud the Attorney General's efforts. However, it is a statement from a woman whose daughter died of a heroin overdose that truly resonates with me. The woman reminded parents of the importance of talking to their kids about the availability and dangers of drugs.

As a mom, I want to protect my sons and shield them from the harsh realities of the world in which we live. I don't want to familiarize them with the crime I see every day.

But as parents, it is our duty to keep our children safe. Protecting them doesn't mean hiding from them the potential dangers they face.

Talk with your kids about drugs. You may be surprised by what they know already. By opening up a dialogue, you're telling them they can come to you with questions and problems about drugs and even other issues.

Together we can make this community safer.

Stay safe,



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# 2014 Safety Kids Calendar

Each year I invite Summit County students in grades six through eight to submit a poster for my annual Safety Kids Calendar contest. The Safety Kids Calendar highlights the 12 rules for staying safe:

1. Trust yourself! Don't give in to peer pressure.
2. Don't do drugs.
3. Don't use alcohol.
4. Never play with guns.
5. Don't smoke.
6. Safeguard your information online. Think twice before you post.
7. Don't talk to or go with anyone you don't know.
8. Say NO to unwanted touch.
9. Never tell anyone you are home alone.
10. Say NO to gangs.
11. Stop bullies in their tracks. Always tell an adult.
12. Violence at home is never OK. Your home should be a safe place.

The first place posters are featured in the calendar, on billboards throughout Summit County and on a public service announcement airing on WBNX-TV: The CW.

This year more than 1,300 students submitted posters. Our judges had an especially daunting task of selecting a first, second and third place winner, as well as an honorable mention, for each category.

We announced the winners at an awards ceremony on November 13 at the Akron-Summit County Public Library. Emcees Tim Daugherty from WONE-FM and Sue Wilson from WQMX-FM presented congratulatory certificates and gift cards to winners in each category.

Heather House, an eighth-grader at Tallmadge Middle School, won this year's grand prize. Her colorful poster encourages kids to be themselves and stay away from gangs.



Congratulations to Heather and all of this year's Safety Kids Calendar contest winners!

Would you like a 2014 Safety Kids Calendar? Contact Kristen Arapp at (330) 643-2800 or arapp@prosecutor.summitoh.net.

## Tough Prosecution

These defendants are out of our community for a long time thanks to the hard work of my assistant prosecutors:

### **William B. Dawson, age 22**

- Felonious Assault
- Firearm Specification
- Participating in a Criminal Gang
- Carrying a Concealed Weapon
- Aggravated Menacing
- Possession of Marijuana
- **Sentenced to 18 years in prison**

### **Michael L. Rardon, age 41**

- Burglary (three counts)
- Theft
- Forgery
- **Sentenced to nine years in prison**

## Guilty at Trial in November

All of our trials in November resulted in guilty verdicts. Congratulations to the following assistant prosecutors for obtaining guilty verdicts at trial last month:

**Nik Buckmeier**

**Brian LoPrinzi**

**Teri Burnside**

**Seema Misra**

**Joe Dangelo**

**Jennie Shuki**

**Aaron Howell**

**Brian Stano**

**Tom Kroll**

**Mike Todd**

**Great job, prosecutors!**

**Help us go green!**

If you currently receive this newsletter on paper and would like to receive an electronic version instead, email Melanie Hart at hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net.



# December Top Cop

**Top Cop: Deputy Brian Cutlip and Deputy Mark Arconti, Summit County Sheriff's Office**  
**Nominated By: Assistant Prosecutors Mike Todd and Seema Misra**

The best law enforcement officers always maintain their professionalism, even in the worst of circumstances. Sheriff's Deputies Brian Cutlip and Mark Arconti proved this when faced with a passenger at Akron-Canton Airport who had too much to drink.

Sanford Joseph Lapsley, 31, of New York, and a friend decided to spend their layover at a bar.

Lapsley was drunk by the time he boarded his flight. He started screaming and swearing in the plane's bathroom and was eventually escorted off the plane.

He continued to scream and swear as Deputies Cutlip and Arconti first

tried to book Lapsley on a later flight and then bring him to the Sheriff's Area.

Lapsley tried to escape the deputies but instead fell on his face, injuring his chin and losing a tooth in the process. He spit blood on the deputies when they tried to help him.

The deputies took Lapsley to a hospital to address the injuries he got from falling. At the hospital, Lapsley continued to cause a ruckus and eventually threw his urine from a portable urinal at a wall.

Lapsley was charged with Harassment with a Bodily Substance and Obstructing Official Business,

both felonies of the fifth degree.

A jury found him guilty of both counts on November 22.

Judge Parker will sentence Lapsley on December 30. Lapsley could spend the next three years in prison.

Despite Lapsley's disgusting behavior, Deputies Cutlip and Arconti treated him with professionalism. They held their tempers and ensured the incident was recorded. Without their professionalism, this case could have been very difficult to prosecute.



## Way to go, Deputy Cutlip and Deputy Arconti!

### Agency Spotlight: Akron Summit Community Action, Inc.

Akron Summit Community Action, Inc. helps low-income Summit County residents by providing them with the tools they need to raise themselves out of poverty. These tools include education, training, support and resources.



Programs offered by Akron Summit Community Action include Head Start; Energy Assistance; Emergency Services for food, clothing, utilities and other necessities; and the Foster Grandparent Program, in which low-income senior citizens mentor youth with special

needs.

Akron Summit Community Action is also the Summit County sponsor for Circles, a national campaign that pairs low-income people with financially stable

community members. The pairs work together to set and achieve goals to not only overcome financial obstacles but to also address community barriers to poverty reduction.

Starting in January, low and middle income residents can get their taxes prepared and electronically filed for free through the Akron Summit Earned Income Tax Program.

In addition to serving individual residents and families, Akron Summit Community Action seeks to improve conditions within the community that would reduce or even eradicate poverty. The agency does this through advocacy, community leadership and education.

Thank you, Akron Summit Community Action, Inc., for all that you do to improve the lives of Summit County residents!

To learn more about the programs and services Akron Summit Community Action offers or to learn how to get involved, visit [www.ascainc.org](http://www.ascainc.org).



# Meet an Assistant Prosecutor: Jamie Syx



**Hire Date:** September 2013

**Title:** Assistant Prosecutor, Child Support Enforcement Agency

**Hometown:** Munroe Falls, OH

**Fun Fact:** I listen to Christmas music all year long. It is my favorite holiday!

**Education:** I have a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Kent State University and a law degree from The University of Akron.

**Background:** I worked as a paralegal specialist in the Garnishment Operations Directorate for the federal government while I attended law school.

**Job Duties:** I prosecute civil contempt cases for the Child Support Enforcement Agency.

**Why I Wanted to Join the Prosecutor's Office:** I have always wanted to be a prosecutor. It is a position that can make a positive impact on people's lives and one that I and my family can be proud of.

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## Holiday Safety Tips

The holidays are a time for visiting with loved ones and giving thanks. Unfortunately, it is also a prime time for criminal activity. While we're enjoying the beauty of the season, criminals are picking their targets. Here are some tips to protect you and your family.

- Doing a lot of shopping? Lock your purchases in your trunk or somewhere else in your car where they are not visible to passersby.
- It's OK to say no. Scam artists take advantage of the generosity people feel during the holidays. If a stranger approaches asking for assistance and you get a funny feeling, don't give them money or other assistance. Direct them instead to the police.
- Want to donate to a charity? Make sure you're donating to a true charity and not a scam artist by visiting the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance at [www.BBB.org/us/Charity](http://www.BBB.org/us/Charity) or GuideStar at [www.GuideStar.org](http://www.GuideStar.org).
- Take a close look at your bank and credit card accounts. See a purchase that doesn't look familiar? Contact your financial institution.
  - Did you get some amazing gifts? Hide the packaging in your trash and keep the details off Facebook.
  - Speaking of Facebook, don't broadcast your travel plans on social media. Many thieves use social media to find empty houses to burglarize.



**Avery and I and everyone at the Summit County Prosecutor's Office wish you a happy and safe holiday season. May 2014 bring you much joy.**

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