



October 2013

News from the Criminal Division

Message from Prosecutor Sherrri Bevan Walsh

You've probably noticed a lot of pink lately. From T-shirts to cupcakes to NFL players' sweatbands, the U.S. seems to be inundated with pink items to draw attention to breast cancer. Fighting and curing breast cancer -- and all cancers -- is certainly a worthy goal.

But the purple of Domestic Violence Awareness, which is also recognized throughout October, gets lost amid all that pink.

We've come a long way since 1987, when the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was observed. However, domestic violence is still misunderstood and underreported.

According to a study by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in four women will experience domestic violence at some point in her life. Women in their early 20s are most likely to be a victim of nonfatal intimate partner violence.

But it isn't only women who suffer. Approximately 15 percent of domestic violence victims are men.

Children are also affected.

A large number of people who abuse their intimate partners also abuse the children

in the home. And witnessing domestic violence makes boys twice as likely to abuse their partners and children.

My office takes domestic violence seriously. We have a group of prosecutors devoted entirely to handling domestic violence cases. These prosecutors understand the unique dynamics of domestic violence.

People who abuse their intimate partners are typically perpetuating a cycle of violence they've known their entire lives. We often find that these defendants grew up in a home with violence.

The Summit County Felony Domestic Violence Court, which my office helped to create, works to help defendants learn that violence toward their partners is not the answer. Through an individualized case plan of intensive supervision, drug and alcohol and/or mental health treatment, group counseling and education, our partners hope to reduce the likelihood that defendants will re-offend.

If you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship, there are many organizations available to help. Locally you can call the Battered Women's Shelter of Summit & Medina Counties at (888) 395-4357 for immediate assistance.

Stay safe,

Upcoming Self-Defense Classes

Don't worry if you missed either of last month's self-defense classes! We have another one coming up in just a few weeks.

For women of all ages:

Tuesday, October 29

6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Lincoln Elementary School gym

3131 W. Bailey Road

Cuyahoga Falls

The class is FREE! No registration required. For more information, call my office at (330) 643-2800.



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Improvements in Child Support

My Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) is continuously working to improve services for its clients. Our goal is to make it as easy as possible for parents to provide and receive the support needed to help their children thrive.

In January, CSEA director Jennifer Bheam was elected president of the Ohio CSEA Directors' Association (OCDA). As president, Bheam is aware of trends and best practices in CSEAs across the state. She is also influential in legislative efforts affecting child support.

In her role as director of Summit County's CSEA and president of OCDA, Bheam also works closely with the state's Office of Child Support.

Through a combination of Bheam's close involvement with other CSEA directors across the state, a motivated team and a number of internal improvements, our services continue to improve. I am proud to say that the Summit County CSEA once again was one of the top-performing metro counties in Ohio in the areas of paternity establishment, support establishment, current support collections and arrears collections.



Additionally, some big changes are happening for clients both at the state and county levels. All of these are designed to make it easier to access your account, update your information and make and receive payments.

One major change made to better protect the privacy of our clients is that CSEA employees are no longer able to discuss case information with clients via email. Instead, clients can communicate with CSEA caseworkers through the state's secure website at www.jfs.ohio.gov/ocs. This change allows us to ensure we only discuss case specifics with the custodial and non-custodial parent. To register for the Office of Child Support's Customer Service Web Portal, please go to www.jfs.ohio.gov/ocs and click on the registration link.

Clients can also use the Web Portal to fully access their account online. This makes it easier and faster to update information and track payments in real time.

Within the next few months, Summit County CSEA will launch an app to enable clients to access important information right from their phones.

Tough Prosecution

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

Bearl Penix, age 67

- Rape (two counts)
- Attempted Rape
- Gross Sexual Imposition
- **Tier III sex offender**
- **Sentenced to life in prison**
- **Eligible for parole at the age of 77**

Joseph K. Burnett, age 28

- Aggravated Robbery
- Kidnapping
- Having Weapons Under Disability
- Firearm Specification
- **Sentenced to 15 years in prison**

Guilty at Trial in September

Congratulations to the following assistant prosecutors for obtaining guilty verdicts at trial last month:

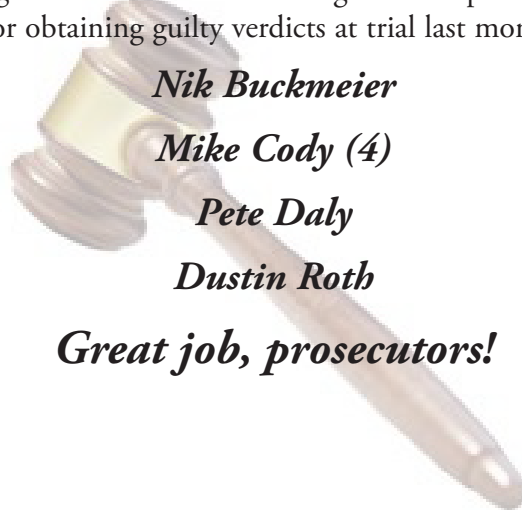
Nik Buckmeier

Mike Cody (4)

Pete Daly

Dustin Roth

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.



October Top Cop

Top Cop: Detective Angela Paonessa, University of Akron Police Department

Nominated By: Assistant Prosecutor Mike Cody



Detective Angela Paonessa of the University of Akron Police Department was the lead detective for a multi-jurisdictional task force that investigated complaints involving the sale of illegal drugs from the Odd Corner store on South Exchange Street in March 2012. That task force included law enforcement officers from the Akron Police Department, the University of Akron Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

In early March 2012, people started filing complaints with UAPD and APD that the Odd Corner was selling bath salts.

Bath salts are a type of drug that produces effects similar to methamphetamine. A state law went

into effect in October 2011 banning the sale and possession of these drugs.

After a preliminary investigation and surveillance of the store, Detective Paonessa made an undercover purchase of bath salts on March 21, 2012.

Bath salts are sold by different names at each store depending on which lab manufactured the drug. While standing in line to buy bath salts, Detective Paonessa had to listen carefully to the man in line ahead of her to learn the name of the bath salts sold at the Odd Corner was "Joy."

When Detective Paonessa bought the bath salts, she chatted with the sales clerk to prove that he knew exactly what he was selling. She then

coordinated the arrest of the man who had been in line ahead of her.

Detective Paonessa and the task force enacted a search warrant for the store two days later. Among the evidence collected were daily sales receipts for October 19, 2011 through March 23, 2012. Detective Paonessa reviewed and summarized the monthly and daily sales of Joy, which were key pieces of evidence during trial.

Four people, including the store's owner, were charged with various drug offenses as a result of this investigation. A jury found the defendants guilty of all indicted charges.

Way to go, Detective Paonessa!

Special Thanks To...

Natasha Branam, a computer forensic specialist with the Bureau of Criminal Investigations (BCI) in Richfield.

In September 2011, a Stow woman found what she believed to be child pornography on her family's computer. The Stow Police Department executed a search warrant and submitted the computer's hard drive to BCI for analysis.

Branam was assigned to the case. She found so many images of naked and partially-clothed children of all ages that she asked a prosecutor to provide direction to narrow the search.

During the two years that my office worked on this case, Branam spent innumerable hours reviewing and analyzing the evidence, meeting with prosecutors and

preparing multiple reports. She spent a lot of time explaining the evidence and helping the prosecutor to prepare for trial. Branam was even hospitable to the defense expert, who made several trips to BCI to review the evidence.

Through all of this, Branam proved herself very knowledgeable and experienced in the field of computer forensics.

The defendant, 47-year-old David Hill, pleaded guilty on October 7 to Pandering Obscenity Involving a Minor, a felony of the second degree; two counts of Pandering Obscenity Involving a Minor, a felony of the fourth degree; and six counts of Illegal Use of a Minor in Nude Materials, a felony of the fifth degree. He will be sentenced on November 12.

Thanks for your hard work, Natasha Branam!



Meet an Assistant Prosecutor: Jen Allen



Hire Date: August 2013

Title: Assistant Prosecutor

Hometown: Macedonia, OH

Fun Fact: I have gone skydiving. It was fun, but I would never do it again.

Education: I earned my bachelor's and master's degrees in Social Work and my Juris Doctorate from the University of Akron.

Background: Before joining the Summit County Prosecutor's Office, I was a social worker in treatment foster care.

Job Duties: As an assistant prosecutor in the Juvenile Division's dependency and neglect division, I represent Summit County Children Services when complaints of abuse, neglect and/or dependency are filed.

Why I Wanted to Join the Prosecutor's Office: I specifically wanted to work in the dependency and neglect division so that I could connect my social work background with my legal career.

Have a Question?

Do you have a question about the criminal justice system? Are you confused about what the grand jury is or why defendants always plead "not guilty" at their arraignment?

We're working on a video Q&A project and want to know what interests you. Post your question on our Facebook page or send a question to wiesner@prosecutor.summitoh.net.

Agency Spotlight: ADM Board

The County of Summit Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board (ADM Board) works to ensure that effective and affordable treatment and prevention services are available to Summit County residents with mental illness and/or alcohol or drug addiction.

Alcoholism, drug addiction and mental illness are real medical conditions that can affect anyone. Recovery is possible through a variety of treatment and support services. The continuum of care funded by the ADM Board includes preventative and treatment services, housing supports, employment assistance, transportation, respite, peer support, recreation and educational services.

The ADM Board helps thousands of uninsured or

under-insured people get the help they need on an ongoing basis. More than 75 percent of the Board's financial resources come from a levy approved by Summit County voters.

The ADM Board continuum of care runs throughout the lifespan, from services and programs for toddlers to older adults. More than 50,000 people are touched by ADM-funded services each year, and every community in Summit County has benefited from an agency or program funded by the ADM Board.

Thank you for all that you do!

To learn more, please visit www.admboard.org.



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