



FROM THE OFFICE OF  
SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR  
**SHERRI BEVAN WALSH**

A MESSAGE FROM PROSECUTOR WALSH  
**ARRIVE ALIVE RETURNS!**

It has been a long, slow journey. We are finally starting to see the relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions as more and more people are getting vaccinated.

Maybe you've noticed it recently. Crowds are returning with people heading outside, interacting with each other. Restaurants, bars, and other businesses are picking back up. It seems like we're getting back to what life was like prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Life in the Summit County Prosecutor's Office hasn't really changed that much. We are still working hard to hold criminals accountable and keep the community safe. But the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a bit of a slow-down for the courts.

My office currently has nearly 90 pending homicide cases. This has caused a significant impact on victims who have had to wait for justice to be served. As cases slowly begin their way back through the justice system, we are very aware of the continued need to support crime victims every step of the way.

I also feel it is important to continue to live up to my office's mission of making Summit County a better and safer place to live. That is why, after more than a year, I am bringing back our Arrive Alive program.

I started Arrive Alive in Summit County three years ago to help keep drunk drivers off the roads. We provided free cab rides and discounted rides through LYFT during certain holidays. I then paused the program last year since most people were staying home and physically distancing due to the pandemic. But this coming July 4th holiday we are once again working with LYFT to provide discounted rides anywhere in Summit County for those who drink alcohol. We'll announce details of how you can get a special code to use as we get closer to the holiday. Keep an eye on our Facebook and Instagram

accounts for the latest information.

I'm excited that people are once again gathering, whether it's with family or out with friends at a bar or restaurant. I'm also pleased many people have decided to be vaccinated to help protect themselves and their loved ones. I know from my own personal experience of getting COVID that this is something you don't want to mess with. In fact, I'm still dealing with some of the effects of the disease months later.

I cannot stress this enough. Please remember to take precautions when out in public. If you have not received the vaccine, please remember to wear a mask and do your best to maintain physical distance from strangers.

As always, stay safe.

*Sherri B. Walsh*



SPONSORED BY:  
**SHERRI BEVAN WALSH**  
SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR

**A FREE Ride Home in Summit County**  
July 3, 6pm to July 5, 2021, 6pm

Celebrate the holidays responsibly!  
Have a designated sober driver or use **Arrive Alive**.



Use **lyft** for a FREE ride home in Summit County  
**USE CODE:**  
SCPOAA07042021

*The life you save may be your own!*

For more information contact:  
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# IN THE COMMUNITY

It's June! We finally made it to warmer weather. With those backyard barbecues and lazy summer weekends also comes the danger of summer storms. Strong thunderstorms could knock down trees and cause significant damage to your home and surrounding property. But beware before you contact a company to clean up the mess.



The Summit County Prosecutor's Office has prosecuted several cases where a person has scammed a homeowner out of money by either not doing work or causing more damage.

So what should you do if you need help removing debris?

- Don't pay cash in advance of the work being completed. Legitimate tree service companies will provide written estimates and be registered with the state.
- Call your insurance company immediately.
- Document the damage and take pictures or videos if possible.
- Obtain three to four estimates and compare based on the same specifications and make sure the tree service has all of the proper equipment to perform the job quoted.
- Get everything in writing. Make sure the agreement includes the business's information, project details, estimated start and completion date and the price. The contract should also be clear as to how clean-up will be handled. Only pay the business in full once the job is completely done.
- Confirm the tree service is properly insured and check registration with the Ohio Attorney General's Office at 800.282.0515.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau of Akron for reviews on businesses — <https://www.bbb.org/local-bbb/bbb-of-akron>

Remember, don't be pressured by someone knocking on your door demanding the work needs to be done immediately. Take your time and make the right decision!

## TOUGH PROSECUTIONS

These defendants will be locked up for a lengthy period of time thanks to our dedicated Assistant Prosecutors:

### Ricardo Marshall, 37

- Murder
- **15 Years to LIFE IN PRISON**

### Prentice Smith, 45

- Rape
- Kidnapping
- **81 Years to LIFE IN PRISON**

## HELPING THOSE IN NEED

The Summit County Prosecutor's Office is very proud to help those in need in our community.

Several times throughout the year, Prosecutor's Office employees help put together meals at OPEN M. Just a few weeks ago employees gathered to provide lunches for an Akron area neighborhood.

OPEN M began in 1968 with a mission to provide pathways out of poverty by feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and strengthening the community.



Thank you to all who were able to help. Thank you to

OPEN M for continuing the mission of providing for the community and working hard to lift people out of poverty to give them a chance to be successful.



# AVERY'S CORNER

# AMBASSADORS' CORNER

As much as I love helping my hooman friends, I want to make sure my furry friends are taken care of too. June is an important month. Not only is it warm enough to go outside and play, but it's also a time to think about animal rights.

The third week of June is Animal Rights Awareness Week. Each year the week focuses on education as well as provides tools to support animal rights. The campaign focuses on advocating for the humane treatment of animals, including pets, farm animals, and wildlife.



I'm sad. One of my furry friends crossed the Rainbow Bridge.

That's Summer. You may have seen Summer around. Summer was a therapy dog who visited many places—dressed in sunglasses and costumes.



We met lots of times. Summer always brought a smile to everyone she met, including me!

I last saw Summer in February when we were together in Green where a park was named after our hooman friend Dick Goddard.

There's a picture of me and Summer on the door where I work. I always liked being around her.



Summer was 16 years old and helped lots and lots of hoomans. Her friends in Barberton are honoring her by having a "Celebrate Summer" event on June 19th at Barberton High School. Safe travels Summer!

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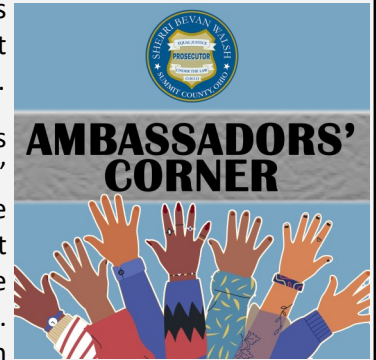
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June is Pride Month, a time for celebration for members of the LGBTQ+ community. It is also a time to remember the June 28, 1969 uprising in New York City following a raid by police on the Stonewall Inn, a popular gay bar in the City's Greenwich Village neighborhood.

However, many people, including people of color, continue to struggle with discrimination for being part of the LGBTQ+ community.

Hayden Gilbert, who's part of our office's Ambassadors for Equity and Social Justice committee, spoke with Akron resident Eli Hawkins. Eli, who identifies as a gay CIS male, talked about what Pride Month means to him.



"Pride Month to me means exactly what it says in its title," says Eli. "Being given the opportunity in several different places around the world, to be an open and proud person. Proud in the fact that we can say, without a doubt, that we can and are able to live in our own truths.:"

Hayden—"What unique experiences do you face as a Black man in the LGBTQ+ community?"

Eli—"Unfortunately, stereotypes drive a lot of our society's misconceptions about how a person should act when they identify as a gay male, let alone a black gay male. While I can't honestly say I grew up being bullied or taunted because of the way I carried myself in those formidable years, what I can say is that I have had many conversations with many different people who say things like "OH I WOULD HAVE NEVER KNOWN", "YOU'RE TOO CUTE TO BE GAY", or "OH OK.... SO, YOU'RE GGAAYYY, YOU'RE JUST NOT GAY GAY..."

Hayden—"Juneteenth, a.k.a Freedom Day, is also in June. How do you think Juneteenth and Pride Month might influence people regardless of their race or sexual orientation?"

Eli—"Being able to relate and understand both celebrations, I honestly feel like it all boils down to the fact that we are all human, pretty much looking for the exact same things. Love, acceptance, recognition, equality, RESPECT."

Our thanks to Eli Hawkins for answering Hayden's questions and providing insight into your life experiences.



**Help Us Go Green!**

Contact Melanie Hart at [hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net](mailto:hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net) to receive this newsletter by e-mail



# TOP COPs

## AKRON'S SEXUAL ASSAULT KIT INITIATIVE UNIT

Justice delayed is not justice denied. The Summit County Prosecutor's Office strives to bring justice to crime victims and their families and hold criminals accountable.



**SAKI**  
SEXUAL ASSAULT  
KIT INITIATIVE  
Reform. Accountability. Justice.

However, it was the work of the officers who first gathered evidence all those years ago which eventually led to a suspect and a conviction.

However, that does not always happen in a short amount of time. Sometimes it takes years for a conviction. That is why this month's TOP COP is Akron's Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Unit—or ASAKI.

The unit is made up of members of the Akron Police Department, the Summit County Prosecutor's Office, members of the Rape Crisis Center of Medina and Summit Counties, and the Summit County Victim Assistance Program. It's mission is to review unsolved rape and sexual assault cases less than 20 years old where no suspect was ever charged.

The ASAKI unit's work has led to the convictions of three individuals. Prentice Smith was sentenced to LIFE IN PRISON earlier this year after being convicted of four separate rapes dating back 20 years.

Akron Officers Agostino Micozzi and Daniel Radca started by believing. Following the first incident 22 years ago, they took the victim's account seriously and conducted a thorough investigation, speaking to a number of witnesses. They also made sure the crime scene unit processed the scene.

One of the most important things they did was write a thorough report, detailing what each individual said. There were no body cams back then, so it was even more important to get all the details. Those detailed reports were especially helpful when preparing for trial. When it came time for trial, we were fortunate both were willing to meet with us and prepare for trial.

Thank you as well to Summit County Prosecutors Jennie Shuki and Brian Stano, and Sexual Assault Specialist Mickey Valdez for their work with the ASAKI Unit.

## JUNETEENTH

Juneteenth, short for June 19th, is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. President Biden just signed a law making Juneteenth a national holiday.

The day commemorates the moment in 1865 when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas to signal the end of the Civil War, two years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.



Confederate General Robert E. Lee had surrendered at Appomattox in April of 1865. However, slavery in Texas remained unchanged until the order was read that all slaves are free. The following December, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution was passed.

Today Juneteenth commemorates African American freedom and emphasizes education and achievement.

## AMAZON SCAMS

We've noticed a number of news reports lately about scams involving Amazon.

Recently, several Northeast Ohio residents were victimized after receiving a call from someone stating there was a problem with their Amazon account. A number of people lost several thousand dollars.

The scam usually goes like this: you get a phone call from someone saying there is some sort of fraudulent activity on your account. The caller asks you to purchase gift cards and give the caller the information to make up the difference.

Remember, you can never pay bills or fix your Amazon account with gift cards. That's the first red flag to avoid.

If you do have an Amazon account, make sure you check it regularly. That way you'll be ready if you receive a random call about fraud on your account.



# WHY I'M A PROSECUTOR

## KATHERINE BERCIK WHITE

"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.

Katherine Bercik White, who works in our Child Support Enforcement Agency, talks about why being a prosecutor is so important to her.



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

The best part of being a prosecutor is having the ability to help someone get back on their feet, whether it's directing them to local services or helping them get a job.

### • WHY DID YOU BECOME A PROSECUTOR?

I became an attorney because I was interested in family law. I initially did not want to be a prosecutor because I thought it only focused on criminal law.

Then I found out about the prosecutor office's work with the Child Support Enforcement Agency and how we fight for families. I really enjoy the idea of working for a public agency and working as a public servant as opposed to working as a private attorney.

When I found out about that opportunity, then I was interested in being a prosecutor.

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

The most difficult part of being a prosecutor, especially with the Child Support Enforcement Agency, is that you are dealing with the dynamics of a family. That involves many broken hearts, bruised egos, money, and children. That can bring out a lot of emotions and you will also see a lot of mental health and addiction issues. It can be a challenge not to have those emotions stay with you.

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

## NATIONAL PTSD AWARENESS MONTH

Trauma impacts people differently. That is why the Summit County Prosecutor's Office has hosted trainings on trauma and provided information for employees on the impact of trauma.

June is National PTSD Awareness Month. The month is dedicated to raising awareness about the condition and how to access treatment. June 27th is also National PTSD Awareness Day.

According to the National Center for PTSD, between seven and eight percent of the population will experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during their lifetime.

Men, women, and children can experience PTSD as a result of trauma in their lives. Events due to crime, combat, accidents, disasters, and abuse are just a few of the causes of PTSD. No matter the reason, PTSD is treatable, but not everyone seeks treatment. There are resources available to help diagnose PTSD and get help. There is no shame in seeking assistance.



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