



FROM THE OFFICE OF
SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR
SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

A MESSAGE FROM PROSECUTOR WALSH **SILENCING THE SCAMMERS**

My office works hard to keep track of the latest scams and crimes to better inform the community and hopefully keep you safe.

It is difficult since criminals, especially those online, spend all their time thinking up schemes to separate you from your money. As my office does more safety speeches in the community, we find many are either victims of scams or have received calls or emails from potential scammers.

That's why these scams are still around. The criminals only need one person to fall for their scheme. That's why we always remind you to think before you act when it comes to getting a phone call or email.

The internet can be a great place to buy things and connect with people. But it's also a place where scammers thrive. Online fraud costs consumers about \$770 million a year and the losses are only growing.

One of the biggest times of the year for scammers is Valentine's Day. Unfortunately people looking for love are finding it in all the wrong places. According to the Federal Trade Commission, romance scams last year accounted for a record \$547 million dollars in lost money.

That total is a nearly 80-percent jump from 2020. On average, the victim of a romance scam lost around \$2,400.

Scammers have a variety of ways to reach people, from phishing emails to dating apps and even texts.

Even last minute shoppers could become victims as they desperately search for the right gift for their loved one.

Many people have a tendency just to blindly click links online, without really stopping to consider if it's a legitimate entity. If you're on social media, it could be worse. A number of people have reported buying something they saw in an ad but it never arrived. Unless it's a company you know, it would be smart to pause and do some searching about 'who' they are, and how well they perform.

Additional safety tips include using a separate email address to separate the 'real you' from a scammer if the business you're buying from is not legitimate.

Also, closely track your finances and keep detailed records of your transactions. If you see any suspicious activity, contact your bank, financial institution, or credit card company immediately.

If you use online payments like PayPal, Venmo, or CashApp, you might be able to stop payment if you take action right away. However, by the time you realize you've been scammed it's probably too late.

I've mentioned these tips before but it's always a good reminder:

- Never send money or give out personal information such as credit card numbers, bank account numbers, dates of birth, or Social Security numbers to unfamiliar companies or unknown persons.
- Many scams involve victims purchasing iTunes Apple gift cards. Utilities and companies will not accept payment with iTunes Apple gift cards. If someone calls demanding the purchase of iTunes Apple gift cards to pay a bill, it is a scam.

As always, stay safe.

Sherri B. Walsh



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CHILD SUPPORT HONOR

Prosecutor Walsh’s Child Support Enforcement Agency is once again being honored by the State of Ohio for outstanding performance.

Prosecutor Walsh’s Child Support Enforcement Agency was recognized in 2021 for the following awards for Outstanding Performance:

- Best Performance Paternity Establishment in the Metro Caseload Division
- Best Performance Collections on Current Support in the Metro Caseload Division
- Best Performance Collections on Cases with Arrears in the Metro Caseload Division
- Best Overall Performance in the Metro Caseload Division

This is the sixth year in a row Prosecutor Walsh’s Child Support Enforcement Agency has received the Best Overall Performance in the Metro Caseload Division from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Office of Child Support.

The Metro Caseload Division includes the six largest counties in Ohio: Cuyahoga, Hamilton, Franklin, Lucas, Montgomery, and Summit.

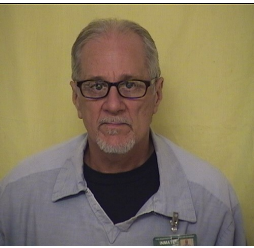
The Summit County Child Support Enforcement Agency collects over \$74 million annually and handles more than 43,000 child support cases. Each year it establishes paternity or support orders for nearly 4,000 children.



DONALD WEBB DENIED PAROLE

The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office works hard to hold criminals accountable. We fight for victims at parole hearings if the prisoner is still a threat to the community

Last month, the Ohio Parole Board denied parole for convicted killer Donald Webb.



In August of 1975, Webb, was out on parole when he and four others went to rob tires from an Akron trucking company. Akron Police Officer Gary Yost was off-duty working security at the company and attempted to stop the men. Webb and the four others beat Officer Yost then shot him.



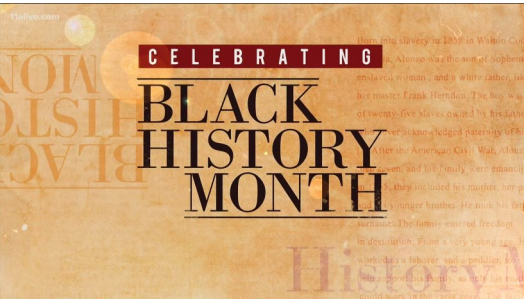
Webb’s next parole hearing is scheduled for 2029.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

In honor of Black History Month, we would like to recognize Carter G. Woodson (December 19, 1875 – April 3, 1950) who is known as the “Father of Black History.”

In February of 1926 Mr. Woodson launched the Celebration of “Negro History Week” the second week of February. It was chosen because it coincided with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Mr. Woodson believed education and increasing social and professional contacts could reduce racism.

In 1976, President Gerald Ford decreed Black History Month a national observance. Ford said in his message, “We can seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.”





AVERY'S CORNER

AMBASSADORS' CORNER

I got to meet some new friends at work.

One was a sweet boy. We did all sorts of fun things together, like lying on the floor and playing games. He even had a stuffed animal which looked like me! He even put it on my head for a silly picture.



I'm glad I was able to sit with him and help him say what happened.



When I'm not at the office I like running around outside. I know lots of humans don't like the cold and snow—but I love it!!!

I spent so much time running and jumping in my backyard. You can barely tell me from the snow!

But make sure you are careful outside in the cold. Only let your four-legged friend outside for a short period of time.



At a recent meeting of the Ambassadors of Equity and Social Justice, a guest speaker discussed redlining in America. Redlining is a discriminatory practice which places certain services, typically financial, out of reach for citizens based on their race or ethnicity.



Additional research on this matter is quite disturbing.

According to a 2017 story by NPR, between the 1930's and 1960's, many companies, including some Federal agencies, enacted policies which segregated People of Color from White Americans.

Insurance companies felt if black people moved into what had been predominately white neighborhoods, it would be more expensive to insure the white homeowners. The Federal Housing Administration drove the wedge between black and white Americans even further by refusing to federally insure any home loans in or near black communities. The agency even refused to give insurance or federal funding to some developers if they built a housing development in or too close to a Black neighborhood. This was a policy of the Federal Housing Administration known as **Redlining**. If a builder did build too close to a Black neighborhood, they were required to build a 6-foot-high wall around the development so Blacks could not enter.

It was the belief of the Federal Housing Administration that any Black person buying a home in a white development would drive down the price of the surrounding properties. It was also later determined that Black people usually paid more for the same house as a white person, which drove the surrounding property values up. The consequences of redlining in America persist today; funding for schools and resource allocation for communities is driven by property value. As our country considers how to build an equitable future for all Americans, we all have a vital role in dismantling harmful policies and biases that perpetuate the disparities for communities across the country.

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Contact Melanie Hart at hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net to receive this newsletter by e-mail



TOP COP

INVESTIGATOR CLAUDE McCUTCHEON

This month, we are saying good luck and happy retirement to someone who has served Summit County with dignity and grace for 50 years. Summit County Prosecutor's Office Investigator Claude McCutcheon is retiring at the end of the month.



Over his years of serving Summit County, Claude encountered many different situations. One that sticks out is when he was on patrol early one Christmas morning and saw a car weaving. He pulled over the driver, thinking the driver was drunk. It turned out the driver was just tired after working the overnight shift. Claude followed him home to make sure he got home safely.

Claude began his career with the Summit County Sheriff's Office right after serving in the Marine Corps in the late 1960's. A true servant leader, and a man of deep faith, Claude wanted to do three things after leaving the Marine Corps: go into law enforcement, teach, and be involved in the clergy.

Claude was able to accomplish all three, first working patrol with the Sheriff's Office, then teaching in the academy, and serving as Chaplain in the Sheriff's Office.

Amanda Burnette, who oversees the Prosecutor's Office Investigative Unit, said "Claude was the commander in my academy when I attended through the Sheriff's office in 1999-2000. He has always been the most patient, kindhearted, genuine person. Our academy was a handful to say the least and he handled what some of those cadets threw at him never losing his calm disposition. Always to be admired and will be missed."

Claude says if you do something you love you never work a day in your life. He says he has enjoyed just about every day of work with the Sheriff's Office and the Summit County Prosecutor's Office. He says working in law enforcement isn't a career, it's a calling.

That is the perfect example of Claude—always giving of himself to help others. Prosecutor Walsh hired Claude in 2004 after he retired from the Sheriff's Office. She says "I have never met a kinder person than Claude. In all the years he has worked here, every time I have seen him he has had a smile on his face. Despite several health issues he and his family have faced over the years, he always has a positive attitude. I wish him all the best with his retirement although I am so sad that he is leaving us!"

As for what's next, Claude isn't sure. He's definitely planning on spending time in warmer weather and that his snow shoveling days are behind him! Besides that, he gets to spend more time with his wife of more than 50 years as well as his children and grandchildren.

Congratulations Claude and enjoy your retirement!

HAPPY RETIREMENT CHRIS MELLION!

As the Summit County Prosecutor's Office says thank you and goodbye to Claude McCutcheon, another member of our family is retiring. Secretary Chris Mellion is leaving the office after more than 36 years!

Chris was hired in 1985 as a courtroom secretary in our Criminal Division and currently works in our Civil Division.

Chris has seen a lot during her time at the Prosecutor's Office, and enjoyed all the time she spent here. She says she'll miss the prosecutors discussing the ins and outs of their cases.

As for retirement, Chris says the first thing she'll do is clean her house! After that, it's relaxing with a book or painting and drawing—oh and sleeping in!

CONGRATULATIONS CHRIS—AND ENJOY YOUR RETIREMENT!!



IN THE COMMUNITY

As 2022 continues, more and more COVID restrictions are being lifted. That is allowing Summit County Prosecutor's Office employees to get back in the community to speak with local groups about being safe.

Recently, Community Outreach Prosecutor Tania Nemer led discussions with local senior groups and provided tips on avoiding scams and being safe in the community.

Tania was joined by Take Me Home Coordinator Leslie Knoblauch at Hudson's City Hall at the City's Senior Advisory Committee meeting. Tania provided vital safety information, including ways to minimize a person's chances of becoming a victim. Just being more aware of your surroundings can significantly decrease your chances of being a victim of a crime.

Thanks to Hudson's Senior Advisory Committee for inviting us to your meeting!



Tania was back in Hudson for another senior safety speech, but this time she brought a special friend. Avery, the Summit County Prosecutor's Office facility dog came along.

Avery's handler Melanie Hart discussed the role Avery plays in helping crime victims, especially children. Avery has assisted nearly 260 victims since coming to the Prosecutor's Office in August of 2013.

Avery sits with victims when they come to the office to meet with prosecutors and investigators. He calms them which makes it easier for them to provide details on what happened to them.

Avery can also accompany people to court. He sits by their side as they testify.



BE HEART HEALTHY!

February is American Heart Month. First started in 1964, American Heart Month teaches us the ways we can help reduce our risk of heart disease.

Always check with your doctor as to the best way to treat any heart condition.

Here are a few signs you may be at risk for heart disease.

- **High blood pressure.** Millions of people in the United States have high blood pressure, even those in their 40s and 50s. If you are one of them, make sure to have it under control.

- **High cholesterol, diabetes, and obesity** are all conditions that can increase your risk for heart disease. If you have any of these risks, work on eating healthy and getting some physical activity a few times a week.

- **Vaping.** Over 35 million adults in America are smokers and thousands of young people are picking up the habit daily. If you vape or smoke, do your best to quit or cut down. It's what's best for your health.



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