

CIRCUIT ATTORNEY'S COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Our Mission: To Pursue Justice For All Citizens Within the Highest Standards of Ethical Behavior and Professionalism



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Help Combat Crimes

- If You See or Hear Suspicious Activity, Call the Police -- Trust Your Instinct!
- If You Witness a Crime, Call 911 Immediately, and Remember Key Details
- Get to Know Your Neighbors
- Get to Know Your Neighborhood Police Officers
- Come to Court and the Warrant Office when You Witness or Are the Victim of a Crime

MESSAGE FROM JENNIFER M. JOYCE

Property crimes threaten not only residents' immediate sense of security but also the City of St. Louis' long-term ability to grow. Homeowners frustrated over insurance premiums, damage to facilities and development costs could choose to move their activities out of our City. The combined impact of property crimes



Jennifer M. Joyce
Circuit Attorney

costs our City greatly. Repeat offenders commit most property crimes. These serial burglars, chronic con artists and professional thieves cost the City untold millions of dollars not just in direct losses to their actual victims but also in the loss of opportunity for our City as it seeks to grow. Unfortunately, some within the criminal justice system label these offenders as non-violent as a means of implying that their crimes are not as serious as a robber or a rapist. The Circuit Attorney's Office knows differently.

In the beginning of 2010, I reorganized my felony trial staff and included a new team whose sole focus was to work on property crimes. This team of 7 lawyers and

__investigators works to ensure that these chronic "non-violent" offenders are held accountable for the actual devastation they cause. The Property Crimes Unit handles property-related crimes ranging from burglars to brick thieves and car thieves to con men. The property crimes' team works with victims to obtain restitution for their losses whenever possible.

The Fall 2010 issue will discuss the work of the Property Crimes Unit, feature some information on past prosecutions and give you information on how the criminal justice system works to bring justice to criminals.

THE PROPERTY CRIMES UNIT

Led by Assistant Circuit Attorney Martin Minnegerode, the Property Crimes Unit prosecutes burglaries, thefts (including car, copper and brick thefts), forgeries and other property-related offenses. At any given time, the team is working on 500-700 cases. The unit also handles numerous concealed weapons cases.

Created by Circuit Attorney Jennifer Joyce in 2010, the Property Crimes Unit is founded with the knowl-

edge that a specialized team of attorneys and investigators working together and with the community would enhance how justice is served to those who break State laws. By focusing on property crimes, the team keeps up to date on crime trends and issues in the City. They have a thorough knowledge of the law specific to holding repeat and chronic thieves accountable. The group works hard to get victims' financial restitution.

The unit's attorneys also collaborate with the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department. Several attend community outreach meetings held by police officers of the City's nine districts. In this capacity, ACAs serve as a bridge between the citizens of St. Louis and the prosecutors who represent them in court. In addition, Property Crimes Unit attorney Bryan Sanger serves as the office's liaison on arson with the SLMPD.

From the Courtroom Central Patrol

Brandon Jones has been charged with three counts of Robbery 1st, four counts of Armed Criminal Action, and one count of Assault on Law Enforcement. Jones is charged with holding three juveniles in the O'Fallon neighborhood at gunpoint while he and two associates robbed them of electronics, video games, cash and clothing on April 22, 2009. Jones is also charged with later pointing a handgun at the officer who located him after the crime. His case is set for Grand Jury on December 9. [ACA John Mantovani](#) and [Investigator Michael Graves](#) are currently handling the case.*

North Patrol

In May of last year, a secretary for a daycare on Lilian brought her 20-year-old son, **Thomas Washington**, to work. After washing off some toys outside, Washington saw a three-year-old girl leave the bathroom. He then pulled her down and attempted to force himself on her. Fortunately, the daycare owner's husband walked in on Washington and prevented further abuse. Thanks to the witness' cooperation and the work of [ACA Mary Pat Beninger](#) and [Investigator Mike Boll](#), Washington was convicted of Attempted Statutory Sodomy. He will be sentenced by Judge Margaret Neill in Division 9 on December 10.

South Patrol

On April 13, **Alonzo Graves** forcefully kicked a female victim to the ground and took her cell phone to prevent contact with the police. Graves was unapologetic upon arrest and made an aggressive statement against the victim. Thanks to the work of [ACA Anna Kratky](#) and [Investigator John Grana](#), Graves was found guilty of Domestic Assault 3rd and Stealing under \$500 by Judge Bryant in Division 26 on October 18. In addition to a suspended sentence of one year, Graves is required to report to the State during this time, to undergo counseling for domestic violence, and to have no contact whatsoever with his victim.

*Ethics Obligation

These charges are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

THE PROPERTY CRIMES UNIT STAFF

With Assistant Circuit Attorney **Martin Minnegerode** as their leader, **Tim Boyer, AJ Bruning, Mahrya Fulfer, Jennifer Matthew, Bryan Sanger, Rachel Schwarzlose** and **Christina Sondermann** are the attorneys of the Property Crimes Unit. Overseen by **Jennifer Miles**, Investigators **Lenny Deschler, Celestine Humphrey, Paul Kurczynski, Wendy Parker, Fred Steeg,** and **Sherlita Stewart** help "fill the gaps" in cases by doing everything from tracking down reluctant witnesses to handling evidence. As the support person, **John Anderson** keeps everyone on top of things.

Though the team is under a year old, its members

bring years of experience to the table. Minnegerode has been at the CAO for ten years and supervised a general felony team of prosecutors before being appointed by Circuit Attorney Jennifer Joyce to head the Property Crimes Unit. Minnegerode also utilizes his expertise in violent crimes by handling murder, robbery and assault cases.

In reference to the City's battle with brick and scrap thieves, Minnegerode calls St. Louis "the perfect storm." As he relates, "St. Louis has numerous abandoned buildings and constant renovation." Essentially, "there is a market for the older materials, and it's a venture thieves find easy and profitable." In response, members of Minnegerode's unit have met with aldermen about propo-

sed legislation to combat copper and brick theft. ACAs have also met with business owners dealing in scrap and look forward to working with members of the business community to curb the market for scrap items that are often stolen.

Team members are aware of the affect property crimes have on the neighborhoods they serve. Minnegerode cites that the driving force behind prosecuting such crimes is a "quality of life issue. From a large standpoint, the property crimes issue is about making the City's residents feel secure in their decision to live here. The safer people feel, the more they will invest in our City, which leads to an increased quality of life for all of us."

TYPICAL PROPERTY CRIMES CONVICTIONS

On December 12, 2009, **David Higgins** set his sights on stealing from Archer Daniels Midland. Higgins, who has various stealing and drug-related offenses on his record, unbolted several large stainless steel sheets used to dry grain from the sides of silos and sold them. Thanks to the work of [ACA Mahrya Fulfer](#), Higgins was handed a conviction in less than fifteen minutes for the felony charge "Stealing over \$500." He plead

guilty to a misdemeanor for stealing copper gutters from a church. Higgins was sentenced to 8 years MDC. He is presently awaiting trial for allegedly stealing copper pipes on December 17, 2009 from the Missouri Sewer Departments Property.*

On September 5, 2007, undercover detectives spotted co-defendants **William York** and **Alexander Clay** climbing through a window of a St. Louis Housing Authority building at 8th and Carr. Though surrounded by a six-

foot high fence, the building was undergoing renovation, making it a prime target for scrap thieves. The two men were arrested for stealing metal grates and a furnace blower. [ACA Colleen Lang](#) secured their conviction. The two, who had numerous prior convictions between them, were placed in rehabilitative drug treatment and put on probation afterwards. However, each recently violated probation and are currently serving sentences of ten years in the Missouri Department of Corrections.

CHILD SUPPORT UPDATE

The drug money seized and reallocated so far in 2010 is an incredible \$20,534.31. **That's money taken out of the hands of drug dealers and given to needy families instead.**

Inspired by the numerous bank account garnishments she filed on deadbeat parents, [ACA Elaine Miller](#) thought of another means to recover unpaid child support. On August 31, her idea was

put into action as the St. Louis Sheriff's Department seized **Brandon Bunting's** 2007 Chevy Malibu. Bunting, who has a record of drug and weapons-related offenses, owed \$9,158 in back child support and twice lied about being employed. Unable to garnish his non-existent wages, Miller found he had bought a car in May. The Chevy was auctioned off to the public September

No Support, No Ride

27, with the majority of the proceeds going to support his child. Miller also orchestrated the seizure of a 1983 Buick LeSabre from **Norbert Cross**, who owed \$27,999.80 in back child support. In addition, two cars were seized from **Robert Colenburg**, who owes a total of over \$20,000 to the state.

THE CAO CRIME FILES

On Thanksgiving Day, 1988, 2 year-old David Boehm was admitted to Children's Hospital for cardio/pulmonary arrest. His mother, Ellen, informed the doctor that she called 911 after finding him unresponsive on the living room floor. David was pronounced dead the next day.

On September 13, 1989, an eight-year-old daughter of Boehm washed her face while taking a bath. As she closed her eyes, someone dropped a plugged-in hair dryer into the tub and held her down as she struggled to get up. On their way to the hospital, a conversation was overheard between the mother and daughter in which Boehm told the crying child that her four-year-old brother had dropped the hair dryer into the tub. The girl stated her

brother didn't do it because he wasn't in the room. She was treated and released.

On September 25, 1989, Boehm twice called her boss to say that her son Steven had stopped breathing so they were going to the ER. Instead, she took the boy out to eat. While driving home, Boehm claimed that Steven wanted to see David so they stopped by his grave. Later that day, Ellen called 911 because her son was unresponsive. At 3:45 p.m., Steven was pronounced dead.

After Steven's death, someone reported Ellen to the Child Abuse Hotline and mentioned the daughter's incident in the bathroom. Prompted to investigate by the deaths of two healthy boys, police dis-

Ellen Boehm

covered the defendant held four life insurance policies on her children that totaled nearly \$94,000. The medical examiner later determined the two deaths were in fact homicides by asphyxiation.

Upon being charged and learning that prosecutors planned to seek the death penalty, Boehm plead guilty both to Murder 2nd and Murder 1st. Referring to Steven, she remarked "even though I loved him dearly and I know what I did was wrong—I just did it." Ellen Boehm was sentenced on April 5, 1993 and is currently imprisoned for life without the possibility of parole or probation.

The research for this article was contributed by CAO staff member Katie Barbeau.

From the Courtroom
Central Patrol

A Neighborhood Order of Protection against **Kenneth Richie** has been issued for Downtown. This persistent offender has a record dating back to 1995, with several crimes occurring in the Downtown area. On September 16, Ritchie was charged with Trespass 1st after running past the security guard at a parking garage on Pine. He plead guilty in 2007 to trespassing at another garage. Richie will appear in court on November 29 in front of Judge Bryant in Division 26.*

North Patrol

In 2006, prior and persistent offender **Jeremy Steele** was arrested on forcible rape charges while on bond for another crime. Upon his arrest, a DNA match led to his implication in a previously unsolved robbery. In 1996, Steele and an acquaintance followed and ran down a female employee of Mercantile Bank while she walked home from the bus stop at 12:30 a.m. after work. Steele was successfully prosecuted by ACA Mary Pat Beninger and Investigator Mike Boll. Despite a delay due to Steele's serving out a federal prison sentence for a drug charge, he was sentenced on October 28 to 15 years MDC.



South Patrol

ACA Anna Kratky and Investigator John Grana credit the quick work of PO Gary Glasby and Sgt. Amy Sprout in the recent arrest of **Ryan Cole**. On May 15, an intoxicated Cole physically attacked his girlfriend. The victim's seven-year-old son then attempted to stop Cole as she ran to a nearby fire station. As officers arrived, Cole barricaded himself and the victim's two sons in the home. Refused entry, Glasby and Sprout forced open the door. The seven-year-old boy had visible injuries and reported that Cole had threatened to kill his mother and father. Cole has been charged with Kidnapping, Abuse of a Child, Assault 3rd, Domestic Assault 3rd, and Endangering the Welfare of a Child 2nd. His next court date will be in front of Judge Ohmer in Division 16 on January 18.



CAO Investigators Jennifer Miles and Lenny Deschler attended career day at Northwest Academy of Law High School on October 20. The investigators spoke with students interested in careers in law enforcement.



POLICE OFFICER OF THE QUARTER

Detective Andrew Perez

We are extremely pleased to announce that the Fall 2010 Police Officer of the Quarter is **Detective Andrew Perez**.

Perez provided excellent testimony for two recent, separate drug-related cases. One criminal, Rodney Harvey, had an extensive record of seven prior felony cases. According to ACA Krista Boston, Perez's preparation and presentation in the courtroom enabled the State to seek justice against a long-time offender. Boston relates that Perez, along with Detectives James

Thayer and Terron Murphy, consistently arrived on time, thoroughly prepared his statement, and performed his duties without complaint—despite having to spend all day in the witness waiting room due to trial delays. According to Boston, Perez "maintained a very positive, calm and appropriately authoritative demeanor throughout his direct- and cross-examinations."

Perez also aided ACA Jennifer Matthew in the prosecution of Bryan Hood, who had two previous convictions on drug

distribution charges and was sentenced to 12 years MDC in August. Perez, along with Detective Thayer, provided testimony when the defense entered a motion to suppress some key evidence. Along with her colleagues, Matthew made note of Perez's professionalism and attention to detail.

The CAO is grateful to work with such officers as Detective Perez. Our partnership with the SLMPD enables our office to seek and secure justice for all citizens of the City of St. Louis.

Circuit Attorney's Office
 Mel Carnahan Courthouse
 1114 Market Street
 St. Louis, MO
 63101



OFFICE INFORMATION AND IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

The Circuit Attorney is the prosecutor for State-level criminal cases in the City of St. Louis. The Circuit Attorney's Office stands against those who break the law by holding them accountable for their actions. The Circuit Attorney is elected by the citizens of the City of St. Louis. The current Circuit Attorney, Jennifer M. Joyce, works with a staff of lawyers, investigators, and other professionals to protect the public by pursuing justice for all.



Mel Carnahan Courthouse

The Office is one of the largest law firms in the St. Louis region. It has more than 60 attorneys, 30 investigators, 11 victim professionals, and 20 support professionals. The Office handles approximately 4000 felonies and 8000 misdemeanors per year, and has a remarkable 98 percent over all conviction rate.

WWW.
 circuitattorney.
 org

1114 Market Street
 St. Louis, MO
 63101, Room 401

Phone: (314) 622-4941
 Fax: (314) 622-3369

Jennifer M. Joyce,
 Circuit Attorney

Fire, Police & Ambulance -----	911
Victim Services -----	(314) 622-4373
Child Abuse Hotline -----	1-800-392-3738
Circuit Clerk -----	(314) 622-3728
Orders of Protection/Adult Abuse Hotline -----	(314) 622-4434
City Hall -----	(314) 622-4000
Sexual Abuse Response Team (SART) -----	(314) 531-7273
Neighborhood Stabilization Office -----	(314) 657-1392
Fraud Assistance Line -----	(314) 612-1412