

# 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

There are few crimes my office takes more seriously than offenses involving an assault on a law enforcement officer. The men and women of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department serve as the front line of our City's justice system. Before the Circuit Attorney's Office can prosecute cases and send the "bad guys" to jail, police officers put themselves in danger by arresting and transporting the City's criminals. While breaking the law is an obvious disrespect to State laws, assaulting a law enforcement officer further disrespects our justice system through a physical attack on the people who work hard to

ensure the laws are upheld and our streets are safe.

Since 2001, Assistant Circuit Attorneys have prosecuted nearly 1400 cases involving about 2000 charges of Assault on a Law Enforcement Officer. Given that there are roughly 1300 officers employed by the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, that breaks down to over one attack on each officer. Our City must work together to make safer the jobs of the very people who keep us safe. In cases involving an Assault on a Law Enforcement Officer, the testimonies of the officer and any witnesses are key. Often, the testimony

of non-law enforcement witnesses can make (or break, in its absence) a case and ultimately affect whether an aggressive criminal continues to roam our streets. Support police officers by assisting the justice system and coming to court if you witness one of these crimes.



Jennifer M. Joyce  
Circuit Attorney

## GANGS IN OUR CITY

Many believe that the root of gang activity in St. Louis stems from our City's beginnings. Like many other urban environments, St. Louis has seen periodical waves of crime committed by loosely organized local branches of nationally operating criminal organizations. Today, St. Louis' gang-related violence is typically associated with the City's criminal street gangs.

Though Hollywood and "gangsta" rappers may make us think of huge, highly organized drug-

trafficking groups, in reality, a criminal street gang does not have to be that large or organized. Three or more individuals can form what law enforcement and prosecutors define and describe as a "criminal street gang." These individuals associate with a look defined by the gang itself (i.e. wearing certain colors, markings, jewelry, etc.) and engage in violent activity. A gang will also give itself a name. In St. Louis, it often references the block, street or area they consider their territory.

Our neighborhoods where gangs gather suffer not only from direct violence but also from the residents' fear of being in gang "turf." Gangs hurt our community by recruiting numerous young men for a life of crime. A major issue in gang-related violence is the conflicts that arise between members of different gangs over what one member sees as disrespect from another gang member. These feuds become increasingly violent as gang members turn to guns for  
(cont).

## From the Courtroom

### Central Patrol

Two aggressive offenders no longer roam our streets thanks to the work of ACA Sean O'Hagan and Investigator Bob Ehrhard. Last March, **Jason Parker** and **Tommie Pollard** robbed a car at a gas station on Salisbury. The two rushed the passenger side while flourishing guns. The victim threw down his money and fled while they fired shots. A citizen who heard the shots wrote down the license number of the getaway car and called the police. Parker and Pollard each entered Alford Pleas to Robbery 1<sup>st</sup>, Assault 1<sup>st</sup> and two counts of Armed Criminal Action. They were each sentenced to 10 years MDC on May 20 by Judge Bush in Div. 4.

### North Patrol

Repeat offender **Demar Cotton** is incarcerated thanks to the work of ACA John Mantovani and Investigator Michael Graves. On February 11, 2009, Cotton and Terrance Hendricks broke into a St. Louis firefighter's residence and held his daughter at gunpoint. When the firefighter came home and interrupted the robbery, they fired multiple shots and gravely injured him. Cotton testified against Hendricks, who received 30 years plus a consecutive life sentence last year. Cotton plead to Robbery 1<sup>st</sup>, Burglary 1<sup>st</sup> and two counts of Armed Criminal Action. He was sentenced to 20 years MDC by Judge Ohmer in Div. 1 on April 1.

### South Patrol

ACA Colleen Lang and Investigator Anne Dressler helped to send convicted rapist **Charles A. Smith** behind bars. In 2009, Smith attacked and strangled his girlfriend. She then placed a restraining order on him — which he violated four times. A jury found Smith guilty of Domestic Assault 2<sup>nd</sup>, Aggravated Stalking and four counts of Violating an Order of Protection. He was sentenced to 18 years MDC on May 26 by Judge Quigless in Division 8.

## GANGS IN OUR CITY

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resolution. Unsuspecting citizens are all too often caught in the crossfires of these shoot-outs.

Ridding our streets of gang violence takes

cooperation between law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and, most importantly, you. Call the police if you suspect gang activity in your neighbor-

hood. If you are a witness to a gang-related incident, make sure to come to court and show up if the case goes to trial.

## VANDALISM OR VIOLENT MESSAGE?

### The Differences between "Tagging" and Gang Graffiti



*Far left: A "tag." Tags are the "signatures" of vandals that consider themselves urban street artists.*

*Left: Gang graffiti marking territory. The letters are the initials of this gang's name.*

Gang graffiti serves as a type of newspaper on the streets. It is used to mark territory, to memorialize slain members, identify new members, and announce feuds or "beefs" between rival gangs. If you see new gang graffiti in your neighborhood, call the police. If possible, take a picture. The idea is to have the markings identified and removed as quickly as possible by the authorities. Removing it sends a message to gang members that claiming your neighborhood or street will not be tolerated and potentially prevents a violent act that could arise over the graffiti's message.

#### TAGGING

- "Artistic"
- Rarely used to claim a territory
- Mostly non-threatening
- Often boasts about the tagger/"artist"
- Focuses on pictures and symbols — legibility is not a goal of the tagger
- Rarely useful for police intelligence

#### GANG GRAFFITI

- Used to communicate — artistic style not a consideration.
- Prominent territorial claims
- Makes explicit threats
- Boasts about the gang
- Dominated by clear symbols, letters and numbers
- Highly useful for police intelligence

## KEEPING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE OUT OF GANGS

A young person's gang membership may not always be obvious to concerned parents, teachers, and mentors. If you are concerned a loved one may be part of a gang, here are some tips to identify and prevent membership:

• **Ask questions.** As a CAO Investigator who volunteers with gang intervention programs puts it, "too many parents stay in the dark."

• **Know who his or her friends are.** If they hang around kids suspected or known to be a gang member, they may be pressured to join or have already joined the gang.

• **It's ok to be "nosy."** Backpacks can be a wealth of information. Look for doodles of gang signs on notebooks. Monitor what they are posting online. Police often use sites like Twitter and Facebook to gain information about gang members.

• **Pay attention to their clothing, appearance and language.** Gangs associate with certain colors, symbols and words. Does he or she refuse to wear one color or say a certain word?

• **Keep them active after school.** Kids who find an activity they enjoy are less likely to join a gang. Being involved gives them the camaraderie and self-esteem boost they are seeking when they join a gang.

## KEEPING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE OUT OF GANGS

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- **Encourage healthy conflict resolution.**

Gang violence stems from excessive force used to work out a "beef." Teach your child alternatives.

USEFUL RESOURCES

www.gangsonus.com

SLMPD - Gang Resistance Education and Training  
314-444-6958

Herbert Hoover Boys & Girls Club  
314-652-8300

Alternatives for Youth  
314-581-4575

## From the Courtroom

## Central Patrol

ACA Christina Sondermann and Investigator Paul Kurczynski made career burglar **Edward Tramble** pay his dues in court. Tramble burglarized a church in March 2010 and was found with church property and a crack pipe. He was convicted of Burglary 2<sup>nd</sup>, Stealing Under \$500, and Unlawful Use of Drug Paraphernalia. He was sentenced to 12 years MDC by Judge Frawley in Div. 22 on May 6.

## North Patrol

ACA Christine Krug and Investigator Dave Schafer successfully brought **Shonta Roper** to justice. On January 8, 2010, Roper showed up at her ex-boyfriend's house; presumably to look for another woman. The victim answered the banging on his door with a gun, but put it down when he recognized Roper. After initiating a scuffle, she grabbed the gun, shot him, and fled the scene. She later escaped police custody when brought in for questioning. Roper was convicted of Voluntary Manslaughter, Armed Criminal Action and Escape from Custody. She was sentenced to 27 years MDC by Judge Van Amburg in Div. 19 on March 25.

## South Patrol

Prior and persistent offender **Daniel Brewer** no longer roams our streets thanks to the cooperation of several ACAs, Investigators and victims. With two pending burglary cases, Brewer was admitted to the City's Post-Plea Drug Court Program against our office's recommendation. He then picked up an attempted burglary charge. He was terminated from Drug Court and plead to his remaining two cases. At his sentencing on March 25, a victim testified that Brewer had already received his chance at rehabilitation and failed to take it. Judge Van Amburg in Division 19 sentenced him to 10 years MDC without the possibility of drug treatment.

## THE CAO CRIME FILES

Elroy Preston

On September 25, 1980, an argument over fried chicken led to two murders in North St. Louis. Prior offender Elroy Preston was staying at a home shared by his brother Ervin, Willie Richardson and Betty Klein. On September 24, the four, along with Elroy's girlfriend Sherry Brown, began a night of drinking. At some point, Willie and Betty bought fried chicken with Elroy's money, who later became upset when Willie decided to try and eat the remaining chicken.

At 3 a.m., Elroy woke his sleeping brother and informed him that he was going to kill him, Willie and Betty. Forcing all three to sit on the couch, Elroy grabbed a hunting knife and stabbed Betty; severing her spinal cord. He then stabbed Willie nine times. Meanwhile, Sherry cowered in a corner and Ervin begged Elroy not to kill him. After Willie died, Elroy dipped some of the chicken in his blood and ate it.

The next morning, Ervin's neighbor found Willie's body in the alley. He called the police, who discovered Betty's body in the backyard. On April 20, 1982, Elroy Preston was found guilty of Capital Murder and Murder 2<sup>nd</sup> and sentenced to death plus life. He has waited longer than any inmate to be executed by the State of Missouri.

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

## POLICE OFFICER OF THE QUARTER

Officer Keith Novara

We are pleased to announce that the Spring 2011 Police Officer of the Quarter is Keith Novara.

Officer Novara has spearheaded the Dutchtown community's renewed fight against crime. A 23-year veteran of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, he brings a wealth of experience to the table; having served in Traffic Safety, the Chief of Police's Office and on the Sex Crimes/Child Abuse Unit. Currently assigned to the 1st District, Novara

is helping to keep troublemakers out of Dutchtown.

ACA Jeff Ernst prosecutes crimes that occur in Dutchtown and frequently works with Novara. He relates, "Novara truly believes in community participation with the justice system. He works tirelessly to keep the citizens of his district informed and goes above and beyond the call of duty in this mission."

At the beginning of this year, Novara created a Dutchtown Neighborhood

Patrol along with CAO Investigator Lenny Deschler, Lafayette Square Neighborhood Patrol founder Mike Petetit, and Dutchtown resident Jim Dolphin. Navaro educates and trains citizens on the proper methods for patrolling the streets and reporting crimes, trash pile-ups and general disrepair.

The CAO and countless Dutchtown residents are grateful to have an officer like Keith Novara on our side in the fight for justice.

CHILD SUPPORT UPDATE

So far in 2011, the Child Support Unit has seized \$17,208 in drug money. **That's money taken out of the hands of drug dealers and given to needy families.**

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 St. Louis, MO  
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## 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](http://www.circuitattorney.org)

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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