

Amber Alert System Needs Public Awareness

By **DAWN A. MICELI**
Correspondent

System has thwarted five abductions so far

A single keystroke triggers a fanning out of civic force. Television viewers, radio listeners, highway travelers, telephone technicians, and even the state's lottery players are placed on high alert. With all eyes focused on an abduction, the predator is easier to trap. So say law enforcement officials who credit the public as being the most powerful, single component involved in Connecticut's sentry-like Amber Alert system.

"That public awareness makes for a kind of closing of the net," said Windsor Police Chief Kevin Searles, co-chairman of the state's Amber Alert Committee. "If the public doesn't listen or take it seriously then it doesn't work." But with a highly technical, instantaneous domino effect, the state's Amber Alert system does work when a child abduction is in progress. To date, Connecticut has activated its emergency warning broadcast system five times to alert the public that a child's life is in danger – and to date, five abductions have been thwarted.

"The intent here is to get the mes-



At the State Police Message Center in Middletown, public safety dispatcher David Hernandez Jr. records and broadcasts Amber Alert information as State Police trooper William Tate observes. *(Photo by Dawn A. Miceli)*

sage out as quickly and effectively as possible through as many venues as possible," said State Police spokesman Lt. J. Paul Vance. Of course, the ubiq-

uitous airwaves make that missive a reality.

Connecticut broadcasters first learned of a new emergency warning

concept taking hold in Texas at a national broadcasters' meeting in Washington, DC, about five years ago. It required use of the FCC-mandated Emergency Alert System (EAS), previously limited to use by broadcast operators in times of civil or weather emergencies, as a tool for helping protect children.

In January 2002, Connecticut became the fifth state to adopt the Amber Alert system, named after Amber Hagerman, a nine-year-old Texas girl who was kidnapped in 1996 while riding her bicycle in her neighborhood and who was murdered. All of the state's television and radio stations are now equipped to receive the designated Amber Alert code, activated through the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Message Center in Middletown. A solitary swipe of a button means programming will be instantaneously interrupted by a sequence of piercing beeps and trills, followed by either a written message scrolling across a television screen or a verbal communication transmitted via radio.

(See Amber Alert on page 8)

Local Company Fights Prescription Drug Thefts

By **JOHN H. PALMER**
Correspondent

The day ends like any other. The manager of a pharmacy closes up shop for the night and goes home to his family after a long day's work. Little does he know, however, that his business is about to become the target of a growing crime trend in the United States.

On the roof of the pharmacy is a man in dark clothing who has been watching the pharmacy for some time – and probably has been inside before, watching the daily goings-on of the pharmacy. He knows what time the manager closes

shop – and he knows that the building has no alarm.

When the pharmacist goes home, the intruder goes to work. He cuts a hole in the roof of the building and lowers himself in. He goes straight to the pharmacy, where he finds his target: a stash of prescription drugs. Bottles of such widely used brand-name drugs such as Vytorin, OxyContin, Lipitor, and Viagra go into the bag he has brought with him. He is smart enough to wear gloves so he will leave no finger-



prints behind.

Back through the hole he climbs, making sure to replace the piece of the roof he cut in the first place. In the morning, the only clues the pharmacist and the police find are maybe some pry marks, but by then the drugs are across another state line, ready to be sold illegally on the black market.

"It's amazing how many robberies and burglaries of pharmacies there are across the country," said John Burke, president of the Ohio-based

National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators and the Commander of the Warren Clinton County Drug Task Force, with 39 years in law enforcement. "Prescription drug (thefts) by everyone's standards is number two behind marijuana."

Prescription drug thefts from pharmacies have become more prevalent in urban areas such as Boston, and now Connecticut. According to Stamford Police Capt. Richard Conklin, there have been about 15 robberies in the last two or three years in Connecticut. These numbers may not seem terribly high, but

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SCAM of the Month:

By GRANT STINCHFIELD
Correspondent



One check can cost you your identity

An "Easy Crime" is Waiting to Happen to You

Every time you write a check and hand it to a stranger, you run the risk of falling victim to check fraud. It is one of the fastest-growing forms of identity theft, and this year, the experts predict, you or someone you know will fall victim to it. The reality is one stolen check, or even one not stolen, can create a lifetime of financial headaches.

"I go out and work, earn my money, and the next thing I know some thief is spending it," declares a frustrated Tammy Pistone of Bristol. She had no idea thieves stole a box of her checks until it was too late. She assumes they were stolen out of her mailbox but acknowledges she writes checks all the time. "The bank called me and said I was bouncing hundreds of dollars' worth of checks. My response was, 'What are you talking about?'"

Pistone and most victims of check fraud are left in a state of limbo, forever trying to clear their good name. She says she had to prove her innocence while her

bank account was frozen for weeks. Four months later, bogus checks were still trickling in, forcing her to go through the whole process all over again. "I feel like I'm on my own and no one wants to help."

The reason the number of cases of check fraud is exploding is that it is a relatively easy crime to commit. Once a thief gets his hands on a stolen check, he has all the information he needs to print up thousands more. A check usually has the person's name, address, and bank routing and account numbers on it for all the world to see, or worse, photocopy.

Just about every office supply store

sells check-printing software. You do not even need to ask for it, the software is right on the shelves. You can even buy the blank checks. That means that once a thief has your check, there is nothing to stop him from printing bogus checks in your name.

Check fraud is a form of identity theft, and Connecticut now has laws stiffening the penalties if convicted – it is a felony with penalties of up to \$15,000 in fines and/or 20 years in prison. The problem is thieves are rarely caught. In Pistone's case the forgers never passed any checks over \$100.00. Make no mistake, those thieves knew exactly what they were doing. Most businesses will not pursue criminal charges if the loss is less than \$100.00. That leaves the criminals free to operate below law enforcement's "radar." A seasoned check forger also knows to spread his crimes out by purchasing merchandise in several towns, cities, and even states it is a classic trick to keep local law enforcement off their trail. When it comes to small dollar amounts, local police are often reluctant to take their investigations beyond city or town limits.

Police departments across Connecticut and the nation readily admit there simply are not enough officers to investigate fully all identity theft crimes. The executive director of the nonprofit Identity Theft Resource Center, based in San Diego, California, insists check forgers know the chance of getting caught is slim. Linda Foley says, "Check forgery is on the rise because the thieves know there is little risk – there's no need for guns anymore as printing checks is easier, less dangerous, and more profitable than robbing a convenience store."

Investigators still ask that victims report the crimes as soon as possible, because catching a check forger is really a race against the clock. The thief can quickly assume someone's identity, write

thousands of dollars in fraudulent checks, and then move on to the next victim. Because check forgers commit the crimes using their victims' names, there is rarely much evidence left behind to track down the counterfeiters.

In Tammy Pistone's case, the check forgers sailed across Connecticut cashing her checks in places including Home Depot, Toys 'R' Us, CVS, and Best Buy. Her bank vows to help straighten out the mess, but Pistone now wishes she never had that box of checks delivered to her house. Identity theft experts recommend customers pick up their checks at their bank.

So-called "mailbox surfing" is now becoming a popular way for thieves to steal checks to counterfeit. Forgers will drive from house to house, sifting through mailboxes, hoping to find checks, credit card bills, pay stubs, or anything else that will give away those private numbers you call your own.

"As with any crime, check fraud isn't going away soon," says Betsy Broder of the Federal Trade Commission. She oversees the Commission's identity theft program for victims. "The Commission's program assists victims and works with the private sector on ways to facilitate the process for regaining victims' good names. That will always remain a priority; it has to."

The process to clear the fraudulent activity can be a draining, time-consuming battle. That means, now more than ever, people need to take precautions before they become victims.

Here is how to protect yourself from falling victim to check fraud or check forgery:

1. When ordering checks, have them delivered to the bank and pick them up there.
2. Try to use a debit card when possible.
3. Try not to use checks at stores you are unfamiliar with.
4. Never print your social security number on your checks.
5. Use your bank's online system to pay bills electronically.
6. Make your goal to minimize the number of checks you have circulating.

Questions or comments for Grant?
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Identity Theft – By the Numbers

Identify theft continues to grow each year. In 2005, nine million Americans were hit with losses totaling \$56.6 billion. Only 1 in 700 cases are prosecuted.

(Source: Associated Press)

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Community Task Force Unites Law Enforcement With Education Efforts

By CINDY SIMONEAU
Correspondent

Stopping underage drinking is a job that takes more than police, school officials, advocacy groups, and parents. As the town of Wilton learned over the past few years, it takes a community.

At least that was the approach of a special task force formed to tackle the problem. The group of adults, including police, town leaders, and clergy, as well as several students, set out to do more than just study the implications of the national issue in this quiet, suburban community which doesn't have a retail outlet that sells alcohol, but also to pass a townwide ordinance supporting its determination of deterrence with action. Wilton is among 49 of Connecticut's 169 municipalities which have adopted similar ordinances.

And, perhaps as an indication of the real need for such a local law, it took only 13 days after official town passage of the Underage Drinking Ordinance by the Board of Selectmen on June 5, 2006, for the first citation to be issued to a 20-year-old hosting a party. By the end of the summer there were more citations, including two 17-year-olds having a party when adults were away.

It is not these first enforcement actions on which members of the task force measure its success, but the heightened awareness of the parents and their underage children.

"It's not just about enforcement," said Wilton Police Capt. Michael Lombardo, a member of the Task Force to Combat Underage Drinking. "It's much more about the education."

"We really wanted people, especially young people, to be informed about what you could do and not do in terms of drinking and having parties that serve alcohol. We wanted them to know about dependency, including the signs and how it starts," said Colleen Fawcett, coordinator of youth services for the Comstock Community Center in Wilton.

"We adopted the 'It takes a village' mentality, helping parents help each other to stay vigilant about what they see and hear, and to talk to one another about it," explained Jory Higgins, dean of students at Middlebrook Middle School and a task force member.

While some communities, including nearby Westport, have faced stiff opposition and resistance to passing an underage drinking law, Wilton's plan was met with little real opposition. Fawcett said a Redding official, recounting that town's difficulties gaining public support, warned they had not launched enough educational efforts early enough to garner the community partnership needed.

"The difference in results I believe can



Three members of the Wilton Task Force to Combat Underage Drinking (left to right): Colleen Fawcett, youth services coordinator for Comstock Community Center; Police Capt. Michael Lombardo; and Jory Higgins, dean of students at Middlebrook Middle School.
(Photo by Cindy Simoneau)

be traced to strong preparatory work over two years, designed to address the issue of underage drinking and its consequences from many different perspectives," said task force member Steve Hudspeth.

Wilton's ordinance covers possession and hosting of events, and provides for limited exceptions including religious services and those allowed by state law to possess alcohol as part of their employment. For possession the ordinance states: "No person under the age of 21 shall be in possession of any container of alcoholic liquor, whether open or unopened, within the town except when accompanied by or in the presence of his or her parent, guardian, or spouse who has attained the age of 21." The prohibition applies to events on public or private property.

On hosting events, the language is equally as direct: "No person shall host an event which allows the consumption or dispensing of alcoholic liquor to or by a minor." The exception is if the minor is accompanied by a parent or guardian or spouse of age 21. The fine for violating the local law is \$90.

Following the original mission statement of the group, the task force was formed following the initiative of the police department and moved forward with accomplishing its objectives through education, providing healthy alternatives, and enforcement of all laws on underage alcohol use. "Through a community-wide effort, the goal of the task force can be reached by reducing the accessibility of alcohol to minors and educating youth, families, and the community about the dangers associated with underage drinking," according to the mission statement.

Two years later, task force members feel they are well on the way to accomplishing their charge. The ongoing education campaign includes large public forums, surveys of students about alcohol

use and accessibility, publicizing facts about alcohol dependency on flyers, and writing opinion columns and letters to the editor in local newspapers.

"We spoke to any groups that we could, PTAs, Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, and community groups and agencies about the plans and what each could do on a day-to-day basis to help," said Lombardo.

"These programs addressed the physiological consequences of underage drinking on the cerebral cortex of the developing brain in the critical years from 11 to 20. A noted psychologist spoke to that subject, as did one of our town EMTs, and also a parent who is a town resident and who lost two children to the effects of underage substance abuse. These presentations were widely covered in our local press and helped to really knock the legs out from under the objection to adoption of an ordinance that underage drinking is merely harmless mischief or a 'rite of passage,'" said Hudspeth.

"With the strong approval and encouragement of our First Selectman, Bill Brennan, the task force embarked upon a campaign of publicity designed to reach a broad cross-section of our town's population before the ordinance ever came up for public hearings to explain those very serious physiological issues for the developing brain and the need for a measured series of responses. We also wanted to assure citizens that the proposed ordinance would not intrude upon parent-supervised conduct of their own

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Parents and Educators Play Key Roles to Reduce Bullying in Schools

By PAMELA FALCIGNO
Correspondent

"Learning without fear should be a basic democratic tenet," states a report from the Connecticut Governor's Task Force on Bullying. The report highlights alarming statistics on aggression in this country and claims "the prevalence of bullying and the seriousness of its outcomes are significantly underestimated by many children and adults." The report also notes "society has a stake in changing the behavior of bullies before they become adults."

"We are only beginning to understand the potential long-term impact of these kinds of behaviors if left unchecked," says clinical social worker Ed Moran from Family Centers, a nonprofit family service organization with facilities in Greenwich, Darien, and Stamford. "If someone is left to being a bully it can develop into a much more serious problem as an adult."

Some see child bullying as a "rite of passage." Others claim that bullies have "always been around."

That kind of thinking "minimizes" the problem, according to Moran.

Connecticut passed an anti-bullying law in 2003, requiring Boards of Education to develop a policy to address the existence of bullying in its schools.

The law defines bullying as any "overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the other student while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity which acts are repeated against the same student over time."

Stamford Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joshua Starr says the schools take bullying "very seriously... It is not acceptable to us that we would not address bullying. We don't accept the idea that boys will be boys. Our expectation of our schools is that they deal with... the way that kids interact with each other and that they try to promote a positive environment... We have been working very hard with our schools to develop programs for social and emotional learning," says Starr. He added, "We are working with our adults so that we can help them to encourage and relate in a positive way with kids and model good behaviors."



The Executive Director for Youth Development of the Stamford school system, Joseph O'Callaghan, says they have been working to help improve the way children relate to each other.

"We try to create a school climate and culture that is a positive learning place," says O'Callaghan, "where kids and adults feel safe, welcome, and encouraged. Looking at the social and emotional learning aspects and how we incorporate that into our classrooms and schools is the key to how we address those issues."

O'Callaghan explains that each school is required to keep a log of bullying incidents. When there is a specific problem with a child being bullied by another, he says guidance counselors, social workers, and psychologists intervene to help the teachers and work with children.

O'Callaghan says they find the ratio of girl-to-boy bullies to be even. However, boys tend to be more "physical" and girls tend to be more "verbal," such as placing conditions on friendships and spreading rumors.

Verbal aggression has even moved into the realm of electronics, with cell phones and the Internet being used by children to target others under what has been termed "cyber-bullying." These "outside of view" tactics can make bullying "hard to detect" and therefore "harder to report," says Moran. "Parents play an extremely important role, they have power -- they have the ability to help their kids manage (bullying) in an effective way on either side, whether their child is the

bully or the victim."

Moran says this is an opportunity for parents to open dialogue with their kids, though the child might not report the incident out of fear of retribution or being labeled a "snitch." He says, "The bully is looking for control -- someone he can overpower, through physical violence or demands." Moran works with parents to help their children problem-solve so they can "disarm" the bully, noting, "If the bully is not getting the reaction he wants, he will move on."

Moran also teaches other children who might be "innocent bystanders" how to provide support and encourages them to report any problem they may see.

Educator, social worker, and consultant Catherine Hogan, a program coordinator for Woodhouse Academy, a private school in Milford, has served on the Governor's Task Force on Bullying. She says bullying crosses all cultural and socioeconomic situations and is a very serious problem across both private and public sectors in education. "Bullying starts at a very, very early age," says Hogan, who has consulted with students as young as the third grade.

Hogan said she feels that educators play a key role in dealing with the issues of bullying. In addition, she is involved with child advocacy groups to enact more legislative changes to protect the rights of the victim and intervene for the safety of the child.

Hogan says bullying has become a "peer pressure problem," and children acknowledge that they are surrounded by media that make it seem like bullying is the "thing to do." She also says she feels many children are bullies because they do not want to be the victim. "Most parents want to know if their child is a bully in order to take corrective measures so their child is not a threat."

Comments or questions? Contact:
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Connecticut Police Chiefs Association 2006-2007 Legislative Agenda

These actions have been recommended by CPCA legislative co-chairs and lobbyists, and approved by the CPCA Board of Directors.

- **Reporting Gun Thefts.** Will propose mandatory reporting of theft of firearms to accelerate recovery, curb criminal use, & reduce illicit resale by hampering bogus theft claims as alibis.
- **Arrest Powers for Local Police.** Will propose statewide arrest authority for any offense committed in officer's presence, to increase effectiveness of police, increase protection of public, and facilitate regional operations.
- **Automated speed & traffic-signal enforcement.** Will propose pilot program on Route 44. Technology exists to allow more and safer enforcement; Avon Mountain is a fitting test site.
- **Allow police to ask police applicants about arrests.** Will propose CGS 31-51i (as modified by PA 02-136) shall not be applicable to any law enforcement agency.
- **Juvenile Justice.** Will oppose efforts to treat 16- and 17-year-olds as juveniles, as this would burden juvenile courts and detention facilities already at capacity, impose added facility, training, and investigative requirements on police, and shield active segment of population from responsibility for their actions.

www.cpcanet.org

What Research Tells Us About Bullying:

By age 24, bullies identified after the age of seven are six times more likely than non-bullies to be convicted of a crime.

By age 30, they are four times more likely to have accrued three criminal convictions.

In the United States, 20-25 percent of schoolchildren are directly involved in bully-target problems.

Targets are far more likely to bring a weapon to school than children who are not targets. Twenty-nine percent nationally have brought weapons to school. (Source: The Governor's Prevention Partnership Bully Task Force Report for 2002)

Fourteen percent of U.S. schoolchildren reported being the victims of bullying within the last six months. Of those students who reported lower grades, victims of bullying were more likely to report receiving D's and F's than their non-bullied counterparts. (Source: U.S. Department of Education)

In Connecticut, bullying has been increasingly linked to youth suicides, according to the Child Advocate. (Source: Connecticut General Assembly Commission on Children 2006)

(Questions or comments for Pamela? Contact: p.falcigno@thejusticejournal.com)

HOPELINE helps

Family Members Dealing With SIDS Also Face a Police Investigation

By **TEALE CALIENDO**
Correspondent

Finally...Friday. And three-month-old Christian was asleep in his room in the Fairfield home his parents, Kim and Brian Meehan, had lovingly renovated. It was a joyous time...all the plans were made...Christian's three-year-old sister Arianna was excited...the sponsors were chosen...the baptism was just 48 hours away...everything was so normal and safe. Christian even slept with a baby monitor to alert his parents if he cried. Ironically, it was the silence that alarmed them. Why wasn't he crying for his regular feeding? Kim and Brian rushed into the baby's room and found Christian blue and nonresponsive.

It took Fairfield police only minutes to respond to Kim's frantic 911 call. An officer scooped up the baby and transported him in the back of a fire truck to a local hospital. The parents followed in their own car, running every light, knowing -- in Brian's words -- that "our life (was) changing. I felt a deep pain in my heart. I felt Christian had left us."

By the time Christian's grandparents Attorney Richard Meehan and his wife Kathy reached the hospital, it was clear the baby had died. "Brian was numb, and Kim was wailing. She thought she had done something. She was uncontrollable," Attorney Meehan recalled.

Meanwhile police officers were sealing off the Meehan home with yellow police tape. After all, it was a possible crime scene. "The last thought that occurred to me, despite 30 years of criminal defense, was that my son's home could be considered a potential crime scene. I have defended a number of infant homicide cases, battered and shaken babies, victims of the most senseless violence, but a 'crime scene' in my son's home? It was unfathomable," Attorney Meehan noted.

In addition to dealing with a tragic death that defies the natural order, families find that Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is a law enforcement issue, because of the possibility of foul play. And even though Attorney Meehan understood this, he still was unsettled. From the hospital, he called then-Fairfield Police Chief Joseph Sambrook and asked why his grieving family had to endure a criminal investigation at this sensitive time.

"He (Sambrook) patiently explained that there is a protocol," Meehan said. "His patrolmen and investigators conducted themselves in a professional and dignified manner. Knowing that they

had to exclude the possibility that the parents had negligently or intentionally harmed Christian, we accepted the questioning and the work they had to perform."

Fairfield Police Lt. Michael Walsh called the role police play in a SIDS death "very difficult." The priority is getting the child to the hospital. But after that it is important to preserve the scene. He said the situation is a powder keg because emotions are so raw and the act of removing potential evidence and establishing a possible crime scene implies to parents that they contributed to the child's death.

"A police officer's competency is shown in their ability to maintain balance when conducting what could be a criminal investigation and feeling empathy for the grieving parents," Lt. Walsh noted. "Police training rests with the knowledge that SIDS deaths do occur, and the officers respond with compassion and empathy."

While Attorney Meehan has only the highest praise for the way Fairfield police handled the investigation of his grandson's death, he knows that is not always the case. He said there are "horror" stories of the way insensitive authorities can traumatize already grieving parents -- the worst being an instance where one young mother was removed from the home in handcuffs as her baby was being rushed to the hospital.

As the Meehan family was leaving the hospital that day, they left with no support system, no grief counseling, nothing to follow up on the tragedy. Fortunately for Kim and Brian, who belong to St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Fairfield, the Reverend Mary Ann Osborne provided comfort and counseling as soon as she learned what had happened. But, Attorney Meehan thought, what about families without that support?

"I started to realize maybe something positive could come out of all of this," he said. That was the beginning of the Christian Meehan Hope Foundation for

SIDS. (www.chfsids.org), an organization aimed at increasing awareness, research, and support services for SIDS families. The three-year-old foundation, which has raised more than a quarter of a million dollars, recently established HOPELINE in partnership with another agency that deals with the death of a child, Help for Families Impacted by Child Sudden Death (FSW).

HOPELINE (1-888-616-HOPE) is a 24-hour toll-free number that helps Fairfield County families that have lost a

child to SIDS. HOPELINE connects SIDS families with a network of support providers, including bereavement groups, medical and mental health professionals, clergy, and the FSW staff. HOPELINE also provides local hospitals, funeral directors, and police departments with information for families in need. In addition, HOPELINE has established a liaison with the Medical Examiner's office to help families get answers to the many questions that linger following such a death. SIDS families are provided with a box containing information about the HOPELINE, a message from Kim and Brian, a book by a SIDS parent, a candle -- the symbol of Hope from the Christian Meehan Foundation for SIDS -- and, if needed, the services of Attorney Meehan's law firm, at no cost.

Family friend Kate Greninger of Trumbull understood the need for support services such as the HOPELINE, and that's why she chose to volunteer.

(Continued on page 22)



AAA CT MOTOR CLUB FACTOIDS:

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- **STATES THAT ENFORCE** nighttime driving restrictions on teen drivers show a 60% reduction in crashes. 40% of fatal crashes take place at night.
- **LARGE-SCALE SOBRIETY CHECKPOINT** programs can reduce alcohol-related crashes by 20%. 11 States still do not have these laws.
- **IN 2004, 62% OF YOUNG DRIVERS** killed in car crashes were unrestrained.
- **THE U.S. RANKS THE LOWEST** in the developed world for seat belt usage. 55% of passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2005 were not wearing seat belts.

Carrots, Sticks, and the Liabilities of Teen Drinking

By ATTORNEY RICHARD BIEDER

Commentary

Nearly each day we read a newspaper headline about a teenage driver who is maimed or killed – or who has caused the maiming or death of others in a car accident.

These accidents may involve the following factors: driving under the influence; alcohol served at a party in the home of absent parents (or parents who are present); late night partying; losing control of a vehicle and crashing or flipping over; and speeding.

These news accounts often continue as friends mourn the loss of “the funniest friend,” “the most wonderful kid,” “the life of the party,” “the one who lit up the room,” or “the guy I’ll never forget.”

The police want it to stop. They are the ones who pick up the pieces — scraping the blood, skin, and clothing off the roads. Those who speak out say these crashes are among the saddest cases to see and to investigate — kids who lose their lives well before reaching their primes and fulfilling their potentials.

Police would rather not see these cases at all — and they wouldn’t need to if parents took more interest in what their children were doing and knew where they were at all times.

Teens are still children until they reach the age of 21. That decision was made by legislators because those under 21 cannot fully appreciate the effect alcohol has on their senses and their reaction time.

Sure, there are possible prison penalties

for teenagers who drink and drive and for those who maim or kill others, and courts nowadays do not hesitate to impose such penalties. But such laws and the imposition of such penalties, while having some impact, do not seem to have significantly decreased the numbers of automobile accidents.

So, what will work?

First, change the teenager’s perception of alcohol as being cool. Impossible, you say? Nuts to you, I say! Remember how uncool it once was to wear a seat belt? Is there anyone who hasn’t recently been reminded by a brother, sister, son, daughter, granddaughter, or grandson under the age of 10 to “put on your seat belt”? Not on your life. Why? Because there has been a huge effort in elementary schools to pound the idea into children’s brains. And it worked. So there’s no reason why it shouldn’t work on the issue of drinking, too. The road to a difficult task begins with a single step. MADD has made significant inroads, but much more must be done.

Second, change the viewpoint of parents and guardians about their own responsibility toward teenagers.

How do you do this?

Sermons at church, temple, mosque, and synagogue are of great help. Community leaders who set a good example wouldn’t be

such a bad idea either. Finally, it would be wonderful if advertisers marketing alcohol showed more discretion in their commercials, and weaned off their “let’s make consumption of our product sexy and cool” ethic.

But these are only helpful carrots. Potent sticks are also critically needed. Connecticut and other states have made a good start but must go farther still.

It is a violation of Connecticut law for any person to give or sell an alcoholic beverage to a minor. However, an adult parent, guardian, or spouse of a minor may offer an alcoholic beverage so long as the minor possesses the beverage while accompanied by the adult. Such adults violate the law if alcoholic beverages are given to a minor friend or relative of their child, ward, or spouse.

In 1986, the Connecticut Supreme Court reversed a 200-year-old law which allowed adults to escape civil liability when providing alcoholic beverages to a minor. This was because sole responsibility was placed upon the minor who consumed the alcohol. The high court’s decision was based on a case titled *Ely v. Murphy*, citing that because teens are legally incapable of discerning the effects of alcohol, one who provides them with alcohol could be found liable to pay money damages to those injured by the conduct of an intoxicated youth. You can imag-

ine the persuasive ability of such a huge money judgment stick; or the stick of losing one’s home in a lawsuit, for example.

Now imagine the additional sticks that the courts, legislators, and/or community leaders could begin to urge, such as the imposition of liability on the part of “away from home” or “at home” parents who don’t engage a responsible someone to watch over the conduct of their teenagers (remember the not infrequent repeats of scenes from the film “Risky Business”?).

Courts in other jurisdictions have in the past imposed such liability — and maybe Connecticut courts will do the same if the legislature does not.

The question is: do legislators only want to wring their hands, or do they really want to come to grips with this growing plague that consumes some of our state’s nascent leaders?

Richard Bieder, a partner in Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder of Bridgeport, is known throughout the country for his handling of individual and class action cases resulting from mass disasters, consumer rights, personal injuries, unfair trade practices, and commercial fraud and misrepresentation.

Bieder is listed in The Best Lawyers in America and is a Certified Civil Trial Advocate. He is a member of the National Board of Trial Advocacy and served as its president. A past president of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association, Bieder has served as a guest commentator on Court TV.

Letters to the Editor

Dialogue helps choices

Thank you for the publication, The Justice Journal. I especially enjoyed the pro and con article on the “Limits on the National Security Agency”. It is important for us to consider all aspects of security and to understand the price of security, whether it is monetary or in the loss of intangible “freedom” there is always a price to pay. Conscious consideration and open dialogue helps everyone come to terms with their choices.

*Libbie Kerr
Danbury, CT*

Academy is eye-opener

I have just read your article “It All Adds Up” in the “Preview Issue” of The Justice Journal. I wish you the best of luck!

You mentioned some of the local police departments had a “Citizens Police Academy”.

I have attended this event at the Greenwich Police Department in 2004. They still carry on with the cause every year.

It really opens your eyes and mind to the dedication a person has to protect and serve as a law enforcement officer.

*Lou Pagano
Greenwich, CT*

Long time coming

I have just read your publication. I must say this type of paper was a long time coming. I have been in security/law enforcement field for over 25 years. This is fantastic. I do have a question...Would it be possible to have the Journal delivered to my home or office. I am sure there are plenty of security professionals who would benefit from your publication.

*Richard B Cohen
Stamford, CT*

Success in Wilton

Thank you for raising public awareness of the effects of underage drinking through such an informative and well-written article. Here in Wilton we had the opposite experience from Westport’s: Our town’s underage drinking ordinance went through with almost no opposition this past spring thanks to a major community educational program that included speakers like Wilton’s own David Pease and Gene Feher. They carefully explained before large audiences the physiological consequences on the developing brain of alcohol consumption that overwhelmingly refuted “harmless-rite-of-passage” thinking. Presentations were also made by Wilton’s Underage Drinking Task Force before many town audiences, including service clubs and PTAs. And, especially, the positive result in Wilton happened because of the outstanding leadership of the Task Force by town Youth Services Director Colleen Fawcett and her co-Chair, student R.J. Chambers.

*Steve Hudspeth
Wilton, CT*

Praise of Westport Chief

I picked up the October issue of your paper that was available at the Clinton Police Department during a recent stop there. I was particularly interested in the article that you wrote and would like to extend my congratulations to the Westport Police Chief, Al Fiore, for attempting to implement an ordinance to crackdown on drinking by those under the age of 21- albeit unfortunately, to no avail. I found it almost laughable (if it didn’t have such dire consequences) that parents were concerned that their homes would

be invaded and college applications would be jeopardized if a \$99 infraction were imposed on offending juveniles. What’s sad is that they voted down a very important step towards weeding out one of the most insidious hidden ills in our society - that of household alcohol consumption. Parent-approved alcohol consumption should be grounds alone for the parent to receive counseling, in my opinion.

Bottom line- there’s nothing “adult” about taking that first drink as a rite-of-passage. If so called “adults” were better role models, their children would deem rite-of-passage to adulthood to be something far more significant and beneficial to themselves and society.

Doesn’t say much for those of us in, “Adulthood”...does it?

Please pass along my “congratulations” to Chief Fiore for at least trying. To the parents of Westport that thwarted positive change...you get a “thumbs down” from this resident of Clinton, CT.

*Jeff Morse
Clinton, CT*

Lighting a lamp

I applaud your efforts.

The problem or issue at hand was clearly identified in your letter, Apathy; it is a sickness that often grips our society until some terrible turn of events awakens us from our giant slumber. Time and time again we are victims of our own sense of invulnerability.

The public does not lack empathy, we quietly mourn those we read about who have suffered, it is always someone else whose name is on the front page or whose life is tragically captured for a moment on the 11 o’clock news. The irony is that all of us are someone’s someone else.

Until attitudes change and the public has a better understanding that we the public are

on the front lines and that it is up to the eyes and ears of society, we are destined to suffer fools as we fall into our usual role of a reactionary society.

Only when we live a pro-active life and we think about more than what task lies directly ahead of us we will be able to secure the homeland.

We cannot even fathom the danger that is out there, we can not accept the possibilities. The reality is just too much for most people to consider.

So I stand up and give thanks to you as you light a lamp, one if by land and two if by sea, certainly a tradition that we New Englanders can understand, I think we need a third lamp or maybe a fourth as for the most part, we live in the dark.

*Seth Block
Fairfield, CT*

Editorial Policy:

The Justice Journal encourages original letters to the editor pertaining to subjects and issues raised by the writers.

We reserve the right to publish or edit letters for taste, length, and clarity. Make sure to include your full name, address and a daytime telephone number so that we can verify who you are. All letters through the mail must be typed and should not exceed 250 words in length. Anonymous letters will not be published.

Please send your letters to:

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21 Charles Street, Suite 114
Westport, CT 06880
Or email:
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Notes from the Editor's desk:

"A Good Read"



Striving to be a publication that's "a good read," *The Justice Journal* has assembled a staff of Connecticut reporters who know how to tell our stories. Their mini-bios are elsewhere on this page. Our goal is to be "a good read" – every story, every edition. Please let us know what we can do to make this newspaper an even better "read" for you and your community.

We were very pleased with the response to our preview edition, both from the public and from the law enforcement community. As our publisher, Doug Johnston, often says, "The train has left the station" – meaning we are moving full steam ahead with our mission "to improve the safety of our community." This is our way of proving the proverbial pen is mightier than the sword.

The Norwalk Police Department website has an innovative link for "commending exceptional performance" by any employee of the department. You are asked to describe what you think was exceptional. If you do not know the person's name, providing the date, time, and location of the action will help identify him or her. The website page (www.norwalkpd.com/faq.htm) notes: "Although our employees don't expect to be thanked for everything they do, recognition of exceptional service is always appreciated. This kind of feedback helps us to know if we're doing a good job."

State Police spokesman Paul Vance, who was the subject of our first "Law Enforcement PROfile" in our preview issue, was promoted to Lieutenant from Master Sergeant, sometime after *The Justice Journal* went to press. It is a promotion well-deserved, and many in the media would agree, overdue!

U.S. Attorney for Connecticut Kevin O'Connor has been given additional duties as an Associate Deputy Attorney General in the U.S. Department of Justice. He will head a special team targeting violent crime and developing initiatives to crack down on gangs and illegal guns.

Planning ahead...did you know the reigning Miss Connecticut (in the Miss America Organization), Heidi Voight, is a crimefighter? Find out how...and why...in the next edition of *The Justice Journal!*

Sincerely,
Kenn Venit, Managing Editor

Letter from the Publisher:



Welcome to the February edition of *The Justice Journal*.

Many of you may have seen our preview edition in October when we created a prototype to introduce our concept and obtain feedback. The response was overwhelming and we received a great many constructive comments. Those comments proved to us there is both a need and strong appetite for this publication. The fundamental concept of improving public safety through education and civic cooperation with law enforcement was strongly endorsed by you.

We have received many letters from the public and I am grateful for your feedback. Your support shows me that citizens are ready to stand up and take an active role in keeping their communities and our state safe.

One such letter was received from Steve Hudspeth of Wilton. It was in response to our October story on underage drinking and the public act concerning the serving of alcohol to minors, which set off a firestorm debate in a number of our towns. Steve writes about how Wilton had a more positive experience, thanks to major community participation.

That is one of the best examples of what *The Justice Journal* is trying to promote and for that I would like to applaud the town of Wilton (See story on page 3). Whether it's in coming together to pass an ordinance, setting up neighborhood watches or simply communicating with one another about the issues in our communities, our central mission is clear: *Break through the apathy and get involved!*

Another recent example, although extreme, occurred at a Stamford Wachovia Bank branch where an employee put himself on the line by chasing down a suspected bank robber. You can read all about it on page 19.

We appreciate your support and hope you enjoy this issue of *The Justice Journal*. Our objective is to inspire you to look for new ways to get involved in your community.

Sincerely,

Doug Johnston

Submit Articles:

The Justice Journal will consider story ideas or the submission of manuscripts from qualified writers. Contact the editor for requirements.

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Or email: Editor@thejusticejournal.com

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Meet The Writers:



GRANT STINCHFIELD is an investigative reporter for an NBC-owned TV station and has been a contributor to MSNBC. Among his special areas of reporting are consumer fraud (especially identity theft) and unsolved murders. He has won four Emmy awards and has had 16 nominations. Other honors include Mothers Against Drunk Driving Journalist of the Year, Associated Press Investigative Reporting Award, Connecticut Safe Kids Achievement Award, and the International Association of Firefighters Achievement Award.



TEALE CALIENDO was an educator who changed careers to become a reporter. She has been in Connecticut journalism for more than two decades. After a distinguished career in radio news in Connecticut, she joined WFSB-TV Channel 3 and became Shoreline Bureau Chief. After years as a corporate communications executive, Teale founded a communications consultation company, which she continues to head, while also continuing writing as a free-lance reporter. Teale is a licensed justice of the peace, and among other responsibilities, enjoys performing marriage ceremonies.



DAWN A. MICELI has worked for various newspapers and other publications throughout Connecticut for a decade and a half. She served as managing editor of an award-winning newspaper, responsible for the layout and editorial content of the 65-page weekly publication, and now is on the staff of an alumni magazine for a Connecticut school. Dawn is an adjunct assistant professor of journalism at Quinnipiac University, teaching courses focusing on writing and reporting. Dawn also appears live on WTIC-TV FOX61 hosting Connecticut Lottery Corporation's mid-day drawings.



PAMELA FALCIGNO is a freelance journalist who specializes in stories about law enforcement. Among her assignments has been covering the National Association of Fugitive Investigators Conference in New Orleans, where she interviewed people associated with producing the FOX TV program, America's Most Wanted. Pamela is involved with public affairs programming on two local public access television channels, one on a Charter Cable system, the other on a Comcast Cable system. She earned her bachelor's degree at Albertus Magnus College, majoring in communications/political science.



DAVID SCALES is a freelance journalist whose work has appeared in a variety of newspapers and magazines across Connecticut. He earned his master's degree in journalism as well as his bachelor's degree in mass communications at Quinnipiac University. He is a contributor to the book, *Helping Your Children Cope with Your Cancer: A Guide for Parents and Families*. David's hobbies include writing fiction and SCUBA diving.



JOHN PALMER, a Norwalk native, has written for several Connecticut daily newspapers, including the Norwalk Hour, the Advocate of Stamford, and the Connecticut Post. He was a public safety officer at Sacred Heart University and is an American Red Cross CPR and First Aid Instructor. John is completing a program for certification as an emergency medical technician. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Southern Connecticut State University and is working toward his master's degree in education at Sacred Heart University.



CHANDRA NILES FOLSOM is a freelance journalist who writes for newspapers and magazines nationwide. She co-authored *Womens Glasnost*, with Tatyana Mamonova, in 1994 and served as an editor on *The Terrorist Conjunction*, by Dr. Alfred Gerteiny, soon to be published by Praeger Security International. Her screenplay *American Jihad* is currently in post production.



CINDY SIMONEAU is a freelance writer, consulting editor and adjunct professor of journalism and English at four area universities. She is a past president of the Connecticut Pro Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, currently serving as treasurer.

Amber Alert—

(Continued from front page)

“Once we get the information faxed to us (from area police departments), then the Amber Alert is sent out within 15 minutes,” said State Police Capt. Phil Halibozek, commanding officer of the Bureau of Infrastructure and Communications. “It’s critical that we get the information out there as soon as possible.”

Obviously, time is an important factor in any abduction and one that, prior to the institution of the Amber Alert system in Connecticut, was working against recovery of the state’s abducted children, according to Mike Rice, president of the Connecticut Broadcaster’s Association. “It used to take hours and parts of the day to gather information. Police were wasting valuable hours and getting hung up with details like child description while the perpetrator was getting away with the child.”

Rice says car color and maybe some license plate information are now all it takes to issue that initial alert. “All we need to know is there is trouble that may be involved, and we know the description of the car... Then nature takes its course.”

Sometimes the results of that course seem anything but natural. Rice said often the perpetrator learns either directly or indirectly of the Amber Alert. “The majority of them hear about

the Amber Alert themselves,” said Rice. “In one case, a relative of the person who abducted the child called the perpetrator on a cell phone and alerted them after having seen it on TV.”

The state’s most recent Amber Alert in August 2006 ended successfully after the abductor, a Montville man, noticed his identifying information flashing on a Department of Transportation (DOT) message board. “He did see the sign and made the call, and we were able to apprehend him on the highway without incident,” said Capt. Halibozek.

Along with the state’s broadcasters and law enforcement community, the DOT was one of the original partners involved with the Amber Alert system. That core group has since been infused with two additional team members – the Connecticut Lottery Corporation and AT&T.

With 1,000 employees geographically dispersed throughout the state on any given day, AT&T Connecticut spokesperson, Seth Bloom, said it just

made sense to include the company’s field technicians in the initial activation plan. Workers receive a coded text message that an alert has been issued and then know to check their e-mail on wireless laptops to learn the details of the abduction in progress. “They go about their day, but they keep their eyes peeled... They’ve been instructed on the code and to call 911 if they have any tips for police.”

A fax also goes out to the Connecticut Lottery Corporation, which then spreads the message to the public through its lottery terminals installed in retail outlets throughout the state. “This entire system is voluntary – there isn’t one piece of legislation that requires the actors to do what they do,” said Chief Searles.

As a public safety dispatcher in the command post at the DPS message center, David Hernandez Jr. handles a variety of police communications, both from municipal departments and individual state police barracks. With the establishment of the Amber Alert system, Hernandez has also taken on a new role – he has been the voice behind two of the five alerts the state has issued.

Once notified of an abduction, Hernandez’ routine goes something like this: upon receipt of an Amber Alert request form from a police agency, he fills in the blanks on a prepared script and then reads the copy into an EAS recorder via a hand-held microphone that fits snugly into his palm (the whole unit is about the size of a VCR and resembles a CB unit). Hernandez has only 90 seconds to tell the public that a child’s life is in imminent danger, so he records his message and then plays it back to ensure that his words are intelligible and within the narrow timeframe. Seconds later, Hernandez pushes a sequence of buttons, and his alert is carried across the airwaves for public con-

sumption. He has only one chance to get it right – policy holds that only one Amber Alert may be issued.

“If the Amber Alert is overused or used incorrectly, it would have the car alarm effect and it wouldn’t help us,” said Rice. “We insist...it can only be issued once, because once it’s issued, the news media is all over it.” The only pause in that routine would be verification that all four Amber Alert criteria have been met: the child must be under 18, is in imminent danger; is the victim of a known abduction, and that identifying information has been obtained about the abductor.

It is that third condition that can make for some harrowing moments, Chief Searles said. Imagine the call from a parent reporting a missing child. It is not enough to issue an Amber Alert, which requires confirmation that a child has indeed been kidnapped. Chief Searles said that what may grow out of that scenario in the near future is a second-tier notification system called “Almost Amber,” for missing children.

Points like these are hashed out at Amber Alert Committee meetings, conducted monthly and after every alert activation. Other suggestions for future implementation include a toll-free number for the public to call with tips for police, as is already in place in Rhode Island, said Chief Searles. Still, for every new idea, committee members seem to agree that the key to the system’s success has always been and will continue to be that public support and awareness. Says Lt. Vance, “Amber Alert: make sure you know what it is. One of the biggest challenges is we need to constantly remind people what it is.”

Chief Searles noted that it still amazes him that the “power and sanctity” of the EAS is voluntarily activated by broadcasters when police notify them that a child has been abducted. He said he once heard prominent Connecticut radio personality Brad Davis talk about the “automatic pass-through” that occurs upon transmission of an alert, with Davis admitting he had been totally unaware that programming had been interrupted during one of his radio shows.

(Questions or comments? Contact d.micelli@thejusticejournal.com)



National Report

17,000 killed in senseless act

Authorities search for answers on a day of sadness

A nation is in mourning as thousands were suddenly killed yesterday all across the country by people who had been drinking and driving. Traffic was backed up in all 50 states making it difficult for emergency vehicles to reach the victims. Hospitals in every city remain overwhelmed with thousands of critically injured patients. The help of National Guard units as well as...

...of blood and the centers to...

...are not enough resources to meet the demands of this catastrophe. The president spoke early this morning at an emergency press conference expressing his condolences to the friends and families of those who were lost. One official in DeBeau County called this “the most devastating moment in American history.” In some places, entire families were killed, leaving many to wonder how something like this could happen in our country today. In a show of support, long lines of volunteers have formed at the...

If this were today’s headline, would you notice? Last year, drinking and driving actually did kill about 17,000 people. It injured half a million more. But because it happened over a year rather than in a single day, it’s not always front-page news. If you drink, find a safe way home. And do your part to keep drunk driving out of the headlines.

MADD
 Activism | Victim Services | Education
www.madd.org

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BLOOPERS & BLUNDERS:

by Jim Sukach - www.quicksolvemysteries.com

TONI DID IT...

Claiming she had a split personality, actually six different personalities, a woman on trial for selling drugs claimed she was innocent. She said Toni did it!

She said Toni, one of her personalities, did not like her and would hide drugs in her apartment. She said she would never use drugs and did not have control over Toni, so she could not be blamed for what Toni did.

The police had found over sixty bags of heroin in her apartment. They also found thirteen thousand dollars in cash.

The jury did not accept her alibi. She was found guilty of heroin possession. She and Toni and the rest of her personalities will have to share a prison cell. Let’s hope they learn to get along!

B.A.T. Mobile Introduced to State for DUI Enforcement

On the cusp of 2007, the state of Connecticut took delivery of its very own New Year's Baby—the B.A.T. Mobile (Breath Alcohol Testing Mobile).

This new mobile police vehicle will assist the State Police in a multitude of tasks, with the primary duty of supporting officers in DUI enforcement measures.

“What’s important to take note of, is when each trooper brings in a prisoner on a DUI arrest, it can take up to two or three hours,” said Lt. J. Paul Vance, Commanding Officer of Public Information. “Just the drive alone can take 30 minutes.”

With the ability to be deployed virtually anywhere, the B.A.T. Mobile allows each individual stopped on suspicion of DUI to be tested and, if needed, processed and held on site thereby dramatically increasing the efficiency of on-duty troopers.

“It has all the necessary equipment required,” said Lt. Vance. “Chemical testing, computers, paperwork and a holding cell that can fit three to four people until the individuals can post bond and be released to a sober party.”

The unit was first deployed on December 31st, by Troop B in Montville as part of the State Police sobriety checkpoint operation. And by all indications, it was a complete success.

“Hundreds of drivers were tested on site and six people were arrested and taken into custody, as a result,” said Lt. Vance.

Costing \$250K, (\$200K from a Federal DOT



grant) the unit is outfitted with a radio, telephone and electronic equipment that can be used as a command post in case of an emergency.

Additionally, the unit is also equipped with enough technology onboard to provide traffic safety educational presentations to the public.

“It can be taken to high schools and colleges where troopers can speak about DUI and the consequences,” said Lt. Vance. “It’s even got exterior lighting and an outside monitor to show videos. So, the B.A.T. Mobile is not only an efficient sobriety checkpoint but has three capabilities.”



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Law Enforcement Profile:

By TEALE CALIENDO
Correspondent

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal Serves as "The People's Lawyer"

"My focus now and in the foreseeable future is being the best possible Attorney General and doing this job as best I can."

Those are the words of Connecticut's Attorney General Richard Blumenthal. Considering he won reelection last November with 74 percent of the voters' support, the people of Connecticut obviously think his best is pretty good. Just take one look at his website (www.ct.gov/ag/site/default.asp) and you can see he is a very busy man. And he's been that way all his adult life, most of which has been dedicated to serving the public, as a state senator, a state representative, and United States Attorney. Blumenthal's advocacy for the rights of Connecticut's citizens reached a pinnacle in 1991 when he became the state's Attorney General, "the people's lawyer" -- that means all of the people, especially the young, the elderly, and the consumer.

Protecting the Young

"Don't talk to strangers" – that was the warning parents gave when children went outside years ago. The problem for today's parents is that strangers are not always outside. They are right in our homes, on our computers.

MySpace.com, which contains the personal profiles of millions of teenagers, has agreed to one of the Attorney General's demands that it provide parents with free software to block the site. However, Blumenthal is not satisfied, because the blocking program is difficult to find and install. He asked MySpace "to provide bold, conspicuous notice, and a clear link on every page for free blocking software that can stop access to MySpace." You can understand the AG's determination when you learn that a 27-year-old Chaplin man was charged last spring with sexually assaulting a 13-year-old Hebron girl he met on MySpace. And, the Attorney General's office currently is investigating several cases of sexual assault involving the popular website.

Blumenthal also demanded that MySpace eliminate the site's links to pornography and institute age verification that will ban users under the age of 16. "MySpace has taken some steps in response to my concerns, but I remain deeply troubled about the pace and substance of changes to the site, espe-



Attorney General Richard Blumenthal

(Photo by Teale Caliendo)

cially since it continues to expose children to potential harm, including pornography, adults seeking sex, and sexual predators.

"We are building a coalition of states that will persuade or compel MySpace to do more and do it more quickly so that such appalling criminal incidents will be prevented," Blumenthal added.

Protecting The Elderly

Scam artists target senior citizens for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is they're available. Retired people usually are home and alone during the day when phone solicitors call. The elderly receive five or more calls daily from telephone salespeople; some surveys put the number as high as 20. So, it is not surprising the elderly comprise 80% of telemarketing victims.

Last summer the Attorney General began the Senior Volunteer Assistance Program (SVAP) in cooperation with the American Association of Retired Persons and the Greater New Britain Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. The volunteers, retired professionals with consumer-related experience, have helped seniors get restitution ranging from one dollar for a toothpaste rebate to \$3,425 for a lottery ticket.

Blumenthal issued a warning in 2006 that the elderly are also being tar-

geted on the streets. Scam artists accuse elderly drivers of hitting them and then intimidate them into paying cash for the "damages." He alerted the public about the case of an 82-year-old woman who was scammed when she pulled into a municipal parking lot in Manchester next to a dilapidated vehicle bearing temporary plates. Three men near the car accused her of hitting it. She was no pushover and protested. She argued there were scratches on the opposite side of the vehicle, but the men frightened her into handing over \$100. The victim later found out they pulled the same scam on another Manchester senior who gave them \$300.

"One common-sense rule is simply to call for police help whenever anyone says you've damaged another car," Blumenthal said. "Unfortunately, con artists may seek to bully seniors into giving cash for damage never actually done. Whether there is damage or not, a police report protects everyone."

Protecting the Consumer

Always waging the good battle for the Connecticut consumer, Blumenthal was not happy when President George Bush signed the nation's federal energy bill into law. "It is a gift to the special energy interests that usurps a lot of legitimate state control and oversight,"

Blumenthal said. He characterized it as a "blank check" for the energy industry.

"It favors the energy interests with huge windfalls and it provides subsidies to the energy interests that are not necessary to stimulate power generation. I think it's a fundamental shift of power that...in the long run will be bad for our consumers and our economy," he added.

The Attorney General also wants the state legislature to act on Connecticut's "spiraling" electricity prices. He labeled the United Illuminating Company's recent increase "a tsunami (that) will deliver a bone-bruising body blow to our economy, devastating both homeowners and businesses...combined with the doubling of CL&P's rates over four years (it) confirms that Connecticut's electricity market is badly broken and requires sweeping, systemic reform."

Blumenthal labeled the much-touted deregulation of the electric utility industry as "dysfunctional – victimizing consumers and our economy, and providing humongous windfall profits to special interests." Blumenthal thinks a windfall profits tax imposed on generators and the creation of an independent Connecticut Electricity Authority to run power auctions and provide financing for power plants might help curb electricity prices.

(Continued on page 17)

Police departments consider the evidence:

Tasers: Lifesavers or Lethal Weapons?

By **DAVID SCALES**
Correspondent

When police officers hit the streets, they know the risk of injury or death comes with the badge. However, the risk of harm to officers and suspects may decline as more Connecticut police departments consider adopting "high-voltage stun guns", also known as "conducted energy weapons", as an alternative to lethal force. According to TASER International, which manufactures the most widely used version of such weapons, "The Taser brand energy control devices are classified as 'Non-Lethal Weapons' (NLW) by the United States Department of Defense. NLWs are defined as 'weapons that are explicitly designed and primarily employed so as to incapacitate personnel or material, while minimizing fatalities, permanent injury to personnel, and undesired damage to property.'"

The Taser is a pistol-like device which uses compressed nitrogen to deploy two small metal probes or darts connected to insulated wires. It can fire them from 15 to 35 feet away from a target – the darts go as fast as 160 feet per second. The probes attach themselves to a person's clothing or body, and the power cell releases an electrical discharge of 50,000 volts, causing neuromuscular incapacitation.

After receiving some requests from officers in the Westport Police Department, Deputy Chief Gary Golas and the other officials at the department are considering purchasing Tasers. "We are looking into them because they are a less-than-lethal approach," Chief Golas said. "As officer and suspect injuries go, studies have shown that Tasers reduce them by 50% compared to putting hands on a suspect in certain situations. There's also no contamination like when you pepper spray or mace someone and no blunt trauma compared to impact weapons."

Chief Golas said the department currently uses an air gun, similar to a paintball gun, which fires small plastic balls filled with powdered pepper gas, also called OC, but it is only carried in one or two cars at the department. According to Chief Golas, the Taser would be a more readily available option. Conventional armaments such as stun guns, mace, or batons require the officer to get closer to a potentially dangerous suspect at increased risk, whereas the Taser operates at a greater range.

TASER International offers versions of its product costing from \$400 to \$900. Law enforcement models come with cartridges that can shoot farther, discharge higher voltage, and for an extra \$500, the Taser can accommodate a camera attachment, which records what the officer sees. Chief Golas said the department has considered purchas-

ing 15 units, but depending on the cost they may buy only ten. He noted the Board of Police Chiefs has not made a definite decision yet, but if they decide to purchase them, officers could be carrying them within 90 days.

However, possible increased safety on

ventricular fibrillation on the tracing that came from that device -- so that worried me a little bit." Dr. Stoenescu thinks the reason it did not cause a problem was because the Taser's shock duration was very short, but he theorizes if the current had lasted a few more sec-

had taken narcotics such as cocaine. It is believed the deaths may have been caused by some type of respiratory arrest rather than cardiac.

"Theoretically a person who is predisposed to an arrhythmia or a drug which predisposes them to an arrhythmia could cause that," Dr. Stoenescu said. "They think they're safe, but they have not been studied in the setting of people who are on cardiac drugs or with people who have devices. It's nebulous, and since we don't know about those people, theoretically there is a concern."

Future police officers are learning how to use Tasers at the Connecticut State Police Academy in Meriden, according to training officer Reginald Allard, Jr. TASER International presents demonstrations where the effectiveness of their product is not only explained but is actually used on recruits who volunteer to be Tasered.

"The Tasers have not caused death," Allard said. "But there has been a correlation. A rooster crows as the sun rises -- but does the rooster cause the sun to rise? No, but there is a correlation." The choice of whether or not to issue Tasers is made by Connecticut's individual police departments, Allard noted. In his 22 years of experience, Allard said he has fired a Taser only in training.

If it comes down to the choice of using a .40 caliber Glock 23 pistol or a high-voltage Taser, Chief Golas believes the Taser has a better chance of saving officers' and suspects' lives even though there are some unpredictable factors.

"Unfortunately you can't plan for everything in life," Golas said. "You do the best you can with the best tools available to you and weigh your options."

Comments or questions? Contact: d.scales@thejusticejournal.com

TASER is the acronym for "Thomas A. Swift's Electric Rifle" according to TASER International.



the streets could come with some risk. Though Tasers themselves do not cause death and can be effective against violent offenders, they are not foolproof. A possibility of danger exists when Tasers are used against people with heart conditions, according to Dr. Mathias Stoenescu, a cardiac electrophysiologist. He studies the heart's rhythm and electrical systems and is director of the UConn Health Center's Heart Rhythm Program.

"The people I would be most concerned for are those who have predispositions to or have cardiac problems," Dr. Stoenescu said. "There is no information about patients who have preexisting heart conditions or people with internal devices like pacemakers and internal defibrillators." In 2006, Dr. Stoenescu treated a prisoner with an internal defibrillator who was Tasered. Although the prisoner suffered no damage to his heart, Dr. Stoenescu examined the defibrillator and found it had registered a high-frequency current, which could possibly trick the device into thinking the heart was experiencing an arrhythmia. The defibrillator could possibly trigger another shock to the heart.

"When we implant these defibrillators, we test them by inducing fibrillation through the device, and one way is through what's called a 'Fibber,'" Dr. Stoenescu explained. "You deliver a high-frequency current through the Fibber and let the device shock the patient out and make sure it works. The Taser shock registered by the device looked identical to the Fibber we use to induce

onds it could have caused the defibrillator to fire.

According to Dr. Stoenescu's research, a 2001 British medical journal reviewed some cases of people who received a Taser discharge. They were brought into the emergency room and were compared to 22 people shot at by police with firearms. Out of 220 cases of people who were shot with a Taser, 1.4 percent died and few had lasting damage. Of the 22 shot with firearms, 50 percent had lasting damage. The deceased patients were examined, and it was determined the majority of them

TASER Executives Take "Hits"

(The following statement is posted at www.taser.com)

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<http://www.taser.com/documents/hits.wmv>

"TASER International, Inc. develops, assembles and markets conducted energy weapons that enable people to protect themselves while minimizing the risk of serious injury or death."



**Attorney
Richard T. Meehan, Jr.**



**State's Attorney
Jonathan Benedict**

VERSUS

CAMERAS IN THE COURTROOM?

Accountability for Judges and Lawyers

By **ATTY. RICHARD MEEHAN, JR.**

Accountability for judges became a hot-button issue for the Legislature this year after Connecticut's chief justice withheld and delayed publishing a controversial decision about access to court records.

Reformers have proposed a long list of solutions, including a pilot program allowing the broadcast of certain criminal trials. Judges and lawyers are equally torn over the idea that this staid and stodgy state would permit such complete public access. In recent years there has been an onslaught of TV dramas attempting to portray the criminal trial process. Celebrity trials like O.J. Simpson's and Michael Jackson's captured our attention, almost like an addiction.

"Boston Legal," "Ally McBeal," etc., have created an almost farcical view of the

process. The proliferation of "CSI" shows has created a false impression in potential jurors that somehow every case can be resolved in a short time span by super forensic sleuthing. Hollywood has created

"The framers determined that only an open court system could guarantee the freedoms they envisioned this new Constitution was to create."

— *Atty. Richard Meehan Jr.*

an unrealistic sense of what occurs in a criminal trial.

The furor over sealing files and allegations of backroom politics in the judiciary demonstrates that the system needs revamping. What better way to put lawyers and judges on our best behavior than by allowing the public to watch what we do on TV?

I recently became a frequent guest com-

mentator on several programs on Court TV. As a cable network it reaches 86,000,000 homes. People not only watch but also comment on multiple message boards. These are not shut-ins with noth-

ing better to do with their time. Many of their comments are insightful, provoking intriguing debate.

The Sixth Amendment guarantees the right to a public trial. When the framers of the Constitution penned that, they were concerned about the secret Star Chamber proceedings that they fled in England. Colonial trials were conducted in small hamlets and villages and probably often attracted many if not most of the residents. The framers determined that only an open court system could guarantee the freedoms they envisioned this new Constitution was to create.

Our courts can't accommodate the majority of residents of a community affected by a sensational trial. The medium of television would serve the interests of the public now. Most of our trials in this state do not attract the national media attention and might not even hold the attention of a local TV audience. But televising trials would hold lawyers and judges to a higher standard of professionalism.

The public does not know that after every trial in this state the lawyers are provided a survey to grade the conduct and demeanor of the trial judge. We fill out the forms anonymously and return them to the Judicial Branch with no real certainty that anyone takes them seriously. Why not let the public judge our judges, or at least have the opportunity to form an opinion whether someone belongs on the bench when it is time to consider reapportionment.

As for lawyers, people should see what we are made of in the courtroom. When I started practicing with my dad 32 years ago, there was no lawyer advertising, no full-color Yellow Pages ads or billboards screaming, "Hire me -- I'm the best." People chose litigators largely by word of

mouth and referral from the family lawyer. Reputations as trial lawyers were earned in the crucible of the courtroom. Now it is often a question not of ability but of the size of a firm's advertising budget that places certain lawyers at the forefront.

Let people see us in action and judge for themselves. In the nearly two years that I have been watching Court TV carefully, I have yet to see a trial -- civil or criminal -- in which the lawyers were preening for the cameras. Juror identities are kept from the camera, and judges can control whether the face of a witness and that person's voice should be identifiable. The dignity of victims and the rights of the accused are matters requiring great deference.

Last year, this state held its first execution in more than four decades. The number of capital prosecutions is increasing. Let the public understand the magnitude of certain crimes. In particular, sentencing should be broadcast. I brought my son's junior high class to court where they watched a teenager sentenced to three years in prison on a drug charge. The click of the handcuffs as that youngster was taken into custody was a dramatic message to those kids about the consequences of drug use.

This is why those framers added the Sixth Amendment. It truly should be the people's court.

Bridgeport attorney Richard Meehan Jr. was the lead defense counsel for former Bridgeport Mayor Joseph Ganim's corruption trial. Meehan is certified as a criminal trial specialist by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. Meehan has also obtained multimillion-dollar verdicts and settlements in complex medical and dental malpractice and personal injury litigation. He is a past president of the Greater Bridgeport Bar Association and appears regularly on Court TV. Website, www.meehanlaw.com



Witnesses at Risk With Televised Trials

By **JONATHAN BENEDICT**
State's Attorney, Bridgeport

Camera coverage of criminal trials has been left up to discretion of trial judges for years. In practice, however, with prosecutors often objecting to the presence of cameras, judges have frequently but not invariably, turned down media requests. This has typically been the result of a balancing of genuine concerns for the integrity of the trial process with a serious question as to what exactly are the advantages of televising a trial.

The effort to mandate television cameras has come on the heels of recent complaints relating to the Judicial Department's now-discarded practices of maintaining certain procedural matters under a cloak of confidentiality. Our criminal trials, have since time immemorial, been open to the media and public in general. With the exception of juvenile and youthful offender cases, all criminal trials may be attended by anyone -- the only requirement being to observe appropriate courtroom decorum. Representatives of the media are invited to attend, take notes and report fully on the proceedings. Except as covered by sequestration rules and the Code of Ethics, persons involved in the process are free to "go on camera" outside of the courthouse in locations typically made convenient for the media.

There are, however, genuine concerns for the integrity of a trial that is carried on live television. Eleven years ago, the O.J. Simpson trial in Los Angeles underlined most of these concerns. Our criminal justice system is clearly the fairest and most reliable ever devised. It is, however, not perfect; dependent upon human endeavors, it is susceptible to human failings. While courtroom professionals are expected to approach their tasks with professionalism and maturity, being on television inevitably poses a distraction that can interfere with the accomplishment of those tasks.

A prosecutor has the dual objective of seeking justice and ensuring that it is done fairly. In strategizing his case and examining witnesses, does the fact that he is doing so "live" affect his decision-making? Does a defense attorney's desire to project an on-camera image that will bring in new clients work in the best interests of his current client? Did the judge's intent to write his own book color his deci-

sions and management of the trial so as to interfere with the logical flow of evidence?

Of greater concern is the effect of television cameras on jurors. While any plan to televise trials provides for juror anonymity,

"While courtroom professionals are expected to approach their tasks with professionalism and maturity, being on television inevitably poses a distraction that can interfere with the accomplishment of those tasks."

— *Atty. Jonathan Benedict*

this hardly resolves a concern for jury contamination. Connecticut has a long history of not sequestering jurors. With the liberal use of admonishments from the judge, and the conscientiousness of our juries, we have been successful (but by no means perfect) in avoiding jury contamination. When we start televising witnesses, don't we greatly increase the risk of the casual over-the-back-fence conversation between a juror and his neighbor who probably has not watched the entire trial and may even have seen proceedings that the jury was not privy to?

Of the greatest concern to me is the effect of the prospect of witnesses being on camera. Most of the witnesses to today's violence are law-abiding citizens who had the misfortune of being in or near their own neighborhoods when gunfire erupted. The persons who we need testimony against often are familiar with our witnesses. As a result, there is today a great reluctance on the part of honest citizens to come forward. This district, only the third largest in the state, in most years is first in the expenditure of witness-protection monies. What do I now say to an eyewitness who asks, "If the case goes to trial, will I be on television?"

Four and one-half years ago, I tried the most publicized case in Connecticut history, State v. Michael Skakel. When CBS, leading a consortium of media outlets, requested permission to televise the trial, the state, citing the above-noted concerns, objected. Judge John Kavanewsky, sharing the same concerns, agreed and denied the request. Realizing the magnitude of the impending media coverage, the Judicial Department devised a media solution that should serve as a model for the trial of high-profile cases everywhere.

A large courtroom was reserved and redesigned in a theater style in Norwalk. It provided ample room for all media representatives as well as the public at large. Reporters were free to attend all trial sessions, take notes, report, and comment as their employers required. Space in the courthouse parking lot was set aside for the electronic media's equipment. An outdoor podium was set up, acces-

sible to as many reporters as wanted to participate. Within the strictures of the Code of Ethics, attorneys made themselves available for interviews. Representatives of the Judicial Department monitored the situation to ensure

that no member of the media was being short-changed.

The results were twofold. On the one hand, the trial not only received massive coverage in New York, Connecticut and Boston in particular, but nationwide as well. No one was ever heard to complain that they just were not being given an adequate opportunity to cover and report on the proceedings. On the other hand, the trial proceeded fairly, and efficiently with due regard for the rights of the defendant

and concern for the jury and the awesome responsibility entrusted to them. As in the vast majority of our criminal trials, justice was done for the State, for the defendant, and for the public as well. This happened at the minimal expense of depriving relatively few citizens the opportunity to browse through a trial from their living rooms rather than tuning into the evening news or unfolding their morning paper. To risk disrupting so critical a function of our democracy as a fair, impartial and credible trial, fairly and comprehensively covered by the media, would be a shame.

Jonathan Benedict became Bridgeport's State's Attorney in 1997 and inherited the Martha Moxley murder investigation. He served as lead prosecutor in the case against Michael Skakel. He received his Doctor of Jurisprudence degree in 1974 at St. John's University School of Law. Benedict became a Connecticut prosecutor in 1976. In 1992, he won a conviction in the first Connecticut murder trial to rely heavily on DNA evidence.

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RESULTS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE
NEXT ISSUE OF THE JUSTICE JOURNAL

Drug Theft—

(Continued from front page)

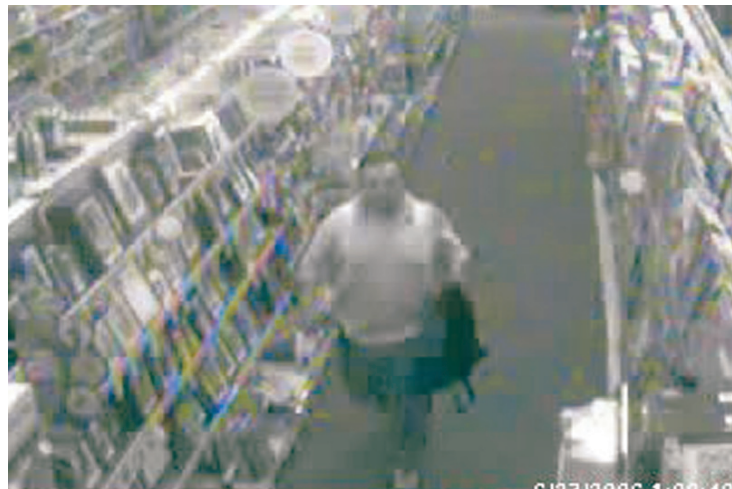
when one considers that a good number of the pharmacies in Connecticut are larger chains such as CVS, Target, and Walgreens that have their own in-house security and more financial resources to afford security measures such as advanced camera systems and motion detectors, it means the thieves are testing to find out what they can get away with.

"It's all about target hardening," said Capt. Conklin, who has been in the Stamford Police Department for 26 years and is a graduate of the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA. He travels around the country to educate pharmacies about drug thefts and how to prevent them, teaching about the advantages of having Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) camera systems and motion detectors and keeping detailed notes about incidents.

Simple measures such as a CCTV camera system helps. In a recent robbery in Stamford, Capt. Conklin said a robber went into a CVS, held a gun to the pharmacist's neck, and took prescription medications from a safe. In that particular robbery, police were able to use photos obtained from security cameras to catch the criminal. By watching the videotape, police saw that the robber had touched a window and the camera itself, and they were able to get his fingerprints.

Capt. Conklin said two major factors are driving the increased thefts of prescription drugs within U.S. borders. First, the federal government's tightening of the country's borders has made it more difficult to smuggle illegal "fake" prescription drugs into the country. Second, most legitimate prescription drugs are approved and regulated by the federal government, which makes them worth more on the black market.

Not only are pharmacies being hit, but trucks transporting prescription drugs are being hijacked as well. "We see a lot of these trends, and they are going to continue...As these pharmacies are coming along with alarms, motion detectors, and cell phone and battery backups, they become a harder target,



Photos from security surveillance videotape inside Stamford CVS, show robbery suspect approaching pharmacist, holding a gun to his neck and fleeing out the door, where police later found his fingerprints.

and thieves are looking for the weaker links. These couriers and shipping firms at truck stops and such tend to be the weaker links," said Capt. Conklin.

A program that has drawn attention from law enforcement officials across the country is a joint initiative with several national law-enforcement organizations, developed and launched by Stamford-based drug manufacturer Purdue Pharma in 2003. RxPatrol (Rx Pattern Analysis Tracking Robberies and Other Losses), as it is called, is a database designed to collect information related to pharmacy robberies and burglaries across the country that can be shared with police departments and other law enforcement agencies.

Capt. Conklin was asked by Purdue Pharma to help coordinate the initiative. He said it works because the nomadic nature of pharmacy thieves makes them hard to catch. When a robbery occurs in

Ohio, for instance, an investigating police officer can enter the information about the crime into the RxPatrol database. The information then gets sent out in an e-mail alert to 75,000 pharmacies nationwide. More than 4,000 participating police departments can search by ZIP code, area code, address, city, or state for information about similar incidents. If a similar theft occurs in neighboring Indiana and results in an arrest, the information could lead to the solution of two crimes. Since its inception in 2003, RxPatrol has logged information on about 2,500 pharmacy thefts nationwide and has led to at least 19 arrests across the country, according to Capt. Conklin.

"There was a consensus that there needed to be a clearinghouse for this kind of information," said Aaron Graham, Vice President Director of Corporate Security for Purdue Pharma. "Nobody took the time to disseminate this information to the greater community. Now we've got pharmacies saying 'Wow, I've got three of these burglaries within five miles of me. Maybe I should know about this.'"

Purdue Pharma is also putting radio frequency identification (RFID) transmitters into bottles of OxyContin to help track packages from manufacture to sale. The FBI's Law Enforcement Executive Development Association (FBI-LEEDA) has been working to help 25 police departments across the country obtain ID scanning devices, at a cost of \$6,000 each, that can track these bottles. The Broward County Sheriff's Office in Fort Lauderdale, FL, is one of the departments that applied for and

received one of the trackers. The only stipulation is that the trackers have to be made available to other nearby departments, if needed.

Graham said the program is personal to him because his father-in-law was a pharmacist for 35 years. "He told me 'I'm a pharmacist. I'm thinking of where to put the Hallmark cards and where to put the medicines on the shelf. I'm not thinking of the cop stuff,'" he said. "Once you become a victim, you become much more sensitive to the issue," Graham noted.

According to Tom Stone, Executive Director of FBI-LEEDA, billions of dollars of prescription drugs are stolen from pharmacies every year. It is estimated that about 60 percent of independent and chain pharmacies will be victims of a burglary, robbery, or shoplifting within a two-year period. Stone, whose organization is based in Westchester, Pa, travels the country speaking to law enforcement professionals at one-day "drug summits" designed to educate police detectives and commanders about the problem of drug diversion and the resources available to battle it.

Police officials across the country have started taking notice of the growing instance of prescription drug thefts, and have begun working with pharmacies and drug manufacturers to raise awareness of the problem as well as coming up with efficient ways to work together to catch thieves. "We recognize the cops can't do it themselves," Stone explained.

Comments or questions? Contact: j.palmer@thejusticejournal.com

STAY ALERT

Read Grant Stinchfield's
"Scam of the Month"

Wilton Task Force—

(Continued from page 3)

children, upon in-home religious services, or upon the use of alcohol under a physician's direction, and that it also would give our police no greater powers of search and seizure than already exist and as are limited by our Constitution that, of course, no ordinance can revoke or undermine," said Hudspeth.

"We were careful not to come across as a fanatical group. We wanted to work together with as many groups as possible, and we found a good portion of parents in town who were all saying the same thing with the same attitude about underage drinking issues," said Higgins.

"The net effect of this two-year program was a raising of town consciousness that not only got the ordinance passed readily and unanimously by our selectmen after public hearings, but also, and even more importantly, raised the consciousness of our entire community to the severe consequences of underage drinking and our need as a town to let it be known how strongly we are concerned about this issue," said Hudspeth.

The result, Fawcett said, is a demonstrated shift in cultural perception from what can be done, to doing something. "If we can reduce the numbers of kids who get tripped up on dependency, we have succeeded."

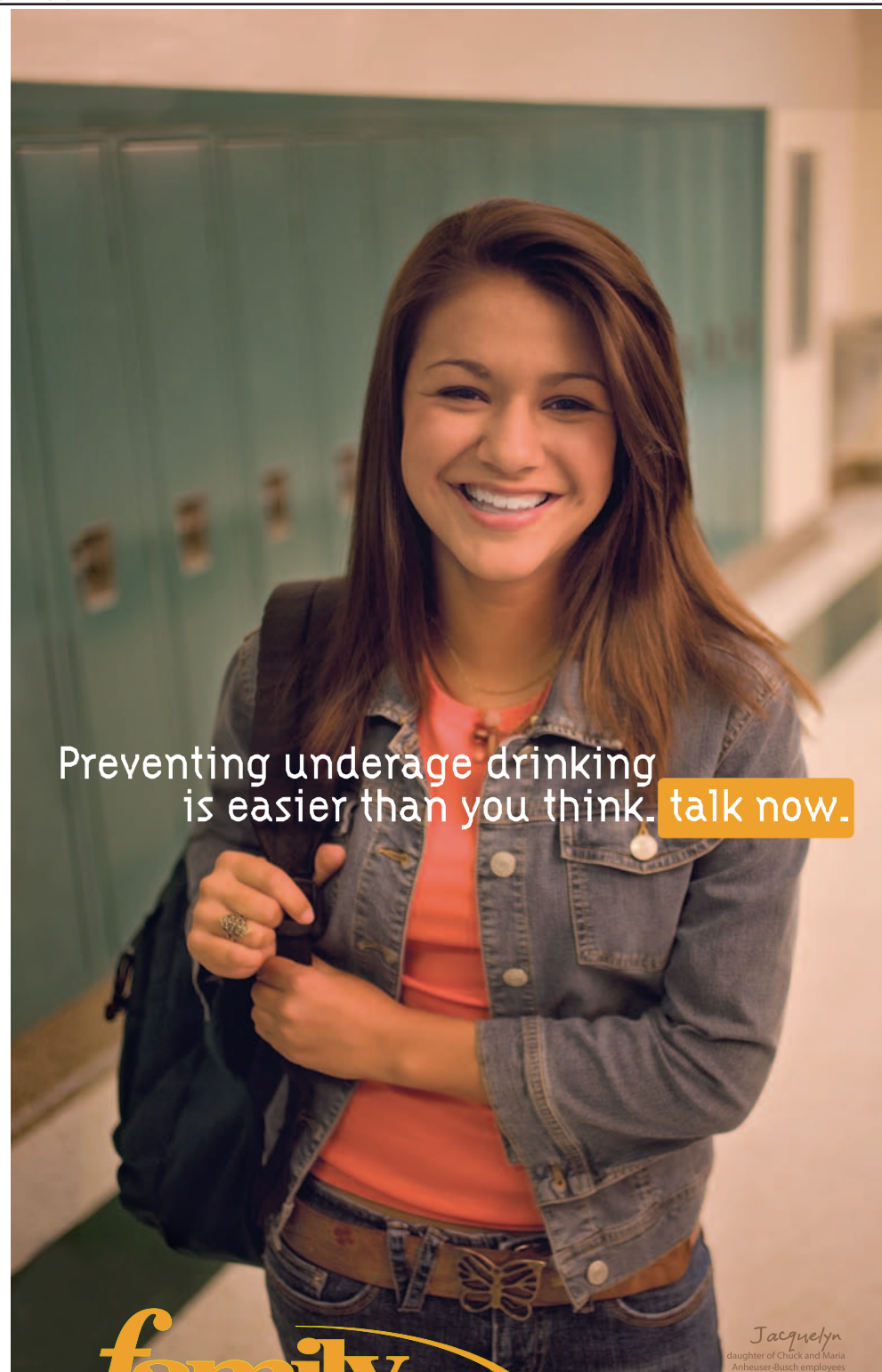
Since the ordinance's passage, the group has shifted its focus to continued

educational efforts and healthy alternatives. A major undertaking is producing a booklet of facts about alcohol and drugs for distribution to the 2,600 Wilton school families and placing information on healthy alternatives, produced by the Outreach Council, in spots frequented by middle and high school students. Other, more direct approaches include a "Save a Life", a mock driving demonstration planned for about 200 students in April, sponsored by the Wilton Ambulance Corps, PTA Council, and Rotary Club. Their educational efforts are also supplemented by the high school health teacher.

In addition, Lombardo said police are considering partnering with the enforcement branch of the state Liquor Control Commission undercover operation to see if local establishments are providing alcohol to underage young people as a supplement to ongoing local police educational outreach to the business community. Wilton does not have any retail stores that sell alcohol but does have many restaurants that serve alcohol.

"Through all of these efforts, past and present, we're reaching the community, parents, and most importantly, kids about alcohol and drugs, dependency and other mental health issues, and the consequences these actions can have," said Fawcett.

Comments or questions? Contact: editor@thejusticejournal.com



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BY THE SHELTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
LUKASZ FALKOWSKI



Name: Lukasz Falkowski **Alias:** Lucas Falkowski
Birthdate: Dec. 7, 1978 **Sex:** Male **Race:** White
Hair: Blonde **Eyes:** Blue **Height:** 6'0" **Weight:** 170lbs
Last Known Address: 24 Moulthrop Street, Ansonia, CT

Charges: 53a-371 Sexual Assault 4th Degree -- 4 Counts,
53-21 Risk of Injury to a Minor -- 4 Counts,
53a-172 Failure to Appear 1st Degree

Please contact the Shelton Police Department at
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if you have any questions or updates to
the information contained in this report.

WARNING: Do not attempt to apprehend this suspect yourself. If seen, contact your local police station immediately.

What If...?

By CAPT. GARY MACNAMARA
Fairfield Police Department
Special to The Justice Journal



Know How to Prepare for School Emergencies

What if you are in school and the fire alarm goes off? Ever since we were old enough to attend school we were taught what to do when a fire alarm starts ringing at school. If the fire alarm goes off,

you form an orderly line and walk quietly to the exit. Schools practice it on a regular basis. In fact, the Connecticut Fire Safety Code mandates that schools perform a minimum of one fire drill

each month. Long ago, fire officials recognized the damage and death a fire would cause in a school, they recognized the threat and developed ways to prevent it. They prepared the staff, students, and parents, and they trained for it, then they developed ways to respond should a fire occur.

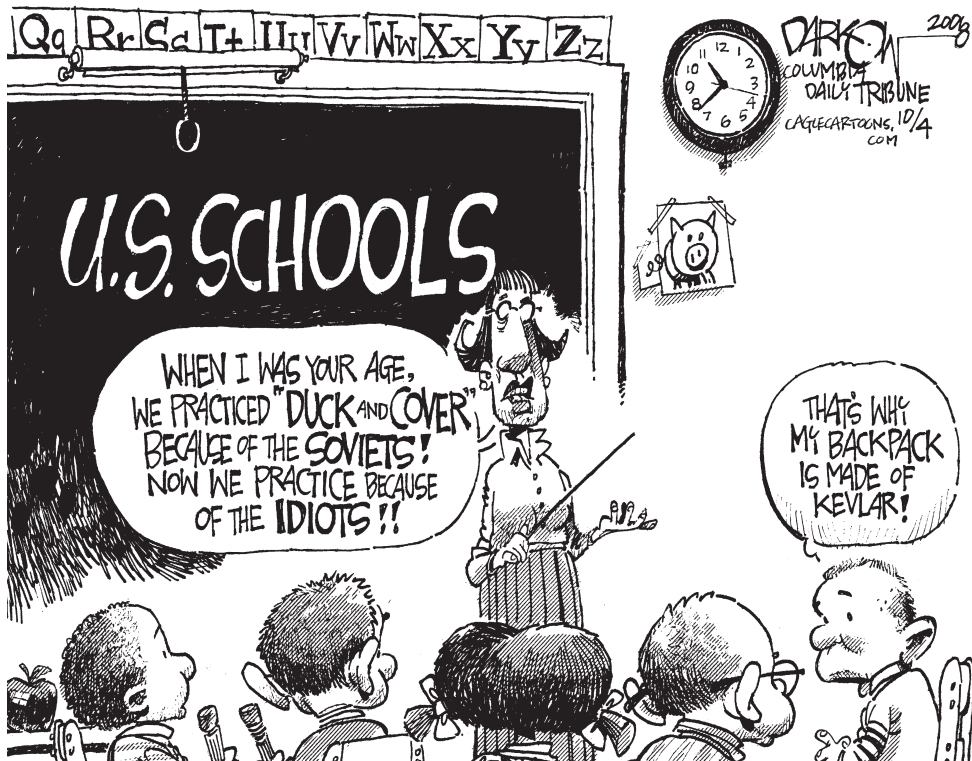
of over 300 students, parents, and staff on the first day of school. On November 20, 2006, hostages (including some children) were taken in a school in Emsdetten, Germany, near the border with the Netherlands.

With events such as these, it is understandable why many parents have asked, "What if it happened here? What if my child were involved? What if I, as a parent, have concerns and want to do something about it?"

Unlike the steps taken to prevent or respond to a fire, school violence is more varied and not as simple to prepare for. There is no red box on the wall labeled, "Pull Handle in Case of Violence." School violence can take on many forms, including bullying, fighting, intimidation, gangs, shootings, hostage situations, and custody or domestic disputes. Even events not directly involving a school, such as a police pursuit, can affect the people in it based upon proximity.

As a result of the complexity of the problem, law enforcement officials, school administrators throughout the area, and others having a stake in the

(Continued on page 23)



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BLOOPERS & BLUNDERS:

by Jim Sukach - www.quicksolvemysteries.com



A REAL DRIVE-THRU HOLDUP

Holding up a restaurant at a drive-thru window can be a tough job, as we have seen. Here is a story about a successful holdup, but the perpetrator did not get away with any money.

An employee of a fast-food restaurant was hurt on the job. His father was angry because the restaurant did not keep its promises to pay for the injuries. To vent his frustration, he staged a holdup-not a robbery! He held up the traffic past the drive-thru windows by parking two pickup trucks in the way!

The line built up as customers and employees became more and more angry. Finally, the police came and made the man move his trucks out of the way.

GET INVOLVED !

Join the debate in every issue with our point/counterpoint column, "Versus"



Law Enforcement Profile—

(Continued from page 10)

This summer the Attorney General announced a multimillion-dollar settlement with drug giant GlaxoSmithKline. The company agreed to pay \$70 million to provide restitution to individual consumers and the state of Connecticut, ending the company's alleged 10-year-long scheme to hike the price of two cancer drugs. Blumenthal filed suit in 2003, charging the drug company that inflated the average wholesale prices for Zofran and Kytril. Since the state's Medicaid program uses those prices to set reimbursement rates, the department overpaid for the drugs.

"GlaxoSmithKline reported false prices in a brazen scheme to soak taxpayers and patients," Blumenthal said. "The company profited at public and patient expense. This settlement provides Connecticut with full restitution and compensates patients and others for inflated co-payments. At the same time GlaxoSmithKline reported artificially high prices to push up Medicaid reimbursement rates, it offered the drugs to physicians at a deep discount. As a result, the difference between what doctors paid for the drugs and their Medicaid reimbursement increased. The bigger margin induced doctors to prescribe more Zofran and Kytril, increasing the company's market share and profits.

The alleged fraud took place between 1993 and 2003."

The AG's office not only protects the people from private interests that threaten their quality of life, it monitors the government to ensure it does not overreach. In 2005, charging that the federal government was acting illegally by not fully funding the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Education Act, Blumenthal took the government to court. Connecticut was the first state to do so, and others have since followed suit. During the summer of 2006 Blumenthal filed a notice with the U.S. District Court, stating that Connecticut's case had been bolstered by a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that said the federal government must be "clear and unambiguous" about any conditions it imposes on states in providing federal money. That decision, Blumenthal said, supports Connecticut's claim that the federal government has illegally imposed ambiguous mandates with inadequate funding.

These are the kinds of issues "the people's lawyer" deals with on a daily basis. If you have anything you would like the Attorney General's office to look into, call 1-860-808-5318 or log on to <http://www.ct.gov/ag/site/default.asp>.

Comments or questions for Teale?
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BLOOPERS & BLUNDERS:

by Jim Sukach - www.quicksolvemysteries.com



LUNCH BREAK...

"Two hamburgers, two colas, all your money, and two cops to go, please!" This is not exactly what they ordered, but it is what they got.

Two men tried robbing a fast-food restaurant through the drive-thru. They did not stop to think about the guy behind them, watching what was happening. In this case, he was also writing down the robbers' license plate number. When it was his turn to pick up his order, he handed the cashier the paper with the license plate number and a description of the car.

Thinking their robbery was a successful morning's work, they decided to take a lunch break just a few blocks away.

In the meantime, of course, the police were called and given the number and description. The lunch break was interrupted by the police, and robbers were arrested while munching their stolen hamburgers and counting their stolen money!

PAY ATTENTION

Look for Cpt. Gary MacNamara's monthly column
"What If...?"



MISSING:

ENDANGERED RUNAWAY SAMANTHA JACKSON



DOB: Sep 13, 1990 Missing: Sep 8, 2006 Age Now: 16 Sex: Female
Race: White Hair: Blonde Eyes: Hazel Height: 5'4" (163cm)
Weight: 130lbs (59kg) Missing From: Bridgeport, CT

Samantha may still be in the local area or she may travel out of the state. She may go by the nickname Sam.



ANYONE HAVING INFORMATION
SHOULD CONTACT:

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST)
Bridgeport Police Department 1-203-576-7671

MISSING:

ENDANGERED RUNAWAY

MARIA ANJIRAS



AGE PROGRESSED



DOB: Aug 10, 1961 Missing: Feb 12, 1976
Age Now: 45 Sex: Female Race: White
Hair: Brown Eyes: Blue Height: 5'6" (168cm) Weight: 120lbs (54kg)
Missing From: Norwalk, CT

Maria's photo is shown age-progressed to 41 years. She was last seen on February 12, 1976 leaving her home on a blue English race bike. The bike was later found approximately one mile from Maria's home but she has not been heard from since.



ANYONE HAVING INFORMATION
SHOULD CONTACT:

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST)
Bridgeport Police Department 1-203-576-7671

Understanding 911 Procedures Improves Response



By **ASSISTANT CHIEF JOSE L. LOPEZ Sr.**
Chief of Detectives
& Community Services
Bureau, Hartford Police
Department

I am repeatedly asked, "When should I call 911?" The telephone number 911 is the police dispatch emergency line. This number should only be used in a true emergency where there is imminent danger, and the need for a police, fire, or EMT response should be immediate. The 911 system should not be used for routine calls or to test your telephone service.

When calling the Public Safety Dispatch Center via 911, you should immediately give your location, in the event that the call is dropped for whatever reason, and then state what the emergency is. The call takers receive extensive training and are required to ask questions that will provide the information for the best possible response. Although some of the questions may not seem necessary to you at the time, they are being asked to assess your needs and for the safety of the responding officers. Many times the call takers will give you valuable information that will assist you while the emergency responders are on their way to you.

Often, while the call taker is receiving the information from you, police units are also being dispatched to your emergency. The dispatcher is concurrently forwarding the information you are providing to the responding police officers. Do not hang up until the dispatcher tells you to do so. Hanging up right away will not make the police get dispatched any quicker.

In the event of a crime, information needed by the call takers includes the exact location of where you are and where the emergency is occurring. They need to know what the actual emergency is. They will ask for the caller's name, description of the suspect(s) and vehicle(s), and weapons involved. Descriptions of people include height, weight or build, age, sex, race, clothing (including hats, coats, shirts, pants, and footwear), and any other distinguishing features (facial hair, glasses, tattoos, etc.). Vehicle descriptions include the approximate year, make, model, body style, color, and license plate number, if available. It is important to state if weapons were observed or implied and, if so, what type (e.g., gun, knife, stick, etc.). Giving the direction that the suspects fled in is also very important. While officers are responding to your location, other units can patrol the general area where the sus-

pects fled and attempt to apprehend them.

If you dial 911 from a cellular phone in Connecticut, your call may be sent directly to the closest State Police barracks. You will have to tell the State Police what city or town you are in so that they can either respond or transfer the call to the local jurisdiction. It is important to immediately give your location in the event that the cellular call is lost or dropped.

In some instances the 911 facility in the city you are in when you call may immediately receive the call and answer it, but here again location becomes important. While cell phones can be tracked (in some instances) to a certain area, during an emergency, that area may be large, and too much valuable time could be lost while trying to locate you.

It is not unusual to dial 911 in error, but if this occurs, it is important to stay on the line and speak to the dispatcher, informing them that you have misdialed. In most instances, the 911 dispatch console will register the number and location from which the call is being made. A police response will be initiated to all locations from which a 911 call was made, whether or not the caller talks to the police, to ensure that everyone in the listed location is safe. There have been many incidents where the caller barely had the

energy to dial 911 due to illness, health, or an episode of violence where another person disconnects the call.

The police will respond, and in many instances, enter and check your home to ensure that there are no victims. This is an emergency wellness check, and a search warrant to visually inspect your residence for an injured party is not required for police entry. There have been many instances where suspects will attempt to convince the police that they called and all is well, while another person in the residence is a victim in need of medical assistance.

It is important to teach children how to properly use the 911 system. They must know not to dial 911 if they are playing with the telephone, and to use 911 only in an emergency.

You should contact your telephone service or carrier to ensure that if you dial 911 from your telephone, the call will immediately route to a local emergency dispatch center. With many computerized or Internet telephone companies and services, the 911 feature is not available. Check for this feature now, and not when an emergency arises. Do not dial 911 to test your carrier; instead, call your particular telephone service to find out.

Remember, 911 should be used only in case of an *emergency*.

Mobile Video Recorders: A Different Kind of "Reality TV"



By **LEONARD BOYLE**
Commissioner,
Connecticut Department
of Public Safety
Special to The Justice Journal

In-cruiser video cameras, or Mobile Video Recorders (MVRs), are now standard equipment in police cars around the country. All Connecticut State Police patrol cars are equipped with MVRs, and our troopers are required to keep them activated when involved in or responding to an incident.

Unfortunately, these cameras have

spawned an entire entertainment genre. Some television programs consist of nothing more than replaying incidents captured by MVRs from the windshields of police cars from New York City to L.A. and everywhere in between. Nevertheless, this technology has value to law enforcement agencies and the public far beyond late-night entertainment.

First, audio/video recordings can be some of the most effective evidence available to prosecutors when trying a case. Many a defendant has been convicted of DUI, for instance, based on the testimony of the arresting police officer who observed glassy, bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, and an unsteady

gait. But when the jury is able to see the defendant sway and stumble as he tries to perform the walk-and-turn test, or they hear someone say "A, C, D, B...G... Z" when asked to recite the alphabet, sustaining a reasonable doubt as to the defendant's intoxication becomes much more difficult. Similarly, as valuable as a written confession is to any criminal case, how much more damaging are the same words, in the defendant's own voice, recorded by an MVR during a defendant's moment of remorse while sitting in the backseat of your cruiser? Such evidence is not easily refuted, even by the most proficient of defense attorneys.

Secondly, the MVR comes as close as possible to putting a juror in the shoes of a police officer who is faced with a life-threatening situation that turns tragic. Most members of the public will acknowledge that police officers have difficult jobs and are often forced to make life-or-death decisions in a fraction of a second under unimaginable stress. But being able to show a juror just how dark it was that night, what exactly a furtive movement looks like, or just how short a fraction of a second actually is can be the difference between a commendation for valor and a prison sentence for an officer in such a situation.

Finally, MVRs protect both honest

police officers and members of the public in situations of alleged improper conduct. Many a citizen complaint has been withdrawn when the complainant learns of the existence of a recording of the incident in question. In addition, in the unfortunate few instances where an officer does act inappropriately, MVR recordings allow the facts to be quickly ascertained and appropriate remedial action to be taken. This can help limit the damage to the public's perception of the police department involved and to the criminal justice system as a whole.

While advances in law enforcement technology may have some disadvantages, such as the unrealistic expectations that have been created in the minds of a "CSI"-obsessed public, the substantial advantages offered by the presence of MVRs in police cars significantly outweigh the potential downside. And, of course, they make for more interesting television when you cannot sleep at night.

(Commissioner Leonard Boyle, a former federal prosecutor and a former East Hartford police officer, oversees the operations of the State Police, State Fire Marshal's Office, and Connecticut's homeland security operations. He was appointed by Governor M. Jodi Rell in 2004. Commissioner Boyle and The Justice Journal thank Trooper Seth Mancini for his contribution to this article.)

BLOOPERS & BLUNDERS:

by Jim Sukach - www.quicksolvemysteries.com



OUCH!

An experienced burglar thought he knew the ropes. He smashed an office window, and he cut himself on the hand when he crawled in. He looked around the office and found a first aid kit. He used it to wrap his hand before he left with a television set.

He barely had time to hook up his new television to his VCR when the police were at his door. He had left his bloody fingerprints on the first aid kit! The police just compared them to fingerprints on file, and they knew who to go after!

Police Need Citizen Involvement...

By **CHANDRA NILES FOLSOM**
Correspondent

We are all familiar with tip programs designed to assist law enforcement in the recovery of missing children and apprehension of criminals. They include AMBER Alerts, Crime Stoppers and television shows such as *America's Most Wanted*. While the Internet and media have done much to galvanize the nation and have succeeded in promoting a positive image of assisting police, there are still many occasions where citizens are reluctant to report crimes.

Perhaps the most notorious case was the story of Kitty Genovese, who was murdered in 1964 on her Queens, New York doorstep in full view of dozens of neighbors and friends, all of whom did nothing as she was stabbed repeatedly.

More recently, accounts of whistleblowers—especially at corporations and in government, demonstrate that bearing witness is not always met with approval.

In fact, these instances serve to undermine or at least send mixed messages about

the importance of being a good citizen.

Most states have some sort of statutory anti-retaliation laws, including protections in the US Constitution, pursuant to the First and Fourteenth Amendments. In 1989, the Whistleblower Protection Act and subsequent amendments were passed to strengthen the law and in 2002, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act created significant protections for corporate whistleblowers following scandals at Enron, Worldcom, Tyco and Merrill Lynch.

However, many of these laws have recently been eroded and other safeguards for those who would report wrongdoing to government officials have been considerably weakened.

So is it fear of retaliation that prevents people from doing the right thing or is there an inherent psychological factor involved?

"We all have some sense of internal moral or ethical obligation to do the right thing or to help others," says Arnold Holzman, Ph.D., a psychologist with Behavioral Health Consultants, LLC,

located in Hamden. "Some of us have a stronger sense of a commitment to help others based on an empathic way of relating to others, as well as a sense of obligation to our fellow man."

According to Dr. Holzman who, along with partner Mark Kirschner, has been providing psychological services to police departments for more than 15 years, people are more willing to help others if nobody else is on hand.

"If a relatively large number of people are available we individually feel less of an obligation," explains Dr. Holzman. "Since we all tend to react with this same decreased sense of personal obligation, a paradoxical effect occurs when nobody helps. The majority of people will tend to respond as a crowd and not become involved, or step out of their comfort zone to report wrongdoing. However that is very much situationally determined, based on the degree of the wrongdoing, the personal responsibility someone may feel, and the potential losses or threats to one's well being, among other

factors. This can be applied to the workplace as well."

In 1991, former financial consultant Keith Schooley came forward to report internal misconduct and cover-ups at the brokerage house, Merrill Lynch.

"I knew there was some risk involved but I honestly believed the propaganda espoused by senior management—that Merrill Lynch insists on the highest level of integrity," said Schooley, whose wrongful termination lawsuit went all the way to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. "After a period of time, I simply couldn't stand by and continue to witness blatant violations of rules, regulations, and laws that repeatedly placed clients in harm's way, all at a firm that people are supposed to trust with their money. If corporate management knew there were more people out there who are willing to stand up and be counted, things might significantly change for the better."

So does Schooley fit the profile of the average whistleblower?

(Continued on page 21)

...But Advise People to Use Caution *Bank Executive Tackles Perpetrator*

By **CHANDRA NILES FOLSOM**
Correspondent

Christopher Paris was not exactly a criminal novice when he allegedly robbed the Wachovia Bank located at 300 Main Street, in Stamford, last month.

In fact, the transient who also goes by the name Alvin Paris, Shaka Shabazz and other assorted aliases had already been convicted of more than two-dozen crimes before he struck the downtown Stamford bank.

Luckily for Wachovia and the public, Justin Quagliani was on the job that day. The 25-year-old financial adviser was not a novice himself when it came to courageous behavior. Quagliani, who had served four years as a Military Police officer, sprang into action after being informed by a teller that his bank had just been robbed.

Police say that as Paris fled from the bank and jumped into a waiting taxicab, Quagliani was already hot on his trail. He blocked the cab, forcing it to an abrupt halt as the suspected robber leaped out the back door and raced down the street, loot in hand, toward the Rich Forum.

Tackling Paris and wrestling him to the ground, Quagliani received scratches to the face before police officers arrived on the scene and handcuffed the escapee.

Although it turned out the suspect was not carrying a weapon, it was reported that he reached into his pocket in the moments before Quagliani drew near.

"This young man is certainly a hero,"



Christopher Paris, suspect in the January 9 robbery of Stamford's Main St. Wachovia Bank, as seen on bank security videotape Dec. 27, shortly before he allegedly robbed Stamford's County Bank, on Atlantic Street.

(Photo provided by Stamford Police Department)

said Captain Richard Conklin, of the Stamford Police Department. "His actions resulted in the capture of a suspect and the recovery of stolen cash."

However, Conklin, who is in charge of investigations at the SPD, warns that heroics can be risky business.

"Because Quagliani was in excellent physical condition, having served as an MP in the Army, he was able to do what he did successfully," said Captain Conklin. "That being said, he risked his well being, had the suspect been armed."

Since Quagliani was under the impression the suspect was armed, the hero banker threw a punch after Paris reached into his pocket.

"I didn't think it through—I just reacted," Quagliani said, following the

incident. "I had to react fast. If I slowed down, I thought he might have stabbed me or shot me."

According to police, the former military man had also applied a guillotine chokehold to the suspect, although even with his expertise, it was not enough to completely disable Paris who was fighting for his freedom.

"I would not advocate that kind of action for those who are not in good shape, especially when it's about material goods," said Captain Conklin. "Now, if someone is being assaulted—particularly a child or an elderly individual, then maybe you need to get involved because by the time law enforcement arrives it could be too late."

Instead, the Captain suggests that

people become good witnesses.

"Take mental notes—how tall is the suspect, what is he wearing, which direction is he traveling, for example," said Captain Conklin.

Also, if the suspect escapes by car, jot down the license plate number, take notice of the type of vehicle, color and other details such as whether or not it has any damage.

"But, if you can follow at a safe distance—and if you have a cell phone, call 911," said the Captain. "Then stay on the phone while the dispatcher asks for updates."

According to police, Paris was most recently discharged from prison in 2003 after serving a one-year sentence on drug charges. He was previously convicted on weapons charges, burglary, and assaulting a police officer as well as other crimes. Paris was held on a \$500,000 bond. He is scheduled to appear in state Superior Court in Stamford, in late January.

"We are very confident the suspect is also the same man who robbed the First County Bank on Atlantic Street, on December 27," said Chief Conklin. "So it's a two-fer."

Quagliani, a nephew of West Haven Police Chief Ronald Quagliani, was treated and released at Stamford Hospital for scratches sustained beneath his left eye.

"He definitely behaved heroically although we don't normally advise it," said Captain Conklin. "It was a personal decision he made to get involved the way he did and the community should be proud of him and appreciate his actions."

Academic Achievement Recognized By Chiefs

By **ALEXANDRA WERLEY**
Correspondent

Beginning in 1971, the annual Samuel J. Luciano Award has been granted to graduates of all Connecticut police academies who have achieved the highest academic averages in their class.

Former Westport Police Chief Luciano was among those who worked tirelessly for passage of Act 65-575, creating the Municipal Police Training Council which requires strict statewide standards, including the establishment of a statewide police academy and a mandatory training period for all recruits. Since the creation of the academy, training programs have increased from five to 22 weeks.

Chief Luciano, who suffered a fatal

heart attack in 1970, never lived to witness the results of his efforts. So in honor of his service, the Samuel J. Luciano Award was established.

To mark the 35th anniversary, CPCA honored all past recipients at the Winter Meeting with a special plaque recognizing them for their achievements. Winners shared memories and posed for a group photograph after the 2006 awards were handed out.

"It was definitely an honor to be a recipient of this award," said Officer Robert Cipolla Jr., who graduated from the 307th P.O.S.T. Academy in Meriden first in his class with a grade point average of 96.08. "After spending such a long time there it was very satisfying to finish at the top of the class."

The 2006 Luciano Award recipients are:

P.O.S.T. Training Sessions:

- Robert A. Cipolla, Jr., Wilton Police Department
- Andrea H. Closson, Torrington Police Department
- Steven M. Moyer, Glastonbury Police Department
- Anthony P. Prezioso, Jr., Westport Police Department
- Brian J. Yezak, Shelton Police Department

Satellite Training Academies:

- Stamford Training Academy, Jeremiah Brussell, Greenwich Police Department
- Waterbury Training Academy, Carl Schaaf, Naugatuck Police Department
- Waterbury Training Academy, Michael DiGiovancarlo, Waterbury Police Department
- Hartford Training Academy, Michael Creter, Hartford Police Department
- Milford Training Academy, Grace Schenkle, Yale University Police
- New Britain Training Academy, Pacifico T. Flores, New Britain Police Department

MISSING:

FAMILY ABDUCTION

ANDREA REYES



AGE PROGRESSED



DOB: Nov 9, 1997 Missing: Oct 5, 1999
Age Now: 9 Sex: Female Race: White/Hisp
Hair: Black Eyes: Brown Height: 3'0" (163 cm) Weight: 30lbs (14kg)
Missing From: New Haven, CT

Andrea's photo is shown age-progressed to 7 years. She was abducted by her non-custodial mother, Rosa Tenorio. Andrea has a birthmark in the middle of her forehead. She also has a lazy right eye and her right knee turns inward. The abductor may be using the alias first names Rosita or Guadalupe and the alias last name Minor.



ANYONE HAVING INFORMATION SHOULD CONTACT:

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST)
Bridgeport Police Department 1-203-576-7671

COLD CASE:

Connecticut State Police Western District Major Crime Squad Cold Case:



Pamela Jerome-Pepper Case #: B-86-016709

A \$20,000 reward is being offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) guilty of this crime.

On January 13, 1986, a Department of Environmental Protection Officer discovered the body of Pamela Jerome-Pepper partially buried in the snow on the Bridgeport Hydraulic Company property off of Valley Road in the town of Redding, Connecticut.

Ms. Jerome-Pepper, a white female with blonde hair, was found partially nude. She was wearing a dark-colored wool-blend coat, a tan turtleneck shirt with maroon and brown stripes, a pair of tan corduroy pants, and brown leather boots.

The victim was last seen on November 25, 1985, in the downtown Bridgeport area.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Connecticut State Police Western District Major Crime Squad:
(800) 376-1554, (203) 267-2220

MISSING:

ENDANGERED MISSING

DOREEN JANE VINCENT



AGE PROGRESSED



DOB: Sep 30, 1975 Missing: Jun 15, 1988
Age Now: 31 Sex: Female Race: White
Hair: Brown Eyes: Hazel Height: 5'4" (163 cm) Weight: 110lbs (50kg)
Missing From: Wallingford, CT

Doreen's photo is shown age-progressed to 27 years. She was last seen leaving her home on the evening of June 15, 1988 and has not been heard from since. She has double pierced ears and a small beauty mark on her abdomen.



ANYONE HAVING INFORMATION SHOULD CONTACT:

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST)
Bridgeport Police Department 1-203-576-7671

Citizen Involvement—

(Continued from page 19)

“Typically one person may feel the personal responsibility or obligation to report wrongdoing, however if it’s rampant and considered common knowledge, no one person may feel personally obligated or responsible,” says Dr. Holzman. “Also the sense of guilt is lessened if it’s felt that many are doing it or at least are complicit.”

There was such a case deep in the mountains of North Carolina, back in 1998.

A group of young people attending a well-known wilderness program, along with two program guides, spotted America’s Most Wanted Fugitive and collectively decided to do nothing.

The escapee—Eric Rudolph, became America’s #1 fugitive following a series of terrorist bombings that included Centennial Park during the 1996 Summer Olympics, a lesbian nightclub and two women’s health clinics where abortions were performed. The bombs, containing dynamite and nails, killed three and injured more than 150.

Rudolph’s wanted posters had been saturated throughout the Appalachians when the band of aspiring survivalists hiking across the rugged terrain, discovered a Caucasian man with bleached blonde hair wearing light clothing, sunglasses and flip flops—not exactly the type of gear one might expect to see in the outback.

Although they all agreed the face they saw was one in the same with the face on the wanted poster, the troop determined that interrupting their excursion with a visit to the police station or being later summoned to pick Rudolph out of a lineup was not in their best interest.

One member, who had initially argued the case for going to the authorities, was rebuked and ostracized until she relented.

Rudolph was captured on a Saturday morning by a rookie police officer five years later in Murphy, North Carolina, a town a few ridges from where he had been spotted by the group.

“People do not get involved for a number of reasons,” says Dr. Holzman. “There’s the fear of being different from everyone else, fear of retaliation, and other inconveniences or threats of loss. For many people there also occurs a clouding of the boundary between what is actually right and wrong, in order to tolerate what they are witnessing.”

But keep in mind that law enforcement is not ubiquitous—nor would we want it to be.

“It relies upon the eyes and ears of the public to identify and report criminal behavior that would otherwise go undetected,” says Dr. Holzman. “The relationship between law enforcement and the community needs to be a partnership, working together towards a common goal of reducing crime.”

“I let my kids and their friends drink at my house, but I take their keys. I don't think there's anything wrong with that.”

THINK AGAIN.

Parents have the power to help prevent underage drinking. Regardless of whether you're buying teens alcohol or hosting a drinking party for minors, it's irresponsible and illegal. Do your part to prevent. Don't provide alcohol to minors.

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Dealing With SIDS—

(Continued from page 5)

“Going back 30 years, before I had my children, I had a friend who lost a baby that way (to SIDS), although they didn’t call it that. It always stuck with me, because there was minimal support. I remember when Kim and Brian lost Christian there still wasn’t much support. They left the hospital and that was kind of it,” she said.

Gredinger, a social worker, felt her training in grief and bereavement could help other families dealing with a baby’s death. “We are available on an on-call basis if there is a sudden death of an infant in the Fairfield County area. The family calls the hotline, and then a volunteer calls us, and we contact the family. Our services differ from some grief support groups because we make home visits. We know that when a family goes through this they are immobilized. I get satisfaction knowing I offer help to families in need. I have two grandchildren, and I couldn’t imagine going through this alone,” she added.

The journey for a SIDS family isn’t easy. The second tragedy in the wake of a SIDS death is often that families fall apart. According to the National SIDS Clearinghouse Information Exchange, the divorce rate among bereaved parents is anywhere from 40 to 70 percent.

Brian described the grief as so deep, he and Kim were paralyzed. They could

not eat, they could not sleep, they took one day at a time, and they cried every day for an entire year. Then, little Arianna smiled. “(She) brought us back,” he explained.

Kim and Brian had another child two years ago, and since SIDS can run in

families, special care is taken with siblings. Most SIDS deaths occur between two and four months, so Noella was on an apnea monitor to observe her breathing for the first few months of her life. She is now a healthy two-year-old.

Christian remains very much a part of the family’s life, his sisters know all about him, and he is in their lives. The family takes comfort from the words of

Rev. Osborne, the priest who would have baptized Christian but instead eulogized him, “Christian and his beautiful heart and peaceful soul are with us even now, because he is with God and God is with us.”

For more information, visit The Christian Meehan Hope Foundation for SIDS website, www.chfsids.org, or call the HOPELINE at 1-888-616-HOPE.



The Meehan Family: (left to right), Noella, Kim, Brian and Arianna

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Research Breakthrough Shows SIDS May Have a Biological Cause

(Courtesy the CJ Foundation, www.cjsids.com)

New autopsy data provide the strongest evidence yet that Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is not a “mystery” disease but has a concrete biological cause. In The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), researchers at Children’s Hospital Boston document abnormalities in the brainstem – a major part of the brain that regulates breathing, blood pressure, body heat, and arousal – in babies who died from SIDS.

SIDS is the leading cause of post-neonatal death in infants in the U.S. Although studies have identified SIDS risk factors, such as putting babies to sleep on their stomachs, there has been little understanding of SIDS’s biological basis or causes.

Neuroscientists Hannah Kinney, MD, and David Paterson, PhD, at Children’s Hospital Boston examined brain autopsy specimens from 31 infants who had died from SIDS and 10 who had died acutely from other causes, obtained from the San Diego Chief Medical Examiner’s office. Dr. Henry Krous, a pediatric pathologist and SIDS expert, played a major role

in this study as well. Examining the lowest part of the brainstem, known as the medulla oblongata, they found abnormalities in nerve cells that make and use serotonin, one of over 100 chemicals in the brain that transmit messages from one nerve cell to another.

Based on their findings, Drs. Kinney and Paterson now hope that a diagnostic test can begin to be developed that could identify infants at risk for SIDS. They also envision someday a drug or other type of treatment to protect infants who have abnormalities in their brainstem serotonin system from sudden death.

(Note: The CJ Foundation for SIDS, which provided funding for this research project, is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the special needs of the SIDS community through funding SIDS research, support services, and public awareness programs. Recognized as the leading SIDS organization in the country and the largest nongovernment funder of programs, the CJ Foundation was co-founded in 1994 by Joel and Susan Hollander in memory of their daughter, Carly Jenna, who died from SIDS in 1993.)

What If...? —

(Continued from page 16)

problem have developed a variety of plans and procedures to try to keep our schools safe and to respond should a problem happen.

Should parents also develop a multitude of plans and procedures to react to a school violence incident? No! If parents want to become part of the solution, they can start by understanding two words: awareness and communication.

Awareness that an incident can happen is the first step. It likely will not happen, but it could. Search the Internet and you will find that incidents of school violence have occurred in places similar to those in our area. The role you can play in prevention, preparation, and response, should an incident happen, will affect its outcome.

With awareness comes concern, and with concern comes action -- action to learn all you can about school violence. Learn what it is -- from the bullying to the killings and everything in between. What are potential causes and what are some solutions? Research and read about the incidents of school violence that have occurred. How did they start? Why did they start? What stopped them? Did someone have information that might have prevented an incident? Did school safety plans work? This will provide you with information so you, as

a parent, have a better understanding of the problem and ways to prevent, prepare for, and respond to an incident.

The information you gather is nothing more than *thoughts* -- unless you communicate them. Talk to your children about school violence. Start by asking about fire alarms. Do they have drills? How often? Then ask them what they think about school violence, if they ever experienced it, or if they ever talked about it with their teachers. Chances are your child has heard about incidents in the news or has been exposed to it in a video game, so why not talk about it? Focus on mutual respect, anti-bullying, and the value of a safe environment in which to learn. For tips to help you discuss the topic, explore the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center website, www.safeyouth.org.

The 2002 Safe School Initiative, a U.S. Secret Service study of school shootings and other school-based attacks, found that *prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attacker's idea and/or plan to attack*. Urge your children to tell someone if they ever hear a fellow student talking about committing violence at school. The study also found:

- Incidents of targeted violence at school rarely were sudden, impulsive acts.
- Most attackers engaged in some

behavior prior to the incident that caused others concern or indicated a need for help.

- Most attackers had difficulty coping with significant losses or personal failures. Moreover, many had considered or attempted suicide.

- Many attackers felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack.

- Most attackers had access to and had used weapons prior to the attack.

- In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity.

- Despite prompt law enforcement responses, most shooting incidents were stopped by means other than law enforcement intervention.

Share this information and inquire about what resources the school is providing to prevent violence. Do they have anti-violence classes, conflict resolution classes, or other means to address issues before they become big problems? Do they work to enforce rules, prevent gangs, and prevent access by unauthorized visitors to the school? Discuss prevention and planning programs with the PTA and teachers. Prepare yourself and your children for an incident. Encourage residents around schools to be watchful of suspicious persons and activities occurring in and around the school and to report the activity to police.

Discuss with administrators the following three things you as parents need to know about the school your child

attends:

1. Do they have plans and procedures in place to protect the children?

2. How are they going to notify parents of an incident?

3. How can parents be reunited with their children should an incident happen? Knowing this prior to an incident will help you prepare should an incident happen and help avoid a rush to the scene by parents seeking information and reunification.

Finally, if you want to help prevent school violence, it helps to understand the ongoing battle between "convenience" and safety. It may not be "convenient" to wear a seat belt every time you drive, but it helps keep you safe. Well thought-out school security plans may not always be "convenient," but they are designed to keep your children safe. Do not sacrifice school safety for "convenience." School safety plans, like fire drill plans, are designed to keep your child safe -- learn about them, communicate them, and above all, follow them.

(Capt. MacNamara heads the Fairfield Police Department Emergency Services Unit which includes the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team. He trains school personnel in regard to emergency responses to crisis situations, and was the lead negotiator during the 2001 Fairfield University hostage crisis.)

Comments or questions? Contact: g.macnamara@thejusticejournal.com

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