

# CIRCUIT ATTORNEY'S COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

To Pursue Justice For All Citizens  
Within The Highest Standards Of Ethics And Professionalism



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## Help Combat Crimes

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

## MESSAGE FROM JENNIFER M. JOYCE

Our mission is to pursue justice for all citizens within the highest standards of ethics and professionalism. Typically this means handling cases in court that are brought to us by the police. Unfortunately, this is not always enough to prevent



Jennifer M. Joyce  
Circuit Attorney

crime. Some criminals are so sophisticated that we need to be proactive to stop them; we can't wait for them to strike.

I call these crooks "professional liars" because average citizens will be fooled almost every time by these smooth talkers. What's worse, there are more of these specialists than ever. Last year alone, 9.9 million Americans had their identities stolen, consumers lost \$40 billion to telemarketing fraud, and US citizens sent \$100 million to con artists in Canada. These thieves often prey on senior citizens in particular, because of their age. These conmen make assumptions about the elderly and target their perceived weaknesses. We all need to be aware of their tactics.

So to help us all, I am pleased to announce the launch of our new anti-fraud initiative, the Fraud Prevention Taskforce.

We've hired the best and brightest law enforcement personnel, and tapped into national networks of prosecutors, investigators, and fraud specialists to give you the up-to-date, important news to help you protect yourself. We've also set up a Fraud Assistance Line for your questions about fraud or if you suspect someone is trying to scam you or someone you know. As always, if you believe a fraud or crime has been committed, you should immediately call 911 and report it. With your help, and with these services in place, we can stop defrauders in their tracks.

## THE FRAUD PREVENTION TASKFORCE

On March 26, the Circuit Attorney's Office kicked off a new initiative to fight financial fraud. We have assembled an expert team.

**Dan Rechten**, a retired former Captain of the St. Louis Police Department, is the Taskforce Coordinator. Rechten's experience makes him the perfect man for the job. He was on the force for 32 years, and

some of our readers on the Southside may remember him as the head of the 3rd District.

Assistant Circuit Attorney **Rebeca Navarro-McKelvey**, veteran of white collar crime prosecution, is the program's Director. Support staff **Kat Tebeau** and **Daniel Julius** round out the four-man crew, though if the large initial response is any indication,

new members may need to be added.

The Fraud Prevention Taskforce holds fraud prevention workshops, provides educational material, supports victims, and monitors the Fraud Assistance Line. Contact the Fraud Prevention Taskforce at 314-612-1412 for information on scams and fraud prevention, or to schedule a seminar.

## From the Courtroom Central Patrol

ACA Dan Proost scored a victory recently in a complex case of financial crime. **Karen Clay** (or **Hurvey**) had forged her uncle and 94-year-old grandmother's signatures. She used the fake documents to file civil lawsuits to try to obtain real-estate property in Downtown West. She plead Guilty to two counts of Forgery in Division 19, and was given a Suspended Imposition of Sentence and two years to report.



Clay's Mugshots

## North Patrol

Walnut Park West residents can breathe a sigh of relief now that **Kenneth Watkins** is no longer prowling their streets. On March 3, 2008, ACA Krista Boston successfully convicted Watkins of Robbery in the 1st Degree for a carjacking in which a semiautomatic machine gun was used. He had previously served 10 years for Murder 2nd, Robbery 1st, Attempted Robbery 1st, Assault 2nd and two Armed Criminal Actions. Sentencing is set for April 18th, in Division 13.

## South Patrol

2008 has certainly been a successful year for ACA Boston, as displayed recently in the conviction of Bevo Mill resident **Bekir Ademovic** in Division 18. Ademovic was found guilty of Voluntary Manslaughter after beating a man to death, claiming self-defense. He was given ten years in prison on March 28th. The victim had evidence of strangulation with jumper cables around his neck.

## COMMON FRAUD & TIPS FOR COMBAT

Thieves and con men usually have the element of surprise working for them. Fortunately, though, there are preventive steps you can take to decrease your chances of being swindled. If you suspect an offer or service of being bogus, you can call the Circuit Attorney's Fraud Assistance Line for advice. Here are some of the most important tips to remember:

**Get to know your neighbors and keep their telephone numbers handy.** More vigilant individuals equals less successful criminals.

**Keep bonds, stock certificates, and seldom worn jewelry in a safe deposit box.** You may not be able to stop the thief from invading your home, but if your valuables are tucked away

safely in a bank vault, you **can** stop him from taking your treasured property!

**While you are out, carry your purse in front of you close to your body; men, don't carry your wallet in your back pocket.** Identity Theft is the fastest-growing crime in the country. The possibility of future crimes committed in your name based on the personal information thieves get from your wallet make this tip especially important to follow.

**Lock briefcases and other valuables in the trunk of your car.** This tip seems simple, but you'd be surprised how often people still fail to do it. Take the extra few seconds to grab your items and put them in the trunk. That little bit of time could save you from far

bigger hassles and losses in the future.

**Be skeptical about any proposal that sounds too good to be true or has to be kept secret.** Criminals prey on rushed decisions, secrecy, and desire for profit.

**Finally, if you are the victim of fraud, or any other crime, call the police immediately.** You may feel embarrassed, but these things can happen to anyone. The criminals are that good now. If you don't call the police, there is absolutely no chance you will get restitution, and the thief is left free to hurt other innocent people. Don't make it any easier for the bad guys!

**Fraud Assistance  
Line  
(314) 612-1412**

## THE "TRAVELERS"

The "Travelers" are an organized crime group operating throughout the United States. There are as many as 30,000 Travelers total, composed of three different clans: Scottish, Irish, and English. They primarily target the elderly in home improvement frauds. Their various swindles include: house painting, roof coating/repair, termite extermination, tree trimming, lawn fertilization, driveway sealing/paving, home invasions, and automotive repair.

The preferred victim is usually a middle-class home owner, over 60 years of age, who is unable to hear well enough to understand what types of repairs will be

made. This victim is often incapable of checking the repairs. Additionally, some elderly home owners do not realize they have been victimized, and the crimes go unreported. Sometimes, even if the elderly victim knows he has been victimized, he does not want to admit that he has been "taken," out of fear or embarrassment.

Travelers migrate from state to state in search of victims. They move with the seasons, and seek out residential areas that are predominantly elderly and obtain their victims through door-to-door solicitation. Springtime is especially active. Travelers quote un-

believably low prices and offer unconditional guarantees. They are experts in salesmanship, and once a sale is made, the traveler will spend the minimum time necessary to complete the job. The Travelers' workmanship is very poor. After the job is "done," the bill will be much higher than the original price quoted, due to "unexpected costs," or a "misunderstanding" on exactly what the estimate covered.

Be careful when approached by strangers at your doorstep, and as with any other crime, if you are the victim of home improvement fraud, contact the police immediately.

## HOME INVADER, RAPIST CAN NO LONGER THREATEN COMMUNITY

Recognition is truly in order for Assistant Circuit Attorney **Mary Pat Benninger**, who successfully prosecuted a man capable of frightening sexual violence.

In 2002, James Fujimoto climbed into the home of a woman in Dogtown through a window. As she lay in bed, he brutally attacked her with an aluminum baseball bat, causing multiple skull fractures. After the beating, he tied her up and raped her. Before leaving, he stole money from her purse, and drove away in her car. Due to the darkness and

the violence of the act, the man remained unidentified. This otherwise untraceable crime could have remained a horrific, anonymous attack on an innocent woman, but instead became a victory for public safety.

Some of the man's physical evidence remained at the crime scene, and police sent it away to check for DNA matches. Luckily, Fujimoto had just been required to give a DNA sample as part of his parole for another crime. After time, the match turned up, he was arrested, confessed, and tried, almost three years later.

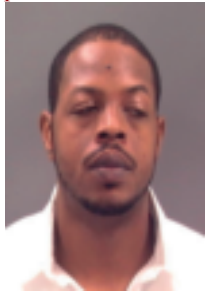


Fujimoto's Mugshot

Fujimoto, who had several other previous burglaries and parole violations on his record, was convicted of Forcible Rape, Forcible Sodomy, Assault 1st Degree, and Robbery 1st Degree. Seven other charges had to be dropped because of Missouri's statute of limitations. He was sentenced to life in prison, plus 25 extra years. He is 26 years old.

## From the Courtroom Central Patrol

**Donald Henry**, a prior offender in the Central West End and Vandeventer neighborhoods, was recently given three very serious sentences in three different trials. He was given 15 years, 15 years, and 10



Henry's Mugshot

years for a combination of Robbery 1st, Trafficking 2nd, Possession of a Controlled Substance, and Unlawful Use of a Weapon. ACA **Jessa Schauman** handled the cases in Division 9.

## North Patrol

**Michael Haywood** pled to two Possession of a Controlled Substance charges. Both arrests occurred in the College Hill neighborhood, and both were possession of heroin. The state is recommending 10 years in prison. Haywood is being screened for drug treatment, and sentencing is set for April 11th. ACA **Greg Sandifer** handled the cases in Division 22.

## South Patrol

ACA **Jennifer Szczucinski** successfully prosecuted a frightening Compton Heights predator, **Gregory Peeples**. Peeples wracked up a sickening list of 22 crimes: 2 counts Child Molestation 1st, 6 counts Statutory Sodomy with a person less than 14 years old, 1 count Statutory Rape with a person younger than 14, 4 counts of 2nd Degree Child Molestation, 7 counts Statutory Sodomy 2nd Degree, and 2 counts Tampering with a Witness or Victim. Peeples was given 32 years. He is 50 years old.

### \*Ethics Obligation

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

## CHILD SUPPORT UPDATE

The drug money seized and re-allocated by the Child Support Unit in the month of March alone totalled \$1478. This brings the Unit's year-to-date total to an incredible \$50,890! **That's \$50,000 taken out of the hands of drug dealers, and given to needy families instead.**

## DID YOU KNOW? ABOUT DNA EVIDENCE

Popular television shows like *CSI* portray DNA as a speedy savior for finding anonymous perpetrators. Unfortunately, fact is far different than fiction. In reality, DNA evidence is rarely found at crime scenes. Processing the sample, if there is one, can take months, not

minutes, and is very expensive. Furthermore, there is not some central database which holds all Americans' DNA. Simply finding some genetic material at a scene does not mean we can know who to match it to.

*Next issue -- an in-depth look at science in the courtroom!*

## POLICE OFFICER OF THE QUARTER: DET. KARON CROCKER



Det. Karon Crocker

We are incredibly pleased to announce that the Spring 2008 Police Officer of the Quarter is **Detective Karon Crocker** of the Sex Crimes Unit. Multiple members of the Circuit Attorney's staff endorsed this choice. Sex crimes are notoriously hard to prosecute, but Crocker's persistence and creativity

made them a lot less trying, and more successful.

Last year, with the help of Det. Crocker, ACA **Erin Granger** tried two men accused of beating and sodomizing a 17-year-old boy. "It was a very challenging case," Granger reflected. The victim was understandably traumatized by the crime and hesitant to keep dealing with the painful memories. Crocker refused to let this blocked path stop her, and turned instead to

other sources of evidence. When she found out the boy escaped while duct-taped by jumping out a window, she photographed bent weeds under the opening. "Several jurors remarked that they thought she did a great job," remembers Granger, "and I had one attorney in the office [say] that she was the best officer he had ever seen testify." For this and other examples, Det. Karon Crocker is our Circuit Attorney's Office Police Officer of the Quarter.

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To Pursue Justice For All Citizens Within The  
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Jennifer M. Joyce,  
 Circuit Attorney

## OFFICE INFORMATION AND IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

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



Mel Carnahan Courthouse

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

Fire, Police & Ambulance -----	911
Victim Services -----	(314) 622-4373
Child Abuse Hotline -----	1-800-392-3738
Circuit Clerk -----	(314) 641-8622
Orders of Protection/Adult Abuse Hotline -----	(314) 622-4434
City Hall -----	(314) 622-4000
Sexual Abuse Response Team (SART) -----	(314) 531-7273
Neighborhood Stabilization Office -----	(314) 622-4628
Fraud Assistance Line -----	(314) 612-1412