



Somerset County Law Enforcement Newsletter



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Message from the Prosecutor

Since our last newsletter, this Office has continued its commitment to providing outstanding service to our community. As part of that commitment we had a recent promotion within the detective bureau and hired five additional detectives, all of whom come with great experience, a strong work ethic and a desire to serve their community. Detective Michael Guerra was promoted to Sergeant this past year in 2018 and I congratulate him on this well-deserved promotion. Our new hires in the detective bureau include, Detective Joseph Grasso, who joined our office in September 2017 and is assigned to our Organized Crime and Narcotics Task force; he was previously a police officer with the Warren Township Police department here in Somerset County. Joe is also one of our DARE officers for the County. Detective Michael Eaton joined our office in July 2017 and is currently assigned to our sex crimes unit. Michael was previously a police officer with the Branchburg Township Police Department here in Somerset County for several years prior to joining the office. Detective Matthew Murphy joined our office in November 2017; he was previously an officer with the Clinton Township police department and also

served as a Task Force Officer with the Drug Enforcement Agency. Matthew is currently assigned to our Organized Crime and Narcotics Task Force unit. William Perez was hired in April 2018, he was previously a New Jersey State Trooper and on loan to



Michael H. Robertson

our office, assigned to assist our Organized Crime and Narcotics Task Force. William will continue as a detective assigned to our Organized Crime and Narcotics Task Force. Lastly, William Seiple was hired in April 2018, and is assigned to our Organized Crime and Narcotics Task Force unit. Bill was previously a detective with the Bernards Township Police Department here in Somerset County and like all of our recent detective hires, comes with a wealth of experience, knowledge and hard work ethic. Congratulations to our recent detective hires, I know they will serve Somerset County well.

We also hired two new assistant prosecutors who have proven to be outstanding additions to the office. Natacha Peavey joined the office in July 2017. She is a 2004 graduate New York Law School and upon graduation clerked for the Honorable Patricia Medina Talbert, J.S.C. Thereafter she was a municipal prosecutor in the City of Newark from 2005 to 2017, where she ultimately achieved the rank of Assistant Chief Municipal Prosecutor and also served as the Acting Chief Municipal Prosecutor before joining our office. Natacha resides in Hillsborough with her husband and two daughters. We also hired Thomas Walsh, who prior to becoming an attorney had a long and distinguished career in

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law enforcement. Tom proudly served as a police officer for the Bloomfield Police Department from 1988 to 2015. During his tenure there, he held the ranks of Sergeant, Lieutenant and ultimately Captain before he retired. Tom obtained his law degree while a police officer and graduated Seton Hall in 2001. After retiring in 2015, Tom had his own boutique firm prior to joining our office in July 2017. Tom resides in Peapack-Gladstone with his wife and two daughters. Lastly, Assistant Prosecutor Brian Stack was promoted to Deputy First Assistant Prosecutor in January 2018. Brian is an outstanding attorney and has a great reputation among his colleagues, the defense bar and the Court. This is a well-deserved promotion for Brian and I congratulate him.

Criminal justice reform took effect over one year ago and I am proud to say that due to the efforts of this Office, along with our law enforcement partners, the Judiciary, Pre-Trial Services, the Public Defender's office and the Defense Bar, Somerset County continues to be one of the top performing counties in the proper implementation and execution of criminal justice reform. My focus will always be on how we can best serve the citizens of this County and I am committed to working with not only my Office but the Judiciary, the Public Defender's Office and the Defense Bar to achieve that goal.

As I have stated previously, one of my top priorities has been and will continue to be combating the drug problem and in particular the opioid/heroin epidemic that exists in every corner of this County. I, along with other members of the County Prosecutor's Association of New Jersey, this year met with the U.S. Attorney for the State of New Jersey who indicated that one of the top priorities of his office will be combating the importation and distribution of illegal narcotics into this State, as well as combating the distribution and illegal use of prescription drugs. To that end, the U.S. Attorney's office along with federal law enforcement is devoting resources to help local law enforcement and communities like Somerset County. It is a welcome partnership and one that I plan on taking full advantage of in order to protect our children and loved ones from this epidemic. Although law enforcement will continue its efforts to enforce the narcotic laws of this State, there is not a one

dimensional solution to this problem, in fact it requires multiple people with multiple backgrounds and expertise, which is why on a regular monthly basis I meet with the folks from the Somerset County Department of Human Services Division, Robert Wood Johnson Hospital – Somerset, Safe Communities Coalition of Somerset County and Empower Somerset, the staff at Safe and Sound of Somerset County, the School Superintendents, the Somerset County YMCA, and grass root initiatives like Community In Crisis, as well as a whole host of other individuals and groups who are all looking to help and provide assistance in any way they can. I can tell you, it is greatly appreciated and I thank all of them for their efforts.

As a community, there are a host of issues that we need to address, which in part I outlined in this message; however, one resounding issue that myself and others believe to be of central concern for children, teenagers and adults is mental wellness. Whether it is drug/alcohol abuse, bullying in schools, suicides, or school violence, many experts in this County and I agree that there needs to be a focus on addressing mental wellness. It is no secret that our world and in particular our children's world has changed with the increased use of technology and the social, academic and other pressures that seem to be ever increasing upon our youth. These pressures have unfortunately led to increased drug/alcohol abuse, teen suicides and violence in our schools. Here in Somerset County we are extremely fortunate to have a host of resources and facilities available to help those in need. My mission over the course of the next several years will be to work with educators, parents, experts, social workers, our County professionals, County Freeholders and others to provide assistance and the resources for those in need and to remove any stigma that is associated with someone struggling with mental wellness issues. Again, there are many within the County that have the knowledge, background and passion to help those in need, no matter what they may be facing and I am happy and grateful to be partners with all of them to help our community.

This year the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office is proud to announce that we will be hosting quarterly community meetings addressing various

topics affecting our community. In May we hosted a community meeting on police use of force and officer-involved shooting investigations. In July we are hosting a community meeting to discuss opioids and what we are doing here in Somerset County to address the epidemic of opioid and heroin abuse. Information about these community meetings and other upcoming events can be found on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/Somerset-County-Prosecutors-Office as well as our Instagram page at www.instagram.com/somersetctyprosecutoroffice and our website at www.scpo.net

In the pages that follow, there are highlights of notable investigations and prosecutions of various cases which were originated or culminated in the past year. It is a testament to the relationship between this office and our local police agencies as well as our state and federal partners. It also highlights the hard work and efforts of the various components that comprise the Legal, Criminal and Administrative Divisions of the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office. Many thanks and appreciation are also to

be extended to Attorney General Gurbir Grewal; Senator Christopher "Kip" Bateman, Somerset County Freeholder Director Patrick Scaglione, who serves as liaison to this Office, and the Board of Chosen Freeholders; Honorable Yolanda Ciccone, Superior Court Assignment Judge of Vicinage 13, and the Judiciary of Somerset County; Michael J. Amorosa, Somerset County Administrator; Chief William Parenti, President of the Somerset County Association of Chiefs of Police, and all of the Chiefs from our municipal police departments; Somerset County Sheriff Frank J. Provenzano; Colonel Patrick Callahan, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police; the FBI R/A Branchburg field office; and those federal law enforcement agencies with which we have undertaken investigations.

Sincerely,

Michael H. Robertson
Prosecutor



CRIME DOESN'T PAY, BUT WE DO!

Somerset County Crime Stoppers, Inc.

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www.somersetcountycrimestoppers.org



VICTIM-WITNESS UPDATE

FROM JUDGMENT TO UNDERSTANDING: THE TRUTH OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

By Victoria Sferra, Victim Witness Advocate



When most people hear about a case of intimate partner violence, they often ask questions like, “Why doesn’t she end the relationship?” “Why doesn’t the victim just up and move?” or “Why does the victim want to be abused?” However, these are the wrong questions. Instead, society should be asking, “What are the safety concerns the victims may face if they end their relationship?” and “What are the barriers the victims will face if they leave?” Most importantly, we need to consider why such expectations are projected on the victims in lieu of asking questions that hold the batterer accountable.

There are many myths surrounding intimate partner violence. As Allison Bressler explains, “Intimate partner violence is NOT a fight or argument with your partner once in a while; it is a pattern of coercive behavior someone uses to gain power, instill fear and to keep control” (Allison Bressler, *A Partnership for Change*).

Other misconceptions about partner violence include the fallacy that domestic violence is caused by stress, mental illness, drugs/alcohol, anger, mutual problems or family problems. Although the preceding examples may be factors, they are not the root cause of intimate partner violence.

In cases of intimate partner violence, batterers perpetuate a learned behavior. These can be based on familial (witness abuse in the home), cultural (concept of “machismo” in different cultures), or societal (male privilege, traditional stereotypes) experiences (Allison Bressler, *A Partnership for Change*).

A batterer cannot be defined simply by age, race, or economic status. Often, batterers can thrive in a career, even appearing charming, intelligent, and amiable. However, batterers in relationships view their partners as possessions to manipulate and control. Conversely, they

see themselves as being the more important individual in the relationship. Batterers expect the victims to meet all their mental, physical, and sexual needs (Allison Bressler, *A Partnership for Change*).

The following function as barriers for women in abusive relationships:

- Fear
- Lack of support/resources
- Culture stigma
- Social prejudice
- Immigration status
- Fear of losing custody
- Lack of housing

Putting all barriers aside, the reality is that the most dangerous time for a survivor/victim is when he or she leaves the abusive partner; “75% of domestic violence-related homicides occur upon separation and there is a 75% increase of violence upon separation for at least two years” (The Center for Relationship Abuse Awareness). Not all victims have the same reactions to intimate partner violence. Some common reactions are shock, anxiety, depression, and guilt. Other reactions may include a decreased capacity for thinking quickly, confusion, memory difficulties, and sleep disturbance (Catherine Hernesh, NJ Coalition to End Domestic Violence).

When working with survivors, it is important to develop an approach that fosters trust and rapport tailored to the unique dynamics of each case. It is also crucial to recognize that some survivors may be unable to remember all the details of the abuse; “It is hard to remember what happened on a particular date, when abuse happens all the time” (Carlton Hershman, detective [ret]). Additionally, when working with a survivor, safety planning is extremely important. For example, connecting the victim to the county lead domestic violence agency for ongoing support is a pivotal step in providing

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LOCAL POLICE BLOTTER



North Plainfield – Vehicular Assault Case

On August 25, 2017 at approximately 3:00 PM P.O. Kevin Munoz was operating a marked patrol car on Willow Ave in North Plainfield. A silver Lexus suddenly swerved next to the officer's car and then accelerated at a high rate of speed for no apparent reason almost driving directly into oncoming traffic before striking a utility pole and rock embankment. The three occupants fled on foot leaving a juvenile suspect behind in the rear seat.

As this was occurring it was learned that a pedestrian had been struck by the Lexus and was lying on the sidewalk surrounded by bystanders. The pedestrian, a juvenile, was seriously injured with numerous broken bones and was transported to RWJ New Brunswick for treatment. Lieutenant Russell Flynn and Sergeant Dennis Kardos located a male running on a nearby side street and he was immediately stopped and detained. The male, identified as 19-year-old Raekwon Billups, was identified as the front seat passenger of the Lexus. Det. Sergeant Alan McKay and Detective Michael Vonspreckelsen began to interview the juvenile rear seat passenger of the Lexus who identified the driver of the Lexus as "Justin." Detectives, remembering a prior motor vehicle theft related incident involving a "Justin," were eventually able to identify the driver of the Lexus as "Justin Johnson."

Detective Donald Everett and several NPPD officers responded to Johnson's residence where he refused to exit. Det. Sgt. McKay telephonically applied for a Superior Court Search Warrant for both the residence and person of Justin Johnson which was granted by the Hon. Margaret Goodzeit and Johnson was arrested at the residence without incident. Detectives also located additional car keys in his bedroom which led to another stolen vehicle investigation which originated in Green Brook.

Johnson was charged with 2nd degree Aggravated Assault, 3rd degree Receiving Stolen Property, 3rd degree Joyriding, and 4th Degree Resisting Arrest while Billups was charged with 3rd degree Receiving Stolen Property, 4th degree Joyriding, Disorderly Persons Possession of Marijuana.

North Plainfield – Sexual Assault Case

The North Plainfield Police Department was contacted on February 5, 2018 by staff at RWJ Hospital New Brunswick regarding a reported victim of sexual assault being treated at the hospital. Detectives interviewed the victim, a 56 year-old North Plainfield resident. The victim indicated the assault occurred on February 1, 2018 in North Plainfield and that the assailant was a male co-worker whom she had known for approximately fourteen months. The victim reported she was assaulted after coming home from a bar in Plainfield accompanied by the suspect to her residence in North Plainfield. The following morning the victim awoke in bed naked from the waist down with the suspect next to her wearing nothing but his underwear. The victim knew immediately that she had been assaulted and indicated that suspect made comments that the two had intercourse.

Detectives contacted the Somerset County Prosecutors office and requested permission to conduct a consensual overhear which was granted and conducted on February 6, 2018 at the North Plainfield Police Department. The suspect admitted in that call to having sexual intercourse with the victim at her residence. The suspect gave specific details regarding the events that led up to and during the assault. Based on this information the suspect was brought to the Detective Bureau for a formal interview.

On February 7, 2018 the suspect provided

Veterans Diversion Program


By: Assistant Prosecutor Annemarie L. Mueller, Somerset County Prosecutor's Office

On December 1, 2017, a new law became effective concerning defendants who are active service members or veterans of the United States Armed Forces. In accordance with that law, the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office established a Veterans Diversion Program. The purpose of the program is to divert eligible service members who have committed nonviolent offenses away from the traditional criminal justice system and into more appropriate case management and mental health services. If an eligible veteran defendant is accepted into the program, successful completion of the program could result in the charges downgraded to a lesser charges, a previous recommendation of a custodial sentence amended to a recommendation of non-custodial probation or a dismissal of the charges.

The program is administered by the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office in conjunction with mental health and other service providers. Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center located in Bridgewater will serve as our primary service provider. However, participants are able to obtain care elsewhere, including through the Veterans Administration. The participants must be veterans or active service members with pending charges and a mental illness. A mental illness can include, but is not limited to, substance abuse issues and mental health issues, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury. The goal of the program is to address and treat the underlying issues of a substance abuse or mental health disorder that may have caused the defendant to commit the crime in an effort to prevent those circumstances from reoccurring.

Participation in the program ranges from six months to two years and will depend on the number, type, and severity of the defendant's issues and his or her progress in the treatment

programs. The pendency of the defendant's charges will be put on hold to allow for the defendant's participation in the program. The defendant will not be required to enter a guilty plea in order to participate in the program. If a defendant is terminated from the program prior to successful completion of the program or withdraws from the program, the case will be returned to the court's active criminal calendar for traditional prosecution.

To be eligible for consideration to participate in the program, the defendant must be charged with a non-violent petty disorderly offense, disorderly persons offense or a third or fourth degree crime. Participation in the Somerset County Veterans Diversion Program will be limited to cases involving indictable crimes. The defendant must be a Somerset County Resident who is an active service member or a veteran who was discharged or otherwise released from active service in the United States Armed Forces or any reserve component thereof. The defendant cannot have received a Dishonorable Discharge. The defendant must also have a prior diagnosis of mental illness or the arresting officer or Assistant Prosecutor has a reasonable belief that the defendant has a mental illness based on behaviors and symptoms exhibited during the commission of the offense or while in custody or based on information provided by family members or friends during the investigation of the offense. The defendant must agree to all the program requirements for admission into and successful completion of the program. The defendant cannot be currently in another diversionary program, have a conviction for a violent crime, and the defendant's current offense cannot be likely to result in a probation, parole or other supervision violation that will most likely result in a period of incarceration. 



ROLL CALL

AWARDS - RECOGNITIONS
RETIREMENTS - PROMOTIONS - NEW HIRES - GRADUATIONS

BERNARDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Bernards Township Police Department is proud to announce the following promotions that took place on April 10th, 2018 during the regular Township Committee meeting:

Michael Voorhees was promoted to Deputy Chief of Police and will take over as Executive Officer for the department. Deputy Chief Voorhees, who holds a Master's Degree from Seton Hall University, began his career in Bernards Township as a patrolman in 1993 and was the first School Resource Officer in the township's history. Deputy Chief Voorhees subsequently served as a Detective, Patrol Sergeant and Lieutenant where he recently successfully guided the department through the N.J. State Chief's Accreditation process. Deputy Chief Voorhees resides with his family in Hunterdon County.

Mark Leopold was promoted to Captain and will take over as Operations Officer for the department. Captain Leopold, who holds a Master's Degree from Seton Hall University, began his career in Bernards Township as a patrolman in 1994. Captain Leopold previously served as a Detective, Patrol Sergeant and most recently as the Detective Division Commander as a Lieutenant. Captain Leopold resides with his family in Hunterdon County.

Jon Burger was promoted to Lieutenant. Before joining Bernards Township, Lieutenant Burger served as a police officer with the Kean University Police Department. Lieutenant Burger, who holds a Master's Degree from Seton Hall University, has served the department in the capacity of Detective and most recently Patrol Sergeant. Lieutenant Burger was also a member of the Somerset County SWAT Team and was the recipient of the 200 Club and PBA Valor Awards for his actions in Warren Township in 2015 where he rescued two officers that were pinned down

by gunfire. Lt. Burger resides with his family in Somerset County.

Tim King was promoted to Sergeant and will be taking over a patrol squad. Sergeant King has been with the department since 2000 and previously served as a School Resource Officer and Detective. He is a veteran of the United States Air Force and served in Saudi Arabia upon being re-activated in the Air Guard after the attacks on 9/11. Sergeant King resides with his family in Hunterdon County.

Robert Herndon was promoted to patrol Corporal. Corporal Herndon previously served as a police dispatcher with the department and then as an officer with the U.S. Immigration Service. He started full-time as a Bernards officer in 1999 and previously served the department as a Detective. Corporal Herndon holds a Bachelor's Degree from Rutgers University. Corporal Herndon resides with his family in Hunterdon County.

Steven Matthews was promoted to patrol Corporal. Corporal Matthews started with the department in 2002 and has served in the Patrol and Traffic Divisions. Corporal Matthews is a former department DARE officer and holds a Bachelor's Degree from Kean University. Corporal Matthews resides in Somerset County.

Alex McKnight was promoted to patrol Corporal. Corporal McKnight started with the department in 2003 after previously serving as a police officer with the Montgomery Township Police Department. Corporal McKnight previously served in the Traffic Division and holds a Bachelor's Degree from Bucknell University. Corporal McKnight resides with his family in Hunterdon County.

Raymond Gizienski was promoted to patrol Corporal. Corporal Gizienski began his

Roll Call - *continued from previous page*

career as a police officer with the New York City Police Department before coming to Bernards Township in 2003. Corporal Gizienski holds a Master's Degree from Seton Hall University. Corporal Gizienski resides with his family in Morris County.

Additionally, **Dominick Aboosamara** was sworn in as our newest officer. Officer Aboosamara previously served this department as a police dispatcher and most recently served as a police officer with the Maryland Transportation Authority. Officer Aboosamara holds a Bachelor's Degree from American Military University in Emergency Management. Officer Aboosamara resides in Somerset County.

BERNARDSVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Three recently appointed Police Officers recited the Oath of Office and were ceremoniously sworn in at the Bernardsville Borough Council Meeting held on Monday, December 11, 2017. Bernardsville Chief of Police Kevin Valentine announced that the three new officers were recently hired and have already started duties in Bernardsville. The Department is now fully staffed at 20 full-time Police Officers.

Anthony J. Foley Jr. of Old Bridge, New Jersey was hired on October 10, 2017 and has already been assigned to patrol duty in the Borough. Officer Foley was most recently employed as a Special Law Enforcement Officer Class II with the Point Pleasant Beach Police Department. Officer Foley also was previously employed as a State Trooper with the Florida Highway Patrol. In addition to completing police training at the Ocean County Police Academy and Florida State Police Academy, Foley has studied at Berkeley College in New York.

Saif Naqvi, of Boonton, New Jersey was hired on October 30, 2017 and is currently completing his agency training with the Police Department. Officer Naqvi most recently served as Special Deputy Sheriff's Officer in Essex County and has received police training at the Essex County Police Academy. Officer Naqvi attended college at The County College of Morris where he took

classes related to Criminal Justice and received an Associate's Degree in Computer Science.

Richard Cowan of Lebanon Twp., New Jersey was hired on November 11, 2017. Officer Cowan is currently completing his agency training with the Police Department. Officer Cowan was recently employed as a Sheriff's Officer with the Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office. Officer Cowan was trained at the Passaic County Police Academy where he received his Basic Police Officer Certification in March of 2017. Officer Cowan is currently pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Criminology at Farleigh Dickinson University.

Chief Valentine said that "the three officers bring with them experience from three different agencies that will be beneficial to the Department and the community." Chief Valentine also thanked the Mayor and members of the Borough Council for recognizing the importance of maintaining an adequately staffed Police Department which facilitates the delivery of essential services to the community.

Bernardsville Police Awards

Several members of the Bernardsville Police Department received awards for actions taken during the 2017 calendar year. The awards were issued by Police Chief Kevin Valentine at the Annual Department Awards Meeting held on December 21, 2017. Bernardsville Mayor Kevin Sooy, Police Committee Chairperson Christopher Schmidt, Borough Administrator Ralph Maresca and Somerset County Prosecutor Michael Robertson were among those present who congratulated the officers at the awards ceremony. The following officers received awards:

Life Saving Awards:

Ptl. Christopher Luckenbach and **Ptl. Steven Seiple** received the Department Life Saving Award for their prompt response and quick action taken on July 4, 2017 in response to a medical emergency call. On that day the officers responded to a residence on Mt. Airy Road where they rendered assistance to a female patient who was bleeding severely as the result of an injury. Utilizing department issued equipment and

training, the officers quickly took action to control the severe bleeding. Medical staff at Morristown Memorial Hospital subsequently credited the action taken by the two officers as saving the patient's life.

In another incident, **Patrolman Steven Seiple, Ptl. Scott Chertoff** and **Sgt. Brian Testa** received the **Department Life Saving Award** for their actions taken on January 26, 2017 in response to a medical emergency call. The officers responded to a reported overdose at a Borough residence where they arrived to find an unconscious and unresponsive male who was not breathing. The officers quickly and correctly determined that the individual was suffering the effects of an opioid overdose. The officers took immediate lifesaving action and also administered the medication Naloxone to the patient. The patient responded to the treatment and was subsequently transported to the hospital where he recovered from the illness.

Honorable Service Award:

The **Honorable Service Award** is awarded to officers that perform a creditable act in the line of duty which is unusual in nature and shows initiative and accomplishment. **Sergeant James Smith, Detective Brian Kelly** and **Ptl. Christopher Luckenbach** were awarded the Honorable Service Award for their initiative, persistence and investigative skills demonstrated on April 15, 2017. The officers conducted an investigation that resulted in the arrest of the suspected burglar.

Additionally, **Detective Brian Kelly** received a second **Honorable Service Award** for his performance in August 2017 during a theft investigation. Detective Kelly demonstrated initiative, technical expertise, investigative abilities and persistence while investigating the theft of valuable industrial batteries from cellular communications towers in Bernardsville and surrounding towns. His efforts ultimately resulted in the arrest of the person responsible for the thefts.

EMT B Award:

Patrolman Timothy Richard was recognized for his performance and participation with the Bernardsville Police Department – NJ State Emergency Medical Technician Training and Certification Program. Officer Richard was awarded a citation bar in recognition of the extra effort put forth in training, practicing skills and obtaining the EMT B Certification enabling him to provide a higher level of emergency medical care to members of the community.

15 Year Service Award:

Sgt. Brad Horsey, Sgt. Jeffrey Melitski and **Sgt. J.P. Tay** were awarded the 15 Year Service Award. This award is bestowed upon officers who obtain 15 years of service and continue to qualify as being professionally ready to perform and dispatch their duties to the community in an effective manner.

Letter of Commendation:

In addition to the awards issued, Chief Valentine presented **Letters of Commendation** to two officers in recognition of their exceptional service during 2017. **Ptl. Timothy Richard** and **Ptl. Justin Alt** were recognized for exhibiting a high level of initiative and competence. The officers led the department in the area of motor vehicle stops, motor vehicle summonses and criminal arrests.

Civilian Service Award:

Police Chief Kevin Valentine presented Borough Recreation Director Cheryl Ferrante with the Civilian Service Award in recognition of her service to the community and her work with the Police Department. Chief Valentine pointed to her continued partnership, support and cooperation with the Police Department in delivering programs such as National Night Out, the Junior Police Camp, the Bicycle Safety Program, and various programs for senior citizens over the last several years. Prior recipients of the award include the Bernards Lions Club, Mr. Larry Phillips who is the Borough DPW fleet mechanic, Mr. John Orfan of the Bernardsville Fire Department and Mr. Wayne Horner who is an employee of the Bernardsville Shop Rite.

SEARCH & SEIZURE UPDATE

State v. Ornette Terry, 232 N.J. 218 (2018)

In this case the New Jersey Supreme Court considered the issue of whether there is a driving documents exception permitting a limited search for driving credentials where a driver was unable or unwilling to present a police officer with proof of a vehicle's ownership. The Court held that police may conduct a limited search of areas of the vehicle where such documents are likely to be kept. However where the officer can readily determine that the driver or passenger is the lawful owner of the car, police may not conduct a search without a warrant for proof of ownership.

On December 31, 2010, at approximately 6:50 p.m., while operating a marked patrol car in Union Township, Officer Devlin observed defendant's GMC truck run a stop sign on Ingersoll Terrace and turn right onto the eastbound lane of Morris Avenue. As it barreled through the stop sign, the GMC truck almost struck Officer Devlin's patrol car, which was traveling eastbound on Morris Avenue. Officer Devlin activated the overheard lights and siren of his patrol car, which was then positioned immediately behind defendant's vehicle. Defendant triggered a dangerous chase as he eluded the police, weaving through traffic before pulling into a gas station. The police removed defendant from the truck at gunpoint, and defendant did not respond to an officer's repeated requests to show the truck's registration or proof of ownership. In light of defendant's silence and his failure to indicate he was in lawful possession of the truck, a police officer conducted a limited search of the glove compartment for the truck's ownership papers

and, in the process, observed a handgun in plain-view on the vehicle's floor. Thereafter, defendant was charged with and found guilty by a jury of unlawful possession of a firearm and hollow point bullets.

At the conclusion of a jury trial in August 2013, defendant was found guilty of both weapons offenses. The trial court sentenced defendant to a five-year prison term with a three-year period of parole disqualification for the handgun-possession offense and to a concurrent twelve-month term for the hollow-nose-bullet offense. Defendant appealed the conviction on the grounds the evidence should have been suppressed and a panel of the Appellate Division reversed the trial court's order, suppressing the evidence and vacating defendant's conviction. The Supreme Court reversed that ruling.

The Supreme Court held that a corollary to the automobile exception is the authority of a police officer to conduct a pinpointed search for proof of ownership when a motorist is unable or unwilling to produce his registration or insurance information. "This limited registration search exception is partly rooted in the common-sense notion that the inability or unwillingness of a driver to produce a vehicle's registration may raise a reasonable suspicion that the vehicle was stolen." The Court stated it is well understood that motorists have a lesser expectation of privacy in their vehicles when driven on our roadways and that given New Jersey's extensive regulation of its highways and thoroughfares, every operator of a motor vehicle must expect the enforcement of those regulations may result

SEIZURE DATE



**By: Assistant Prosecutor
William A. Guhl
Somerset County
Prosecutor's Office**

in some intrusion upon that operator's privacy.

The Court concluded that, "When the operator of a vehicle is unable or unwilling to produce the registration or ownership papers, as in the present case, a quick, pinpointed search for the documents in the glove compartment is arguably a lesser intrusion under the Fourth Amendment than the immediate impoundment of the vehicle and detention of the operator."

The Court went on to say that based on decades of this State's jurisprudence, Officer Devlin had the right to conduct a limited, pinpointed search for the rental papers in the places where they are ordinarily kept. The Court added that, "It bears mentioning that the officers lawfully removed defendant from the truck for their safety and frisked him for weapons. Having done so, the officers were not required to allow the unresponsive and uncooperative defendant to return to the vehicle before Officer Devlin conducted a limited registration search. The officers were entitled to take reasonable, common-sense measures to protect their own lives as they were attempting to determine whether the vehicle was stolen."

The Court reversed the judgment of the Appellate Division and affirmed the trial court's order denying the motion to suppress.

State v. Shayna Zalcborg, 232 N.J. 335 (2018)

In this case the New Jersey Supreme Court considered a warrantless blood draw in a vehicular homicide investigation where the driver was suspected of DUI and whether there was sufficient exigency to dispense with the warrant requirement.

On the night of July 27, 2011, the Freehold Township Police Department received a report of a motor vehicle accident and dispatched officers to the scene. On their arrival, the officers determined that the accident was serious and called emergency medical and fire personnel for assistance. The police secured the roadway so that no other vehicles could approach the crash in order to render the situation less dangerous for the first responders. Because the accident scene was on a major thoroughfare and the crash coincided with the first night of the heavily trafficked Monmouth County Fair, several officers were deployed to block off access to the road and to direct traffic. They continued to do so throughout the entirety of the accident investigation.

Emergency personnel arrived and observed that the doors of the vehicle driven by defendant could not be opened due to the impact of the crash. Members of the fire department employed the "Jaws of Life" to remove the top of the vehicle's passenger compartment and extricate its three occupants. All three were transported via helicopter to Jersey Shore Medical Center for treatment. One of the passengers of defendant's vehicle eventually died as a result of injuries sustained in the accident.

Two of the emergency medical personnel expressed their concern to a police officer that defendant had smelled of alcohol. Further, after the top of defendant's vehicle had been removed, officers observed a miniature bottle of an alcoholic beverage in the vehicle's console. The

continued on next page

Search & Seizure Update - continued from previous page

officers concluded that there was probable cause to believe that defendant had been driving while under the influence of alcohol. Because defendant was incapacitated as a result of her injuries and therefore unable to undergo field sobriety tests, the officers decided that it would be prudent to obtain a sample of defendant's blood.

An officer was dispatched to Jersey Shore Medical Center to acquire the sample which was common practice in the Freehold P.D. where there was a serious motor vehicle accident. The officer arrived at the hospital shortly thereafter and inquired into defendant's location. The officer was instructed that he would have to wait but was not given an estimate as to how long. About an hour later, the officer was granted access to defendant and requested that a nurse obtain a sample of her blood. The nurse extracted the blood sample and delivered it to the officer.

A grand jury charged defendant with second-degree vehicular homicide, two counts of third-degree assault by auto, and fourth-degree assault by auto. A trial judge granted the defendant's motion to suppress the blood draw citing to the then-recent 2013 United States Supreme Court holding, *Missouri v. McNeely*, 569 U.S. 141 (2013), in which the Court held that the rapid dissipation of alcohol in blood was not a per se exigency justifying a warrantless blood draw. The State appealed and the Appellate Division reversed holding *McNeely* was prospective. In 2015 the New Jersey Supreme Court granted pipeline retroactivity to the *McNeely* decision. Defendant then appealed the reversal based on that retroactivity ruling and the Supreme Court remanded the matter to the trial court for a hearing on whether there was an exigency in this case.

On remand, the trial court again granted defendant's motion to suppress in a written opinion. After finding that the officers had probable cause to obtain a blood sample, the judge held that the State failed to establish that an exigency existed sufficient to constitute a recognized exception to the warrant requirement.

The Appellate Division affirmed that suppression. The New Jersey Supreme Court granted the State's leave for appeal and also the Attorney General's leave to appear as *amicus curiae*.

The State argued it is vital to consider that the officers, before allowing the roadway to be reopened to traffic, needed to investigate a serious car crash. In this case one that required the "Jaws of Life," the assistance of three medevac helicopters, eyewitness interviews, and the collection of evidence necessary to determine the cause and manner of the collision. Moreover, the State urged the court should ascribe "substantial weight" to the perceived dissipation of alcohol evidence that the officers reasonably faced. Further, the State argued that telephonic warrants, for all intents and purposes, were unavailable to the officers on the night in question. While the court rules provided for telephonic warrants at the time of the accident, there was no formalized procedure within Monmouth County to facilitate procuring such warrants in practice.

The Supreme Court held that the results of the blood draw should not have been suppressed as there existed objective exigency justifying the officers' warrantless taking of defendant's blood sample. The Court noted that defendant's accident was a serious one, requiring the presence of several emergency-services units, the extrication of injured parties from a vehicle with the "Jaws of Life," and the need to transport victims via helicopter to a local hospital. The accident occurred on a typically busy state highway on the night of a nearby event that drew unusually high traffic. In addition to investigating the role played by alcohol in the crash, the officers present had to direct car flow, examine the wreckage, interview parties and witnesses, and document their actions, among other essential tasks.

The Court concluded that any delay in seeking to obtain defendant's blood sample after the establishment of probable cause is attributed to the complexity of the situation

and the reasonable allocation of limited police resources—not a lack of emergent circumstances, as argued by defendant. Further, the Court noted that the hour for which the officer was forced to wait at the hospital before obtaining the blood sample does not undermine the State’s claim of exigency.

State v. Aharon Atwood and Shalom Mizrahi,
___ N.J. ___ (2018)

In this decision issued on March 29, 2018 the New Jersey Supreme Court reviewed a subsequently obtained search warrant to determine if it had the effect of retroactively validating a preceding warrantless motor vehicle stop. The Court held that subsequently obtaining a search warrant will not validate the preceding warrantless conduct and if there is a material issue related to that conduct the State bears the burden of proving the appropriateness of the police conduct at a testimonial hearing.

On June 12, 2015, at 10:08 p.m., the Lakewood Police Department (LPD) received a call from Hatzolah of Lakewood, a volunteer first aid organization, regarding a disturbance on Ford Avenue in Lakewood, New Jersey. The caller did not provide specific details, but officers were dispatched to check the area for any suspicious activity.

Sergeants Pederson and Miick of the LPD responded to the area and conducted a motor vehicle stop of an automobile driven by defendant Aharon Atwood, in which co-defendant Shalom Mizrahi was a passenger. According to the search warrant affidavit, Sergeant Miick observed Atwood’s vehicle travel south on Cornell Street as it “pulled over to the side of the road with a front driver’s side head light out,” then witnessed “the vehicle quickly leave the area as the marked unit was observed.” Defendants later challenged this characterization of what prompted the stop and claimed there was no motor vehicle violation.

After Sergeant Miick activated the overhead lights, Atwood immediately pulled the vehicle to the side of the road. Both officers approached

the vehicle and questioned defendants about the disturbance on Ford Avenue. Mizrahi explained that he had been the victim of a robbery. The officers then questioned defendants about an apparent marijuana odor emanating from the vehicle. While questioning defendants, Sergeant Miick reportedly detected traces of marijuana, in plain-view, on the driver’s side floor. The officers requested an Ocean County Sheriff’s K-9 narcotics dog to respond to the scene and removed defendants from the vehicle. The K-9 gave a “positive hit” on the vehicle’s trunk. Police impounded the vehicle and placed both defendants under arrest.

Later that evening, Officer Nathan Reyes of the LPD obtained a search warrant for the vehicle. A judge issued the warrant at approximately 3:00 a.m. on June 13, 2015. Police executed the warrant soon thereafter, uncovering marijuana and cocaine in the rear interior passenger area of the car.

A motion to suppress was subsequently filed challenging the initial motor vehicle stop. After a dispute over whether the State bore the burden to proceed as if this were a “warrantless” search, or whether the defense had to establish the factors required for a hearing on a search “with warrant” the trial court ordered the State to proceed with a testimonial hearing related to the initial traffic stop. On the hearing date the State again objected to bearing the burden since a warrant had been obtained in the case. The trial court again ordered them to proceed.

The State then requested, and was granted, a short recess to obtain assistance in setting up the equipment to play the MVR. Upon resuming, the State announced that it would not go forward with evidential proceedings. Instead of proceeding with playing the MVR and calling witnesses, the State renewed its effort at challenging which party should carry the initial evidentiary burden and proposed orders ascribing the burden to the defense. The court admonished the State and ordered that it begin with the presentation of testimony. The

continued on next page

Search & Seizure Update - continued from previous page

State called no witnesses. Finding that the State had failed to meet its burden, the court granted defendants' motion to suppress. The court suppressed all evidence seized – including the evidence seized pursuant to the search warrant under the “fruit of the poisonous tree” doctrine.

The State filed for leave to appeal and the Supreme Court considered that appeal. In this case the State argues that the police obtained the CDS via a warrant and so the State should not be required to “re-justify” a search already justified when the warrant application was made and approved. It is from that perspective that the State asserts suppression motions cannot become “hybrid” motions with multiple burdens of proof. The State finally argues that even if the motor vehicle stop was “warrantless” for procedural purposes, the State met its burden of proof because the search warrant affidavit – on its own and by a preponderance of the evidence – demonstrates that the police acted with reasonable and articulable suspicion. Defendant Atwood contends that a Franks hearing would have been inappropriate in this case because he did not primarily challenge the legality of the search warrant but rather the allegedly unreasonable traffic stop that preceded the warrant.

The Court found that there was a material issue raised as to the initial motor vehicle stop and that the State had to prove the reasonable and articulable suspicion to justify the initial stop. The Court found that a testimonial hearing was required even for that limited purpose and that the statements in the warrant affidavit were not enough to carry that evidentiary burden. Defendants were entitled to cross-examine the officers who made those statements to test, among other things, the officers' vision and perspective in observing the perceived traffic violation, as well as whether the MVR conflicts with the officers' account. The Court held that the warrant affidavit is not a substitute for the officers' testimony and therefore did not suffice to justify the stop. The Court also reiterated that the grant

of a forward-looking warrant cannot be used to validate actions already taken.

The Court concluded, “A search warrant cannot serve as a rubberstamp to justify the police's pre-warrant conduct. The legality of that conduct rises or falls based on the State's ability to provide independent justification for the pre-warrant seizure that led to the search. Here, that pre-warrant conduct was the investigatory stop. By sitting on its hands at the evidentiary hearing and refusing to produce witnesses or evidence, the State left the trial judge no option but to suppress the evidence. The State sacrificed its case to an unproven and unsupported search warrant theory in the vain hope of having better positioning on burden of proof grounds. The State's refusal to present any evidence at the motion hearing amounted to a failure to carry its burden as to the stop. The search warrant here would not have been obtained but for the motor vehicle stop, and the trial court properly granted defendants' motion to suppress.”

State v. Malcolm Hagans, ___ N.J. ___ (2018)

In this decision issued on April 23, 2018 the New Jersey Supreme Court considered the validity of a driver's consent to search her vehicle after she had initially denied consent. The Court upheld the validity of the subsequent consent relying on an analysis guided by the State v. King factors on voluntariness of consent.

In March 2012, New Jersey State Trooper John Faust pulled over a 2002 Mercury Sable with a damaged tail-light on Interstate 295 in Burlington County. The driver, Shonsheyra Chandler, had changed lanes without signaling. Defendant Malcolm Hagans, was seated in the front passenger seat. Faust approached the passenger side of the vehicle and after asking Chandler for her driving documents smelled the odor of burnt marijuana in the vehicle.

The Trooper asked defendant, who was on his cell phone, to hang up. When defendant objected, Faust asked him to step out of the vehicle, arrested him, handcuffed him. Faust then asked Chandler

to step out of the vehicle, administered Miranda warnings, and questioned her about the presence of marijuana in the vehicle. Faust handcuffed Chandler and placed her in the backseat of his police vehicle. Chandler denied knowing defendant had marijuana on him and denied that she had been smoking marijuana in the car. Upon request, Faust brought Chandler's daughter who had been seated in the rear seat of the car to the police car to be with her mother. Officers at the scene placed defendant in another police vehicle.

Faust requested Chandler consent to a search of her vehicle. Before reading the consent form to her, Faust told Chandler that "it would be a lot easier if you would just make things easy." Faust read the consent form aloud. He advised Chandler of her right to refuse consent and that if she refused, barring any other reason to detain her, she could leave. He also explained if she consented, she had a right to be present during the search and could withdraw her consent at any time. Faust asked whether she would give consent, and Chandler responded "no."

Faust then discussed his next steps. "I know, but at this time ... we are going to apply for a search warrant, okay, and that is kinda going to prolong the inevitable. I would just like it to be easier." Chandler replied, "Go ahead." Faust then inquired, "What's that ma'am?," to which Chandler repeated "Go ahead." Faust asked, "Are you sure?" Chandler answered, "Yeah." Faust countered, "So you're saying yes?" Chandler responded, "Yes."

To confirm Chandler's decision, Faust re-read her the consent-to-search form in its entirety. Faust then again asked Chandler if she consented to the search of her vehicle; she responded "yes." Faust repeated for the MVR that Chandler had initially denied consent but changed her mind and consented because she "did not want to wait any longer."

The search produced a bag of marijuana and a loaded .22 caliber pistol. Chandler denied knowledge of the pistol, which police found behind the front passenger seat, near Chandler's

daughter. Faust explained to Chandler that the Division of Youth and Family Services—now the Division of Child Protection and Permanency—would be notified given the proximity of the pistol to her young daughter. Defendant ultimately admitted to ownership of the marijuana and the pistol. He was charged with second-degree unlawful possession of a weapon, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:39-5(b), fourth-degree child abuse, in violation of N.J.S.A. 9:6-1, and a disorderly persons offense for possession of marijuana. Chandler was not charged.


The Supreme Court held that the lynchpin to voluntary consent "is whether a person has knowingly waived [her] right to refuse to consent to the search." The Court then referred to *State v. King* in delineating the factors to be evaluated and weighed in determining voluntariness. Those include: (1) that consent was made by an individual already arrested; (2) that consent was obtained despite a denial of guilt; (3) that consent was obtained only after the accused had refused initial requests for consent to search; (4) that consent was given where the subsequent search resulted in a seizure of contraband which the accused must have known would be discovered; [and] (5) that consent was given while the defendant was handcuffed.

The Court noted that "An officer's comment regarding the inevitability of a search warrant does not indicate coercion if it is 'a fair prediction of events that would follow' rather than 'a deceptive threat made to deprive [an individual] of the ability to make an informed consent.' *Cancel*, 256 N.J. Super. 430 (App. Div. 1992).

The Court concluded that while several *King* factors were present to question voluntariness, they are only guideposts and are not dispositive in isolation. In this case the presence of an MVR allowed the Court to evaluate the demeanor of the consenting party. The Court noted, "The Appellate Division observed that Chandler appeared at ease throughout the entire interaction and listened to and calmly considered her options. Faust's actions, in the panel's view,


Search & Seizure Update - continued from previous page

were not menacing, harassing, or deceptive. The panel's observations underscored those of the trial court."

The Court concluded, "In sum, we find sufficient credible evidence supports the trial court's determination that Chandler's consent was voluntary under the totality of the circumstances, despite the presence of several of the potentially coercive King factors. Here, technological advancements permitted the trial court to better evaluate the manner in which Faust obtained consent. Such possibilities – which are increasingly common today – are precisely why the King Court factors are guideposts rather than rigid absolute authority. 


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detectives with a post-Miranda statement in which he admitted to being friends with the female victim and to knowing that she identified as a lesbian. The suspect said that he and the victim had consumed several drinks at the bar and that he later led the victim into her bedroom while she was in a semi-conscious state and began to kiss and fondle her. At some point the victim was completely unconscious and not responding at all to the suspect, at which point the suspect vaginally penetrated the victim. The suspect went on to say that the victim did not provide consent at any time.

He was then charged with 1st degree Aggravated Sexual Assault, arrested, and lodged in the Somerset County Jail. 

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safety planning support.

While each case of domestic violence is unique, it is important to remember that "[n]ot all battered women want the relationship to end, but all battered women want the violence to end" (Catherine Hernesh, NJ Coalition to End Domestic Violence). 

Resources:

Safe + Sound Somerset DV Call/Text Hotline
(866) 685-1122

Domestic Violence information, support, and emergency shelter.

National Domestic Violence Hotline
(800) 799-7233 (800) 787-3224 (TTY)

Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center, Bridgewater NJ
(908) 725-2800

Counseling for youth and adult victims of domestic violence. OPTIONS Program: for male and female perpetrators of domestic abuse seeking to end their abusive behaviors.

Family & Community Services of Somerset County, Bound Brook
(732) 356-6327

Counseling for youth and adult victims of domestic violence. RESPECT Program: for male perpetrators of domestic abuse seeking to end their abusive behaviors.

Roll Call - *continued from page 9***NORTH PLAINFIELD POLICE
DEPARTMENT**

On April 9, 2018 **Chief William G. Parenti** along with Mayor Michael Giordano conducted the swearing-in of two new officers and the promotion of four officers. The Oath of Office took place at the Borough Council Meeting before a large gathering of family, friends and residents. Sworn-in as probationary officers were **Valerio Zuena** and **Gregory Ternlund**. Sworn-in as a Detective was **Joseph Mazza**, sworn-in as Probationary Sergeant was **Michael vonSpreckelsen**, sworn-in as Probationary Lieutenant was **Alan McKay** and sworn-in as Probationary Captain was **Russell Flynn**. The promotions follow the retirement of **Captain Gerard Clyne** on February 28, 2018 after 30 years of service to the Police Department. The hiring of Zuena and Ternlund brings the number of sworn officers back to forty-six. Pictured from left to right are: Officer Valerio Zuena, Detective Joseph Mazza, Chief William Parenti, Captain Russell Flynn, Lieutenant Alan McKay, Sergeant Michael vonSpreckelsen, and Officer Gregory Ternlund.

**SOMERSET COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

The Somerset County Sheriff's Office announces that **Frank Apisa** was promoted to Chief of the Corrections Division in December of 2017 and **Keith Covert** and **Donald Essig** were recently promoted to the position of Lieutenant within the Corrections Division in the winter of 2018. Additionally, below is a list of recent new

hires to the Corrections Division as Corrections Officers as of the beginning of 2018:

Tommy Hom – Born in New York and currently resides in Piscataway New Jersey. Tommy attended Colonia High School where he played soccer the first two years and hockey the last two, where he was a team captain. He then moved on to Middlesex County College where he graduated with an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice. Afterwards, Tommy attended and graduated from the New Jersey City University with a Bachelor's Degree in National Security Studies. During his senior year at New Jersey City University, Tommy completed an internship with the Woodbridge Police Department. Growing up with a father in law enforcement (NYPD), Tommy found a passion to pursue a career in law enforcement as well.

Shawn Dwyer – Born and raised in Somerville, NJ where he attended Immaculata High School. While in high school, Shawn was a three year varsity football letter winner and a Presidential Volunteer Service Award recipient. After high school, Shawn attended and graduated from DeSales University with a Bachelor's Degree in Sports Management. While at DeSales, Shawn played on the club rugby team. In his free time, Shawn is an active volunteer for the Jack Gardner Softball Tournament that assists families with special needs children and is an assistant high school football coach.

Michael Stephenson – Michael grew up and currently resides in Hillsborough, NJ where he attended and graduated from Immaculata High School. While attending Immaculata, Michael played varsity football and lacrosse. After high school Michael attended Centenary College where he played lacrosse and graduated with Bachelor's Degree in Individualized Studies with a Concentration in Criminal Justice. Before starting at the jail, Michael was a Deputy with the Essex County Sheriff's Office.

Keith Moran – Born and Raised in Skillman, NJ Keith graduated from Montgomery High School. Keith then attended and graduated from

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Dean Junior College in Franklin, Massachusetts with an Associate's Degree in Liberal Arts-concentrating on Sports Management. He continued his education at Centenary College in Hackettstown, NJ where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice. During his high school and college careers, Keith played and lettered as a baseball pitcher. After college, while pursuing a career in Criminal Justice, Keith worked at various jobs as a security officer and dispatcher. Keith is married to his wife Brittney.

Brooke Nikola – Brooke graduated Summa Cum Laude from Centenary College with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice. While at Centenary, she was selected to be a student ambassador and representative of the college. Brooke was also the Forensic Science Teaching Assistant and a board member of the Sociology Criminal Justice Club. Brooke is an avid equine enthusiast who trained adults and children in English Show Jumping prior to joining the Somerset County Sheriff's Office, Corrections Division.

Norberto Estrella-Taveras – Born and raised in New Brunswick, NJ until the age of 8. His family then moved to the Dominican Republic where they lived for the next five years. Norberto and his family then back to New Jersey where he finished high school. While in high school Norberto excelled in baseball and even tried out for a few major league teams. Norberto soon decided to focus on college and began his college education at Berkeley College focusing on Criminal Justice. While in college, Norberto became a volunteer fire fighter and an auxiliary officer with the Edison Police Department. Norberto plans on completing his degrees while employed with the Somerset County Jail. In his spare time, Norberto likes to spend time with his family (parents and two siblings), go hiking, and play baseball.

Cristian Perez – Cristian was born in Queens, New York and at the age of 6 moved to Guatemala. At the age of 12 he returned to the U.S. and moved to Bridgewater, New Jersey where

he attended school and currently resides. After high school, Cristian continued his education at The Universal Technical Institute in Exton, P.A. where he graduated with a degree in Automotive Technologies. He then went on to work for Toyota as a technician. After a few years, Cristian joined the Solar Industry as a technician. Now Cristian has taken a great career opportunity with the Somerset County Sheriff's Office, Corrections Division as a Corrections Officer.

Gregory Featherman – Gregory Featherman was born and raised in Lewisburg, PA where he attended Lewisburg Area High School. While in school Gregory was active playing football, wrestling, and track & field. He was also active with his local fire department. After high school Gregory attended Pennsylvania College of Technology and graduated with a degree in Applied Health Science (Health Information Technology). After relocating to Somerville, New Jersey he went through the Somerset County Emergency Services Training Academy where he then became a member of the Somerville Fire Department Engine 1.

Matthew Yapaola – Matthew was born and raised in Hackettstown, New Jersey where he attended and graduated from Hackettstown High School. After high school Matthew attended Fairleigh Dickinson University where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Criminology and a Minor in Forensics. Before accepting his position with the Sheriff's Office, Corrections Division, Matthew worked for the Warren County Prosecutor's Office and the Warren County Department of Weights and Measures.

William Kimball – William grew up in Pittstown, NJ and attended Delaware Valley Regional High School where he lettered in wrestling and cross country. After high school, William attended West Virginia University where he played rugby and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminology. William is currently an assistant wrestling coach for Delaware Valley Regional High School, an assistant wrestling coach for the Wildcat Wrestling Club, and is a rugby player for the Morris Rugby Football Club.

New Hires

The Somerset County Sheriff’s Office has also announced the hiring of several Sheriff’s Officers in the Law Enforcement Division since June of 2017. This includes:

Patrick Hoben hired on June 12th and graduated Monmouth County Police Academy of waiver training September 21, 2017. Patrick lives in Bound Brook is a life-long resident of Somerset County. Graduating Bound Brook High School, Patrick started his collegiate academics in Ohio at Muskingum University. He is a 2016 graduate with a Bachelors of Arts degree majoring in Criminal Justice with a minor in Sociology. Patrick lettered in NCAA Football and played four years for the Division III Muskies of New Concord, Ohio. Patrick began his law enforcement career in 2016 with the Belmar Police Department as a SLEO I / II officer working in the beach community. Patrick comes from a family of first responders that includes his mother, father and sister.

Nicholas Dante hired on June 26th and graduated John H. Stamler Police Academy in December 2017 on December 14th, 2017. Raised in Bridgewater, Nick was a 2011 graduate from the Bridgewater-Raritan High School, throughout High School; he trained in Boxing, Muay Thai, and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. He received his associate’s degree in Criminal Justice from Raritan Valley Community College. After college, Nick joined the Plainfield Police Division as an Auxiliary Police Officer where he served for four years. At the Police Academy he was the recipient of the Top

Shot award for outstanding marksmanship. He spends his free time as a self-defense instructor and volunteers his time teaching others how to prevent and protect themselves against violence.

Anthony Palovick hired July 10th and graduated Monmouth County Police Academy on December 14th, 2017. Anthony was born in Somerville and has been a resident of Manville Borough his entire life. He was a 2008 graduate of Manville High School where he was a three sport athlete throughout his high school years. Anthony attended Caldwell University majoring in Criminal Justice. Anthony began his law enforcement career as a class 2 officer with the Point Pleasant beach police department. He graduated the Ocean County police academy in May of 2017. Shortly after, Anthony was afforded the opportunity to be hired full-time with the Somerset County Sheriff’s Office as a Sheriff’s Officer.

Jarren Mann hired August 7th and graduated Cape May Police Academy on January 17th, 2018. Jarren graduated from Warren Hills Regional High School where also participated in baseball. He graduated from College of Saint Elizabeth with a Bachelor in criminal justice. Jarren resides in Bedminster with wife Kristin. Prior to joining the SCSO was a Senior Corrections Officer for 14 years with the NJ Department of Corrections.

Adam Tomassacci hired August 7th and graduated Cape May Police Academy on January 17th, 2018. Born and raised in Shickshinny

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Pennsylvania, Tomassacci now currently resides in Bridgewater with his wife Taryn and Son Trent. Adam obtained a Bachelor's of science degree from Marywood University. Adam recently worked in the health field until he decided to transition careers into law enforcement and join the Somerset County Sheriff's Office. Adam enjoys fishing, being outside, and spending time with family.

Christopher Aboosamara hired on October 10th and graduated Mercer County Police Academy on March 9th, 2018. Graduated from Raritan Valley Community College in May of 2010 with an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice. While studying, completed an internship at Somerset County Jail. After graduating from the Somerset County Police Academy in 2013, began his career as a Corrections Officer with Somerset County Jail. As a Corrections Officer he was a member of the Corrections Response Team.

Samuel Marton was hired on October 10th and graduated Mercer County Police Academy on March 9th, 2018. He graduated from Rowan University in May 2016 with a Bachelor's degree in Law and Justice and a minor in Psychology. While there, he completed a year-long internship as a Student Patrol Officer with Rowan Public Safety. Shortly after graduation he interned at the Somerset County Sheriff's Office for 3 months before becoming a Sheriff's Cadet.

The Sheriff's Office also hired part-time and full-time cadets: **Sean Simpson** is full-time as of March, 19th and **Kevin Bereheiko** is part-time as of March 19th with **Shane McIntire** starting part-time April 16, 2018.

Somerset Sheriff Supervisors Complete FBI-LEEDA Trilogy

Somerset County Sheriff's Office supervisors recently completed an Executive development leadership program presented at the John H. Stamler Police Academy. The FBI-LEEDA Executive Leadership Institute is an innovative program designed for executive level law enforcement leaders and focuses on the evolving encounters facing the law enforcement profession.

The week-long session hosted by Union County Sheriff's Department featured instructor retired Chief Dean Crisp and retired Chief Les Kachurek with the Federal Bureau of Investigation Law Enforcement Executive Development Association (FBI LEEDA).

LEEDA programs centers on Supervisor, Command and Executive skills development to holistically cultivate the supervisor's leadership abilities. Topics include generational leadership, paradigms and change objectives, power and influence, transactional and transformational leadership, and the history and direction of law enforcement. Once an officer completes all three class seminars, they receive a Trilogy Award — an honor Somerset County Sheriff Office Captain Steve SanAntonio received at the conclusion of the December of 2017 module.

Colonel Richard Borden said "Professional development and keeping up with the latest leadership models is important to continue providing the best practices to our personnel and the community. LEEDA focuses on executive skills and liability dangers faced by supervisors and/or command staff members. Officers learn best practices, Court rulings and generational changes during interactions with employees from rookie status to experienced veterans." Captain Steve SanAntonio said, "Learning the best approaches to influence employees is a skill well worth investing in to get the most out of your workers." Captain SanAntonio added "We have new employees coming in blending in with veterans and it's good to know how each generation works to get the most out of them and get best delivery of services."

"The Somerset County Sheriff's Office is always looking for the best practices in leadership and has scheduled a number of supervisors to attend LEEDA programs to build their leadership skills as a whole," Sheriff Frank Provenzano said.

