



# County Police Ink

October 2009

New Castle County Police Department

## What's Inside

- Arrest in home invasion
- Serial burglars arrested
- Significant drug busts
- Pictures from promotion ceremony

## 2009 Promotion Ceremony

### Wanted Person Leads to Marijuana Grow Operation

The New Castle County Safe Streets Team has shut down a clandestine marijuana cultivating operation in the Elmhurst Community. Inside the home, police found an elaborate marijuana growing system in the basement complete with metallic sheet walls, high powered lamps, two separate power sources, multiple marijuana plants and several ingredients designed to enhance plant growth. On Thursday (10/1), officers from the Safe Streets Team received information regarding a male subject who was wanted for multiple capiases and an arrest warrant for threatening to kill his ex-wife's current boyfriend. The officers learned that the subject, Mark Tannen (age 33), was reportedly staying at a home in the 300 block of W. Summit Avenue with a male acquaintance. After confirming the active warrants, the Safe Streets Officers set up a surveillance detail at the home just after 1:30 p.m. After a few moments, a male subject exited the home, got into a car, and drove off. The subject (Nathan Lewandowski, 32) was stopped for a traffic violation and found to not be in possession of a registration and insurance card. Lewandowski indicated he had the documents inside his home and offered to respond back to the residence to recover the documents. SEE PAGE— 4



### Stepping up the officers' ladder



The News Journal/BOB HERBERT



TOP: Ruben Martinez Sr. pins a badge on son, Lt. Ruben Martinez, while newly promoted interim superintendent Maj. Michael McGowan (center) looks on.

ABOVE: The officers listen during the ceremony. In the foreground is Marnita Koveleski, a police communications supervisor, and Lt. Martinez (left).

Eleven New Castle County police officers were promoted Wednesday morning in ceremonies at Delaware Technical & Community College in Stanton. Offering remarks at the 11 a.m. event were Acting Public Safety Director Rick Gregory and County Executive Chris Coons, who presented badges to the two majors, one captain, three lieutenants, and five sergeants. Emergency Communication Chief Dave Roberts did the honors for Marnita Koveleski, a police communications supervisor.

The officers promoted and their new ranks:

- Maj. Michael McGowan, a former police lieutenant now serving as acting chief of police for the county
- Maj. Mark Hitch
- Capt. Robert Becker
- Lt. Wendi Feeser, Lt. John Treadwell and Lt. Ruben Martinez – the first Hispanic officer in the county to rise above the rank of sergeant
- Sergeants Jason Atallian, Joseph Blithe, Joseph Bloch, Diane Smith and Gustavo Zeissig

Watch video from the New Castle County Police Department promotion ceremony at [delawareonline.com/video](http://delawareonline.com/video).

Courtesy of the Wilmington News Journal

Congratulations to the eleven police officers and police communication supervisor Marnita Koveleski who were honored at the promotion ceremony held at the Delaware Technical and Community College in Stanton. This collection of supervisors represents one of the most diverse and well rounded officers in recent memory. SEE PAGE —4 (for photographs)

### Two Serial Burglars Arrested

Two adult males have been arrested and charged with burglary related offenses after an off duty police lieutenant observed the suspects running through a wooded area away from a home while wearing gloves. The officer followed the suspects in his personal vehicle and called for patrol units who later stopped the two suspects and recovered stolen goods from the trunk of their car. Both suspects have been linked to a total of five residential burglaries so far, however, additional charges are pending. Since the end of August, County Police Detectives have been investigating a series of burglaries that had occurred in the Mount Cuba and Centerville areas of Delaware. Based on information gleaned from the investigation, witnesses reported seeing a green colored Cadillac that was occupied by two white male subjects in the area around the times of one of the break-ins. On Friday, October 2, at 1:35 p.m., the son of a county police detective called his father and told him he had just witnessed two white male subjects who had parked a car (green Cadillac) on Paper Mill Road. He indicated he watched the subjects as they walked into the wooded area toward the community of Chestnut Valley.

While detectives were en route to the suspicious car, off duty police lieutenant (Gerard Donovan) was traveling along Paper Mill Road when he observed two subjects running out of the woods and getting into a green Cadillac. Lieutenant Donovan was aware of the recent burglary trend and was familiar with the green Cadillac that was sought by detectives, so he followed the car and called 911. Assisting county officers then moved in and stopped the car on Kirkwood Highway near the Red Mill Shopping Center. Both occupants were detained and later arrested for two counts of burglary after police recovered stolen goods from the trunk. The suspects have been identified as Joseph R. Blevins, a 26 year old male who resides in the Woodland Apartments in Wilmington and Christopher Miller, a 27 year old male who resides in the Murray Manor Trailer Park. Both Blevins and Miller were arrested for two counts of burglary and related offenses on Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>. They were both committed to the Howard Young Prison after failing to post \$22,500 secured bail. Blevins has since posted bail and has been released. He is now wanted again for the additional three burglaries (listed below) based on arrest warrants that were signed on Monday. Miller remains in prison. As a result of several search warrants and the recovery of multiple stolen items, detectives were able to link the suspects to at least three other burglaries that occurred over the past few weeks in the communities of Wyndom and Stonewold in Wilmington.



Lieutenant Gerry Donovan

### Police Seized 24 Pounds of Marijuana

Frank Brandon, a 23 year old male who resides in the 100 block of Highland Blvd in New Castle (and recent resident of New York City) has been charged with trafficking marijuana, possession with the intent to deliver marijuana, and maintaining a vehicle for keeping a controlled substance. On Wednesday (10/14) afternoon, police received information regarding a package of marijuana that was to be picked up at a residence in the community of Belvedere. Several undercover officers (from the drug control unit) set up a surveillance operation on the home and watched as a male subject stopped at the home and picked up a cardboard box that contained the suspected marijuana. A team of officers then stopped the car just after the driver left the community of Belvedere on Route 141 near Newport. The large cardboard box was found in the trunk of the car with the suspected marijuana inside. Brandon and two other men were taken into custody without further incident. The other two men were later released and not charged with a crime. The substance in the cardboard box later field tested positive for marijuana and weighed 24 pounds. Brandon was later arraigned and committed to the Howard Young Prison after failing to post bail.



### Suspect Linked to Three Residential Burglaries

Samuel Reeder, a 24 year old Newark, man, has been charged with three residential burglaries that he committed in the Pike Creek area after he was arrested by Probation and Parole Officers and later found to be in possession of a stolen lighter. On Monday (10/19), County Police responded to three residential burglaries that occurred in the Drummond North and Meeting House Hill communities. In each case, the suspect forced his way into the homes through a rear door and ransacked the homes while stealing cash, jewelry, lap top computers, and a 42 inch television set. Later on Monday afternoon, officers from Probation and Parole arrested Reeder at his home for a probation violation. Officer Brian Burke learned of the arrest and noted Reeder was in possession of a bundle of heroin and cash when he was taken into custody. Burke also was aware of the burglary spree that had occurred earlier in Pike Creek and had previous knowledge of Samuel Reeder. Burke then contacted detectives and indicated he could possibly be a suspect in the burglaries. After his arrest by Probation and Parole, Reeder was transported to headquarters for processing.



Officer Brian Burke

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### Suspects Linked to Home Invasion

New Castle County detectives have arrested two Philadelphia men for a home invasion and robbery of two elderly victims that occurred on October 8, 2009, in the community of Silverside Heights. In this incident, the two men forced their way into the home of two elderly victims, an 82 year old male and 85 year old female. One of the suspects then tied the victim's hands and feet before covering their heads with an article of clothing as the second entered the home and stole cash from inside. The suspects were last seen fleeing in his 1989 Ford Crown Victoria.

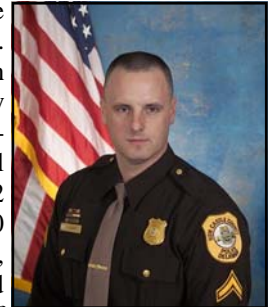
Detective Timothy Argoe was assigned to investigate this case. Knowing that the victim's car was stolen, Argoe surmised that the suspects most likely walked to the victim's home as no other vehicle was found left behind. On a hunch, he decided to contact the Dart Bus Company and discovered a bus had dropped off two male subjects at the bus stop one block from the victim's home moments before the home invasion occurred. Argoe recovered the surveillance video from the bus and found the two male subjects who fit the description provided by the victims. One of the suspects was wearing a brown corduroy jacket that was described by the victims as the coat the male subject (who tied them up) was wearing. The victims were able to positively identify one of the suspects as a family acquaintance, Keith Czajka. The other suspect was later identified and arrested by Upper Darby Police (PA) in Philadelphia. The two suspects were identified as Keith Czajka and John Torres of Philadelphia.



Detective Tim Argoe

### "Flying Sparks" Leads to Arrest

County Police have arrested two suspects for attempting to steal a utility trailer from the parking lot of the Life Community Church in Newark, DE. An alert officer drove passed the church and observed "flying sparks" coming from the side of a trailer and stopped to investigate the light show. The officer was surprised to find a male subject using a "Skilsaw" that was powered by a generator in an attempt to remove a "The Club Tire Claw" from the trailer. On Thursday (10/29) at 11:15 p.m., County Police Officer Thomas Purse was patrolling the area of the 700 block of Otts Chapel Road when he noticed what he believed to be flying sparks coming from the area of a utility trailer that had been parked in the parking lot of a nearby church. When the officer approached the vehicle, he heard a female voice shouting "stop, stop the police" to another male subject who could not hear her. Officer Purse discovered the sparks were coming from a saw that the male subject was using in an attempt to remove a device from the tires of the utility trailer. The two suspects were arrested without incident. Officer Purse found the suspects had driven a pick up truck to the church and planned to steal a 2009 utility trailer that had been parked in the parking lot. The male subject was using a generator to power the saw and was in the process of cutting off a tire device when the officer caught him in the act. The following suspects have been charged with possession of burglary tools, attempted felony theft, conspiracy, criminal mischief, and criminal trespassing: Robert D. Locicero, a 42 year old male who resides in the 1500 block of Whitaker Road in Newark, DE. Christi L. Merion, a 31 year old female who resides in the unit block of Burns Way in Newark, DE.



Officer Thomas Purse

### Robbery Suspect Arrested after Victims Break his Arm with Baseball Bat

County Police have arrested Michael Wells, a 30 year old male who resides in Pennsgrove, NJ. He was arrested after he attempted to rob teenage male victims at gunpoint. The teens (ages 19 and 16) were able to disarm Wells and strike him with a baseball bat while attempting to fend off the attack. On Sunday (10/11) at 7:52 p.m., County Police responded to the Brookside Shopping Center for a report of a fight in progress between several subjects who were armed with a gun and a baseball bat. When the officers arrived, they found a number of subjects who appeared to be attempting to break up a fight. Two male subjects were treated by paramedics at the scene and transported to the Christiana Hospital where they were treated for injuries sustained in the altercation. The investigation has revealed that two teenage male victims had just removed money from the ATM Machine in the shopping center and had returned to their car. A male subject (Wells) then approached and attempted to start a conversation at which time he brandished a handgun and pointed it at the victims. Wells was able to remove some cash from one of the victims who grabbed the gun which resulted in a struggle. The other victim then exited the car and armed himself with a baseball bat. He proceeded to strike the would-be robber with the bat as the three struggled with the gun. In the end, one of the victims sustained a laceration to his face that required sutures. Michael Wells sustained a broken arm. The handgun turned out to be a BB gun that resembled a real semi-automatic weapon. Wells has been charged with robbery in the first degree, attempted robbery in the first degree, possession of heroin and possession of heroin within 1,000 feet of a school. He has been arraigned and committed to the Howard Young Prison after failing to post \$31,500 secured bail.

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Due to a lack of a valid insurance card, the officers transported Lewandowski to the home (in the police car) and parked out front. The original wanted suspect (Tannen) observed the police car and decided to bolt out of the back door. He didn't, however, see the other officers who were out back awaiting his anticipated exit. Tannen was taken into custody without incident in the back yard. While he was being handcuffed, the officers observed a two foot tall marijuana plant growing in the soil near the door. Based on this finding, a search warrant was obtained for the home. When the officers entered the home, they were taken aback by multiple canine droppings throughout the home. Despite the tremendous stench, the officers forged on (in protective suits) and located the grow operation in the basement. The officers also recovered a rifle, multiple rounds of ammunition, a homemade explosive, and drug paraphernalia throughout the home. Lewandowski's girlfriend, Lisa Corazza (age 20) was inside the residence and taken into custody as well. Four Pit Bull Terriers were removed from the residence by members of the SPCA due to the conditions inside. Both Lewandowski and Corazza were arrested and charged with the following offenses: manufacturing marijuana, maintaining a dwelling for keeping a controlled substance, possession with the intent to deliver marijuana, possession of a deadly weapon during the commission of a felony, and related drug offenses. After all of the arrests were completed, several of the surrounding neighbors came outside and thanked the officers for closing down the operation.

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burglary spree in Pike Creek. Detectives then spoke with the probation officers who noted seeing electronic equipment inside Reeder's home that was consistent with the items that had been taken in the burglaries. Based on this information, detectives obtained a search warrant for the home and later located the stolen property from the Pike Creek burglaries. Reeder has been charged with maintaining a dwelling for keeping heroin, possession of heroin, possession of a hypodermic needle, and possession of marijuana. He was also linked to the burglary spree and charged with three counts of burglary, three counts felony theft and two counts of criminal mischief. He has been arraigned and committed to the Howard Young Prison after failing to post \$37,500 secured bail.

## Promotion ceremony photographs



Major McGowan



Major Hitch



Captain Becker



Lieutenant Martinez



Lieutenant Treadwell



Lieutenant Feeser



Sergeant Atallian



Sergeant Blithe



Sergeant Bloch



Sergeant D. Smith



Sergeant Zeissig



PCS Koveleski

## **Significant Crime Recap October 2009**

**Minquadale**

**Thursday 10/1/09 2015**

**District 10-Street**

**Summary:** (Reported robbery) A 50 year old male was walking to his girlfriend's residence on Lewes Street when he was approached by two males. One of them pointed a gun at the victim's head and demanded his money. The suspects stole cash, a jacket and watch from the victim before they fled on foot toward Hazeldell Avenue.

**Sparrow Run**

**Saturday 10/3/09 2215**

**District 6-Powers**

**Summary:** (Reported robbery, carjacking) Two male victims were sitting in their vehicle in front their home on Flamingo Drive listening to music when they were approached by a child (7-10 year old). The child then pointed a handgun at the victims and demanded property. A second older suspect then came up and took the handgun from the first suspect and told the victims to exit the car. One turned over his cell phone prior to the suspects fleeing in the victim's vehicle.

**Green Tree Apartments**

**Thursday 10/8/09 0600**

**District 8-Cartier**

**Summary:** (Departmental shooting) Detectives and SWAT Officers responded to an address in the 700 block of Peachtree Road in an effort to execute an arrest warrant of a male subject who had a history of gun violence. As the officers entered the home, they encountered the subject who was armed with a handgun. After several verbal commands were ignored, the subject was shot by two SWAT officers. He later died at the Christiana Hospital.

**Silverside Heights**

**Thursday 10/8/09 0910**

**District 8-Cartier**

**Summary:** (Home invasion) An elderly man answered a knock at the front door of his home on Orchard Lane and was accosted by a male subject who forced his way inside. The subject took the victim into the living room area and bound his arms and legs. When the female victim came out of the bathroom, the subject forced her onto the couch and also bound and blindfolded her. A second male then entered the home and removed a number of items from inside. Detectives were able to obtain video footage of the two suspects as they exited the nearby bus stop just prior to the robbery. Based on the footage, detectives identified and arrested both men.

**Lancaster Court Apts.**

**Thursday 10/8/09 2025**

**District 1-Reda**

**Summary:** (Reported robbery) A male victim was walking in the area of 3 Court Drive when he was accosted by a subject who assaulted him and stole his cigarettes. The victim was uncooperative with investigators.

**Rosegate**

**Thursday 10/8/09 at 2307**

**District 10-Street**

**Summary:** (Reported robbery) A male victim was walking on Thorn Lane when he was surrounded by a number of subjects who knocked him to the ground and started assaulting him. The victim was struck with the butt of a gun and robbed of his cash. A police officer came upon the disturbance which caused the assailants to flee the scene as the victim was knocked unconscious.

**Rosegate**

**Thursday 10/8/09 at 2342**

**District 10 Street**

**Summary:** (Reported robbery) A male victim was walking on Thorn Lane when we was accosted by a subject who brandished a handgun. The suspect stole cash from the victim before fleeing on foot.

**East Pointe Apts.**

**Monday 10/12/09 2040**

**District 8-Cartier**

**Summary:** (Reported robbery) A 23 year old male had just exited his vehicle in the parking lot of the apartment complex when he observed a male subject approaching him. The subject pulled out a handgun and pointed it at victim and told him to empty his pockets. The victim relinquished his jacket and prescription medication before the suspect ran off as another person exited the apartment building.

**Arbor Place Townhouses**

**Monday 10/12/09 2045**

**District 10-Street**

**Summary:** (Miscellaneous investigation) A 38 year old female, who resides in the 100 block of Parma Avenue, reported she found a spent round in her 3 year old daughter's bedroom. Police discovered the bullet penetrated the exterior of the residence and came to rest in her daughter's bedroom. The victim advised that this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> incident this year where her residence has been struck by a stray bullet.

**Arbor Pointe Apts.**

**Tuesday 10/13/09 2045**

**District 1-Reda**

**Summary:** (Attempted robbery) A 26 year old female had just parked her car in the parking lot of 2036 Bentwood Road and was walking to her apartment building when she observed a male subject walk out from behind another vehicle. The woman noticed the subject was following her so she started to run as the man chased her. The victim made it to the first floor landing of her building when the subject tackled her. The victim's husband heard the commotion and walked outside at which time the man fled empty handed.

**Whispering Pines**

**Friday 10/16/09 1500**

**District 5-Diller**

**Summary:** (Reported robbery) A 27 year old female victim reported she and her four year old son had just dropped her sister off at a residence on Elliott Street so she could get picked up for work. As she dropped her off, a male exited the house and asked her for a ride to his aunt's house "around the corner." The victim proceeded to give him a

ride and he directed her to the dead end of Gilbert Street. When they stopped, the man pulled out a buck knife and held it to her throat while a second male suspect then came out and held a knife to the victim's four-year old son's throat. The suspects took the victim's purse and fled. She sustained a minor cut on her neck, but was otherwise unharmed.

**Abbey Walk Apts.**

**Saturday 10/17/09 1830**

**District 9-Sheldon**

**Summary:** (Reported robbery) A 47 year old female victim, who resides at 82 Abbey Lane, heard a knock at the door and opened same. A male suspect then came into the apartment uninvited and stated that he was there to see Anthony (victim's boyfriend) and wanted the TV. The victim began to struggle with the suspect and followed him outside, where another struggle over the TV ensued. The suspect was eventually able to get the TV and put it into the trunk of his vehicle, a silver Honda Civic. He was last seen fleeing the area in the car. A tag number was obtained.

**Todd Estates**

**Sunday 10/18/09 1930**

**District 11-Tackett**

**Summary:** (Reported robbery) Three teenage victims had pulled up in front of their friend's house on Brennen Drive when they were approached by two male suspects who asked if they had any weed to sell. One of the subjects suddenly brandished a handgun and robbed the victims of their cell phones. The suspects fled in an unknown older model red car. The victims went into their friend's house and told the adults who called police.

**Midway Plaza Apts.**

**Sunday 10/18/09 2130**

**District 1-Reda**

**Summary:** (Reported home invasion) Four adult male victims had returned home (4815 Old Capitol Trail) after shopping all day. As they unloaded their car, they observed two suspects standing between vehicles across the parking lot from them. As the last victim entered the apartment with the last of the items, the two suspects pushed open the door, displayed guns and stole cash from the victims. The suspects also stole a cell phone and laptop computer before fleeing.

**Georgetown Village Apts. Monday 10/26/09 0150**

**District 7-Smiley**

**Summary:** (Reported robbery) A 34 year old male victim was walking to Building M when he was approached by two suspects. Both suspects displayed handguns and demanded victim's money. The suspects stole a cell phone and then fled on foot possibly fleeing in a vehicle with a loud muffler.

**The Elms**

**Tuesday 10/27/09 2030**

**District 11-Tackett**

**Summary:** (Home invasion) A 56 year old male victim was sitting on his sofa inside his apartment at 401 Coventry Lane when he was grabbed around his neck. Victim was held in a headlock while four other male subjects removed cash and prescription pills from an

unsecured fire safe in his bedroom. The victim yelled that he was going to get his gun and the suspects fled.

**Red Clay Creek Apts.**

**Wednesday 10/28/09 0400**

**District 1-Reda**

**Summary:** (Reported robbery) A 31 year old male victim had parked his car in the 2200 block of Melson Road and was exiting his vehicle when he was struck from behind and knocked to the ground. When he got up, he observed all the doors were open on his vehicle and 3-4 suspects were running away. Victim the looked in his vehicle and noticed the above property was missing. The victim refused medical treatment.

**Hampton Walk Apts.**

**Saturday 10/31/09 2130**

**District 7-Smiley**

**Summary:** (Stabbing investigation) A 16 year old male reported he had been stabbed in the area of the intersection of New Jersey Avenue and Carvel Avenue. The victim's sister advised that she received a call from her brother advising that he was stabbed and told her to come pick him up in the area of New Jersey Avenue and Carvel Avenue. Once in the car, the victim frantically told his sister to drive him to the hospital. The victim suffered two stab wounds to the abdomen area that required surgery. Detectives are currently attempting to confirm if the victim had been stabbed at the intersection.