



# METRICH Enforcement Unit

## Information Bulletin

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23 Years Serving North Central Ohio Communities

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### Norwalk police find drugs after woman arrested on warrants

#### Huron County

A Columbus woman was arrested this week by Norwalk police while she was in the area, according to court records.

Investigators found \$8,000 on Stacy Parker Rodriguez, 30, along with suspected drugs, according to a search warrant filed Wednesday in Norwalk Municipal Court.

Parker Rodriguez was arrested on two outstanding warrants Tuesday for forgery and tampering with government documents, court records stated.

Police tracked the suspect to her mother's home at 54 W. Willard Avenue where she was found hiding in a closet, according to the search warrant documents. Police searched her vehicle and seized \$8,000 in cash as well as suspected heroin.

Parker Rodriguez is "married to Cesar Rodriguez, a suspected drug trafficker in the Columbus, Ohio, area," the search warrant stated. "(The) METRICH (Drug Task Force) and Columbus Police Department had arrested Cesar Rodriguez for trafficking in heroin and reported that he is known as one of the largest dealers in the Columbus area," according to the documents.

Parker Rodriguez is being held at the Huron County Jail on a \$36,000



Over 600 balloons of tar heroin were recovered from a suspect during a case involving METRICH and Columbus Narcotics.

bond, according to the jail spokesman. She is due back in court March 4, court records stated.

Huron County Sheriff's Capt. Robert McLaughlin, the commander of the Huron County Unit of the METRICH Drug Task Force, and Robert McDowell, the prosecutor's investigator and police dog handler also assisted in the investigation, the search warrant stated.

Originally published in the Norwalk Reflector on February 27, 2009.

## MARMET-METRICH drug task force makes arrest

### *Marion County*

On 01/15/09 detectives of the MARMET-METRICH Drug Task Force served a search warrant at 1014 East Church Street following a drug investigation. Detectives with the task force located seventy-eight grams of crack cocaine, ten grams of marijuana, and drug paraphernalia. Also recovered was \$973.00 of suspected

drug money. The street value of the drugs located is approximately \$5,700.00.

Cherell McDuffie, 21 years of age of 323 Willow Street Marion, Ohio was arrested for two counts of drug trafficking, and one count of drug possession. McDuffie was transported to the Multi-County Correctional Center.

The MARMET-METRICH Drug Task Force is made up of detectives from both the Marion County Sheriff's Office and Marion City Police Department. The task force was assisted with the search warrant by additional officers from both the sheriff's office and police department.

## Three arrested with meth chemicals

### *Hancock County*

Findlay police arrested three West Virginia residents on Monday after drug manufacturing chemicals were found in a car in front of Wal-Mart, 2500 Tiffin Ave.

Police initially stopped the car while investigating a shoplifting incident reported at the Kroger store, 1996 Tiffin Ave., at 11:49 a.m.

In searching the car, officers found "chemicals and/or ingredients used in the manufacture of methamphetamine," police said.

Sgt. Randy Digby said several police officers and firefighters came to secure the area, which

was blocked with yellow tape. The east entrance to Wal-Mart, near where the car was stopped, also was blocked with yellow tape.

The Hancock METRICH drug unit was summoned to the scene. The unit was assisted by the Findlay Fire Department and Eagle Environmental.

Chemicals used in making methamphetamine are poisonous to breathe or swallow and are flammable, Digby said.

Arrested were Larry D. Lacy, 48, and Cynthia J. Overbee, 43, both of St. Albans, W. Va, and Mark A. West, 33, of Liberty, W.

Va. They were charged with illegal possession of chemicals for the manufacture of drugs, a third-degree felony. Lacy also was charged with petty theft, a first-degree misdemeanor, in connection with the Kroger shoplifting incident.

All three were being held Monday night in the Hancock County jail.

A Findlay man, Benjamin G. Thomas, 22, was arrested on an obstruction of official business charge, and was then released.

Originally published in the Courier on Tuesday, February 17, 2009.

## Galion man faces drug charges

### *Crawford County*

One man was arrested and \$1,000 worth of drugs were seized when a search warrant was served at a Galion apartment Wednesday.

Galion police Chief Brian Saterfield said officers arrested 30-year-old Justin Espinoza, 155 Easton Way, Apt. 4, on suspicion of trafficking in drugs. The

Galion Police Department was working in conjunction with METRICH Drug Task Force.

Officers said they seized numerous prescription pills, packages of suspected marijuana, drug paraphernalia and several balloons of suspected heroin. A warrant was obtained on the basis of continuing complaints and infor-

mation received from area residents.

"The search was pretty simple. To get that much heroin in one search is a pretty good deal," Saterfield said.

Originally published in the News Journal on February 13, 2009.

## Multi-jurisdictional collaboration yields arrest

### *Seneca County*

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On Tuesday, January 20 2009, the Seneca County Drug Task Force-METRICH Enforcement Unit, consisting of the Fostoria Police Department, Tiffin Police Department, Seneca County Sheriff's Office & the Seneca County Prosecutor's Office, along with Agents from the Bureau of Criminal Identification & Investigation (BCI&I), Zero Tolerance Task Force (Fostoria, Ohio) and Agents from the DEA Task Force (Toledo Division) executed a drug related search warrant at 4159 North CR 33, Pleasant Township, Seneca County, OH, that being the residence of Juan Martinez, 58 YOA.

The search warrant signed by Judge Paul Kutscher of the Seneca County Probate Court un-

veiled a substantial amount of marijuana & criminal tools.

The search warrant stemmed from an investigation initially opened by the Warren County Drug Task Force & Customs/Border Protection, which intercepted a suspicious parcel package that was coming from the state of Texas and delivered to the Pleasant Township residence. Upon further investigation, Agents found that the package contained a large amount of marijuana, at which time they contacted the Seneca County Drug Task Force – METRICH Enforcement Unit.

The METRICH Unit continued the investigation in Seneca County, delivered the suspicious package and subsequently exe-

cuted a search warrant on the rural area residence.

Agents from BCI & I, Zero Tolerance Task Force and the DEA Task Force assisted the Seneca County Drug Task Force – METRICH Unit with the execution of the search warrant.

Arrested was fifty-eight year old Juan Martinez for Trafficking in Marijuana, a Felony of the Third Degree. Mr. Martinez is presently being held in the Seneca County Jail pending prosecution.

“This investigation is just a small example of what we have to look forward to with our continued support of multiple jurisdictions working together to combat the increasing drug concerns in our communities.” Sgt.-Det. Donald R. Joseph said.

## Willard police, METRICH execute search warrant at residence on Walton Avenue

### *Huron County*

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Officers from the Willard Police Department, the Norwalk Police Department and deputies from the Huron County Sheriff's Office executed a search warrant last week at an address on US 224.

According to Capt. Robert McLaughlin of the sheriff's office, the search warrant was executed at a mobile home on Walton Avenue, the home of a 25 year old. During the search, officers seized two loaded weapons, marijuana paraphernalia, prescription pills and 35.98 grams of powder cocaine.

“We found a .25 automatic and a .357 magnum,” McLaughlin

said. “They were both in the master bedroom and both were loaded.”

The search was the result of an investigation conducted by the Huron County METRICH Unit, McLaughlin said. Possession of powdered cocaine is a felony of the third degree.

This investigation centered around the 25 year old resident at that location and his associates who were bringing cocaine and marijuana into Willard, McLaughlin pointed out.

“He's responsible for getting drugs up from Texas to Willard,” McLaughlin said. “I'd say he's a major player.”

Reports from the search warrant and copies of the drug analysis which was conducted by the Mansfield Police Department laboratory were given to the Willard law director, according to McLaughlin.

The joint investigation involving the Willard Police Department and METRICH has been going on for six to seven months, McLaughlin pointed out.

Charges were expected to be filed against several persons he added.

Originally published in the Willard Times Junction on January 22, 2009.

## Three warrants executed

### *Richland County*

On March 31, 2009, in a collaborative law enforcement effort, officers from the METRICH Enforcement Unit, Mansfield Police Major Crimes, Richland County Sheriff's Office, Ontario Police Department, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF), and ASORT executed three drug

and weapons related search warrants signed by the Honorable Judge Ault.

The warrants were all in the City of Mansfield and were located at 143 Stewart Avenue, 50 ½ Rowland Avenue and 5 Stoodt Ct.

Officers located quantities of

suspected heroin, crack cocaine, marijuana, ecstasy, diverted pharmaceutical drugs, drug paraphernalia, two handguns and \$3452 in cash.

Officers arrested two individuals from Detroit, Michigan with additional arrests pending further investigation.

## 52 balloons of heroin seized

### *Marion County*

On 02/23/09, around 2100 hours, the MARMET-METRICH Drug Task Force served a search warrant at 492 Silver Street as a result of a drug investigation by the task force. Detectives seized 52 balloons of heroin with a street value of \$1,600.00

A male and female from the residence were questioned by de-

tectives and released. George T. Holt was arrested and taken to the Multi-County Correctional Center for charges of Trafficking Heroin, a fifth degree felony, Possession of Heroin, a fourth degree felony, Weapons Under Disability, a third degree felony, and Tampering With Evidence, a third degree felony. Holt attempted to run from

the residence and had thrown the drugs while fleeing from detectives.

Detectives also located a loaded Ruger 9mm handgun, which was reported stolen from a residence in Marion, Ohio. Several items of drug paraphernalia were also located in the residence. The investigation is continuing regarding the handgun.

## Willard traffic stop leads to heroin bust

### *Huron County*

A Willard woman arrested Friday on warrants issued out of Norwalk was later found with 63 balloons of suspected heroin, Willard police Chief Joseph Daniel told the News Journal on Monday.

Mary A. Keen, 29, of 119 1/2 Dale Ave., was arrested late Friday afternoon after Willard police Detective Adam Strong stopped a vehicle with Keen and two other passengers and obtained a warrant to search it. Keen was initially arrested on two outstanding contempt warrants issued by Norwalk Municipal Court.

Daniel said the woman was

later found with the small, marble-sized "balloons" authorities suspect is heroin.

Such an amount of the illicit drug has an estimated street value of \$1,800, according to Daniel.

The suspected heroin was sent to the METRICH Enforcement Unit's crime lab at the Mansfield Police Department for analysis.

"Once we have the suspected heroin analyzed, and if it turns out to be heroin, the case will go to the Huron County prosecutor's office," Daniel said.

Keen was taken to Huron County Jail, where she remained Monday. Neither of the vehicle's

two other occupants was arrested.

The county sheriff's department and METRICH assisted in the seizure.



Originally published in the News Journal on March 10, 2009.

## • INTELLIGENCE ALERT -

### ECSTASY MIMIC TABLETS (ACTUALLY CONTAINING N-BENZYLPIPERAZINE (BZP), 1-(3-TRIFLUOROMETHYL)-PHENYLPYPERAZINE (TFMPP), AND CAFFEINE) IN

The Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation in Bowling Green recently received five plastic bags each containing 10 unusually shaped, yellow tablets with a “Decepticons” logo, suspected Ecstasy.

The tablets were acquired in Findlay, Ohio, by the Metrich Drug Enforcement Unit.

Analysis of the tablets (total net mass 14.2 grams) by GC/FID and GC/MS, however, indicated not MDMA but rather a mixture of N-benzylpiperazine (BZP), 1-(3-trifluoromethyl)

phenylpiperazine (TFMPP), and caffeine (not quantitated).

The laboratory has previously received numerous submissions of tablets containing BZP/TFMPP mixtures, but this was the first submission of Ecstasy or Ecstasy mimic tablets with this shape and logo to the laboratory.

Originally published in *Microgram* in the January 2009 issue.



[Editor's Notes: According to the analyst, the “Decepticons” are the antagonists in the fictional “Transformers” universe. This is the first report of this tablet shape and logo to *Microgram*.]

## Hundreds of prescription pills seized

### Marion County

On 01/26/09, detectives with the MARMETMETRICH Drug Task Force served a search warrant at 699 Wilson Avenue. The search warrant was a result of a three month drug investigation by the drug task force.

Steven J. Cottrell, 23 years old of 699 Wilson Avenue was arrested for three counts of trafficking drugs, two fourth degree felonies and one fifth degree felony.

Cottrell was transported to the Multi-County Correctional Center. A female resident was questioned and released and charges of trafficking in drugs, both fourth degree felonies will be forwarded



Increased abuse and sales of pharmaceutical drugs is occurring throughout the METRICH region.

to the prosecutor's office on the female.

All drugs that were sold by these subjects were prescription medications such as Morphine,

Percocet, and Klonopin. Detectives located one hundred and sixteen Morphine pills at the residence. Also located were around one hundred various types of prescription pills. The street value of the prescription pills recovered is approximately \$1,000.

The MARMET-METRICH Drug Task Force detectives were assisted by additional officers and detectives from both the Marion County Sheriff's Office and the Marion City Police Department. The Marion County Dog Warden also responded and assisted by removing a pitbull from the residence.

## Search warrant upheld, Willard man goes to prison

### *Huron County*

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The 6th District Court of Appeals in Toledo has upheld a search warrant that led to a 16-month prison term for a Willard man.

Lorenzo Nunez Jr., 29, of 214 E. Tiffin St., had his prison term suspended after he was sentenced Jan. 12 in Huron County Common Pleas Court. At the time, Huron County Prosecutor Russell Leffler said it was possible there wasn't enough information related to the six-month investigation by METRICH, a multi-county drug task force, that led to the Jan. 10, 2007 drug bust at the defendant's home.

Nunez arrived home after authorities conducted a "no-knock" search warrant, said Huron County Sheriff's Capt. Bob McLaughlin. He said detectives found a half ounce of cocaine in the basement of the residence.

Twenty officers conducted simultaneous search warrants at Nunez's home and another sus-

pect's North Church Street residence. Authorities seized just under 10 grams of cocaine, \$1,000 in cash and scales suspected of being used to weigh drugs during the East Tiffin Street search. From North Church Street, officers confiscated a 22-caliber Remington long rifle, a compound crossbow, ammunition, a cell phone and scales.

McLaughlin, the county's METRICH contact, was involved with the raid along with the sheriff's office special response team and detectives from the Willard and Sandusky police departments.

Earlier, a confidential informant who had gotten drugs from Nunez and another suspect said there was a "huge amount of drugs" coming to Willard, so the officers searched both homes on an "either/or warrant," Leffler said in January.

Eight days after the drug bust, Nunez posted 10 percent of a \$15,000 bond and was released

from the Huron County Jail. On Oct. 10, he pleaded no contest to possession of cocaine. Judge Jim Conway credited him with serving three months behind bars when Nunez was sentenced in January.

On Jan. 14 two days after being sentenced, Nunez was released from jail to the Lorain Correctional Institution, a corrections officer said.

He was sentenced Jan. 31, 2001 up to six months in a community-based corrections facility as part of his two years of probation for three counts of trafficking in cocaine.

Court records further show Nunez also was fined \$750, had his driver's license suspended for six months and ordered to pay a total of \$300 in restitution to Willard police and the sheriff's office.

Originally published in the Norwalk Reflector on February 18, 2009.

## Apple Valley marijuana operation shut down

### *Knox County*

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An indoor marijuana growing operation was shut down in Apple Valley late Monday nights.

According to Knox County Sheriff David Barber, detectives executed a search warrant late Monday evening at a residence on Baldwin Heights Circle, Howard, discovering an indoor marijuana growing operation in the base-

ment.

Barber said detectives found a hydroponic growing operation and seized several live plants, dried marijuana and drug paraphernalia.

No arrests were made at the time the search warrant was executed. The continuing investigation is being handled by Detective

Sgt. Gary Rohler and detectives Roger Brown and David Light. Mount Vernon Municipal Court Probation Officer Rene Joris assisted the sheriff's office in the investigation.

Originally published in the Mount Vernon News on January 27, 2009.

## MARMET traffic stop nets guns and drugs

### *Marion County*

On 02/02/09, the MARMET-METRICH Drug Task Force was working an investigation in the 2100 block of Marion Mt. Gilead Rd. As a result, the task force conducted a traffic stop in the 1000 block of Bermuda Drive on a vehicle seen leaving the area of Marion Mt. Gilead Rd.

After further investigation two hand guns were located in the vehicle, a Beretta 9mm and a Beretta 40 caliber. Two subjects were arrested and transported to

the Multi-County Correctional Center.

Robert C. Baker, 27, of 182 Wallace Street was arrested for Carrying a Concealed Weapon, a fourth degree felony, Weapons Under Disability, a third degree felony, Tampering With Evidence, a third degree felony, and Illegal Conveyance of Drugs into a Detention Facility, a third degree felony.

After Baker was taken to the Multi-County Correctional Center

it was found he had 18.9 grams of crack cocaine concealed in a body cavity which was recovered. The cocaine recovered has a street value of \$1,900.00.

Also arrested from the vehicle, was 47 year old, Keith Washington of 367 Patterson Street. Washington was arrested for Carrying a Concealed Weapon, a fourth degree felony and Tampering With Evidence, a third degree felony. Three other subjects in the vehicle were questioned and released.

## Logan Road man faces felony charge after search

### *Richland County*

A 21-year-old Logan Road man was charged with a first-degree felony after a police raid early Wednesday.

Ryan Wardle of 395 Logan Road was arrested for corrupting another with drugs and possession of heroin, a fifth-degree felony, after the METRICH Enforcement

Unit and city police searched his residence. The charge corrupting another with drugs stemmed from a juvenile at the residence who reportedly had heroin and said Wardle supplied it. Authorities recovered heroin, drug paraphernalia that included about 10 needles, and \$250 cash.

The warrant was the result of information provided by a Neighborhood Watch group and the police department's second-shift patrol officers.

Originally published in the News Journal on February 26, 2009.

## Reports of Opana® Abuse Emerging in Several OSAM Network Areas

During focus group interviews conducted between July and December of 2008, OSAM Network Regional Epidemiologists obtained their first reports about the abuse of Opana®, an opioid, in several markets throughout Ohio. Users in Athens commented that OpanaER® sells for \$20 for a 20-milligram tablet and \$40 for a 40-milligram tablet. Crime labs in Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and BCI & I Richfield and London reported low availability. Opana's psychoactive ingredient is oxymorphone, a

Schedule II, semi-synthetic pharmaceutical opioid that has high potential for abuse. Opana® is available in 5 and 10-milligram tablets. Opana ER® is available in 5, 7.5, 10, 15, 20, 30 and 40-milligram tablets. Reports about Opana® abuse and user perceptions regarding the "superiority" of Opana® in comparison to other pharmaceutical opioids are troubling. Users have long viewed OxyContin® as one of the most desirable but also dangerous pharmaceutical opioids because it can accelerate pharmaceutical opioid

addiction and sometimes lead to heroin abuse. Overall, the emerging phenomenon of oxymorphone tablet abuse is consistent with the continuing trend of high levels of pharmaceutical opioid abuse in Ohio and across the nation.

Source: OSAM Network



*22 Years Serving North Central Ohio Communities*

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METRICH (Metro-Richland County) Enforcement Unit is a ten county law enforcement task force created to address multi-jurisdictional violators of Ohio's drug, weapons, and organized crime statutes. The project operates with a basic "Community Policing Philosophy" using a "Weed and Seed Strategy" from ten "de-centralized" offices.

Participating agencies: Ashland, Crawford, Hancock, Huron, Knox, Marion, Morrow, Richland, Seneca, Wyandot County Sheriff's Offices and Prosecutors Offices; Ashland, Loudonville, Bucyrus, Crestline, Galion, Findlay, Bellevue, Greenwich, Monroeville, New London, Norwalk, Plymouth, Wakeman, Willard, Mt. Vernon, Marion, Mt. Gilead, Lexington, Mansfield, Ontario, Shelby, Fostoria, Tiffin, Carey, Upper Sandusky Police Departments; Ohio State Highway Patrol; Ohio Department of Public Safety; BCI&I, Ohio State Board of Pharmacy; U.S Department of Housing & Urban Development; FBI; ATF; DEA; IRS.

## Points of Contact

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### Crawford County

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### Hancock County

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