



METRICH Enforcement Unit

Information Bulletin

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23 Years Serving North Central Ohio Communities

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New Mexico men arrested for dumping bag out of airplane *Huron County*

Two Albuquerque, N.M., men were arrested at the Huron County Airport Wednesday night after the U.S. Border Patrol followed their plane and watched them dump a large bag out of it over a wooded area near Willard, according to the Huron County Sheriff's Office.

The sheriff's office arrested Greg Baca, 47, and Ryan Thomas, 47. Both were charged with trafficking in marijuana and are in the Huron County Jail on \$100,000 bonds, according to Norwalk Municipal Court.

The U.S. Border Patrol tracked the plane from New Mexico to northern Ohio, said Capt. Robert McLaughlin, commander of the Huron County unit of the METRICH Drug Task Force. When the plane was around Findlay, Homeland Security sent a Border Patrol plane to intercept it.

The Border Patrol discovered there were actually two planes traveling together, according to the sheriff's office.

One of the planes landed in Dayton, but the other one continued to Huron County. Once it reached the Willard area, a large bag was thrown out of the plane in a wooded portion of New Haven Township.

The sheriff's office was notified about 8 p.m. Wednesday of the pack-

age being dumped.

Deputy Todd Wagner, Willard Police Detective Adam Strong and Assistant Chief Mark Holden found the bag and it held what appears to be five large packages of marijuana, according to the sheriff's office. The evidence will be sent for testing.

The exact weight of the packages was unknown, according to the sheriff's office. The suspect plane flew past Norwalk but turned around when it saw bad weather, McLaughlin said. It eventually landed at the Huron County Airport. "We don't know what the destination was at this point," Sheriff Dane Howard said.

Two police dogs that checked the plane indicated there were illegal substances inside, according to the sheriff's office.

Law enforcement personnel were planning to obtain a search warrant to conduct a more thorough search of the plane, said the sheriff's office.

Howard said he was unsure what happened with the other plane that landed in Dayton.

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Search warrant yields mushroom grow

Ashland County

On Monday, May 11th at 1208 hours, Ashland City Police Detectives, Ashland METRICH Narcotic Detectives and uniform officers executed a search warrant at 343 Sandusky Street reference to an investigation, which began in December of 2008.

The investigation revealed that the occupants of the residence were manufacturing and trafficking in drugs. A large amount of

evidence was seized from the residence relating to the manufacturing of Psilocybin Mushrooms, which is a Federal DEA Schedule I hallucinogenic controlled substance.

Evidence from all stages of the manufacturing process was recovered as part of the warrant, including the mushroom spore to the finished product, which was weighed and packaged to sell.

The street value of the finished product is approximately \$1,400.00 and the mushrooms that were currently growing, would have produced thousands of dollars of finished product.

Two suspects were named in this investigation however; no arrests were made at this time pending lab analysis and a Grand Jury Indictment.



Psilocybin is a hallucinogenic organic compound found in psilocybin mushrooms and is classified as a Schedule I drug. Psilocybin mushrooms are commonly referred to as "magic mushrooms" or "shrooms" and are indigenous to tropical and subtropical regions of the United States, Mexico and South America though they are also grown locally in specialty kits as shown above. The effects of psilocybin depend significantly on many variables including the type of mushroom, preservation, dosage, and physiology. Typical reactions involve hallucinatory effects including visual and auditory distortion. It is not uncommon to find psilocybin mixed with chocolate as a remedy for the potential nauseating effects of the drug. Retail level sales per unit dose within the METRICH region typically sell for approximately \$7-10, while retail level distribution of chocolate bars containing psilocybin within the METRICH region typically sell for \$25 per bar.

Woman found guilty of drug charges

Hancock County

A Findlay woman suspected by city police of running a crack house was convicted Tuesday of four felony charges stemming from a 2007 undercover drug investigation.

A Hancock County Common Pleas Court jury returned guilty verdicts against Rosemary A. Siefer, 48, 138 Harrington Ave., following a two-day trial. Siefer was found guilty of one count of trafficking in cocaine and three counts of possession of drugs. The most serious charge, which involved crack cocaine, is a first-degree felony. The other offenses are a third degree felony, a fourth-degree felony and a fifth-degree felony.

She will be sentenced by Judge Joseph Niemeyer on June 18 following a pre-sentence investigation.

Siefer had been indicted last July in connection with a Dec. 22, 2007 raid by the Hancock METRICH drug unit at the defendant's Harrington Avenue residence. According to court records, a large quantity of both powder and crack cocaine and Oxycodone, a narcotic pain reliever, were found in a safe seized during a search.

The trafficking offense involved a sale of between 1-5 grams of crack cocaine that Siefer made to a police informant the month before.

Testimony at the trial indicated Siefer got the attention of METRICH detectives after they re-

ceived tips in July 2007 from several neighbors that drug activity was taking place at her home.

Findlay police Det. Bob Francis, who testified Tuesday, said officers conducted surveillance of the residence after receiving those tips, and noted a lot of people in and out of Siefer's home — an indication that drugs were being sold there.

Francis testified that police later used an informant, who was able to make a sale of crack cocaine from the defendant. The informant, who also testified, indicated that there were surveillance cameras inside and outside Siefer's home at the time he went there to make the controlled buy in November 2007.

One of the cameras allowed Siefer to see who was coming to her home and another was trained on the safe where the drugs were later found, according to testimony.

Assistant County Prosecutor Alex Treece wrapped up the state's case Tuesday after Francis and the confidential informant testified. On Monday, Assistant County Prosecutor Drew Wortman had called another METRICH detective and a crime lab chemist to the witness stand. Defense attorney Andrew Schuman did not call any witnesses Tuesday. In his closing, Schuman suggested that Siefer allowed others to use the safe that was found in her bedroom, and that the illegal



The abuse and sale of cocaine and crack cocaine remain significant threats throughout the METRICH region.

drugs were not hers.

The seven-woman, five-man jury deliberated about two hours before returning the verdicts at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

Siefer, who has been held in the Hancock County jail since last fall, was returned there to await sentencing. She faces a maximum sentence of 17½ years.

Treece said Tuesday night the prosecutor's office would seek a "significant sentence" for Siefer, whose Harrington Avenue property was initially subject to forfeiture since it was a suspected crack house. He said the state is no longer seeking to seize the property, however, since two "suspicious" fires have occurred there since late 2007 and have diminished its value, and because there are liens on the home.

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Kenyon student charged with drug trafficking

Knox County

For the second time in less than six months, the Knox county Sheriff's department raided a Kenyon College residence and arrested one student on drug trafficking charges.

According to statement from Sheriff David Barber, detectives searched a student residence late Thursday. Robert E. Granville Jr. was arrested on two counts of

trafficking marijuana. He is being held in the Knox County Jail.

Barber said the 19-year-old Kalamazoo, Mich., man allegedly sold marijuana to an undercover deputy. Detectives seized marijuana, pills, drug paraphernalia and cash from the residence.

In December, two Kenyon students and three Muskingham College students were arrested on

drug charges.

The raid was the result of Knox County Sheriff's Department, part of METRICH's 10-county enforcement unit, joining forces with the Kenyon College Office of Security and Safety.

Originally published in the News Journal on April 28, 2009.

Five more arrested on drug-related charges

Wyandot County

Five more people have been arrested on felony drug charges as a result of an ongoing investigation by the Wyandot County Sheriff's Office and the METRICH Drug Task Force.

Arrested were Becky L. Roberts, Derek J. Wallace, Jonathan S. Weatherholtz Jr. and Rebecca S White, all of Upper Sandusky; and Keith A. Elliott, Findlay.

Nine other people from the area were arrested Wednesday evening and Thursday morning on similar charges.

Roberts, 25, 320 D Indian Mill Dr., Uppers Sandusky, was charged with trafficking in drugs, a third-degree felony, with juvenile and criminal forfeiture specifications for allegedly selling or offering to sell Alprazolam, a Schedule IV controlled substance; and a fourth-degree felony for allegedly selling or offering Oxycodone, a Schedule II controlled substance, in an amount less than

the bulk amount.

Wallace, 19, 975 E. Wyandot Ave., Upper Sandusky, was charged with two counts of trafficking drugs, both third-degree felonies, with a criminal forfeiture specification, for allegedly selling or offering to sell heroin, a Schedule I controlled substance, in an amount less than 10 unit doses and less than 1 gram. The second count charges him with selling or offering to sell heroin in an amount equal to or exceeding 10 unit doses or equal to or exceeding 1 gram but less than 5 grams.

Weatherholtz, 21, 220 Orchard Drive, Apt. 1, Upper Sandusky, was charged with two counts of trafficking drugs, both third-degree felonies, with school and criminal forfeiture specifications. He allegedly sold or offered to sell Oxycodone, a Schedule II controlled substance, in an amount less than the bulk amount.

White, 42, 420 Indian Mill

Drive, Apt. C, was charged with two counts of trafficking in drugs, both fifth-degree felonies, with a criminal forfeiture specification for allegedly offering to sell Alprazolam, a Schedule IV controlled substance, in an amount less than the bulk amount.

Elliott, 45, 527 W. Sandusky St., Findlay, was charged with trafficking in drugs, a fourth-degree felony, with a criminal forfeiture specification for allegedly selling or offering to sell Oxycodone, a Schedule II controlled substance, in an amount less than the bulk amount.

Wyandot county Sheriff Mike Hetzel previously had said the Upper Sandusky and Carey police departments assisted with the investigation.

Originally published in the Daily Chief Union on May 1, 2009.

Local heroin trade has Columbus ties

Richland County

A heroin pipeline runs from Columbus to Richland County. METRICH Enforcement Unit Commander Lt. Dino Sgambellone estimates 90 percent of the local heroin supply comes from the state capital.

"Our heroin problem is a direct result of individuals obtaining the drug from Columbus," Sgambellone said.

The heroin connection has led to a partnership with Columbus Narcotics, which has more manpower and resources than the 10-county regional task force. Joint investigations have resulted in the confiscation of 150 grams of heroin -- with a street value of more than \$100,000 -- destined for Richland and surrounding counties.

"We are seeing more heroin in Columbus than any of the other drugs," said Sgt. Bill Mingus of Columbus Narcotics.

The reasons extend beyond Ohio.

"Heroin is easier for the traffickers to get through," Mingus

said. "In source countries for cocaine, it may be little tougher to get across the borders." Sgambellone said there's been a dramatic local increase in the use and trafficking of heroin.

"Along with that, we've seen an increase in diverted pharmaceutical drugs," the lieutenant said. "We're seeing people follow that same path from abuse of pharmaceuticals to heroin. For the addict, it (heroin) becomes easier to get."

Sgambellone said local residents who go to Columbus for heroin often sell what they don't use. He said a balloon of heroin that goes for \$10 in Columbus sells here for \$40.

"From an interdiction standpoint, it requires different strategies from law enforcement," Sgambellone said. "With crack cocaine, you may have an individual running a distribution network, and he might have three or four houses in the city he's selling crack from. You know where it's being sold.



Heroin wrapped in foil and raw heroin that had yet to be packaged.

"Most of the time, you know who's selling it. It's easier to interrupt the distribution because it's more localized."

Heroin is another story.

"With heroin, the mid- and upper-level dealers are in Columbus," Sgambellone said. "(Locally) it's principally users that are selling what's left over from their trip in order to reup. It's an endless cycle."

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More than 100 marijuana plants seized

Hancock County

Detectives seized 101 marijuana plants from a rural Hancock County residence Thursday, the Hancock County METRICH drug unit reported Friday.

After obtaining a search warrant, detectives went to the residence at 3456 Ohio 12, north of Rawson. They noticed a person planting marijuana plants in a corn field behind the residence,

according to the drug unit.

Detectives searched the residence and located a "soil-based marijuana grow operation inside," the drug unit said.

They seized 101 marijuana plants, "numerous" items of drug paraphernalia and criminal tools, according to the unit.

Ryan Pina, 25, was arrested on two outstanding warrants from

Findlay Municipal Court and Hancock County Juvenile Court, the drug unit said.

Criminal charges of cultivating marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession of criminal tools are pending, according to the drug unit.

Originally published in the Courier on June 20, 2009.

Search warrant yields guns and drugs

Marion County

On May 21, 2009 at 2:14pm the MARMET-METRICH Drug Task Force conducted a search warrant at 471 Smith Street in Marion, Ohio. The search warrant concluded a drug investigation involving this residence and subjects residing at this residence.

Adam J. White of 132 East Columbia Street was arrested for possession of heroin, a fifth degree felony and possession of drug paraphernalia a fourth degree misdemeanor.

Ryan K. Nelson of 471 Smith Street was arrested for trafficking heroin a fourth degree felony, possession of heroin a fifth degree

felony, having weapons under disability a third degree felony, and two counts of child endangering both first degree misdemeanors.

Roger L. Lark of 471 Smith Street was arrested for permitting drug abuse a fifth degree felony.

White, Nelson, and Lark were all transported to the Multi County Correctional Center. A female residing at the residence was questioned and released and charges of possession of heroin a fifth degree felony, trafficking heroin a fourth degree felony and two counts of child endangering both first degree misdemeanors

will be forwarded to the prosecutor's office on the female resident.

Through the search detectives located approximately \$1800 in cash, two stolen semiautomatic handguns, 2.4 grams of marijuana with a street value of \$50.00 and 33 balloons of heroin with a street value of \$1000.00. Marion County Children Services also responded to the residence due to two children ages 7 and 4 being at the residence. The two handguns were found to be stolen out of a burglary in Marion City and a burglary in Marion County. The investigation regarding the handguns continues.

2 arrested by WCSO in search warrant execution

Wyandot County

The Wyandot County Sheriff's Office seized many drug-related items, as well as stolen property, after it executed a search warrant at 16753 Cherokee Street, Harpster, on Monday night.

The WCSO reportedly discovered a marijuana growing operation and stolen property at the

residence.

Benjamin M. Gamble was arrested on undisclosed charges and a juvenile, Dylan S. Hill, no address given, was arrested for underage consumption.

The WCSO, a member of the METRICH drug task force, seized many items including a firearm,

17 marijuana plants, various cultivation items, 14 street signs, street barricade items, ATVs and snowmobiles with license plates removed or attempts to be removed and various other items.

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Thirty-three balloons of heroin seized

Marion County

On May 4, 2009, MARMET-METRICH Drug Task Force conducted a traffic stop at Barnhart Street and Garfield Avenue as a result of a drug investigation. Detectives stopped a 1997 Plymouth Voyager and two of the passengers were arrested and taken to the Multi-County Correctional

Center.

Sarah and Shane Morgan of 914 Gebhart Street, were arrested on felony charges of possession of heroin.

The driver of the vehicle, Logan Newell and another passenger, Angela Ballard, both of 418 Cherry Street, will have fel-

ony possession of heroin charges forwarded to the prosecutor's office.

Detectives seized a total of thirty-three balloons of heroin as a result of the investigation. The heroin has a street value of one thousand three hundred and thirty dollars.

Horticulture program receives donation

Knox County

The Knox County Career Center Board of Education on Tuesday accepted a substantial donation from the Knox County Sheriff's Office in the form of equipment and materials to the horticulture program. The items were seized by the Knox County Sheriff's Office/METRICH Enforcement Unit and are part of its "Weed and Seed" strategy in Knox County.

Weed and Seed is a philosophy the KCSO uses in regard to indoor marijuana grows, drug houses and clandestine meth labs, Sheriff David Barber said. The weed part of the strategy, he explained, is to weed out the problem, as evidenced by the closing of five major growing operations last year. The seeding part of the concept is to do something positive as a result. For instance, with mandatory drug fines and asset seizure and sale, a portion of that money goes toward the DARE program.

"Out of those five indoor grows," Barber said, "the department had a ton of paraphernalia. The detectives came up with the idea of contacting [horticulture instructor] Craig [Campbell]. Besides not having to worry about what the tubing, fertilizer and halogen lights will be used for, we thought this would be the perfect opportunity to employ the Weed and Seed strategy to see something positive happen. What better gift could we give to the future of the county, the kids?"

Campbell said he is very pleased with the largesse, which

is estimated to equal about \$28,000 worth of materials. He said the items included about 30 grow lights, 300 one-gallon pots, plant food and additives.

"The fertilizers are top-quality products that we probably would never buy here because of budget constraints," he said. "You will see the results in more productive and brighter blooms in the petunias which surround the driveways and in the Children's Garden.

"The three complete hydroponics systems we received will probably be of the most use to us," Campbell said. "We got pumps, grow lights, pots, tubing, growing medium, meters and every possible nutrient and additive that you could ever need."

Campbell said the career center can only use some of the grow lights, so, with the sheriff's permission, he will be contacting other career centers in the state to share the grow lights with them.

Janet Hawk of Danville and Bill Blaschke of Windy Hill Nursery have volunteered to help get the hydroponics system up and running. Campbell plans to install the system in one of the greenhouses on the campus, and hopes to grow tomatoes and cucumbers for use in the cafeteria, generating a source of fresh vegetables all winter long.

Regarding personnel, the board advanced Vicki Clark and Elaine Robinson on the salary schedule due to completion of the necessary requirements. Caleb Ryan, an auto technology student, was hired as a summer maintenance worker.



Knox county Career Center's horticultural program was the beneficiary of recent marijuana raids by the Knox County Sheriff's Office. Confiscated items were donated to the KCCC.

Lynn Porman was hired as a science instructor and Cindy Strauser as a teacher aide for the 2009-10 school year.

The board also made adjustments to nursing program contracts, added to the adult course offerings and instructor lists, and hired Adult Basic & Literacy program personnel, to be paid through ABLE grant money.

Besides approving routine monthly and annual fiscal year financial actions, the board approved property, fleet and liability insurance through the Ohio School Plan. It also approved a memorandum of understanding for the locally funded initiatives portion of the building project. Those include heating and cooling, electrical, technology, windows and door hardware for the board offices and preschool.

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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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