

CIRCUIT ATTORNEY'S COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



Our Mission: To Pursue Justice for All Citizens Within the Highest Standards of Ethical Behavior and Professionalism

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Help Combat Crimes

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

MESSAGE FROM JENNIFER M. JOYCE

As Circuit Attorney, I am committed to helping defend our children's childhood. These youngest members of our City need homes and neighborhoods free of violence. The streets they play on must be safe. They deserve parents that honor their legal obligations to support them to the best of their ability.

The Circuit Attorney's Office works to protect children in many ways. Our Victim Services Unit provides counseling, advocacy and resources to children and their families. The Sex Crimes, Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Units prosecute offenders who abuse or threaten children. These attorneys partner with special units in the

St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, several community organizations, local children's hospitals, and the Department of Social Services to assist child victims and witnesses of abuse or violence. Sex offenders' accountability is important to keeping our children safe. One Assistant Circuit Attorney is dedicated to reviewing cases involving a sex offender's failure to follow registration requirements. The staff of the Child Support Unit work tirelessly to ensure that the children of St. Louis receive adequate support.

Children face challenges unheard of in years past. Some witness acts of violence in their schools. Others grow up without

basic human needs. When a child is exposed to violence or lacks fundamental life resources, he or she has a much higher risk of future involvement with the adult criminal justice system. By using our resources and partnering with the community, the Circuit Attorney's Office is dedicated to protecting childhood.



Jennifer M. Joyce
Circuit Attorney

CHILDREN IN THE COURTS

Unfortunately, children are often victims or witnesses to crime in the City of St. Louis. Sometimes, they are the only witness to a crime. At the CAO, we know that any victim of crime, regardless of their years on this Earth, deserves that their attacker gets their day in court.

Our attorneys work hard to give this special class of victims access to the

justice system. Cases involving children can present challenges. Jurors and society must know that the word of a child victim is the same under the law as the word of an adult victim. Criminals forget children; hoping people won't believe the "word of a child." Thankfully, these criminals are wrong - both legally and practically. Jurors and judges regularly convict based on

the word of a child. The counselors, caseworkers and advocates in Victim Services help children handle the difficulties of getting ready for court.

Another issue unique to either sex or abuse cases involving a child is that often there is no physical evidence of the abuse by the time the case reaches court. ACA's explain to jurors and judges that
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From the Courtroom

Central Patrol

Prior and persistent offender **Terrance Smith** was recently sentenced to 12 years MDC thanks to the work of ACA Christina Sondermann and Investigator Bob Ehrhard. While fleeing from Richmond Heights police, Smith ran a red light and crashed his car into another vehicle. The vehicle's driver and passenger were both injured. Smith plead guilty to two counts of Assault 2nd and one count Resisting Arrest in front of Judge McCullin in Division 20 on January 25.

North Patrol

Persistent offender **Yancy White** can no longer steal from our City's residents thanks to the work of ACA Erin Granger and Investigator Terri Vitale. White, who has an extensive record in Illinois, moved his criminal trade to St. Louis with a string of three robberies on February 3rd and 5th of last year. In all three incidents, White was either described as or caught on tape wearing a black puffy jacket. In court, White tried on the jacket – that he claimed was not his – and it fit. He was convicted of three counts of Robbery 1st and three counts of Armed Criminal Action. He was sentenced to 16 years MDC on February 25 by Judge Grady in Div. 21.

South Patrol

On July 17, 2009, **Nicholas Sahn** was arrested while attempting to burglarize a residence on Minnesota. An offender with a record that includes 12 felony convictions, Sahn was on probation for 7 different stealing-related offenses at the time of his arrest. Upon arrest, Sahn admitted to an earlier burglary in the 1st District. Due to the hard work of ACA Christina Sondermann and Investigator Bob Ehrhard, Sahn was convicted of one count Attempted Burglary 1st, one count Burglary 2nd and one count of Property Damage 1st. He was sentenced on December 17, 2010 to 14 years MDC by Judge Forder.

CHILDREN IN THE COURTS

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because of the nature of abuse, often a child is healed long before the abuse is discovered.

While the “obvious” victim of domestic violence is the abused man or woman, the hidden victims are the children in the home. Studies have shown that witnessing domestic violence negatively impacts a child's future. Boys are more likely to become abusers themselves while girls have a higher chance of entering abusive relationships.

Headed by ACA Christine Krug, the Sex Crimes, Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Units diligently make sure that any child who is abused or witnesses domestic violence is not traumatized by their experience with our Office or other law enforcement officials. Prosecutors handle a case from start to finish in order to remain a point of contact for victims.

To prevent a child from the pain of telling what happened repeatedly, the unit works with the Children's Advocacy Center. Here, a child explains their situa-

tion once so they don't have to repeat it. An attorney from our office is always present, along with representatives from the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, Family Court, medical professionals, the Children's Division and any other organization that might be involved with the case. As Krug puts it, the dedication of her team comes from their desire to aid the victims. According to Krug, “We can't fix what happened. But we can help to protect that child or adult from future harm from the same person.”

AIDING CHILDREN, REIMBURSING TAXPAYERS

The CAO's Child Support Unit

Over the years, taxpayers have been left with the cost of supporting innocent children whose parents will not provide them with basic human needs. The start of a child support program at the federal level was meant to pay back the citizens whose tax money went to welfare benefits given to families with an unemployed head of the household. Most of the time, this meant that the father was absent. Today, we don't distinguish

whether the mother or father is absent but we do focus on providing support for children. Time and again has shown that the more financial support comes into a household, the better educated a child will be, and the more capable of being a better contributor to our community as a whole.

In order to have a parent pay child support, a mother or father must first open up a case with the Missouri Family Support Division. There, the division works

to get an Order of Paternity, which establishes that someone is legally the child's parent. Our office's Child Support Unit handles cases in which it has been particularly difficult to get a delinquent parent to pay back the state for welfare and/or the child's guardian for support.

The Child Support Unit seized an incredible \$27,844.31 in drug money in 2010. They have already seized \$10,859 in 2011. That's money taken out of the hands of drug dealers and given to needy families.

HOLDING SEX OFFENDERS ACCOUNTABLE

Working to see that sex offenders are registering and compliant with notification laws is important to ensuring communities are aware of the presence of, and restrictions on, convicted sex offenders. Such knowledge and information are key tools for our community to use in

protecting our children. Last year, our office charged 18 cases involving convicted criminals accused of failing to comply with sex offender registration requirements. One Assistant Circuit Attorney, supervised closely by our Chief Warrant Officer, is solely dedicated to reviewing these cases and holding these criminals

accountable.

Sex offenders in the state of Missouri must register within three days of their conviction, release from prison or placement on probation. Failure to register is a felony. A third conviction on this charge can land an offender in prison from 10-30 years.

THE CAO CRIME FILES

On January 11, 1991, 11-year-old Elissa Self-Braun left her house to walk to school in South St. Louis. Her 13-year-old sister, leaving later, found Elissa's umbrella on the way to the bus stop and assumed she had unintentionally dropped it.

At 9 a.m., the girls' mother received a call from Elissa's school saying she had never made it in. Immediately, her parents began to search their neighborhood and called the police to report her as missing. Despite a near-constant search and interviews with numerous acquaintances, police could not turn up any leads.

On January 15, two people walking along the bank of the St. Francis River near the Black Bridge found a young female's body that matched the description in Elissa's

missing person file. Upon investigation of the area, officers noted that a large boulder in the parking area nearby had been hit by a car and moved out of place.

In February, police ran across the profile of Martin Link while researching sex offenders who lived in the vicinity of Elissa's neighborhood. Police discovered he used to live near Black Bridge and, according to friends, knew the area "like the back of his hand."

Link was in prison for an attempted robbery in Kirkwood. The stolen car he was driving at the time had a brand new exhaust that the owners had not purchased. Employees at the repair shop where Link had taken the car reported that it was covered in red clay – commonly found on the banks of the St. Francis River – and had

body damage indicative of hitting a large object.

Link was taken into custody by St. Louis Police on August 21, 1991. He had also attacked a 20-year-old woman in South St. Louis. After holding her at knife point, committing sodomy and attempting to rape her, Link ordered her in his car but the victim jumped out at a stop sign. Link was charged with Murder 1st, Forcible Rape, two counts of Kidnapping, Attempted Rape, Sodomy, Robbery 1st and three counts of Armed Criminal Action. He was found guilty on all counts and sentenced to death for Elissa's murder – in addition to sentences of life and 30 years for his other crimes against Elissa and the young woman. Link was executed February 9, 2011.

The research for this article was contributed by CAO staff member Katie Barbeau.

Martin Link

From the Courtroom

Central Patrol

A sex offender no longer walks our City streets thanks to the work of [ACA Beth Orwick](#) and [Investigator Bob Ehrhard](#). In September 2009, **Christopher Ivory** followed a young teenager on her way home. As the girl walked past the Loop area, Ivory overcame her on the street and attempted to rape her. After neighbors responded to her cries for help, Ivory fled the scene. Though he defended himself in court this December, Ivory was ultimately found guilty of Attempting Forcible Rape, Kidnapping and Stealing. He was sentenced on January 14 to 52 years MDC by Judge Riley in Division 7.

North Patrol

Prior and persistent convicted offender **Terrance Battley** was recently convicted of Burglary 2nd, Resisting Arrest, Stealing under \$500 and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. On April 5th of last year, Battley broke into a former landlord's residence in the Wells/Good-fellow neighborhood. Vigilant neighbors saw Battley leave the scene and called police. Two even followed him and were later able to point him out to police. He was quickly arrested with a stolen television's remote in one pocket and a crack pipe in the other. Battley was successfully prosecuted by [ACA Jason Steinmeyer](#) with the help of [Investigator John Moss](#). He was sentenced on January 13 to 12 years MDC by Judge Garvey in Division 3.

South Patrol

Dustin Ward was successfully brought to justice by [ACA Jason Steinmeyer](#) and [Investigator John Moss](#) in January. Previously convicted of such charges as DUI and Stealing, Ward hit an off-duty city police officer over the head with a beer bottle at a local sports bar. Ward was convicted of Assault 2nd and Armed Criminal Action and sentenced January 13 to 7 years MDC by Judge Riley in Division 7.

POLICE OFFICER OF THE QUARTER

Detective Kara Roberts

We are pleased to announce that the Winter 2011 Police Officer of the Quarter is **Detective Kara Roberts**.

ACA Christine Krug first noticed Roberts' standout abilities when the current detective was a probationary officer working on a child abuse case. According to Krug, Roberts "handled the arrest well, wrote a great report, remembered the case when we were preparing for trial and did a great job testifying." As head of our Sex Crimes, Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Units,

Krug was "thrilled" when Roberts was assigned to the DART Unit, which works regularly with her team.

Officers of the DART Unit like Roberts face unique challenges. Detectives who work days often handle the warrant applications for detectives who worked the night before. According to Krug, Roberts shows up as prepared for others' warrant applications as she is for her own warrant applications. She also has no qualms tying up loose ends in a co-worker's investigation

and "is seen as a go-to detective for domestic violence cases."

ACA Cynthia Copeland recalls Roberts going out of her way for cases to the extent of picking up, on numerous occasions, victims and witnesses who did not have transportation. Copeland relates that she is always prepared for grand jury and is a "joy to work with."

The CAO is grateful to work with officers such as Detective Roberts. Her cooperation and skills are an invaluable asset to our pursuit of justice.

Circuit Attorney's Office
 Mel Carnahan Courthouse
 1114 Market Street
 St. Louis, MO
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OFFICE INFORMATION AND IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

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



Mel Carnahan Courthouse

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

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Jennifer M. Joyce,
 Circuit Attorney

Fire, Police & Ambulance -----	911
Victim Services -----	(314) 622-4373
Child Abuse Hotline -----	1-800-392-3738
Circuit Clerk -----	(314) 622-3728
Orders of Protection/Adult Abuse Hotline -----	(314) 622-4434
City Hall -----	(314) 622-4000
Sexual Abuse Response Team (SART) -----	(314) 531-7273
Neighborhood Stabilization Office -----	(314) 657-1392
Fraud Assistance Line -----	(314) 612-1412