

# InForce

A quarterly publication of the Berks County Sheriff's Department

visit us at [www.CountyofBerks.com/Sheriff](http://www.CountyofBerks.com/Sheriff)

Spring 2012



"Making a Difference"

## A Message from Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht

As your sheriff I feel that it is very important to communicate with the citizens of Berks County. That is why I have started the Berks County Sheriff's Department newsletter called "InForce".

This quarterly publication will focus on the Berks County Sheriff's Department, its employees and the law enforcement job we do each and every day.

We will keep you informed on our fight to "Keep Berks Safe" by featuring wanted persons and ask for your tips to help us do our job.

We offer safety tips for all ages and "Kid Corner" for games and children safety tips.

We will be answering your questions in the "Ask the Sheriff" portion where we encourage you to interact with us via email to get your questions answered about the BCSD. These questions will be answered in future publications of the newsletter. Please email your questions to [Sheriff@CountyofBerks.com](mailto:Sheriff@CountyofBerks.com)

We will be listing a calendar of events that are offered by the BCSD and invite the community to join us at these events. We will keep you updated on the Berks County Sheriff's Department Explorer Post # 27 and feature the "Explorer of the Quarter". This newsletter is just another example of how the Berks County Sheriff's Department is Making a Difference for the citizens of Berks County.

### About The Department

The Berks County Sheriff's Department is the second largest law enforcement agency in Berks County second only to the Reading Police Department. With a staff of over 100 employees we offer services ranging from enforcing the vehicle code and crimes code, to licensing firearms dealers and issuing Pa License to Carry Permits.

The department service area not only includes all of Berks County but is often required to travel the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the entire United States. The department services tens of thousands of civil customers in the county and handles over 15,000 criminal defendants each year. The Sheriff's Department is organized into 5 Divisions: Civil, Court, Patrol, Central Booking and Warrants.



## Features



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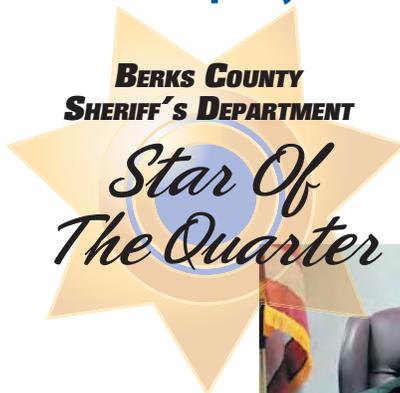
## John Stanton Named Chief Deputy

Chief Deputy John Stanton graduated from Lackawanna College Police Academy in 1992. He worked as a Police Officer for Pine Grove Police Department from 1992-2001. Chief Stanton joined the Berks County Sheriff's Department in 2001 and was assigned to the Court Division. He later transferred to the Services Division where he was assigned to personal property levies and real estate evictions. He then transferred to the Central Booking Center as a Deputy and later as the D Platoon Sergeant.

Chief Stanton was promoted to Assistant Chief by the previous Sheriff, Sheriff Jozwiak and completed assignments in the Services and Court Divisions.

Upon Sheriff Weaknecht's election and reorganization of the department he changed the Assistant Chiefs to the rank of Captains. Chief Stanton then served as Captain of the Patrol and Central Booking Divisions.

In January 2012 Sheriff Weaknecht named Captain Stanton his Chief Deputy. Chief Stanton supervises the department's budget, purchasing as well as it's 110 full time employees.



Chief Deputy John Stanton

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# Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht Starts His Second Term

Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht was sworn into office for his second four year term on December 30, 2011. The ceremony was held in Courtroom 5A of the Berks County Courthouse. Sheriff Weaknecht's family and supporters were in the courtroom as well as several members of the BCSD.

The Berks County Sheriff's Department Honor Guard was there to present the colors at the start of the service.

Sheriff Weaknecht's wife Jessica and step daughter Emily held the bible during the oath of office that was administered by The Honorable Judge Mary Ann Ullman, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas.



## Also receiving their oaths were:

Commissioner Mark Scott, Recorder of Deeds Fred Scheeler, Controller Sandy Graffius, Clerk of Courts James P. Troutman, Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt, Register of Wills Larry Medaglia, Commissioner Christian Leinbach and District Attorney John Adams.

This is the same team of Row Officers that were elected and sworn into office in 2007 and all will continue to work together for the citizens of Berks County.

# Berks County Sheriff's Department Was Busy for the Holidays

Sheriff Weaknecht and his staff gave back this holiday season by volunteering their time to spread some holiday cheer. The Sheriff himself and his deputies teamed up with Berks Encore to hand wrap gifts at the Berkshire Mall. They may not have been "gifted" at wrapping gifts but they are passionate about making a difference in the lives of our Berks County Seniors.

The Berks County Sheriff's Department staff also participated in the "Shop With a Cop" program initiated by Crime Alert and Albert Boscov. Twenty deserving children were chosen from the surrounding school districts to spend \$100.00 on their families this Christmas. Children were escorted throughout Boscov's Department store by BCSD Deputies and local police, which certainly helped to create a positive experience that will last a lifetime.

Lastly, in an effort to make sure that the needy and less fortunate residents of Berks County had gifts this holiday season, the Berks County Employees participated in the Salvation Army Gift Drive. They all enjoyed the feeling of "giving back" and look forward to participating in these and other worthwhile events next year. The gifts were delivered by the BCSD.



# Berks County Sheriff Explorer Post 027



Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht has started an explorer post for young adults that are interested in a law enforcement career. This post will teach the explorers what it takes to be a law enforcement officer by offering hands on training and experience. The explorers will learn about the BCSD as well as other law enforcement agencies including the US Marshal's Office, Pennsylvania State Police, Berks County District Attorney's Office, Berks County Jail System, State and County Parole and Juvenile Probation Office just to name a few.

Explorers are between the ages of 14 and 20 years old and come from all areas of the county. The explorers will also play a key role in the BCSD by assisting in outreach programs and representing the department at events and competitions.

Berks County Sheriff's Department Explorer Post 027 is named after Berks County Deputy Sheriff Kyle Pagerly who was killed in the line of duty on June 29, 2011 while serving a felony warrant in Northern Berks County. Deputy Pagerly was enrolled to assist in starting the post prior to his death. Kyle's badge number was 027 which has been retired and will be the post number in his honor.

This new program is run by department members who volunteer their time as well as civilian volunteers. For more information about the post please visit our website at [CountyofBerks.com/Sheriff](http://CountyofBerks.com/Sheriff).

Any young adults interested in becoming a BCSD Explorer please send an email to [Sheriff@CountyofBerks.com](mailto:Sheriff@CountyofBerks.com) or call 610-478-6240 ext. 3262 for more information.

My name is Bonnie Jane Clark and I'm 16 years old. I am a sophomore at Oley Valley High School. My family and friends mean everything to me. My mom is my number one hero. She's the reason I am who I am today. I plan on attending a 4-year college to major in Forensics and Criminal Justice. My passion has always been for law enforcement. My goal is to work for a Forensic unit or for the FBI. I will do anything to reach my goals. I am on the OVHS girls volleyball team as a right DS (defense specialist), a guard on the girls basketball team but I took a season off due to personal reasons, I cheer for the OVHS winter cheer squad as a flyer and a base, I also run track for the lady lynx.

I came across the Explorers Post by a survey that I took in school. The survey was mostly about our future and what our interests were. The survey also asked the student body if we were interested in going to a college after graduation. I answered everything regarding the law enforcement field and the scientific field. I was contacted by the sheriff's department of Berks County to see if I was interested in their program.



Bonnie Jane Clark, Oley Valley High School

## Friends of the Berks County Sheriff K-9

In January of 2012, Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht created a non-profit K-9 organization called the "Friends of Berks County Sheriff K-9". The goal of the program is to help maintain and enhance the Berks County Sheriff K-9 unit and to provide education and awareness to the citizens of Berks County.

As the Friends of the Berks County Sheriff K-9 Association grows, we will expand our efforts to support the needs of the K-9's as well as make the public aware of the contributions and safety issues in the County of Berks where the K-9 teams will serve.

To join your friends and neighbors in supporting the Friends of the Berks County Sheriff's K-9 Association and to give back to these brave heroes who serve and protect the citizens of Berks County, simply go to [www.CountyofBerks.com/Sheriff](http://www.CountyofBerks.com/Sheriff) and become a member by choosing one of the following:

- Silver member: \$25.00 + ID Card / Newsletter
- Gold member: \$100.00 + ID Card / Newsletter / Patch / 1 Polo Shirt / 2 Tickets to Summer Picnic at the Kyle D. Pagerly K-9 training facility in Berks
- Corporate / Platinum member: \$1000.00 + Company or Business ID Card / Newsletter / 5 Patches / 5 Polo Shirts / 5 Tickets to Summer Picnic at the Kyle D. Pagerly K-9 training facility in Berks / K-9 Meet and Greet at your place of business or organization



# Foreclosure Diversion Program In Berks

With residential foreclosures still a major concern in Pennsylvania and more specifically, in Berks County, Sheriff Weaknecht assigned his Real Estate Administrator, Jennifer De Frees, to be a part of a Taskforce established by the Berks County Bar Association. This taskforce's primary objective was to develop a program similar to those in surrounding counties in Pennsylvania that would help financially distressed homeowners find a possible solution to losing their homes.

The team of Judges, lawyers, court professionals, and counselors worked together for months to come up with a program for Berks County. If homeowners opt into the program, the homeowner will meet with an assigned housing counselor and explore viable alternatives to avoid foreclosure. The goal was to put the lender and homeowners in a situation that will allow them to achieve mutually agreeable resolutions to foreclosure.

## How the program works:

- A distressed homeowner will receive a "Foreclosure Complaint and Urgent Notice". It is the sole responsibility of the homeowner to contact a housing counselor within ten (10) days of receiving this notification.
- If proper documentation is provided, a Conciliation Conference will be held with a non-biased Conciliator. The Conciliator's role is to make sure the rules of the program are followed and that the parties involved communicate and find a suitable agreement for all parties involved.
- The scheduling of the Conference will postpone the Sheriff Sale until the outcome of the scheduled Conference.

Since the program's kick-off on January 1, 2012, there have been over 40 homeowners entered into the program. There are too few statistics to prove as to whether or not the Foreclosure Diversion Program will be a success but at the very least it will certainly open the lines of communication with the lender and homeowner which is key to finding a mutual agreement and ultimately avoid foreclosure.

# Berks County Sheriff's Department Blood Drive

On November 29, 2011 the Berks County Sheriff's Department held a blood drive to help one of our own in need, in which 34 individuals registered to give blood, as well as their time. According to the blood bank, this drive helped to save sixty nine lives! With this, we would like to give a big THANK YOU shout out to all who participated in making this blood drive a success!

It is the generosity of the citizens of Berks County toward causes like this that make me proud to be the Sheriff of Berks County. Striving together to keep Berks County and its citizens safe AND healthy!



# BCSD Community Outreach Program

Sheriff Weaknecht along with members of the BCSD Firearms Licensing Unit conducted "Your Second Amendment & Concealed Carry Rights" seminar at Cabela's on February 11th and 12th.

This highly informative and interactive seminar is about your Second Amendment and concealed carry rights and covers a variety of topics including your gun rights inside and outside of the home, where you can and cannot conceal carry and the importance of gun safety. Sheriff Weaknecht and staff also are available to answer your questions.

Cabela's is a strong supporter of the BCSD and hosts these events several times per year as part of their NRA Weekend. For seminar dates and times please visit our department website at [www.CountyofBerks.com/Sheriff](http://www.CountyofBerks.com/Sheriff).

These seminars are free to the public and are offered as part of the BCSD Public Service Programs. If your organization would like to host a seminar please call the BCSD at (610) 478-6240 ext. 3262.

# BCSD New Vehicle Design

The BCSD will be sporting a new patrol car design. The new colors and design are on the streets and are part of a fuel savings initiative started by Sheriff Weaknecht last year. We are going green. Sheriff Weaknecht made the decision to add the Ford Fusion after hearing positive reviews from the New York City Police Department. The goal is to eliminate the 8 cylinder vehicles, in most cases, with more fuel efficient 4 and 6 cylinder models.

These vehicles are not only less expensive to operate but also less expensive to purchase. This is just one more example of the BCSD working hard to save your tax dollars.



# Safety Tips

## Bike Safety For Kids

Always ride your bike on the sidewalk or use bike trails. When there is no sidewalk or bike trail available follow these rules when riding on the street.

### When riding on the street:

- Use HAND signals.
- Obey traffic signs.
- Keep in one row when riding in a group.
- Keep to the right of the street.
- Walk across busy streets; stay off busy streets if you do not have to use them.
- Slow down and check traffic at all corners.
- Always let cars and people go first.
- Always wear a helmet.

### Things not to do when riding your bicycle:

- Never go in and out of traffic.
- Never go in between two cars.

### Bicycle Helmets

- All bicycle helmets should have a sticker that says it meets standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).
- Make sure all helmet straps are fastened; the helmet should fit you properly.
- The bicycle helmet should be worn level and cover your forehead.
- Never wear a hat under your bicycle helmet.
- If your helmet becomes damaged, replace it with a new helmet.

### Traffic

- When a Police Officer is directing traffic, go to the corner where the Police Officer is and wait until that Officer tells you it is OK to cross the street.
- When crossing the street, always cross inside the crosswalk. When there is no cross walk, cross at the corner. DO NOT cross in between cars.

## Safety Tips for Travelers

When you're traveling for business or pleasure, make sure you remember these safety tips provided by the American Hotel and Motel Association:

- Don't answer the door in a hotel or motel room without first verifying the identity of the person at the door. If the person claims to be an employee, call the front desk and ask if someone from their staff is supposed to have access to your room and for what purpose.
- When returning to your hotel or motel late in the evening, use the main entrance of the hotel. Be observant and look around before entering parking lots.
- Close the door securely whenever you are in your room and use all of the locking devices provided.
- Don't needlessly display guest room keys in public or carelessly leave them on restaurant tables, at the swimming pool, or other places where they can be easily stolen.
- Do not draw attention to yourself by displaying large amounts of cash or expensive jewelry.
- Don't invite strangers to your room.
- Place all valuables in the hotel or motel's safe deposit box.
- Do not leave valuables in your vehicle.
- Check to see that any sliding glass doors or windows and any connecting room doors are locked.
- If you see any suspicious activity, please report your observations to the management.
- Discretely carry a map and be familiar with the area you are visiting. Plan trips in advance.
- Don't leave purses or pocketbooks on the back of a chair when dining out; keep them in your lap and in sight.
- Keep your wallet in the front pocket of pants or a jacket pocket, not in the rear pocket.

# Most Wanted



## "BCSD Wanted" is now on Berks Community Television (BCTV) and Land Display Billboards

The Berks County Sheriff's Department is now listing Wanted Persons on BCTV. This service was started at the beginning of the year and has been a great way to get wanted persons information out to the community. We have already made several arrests from tips called in from the great citizens of Berks County who want to assist Sheriff Weaknecht's fight to "Keep Berks Safe".

Wanted persons are also shown on the Land Display electronic billboards throughout Berks County roadways. A special thanks to the Land Display company and all their employees for this great public service.

BCTV and Land Display are just two more outlets used by the BCSD to bring attention to these wanted persons so the good people of Berks County can assist with tips.

Wanted persons can also be found in the *Sunday Reading Eagle* newspaper, 69 News Berks edition, Comcast On-Demand, Facebook, Twitter and the weekly Merchandiser.

The BCSD also prints a Most Wanted publication which is distributed in the *Sunday Reading Eagle* two times per year. Look for our next publication on May 20, 2012 in the Sunday edition of the *Reading Eagle*.



**Trinidad Cruz**

5ft 9in 160lbs 6/25/1989 22yo  
LKA: 100 Block of Carpenter Street  
Reading **Wanted for:** Probation Violation. **Original charges:** Statutory sexual assault.



**Walter Ortiz Jr.**

5ft 6in 150lbs 10/12/1987 24yo  
LKA: 100 Block of N 10th Street  
Reading **Wanted for:** Probation violation and bench warrant. **Original charges:** Simple assault and Firearms not to be carried without a license.



**Fernando Medina-Colon**

5ft 7in 150lbs 7/25/1981 30yo  
LKA: 1300 Block of Church Street  
Reading **Wanted for:** Possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance.



**Omar Caraballo**

5ft 10in 195lbs 8/26/1983 28yo  
LKA: 300 Block of Lackawanna Street Reading **Wanted for:** Robbery.



**Julio Ortiz Jr.**

5ft 6in 220lbs  
10/28/1987 24yo  
LKA: 900 Block of Rose Street  
Reading **Wanted for:** Criminal attempt to commit homicide & aggravated assault.

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## BCSD Sports

December 2nd was the second annual Berks County Sheriff Night at the Reading Royals. The BCSD Honor Guard started the evening by presenting the colors and Sheriff Weaknecht dropped the puck to start the game.

Members of the Royals team wore specialty designed Berks County Sheriff Department helmets that were auctioned after the game.

Although the Royals lost the game to the Wheeling Nailers it was a great success for the BCSD as proceeds from tickets sales and the helmet auction benefited the BCSD Honor Guard and K9 fund.

Plans are being made for the third annual event to be held early next year. Details will follow in a future publication of this newsletter.

## Additional Honor Guard Dates

Sinking Spring Honorfest - 5/5/2012

Event to be held at the St. Johns Lutheran Church to honor Deputy Kyle D. Pagerly and Officer Scott Wertz.

National Police Week - 5/12/12 to 5/15/2012

Washington D.C.

Birdsboro Parade and Firing Detail - 5/28/2012

Parade and firing detail that will take place at the cemetery in Birdsboro.

Birdsboro Flag Disposal Ceremony - 6/2/2012

Flags can be dropped off at the Birdsboro Legion for a ceremonial Flag disposal event that will include the Berks County Sheriff's Honor Guard and the Boy Scouts.

## The Airport Substation

The Berks County Sheriff's Department has a substation in the Reading Regional Airport. Office hours there are Monday thru Friday 10:00am to 6:00pm (closed 3:00pm to 4:00pm).



## Licenses to Carry Firearms

The Berks County Sheriff's Department will be issuing Pennsylvania Licenses to Carry Firearms at 5 remote locations in Berks County.

Visit our website at [www.CountyofBerks.com/Sheriff](http://www.CountyofBerks.com/Sheriff) and click on the "Firearms Section" link to see a list of locations, dates and time. You may also download an electronic version of the application.

Applicants for the licenses are to bring a Pennsylvania Drivers License or Pennsylvania Photo Identification Card and payment of \$20.00 cash or check. After filling out the application, a computer background check will immediately be performed. Upon successful completion of the background check, the license will be issued.

Make check payable to Eric J. Weaknecht, Sheriff in the amount of \$20.00.