

2011

December 30, 2011

Two vehicles stolen in Nanticoke

Times Leader

City police are investigating the theft of two vehicles.

A 1989 Chevrolet K1500 pickup truck was reported stolen at 9:43 a.m. Friday from the 200 block of Railroad Street. The truck is black with gold on each side and has no registration plate or muffler.

A 1997 Plymouth Voyager minivan was reported stolen at 8:15 a.m. Thursday from the 400 block of East Main Street. The van is green and has a registration plate GKE-0503.

Anyone with information about the thefts is asked to contact Nanticoke police at 735-2200.

December 30, 2011

Men plead guilty to mayor assault

Assistant district attorney is seeking a four- to eight-year prison sentence for each man.

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Three men accused of assaulting Nanticoke Mayor Joseph Dougherty and burglarizing several stores in the Wyoming Valley pleaded guilty to related charges Thursday.

Steven Brannigan, 21, Daniel Banks, 25, and Thomas Owens, 21, all of Wilkes-Barre, entered their pleas before Luzerne County Senior Judge Hugh Mundy.

Assistant District Attorney Thomas Hogans said he is seeking a four- to eight-year prison sentence for each man when they are sentenced on Feb. 9.

Each man pleaded guilty to six related charges including criminal conspiracy to commit aggravated assault, criminal conspiracy to commit simple assault and criminal conspiracy to commit burglary.

The three men are charged with assaulting Dougherty by pulling him out of a 2011 Chevrolet Cruze on June 25, striking him with a club, then using the vehicle to commit burglaries in three different municipalities.

Police said the men then burned the car in a wooded area in Huntington Township.

Dougherty, 44, an automotive paint salesman for Colours Inc., said he was sitting in his company car that was idling in the 300 block of East Green Street, Nanticoke, just after 11 p.m.

The headlights and an interior dome light were turned on when, Dougherty said, he was pulled from the vehicle by three men in their late teens or early 20s.

Nanticoke police said Dougherty reported he was beaten with a club or a stick. He was treated at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center in Plains Township.

Police said the three men then used the vehicle to commit robberies at the Sunoco service station on the Sans Souci Parkway and Don's Deli on West End Road, both in Hanover Township.

They were also are suspects in an attempted burglary at the Variety Shop on East Main Street, Newport Township, and a burglary at the Countryside Market on Main Road in Hunlock Township.

State police recovered the car, which was torched in woods near Zachery Road and state Route 239 in Huntington Township on June 26.

Banks told investigators he used gasoline to set the vehicle on fire, according to the complaints.

12/29/2011

Nanticoke man faces assault charges after bar fight

Citizens Voice

A Nanticoke man was charged with two counts of assault and one count of harassment after hitting another customer with a pool stick and throwing a beer mug at a bartender.

According to authorities, police were dispatched to the Prospect St. Cafe in Nanticoke at 12:12 a.m. Dec. 20 for a report that a man attacked people in the bar and then left in a blue mini-van.

At the bar, police spoke with Vincent Rodriguez, who played pool with Lee Antonik, of 274 Miner Ave., before the attack. Rodriguez told police that Antonik asked to play for money, but after Rodriguez said no, the two agreed to play for no money. After the game, Rodriguez sat at the bar.

Bartender Chris Catchpole said after the game, Antonik put \$5 on the bar and said "double it." Catchpole told Antonik

that any agreements about money were between Antonik and Rodriguez. Catchpole then went to help other customers. With Rodriguez's back to him, Antonik allegedly struck Rodriguez three times with a pool stick, once on the upper arm, once on the back, and once on the leg. Catchpole saw the assault and told Antonik to leave. Antonik began to leave and Catchpole told him he could not take a mug of beer with him. Antonik threw the mug at Catchpole and nearly hit him, police said.

12/29/2011

Police Blotter

Times Leader

City police reported the following:

- Police investigated a burglary at The Medicine Shoppe, 69 N. Market St., on Tuesday night. Police said a window was smashed just before 9:30 p.m. and prescription medications were stolen.
- Mike Jezewski reported scrap aluminum was stolen from a business on Alden Road.
- Robert Fenner, of West Green Street, reported an unknown person entered his landlord's garage and stole a 1986 Honda quad, which is white, red and yellow.
- Police cited Matthew Ceppa, of Glen Lyon, with public drunkenness after investigating a report of door banging. Ceppa was jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility on an unrelated warrant.
- Kristyn Lutecki, of South Market Street, reported mirrors and windows on a vehicle were damaged.
- Carol Potora, of Phillips Street, reported a mirror was damaged on a vehicle.
- Police apprehended Gerard Jenkins, of Nanticoke, at Cocoa Hut, East Main Street, on a warrant from Monroe County for failure to appear.

12/17/2011

A man was arraigned Thursday in Wilkes-Barre Central Court for his alleged role in stealing aluminum from a business in August

Times Leader

Joshua George Hallas, 29, of West Ridge Street, Nanticoke, was charged with theft, criminal mischief, defiant trespass and criminal conspiracy to commit theft. He was jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for lack of \$10,000 bail.

Police allege Hallas and Mark Anthony Luczak, 29, of River Street, Nanticoke, stole 4,000 pounds of aluminum from Eclipse Fleet on West Union Street, according to the criminal complaint.

Hallas used bolt cutters to cut a fence and drove his pickup truck to the metal that they sold as scrap at a Wilkes-Barre metal recycler, the criminal complaint says.

Luczak is facing charges of receiving stolen property and criminal conspiracy in Luzerne County Court.

Hallas is scheduled for a preliminary hearing on Dec. 21 before District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke.

12/9/2011

Nanticoke man gets 20 months for mortgage fraud

Citizens Voice

A judge on Thursday ordered a Nanticoke man to spend 20 months in federal prison in connection with a mortgage fraud scheme, the U.S. Attorney's Office announced.

Richard Woods, 54, previously pleaded guilty to a charge of mail fraud, authorities said.

Woods is the third defendant to be sentenced in the case, which led to a 2007 indictment by a grand jury.

The FBI alleged the operators of First Advantage Mortgage Company, which was based in Lake Ariel and later Hamlin, and Four Star Mortgage Company in Gouldsboro, used false appraisals, false documents and false employment records to qualify customers for inflated mortgages and loans between 1999 and 2005.

Many of the customers subsequently defaulted on the mortgages and loans, resulting in losses to banks and other financial institutions, authorities said.

The FBI said Woods admitted he prepared numerous false real estate appraisals to qualify borrowers for inflated mortgages.

12/2/2011

David Marinus, 45, of Apollo Circle, was arraigned Wednesday in Wilkes-Barre Central Court on charges he assaulted his girlfriend, Heather Szymaszek, inside their apartment.

Times Leader

Marinus was charged with simple assault and harassment. He was jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for lack of \$10,000 bail.

Marinus claimed Szymaszek was hitting him. She was treated at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center in Plains Township, police said.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled on Dec. 7.

11/29/2011

Nanticoke police seek witnesses to motorcycle crash

Bob Kalinowski - Citizens Voice

Nanticoke police are investigating a motorcycle crash that sent a 45-year-old man to the hospital with critical injuries Monday night on Main Street.

Police said Myron Malloy of Nanticoke was traveling on the 400 block of East Main Street around 8:15 p.m. when he lost control and fell off the 2007 Kawasaki motorcycle.

Malloy slid about 60 feet from where he skidded and lost control. He was taken to Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center, Plains Township, where he was in critical condition Monday night, police said.

The motorcycle skidded nearly 150 feet, coming to rest at 444 E. Main St.

Police said they spoke to two motorists who witnessed part of the incident.

The first witness, while traveling on Main Street, saw a "quick flash" pass her vehicle near a curve in the road. She looked in the rearview mirror and saw the person and motorcycle sliding along the road. The second witness just made a left turn onto Main Street from State Street. Shortly after completing the turn, she saw the motorcycle and driver sliding past the side of her vehicle.

Police said Malloy doesn't have a license to operate the motorcycle and there was no legal registration plate on the vehicle. Investigators said Malloy was traveling faster than the posted 25 mph speed limit.

An update on Malloy's condition was not immediately available. Investigators said he was wearing a helmet.

Police are looking for additional witnesses to the crash. Anyone with information should call city police at 570-735-2200.

11/28/2011

Shots fired into two houses in Nanticoke

Citizens voice staff report

Nanticoke police are seeking information about who fired shots into two houses in the 100 block of Orchard Street on Sunday morning.

At one house, a single shot was fired into the front window, and the projectile was recovered inside.

The second house had a single shot fired into the front door. Police said the projectile went through the aluminum storm door and the metal front door and lodged in a closet.

Neighbors told police they heard two gunshots at about 4:30 a.m. and saw a small four-door vehicle in the area.

The projectiles are believed to be from a handgun. Both were recovered and will be submitted to the crime laboratory for further analysis.

Nanticoke police were assisted by the state police forensic unit from Troop P, Wyoming. Anyone with information about the incidents is asked to call Nanticoke police at 570-735-2200.

11/22/2011

Nanticoke police seek info on attempted robbery

Bob Kalinowski - Citizens Voice

Nanticoke police are investigating an attempted robbery Monday at the Cocoa Hut convenience store at 195 Middle Road.

Police said a man walked in the store, formerly called Uni-Mart, at around 7:18 p.m. and demanded money several times. The man fled without getting any cash, police said.

“He wasn’t given any money and fled the store. He took off into the woods” in the city’s Hanover section, said Detective Capt. William Shultz.

The suspect was described as a white male, about 6’2” and 240 pounds. He was wearing all dark clothing with a hood over his head and face.

Anyone with information is asked to call 911 or Nanticoke police at 570-735-2200.

11/22/2011

City police reported the following incidents

Times Leader

- Jerome Delkanic, of West Broad Street, reported that someone flattened the tires on his vehicle.
- Janet Wright, of East Main Street, reported that someone removed a black, green and white Mongoose Crush bicycle from her back porch.
- Police said they cited Heather Szymaszek, of Apollo Circle, with public drunkenness after they said she was causing a disturbance outside of the Prospect Street Caf?.
- Florence Cheshinski, of West Grant Street, reported someone threw a rock at her back porch window, smashing it.
- Kenny O’Donnell, of Front Street, reported to police that someone entered his vehicle and stole a pack of cigarettes and a cup of loose change.
- Michael Taylor, of East Grove Street, reported someone stole the driver side mirror off of his Jeep Wrangler.
- Police said Michael Bieble, of Center Street, reported someone entered his vehicle and stole a Sirius radio, an iPod Touch, various CDs and a bottle of American Eagle cologne.
- Heather Keller, of South Market Street, reported to police that someone entered her home and stole a Wii game system.
- Charles Hampton, of Maple Street, reported to police that someone stole a 10-by-12 tan rug from his porch.
- Police said Howard Stritzinger, of Prince Street, was cited for public drunkenness after he was observed walking on West Broad Street, staggering and almost falling. Police said he was taken into custody.
- Police said they charged Bret David Clark, 35, of Plymouth, with violating a protection-from-abuse order after a woman reported Clark was following her on Nov. 17.
- Police said they charged Mark Ryan Viniarski, 42, of West Noble Street, Nanticoke, with simple assault and harassment after police were called to a domestic dispute on Nov. 18. Police said Viniarski was intoxicated and pushed a woman.

11/19/2011

Pedestrian struck in Nanticoke; police seek witnesses

Bob Kalinowski - Citizens Voice

Nanticoke police are looking for witnesses to a vehicle-versus-pedestrian crash that sent an 83-year-old woman to the hospital Friday morning.

Police said Mary Conrad, of Nanticoke, was crossing East Main Street, not within the crosswalk, when she was slightly struck by a vehicle operated by Clifford Farides, 60, of Bloomsburg.

Farides was making a left turn from North Market Street onto Main Street when the incident occurred around 11:48 a.m., police said.

Conrad was knocked to the ground and transported to Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center in Plains Township. The woman's injuries were not life-threatening, police said.

Anyone who witnessed the crash is asked to call Nanticoke police at 570-735-2200.

11/11/11

Thief gets 4- to 8-year sentence

Jonathan Michael Kemmerer, Nanticoke, had admitted to dozen charges stemming from 5 incidents.

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A Nanticoke man was sentenced Thursday to four to eight years in state prison on a dozen charges stemming from five

incidents, including burglaries at Moon Lake Park in Plymouth Township.

Luzerne County Senior Judge Hugh Mundy sentenced Jonathan Michael Kemmerer, 27, of East Broad Street, on two counts of robbery; three counts of criminal trespassing; four counts of theft by unlawful taking; two counts of criminal mischief, and one count of possessing an instrument of crime.

Kemmerer pleaded guilty to the charges in October.

According to court papers:

On Jan. 28, Kemmerer robbed the Cocoa Hut on East Main Street in Nanticoke, telling a clerk he had a gun.

Kemmerer took an undetermined amount of cash and left the store. A surveillance video captured the robbery, and Kemmerer was identified as the suspect. On Jan. 1, Kemmerer burglarized a Broad Street, Nanticoke, residence and took copper piping.

That same month, Kemmerer and another man burglarized Moon Lake Park along state Route 29, owned by Luzerne County Parks and Recreation Department, two separate times.

Aluminum dividers and copper piping were stolen in the incidents.

Most recently, on June 24, Kemmerer walked into Shelly's Pizza on Carey Avenue in Hanover Township and asked to use the bathroom.

When he left the bathroom, he approached the counter and told the clerk he had a gun and wanted money.

About \$330 was taken, and Kemmerer fled. He later told investigators he spent the money on cocaine and that he committed the robbery because of a drug addiction.

Mundy ordered Kemmerer to pay \$3,074 in restitution and said Kemmerer will receive 35 days credit for time already served in prison.

Assistant District Attorney Albert Yacoub prosecuted the case. Kemmerer was represented by attorney Thomas Cometa. Cometa filed a request to modify Kemmerer's sentence shortly after his hearing Thursday, asking that all of Kemmerer's sentences run concurrent to each other for a total of 18 to 36 months in prison.

Cometa said his client has been drug-free since his arrest and he has accepted responsibility for his actions by pleading guilty.

11/9/2011

Times Leader

City police reported the following:

- Michael Tolodziewski, of West Union Street, reported someone entered his vehicle and stole two knives, a compass, a spotlight, a folding tree saw, camo coveralls and a camo backpack.
- Brenda Klos, of Apollo Circle, reported soda was poured on her vehicle.
- Nicole Golanowski, of West Union Street, reported items were stolen from her vehicle.
- Mary Jane Nestorick, of West Union Street, reported items were stolen from her vehicle.
- Police said they cited Clement Sosnak Jr., of West Main Street, with public drunkenness when he was allegedly found staggering on West Main Street.
- Heather Tolodziewski, of Apollo Circle, reported jewelry and medication was stolen during a burglary at her apartment.
- John Balut, of South Market Street, reported a tire was flattened on his vehicle on Spruce Street.
- Tara Yokavonis, of East Grand Street, reported a tire was slashed and nails were put in another tire on her vehicle.

11/6/2011

Court Briefs

Times Leader

Aggravated assault, terroristic threat and reckless endangerment charges against Nassieve Wilson, 34, of West Green Street, were dismissed during a preliminary hearing on Wednesday.

Nanticoke police had accused of threatening Shayla Perry with a handgun during an argument at his residence on Oct. 23, according to the criminal complaint.

A man accused by Newport Township police of drunken driving with a child waived his right to a preliminary hearing before District Judge Donald Whittaker on Wednesday.

William H. Weaver, 50, of South River Street, Wilkes-Barre, waived two counts of driving under the influence and a

single count of child endangerment to Luzerne County Court.

Township police withdrew charges of reckless endangerment and three traffic violations against Weaver.

Weaver had a blood alcohol level of .185 percent when he was stopped by police on Rock Street on July 4. A 12-year-old boy was in Weaver's vehicle, according to the criminal complaint.

Denis Richard McDermott, 58, of Miner Avenue, Newport Township, pleaded guilty to a defiant trespass charge during a preliminary hearing Wednesday before District Judge Donald Whittaker.

Nanticoke police accused McDermott of entering a garage on East Grand Street and rummaging through bags on Oct. 9, according to the criminal complaint.

Police withdrew charges of burglary and possessing instruments of crime.

10/28/2011

4 arrested in home drug raid

Police said they made controlled buys of heroin from Nanticoke residence.

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Days before seizing more than 800 packets of heroin in a raid of an East Main Street house, police made controlled buys of heroin from the residence, according to arrest papers.

Police arrested four people, including two men from Brooklyn, N.Y., and seized crack cocaine, marijuana and a gun, the papers said.

Nigel Errol Sandy, 24, and William Edward Reid, 23, both of Brooklyn, and Hector J. Lopez, 22, and Karl T.

Traynham, 28, both of Nanticoke, were held for lack of bail on various drug charges at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility.

According to affidavits of probable cause to support the arrests:

State police provided money to a confidential informant on Oct. 18 and 24 to buy heroin at the residence from a person who used the street name "Hec." Portions of the controlled buys tested positive for heroin.

On Wednesday, state police and Nanticoke police searched the residence and seized 842 packets of heroin that matched the previous controlled buys from Lopez.

A cell phone that had the number called by the informant was seized from Lopez as well as \$80 used to make one of the controlled buys two days earlier.

All four men were in the residence at the time of the raid.

In addition, a Nanticoke police dog used in drug searches reacted to a scent in a car parked in front of the residence.

Reid told police he drove the car owned by his uncle in Williamsport to Nanticoke from New York City.

Police obtained a search warrant for the car and seized a gun as well as three black bags that were identical to the one in the residence that contained unopened packets of heroin.

Police also said a deodorizing material was sprinkled throughout the car to try to thwart dogs trained to detect narcotics.

10/28/2011

A man was arraigned Wednesday in Wilkes-Barre Central Court on charges he assaulted his wife.

Bret Clark, 35, of Orchard Street, Nanticoke, was charged with simple assault, stalking and harassment. He was released on \$5,000 unsecured bail.

Police allege Clark assaulted his wife during an argument inside their residence Tuesday night, according to the criminal complaint.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled on Nov. 2 before District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke.

10/27/2011

Nanticoke gun dealer seeks fair sentencing

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In a letter to U.S. District Court Senior Judge Edwin M. Kosik, D&R Sports Center owner Mark Komoroski claimed the wrong federal guidelines were used to determine his sentence.

A Nanticoke sporting goods dealer currently in federal prison for conspiring to illegally ship paramilitary equipment to Russia will get a chance to prove his sentencing was unfair.

Mark Komoroski, owner of D&R Sports Center, petitioned U.S. District Court Senior Judge Edwin M. Kosik to allow him a hearing to "vacate, set aside or correct" his sentence, alleging he unjustly received a longer prison term than his co-conspirator due to use of the wrong federal guidelines.

Kosik turned down Komoroski's request to be released from the Federal Correctional Institution in Fort Dix, N.J. on bail, but granted him the hearing, to be held at 9:30 a.m. Dec. 14 in the William J. Nealon federal courthouse in Scranton.

Prosecutors said Komoroski and Russian national Sergey Korznikov conspired to smuggle equipment such as rifle scopes and face shields from the United States to Russia for sale to persons unknown.

Both men pleaded guilty, but Kosik sentenced Komoroski on July 29, 2010, to 32 months - 2.6 years - imprisonment, two years of supervised release and a \$10,000 fine, while sentencing Korznikov this past July to six months in prison and two years of supervised release.

Komoroski's contention is his sentence was incorrectly determined under guidelines for offenses involving national defense and weapons of mass destruction, while Korznikov's was determined using federal guidelines for economic offenses, which have lighter penalties.

"In reality, my offense was indistinguishable from Korznikov's," Komoroski wrote in his earlier letter to Kosik, in which he asked for the hearing and a reopening of records related to the sentencing guidelines. "We conspired to smuggle goods outside of the U.S. without properly stating the value of such goods to avoid Korznikov having to pay import taxes to Russia."

Komoroski is due to get out of prison on Dec. 12, 2012, according to his wife Lecia, who also believes her husband's sentence is unfair and has been pushing for an earlier release.

She was happy to learn of the Dec. 14 hearing and says if her husband comes home, "It'll be the best Christmas present my family ever had in our lifetimes."

10/25/2011

Police: Man threatens to kill stepdaughter after she changes TV channel

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A man pulled a gun and threatened to kill his stepdaughter Sunday night because she changed a television channel, Nanticoke police said.

After the channel flip, an irate Nassieve Omar Wilson unplugged the television and retrieved a loaded handgun from his vehicle outside the home at 115 W. Green St., police said.

Police said Wilson returned inside the home, pointed the gun at stepdaughter Shayla Perry and vowed to kill her.

During questioning by police, Wilson acknowledged he threatened to kill Perry if she "messed with" him or his son, investigators said. He said he feared Perry because she promised to "get rid" of him multiple times in the past.

Police charged Wilson, 34, with aggravated assault, simple assault, recklessly endangering another person and terroristic threats.

According to arrest papers:

Police were called to 115 W. Green St. on Sunday around 8:15 p.m. for a domestic dispute involving a gun. Officers met with Perry, who said Wilson pointed a gun at her and threatened to kill her while she was watching television with her younger sister. Her mother kept yelling "No" and tried to push his arms down to prevent him from pointing the gun at her, she said. Fearing "the worst," Perry said she fled the home.

Officers then met with Wilson on the porch. He invited them inside. Police said he admitted confronting Perry with the gun because she changed the channel while his son was watching television. He said he retrieved the weapon because he felt threatened by Perry. Wilson, however, said he never pointed the gun at her.

Investigators seized the gun, a Ruger P95, which was loaded with 12 rounds.

Wilson was taken into custody and lodged in the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for overnight arraignment.

Magisterial District Judge Donald Whittaker arraigned Wilson on Monday morning and ordered him jailed in lieu of \$100,000 cash bail.

10/25/2011

Police Blotter

Times Leader

Nassieve Omas Wilson, 34, of West Green Street, Nanticoke, was arraigned Monday by District Judge Donald

Whittaker in Nanticoke on four counts of aggravated assault, and one count each of simple assault, reckless endangerment and terroristic threats for allegedly using a gun to threaten a woman.

He was jailed at the county prison for lack of \$100,000 bail.

Police allege Wilson got into an argument with Shayla Perry about changing a station on a television his son was watching inside his residence just after 8 p.m. Sunday. Perry said Wilson aimed a gun at her and threatened to shoot her during the argument, the criminal complaint says.

Police said the gun was loaded.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled Nov. 2 before Whittaker.

10/24/2011

Nanticoke woman charged with retail theft

Citizens Voice

Julie Conklin, of 109 Welles St., Nanticoke, is facing charges of theft.

Police said Conklin tried to take \$21 worth of merchandise from the Family Dollar store.

10/21/2011

Police Wednesday reported the following:

Times Leader

- Jennifer Souder of East Green Street was cited with harassment for attempting to stop someone who had been staying with her from leaving her apartment, police said.
- Lamont Diggs of East Washington Street said the front door of his residence was kicked and two televisions, prescription medication, a bubble gum machine, a gold stamp collection and a Sony game system were stolen.
- Judith Kotch of West Grand Street said an Acer Aspire laptop computer was taken from her apartment during a burglary.
- Amy Sauers of Hill Street said her son's blue and gray Huffy bike was stolen from her property.
- Brittany O'Gorman of North Chestnut Street said her vehicle was entered and an iPod Nano and prescription medication were stolen.
- Frank Nowakowski of Espy Street said his grandson's DK Cyclone bike was stolen from his yard. The bike is white with purple rims.
- David Letteer of East Ridge Street said he was assaulted and robbed in the area of College and East Main streets. Letteer said he was grabbed from behind and his head was pushed into a telephone pole causing him to black out. When he came to he discovered that money was missing from his wallet.
- Dorothy Tinney, 46, of East Ridge Street was charged with resisting arrest, public drunkenness and disorderly conduct on Oct. 7. Tinney threatened her husband after he refused to give her the keys to their car. Police subdued her with a Taser after she struggled with an officer outside her house.
- Denis Richard McDermott, 58, of Miner Avenue, Newport Township was charged with burglary, criminal trespass and possessing instruments of crime after police found him inside a residence on East Grand Street on Oct. 9. A witness said he saw McDermott use a pry bar to open a door on the residence. Police said they found a flashlight and a screwdriver on McDermott and a pry bar and a backpack with screwdrivers, a hammer and three towels outside the residence.
- John Michael Norcross, 42, of East Ridge Street was charged possession of a controlled substance and drug paraphernalia on Oct. 10. Police said he had two and a half tablets of the narcotic medication Suboxone on him after he was seen entering and leaving a residence known for drug activity on South Market Street.
- John Sabecky, 51, of Oak Street, was charged with simple assault and harassment after he hit his wife Linda in the mouth and dragged her across the floor around 3:20 a.m. on Monday. Linda Sabecky said she was assaulted during an argument with her husband, who came home intoxicated and was trying to cook something on the stove. She said left the residence and when police located her in a convenience store parking lot on Middle Road she said she was afraid her husband was going to burn down their home.

10/18/2011

A man was arrested for beating his wife after she warned him it wasn't a good idea to cook on the stove at 3:30 a.m. while he was intoxicated, police said.

Citizens Voice

John D. Sabecky, 51, of 125 Oak St., is charged with simple assault and harassment.

Police said Linda Sabecky fled to a convenience store on Middle Road to call the police after the assault. She told police she was concerned her husband was going to burn the house down while cooking intoxicated, so she confronted him. John Sabecky then started choking her and hit her in the face, causing her lip to bleed. He then drug her across the floor, she said.

John Sabecky was jailed in lieu of \$10,000 bail.

10/14/2011

In Nanticoke, concern after the second lab bust in a month

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Nanticoke police charged a man Thursday with drug crimes after uncovering another methamphetamine lab in the city over the weekend.

Authorities said the meth lab operated out of 255 Apollo Circle, a subsidized housing development where the suspect, Bradley Evanitus, occasionally stayed.

The 27-year-old is charged with felony counts of manufacturing methamphetamine and related crimes, including risking a catastrophe and illegal dumping of meth waste.

Magisterial District Judge Donald Whittaker arraigned Evanitus and ordered him jailed in lieu of \$75,000 cash bail.

Production of meth - with volatile, potentially explosive components - is hazardous enough, but Evanitus would simply discard the toxic chemicals in the household trash placed outside in the densely populated complex, Nanticoke police Detective Capt. William Shultz said.

"I am very concerned with it happening in this particular housing development," Shultz said. "There's a lot of children there."

According to arrest papers:

The woman who leases the apartment, Jessica Kashatus, called police last Friday to say she was out of town and suspected drug activity was taking place at her residence. She asked police to enter her property, remove the people and have it padlocked.

Police and officials from the Nanticoke Housing Authority entered the property and located Evanitus inside with a woman.

Investigators said they initially spotted heroin, syringes and drug paraphernalia. Then, they found a host of items commonly used to manufacture meth, including: pseudophedrine, Coleman fuel, drain cleaner, lye, ammonium nitrate, lithium, sodium, plastic tubing, coffee filters and funnels.

Evanitus admitted to investigators he had cooked meth two days earlier.

Evanitus was arrested and jailed on the heroin charges, while a clandestine response team investigated the suspected lab and a state police forensic scientist inventoried, collected and secured the items.

Evanitus wasn't a tenant of the apartment, but "he was allowed to stay there" at times, Shultz said.

He was transported from jail for the arraigned Thursday on the meth-related charges.

This was the second alleged meth lab busted in Nanticoke in the last month.

Authorities raided a property at 5 Alden Road on Sept. 22 and charged Jeffrey DeLuca, 41, with manufacturing methamphetamine and related crimes.

City police worked on both cases with the state attorney general's office and state police.

"It's another step in our ongoing investigation into methamphetamine manufacturing and trafficking in Luzerne County," John Soprano, regional director of the attorney general's office, said.

"We are going to be continuing. There are going to be more arrests in the future and we're going to continue the battle against meth," he said.

10/5/2011

Arrested hitchhiker found with stolen garbage stickers

Bob Kalinowski - Citizens Voice

Nanticoke police arrested a hitchhiker early Tuesday on West Main Street and seized some of his belongings, which included brass knuckles, a knife, two 24-ounce cans of beer and dozens of Ashley Borough garbage stickers.

Donald E. Shoemaker, 47, no known address, is charged with possession of prohibited offensive weapons and public drunkenness.

According to arrest papers:

Police on patrol located Shoemaker hitchhiking along the 400 block of West Main Street around 12:22 a.m. and stopped to assist. While speaking to police, Shoemaker, who reeked of alcohol and had trouble speaking, dropped the brass knuckles on the ground, police said.

Soon, he acknowledged he also had a knife in his waistband, police said. Police said he also possessed two cans of beer and 45 Ashley garbage stickers.

Asked about the stickers, Shoemaker said he "took them from my buddy" and planned to "sell them for money."

In Ashley, residents can purchase a packet of 78 stickers for \$125 and additional ones cost \$1, officials said.

10/5/2011

Suicide threat closes portion of Sans Souci

Citizens Voice

A man threatening to commit suicide forced a shutdown of part of the Sans Souci Parkway early Tuesday morning, police said.

Police said they got a call from the man's ex-girlfriend around 1 a.m. that he planned to jump off the Route 29 overpass to kill himself.

Upon arrival, police found the man, 22, standing on the top railing of the bridge. He told police he no longer wanted to live.

Hanover Township and Nanticoke police began negotiations with the man, and he was rescued. The man was taken for a mental health evaluation.

9/30/2011

A man was arraigned Thursday in Wilkes-Barre Central Court on charges he assaulted his wife.

Times Leader

David Junior Dasilva, 23, of Railroad Street, was charged with simple assault and harassment. He was jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for lack of \$5,000 bail.

Police said Megan Dasilva claimed her husband assaulted her during an argument about pictures being deleted on a media card on Sept. 20, according to the criminal complaint.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled on Oct. 5 before District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke.

9/29/2011

Men accused of assaulting Nanticoke mayor waive hearing

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The three men accused of severely beating the Nanticoke mayor and using his car for a wild county-wide crime spree appeared in court Wednesday, facing their alleged victims for the first time.

Daniel Thomas Banks, 24, of Nanticoke; Steven Brannigan, 20, of Hanover Township; and Thomas Maxwell Owens, 21, of Wilkes-Barre, each agreed to waive their preliminary hearings on a numerous charges that could keep them behind bars for years. Afterward, they were sent back to prison, each on bails more than \$1 million, to await the resolution of their cases in county court.

While waiting for their cases to begin in court Wednesday, however, they spent most of their time laughing and joking with each other about their past six weeks in prison, like learning how to play pinochle and being turned down for jailhouse jobs because of the seriousness of their charges. One of the suspects, speaking with two females who came to greet and hug them, suggested the group of arresting officers in the room were "corrupt."

After the brief hearing, Luzerne County Deputy District Attorney David Pedri vowed to vigorously prosecute the case. "This is something we are taking very seriously. We have three individuals who went on a crime spree, who hurt various people in various municipalities," Pedri said. "This type of activity can not be tolerated."

Investigators said the three men bludgeoned Nanticoke Mayor Joseph Dougherty with brass knuckles, a wooden bat and their fists outside his East Green Street home the evening of June 25. Police said they then took his car and committed a series of "smash and grab" burglaries at Countryside Market in Hunlock Creek, Variety Stop in Glen Lyon, the Sans Souci Sunoco in Hanover Township and Don's Deli in Hanover Township. They then torched Dougherty's vehicle in a remote part of Huntington Township, police said.

Nanticoke, Hanover Township and Newport Township police departments, along with state police at Wyoming and Shickshinny, worked together to make the arrests. They obtained surveillance footage and then confessions from each suspect, police said.

The suspects are next scheduled to appear in county court on Dec. 2 for formal arraignment.

9/24/2011

A man was arraigned Friday on charges he burglarized an apartment on West Ridge Street.

Times Leader

Kenneth Pennington, 23, of East State Street, Nanticoke, was charged with three counts of criminal conspiracy, and one count each of burglary, theft and criminal trespass. He was jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for lack of \$25,000 bail.

Police allege Pennington and Joshua Frame, 29, of Nanticoke, burglarized an apartment on West Ridge Street, stealing a television, a DVD player and two video game systems on Sept. 4, according to the criminal complaint.

Frame was arrested Sept. 6 on burglary and theft related charges. He remains jailed at the county prison for lack of \$40,000 bail.

Preliminary hearings are scheduled on Oct. 12 before District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke.

9/23/2011

Man operated meth factory, officials say

Jeffrey J. DeLuca of Nanticoke said he ran drug-making operation to earn a living, say authorities.

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An unemployed man manufactured methamphetamine for at least seven months, using proceeds to “pay his bills,” authorities allege.

Agents with the state Office of Attorney General Bureau of Narcotics Investigation and Nanticoke police arrested Jeffrey J. DeLuca, 41, on Thursday after allegedly finding medicine and other contraband inside his Alden Road apartment used to cook methamphetamine.

“This wasn’t your mom-and-pop operation,” said Deputy Attorney General Tim Doherty. “He certainly knew what he was doing.”

Authorities searched DeLuca’s apartment at 5 Alden Road just after 7 a.m. and found cold medicine, chemicals, funnels, iodine, hot plates, anti-freeze, scales and plastic tubing.

Doherty said the items seized are used to manufacture methamphetamine.

John Soprano, regional director for the attorney general, said the lab was “large scale.”

Soprano said agents with the AG’s clandestine team safely removed the chemicals from the apartment.

A first-floor apartment was vacant, Soprano said.

DeLuca was arraigned by District Judge Joseph Halesy in Hanover Township on three counts of possession of chemicals with intent to manufacture a controlled substance, and one count each of manufacture of a controlled substance, possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance, unlawful possession of a controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia and risking or causing a catastrophe.

DeLuca’s Toyota Tacoma pickup truck was seized, Soprano said, because agents believe he was using the vehicle to deliver and sell methamphetamine.

“It’s an ongoing case that we’re building on,” Doherty said. “He had the baking ingredients for a methamphetamine operation.”

DeLuca allegedly told authorities he began cooking methamphetamine in February from the apartment. He said he was not working and needed to “pay his bills” and to pay his daily living expenses, according to the criminal complaint.

Authorities allege in the complaint DeLuca claimed he acquired the ingredients from various people, and last cooked methamphetamine Wednesday night.

DeLuca was jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for lack of \$100,000 bail.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled on Sept. 28.

9/22/2011

Family fight results in stabbing, charges

Citizens Voice

Nanticoke police are investigating a family fight that sent two men to the hospital Monday.

The altercation, which allegedly started over text messages, started when 28-year-old Zachery Hallas went to Apollo Circle around 1:47 a.m. to speak with Steven Tagnani, 21.

The two men fought, both claiming they were defending themselves. Hallas said he was struck with a car jack. Tagnani was stabbed with a knife.

Police said both men were transported to Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center in Plains Township where they were treated and released.

The investigation is continuing. Anyone with any information is asked to call Nanticoke City Police at 570-735-2200, ext. 205 or 206

9/12/2011

On Friday around 11 a.m., police arrested Kuren for breaking into 741 S. Prospect St. in Nanticoke. He was caught in the basement. While the property was not in the flood zone, Kuren admitted he was trying to capitalize on the flood emergency, police said.

Citizens Voice

"I believe he was taking advantage of the situation," said Nanticoke police Capt. William Shultz. "He did admit he knew a flood was going on. He did in during a natural disaster."

Charged with burglary, trespassing and theft, Kuren was jailed on \$75,000 cash bail.

9/3/2011

German shepherd returned to owner after attack

The dog mauled a tiny poodle outside a South Hanover Street home in Nanticoke this week.

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A German shepherd that mauled a tiny poodle outside a South Hanover Street home Wednesday was returned to its owner after being held at the SPCA in Plains Township, authorities said Friday.

Samantha Elliott Krepps, press secretary for the state Department of Agriculture, said the German shepherd involved in the attack and a Rottweiler that had been with the shepherd are up to date with their vaccinations and licenses.

She said the municipal police department will "take point" in filing citations if any are warranted.

A Nanticoke police report lists Jessica Ann McGahee as the owner of the dogs. She did not return a message seeking comment on Friday.

In another development, the German shepherd was not wearing a spike collar, a man who detained the dog said. Jason Weston, who lives in the 1200 block of South Hanover Street, said he was unaware the German shepherd was involved in the mauling of a poodle when he placed the dog on his porch.

Weston said the German shepherd did not have a collar, countering a claim that the poodle's owner may have been injured by a collar.

Victor Swiderski, 85, said he was holding his poodle, Ginger, on a leash outside his house in the 1000 block of South Hanover Street when a German shepherd and a Rottweiler charged into his yard just before 5 p.m. Wednesday.

Swiderski said he bruised his arm when he attempted to pull the German shepherd off his poodle. He did not know if he was bitten or if the bruises were caused by a spiked collar he thought the dog had been wearing.

Swiderski's poodle was taken to the Northeast Veterinary Referral Hospital in Plains Township where it died.

The two dogs appeared to have escaped from a pen outside a house at 1027 S. Hanover St.

Weston said he was inside his house and went outside when his own dog started barking and saw another dog in his yard.

"At first, I thought it was someone cutting through my yard and I went outside to yell at them," Weston said. "Then I realized it was just two dogs."

Weston said he wrangled the German shepherd and the Rottweiler onto his porch because he was concerned they would get hit by a vehicle.

"The Rotty had a collar on, sort of like a choke collar," Weston said. "The German shepherd didn't have a collar on."

Weston said the two dogs were not aggressive, noting the Rottweiler was licking him. He added he has never seen the two dogs roam freely in the neighborhood, noting he resides two blocks away.

"I found out the dogs were involved in that mauling when police told me," Weston said.

Police said the investigation was referred to the state dog law enforcement officer due to the fact that a human was not

bitten.

State Dog Officer Jim Spencer deferred questions to the state Department of Agriculture, which oversees dog laws in Pennsylvania.

9/2/2011

**A tiny dog's bloody killing leaves a void in its owner's heart
The Nanticoke case is being investigated because of a possible bite to a human.**

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His eyes tearing up, Victor Swiderski stood in the middle the living room of his South Hanover Street home on Thursday thinking about the ferocious attack by a large dog that mauled his tiny poodle named Ginger.

Swiderski, 85, said he was standing outside a side door to his home with Ginger when a German shepherd and a Rottweiler charged into his yard just before 5 p.m. Wednesday.

The German shepherd mauled Ginger, ripping the tiny dog apart, while the Rottweiler sat several feet away, Swiderski said.

Swiderski rushed his dog to the Northeast Veterinary Referral Hospital in Plains Township where it was euthanized.

"There was nothing they could do," Swiderski said.

Tears filled Swiderski's eyes as he recalled the attack from inside his home, standing next to Ginger's kennel and bed.

"Looking around here, it's tough to see all the toys for her," Swiderski said.

Swiderski suffered bruises to his right arm when he tried to pull the larger German shepherd off the tiny poodle. He does not know if he was bitten by the German shepherd or if the bruises were caused by its spiked collar.

Nanticoke police Detective Capt. William Shultz said police captured the two dogs down the street and transported the animals to the SPCA in Plains Township. Shultz said the case is being investigated by the state dog officer because it is not definite that the German shepherd bit Swiderski.

"It was the most vicious attack I've ever seen; there was nothing Ginger could do," Swiderski said.

Swiderski said he took Ginger outside a side door on a leash to prevent her from running after rabbits. As soon as he stood on the concrete stoop, Swiderski said his neighbor yelled to go back inside.

"My neighbor yelled to get my dog inside because those other dogs were running around again," Swiderski said. "By the time I turned around, it was too late."

His neighbor ran over and struck the German shepherd with a walking stick.

Shultz said the German shepherd and Rottweiler are owned by Jessica Ann McGahee, who resides at 1027 S. Hanover St., two houses away from the Swiderski residence.

McGahee and her boyfriend, Tom Nalbome, were away at the time of the attack, Shultz said.

It remained unknown if she will be cited.

"That would be up to the dog officer," Shultz said.

The dogs appeared to have escaped from an outside pen that can be seen from the street. A section of the pen appeared damaged.

McGahee did not return a message for comment on Thursday.

8/31/2011

**Nanticoke man gets jail on charge of raping child
Stuart W. Weidow III faces lifetime registration under Megan's Law.**

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The father said he installed a camera in his daughter's closet and came home one evening and saw Weidow running out of his daughter's bedroom and into the bathroom.

A Nanticoke man was sentenced Tuesday to 10 to 20 years in state prison on a charge that he raped a 12-year-old girl over a four-month period.

Luzerne County Judge Lewis Wetzel sentenced Stuart W. Weidow III, 23, of Apollo Circle, on a charge of rape of a child.

Wetzel said Weidow must register his address under Megan's Law for his entire life.

"You're a young man ... try to help yourself (while in prison)," Wetzel told Weidow.

Weidow pleaded guilty to the single charge in May. Prosecutors were seeking a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years due to the nature of the charge.

Weidow received 280 days credit for time already served in prison.

According to court papers, on Oct. 23, police received a call from the father of the 12-year-old girl, who said he caught Weidow having an inappropriate relationship with his daughter.

The father said that several of the girl's friends told him and his wife about the sexual acts, and that when they confronted the girl, she denied the allegations.

The father said he installed a camera in his daughter's closet and came home one evening and saw Weidow running out of his daughter's bedroom and into the bathroom.

The girl's father said he watched the videotape, which clearly showed Weidow having sexual intercourse with his 12-year-old daughter, court papers said.

The girl told investigators she and Weidow had been "secretly dating" since June and said the situation was "little by little getting worse."

Weidow knew how old she was, the girl said, and that on several occasions they had oral and sexual intercourse, court papers say.

Wetzel said Weidow is not to have any unsupervised contact with minors and is not to frequent places minors visit, including parks, playgrounds or public pools.

An evaluation of Weidow was performed by the state Sexual Offender's Assessment Board, but Weidow was not determined to be a sexually violent predator.

8/31/2011

A man was arraigned Tuesday in Wilkes-Barre Central Court on charges he fought with police investigating a disturbance on private property.

Times Leader

Dustin Lee Pursel, 18, of East Ridge Street, Nanticoke, was charged with resisting arrest, disorderly conduct, public drunkenness and purchase of alcohol by a minor. He was released on \$2,000 unsecured bail.

According to the criminal complaint:

Police investigating a fight at an apartment building on East Noble Street found Pursel lying on the ground. Police advised Pursel he was on private property.

Pursel allegedly told police that "It is God land" and he had the right to be on the property so he "can chill out like the hippies did," the complaint says.

Police said Pursel struggled with officers when he was arrested. He spat inside the police cruiser and banged his head against a cell wall, according to the complaint.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled on Sept. 7 before District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke.

8/18/2011

Woman sentenced for stealing from elderly

Kelci Pamela Jones, 23, of Nanticoke, gets a minimum of a year in county prison.

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A woman charged with robbing an elderly man and taking money from an elderly woman was sentenced Wednesday to a minimum of one year in the county prison.

Kelci Pamela Jones, 23, with a last known address of South Market Street, Nanticoke, was sentenced by Luzerne County Judge Lewis Wetzel on two counts of theft and one count each of criminal trespassing and robbery.

Jones, who pleaded guilty to the charges in June, was sentenced to 12 months less one day to 24 months less two days. Wetzel said Jones will receive 65 days credit for time already served and must pay \$510 in restitution.

Jones was represented by attorney John Donovan. Assistant District Attorney Rebecca Reimiller prosecuted the case. According to court papers, on Oct. 8 police responded to a home on South Market Street for the report of a robbery.

Norbert Domzalski, 78, told police he was sleeping when an unknown female entered his home and startled him.

Domzalski said the woman, later identified as Jones, said she would do a sexual favor for money.

Domzalski told police that when he declined the woman demanded money from him and tried to take his wallet.

After a struggle with Domzalski, police said Jones was able to remove \$50 in cash and fled.

A month later, police learned Jones admitted she committed the crime to a friend.

Police later questioned Jones, who said she was under the influence at the time and went into Domzalski's home to get money.

Jones told police she saw pants on the floor in Domzalski's home, grabbed for a wallet and was able to remove \$35 that she and another woman allegedly used to purchase two bags of heroin.

On Dec. 17, police said Jones took approximately \$510 from a 72-year-old woman while she slept in her East Ridge Street home.

Police said Jones went shopping with Dolores Storms and Storms cashed a \$700 check, using that money to buy groceries. Afterward, Jones accompanied Storms to her home with her son and helped put groceries away before Jones began making food in the kitchen.

Storms told police she went to sleep around 9:30 p.m. and woke up about two hours later to use the bathroom. When she woke up, Storms told police, she found an empty bank envelope in the kitchen that contained the remaining \$510 from her shopping trip earlier that day.

Storms told police she put the envelope under a container on a stand next to her bed before going to sleep.

8/18/2011

Police: Mayor not specific target of attack

Authorities detail how they encountered three suspected in Joseph Dougherty's beating.

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Police knew assault and burglary suspect Steven Brannigan was telling a lie.

Officers showed up at a residence in the Marion Terrace apartment complex looking for Thomas Owens on Aug. 1.

They watched Brannigan, 20, and Owens, 21, enter the residence.

After officers knocked on the door, Brannigan allegedly told them he was alone.

Police searched the apartment and found Owens lying on the floor trying to hide behind a bed, according to charges filed.

Brannigan, Owens and Daniel Banks, 24, were charged Tuesday in the violent beating of Nanticoke Mayor Joseph Dougherty on June 25.

Nanticoke police Detective Capt. William Shultz said Dougherty was beaten with brass knuckles and a wooden club on South Chestnut Street before the trio stole his company-issued vehicle, a 2011 Chevrolet Cruze.

Shultz called the attack a "crime of opportunity," noting Dougherty was not specifically targeted by the three men.

Brannigan and Owens had been jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility since their arrests on Aug. 1, when Owens was found inside the apartment.

Brannigan was charged with hindering apprehension, and Owens had been a fugitive since Feb. 15 when a Luzerne County judge issued an arrest warrant for skipping a hearing on a probation violation, court records show.

Owens pleaded guilty to escape from a youth detention school in Butler Township in September 2008. He was sentenced to six months probation but failed to report to a probation officer and tested positive for marijuana, according to the violation report.

Arrest records indicate investigators were aware at the time of the pair's arrest on Aug. 1 that they were allegedly responsible for a two-day crime spree that began with the carjacking and assault on Dougherty.

Investigators alleged the three men used the Chevrolet to burglarize businesses in the townships of Hanover, Hunlock and Newport within several hours on June 26.

State police at Shickshinny said the car was found torched in a wooded area near Zachery Road and state Route 239 in Huntington Township on June 27.

Banks admitted to investigators he poured gasoline on the vehicle before he set it on fire, according to arrest records. Like Brannigan and Owens, court records show Banks had obstructed police and failed to appear for a hearing on a probation violation.

Arrest records say Banks tried to prevent officers from apprehending his brother, who was involved in a disturbance in the parking lot of Weis Plaza in Nanticoke in June 2006. He was sentenced to six months probation after he pled guilty to an obstruction charge.

Banks was sentenced in July 2010 for driving under the influence of marijuana after he crashed his vehicle on state Route 239 in Mocanaqua in November 2009. A probation violation was filed against Banks when he failed to pay fines and meet with a probation officer.

An arrest warrant was issued for Banks when he failed to appear for a probation violation hearing in November. When he was captured, a county judge in May gave him five months to pay \$1,200 in fines.

8/17/2011

3 charged in beating of mayor

Trio also accused of going on a crime spree after taking Nanticoke official's car.

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Mayor Joseph Dougherty has a simple message for the three men accused of beating him with brass knuckles and a wooden club before stealing his company-issued vehicle.

"Enjoy jail," Dougherty said.

Authorities allege Daniel Banks, 24, Steven Brannigan, 20, and Thomas Owens, 21, all from Wilkes-Barre, went on a two-day crime spree on June 25 and 26 in four municipalities, stealing vehicles, burglarizing businesses and intentionally setting a fire, in addition to the violently assaulting Dougherty.

The three men were arraigned by District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke on a host of felony and misdemeanor assault, theft and conspiracy charges that were filed after a joint investigation by state police at Wyoming and Shickshinny, and police in Hanover Township, Nanticoke and Newport Township.

They were jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility -- Banks for lack of \$1.25 million bail and Brannigan and Owens, \$1 million bail each.

"They attempted to steal a vehicle on Prospect Street (Nanticoke) owned by Peter Kanjorski," said Nanticoke police Detective Capt. William Shultz. "When that failed, they went down two blocks and ran into the mayor. They beat him and stole his vehicle."

Dougherty said he was sitting in a 2011 Chevrolet Cruze owned by his employer, Colours Inc., in front of his residence on South Chestnut Street at about 11 p.m. June 25 waiting for a friend when he noticed three men walking in the street. Dougherty was pulled from his vehicle and assaulted.

Shultz said the three men used brass knuckles and a small baseball-style bat to assault Dougherty.

"They put a beating on me," he said after the three men were arraigned. "I'm very pleased they got arrested. I want to go to work. Life goes on."

After carjacking Dougherty, authorities allege, Banks, Brannigan and Owens drove the Chevrolet to Countryside Market on Main Road in Hunlock Township, where they smashed a glass door and stole cigarettes and a cash register at about 1:30 a.m. June 26.

The three men then traveled to Newport Township, where they smashed a glass door at the Variety Shop on East Main Street in an attempted burglary just after 3 a.m.

Less than an hour later, authorities allege in the criminal complaint, Banks, Brannigan and Owens drove to Hanover Township, where they smashed a glass door at the Sunoco service station on the Sans Souci Parkway and ransacked the business, damaging a lottery machine and a cash register, and stealing money and cigarettes.

The three men left Sunoco and traveled a short distance to Don's Deli on West End Road, where they forced open a door and stole a cash register and damaged a credit card machine at about 3:45 a.m., the criminal complaints say.

Video captured on surveillance cameras at several of the businesses helped investigators, Shultz said.

State police recovered the Chevrolet, which was torched in woods near Zachery Road and state Route 239 in Huntington Township on June 26.

Banks allegedly told investigators he used gasoline to set the vehicle on fire, according to the complaints.

Preliminary hearings for the three men are expected to combine before a single district judge. A date has not been scheduled.

8/17/2011

Suspects charged in Nanticoke mayor's beating, carjacking

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Three men were arrested Tuesday for beating Nanticoke Mayor Joe Dougherty and stealing his company car in June. Daniel Thomas Banks, 24, of Nanticoke; Steven Brannigan, 20, of Hanover Township, and Thomas Maxwell Owens, 21, of Wilkes-Barre, were arraigned before Magisterial District Judge Donald Whittaker. Police said the three men used Dougherty's car to commit a string of burglaries in other communities throughout Luzerne County.

They face a slew of charges in connection with the beating and carjacking of Dougherty including aggravated assault, simple assault and robbery of a motor vehicle as well as burglary and related charges in Hanover and Newport townships and Hunlock Creek.

Dougherty, who talked to the media outside the arraignment, recalled the night of June 25 when three men bludgeoned him outside his home on East Green Street and stole his vehicle. He said he was beaten like never before. He just came

home, parked his vehicle outside his house and waited inside for his friend to pick him up.

While he waited, he saw three men walking in the middle of the road toward him. As they got closer, he said they opened his driver door, pulled him from his Chevrolet Cruz and hit him in the head, face and body. He was bleeding from his head, face, nose and right leg. Dougherty was assaulted with brass knuckles, a wooden bat and the three men's fists, police said.

Dougherty credited "wonderful cooperation from law enforcement" in arresting the three men. Nanticoke, Hanover Township and Newport Township police departments and state police at Wyoming and Shickshinny worked together to make the arrests.

According to the criminal complaint, police learned the three men were involved in other burglaries they committed with Dougherty's vehicle, including one that occurred June 26 at 1:30 a.m. at Countryside Market in Hunlock Creek. State police at Shickshinny investigated and observed the three on video committing the crime with Dougherty's car. Just after 3 a.m. on June 26, Newport Township police found a glass window in an exterior door was broken at the Variety Stop in Glen Lyon. A video showed the same vehicle was involved.

At 3:45 a.m. that day, Hanover Township police were dispatched to the Sans Souci Sunoco for a burglar alarm. When police arrived, they found the front window was smashed. According to police, the three men entered the business and destroyed the lottery machine, cash register and shelves. Money and cigarettes also were missing. Owner Simmy Singh reported \$218 was stolen from the cash register; \$607 worth of cigarettes were taken and \$3,300 in damage to the building and equipment.

At about 4:15 a.m. on June 26, Hanover Township police responded to Don's Deli on West End Road where a window was smashed. Owner Don Heness told police that the cash register and cord for the credit card machine was missing. He said the approximate value for the stolen cash register and cord for the credit card machine is \$121 and there was \$260 in damages to the building and equipment.

Investigators obtained video surveillance which shows Dougherty's vehicle at Don's Deli and Sans Souci Sunoco. The three men burned Dougherty's vehicle in the Hunlock Creek area, according to police.

The three men also are charged with breaking into and attempting to steal Peter Kanjorski Jr.'s vehicle in Nanticoke on June 25.

Between Aug. 1 and Aug. 4, members of Nanticoke, Hanover Township and Nanticoke police departments interviewed Banks, Brannigan and Owens, who admitted to their roles in committing the crimes, police said. The three men declined comment as police led them to their arraignment on Tuesday.

They were jailed at Luzerne County Correctional Facility in lieu of \$250,000 bail. Whittaker set preliminary hearings for Sept. 23 and 24 in his court and before magisterial district judges in the areas where the crimes occurred.

8/16/2011

Three men arrested for assault on Nanticoke mayor

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Three men are facing charges for the beating and carjacking of Nanticoke Mayor Joseph Dougherty in June.

[click image to enlarge](#)

Stephen Brannigan, 20, Daniel Thomas Banks, 24, and Thomas Maxwell Owens, 21, all from Wilkes-Barre, were arrested Tuesday morning after a joint investigation by state police at Wyoming, and police in Hanover Township, Nanticoke and Newport Township.

Authorities allege the three men assaulted Dougherty who was sitting inside an idling Chevrolet Cruze in the 300 block of East Green Street, Nanticoke, on June 26.

Dougherty was assaulted with brass knuckles, police allege.

After the three men stole the Chevrolet, state police said the vehicle was used in a burglary at the Country Side Quick Mart on Main Road in Hunlock Township on June 27.

The vehicle was found torched in a wooded area near Zachery Road and state Route 239 in Huntington Township on June 28.

Authorities also suspect the three men burglarized Don's Deli on West End Road in Hanover Township on June 26, and attempted to burglarize a building in Newport Township.

Brannigan, Banks and Owens are scheduled to be arraigned by District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke on a host of felony and misdemeanor assault and theft charges later today.

8/10/2011

Citizens Voice

Nanticoke police activity

Robert Smith of South Hanover Street reported someone entered his vehicle and stole a DVD/GPS/Backup Camera system.

Jennifer Olszyk of South Hanover Street reported someone entered her vehicle and stole a leather briefcase handbag.

Theresa Antolik of Hillcrest Drive reported someone entered her vehicle and stole loose change.

Joann Mavus of Hillcrest Drive reported someone entered two of her vehicles and stole sunglasses.

Joseph Michalek of Mountain View Drive reported someone entered his vehicle and stole loose change, a backpack and a GPS device.

Cheryl Taskowek of Hillcrest Drive reported someone entered her vehicle and stole loose change.

Sara Hamilton of Front Street reported someone keyed the driver side of her vehicle.

Nicholas Syudam of State Street was cited for operating an all-terrain vehicle on a roadway, operating an ATV without a license, operating an ATV without proper registration and operating a vehicle with a suspended license after he was spotted driving on Access Road.

John Klimchak reported someone broke the side window of a dump truck he owns and was parked on East Washington Street.

Shannon Musto of East Ridge Street reported someone punctured a hole in two of her tires and her swimming pool.

8/9/2011

Nanticoke man allegedly beats, drags girlfriend down road

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Police said a man beat his girlfriend and dragged her down the middle of East Main Street early Monday morning in Nanticoke, awakening neighbors.

Daryl Williams, 23, is charged with simple assault and harassment in connection with the domestic dispute that turned violent around 6:30 a.m.

Investigators said Williams chased after and caught up to live-in girlfriend, Starneesha Richardson, after she fled their apartment at 220 E. Main St. to avoid his attack. Williams knocked Richardson to the ground along the 100 block of Main Street and began punching and kicking her, police said.

Police said he then grabbed her by the feet and started dragging her down the roadway.

According to arrest papers:

Richardson told police the two got in an argument because she came home at 11 p.m. the night before. Williams then began smashing and breaking items around the home.

Around 2:25 a.m., police were called to their apartment for loud noise. The couple arrived at the door.

Williams was holding a metal pipe and a broomstick and Richardson was holding a knife. Both parties, however, denied their dispute ever got physical or that any threats were made.

The two continued to argue, police said, until Williams took Richardson's cellphone. Richardson then fled to a nearby convenience store, prompting Williams to follow. That's when, witnesses say, Williams beat Richardson and began to drag her down the street around 6:30 a.m.

Richardson suffered numerous scratches and scrapes, police said.

Williams was arraigned and jailed in the Luzerne County Correctional Facility in lieu of \$5,000 cash bail.

8/9/2011

Gun dealer alleges unfair sentence

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A Nanticoke man convicted of conspiring to illegally ship military equipment to Russia is seeking a hearing to determine whether his sentence is appropriate.

D&R Sports Center owner Mark Komoroski recently sent a letter to U.S. District Court Senior Judge Edwin M. Kosik in which he alleges he was unfairly sentenced to a longer prison term than his co-conspirator because the wrong federal guidelines were used.

Prosecutors said Komoroski and Russian national Sergey Korznikov conspired to smuggle equipment including rifle scopes, firearm magazines and face shields from the United States to Russia to be sold to unknown people.

Both men pleaded guilty. Kosik sentenced Korznikov on July 21 to six months in prison and two years of supervised release. However, Komoroski was sentenced on July 29, 2010, to 32 months - 2.6 years - imprisonment, two years of supervised release and a \$10,000 fine.

In a letter to Kosik dated July 31 and filed in federal court Monday, Komoroski said the main reason for the disparity was because Korznikov's sentence was determined using federal guidelines for economic offenses, while Komoroski said his sentence was determined under guidelines for offenses involving national defense and weapons of mass destruction.

"In reality, my offense was indistinguishable from Korznikov's," Komoroski wrote. "We conspired to smuggle goods outside of the U.S. without properly stating the value of such goods to avoid Korznikov having to pay import taxes to Russia."

To prove his claims, Komoroski is seeking a hearing and a reopening of records related to the sentencing guidelines. In his Aug. 5 reply, Kosik acknowledges receipt of Komoroski's letter, a copy of which was sent to Assistant U.S. Attorney Christy Fawcett, who prosecuted the case.

"At the time of Korznikov's sentencing, (Fawcett) specifically related the reason for disparity in the sentences. Accordingly, it may be more appropriate for her to respond to the letter I presume she received," Kosik wrote. "I know your circumstances have been distressful to you and your wife. Since she is most innocent, my sincere sympathy is with her."

Kosik concludes, "We may be addressing this matter again." Kosik's office had no comment on his reply.

Komoroski's attorneys, Frank Nocito and Philip Gelso, also declined comment.

Komoroski's wife Lecia said she visited him in prison Monday at Fort Dix, N.J., where he has been serving his time since Aug. 19, 2010, and was not aware of Kosik's letter. She has been working hard to help get her husband's sentence overturned.

"It's sad what transpired, and I'm hoping everybody realizes this is wrong, what they did to Mark," Lecia Komoroski said.

Korznikov's attorney Richard Levitt said he and his law partner Nicholas Kaiser do not represent Komoroski, and that he thinks Kosik will do what he believes is best.

"We have no interest in his sentencing one way or another," Levitt said.

Regarding Korznikov's sentencing, he said, "I think the judge was extremely thoughtful and fair."

7/26/2011

Area man appeals sentence for conspiring to export military items

Mark and Lecia Komoroski say attorneys failed to challenge calculation of sentencing guidelines.

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A Nanticoke man who pleaded guilty to illegally conspiring to export military equipment to Russia is questioning why his co-defendant received a much lesser sentence for his role in the case.

Mark Komoroski and his wife, Lecia, owners of D&R Sporting Goods, contend he was subjected to a much harsher sentence because his attorneys failed to challenge an alleged improper calculation of the sentencing guidelines relating to his crime.

That belief was compounded on Thursday, when Komoroski's co-defendant, Sergey Korznikov, was sentenced to six months in prison, compared to the 32-month prison term imposed on Komoroski last July.

Lecia Komoroski said she believes Korznikov's sentence was much less because his base offense level – a number utilized in federal cases that dictates the number of months of imprisonment – was properly calculated, whereas her husband's was not.

"He was completely misled in the courtroom," Lecia Komoroski said of her husband. "It comes down to the fact they were both charged with one count of conspiracy. They have to start at the same base offense level."

Lawyer's viewpoint

But Korznikov's attorney, Nicolas Kaiser of New York City, said the disparity stemmed from a difference in the charges to which the two men pleaded guilty.

Mark Komoroski and Korznikov, a Russian national, were charged in January 2008 with violating the Arms Export Control Act for trying to smuggle military equipment, including rifle scopes, firearm magazines and face shields, into Russia.

Komoroski pleaded guilty in August 2009 to five counts of conspiracy and was sentenced in July 2010. The dispute in his sentence centers on whether any of the items involved are on a list that requires the seller to have a special license

from the U.S. Department of State, which Komoroski did not possess.

Komoroski maintains the government wrongly concluded that 21 items shipped qualified for inclusion on that list – a determination that raised the sentencing guideline range in his case from eight to 14 months to 46 to 57 months in prison, he says.

In a motion seeking to vacate his sentence, Komoroski claims his attorneys, Frank Nocito and Philip Gelso, wrongly advised him that it did not matter if the items were on the list. The motion, which Komoroski and his wife wrote and filed themselves, claims the attorneys never filed a challenge to the government's position, leading to the imposition of a disproportionate sentence.

Contacted Monday, Nocito said he and Gelso were precluded from commenting on Komoroski's claims due to attorney client privilege.

Lecia Komoroski said she and Mark did not realize he had been subjected to the wrong sentencing standard until after he began serving his sentence in August 2010.

'Gut feeling'

Komoroski said she began reviewing the law based on a "gut feeling" that something was amiss. That's when she discovered his sentence had been based on a guideline relating to "offenses involving national defense and weapons of mass destruction."

Komoroski said the guideline range for that offense is much lower if the weapons involved were non-fully automatic small arms, such as rifles and handguns. In her husband's case, he had shipped rifle scopes, firearm magazines and face shields, thus he should have qualified for the lesser sentencing range.

"They had Mark and I believing (the items) were on the State Department list, when in fact they are not," she said. "If our attorneys had ever shown that to us, Mark would never have pleaded guilty to what he pleaded to."

Korzniakov's attorney, Kaiser, said he could not comment on Komoroski's ineffective counsel claim against Nocito and Gelso. He said he reviewed Komoroski's motion to vacate his sentence and does not believe he will prevail, however.

"I don't think they stand much of a chance given the way the courts faithfully addressed Mr. Komoroski's sentencing guideline and faithfully adhered to established precedent to determine Mr. Komoroski's sentence," Kaiser said.

As for the disparity in Komoroski's and Korzniakov's sentence, Kaiser said Komoroski and Korzniakov pleaded guilty to conspiracy. The key difference is Korzniakov admitted he engaged in the conspiracy solely to avoid paying Russian tariffs on the equipment, whereas Komoroski's plea involved smuggling the equipment into Russia, he said.

Lecia Komoroski insists her husband did not know he needed a State Department license to ship the equipment in question. She says Mark was simply trying to build up the family business and got involved with something he did not fully understand.

"We are just hard-working, middle-class Americans who were trying keep a business going and do right thing," she said.

Store still open

Lecia Komoroski has continued to operate D&R Sporting Goods since Mark's arrest. The store had to forfeit its license to sell firearms, but continues to sell other types of sporting goods.

Komoroski said she realizes it's possible Mark, who is scheduled for release in December 2012, will serve his entire sentence before the issue is resolved. They have vowed to continue to fight regardless.

"I'm very passionate about this because I know it's wrong," she said. "I don't care if it goes on for 10 years, we will continue to fight this."

7/22/2011

Russian gets six months for smuggling military equipment

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A Russian national who pleaded guilty to participating in a military equipment export smuggling operation was sentenced Thursday in federal court to six months in prison.

Sergey Korzniakov, 42, of Moscow, will begin his sentence on Aug. 11 at a yet to be determined location.

Senior U.S. District Judge Edwin Kosik also ordered Korzniakov to serve two years of supervised release upon the completion of his sentence.

Korzniakov and co-defendant Mark Komoroski, owner of D& R Sporting Goods in Nanticoke, were charged in January 2010 with conspiring to smuggle the equipment that included rifle scopes, ammunition magazines and face shields to Russia from the United States.

Korzniakov was connected to Moscow-based Tactica Ltd. that sells rifle optics, binoculars, boots, and other hunting and

paramilitary equipment.

Federal authorities believed he had illegally exported hundreds of thousands of dollars of equipment over a several-year period, according to a search warrant affidavit filed in 2006.

Komoroski received a 32-month sentence in July 2010, was ordered to pay a \$10,000 fine and serve two years of supervised release.

The investigation was handled by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Internal Revenue Service criminal investigations unit; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; U.S. Postal Inspection Service; Department of Commerce; Defense Criminal Investigative Service; and the Pennsylvania State Police.

7/21/2011

City police reported the following incidents:

Times Leader

- Nicholas Kopiak of West Union Street reported to police that someone stole his red 20-inch lawn mower from his back porch Monday.
- Brandon Switzer of East Union Street was cited with trespassing Monday after he was observed sitting in his vehicle that was parked in the Greater Nanticoke Area High School parking lot, violating the posted no trespassing sign, police said.

7/20/2011

Cereal dispute leads to arrest for Nanticoke man, woman

Police charge Jason Slater and Laura Rasmus with harassment, simple assault.

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A city couple was charged this weekend after an argument that began over spilled cereal.

City police said Jason Slater, 27, and Laura Rasmus, 23, both of East Church Street, were charged with harassment and simple assault after police responded to their home late Saturday for the report of an assault.

Slater and Rasmus were arraigned on the charges Sunday morning and were released on their own recognizance.

A preliminary hearing for the duo has tentatively been scheduled for July 26 before District Judge Donald Whittaker.

According to court papers, at around 11:45 p.m. Sunday police were called to the East Church Street home for the report of a man who was assaulted.

Slater told police he was assaulted by his girlfriend, Rasmus, and that he had been laying on the couch with a bowl of cereal.

While laying on the couch, Slater said, he began to fall asleep and spilled a little cereal on the floor.

Rasmus, Slater said, told him she "hated when he did that" and began to punch, slap and kick Slater.

Slater said he tried to get Rasmus to stop hitting him, but she grabbed a decorative cross from the wall and began to strike Slater with it.

Slater said he began to cry and left the home.

Police later spoke with Rasmus, who said she told Slater to stop dozing off on the couch repeatedly and then tried to kick Slater out of the house.

Rasmus said Slater is the one who grabbed the cross of the wall, and hit her on the back with it.

7/20/2011

City police reported the following incidents:

- Police said Howard Stritzinger of Prince Street was taken into custody and cited with public drunkenness after police said they saw him sleeping on a bench in front of the Oplinger Towers on East Main Street on Monday.
- Helen Allabaugh of Hanover Township reported to police that she was at a function at the Quoit Club in Nanticoke on Monday when someone entered her unlocked car and took a change purse and plastic bag, both containing cash.

7/13/2011

Nanticoke men arrested on drug trafficking charges

By Denise Allabaugh - Citizens Voice

Two Nanticoke men face drug trafficking charges for distributing hundreds of grams of heroin and crack cocaine, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Pennsylvania announced today.

Marcus Holder, 24, and Michael F. Bruce, 24, conspired to distribute more than 400 grams of heroin and more than 112 grams of crack cocaine in Luzerne County from 2009 to April 2011, according to U.S. Attorney Peter J. Smith. Holder and Bruce also allegedly possessed five firearms in relation to drug trafficking and distributing controlled substances on numerous occasions.

If convicted of all charges, Holder and Bruce face a maximum sentence of 40 years imprisonment.

The case was investigated by special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and officers from Nanticoke, Plains Township and Wilkes-Barre. Assistant U.S. Attorney John Gurganus is prosecuting the case.

7/9/2011

Heather Lynn Tolodzieski, 21, of Apollo Circle, Nanticoke, was sentenced Friday on three separate counts of retail theft by Luzerne County Judge Tina Polachek Gartley.

Tolodzieski pleaded no contest to one charge and guilty to the remaining two charges in May.

According to court papers, on Jan. 1, 2010, police said Tolodzieski entered Kohl's Department Store in Wilkes-Barre Township and tried to leave the store with clothing items.

On June 10, 2010, police said, Tolodzieski entered the Weis Market in Nanticoke and again tried to leave the store with several items.

On Dec. 14, 2010, police said, Tolodzieski entered Redner's Market in Edwardsville and attempted to remove items including sponges, a can of air freshener, a box of garbage bags and maxi pads.

6/30/2011

Out on bail on theft charges, man jailed for allegedly robbing store

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Free on bail on charges he conspired to steal copper and brass fixtures from a building at Moon Lake Park, Jonathan Kemmerer Jr. was arrested early Wednesday morning for allegedly robbing a store.

Kemmerer, 27, of East Broad Street, Nanticoke, was arraigned in Wilkes-Barre Central Court on two counts of robbery and a single count of theft. He was jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for lack of \$20,000 bail.

According to the criminal complaint:

Police allege Kemmerer entered the Cocoa Hut Convenient Mart on East Main Street around 9:30 p.m. Tuesday and tried to buy items with an access card that had insufficient funds. He left the store after he was refused the sale.

Police said in the complaint Kemmerer entered the store a second time with his hand under his shirt, telling the clerk, "Give me the money. I have a gun."

Kemmerer was identified as the suspect when police reviewed video surveillance, according to the complaint.

Police found Kemmerer at his house just before 1 a.m.

Kemmerer allegedly admitted to robbing the store, telling police he discarded a hat and T-shirt when he ran away from the business. He said he used the money he took to buy cocaine and gave his mother \$20, the complaint says.

In an unrelated case, according to court records, state police at Wyoming charged Kemmerer and Donald Keith Violini, 38, of Hunlock Township, with sneaking into the pool house at Moon Lake Park and stealing copper wire and brass fittings in December.

Violini is further charged with stealing items from the park's pool house in January.

State police allege the two men received \$209 from a scrap yard on Dec. 16, and Violini received \$89 from a scrap yard on Jan. 19, according to arrest records.

Kemmerer and Violini are facing theft-related charges in county court for allegedly stealing metal from Moon Lake.

Kemmerer is further facing charges in county court for stealing copper from a house on East Broad Street, Nanticoke, on Jan. 19, court records say.

A preliminary hearing on the latest charges against Kemmerer is scheduled on July 5 before District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke.

6/28/2011

Car stolen from Nanticoke mayor found torched in Sweet Valley

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State police at Shickshinny recovered a burned out vehicle that may be linked to the car stolen from Nanticoke Mayor Joseph Dougherty Saturday night.

The vehicle was found torched near Zachary Road at about 8:30 p.m. Monday. It has since been seized by state police. Dougherty was assaulted by three males in their late teens or early 20s while he sat inside a Chevrolet Cruze, which is owned by his employer, Colors Inc.

State police suspect the vehicle was used in a burglary at Sorber's Stop and Go Quick Mart on Main Road in Hunlock Township at about 1:33 a.m. Sunday.

Two males smashed the glass front door at the quick mart while the third male waited outside, state police said.

Cigarettes, lottery tickets and an empty cash register was stolen from the store. The vehicle was last seen traveling south on Main Road after the burglary, state police said.

Authorities are also investigating whether the three men are responsible for burglaries at the Sunoco Service Station on the Sans Souci Parkway, Hanover Township, and Don's Deli on West End Road, also in Hanover Township, Saturday night.

6/27/2011

Nanticoke mayor is attacked

Joe Dougherty is beaten Saturday in a crime that might be linked to others.

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As the city's mayor, Joe Dougherty might have upset some people, but not to the point where they would beat him and steal his car.

The part-time mayor was the victim of a vicious attack Saturday night near his house on East Green Street that left him with a broken nose, staples in his head and bruises over his body.

"I don't think it was anybody from town, to be completely honest with you," he said Sunday.

Three white males in their late teens or early 20s assaulted him and drove off with a white, four-door 2011 Chevrolet Cruze that has the number 192 in black on the driver's side quarter panel. Police are investigating whether the carjacking and robbery is connected to the smash-and-dash burglaries of stores in Hanover, Newport and Union townships.

Dougherty, 44, a full-time, automotive paint salesman for Colours Inc., said he was sitting in the car provided by the company doing paperwork around 11:15 p.m. and waiting for a friend to come by so that they could go out. The headlights were on, the motor running and the interior dome light was on as well. He saw three males pass by and he didn't give them a second thought.

"Next thing you know I'm drug out of my car and I'm thumped," he said.

"It was so quick. They pulled me out of the car. My keys were still in the ignition. I was listening to the radio. I saw something. It looked like a club."

Dougherty said his attackers didn't say anything and they didn't take his wallet.

He remembered calling Luzerne County 911 and handing his phone to his friend who had arrived by then.

Nanticoke Police Detective Capt. William Shultz corrected Dougherty, saying the mayor did call 911, but "at one point lost consciousness." The friend picked up the phone, said Shultz.

Dougherty was taken to Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center in Plains Township, where he was treated.

The mayor struggled to find an answer for the attack.

"I've lived in this neighborhood all my life," he said, adding he plans to stay put.

Shultz, however, offered an explanation, calling it a "crime of opportunity."

Dougherty did not know his attackers and they might not have known him, said Shultz.

The detective said a neighbor reported seeing Dougherty sitting inside the car with the headlights on.

"He didn't think anything of it," Shultz said of the neighbor. The neighbor also recalled hearing the car speed off.

The car was last seen traveling north on South Chestnut Street.

A car matching that description was involved in a burglary around 1:30 a.m. at Sorber's Stop & Go Country Side Quick Mark gas station on Main Road in Union Township, according to state police at Shickshinny.

A glass door was smashed and two white males went inside, state police said. A third white male waited outside the store. Cigarettes, lottery tickets and an empty cash register were taken, state police state.

The three males drove away, heading south on Main Road toward Hunlock Township and U.S. Route 11, state police said.

Windows were smashed in burglaries at Don's Deli on West End Road and the Sunoco Service station on the Sans Souci Parkway, Hanover Township police said.

There were no descriptions of the suspects in either of those break-ins.

Anyone with information about the carjacking and robbery is asked to contact Nanticoke police at 570-735-2200. State police at Shickshinny asked that anyone with information about the break-in at Sorber's Stop & Go contact them at 570 542-4117.

6/27/2011

Nanticoke mayor carjacked, beaten

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The mayor of Nanticoke was bludgeoned with a club late Saturday night when three men attacked him outside of his home and stole his car.

Recovering with family Sunday afternoon, Joe Dougherty said they "ripped me out of my car and hit me with a billy club, but I'm still walking around today."

Nanticoke police Capt. William Shultz declined to identify the victim, but confirmed police are looking for three men in their late teens or early 20s who are suspected of stealing a vehicle from the 300 block of East Green Street at about 11 p.m. Saturday. He is looking into a possible connection with several burglaries and attempted burglaries in the area that night.

He said it did not appear the victim was targeted, and this was a "crime of opportunity." The vehicle is a white four-door 2011 Chevrolet Cruze with "192" painted in black on the driver's side. It was last seen traveling north on South Chestnut Street.

Dougherty said he was sitting in the vehicle, doing paperwork, waiting for friends to pick him up, when the men attacked him. Despite heavy blood loss and some loss of consciousness, he called 911 for help. Dougherty was taken to Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center and later released. He received staples in his head, stitches in his forehead, nose and leg and his nose was broken.

Councilman Brent Makarczyk rents to Dougherty and lives in the same building as the mayor. He heard a car speed away Saturday night and walked outside to find Dougherty and a friend, who was on the phone.

"Just about the time I got to the car, he collapsed," Makarczyk said. That's when he noticed the blood. "Joe, he's a fantastic human being, just a great guy. I don't know what motivated this kind of attack, but there must be something wrong with these guys," he said. "... When you have three guys drag a guy out of a car and beat him without saying a word to each other, they're either psychic or they planned this."

Their neighborhood is generally peaceful, Makarczyk said, and he and his wife will sit on the porch until late at night in the summer. They rarely see anyone besides neighbors or teenagers walking around. However, he sees the demographics of the area changing and an increase in drug activity and knows that is taking a toll.

"With the money issue, it seems like the police department is doing the best they can but they are spread thin," he said.

The 44-year-old mayor has been a resident of Nanticoke his entire life, and said nothing of this sort has happened to him before, but the region is changing and violent incidents are becoming more frequent. Dougherty cautioned people to be vigilant in their neighborhoods and keep an eye on their surroundings.

"People voted me into office because they wanted someone to stand tall and I do, even if I get knocked down. I get back up," he said.

Shultz said there could be a connection to an attempted burglary at the Variety Stop, 15 E. Main St., Glen Lyon. Plains Township police are also investigating several overnight burglaries, but officers were unable to provide additional details Sunday afternoon.

State police at Shickshinny are investigating a burglary at the Sorber's Stop and Go Country Side Quick Mart in Union Township, near Hunlock Creek, that involved a white four-door Chevrolet Cruze that was carjacked earlier from Nanticoke, according to state police.

Three men about 18 to 25 years old, smashed the glass front door and entered the store at about 1:33 a.m. Two of the men went inside, stole cigarettes, lottery tickets and an empty cash register, and then all three fled in the Chevrolet, headed south.

Hanover Township police are also investigating several overnight burglaries, at 3:45 a.m. at the Sunoco Service Station on the Sans Souci Highway and at 4:15 a.m. at Don's Deli on West End Road. Both stores were entered after front windows were broken. Officers were unable to provide additional details Sunday afternoon.

Anyone with information on the carjacking is asked to call Nanticoke City police at 570-735-2200. Anyone with

information on the Union Township burglary is asked to call state police at Shickshinny at 570-542-4117

6/25/2011

Thief with green thumb on the run

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Hanover Township and Nanticoke police are searching for a wanted fugitive accused of stealing various items from Dundee Gardens on the San Souci Parkway and who also is also facing prison time for unrelated charges in county court.

Authorities are looking for Michael A. Laury, 32, of 244 E. Main St., Apt. A, in Nanticoke. He is facing felony theft charges in Hanover Township, along with receiving stolen property and drug charges in Nanticoke after the stolen goods and drugs were found in his home during a search, police said.

Laury has been on the run since he failed to report to prison on May 23 to begin serving a one to two year prison sentence on previous drug and theft charges, police said.

According to arrest papers filed by Hanover Township and Nanticoke police:

Laury and his girlfriend subleased a room of their apartment to two women. After numerous odd garden items appeared in the home, one of the women, Cassandra Friese became suspicious. The items included a fountain, garden gnomes, an outdoor fireplace, a birdbath, bronze statues, concrete figurines and plants.

Friese then questioned Laury, who admitted the items were taken from Dundee Gardens. Friese then went to the business to report the theft.

Nanticoke police served a search warrant at the property on May 20 and located the stolen items, worth more than \$2,000.

Anyone with information on Laury's whereabouts is asked to call 911, Hanover Township police at 570-825-1250, or Nanticoke police at 570-735-2200.

6/25/2011

A man was arraigned Thursday night on charges he received items that were stolen during a home burglary

Times Leader

Joshua Charles Frame, 29, of East Main Street, Nanticoke, was charged with receiving stolen property and criminal conspiracy. He was arraigned by District Judge Paul Roberts in Kingston and released on \$7,500 unsecured bail.

State police at Wyoming allege Frame accepted a television and a Direct TV box that were stolen from a Lake Township house in September, according to the criminal complaint.

State police recovered the items inside residence of Frame's former girlfriend on East Main Street.

6/23/2011

A man was arraigned Wednesday in Wilkes-Barre Central Court on charges he assaulted a woman inside her residence.

Times Leader

Paul Halliday, 36, of West Ridge Street, Nanticoke, was charged with three counts of criminal mischief, and one count each of burglary, criminal trespass, false imprisonment, harassment, defiant trespass and possession of a controlled substance. He was jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for lack of \$2,000 bail.

Police allege Halliday opened a door and entered the woman's residence in the 300 block of West Main Street on Tuesday night. Halliday allegedly struck the woman and refused to let her leave, according to the criminal complaint.

Police said in the complaint Halliday had 19 prescription tablets in his pockets.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled on June 28 before District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke.

6/23/2011

City police reported the following:

Times Leader

- Edward Wiernusz, of South Hanover Street, reported a patio chair and an ottoman were stolen from his patio.
- Eclipse Fleet Service, of West Grand Street, reported two windows were smashed at its building.
- Joseph Zdziarski, of West Noble Street, reported someone flattened a tire on his vehicle.

- Debbie Rentko, of West Union Street, reported jewelry and electronics were stolen during a burglary at her residence.
- Police said they cited Kara Young, of East Grand Street, with public drunkenness when she was allegedly found intoxicated and vomiting in an alley near East Washington Street. Police said Young was wanted on unrelated summary warrants.
- Donald Sullivan, of West Main Street, reported someone keyed his vehicle.
- Police arrested Steven Tagnani, 21, of East Broad Street, on charges he assaulted his stepbrother and stole a vehicle on Friday.

Tagnani was charged with robbery of a vehicle, unauthorized use of a vehicle, simple assault and harassment. He was jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for lack of \$25,000 bail.

Police allege Tagnani assaulted Ronald Sokoloski and stole Sokoloski's vehicle, according to the criminal complaint. Police recovered the vehicle near Tagnani's residence.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled on June 28 before District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke.

6/18/2011

Second steroid charge for former Nanticoke man

Times Leader

A former Nanticoke man who pleaded guilty in 2008 to distributing anabolic steroids has been charged a second time with selling the performance enhancing drugs.

Peter Sepling and John Nikoloff, no address listed, were indicted last week by a federal grand jury on charges of distributing a controlled substance and several related offenses.

According to the indictment, Sepling and Nikoloff sold and distributed several types of anabolic steroids, as well as the gamma butyrolactone (GBL), a chemical that is utilized as a recreational drug, in Luzerne County from April 21 till April 26.

Sepling was among nine people who were charged by federal authorities in 2007 with operating a drug ring that distributed steroids and several types of "club drugs" in Luzerne and other counties.

He was sentenced in April 2008 to 2 years in prison on that case. He was released from prison in February 2010, according to the federal department of corrections.

The latest indictment says Sepling and Nikoloff smuggled the drugs into the United States from China. The indictment does not provide any further details of the operation.

6/17/2011

City police reported the following incidents

Citizens Voice

John Storm of River Street reported someone stole a 30 pack of Coors Light and a bottle of vodka from a cooler on his deck.

Cohen Miller, of Beaumont Street, Warrior Run, reported someone threw a large rock through the windshield of his vehicle.

Brenda Klos of Apollo Circle reported someone put sugar in her gas tank.

Jeffrey Montgomery of East Main Street, Glen Lyon, reported someone smashed the passenger rear window of his vehicle on Front Street

Tanya Belcher, of West South Street, reported someone threw a rock at her window.

Alex Oko, of East Church Street, reported someone keyed both sides and the hood of his vehicle.

Scott Weber of West Church Street reported someone stole his sliver and black bike.

Michael Sarnak of South Hanover Street reported someone smashed out the driver's side of window of his vehicle.

John Pipan of Ridgeview reported someone broke the door and window of a property he owns on South Prospect Street in Nanticoke.

Tracey Applybey, of West Green Street, reported someone attempted to steal the license plate off her vehicle.

Dorothy Pugh of Lawrence Street reported someone threw three lawn chairs into her in-ground pool.

Karen Hazleton reported someone spray-painted graffiti on the sidewalk and front door steps of a property she owns on Front Street.

6/17/2011

A man was arraigned Tuesday on a charge he sent several text messages to a woman in violation of a protection from abuse order

Times Leader

Scott Alfonso, 18, of Enterprise Street, Nanticoke, was charged with stalking and violating a PFA. He was arraigned by District Judge Donald Whittaker and released without bail.

Police allege Alfonso sent five text messages to a woman who obtained a PFA against him in February, according to the criminal complaint.

A preliminary hearing on the stalking charge is scheduled on June 21. A hearing on the alleged PFA violation is scheduled on June 23 in county court.

5/26/2011

Police Blotter

Times Leader

A man wanted for stealing metal from a railroad line and stealing a television from a store was allegedly captured with heroin and syringes Tuesday night, police said.

Police apprehended Michael Gordon Briggs, 25, last known address as South Hanover Street, Nanticoke, at about 10:55 p.m. after receiving information he was at an apartment on South Market Street.

Police allege Briggs was in possession of heroin stamped "pain killer" and several syringes. He struggled with an officer when he was arrested, police allege.

Briggs was wanted by police on charges he stole a television from Weis Market in Nanticoke on Sept. 7.

Canadian Pacific police charged Briggs, along with Connie Marie Mihalichko, 20, and Luke Galazin, 23, both of Ashley, of stealing metal from a railroad line near Breaker Road in Hanover Township on April 1.

Briggs was arraigned in Wilkes-Barre Central Court on five counts of possession of drug paraphernalia, two counts of resisting arrest, and one count each of criminal conspiracy, defiant trespass, theft, escape, criminal attempt to escape, possession of a controlled substance and retail theft. He was jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for lack of \$16,000 bail.

Briggs is scheduled for preliminary hearings on charges filed by Nanticoke police and Canadian Pacific police on May 31 before district judges Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke and Joseph Halsey in Hanover Township.

Mihalichko and Galazin are scheduled for preliminary hearings on June 7 before Halsey.

5/7/2011

A Wilkes-Barre man was charged with assault and harassment for pulling off the shirt and bra of his pregnant girlfriend after he dumped a can of soda over her head in Nanticoke.

Citizens Voice

Nanticoke police filed the charges against Joshua S. Henrie, 21, of Scott Street following the April 13 incident at the rear of a residence in the 300 block of East Washington Street, according to a probable cause affidavit filed with Magisterial District Justice Donald Whittaker of Nanticoke.

They said the victim was inside a car when Henrie reached through the window to remove her clothes, the affidavit said.

5/7/2011

Casings recovered in Nanticoke drive-by shooting

Citizens Voice

Nanticoke police recovered six shell casings after receiving reports that shots were fired from a vehicle Thursday night. Witnesses said the passenger in a dark, small to mid-sized vehicle fired five shots from a small-caliber weapon at 11:50 p.m. in the area of Coal Street and two more shots at Apollo Circle, police said.

While no person, vehicle or building was hit by what police called a reckless act, they ask anyone who can help locate the shooter to call them at 570-735-2200.

5/6/2011

Times Leader

City police reported the following:

- Len Stefaniak, of West Green Street, reported someone tried to enter his residence through a basement door.
- Police cited Kenneth Sliker, of Apollo Circle, with public drunkenness after investigating a disturbance in the Apollo Circle apartment complex.
- Lillian Garcia, of East Washington Street, reported someone forced open the front door to her residence, causing damage.
- John Heck, of Coal Street, reported a 9 mm handgun and a loaded magazine were stolen from his residence.
- Frank Castrignano reported copper pipe was stolen from a house he owns on East Ridge Street.
- Donna Littzi, of East Green Street, reported someone slashed a tire on her vehicle.
- May Burger reported a window was smashed on a house she owns on East Ridge Street.
- Steven Bruns, of West Green Street, reported someone vandalized his vehicle.
- Jamie Coen, of West South Street, reported someone damaged a wheel on her lawn mower.
- Jill Jeffries, of River Street, reported a two-cycle mini Harley-Davidson and a weed trimmer were stolen from her shed.
- Robert Ottensman, of River Street, reported a child's gas-powered quad was stolen from his shed.
- John Storm, of River Street, reported a pad lock was cut on a storage trailer. No items were stolen.
- Police charged William James Cupp, 53, last known address as West Green Street, with violating a protection from abuse order on April 28, when Loretta Fenner claimed he slapped her on West Green Street.
- Police charged Desalegn Y. Tefera, 30, of Wilkes-Barre, with violating a protection from abuse order on April 29, when Rahel Alemu claimed he contacted her at Luzerne County Community College.
- Police charged William Michael Conway, 25, of Nanticoke, with violating a protection from abuse order on May 1, when he allegedly confronted his ex-girlfriend, Erin Shea, while she was shopping at Weis Markets.

5/5/2011

Police: Father pulls knife on 14-year-old daughter

Citizens' Voice

A Nanticoke father, Brian Halaburda, was charged with attempted assault when he pulled a knife on his 14-year-old daughter during a domestic dispute on Tuesday night at their home on Hanover Street, city police said in a probable cause affidavit.

The fight started when Halaburda and his wife asked their daughter where she got money to buy new clothes, the affidavit said.

4/27/2011

Nanticoke police probe robbery, burglary incidents

Citizens Voice

The Turkey Hill Minit Market at 460 W. Main St. was robbed Tuesday just after 4 p.m. and the suspect fled on foot, police said.

According to police, a white male in his late teens, about 5 foot 9 inches tall, weighing about 150 pounds and wearing a navy blue hooded jacket, faded blue jeans and a blue handkerchief across his face entered the store and demanded the clerk open the cash register and give him all the money. The suspect fled with a small amount of cash.

Later that night, Nanticoke police investigated a house burglary in the 200 block of Enterprise Street. The victims said they left their home at about 7:30 and returned home at about 11 p.m. to find their garage door kicked in.

According to police, the suspect or suspects entered the house through an inside garage door and stole jewelry, watches, weapons and personal checks.

Anyone with any information about the crimes is asked to call Nanticoke police at 735-2200, ext. 201.

4/14/2011

Cops check on report of man banging on doors; arrest fugitive

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A woman at the bar apparently had no interest in the man from Nanticoke -- but police did.

James Michael Hughes told township police he was with a woman at Mugs and Jugs Bar on Oxford Street early Wednesday morning, according to the criminal complaint, when the woman left and did not return. Hughes, 22, of East State Street, said he walked to an apartment complex looking for friends and a place to stay early Wednesday morning. Township police encountered Hughes while investigating a report of a suspicious man banging on doors at Marion Terrace Apartments on Mark Drive around 2:30 a.m.

According to the latest criminal complaint:

Police said the banging led to the capture of fugitive Hughes, who was wanted by the Luzerne County sheriffs and adult probation departments for missing a court hearing and violating probation.

After his capture, police said, Hughes used another name to hide his true identity.

He was allegedly found in possession of a pill that he did not have a prescription for.

Hughes was arraigned in Wilkes-Barre Central Court on charges of giving false identification to law enforcement, disorderly conduct and possession of a controlled substance. He was jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for lack of \$10,000 bail.

According to court records, Hughes was sentenced Feb. 7 to 36 months probation with the first six months on house arrest on charges of simple assault and possession of a controlled substance. Those charges involved allegations that Hughes assaulted two township police officers and a paramedic on Oct. 23, 2009, and was in possession of heroin during a traffic stop in Wilkes-Barre on May 7, 2010.

In an unrelated case, Hughes was wanted by the county Sheriff's Department on a warrant accusing him of skipping a preliminary hearing on March 29 on felony assault charges, according to arrest and court records.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled on April 19 before District Judge Joseph Halsey in Hanover Township.

4/14/2011

Nanticoke man crashes truck into moving train

Amanda Christman - Citizens' Voice

A Nanticoke man drove his pickup truck into a moving train in Hazle Village this morning, escaping with only a neck injury but snarling morning traffic on state Route 309.

State police at Hazleton said Robert Pashinski, 51, was northbound when he slammed into the moving freight train at about 9:20 a.m.

There is no gate at the crossing and Pashinski told police he didn't hear the train or see flashing warning lights until it was too late.

The accident happened in Hazle Township on tracks that traverse the four-lane highway between the Pennsylvania Driver License Center and the intersection with state Route 424, just south of the Hazleton city line.

The train was pulling multiple freight cars labeled "Norfolk Southern Railroad" and was heading west on the tracks when Pashinski drove into it, police said.

Route 309 was blocked to motorists south of Route 424 and north of the railroad tracks as emergency workers cleaned up the scene and a tow truck loaded Pashinski's Dodge Ram pickup onto a flatbed around 10:15 a.m.

The train remained stopped on the tracks, blocking Route 309 until police gave the conductor the authorization to roll away shortly after 10 a.m.

Pashinski, who was hauling a wrecked Toyota Corolla and a motorcycle to a Hazleton area junkyard with his pickup truck, sustained minor injuries, police said.

Police said they will cite him for various motor vehicle violations at district court in Hazle Township.

The pickup truck sustained front end damage and the train was not damaged.

Hazleton Fire Department, Hazle Township Fire and Rescue, Hazleton police and McAdoo Ambulance responded.

4/13/2011

City police reported the following incidents Tuesday:

Citizens' Voice

> Judith Kotch told police someone forced entry into her West Grand Street home and stole a 47-inch Zenith flat-screen plasma television.

> Michelle Cardinal of Loomis Street said someone entered her house and stole a brown leather Raiders wallet and its contents.

- > Someone broke into the Pinnacle Roofing warehouse and stole 20 sheets of 3-inch by 8-inch copper flashing.
- > Someone stole 75 feet of green garden hose from the side of Harry Worke's Beaumont Street, Warrior Run, home.
- > William Voyton of West Grand Street reported someone spray-painted a silver line across the top of the rear door of his vehicle.
- > Kimberly Miller of Hill Street and Adam Zwolinski of West Church Street reported having the windshields of their vehicles shot with BB guns. Thomas Powell of Lee Mine Street said his rear passenger-side door window was shot with a BB gun.
- > Ron Lamarca said someone struck the fence post at the rear of his Pine Street residence.

Two Nanticoke men are charged with violating protection from abuse orders in two separate incidents.

Andrew Wisneski, 22, of Nanticoke, was arrested at 2:37 p.m. Tuesday on a warrant after a Hanover Township officer saw him riding a bike in the area of the Sans Souci Parkway.

William James Cupp, 53, formerly of West Green Street, was arrested by Nanticoke police Saturday morning after allegedly harassing his ex-girlfriend by saying, "How nice, look at the love birds" when he saw her walking with her new boyfriend and phoning her later. Cupp was not supposed to have any contact with his ex-girlfriend.

4/13/2011

Police Blotter

Times Leader

A man accused of ramming his vehicle into a car driven by a former girlfriend waived his right to a preliminary hearing Tuesday before District Judge Donald Whittaker.

Steven Todd Price, 40, of Buttonwood Avenue, Wilkes-Barre, waived charges of stalking and accidents involving damage to attended vehicle to Luzerne County Court.

Nanticoke police withdrew charges of reckless endangerment, simple assault and five traffic violations against Price. Police allege Angela Espinosa reported on Feb. 3 that her vehicle was struck by a Ford Escape, driven by Price, on West Washington Street. She followed Price, who she claimed made a motion with his hand across his throat, according to a police news release.

4/12/2011

Cops: Bath salts tied to break-in

Times Leader Staff

A man who allegedly told police he was high on bath salts was charged with burglary after authorities said they found him inside of a classroom building at Luzerne County Community College early Monday morning.

Matthew J. Furr, 32, of Middleburg, was charged with burglary and criminal trespass.

He was jailed at the county prison for lack of \$10,000 bail.

According to the criminal complaint:

A security guard at the college noticed an open door at Building 4, which is the science building, around 1:30 a.m.

Police searched the building and allegedly found Furr sleeping in a corner of room 436.

Furr told police he hopped on a freight train in Sunbury to Wilkes-Barre two days ago and found himself wandering around the area.

He consumed bath salts and started feeling chest pains, the complaint says.

Furr said he walked on Kosciuszko Street looking for help and found himself lying in the roadway.

He got up and ended up on campus, claiming he found an open door to a building.

Furr said he entered the building looking for help, according to the complaint.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled on April 19 before District Judge Donald Whittaker.

4/5/2011

Police Blotter

Times Leader

A Nanticoke woman was sentenced Monday to four years probation on several charges of indecent exposure in which

police say she exposed herself to children and neighbors.

Kathleen Levandowski, 43, of Apollo Circle, was sentenced on three counts of indecent exposure, two counts of driving under the influence and one count of harassment by Luzerne County Senior Judge Joseph Augello.

Augello also ordered Levandowski to serve seven days on house arrest with an electronic monitor and to undergo mental-health and drug-and-alcohol evaluations. She pleaded guilty to the charges in February.

According to court records, on April 19, 2010, Levandowski exposed her genitals while on the hood of a neighbor's vehicle outside her home, and performed obscene acts in the yard and when officers arrived.

On May 22, two different neighbors reported Levandowski flashed her breasts at children playing in a nearby playground and to holding a bouquet of daisies while nude outside her home.

3/31/2011

Area man acquitted of rape

Daniel Drury Sr. testified false allegation he assaulted girl was result of charge he filed.

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After nearly seven hours of deliberations, a Luzerne County jury acquitted a Nanticoke man of raping an 11-year-old girl in 2002.

The jury of 11 men and one woman found Daniel Drury Sr., not guilty of five related charges, including rape of a child. "I'm not guilty," Drury, 46, said while leaving the Bernard C. Brominski courthouse building Wednesday evening. "It's all because of allegations...that someone has to go through this because of a bad divorce. It's a shame..."

Drury's attorney, Thomas Cometa, said he is happy the jury listened to evidence and gave the case great thought before delivering its verdict of not guilty on charges of rape of a person under 13 years old, aggravated indecent assault, incest, indecent assault and corruption of minors.

Prosecutors alleged Drury raped the girl shortly after her 11th birthday in 2002. The now 19-year-old woman did not report the incident until 2008 when she began having vivid nightmares, she testified Monday.

The woman cried while the verdict was read Wednesday evening, while members of Drury's family hugged and gave Drury the thumbs-up.

Cometa said the delay in reporting the incident could be one factor the jury weighed in its verdict.

Luzerne County Senior Judge Joseph Augello, who presided over the trial, said Drury will be released from the county prison pending any detainers.

Drury testified Tuesday he believed the alleged rape story was fabricated against him in retaliation for filing harassment charges against his ex-wife.

He testified that in 2008 he filed harassment charges against his ex-wife, Gail, and that at a hearing before a district judge both were found not guilty of harassment.

He said he had a drinking problem at the time, and rather than "getting drunk and doing something stupid," he had been planning for some time to move to Florida and decided to follow through with his plans.

He said he moved to Florida in late 2008, not because he wanted to flee Nanticoke to avoid getting arrested, but because he wanted to start a new life away from his ex-wife and his drinking problem.

He said he had no idea charges were being filed against him. He said he knew Luzerne County Children and Youth Services had conducted an investigation on him, but he added that he thought that investigation was closed.

Drury also said he did speak with Nanticoke police about the alleged incident, but the police never told him they were filing charges against him and never told him not to leave Nanticoke.

Nanticoke police, Drury said, never said they didn't believe him when he denied the allegations, and said they would call him if they needed him.

4/27/2011

A third person has been charged in connection with a theft from Pennsylvania American Water Co.

Police Blotter - Times Leader

Township police said Jodelle Lamoreaux, 41, of West Field Street, Nanticoke, was arraigned on Thursday before District Judge Michael Dotzel, Wilkes-Barre Township.

Lamoreaux along with Joshua G. Hallas, 28, of Ridge Street, Nanticoke, and Kristin M. Smith, 38, of Loomis Street, Glen Lyon, Newport Township, are accused of stealing a steel cutting blade from the water company on South Main Street on Tuesday afternoon.

Hallas and Smith, who were stopped by a water company employee, were charged with conspiracy to commit theft, theft by unlawful taking and criminal trespass. An arrest warrant had been issued for Lamoreaux, who fled before police arrived, police said.

Lamoreaux was released on her own recognizance. Her preliminary hearing is scheduled for April 4 before District Judge Joseph Halsey in Hanover Township.

Hallas and Smith are free on \$10,000 unsecured bail. They have a preliminary hearing before Halsey at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday.

4/23/2011

Plymouth man charged with sex abuse of girls

By Bob Kalinowski Citizens' Voice

A 51-year-old man is facing a slew of child sex charges for sexually abusing two young girls at homes in Nanticoke and Plymouth between 2002 and 2005, police said today.

Robert Caravella is accused of preying on and violating the girls at his former home on North Chestnut Street in Nanticoke and his current home on Gould Street in Plymouth.

The girls, now 15 and 10, recently described the horrors of the alleged abuse to investigators, arrest papers say. Caravella made the girls view pornographic magazines and then forcibly subjected them to sexual acts, according to charges filed today.

Caravella was arraigned this morning in Wilkes-Barre Central Court by Senior Magisterial District Judge Andrew Barilla.

He is charged with 36 counts of charges, which include involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated indecent assault of a victim less than 13, aggravated indecent assault of a child, illegal contact with a minor, corruption of minors, endangering the welfare of children.

Barilla ordered Caravella jailed in the Luzerne County Correctional Facility in lieu of \$25,000 cash bail.

A preliminary hearing was tentatively scheduled for March 29 in front of Magisterial District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke.

3/18/2011

Two brothers were arraigned Thursday on charges they robbed a woman in December. One is wanted for alleged attempted murder in New York City, authorities said.

Times Leader

Anthony McClinton, 23, and his brother, Alonzo McClinton, 28, of Bronx, N.Y.C., were captured by police and the New York City Fugitive Task Force on Wednesday night. Anthony McClinton was captured in a parking lot near Apollo Circle and Alonzo was captured at an apartment at Apollo Circle.

Anthony McClinton was wanted for a shooting in New York City on March 13.

Nanticoke police charged the two men for allegedly robbing and assaulting a woman at her residence on Hanover Street on Dec. 3. During a struggle with the woman, a shot from a gun struck a door, according to the criminal complaint.

Police also charged Alonzo McClinton with stealing a vehicle he asked to borrow from a woman on Dec. 5, the complaint says. The woman learned Alonzo took the vehicle to New York City.

The two men were arraigned in Wilkes-Barre Central Court on six counts of robbery, and one count each of theft and simple assault. Alonzo McClinton was also charged with theft, unauthorized use of a vehicle and being a fugitive from justice.

Alonzo was jailed at the county prison for lack of \$310,000 bail, and Anthony McClinton was jailed for lack of \$300,000 bail.

Preliminary hearings are scheduled on March 22 before District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke.

3/16/2011

15-30 months in sex assault case

Matthew Souder, 26, charged with having an inappropriate relationship with girl, 14.

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A Nanticoke man charged with having an inappropriate relationship with a 14-year-old girl was sentenced Tuesday to

15 to 30 months in county prison.

Matthew Souder, 26, with a last known address of East Green Street, was sentenced by Luzerne County Judge David Lupas on one count of statutory sexual assault.

Souder pleaded guilty to the charge in January.

"I'm sorry about what happened...very sorry," Souder said before his sentencing.

The girl's mother also spoke Tuesday, saying her daughter suffers from horrible nightmares, can't sleep at night and attends counseling.

Souder's attorney, Thomas Cometa, said his client has accepted responsibility for his actions. He said alcohol was a major factor in Souder's conduct and there were no allegations of force made.

According to court papers:

On July 15, a then-14-year-old girl told police that on July 2 she and Souder had sexual intercourse at an East Ridge Street, Nanticoke, residence.

The girl told police that on July 2 she went to her friend's home, where she had been going on weekends since the beginning of the summer.

The girl said she and her friend played video games when Souder asked if they wanted to smoke some marijuana. The girl said Souder called her a chicken and that she eventually did smoke marijuana.

The girl said Souder also had alcohol and that several drinks were consumed at the residence. The girl said her friend eventually fell asleep and that she went to bed, police said.

That's when, the girl said, she and Souder spoke for a few minutes in the bedroom when Souder asked her to take off her pants.

The girl said she refused at least three times before she complied. Police said Souder initially denied having intercourse with the girl or giving anyone alcohol or marijuana.

He later told police it was the girl who initiated intercourse with him, according to court papers.

3/11/2011

Police Blotter

Times Leader

A homeless man was arraigned Wednesday in Wilkes-Barre Central Court on charges he stole a cell phone and money from an apartment.

Police charged Daryl Lowyn, 40, with theft and public drunkenness. He was jailed at the county prison for lack of \$10,000 bail.

Police alleged Lowyn stole a cell phone and money from an apartment in Nanticoke Towers on March 1 or March 2. He also appeared in public while intoxicated on Prospect Street on Tuesday, according to the criminal complaint.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled on March 15 before District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke.

3/8/2011

Times Leader

Police report

Justin Wiermusz, of South Hanover Street, reported someone kicked in the door to his grandfather's garage.

3/1/2011

Updated: 2:06 PM

LCCC student caught with gun on campus

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A student at Luzerne County Community College was charged with possessing a gun on campus Tuesday morning. Christian Zaccagni Sr. said he forgot the firearm, which he said weighs three ounces, was in his coat. Zaccagni said the firearm was discovered during anatomy class. He claimed to be a nursing student at the college.

Zaccagni, 47, of Dana Street, Wilkes-Barre, was arraigned by District Judge Donald Whittaker on charges of firearms not to be carried without a license and possession of a firearm on school property. He was jailed at Luzerne County Prison for lack of \$10,000 bail.

Police said the firearm was a .38 caliber handgun, according to arrest papers.

3/1/2011

Man linked to deadly shooting waives meth charges

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A man linked to a deadly shooting inside a Hunlock Township trailer last month waived his right to a preliminary hearing on Tuesday on charges he sold methamphetamine to police.

Jeffrey Laton, 40, of Wapwallopen, waived two counts of possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance to Luzerne County Court.

Nanticoke police withdrew two other counts of possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance, and two counts of possession of a controlled substance and criminal use of communication facility.

Nanticoke police alleged Laton sold methamphetamine to an informant on July 2 and July 18, according to arrest records.

Laton was arrested Feb. 9 after a deadly shooting at a trailer on Old Tavern Road in Hunlock Township.

State police said Robert Muntz, 44, was killed in the shooting.

Laton's girlfriend, Amanda Bowman, 28, was shot in the arm in the trailer, according to search warrant affidavits.

State police said the trailer was being used to manufacture methamphetamine.

Bowman and another woman, Denyse Sedorchuk, 35, told state police Muntz was one of three masked intruders who forced their way inside the trailer.

No charges have been filed regarding the fatal shooting.

2/28/2011

Police said that on Saturday they arrested Patrick Myers, 36, of East Green Street, Nanticoke, after a three-week investigation.

Times Leader

Myers fought with police and had to be subdued with a stun gun when police attempted to take him into custody in the parking lot of the Burger King, police said. Police said they recovered one-quarter pound of marijuana from Myers. Myers faces multiple counts of delivery of a controlled substance, possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance and possession of a controlled substance, police said. He also was charged with resisting arrest. Myers was arraigned by District Judge Joseph Carmody and committed to the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for lack of \$100,000 bail.

Police said they previously arrested Myers for selling marijuana in 2006.

2/26/2011

Police Blotter

Times Leader

- Robert Zaremba, 24, of Nanticoke was charged with theft for taking money from a sympathy and prayer box at the Exaltation of the Holy Cross Church on Main Road on Feb. 3, police said. Zaremba admitted stealing the money, police said.
- Nicholas Watkins, 23, of Nanticoke was charged with racing on highways and other traffic citations after a crash on state Route 29 on Wednesday, police said. Watkins's vehicle struck a guide rail and was disabled, police said. A white Ford Mustang fled the scene, police said.
- Lukasz J. Stachurski, 27, of Nanticoke was charged with disorderly conduct and harassment after a disturbance at Austie's Restaurant on Feb. 18, police said. Witnesses and a victim claimed Stachurski attacked a patron and a waitress attempting to break up the scuffle, police said. The waitress and patron were not injured. Stachurski fled the scene and later contacted Nanticoke police claiming he was assaulted.
- State parole agents looking searching for a parolee Friday night found bags containing more than 6 pounds of marijuana, \$515 in cash and a scale in a residence in the rear of East Main Street, police said. The occupant, Shawnese Lynn Taylor, 23, faces possession with intent to deliver, possession of marijuana, conspiracy and possession of drug paraphernalia charges, police said. Taylor was taken into custody and was to be arraigned, police said. She also is wanted in Monroe County on an outstanding warrant. The investigation continues and additional arrests are expected, police said.

2/25/2011

Intruder apprehended after breaking into residences of elderly

By Bob Kalinowski and Erin Moody (Staff Writers) - Citizens Voice

Bob Stachyra was ready to shoot the intruder. But his 85-year-old mother said no.

Scared off by the threat of deadly force around 5 a.m. Thursday during the break-in at a South Prospect Street residence, the burglar then smashed his way inside another elderly woman's home a few doors away, police said.

Jamie T. Lohman's home invasion spree soon ended when he fled the second home, spurred by the victim's 911 call, and encountered Nanticoke cops, police said.

Stachyra of Saylorburg said he and family were at the 1016 S. Prospect St. home early Thursday, preparing to take his mother, Stella, to the casino for her 85th birthday. Then, they heard a smash. The suspect, the woman's tenant on the other side of the double-block, soon emerged. The man wielded a metal ice chopper and hammer.

Stachyra, 55, cocked his gun and threatened to shoot.

"She said 'don't shoot,' and he ran out the window. I wouldn't have had a problem. I listened to my mother and didn't shoot, and the cops said I would have had the right to shoot," Stachyra said.

"It was a heck of a thing to wake up to - a guy standing there about 3 feet on the other side of the window holding an ice scraper," Stachyra recalled.

Lohman, 37, dropped the ice chopper and hammer, then fled out the window he smashed, Stachyra said. Police say he then broke into 1006 S. Prospect St., where 87-year-old Eleanor Grotkowski was sleeping in her bedroom.

According to arrest papers filed with Magisterial District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke:

Grotkowski told police she heard a loud noise and then Lohman appeared in her doorway. She said she recognized Lohman, of 1014 S. Prospect St., as a neighbor who helped her clear snow days earlier. Lohman then barricaded the bedroom, moving her chest of drawers in front of the door. As Grotkowski yelled for him to leave, Lohman turned his back to her. She grabbed a phone on her night stand and called 911. Lohman fled.

Nanticoke police Sgt. Mike Roke and Officer Amos Vanderhoff were outside the home when Lohman emerged. After Lohman ignored commands, Roke deployed his Taser and took Lohman into custody.

Police believe Lohman was under the influence of crack, but are unsure what his intentions were, said Nanticoke police Detective Capt. William Shultz.

"I don't know what he was thinking," Shultz said.

The women were traumatized, but uninjured, he said.

"You're talking about 85-year-old and 87-year-old women. They said their hearts were racing," Shultz said.

The only injuries reported in the incident were to Lohman himself. He suffered cuts and abrasions to his hands, arms and legs as well as an ankle injury, police said.

His blood was tracked throughout both homes, police and the victims said.

"There's blood on the walls on the inside, where he got cut from the glass, and he bled on the rugs, so we have to get that cleaned," Stachyra said.

Stachyra said two days before the incident, Lohman knocked on the door, barged inside, and ran up to the bathroom to call 911 following a domestic dispute next door, Stachyra said. Stachyra said he was glad he had a gun on hand Thursday to scare Lohman off.

"If that wasn't there, he could have come in swinging and hurt a lot of people," Stachyra said. "This morning, thank God we were getting up early. Mom is OK. I'm just glad we were there."

Authorities filed two separate criminal complaints against Lohman - one for each residence - that include charges of burglary, attempted burglary, criminal trespassing, attempted theft and possessing instruments of a crime.

Due to his injuries, Lohman was arraigned by Whittaker at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center in Plains Township, where he was expected to undergo surgery. Whittaker set bail at \$150,000 cash.

Lohman was transferred from the hospital to Luzerne County Correctional Facility on Thursday night.

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2/22/2011

Police charged Michael John Ondek, 54, of West Kirmar Avenue, Nanticoke, on evidence of drunken driving after a crash on East Main Street on Feb. 4.

Times Leader

Ondek was charged with two counts of driving under the influence and a traffic citation. The charges were filed with District Judge Donald Whittaker and mailed to Ondek.

Police alleged Ondek had a BAC of .263 percent, the criminal complaint says.

2/19/2011

Nanticoke police arrest knife-wielding suspect in convenience store robbery

Citizens' Voice

Nanticoke police have charged a man in the Jan. 25 knifepoint robbery of a city convenience store.

Christopher Page was caught, police said, when he returned to the Coco Hut store a week later to make a cash wire transfer and the clerk recognized him as the robber.

Page, 36, of 60 W. Green St., Apt. 3, was charged Friday with robbery and theft.

According to police, Page entered the store around 2:35 a.m. on Jan. 25 and pulled a butcher knife after asking for a carton of cigarettes. Page then took the cash drawer from the register and fled, police said.

On Feb. 2, Page returned to the store and made a cash wire transfer and in the process, gave his name to the store manager. Police later located Page and arrested him.

While Page denied the robbery, a clerk identified him in a photo lineup and police said he matches the description of the robbery suspect in surveillance footage.

2/18/2011

Citizens' Voice

City police reported the following incidents:

> James Gordon, of Garfield Street, was arrested after a disturbance at his home. Police said he was told to cease his actions and he followed police outside with a can of beer in his hand.

> Marie Yandrofski of East Ridge Street reported someone smashed out the rear window of her vehicle.

> Police arrested Kara Young for assaulting her live-in boyfriend, Shawn Miller, at 412 E. Grand St. because Miller was on the phone with his ex-girlfriend, making arrangements to pick up their child. Police said Young, who is five months pregnant, threw a lit cigarette and a coffee mug at Miller, choked him and then bit him on the face.

> Michael J. Ondek, 54, was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol following a head-on crash Feb. 4 on East Main Street near the 109th Field Artillery armory.

> Police arrested Jason Slater, 27, for showing up at his ex-girlfriend's residence in the East Side Apartment, pounding on the door and harassing her. The woman, Laura Rasmus, told police Slater is homeless and has been staying in the vestibule, stairwell and laundry room of the complex and refuses to leave her alone. While investigating Rasmus' complaint, police noticed Slater emerge from the laundry room and apprehended him after a brief chase. Slater is charged with loitering and prowling at nighttime, criminal trespass, harassment, and public drunkenness.

2/5/2011

Police say man defied PFA, stalked his ex-girlfriend

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Defying a protection from abuse order against him, a Wilkes-Barre man stalked his ex-girlfriend Thursday in Nanticoke and then rammed her vehicle with his car at West Washington Street, police said.

Police say Steven T. Price, 40, fled from the scene, but the victim called 911 and followed him until he was apprehended in Hanover Township.

Price is charged with stalking, violating a PFA order, simple assault, fleeing the scene of a crash, reckless driving, careless driving, failure to render air and traffic violations.

The victim, Angela Espinosa, said in her PFA application, filed Jan. 12, that Price has continued to harass and stalk her since she broke off their weeks-long relationship in November. She said he follows her, shows up at her job and has threatened to "slash my throat."

Price was jailed in the Luzerne County Correctional Facility before being released on \$25,000 bail.

According to arrest papers filed with Magisterial District Judge Donald Whittaker:

Espinosa said she was leaving the Nanticoke Special Care Hospital around 4:41 p.m., when Price drove past her and bumped her car. While passing, he made a throat-slashing motion with his hand across his neck, she said. He turned

around, followed her and struck the rear of Espinosa's vehicle, she said.

Price fled and called 911. Espinosa said she followed Price while on the phone with a 911 operator. Hanover Township police, which was on the scene of a traffic stop on Middle Road, eventually stopped Price's vehicle. When officers told Price to stop, he sounded his horn, yelled and drove around them. They got in their vehicles and pursued him to a parking lot, where he stopped, police said.

2/4/2011

Nanticoke man pleads guilty to 6 counts in child porn case

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A Nanticoke man pleaded guilty Tuesday to six counts relating to charges that he downloaded child pornography because he was "curious."

Jamell L. Amos, 34, of East Ridge Street, entered the plea before Luzerne County Senior Judge Joseph Augello.

Amos, who faces seven years maximum in prison on each charge, will be sentenced on May 2.

Augello said Amos will have to register his address under Megan's Law and that he is to have no unsupervised contact with children, the Internet or places children frequent.

Amos was released from the Luzerne County jail pending any detainers and his unsecured bail is set at \$25,000.

According to court records, Amos was arrested after investigators searched his East Ridge Street apartment in June.

Investigators allege they uncovered several movies showing children involved in sex acts that were saved on a computer.

Amos said he was "curious" when asked why he downloaded child porn. He said the more illicit videos he watched, "the more he was getting into it."

Amos asked investigators, "Why the (expletive) are people do(ing) this?"

He said he saved child porn images and videos on DVDs he wanted to give to police to investigate. Amos said he instead smashed the DVDs into pieces, which he recycled.

1/27/2011

Times Leader

City police reported the following:

- Police said they captured a fugitive wanted by the New York State Department of Parole on Tuesday.

Paul Walker, 35, was apprehended at 568 E. Main St. at about 4 a.m., police said.

Walker has been wanted by parole officers in New York since December 2008.

He was jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for lack of \$50,000 bail.

- Police said they are investigating an armed robbery at the Cocoa Hut on East Main Street early Tuesday morning.

Police said two employees reported a man entered the store at about 2:37 a.m. and asked for a carton of cigarettes.

When an employee turned to get the cigarettes, the customer displayed a large butcher type knife and demanded money from the cash register.

Police said the man fled the store with an undetermined amount of cash and was last seen running on Prospect Street.

Police described the bandit as a white male, 5 feet, 5 inches tall, medium build, blue or black hooded sweatshirt and an unshaven face.

Anyone with information about the armed robbery is asked to contact 911.

- Marvin Lorah reported copper pipes were stolen from a residence on West Main Street.

- Paula Oshinski, of South Market Street, reported someone stole a 19-inch Toshiba flat-screen television from her residence.

- Robert Pauska, of State Street, reported someone stole a Stihl Farm chain saw, a Craftsman tool set and a compact disc player from his vehicle.

- Lillian James, of State Street, reported someone stole a Panasonic compact disc player, a leather coat, tools, a floor jack and compact discs from her vehicle.

- Rich Kaminski, of Line Street, reported a compact disc player was stolen from his vehicle.

- Joelle Andrejewski, of West Union Street, reported someone smashed a window on her vehicle and stole an Enon DVD, compact discs, a music player, and a touch screen stereo system. The seats, dashboard, airbags, console and steering wheel were cut, police said.

1/27/2011

Plea ends child-sex case

Matthew F. Souder, 26, of Nanticoke faces a maximum of 10 years in prison.

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A Nanticoke man charged with having inappropriate contact with a 14-year-old girl pleaded guilty to a related charge Wednesday.

Matthew F. Souder, 26, whose last known address is on East Green Street, entered the plea before Luzerne County Judge David Lupas to one count of statutory sexual assault.

Prosecutors withdrew two counts of corruption of minors.

Lupas said Souder faces a maximum of 10 years in prison when he is sentenced on March 15. Souder had previously pleaded not guilty to the charges at a December arraignment.

According to court papers, on July 15, a then-14-year-old girl reported to police that on July 2 she and Souder had sexual intercourse at an East Ridge Street, Nanticoke, residence.

The girl told police that on July 2 she went to her friend's home, where she had been going on weekends since the beginning of the summer. The girl said she and her friend played video games when Souder asked if they wanted to smoke some marijuana.

The girl said Souder called her a chicken and that she eventually did smoke some marijuana.

The girl said Souder also had alcohol and that several drinks were consumed at the residence.

The girl said her friend eventually fell asleep and that she went upstairs to go to bed, police said. That's when, the girl said, she and Souder spoke for a few minutes in the bedroom when Souder asked her to take off her pants. The girl said she replied no at least three times before she complied.

Police said Souder initially denied having intercourse with the girl or giving anyone alcohol or marijuana. He later told police it was the girl who initiated intercourse with him, according to court papers.

1/21/2011

A man accused by police of burglarizing a house and stealing copper pipes was arraigned Thursday in Wilkes-Barre Central Court.

Times Leader

Jonathan Michael Kemmerer, 27, of East Broad Street, Nanticoke, was charged with burglary, criminal trespass, theft, receiving stolen property, possessing instruments of crime and criminal mischief. He was jailed at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility for lack of \$25,000 bail.

According to the criminal complaint:

Police allege Kemmerer entered a home on East Broad Street and tried to steal two bags of copper pipe that had been cut earlier on Jan. 19.

Kemmerer was caught by a neighbor who heard someone inside the house. He allegedly told police another man had cut the pipes and he was instructed to pick up the copper pipes, the criminal complaint says.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled on Jan. 25 before District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke.

1/15/2011

Nanticoke man accused of dealing marijuana

Erin Moody - Citizens Voice

A two-month investigation into marijuana dealing in Hanover Township and Nanticoke has led to an arrest and the seizure of more than \$10,000, police announced Thursday.

Carl John Thomas May, 18, of Kosciuszko Street, Nanticoke, was arrested on the Sans Souci Parkway in Hanover Township and marijuana was seized from his vehicle.

May was arraigned before Magisterial District Judge Donald Whittaker on a felony charge of possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver and misdemeanor charges of possession of a controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia with intent to use. He was taken to Luzerne County Correctional Facility in lieu of \$100,000 straight cash bail.

At about 5:10 p.m. Thursday, a search warrant was served at a residence on Kosciuszko Street by members of the Luzerne County Drug Task Force and officers of the Hanover Township and Nanticoke City police departments.

A pound of marijuana, \$10,669 in cash, a digital scale and plastic bags were seized. May's 2007 Subaru was also seized. The two-month investigation included purchases of marijuana by police.

1/15/2011

Times Leader

City police reported the following:

- Police charged Benjamin Fortner, 28, of Apollo Circle, with disorderly conduct and criminal mischief after he allegedly damaged a vehicle on Coal Street on Jan. 1. Fortner was also cited for public drunkenness. A preliminary hearing is scheduled Feb. 1 before District Judge Donald Whittaker in Nanticoke.
- Brandon Rospendowski, of East Broad Street, reported someone stole the window fabric from his Jeep.
- Brandon Switzer, of East Union Street, reported someone stole an automotive diagnostic scanner and a stereo from his vehicle.
- Michael Whalley, of South Walnut Street, reported someone stole his wallet from his vehicle.
- Copper pipes were stolen from a home on Christian Street. The home is for sale by Century 21.
- Wyoming Valley Transmission, North Market Street, reported transmissions and other items were stolen from a storage vehicle.

1/8/2011

Kid porn gets man 17.5 years in prison

John Dudkiewicz of Nanticoke is called a danger to society. He must undergo lifetime supervision.

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(Public Defender Ingrid) Cronin spoke at length of Dudkiewicz's troubled upbringing. The child of a prostitute, he was placed in foster care at an early age, where he was sexually abused.

A Nanticoke man who previously pleaded guilty to molesting two children was sentenced Friday to 17.5 years in federal prison for downloading child pornography.

U.S. District Judge A. Richard Caputo imposed the sentence upon John Dudkiewicz, based in part of his finding that Dudkiewicz posed a danger to society.

Dudkiewicz, 36, was charged in October 2009 based on an investigation by the Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office, which is part of an Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, the FBI and the Taney County, Missouri, sheriff's office.

At Friday's hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Fran Sempa detailed Dudkiewicz's troubling history of molesting children, including two convictions in Luzerne County Court.

Sempa said Dudkiewicz had confessed to agents that he had molested other children for which he was not charged.

Particularly troubling, Sempa said, were comments Dudkiewicz made to an FBI agent after he arrested him on the child pornography charges.

"The agent asked him, 'If you had the opportunity to take a child and molest them right now and know you wouldn't get caught, would you do it?' He said 'Yes,'" Sempa said.

Dudkiewicz's attorney, federal public defender Ingrid Cronin, acknowledged Dudkiewicz made the comment, but said she's not convinced that Dudkiewicz, who is mentally retarded with an IQ of 50, understood what he was saying.

Cronin spoke at length of Dudkiewicz's troubled upbringing. The child of a prostitute, he was placed in foster care at an early age, where he was sexually abused. He was never given the proper care or training for his mental retardation that would allow him to function in society, she said.

"This is a man who in many ways was victimized himself at the start of his life," Cronin said. "He has a very sad personal history."

Sempa acknowledged Dudkiewicz has lived a "tragic" life, but said any sympathy for him must be outweighed by the need to protect society.

Sempa noted that while Dudkiewicz was in prison for one of his cases, he sent a letter to a woman, asking her to send him photos of 3- and 4-year-olds in their swimsuits.

"There is no question he had a difficult life. You have to weigh those factors against just punishment, the need for deterrence and the need to protect children," Sempa said.

In issuing the sentence, Caputo said of Dudkiewicz's troubled upbringing, it was "at best a tragic story." Federal sentencing guidelines had called for a sentence of anywhere from just more than 22 to 27 years in prison. Caputo said he believed the 17.5 year sentence was appropriate given all the circumstances. In addition to the prison sentence, Caputo ordered Dudkiewicz to be subject to lifetime supervision by the federal probation office upon his release. He must also register as a sex offender and undergo sexual offender counseling.