

CRIME BY THE NUMBERS

Meetings,
analysis
create
efficiency
SAPD, local
agencies in
on discussion

By JOEL LEHMAN
Messenger Staff

ST. ALBANS — Law enforcement officers and community members are having conversations about crime statistics. The aim: increased police efficiency in St. Albans City and Town.

Since October, the St. Albans Police Department (SAPD), city and town administrators and representatives from a handful of local agencies have met monthly to examine data and exchange ideas based on patterns they have identified in the numbers.

Diverse points of view have arisen at the table.

The program, called Comp-Stat, which stands for 'Computer Comparison Statistics,' allows



St. Albans Police lieutenants along with law enforcement officers from other agencies and St. Albans community members meet during a recent Comp-Stat meeting, where police data is shared and discussed, and strategies are formed based on patterns in crimes.

JOEL LEHMAN, St. Albans Messenger

police to coordinate efforts more efficiently, and community members can identify problems that range from recurring drug use and arson patterns to zoning compliance.

"We want to make sure we're not spinning our wheels and going in different directions," St. Albans Police Chief Gary Taylor said at a Comp-Stat meeting held recently in St. Albans City.

Also in attendance at the most

recent meeting are state's attorney Jim Hughes, Nina Curtiss of the Franklin Grand Isle Restorative Justice Center, Jon Centabar of the Department of Liquor Control, Cpt. Matt Mulheron of St. Albans Fire Dept., representatives from Northwestern Counseling & Support Services and several City administrators, totaling about 16 people.

Led by Lt. Ron Hoague, police

► See COMPSTAT on page 5A

'We want to
make sure we're
not spinning
our wheels ...'

Gary Taylor,
police chief

Police
witness
changing
trends

DUIs increase,
larcenies down
in 2015 stats

By MICHELLE MONROE
Messenger Staff Writer

ST. ALBANS CITY — In 2015, the St. Albans Police Dept. arrested 19 percent more people for driving under the influence than the previous year, according to Chief Gary Taylor.

Taylor told the St. Albans City Council on Monday that the intoxicated driving arrests typically start around 10:30 p.m. and continue until the bars close.

The numbers were part of a presentation to the council of 2015 crime data. Taylor previously made a similar presentation to the St. Albans Town

► See DATA on page 5A

WILDLIFE

Where the animals cross

Group asks residents
to log in with reports

By MICHELLE MONROE
Messenger Staff Writer

MONTGOMERY — Aspiring amateur naturalists, or anyone who just happens to drive, bike or walk past wildlife areas, have an opportunity to help identify crucial animal crossings.

Cold Hollow to Canada's (CHC) WildPath's Project makes it possible for citizens to upload information about animal crossings to a web-based database using either their cell phone or a computer.

The information gathered will be shared with the Vermont Agency of Transportation, the state biologist and local governments, explained Bridget Butler, CHC's program director.

"The big picture is protecting animal habitat," said Butler.

One of the ways humans intrude on animal habitat is by cutting across the places where they reside with roadways, explained Butler. "When wildlife cross roadways they are at risk of getting killed by vehicles and these collisions can be a safety issue for



A white-tailed deer runs across a road.

Photo courtesy CHRIS MAZZARELLA, Cold Hollow Canada (CHC)

people too," she added in a written statement.

CHC is interested in gathering data on all kinds of animals – birds, amphibians, reptiles as well as mammals.

Identifying animal crossings is the first step in making those crossings more safely usable for both wildlife and people.

As an example, Butler mentioned otters in St. Albans who had been traveling along

Stevens Brook. Upon reaching a culvert they got out of the water and crossed the road.

VTrans and municipalities are going to be replacing culverts around the state as part of the effort to improve water quality. When those culverts are replaced it's worth considering what works for aquatic and terrestrial

► See CROSSING on page 5A

COMMUNITY

Homeless man's
legacy nurtures
those in need

Free Library accepts
food, cash donations

By ELAINE EZERINS
Messenger Staff Writer

ST. ALBANS — A food drive is underway in the memory of the late Roger Boucher, a man who had no home but was welcomed into the heart of the community.

St. Albans Free Library is conducting the second annual March food drive that between March 14 and 26 includes collection of funds to be given to NorthWest Family Foods.

"Roger was a homeless man that lived in our community for many, many, many years," children's librarian Sarah Allerton said. "He rode a bicycle through town. He lived on the rail trail for a while."

"He was a paranoid schizophrenic and was completely uncomfortable living in doors," she continued. "So that's kind of why he lived outside."

"He was just the most generous person in the world," Allerton said. "He would come to the library almost every day. He kind of became part of our library family. For the most part he was just so helpful and so kind and he would sit in the foyer to dry out his clothes when he needed to."

"He wasn't comfortable very many places indoors but for some reason the library was OK with him," she said, fondly. "He would do research on things, on all sorts of things. He was always the first to jump up to help us carry something or shovel our walk for nothing. We always tried to pay him. He wouldn't let us."

► See FOOD on page 5A

INSIDE

Ground is ripped up and muddied by ATVs driving through Bakersfield's baseball field and the historical society's parking lot. There are signs posted by the town selectboard stating "No ATVs" and "No Parking."

SEE STORY, PAGE 2A



ERIC JESSIMAN, Photo



WEATHER:

Today: Becoming sunny. High 32.

Tonight, clear. Low 17.

Sunday: Sunny, then some clouds. High 40, low 26.

FORECAST, PAGE 6A



Czechs: EU, Turkey reach breakthrough deal on migrants

By MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS & RAF CASERT,
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — After months of acrimony, the European Union and Turkey reached a landmark deal on Friday to ease the migrant crisis and give Ankara concessions on better EU relations.

In a final meeting high on smiles, handshakes and backslapping, the 28 EU leaders and Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu sealed an agreement that will allow thousands of migrants to be sent back to Turkey as of Sunday, while Ankara will see fast-track procedures to get billions in aid to deal with refugees on their territory, unprecedented visa concessions for Turks to come to Europe and a re-energizing of their EU membership bid.

Davutoglu strode into the final joint session with the poise of a winner, happily shaking hands with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and getting an encouraging pat on the back from French President Francois Hollande.

“The deal with Turkey approved. All illegal migrants who reach Greece from Turkey starting March 20 will be returned,” tweeted Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka.

Davutoglu said Turkey’s prime concern was the fate of almost 3 million Syrian refugees on its territory. At the same time, he was looking for unprecedented concessions to bring the EU’s eastern neighbor closer to the bloc.

For the EU, the deal brought some closure to months of bitter infighting over how to deal with the migrant crisis, which would essentially see Europe outsource its refugee emergency to Turkey.

“For Turkey, the refugee issue is not an issue of bargaining, but values,” Davutoglu told reporters earlier Friday, staking out the same moral ground that the EU has claimed



AP photo
Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, center, speaks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, left, during a round table meeting at an EU summit in Brussels on Friday, March 18.

throughout the crisis.

With more than 1 million migrants arriving in Europe over the past year, EU leaders were desperate to clinch a deal with Turkey and heal deep rifts within the bloc, while relieving the pressure on Greece, which has borne the brunt of arrivals.

The agreement would have clear commitments that the rights of legitimate refugees would be respected and treated according to international and EU law. Within a week, Turkish and EU officials would assess joint projects to help Syrian refugees in Turkey, after complaints that promised aid of 3 billion euros (\$3.3 billion) was too slow in coming.

Turkey would also be guaranteed that EU accession talks on budgetary issues could start before the summer.

In the Idomeni camp on the Greek-Macedonian border, Muhammad

Hassan, a Syrian from the devastated city of Aleppo, was looking for relief from the talks in Brussels and wondered why a continent of 500 million people could not deal with the situation.

“Europe have only 1 million” migrants, Hassan said. “How come it’s difficult?” he asked, comparing the EU to Lebanon, a nation of 5.9 million. “If a small country takes 3 million refugees and didn’t talk, how about Europe? It’s not difficult.”

The conditions in Greece and the Idomeni camp were called intolerable by the Greek government on Friday. Interior Minister Panagiotis Kouroumplis compared the crowded tent city to a Nazi concentration camp, blaming the suffering on some European countries’ closed border policies.

CompStat

continued from page 1

officers and detectives talk about very specific cases — arrest warrants for a suspected criminal in the city, an arson case in town, a liquor violation in the city, among the discussion topics.

“The concept is fantastic,” Curtiss said. “We’re hoping to bring people from different agencies to really look at the city as a whole to figure out how to solve these problems.”

The Comp-Stat model is used by agencies large and small in communities all over the world, Taylor wrote in overview statement about the program. Data has long been used by police to solve problems. By bringing in as many parties and perspectives from the

community as possible, the data can be applied practically.

Frequently, local agencies find an overlap in crimes, Taylor said. And with so many different points of view, there’s more creativity or, at least, coordination to find a resolution.

“I’m happy to be sitting at the table with these people. It speaks to the community that we have so many people who care about the community and care about making positive change,” Curtiss said.

Chip Sawyer, St. Albans City director of planning and development, also was present at a recent meeting. He said that police are the eyes-on-the-ground in St.

Albans. If there’s anything to share about permitting violations or issues with individuals concerning property, they’re his best resource.

“There’s rarely a very simple solution,” Sawyer said. “We want to make sure that if there’s something we can do to help out, we’re doing it in a coordinated way. Solving the city’s problems is what we’re there for.”

“It’s still in its infancy,” said Marty Manahan, city director of operations and business development, another meeting attendee. “Seeing that information makes people more aware of what’s going on and they’re more apt to respond.”

At each meeting, an overview of criminal activity in four zones in St. Albans City and Town are examined. Patrol sergeants are assigned to each zone and then report patterns at the meeting including traffic stops, animal problems, retail theft and drug use.

A focused plan saves money, time and resources, Taylor said. Meeting discussions often focus on individuals, for example an NCSS client who is also facing criminal charges.

And with that greater efficiency comes better transparency and accountability from law enforcement agencies in the community.

“He passed away in November of 2014,” Allerton said. “And there was kind of an outpouring of grief. Everybody thought that everyone else treated him like an outcast and didn’t realize how many connections he had actually made with people in the community.”

“So, in order to keep that generous spirit alive,” she said, “somebody actually approached us and said we should do a food drive.”

“We called the food shelf,” she continued, “and they said, ‘Actually donations drop off in March, so the food drive would be more helpful to us if you do it at a time that’s not so popular for giving.’”

“So last year we did it, and we collected 231.5 pounds of food and \$183.02 in cash,” Allerton said.

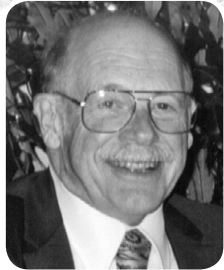
By Thursday, the library had only received two bags of food, but \$140 in cash.

Allerton said she would love to beat last year’s numbers and keep Roger’s legacy alive.

Donations can be dropped off during library hours at the 11 Maiden Lane facility, until closing time on Saturday, March 26.

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The library is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday.



10/24/24 - 3/20/08

Those we love don't go away,
They walk beside us every day,
Unseen, unheard, but always near,
Still loved, still missed and very dear.

Our Love,
Helen
Warren & Claire
Marchia & Robert
Wendy & Gary
Glenn & Kathy

Crossing

continued from page 1

animals as well as people, said Butler. Knowing if there are culverts animals won’t use can inform culvert planning, she suggested.

There are multiple ways volunteers can participate.

Using cell phones, people can upload photos of animals they find who have been killed along roadways, as well as observations of animals that successfully crossed, explained Butler.

As always, there’s an app for that, in this case iNaturalist. The free app, available for both iPhone and Android, allows for uploading of geo-tagged photos

directly to the WildPaths Web site.

It’s also possible to use a form on the WildPaths Web site (<http://bit.ly/CHCWildPaths>) to report observations. “A good description will get us a long way,” said Butler.

Participants don’t need to worry about identifying the animals in their photos. Biologists working with CHC can help with that.

Those who want to get

more involved can choose to regularly walk, bike or drive an area looking for animals.

The focus of the WildPaths Project is Richford, Montgomery, Enosburgh, Bakersfield, Fletcher, Belvidere and Waterville.

Volunteers also can take part in a WildPaths walk and learn more about how to identify crossings, take photos of animals and

share their observations. The first will be held on April 16 in Bakersfield at noon. The event is free. For more information visit the CHC Web site (www.cold-hollowtocanada.org).

vel across the landscape.



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HAPPY BIRTHDAY
MOM & DAD
Another year gone by, I wished you both were still here.
There isn't a day goes by that we don't think of you both,
Miss You!
Marjorie, Norma,
Bobby, Harold, Rose,
Sandy & Butch

Data

continued from page 1

Selectboard.

The St. Albans Police Dept. (SAPD) made 101 arrests for driving under the influence last year, 69 in the city and 32 in the town.

For several years, the SAPD has used data on motor vehicle crashes and crime to identify high priority areas for patrols. Those roads and streets often overlap, according to Taylor.

In 2015, Swanton Road, Fairfax Road and Tucker’s Way were all among the top five locations in the town for crashes and crime.

In the city, Lake Street and North and South Main streets were among the top five sites of crashes and crime.

counter the physical effects narcotics overdoses, there have been about a half dozen “saves,” said Taylor.

Burglaries are continuing a downward trend, and robberies appear to be following suit, Taylor told the council.

“Many of the problems we once experienced here have migrated just north of us,” he said.

Because the city is a shire town with the county’s medical and social service agencies, there are more law enforcement incidents in the city. Overdoses and intoxicated individuals “fall in our lap, usually by virtue of the fact that the hospital is here,” said Taylor.

The department is receiving more informational calls from the public than in past years, said Taylor. “One of the things that happens when a police department becomes more responsive is you get more and more calls,” said Taylor.

The SAPD is still doing many drug investigations, including undercover drug work. “What we’re seeing less of, I think, is the diverted prescription drugs,” said Taylor. Instead, people are opting for the less expensive heroin and crack.

Three weeks ago, the department seized 1,000 rocks of crack cocaine and another 400 last week.

The department is seeing more overdoses, said Taylor, although he did not provide specific numbers. Since SAPD officers began carrying Narcan, a drug to

Overall, the SAPD investigated 520 larcenies or stolen property crimes in 2015, 57 percent in the city and 43 percent in the town.

There were six armed robberies in the city and one in the town last year. An armed robbery does not always involve a gun, noted Taylor.

Asked about repeat offenders, Taylor answered, “There are places we go to more than others.” Many of those are in the more densely populated downtown areas.

The SAPD now has an counselor from Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (NCSS). “That’s been a huge help,” said Taylor. The counselor travels to incidents involving NCSS clients in his own vehicle, not a police car, he explained.

Food

continued from page 1