



Akron police officers talk as they investigate a home invasion robbery in the 1500 block of Hilbish Avenue on Friday. Police said 21-year-old David Hillis managed to get to a gun and shoot at the would-be robbers. | MIKE CARDEW/Akron Beacon Journal

Shooting

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"There's nothing new on the homicide," Zampelli said. "We are still gathering information and interviews, and those will be taken to the police legal advisor who will determine whether Hillis will be charged with anything or if it was self-defense."

The chief city prosecutor, Craig Morgan, said he could not talk about the case because it is pending.

"My impression is that there's a lot left to do on the investigation," he said. "There's a large group of detectives working on this case and they've been putting the time in since it happened. They're going to uncover everything they can before we make any kind of decision."

Hillis remains free.

Meanwhile his father, Michael Hillis of Industry Street in Tallmadge, was released on a \$5,000 bond. He was charged with failure to comply, obstructing official business, disorderly conduct and

misconduct at an emergency.

Michael Hillis, 52, a former deputy with the Sheriff's Department from 1998 to 2013 in the jail division, drove to the home of his son on Hilbish Avenue, jumped out of the car and confronted police by trying to lift the "do not cross" police tape to see his son. Police warned him not to go past the police line, which was blocking the scene, but he ignored police warnings and argued with officers.

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Akron police rescue dogs from roof of moving van

Menonite family traveling on I-76 prompts multiple 911 calls, surrenders 4 pups

By Phil Trexler

Beacon Journal staff writer

Call after call came into 911 centers from Ashland County to Akron.

All over four caged puppies riding atop a family's minivan.

The rough ride ended for the pups on Interstate 76 near Gilchrist Road in East Akron when

flipped on his emergency lights Friday afternoon.

Inside the minivan were Wendell Steiner, his wife, Candace, and their four children, all under 5. The family, Mennonites from Nova in Ashland County, had no idea they were causing such a fuss as they were motoring along at 50 miles per hour or so.

Wendell Steiner told police he was merely transporting the mixed-breed pooches to his wife's family in Chambersburg, Pa.

Please see Puppies, A5



Akron police Sgt. Kris Beitzel tends to a cage with four dogs as Cynthia (left) and Veronica Steiner keep watch on Friday. The Ohio family was driving to Pennsylvania with the dogs on the roof.

PHIL MASTURZO/Akron Beacon Journal



PHIL MASTURZO/Akron Beacon Journal

Veronica (left) and Cynthia Steiner watch as the last of four dogs is taken by animal control officers in Akron. Police stopped their van after drivers spotted the dogs on the roof.

See police dash cam video with this story on Ohio.com.

Puppies

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"We had more important things to put inside the vehicle. We have four children," he said.

The pups, all about 3 months old, belonged to Steiner's father, who was unable to keep the dogs. So, Steiner volunteered to drive his Dodge Caravan more than 300 miles to south-central Pennsylvania.

Steiner said he had no idea he was possibly breaking a law by putting the dogs on the roof. The cage, about 2 feet wide and 4 feet long, was covered with a blanket, but the wind on the highway lifted the cover, exposing the pups for passing motorists to see.

"If I had known, I'd never agree to it," he said. "I would have kept them in Nova."

The puppies appeared startled and shaken, but otherwise OK.

Steiner agreed to turn them over to the county dog warden.

"There must of been dozens of calls from Nova to Akron," [redacted] said. "We've had three or four since the van entered Akron. The other jurisdictions just couldn't catch them in time."

Sgt. Kris Beitzel said the dogs would be taken to a local veterinarian hospital to be examined and then be sent out for adoption through the Humane Society of Greater Akron.

Beitzel said no charges will be filed against Steiner.

"He had absolutely no idea what he was doing was wrong," Beitzel said. "In this case, the cultural issues, he now knows that this is absolutely not the way to transport puppies. The puppies are traumatized, but I think they'll come around with a little love and attention."

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Police display of discipline merits thanks

Yes, some cops are absolute jerks. No use arguing otherwise.

For were I to, new volumes of unassailable caught-on-tape footage of yet another yahoo constable would illuminate every TV screen in the nation.

Even so, dear readers, despite all the yakety-yak echoed by those voices in the streets, such cases are by far the exception rather than the rule.

The overwhelming majority of cops are out there trying to keep all of us safe from harm.

That's not just me talking, either. The facts bear that out.

That said, I'm taking this space today to tell you about some Akron police officers and detectives who impressed me — and I hope you — with the restraint they marshaled recently in apprehending yet another hoodlum.

Turns out that these badder-than-bad-butt perpetrators were juveniles.

Of course, there was no way for the cops to know that.

I mean this undynamic duo — a 14- and a 15-year-old — didn't look like kids.

What they were allegedly out doing could hardly be mistaken for child's play.

Lest I keep you in the dark any longer, let me tell you what went down — and you be the judge.

On or about the first of April, in the dark of night, Akron police received a robbery-in-progress call at a west-side convenience store and responded with ample backup.

The cops had arrived just in time to see this holdup guy — yes, he had a gun — emerge from the store.

So, they ordered what looked to be a man to halt and to drop his gun, threatening — as they have a right to do — to shoot if he didn't follow their command.

That he was clearly outnumbered by other men with guns apparently didn't bother him, as he began to run.

Luckily for him, they didn't shoot, although they would have been well within their right to do so.

Instead, these cops put their lives in more peril by pursuing him on foot.

When the suspect was finally apprehended, he was immediately

Jewell Cardwell



pegged for 19.

Imagine their collective surprise — to say nothing of their sighs of relief at what might have been — when they learned he was only 14.

"He looked at least 19," declared Akron Police Lt. Drew Alexander, who was on the scene.

The juvenile was 5 feet 9 inches tall and 155 pounds.

He wasn't brandishing a book bag, a homework assignment or his birth certificate.

The gun he earlier had been seen carrying was discovered along with the stolen money a few blocks from the store.

If this juvenile had been wounded — or worse — by a cop's bullet, it's almost a given that all hell would have broken loose.

Tempers would be flaring and anti-cop-sentiment marches would be heating up all over the place by some hothead faction of the community, and we would have a big mess on our hands given (1) their age, and (2) their race — African-American.

And for what?

"We have a video from that night that shows just how violent they are," Alexander said.

As it turned out, this 14-year-old and his 15-year-old sidekick — who was arrested later at his home — are alleged to have been involved in several robberies.

But it's not just robbing that they do, Alexander said knowingly.

"They stomp and pistol-whip their victims," he continued.

Again, not exactly kid's play.

Thanks to several of Akron's finest, this vermin is off the streets — and hopefully for a very long time.

Their fate is now in the hands of Summit County Juvenile Court.

Here's hoping that it sees them as the men — bad ones at that — they so wanted to be and sentences them accordingly.

In the meantime, our hats should be off to Alexander and company — Troy Minard, Gary Garrett and Rick Edwards, Jonathan Strainer,

new Keny and Terry Hudson and detectives Rick Oldaker and Bill Bosak — for exercising discipline beyond the call of duty.

Jewell Cardwell's column appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Messages for her can be left at 330-996-3567.

Seven of this year's

Each year, a coalition of more than 100 education, business and community organizations shines a spotlight on educational programs throughout the state that raise student and teacher performance levels.

On April 23, BEST (Building Excellent Schools for Today & the 21st Century) honored 44 programs with 1997 Ohio BEST Practices Awards. Seven of the winners were from the Akron-Canton area.

The winners were chosen from 345 entries. Following are descriptions of area programs that were nominated by their districts or by others for this year's award. Programs that won awards from BEST have notations in italics. The rest of the local programs will be profiled tomorrow.

Medina County

• **Adventures in Math and Science for Girls (Medina's Heritage Elementary School):** Girls in grades three, four and five are invited to two-hour Saturday sessions to experiment with science and math. The program is voluntary and planned by teachers and parents. The girls have the opportunity to meet female role models in science and math careers.

• **Home Activities and Parents in Partnership for Proficiency Books (Medina County Schools Educational Service Center):** Teachers developed the books, which range from kindergarten books that offer activities to encourage participation between home and school, to books to help third- through sixth-graders prepare for proficiency tests.

Portage County

• **The After School Kids Club (Ravenna schools):** Students join with their peers in special-needs classes for extracurricular activities, ranging from playing sports to attending movies and making pizza. The program, which helps students form friendships and build communication skills, also builds partnerships with the community through field trips.

• **Center School (Ravenna schools):** The schools teamed up with Portage Children's Center to offer educational and mental health services to families with children who might not fit into a regular school environment. The school district provides the teacher, transportation and educational supplies, and the Children's Center provides therapy specialists who help the teachers. Students receive an individual plan that includes

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Police charge teen-ager with chase in stolen car

A 17-year-old Akron teen was taken into custody Monday for allegedly leading police in a chase in a stolen car and causing an accident that injured a woman in another vehicle.

The teen was fleeing from police about 9 p.m. Sunday, going east on Onandago Avenue in Goodyear Heights, according to police reports, when he ran a stop sign at Brittain Road. The car was struck by a pickup truck that was northbound on Brittain, police said.

Injured was a passenger in the truck, Angela M. Burgoon, 21, of Akron, who was treated at Akron General Medical Center and released.

The 17-year-old youth, who was

arrested the next day on North Seiberling Street in Goodyear Heights, was already wanted on an arrest warrant charging him with receiving stolen property, officer [REDACTED].

The same youth also is being investigated in connection with a second stolen car he had when arrested, police said.

In Sunday's accident, both the 17-year-old driver and his 16-year-old passenger fled when police arrived. After a short chase, the 16-year-old was caught and charged with delinquency by reason of receiving stolen property (the car).

The [REDACTED] does not name juveniles unless they are accused of a violent crime involving injury to a person.

[REDACTED]