

Diverse skills offered by Amity Township Police Department

By Denise Larive, 21st Century Media

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Various Amity Township Police officers have been in the news for apprehending suspected arsonists, burglars, and drug dealers, as well as helping the public during emergency situations.

Police Chief Kent A. Shuebrook, who will celebrate his sixth anniversary with the department in February, often praises his 11 officers to the Board of Supervisors at its semi monthly meetings.

Shuebrook said during a recent interview that the officers' different skills and experiences has resulted in a highly competent and diverse team of officers that serve and protect the community.

Prior to his appointment as police chief in February 2009, Shuebrook was lieutenant of the Tom's River, NJ Police Department, where he worked for 32 years.

Cpl. Mark Scherer is the supervisor of the squad," Shuebrook said, adding, " He oversees traffic grants, and the assignment of personnel on that."

He is also the department's Taser Gun instructor.

Cpl. Susan Brown is the department's second senior officer.

She oversees scheduling, the property and evidence room, and is also the liaison to the county's Youth Aid Council," Shuebrook said, adding that Brown also has department-wide supervising authority.

Mark and Sue, they also go out to handle calls. Their first priority is to answer calls for service," Shuebrook said, adding, " But, both corporals bring innovative ideas to the table. They are both insightful and innovative."

Officer Jeff Smith is the department's detective.

He will be here three years in February and has done a phenomenal job. You have to be really good interacting with people, as well as tenacious, able to deal with a high level of frustration, plodding -- to get people to come in to talk/interviews."

People lie, and there are a lot of dead-ends and you never have a clean plate. The detective job is frustrating -- you can't ever get the job done. I refer to him as my " Columbo."

Jeff is very laid back and mellow. His arrest clearance on the 103 cases assigned to him his first year was significantly higher than the national average.”

Shuebrook said Smith solved the Amity Park Road barn fire -- nine months after it had occurred.

He solved it with a confession by listening to a 911 call for an attempted arson at another location -- at another vacant barn. I was impressed -- and he solved it without any real advanced training -- shortly after becoming detective.”

Officer Thomas Gauby is the department’s liaison to Amity Township Crime Watch.

He is their people person.”

There are a lot of personable officers in the department, but Tom is very good. There are more people involved with that than there were on the Tom’s River Crime Watch -- a community of 100,000 people. Crime watch programs often fall apart when they feel the police department doesn’t care. Tom being engaged is an important part of it.”

Officer Christopher High, who received a letter of recommendation from Southern Berks Regional Emergency Medical Services this summer, oversees property and evidence.

High was previously on the Berks County Emergency Response Team (BCERT).

The letter of recommendation praised High on his efforts with a “ potential overdose patient ... who was obviously intoxicated and had been mixing alcohol with prescription medication.”

[High] kept talking to the man and was finally able to convince the man to accompany our crew to the hospital,” Malcolm Cole said, executive director of Southern Berks Regional Emergency Medical Services, Reading.

Chris is very, very dedicated, very professional skills and oversees property and evidence directly -- disposal and destruction. Nobody wants to do it -- there is no glory in it -- very meticulous. Could lose cases if there are missing drugs or missing evidence. Chris has also stepped-up to take care of information technology.”

Officer Brian Devlin is also very personable, incredibly energetic and very proactive. He does a lot of traffic enforcement. He does a good job -- he’s very competent. Brian’s primary function is patrol.”

Shuebrook said Officer Shawn O’Rourke is a very skilled and competent.

His strength is in drug enforcement. He was involved with money laundering -- drug distribution on both the East and West coasts, which involved forfeiture of property by the federal government.”

O'Rourke and Devlin were both previously Berks County Police officers.

Officer Jamie Milesosky, who returned a year ago from military duty in Afghanistan, was previously an officer with the Reading Police Department for six years.

He brings a lot of experience from Reading. Jamie oversees the department-wide officer training and research, and he has very strong managerial skills, which I attribute to his military experience.”

Shuebrook said Scherer and Milesosky are graduates of the state's Police Northwest Training Center, Meadville.

Officer Kenneth Moyer is our traffic guru. He was involved on the county's fatal accident response team and is highly skilled.”

Moyer, Smith and Scherer are also Berks County detectives.

Shuebrook said they can conduct investigations outside of Amity Township without any other municipal approval.

Officer John Coe, previously a Berks County Sheriff's Officer, and a Marine, is “ very proactive with traffic enforcement.”

He is former military, and I'm proud to have him. Coe is Range Master and is responsible for organizing and schedules the annual firearms qualification. All officers need to qualify with the firearms they carry.”

Coe oversees the firearms inventory that includes cleaning and repair.

Officer Michael DiMaria was hired this June as a full time officer after serving one year as a temporary officer.

He was previously with the Oley Township Police Department for six and a half years.

DiMaria is patrol officer. He does a good job and he was a good choice.”

And last but not least, is Linda McCue, code compliance clerk and police secretary. Linda has been with the township for 15 years. She keeps everything running efficiently and smoothly.”