

Barillari named Amherst Bee's 'Officer of the Year'

Officer Thomas Barillari was named the 2006 Amherst Bee "Officer of the Year" at the annual Amherst Police Club installation dinner last Saturday.

Officer Thomas Grillo received honorable mention recognition.

This year marked the 50th anniversary of the award.

On Sept. 11, 2006, Barillari responded to a report of a woman who had been beaten and robbed in her garage by three males. Barillari was close by and arrived on location in less than a minute.

He provided first aid to the victim until an ambulance arrived, and was assigned to escort the ambulance to the hospital. While en route, Barillari spotted a suspicious vehicle which he recalled seeing in the area prior to the robbery.

Barillari called for backup, and the suspects were separated and interviewed. The driver made several admissions and consenting to a search of his vehicle. During this search, the victim's car keys were located under the back-seat of the suspect's vehicle. All three suspects were then taken into custody.

Grillo was recognized for actions that stemmed from a routine traffic stop on the night of June 27, 2006.

Grillo interviewed the driver, a male in his 30s, and observed him to be extremely nervous. The passenger was a young girl dressed in what appeared to be pajamas.

The passenger eventually stated that they had just come from a hotel in another jurisdiction, where they had sexual relations. Grillo continued the investigation and eventually he determined that the passenger was only 15 years old and was involved in an abusive relationship with her mother's ex-boyfriend.

The driver was prosecuted for the sexual offenses.

William F. Muck II Award Officer of the Year

The William F. Muck II Award is presented each year by the membership of the Amherst Police Club to the department's outstanding officer of the year, and runner-up.

On the night of March 26, 2006,

Officer Eric Davis noticed a vehicle traveling slowly on Ridge Lea. He attempted to stop the vehicle for a traffic violation but when he activated his lights, the suspect vehicle turned onto Niagara Falls Boulevard and then continued onto the Youngmann Highway ramp before finally pulling over.

Davis noticed three different license plates on the floor of the vehicle. Two were from Maine, and one was from New York. The New York plate was stolen on March 24, 2006 from a vehicle in Salamanca and belonged on a vehicle with the same make, color and year of the suspect's vehicle. Officer Davis arrested the suspect for criminal possession of stolen property at that time.

During a pat down of the suspect, black latex gloves as well as a pocket knife covered in mud were found in his pockets, and a climbing carabiner was found sewn into his pants. The vehicle was inventoried during which officers found a black nylon mask, a pellet gun, a pry bar, a small tool belt with a chisel, 100 feet of nylon rope and other suspicious items. The vehicle also has a GPS system in it which was programmed with numerous pharmacies located near the Youngmann, as well as the Best Buy store on Niagara Falls Boulevard.

Davis recalled a recent roof burglary at Outback Steakhouse on Niagara Falls Boulevard, and a roof alarm at K-Mart a few nights earlier. He forwarded the information to Detectives John Trabert and Matthew Gould.

The detectives checked the area of K-Mart and found damage to a roof vent, along with rope on the roof matching that found in the suspect's vehicle. They also found several cigarette butts on the roof. While speaking with the suspect, the detectives learned that he smoked. They checked the property the suspect had up on his arrest and discovered his cigarettes were the same type found on the roof. During their interview, the detectives were able to get a DNA sample from the suspect without his knowledge, which, along with the butts found on the roof, were submitted for analysis. On Aug. 30, 2006, the detectives received word that the



Present for the 50th annual Amherst Bee "Officer of the Year" award ceremony were, from left, Trey Measer, Bee publisher; John Moslow, chief of police; Thomas Grillo, honorable mention; Thomas Barillari,

Bee award winner; David Sherman, Bee managing editor, and Edward Guzdek, Police Club president.

Photos by John Rusac

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The Amherst Police Club honored several officers at the annual banquet. Shown from left are Edward Guzdek Jr., Police Club president; John Moslow, chief of police; Mark Cavagnaro, Wright Award winner; Detective John Trabert, Muck Award co-winner; Eric

Davis, Muck Award co-winner; James Persons, Muck Award runner-up; Matthew Gould, Muck Award co-winner; and Andrew Edwards, Muck Award runner-up.

DNA was a match and arrested the suspect on the new charge of attempted burglary at K-Mart.

Receiving honorable mentions status were Officers James Persons and Andrew Edwards.

On April 19, 2006, Persons and Edwards were on routine patrol on Kenmore Avenue, when they observed a group of people congregated in the street. As the officers exited their patrol car, they found an injured, unconscious woman having seizures in the roadway. They immediately requested emergency personnel, and began administering first aid. Prior to the arrival of EMS, the woman stopped breathing. The officers repositioned the woman's head and cleared her airway al-

lowing her to continue breathing.

According to the witnesses, the woman had been struck in the head several times by a male suspect. Through further questioning, they were able to learn the name and personal data of the woman's boyfriend, which matched the description of the suspect. This information was also given neighboring patrols, and the suspect was apprehended.

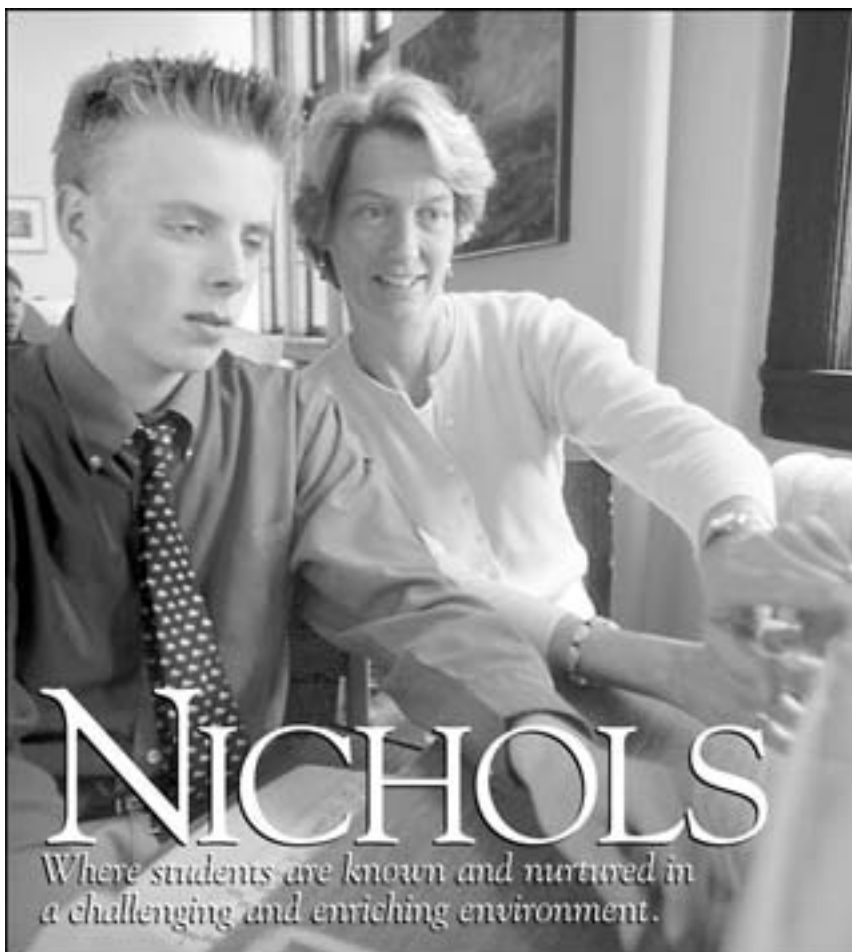
Capt. Donald G. Wright Sr. Memorial Award

Donald G. Wright Sr. was appointed to the Amherst Police Dept. in 1947. During the early years of his career, Don worked as a "plain clothes" officer similar to today's rank of detective.

Wright retired from the police department in 1977, and passed away in 1981. Shortly thereafter, Wright's wife decided to honor her late husband by rewarding officers from the Amherst Police Department who exhibit a strong dedication and pride throughout the course of their careers.

This year's recipient, Mark Cavagnaro, was hired by the Amherst Police Dept. in 1979 and was promoted to the detective bureau in 1999. He has been a member of the Narcotics Unit since 2000.

Throughout his career, Cavagnaro has received several awards. He has served as a member of the Amherst Police Club's Board of Directors for more than 20 years.



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