

# Valentines with a touch of April Fool

Arundel sheriff uses sting  
to serve warrants

By Andrea F. Siegel

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The SUV bore the slogan of Keystone Candigrams: "Just One Bite & You're Hooked." The top of the candy box featured a romantic design, and the smiling delivery woman, a plaid cap covering her braided hair, needed the recipient's signature for the chocolates.

But this Sunday delivery, on Valentine's Day, was anything but sweet.

The deliverer was Anne Arundel County Sheriff's Lt. Jennifer Gilbert-Duran, who was serving a warrant. The recipient was Timothy Lawn, 23, handcuffed and led away from his Glen Burnie home for failing to appear in court on traffic charges.

The Arundel sheriff's office used the operation to whittle away at 8,622 unserved warrants. Fifty arrests were made Sunday, 15 of them through the delivery service.

For Sunday's sting, Sgt. Tanya Pfaltzgraff — or "Gretchen" to those on the phone — told suspects they had a gift and asked them to select a delivery time.

"They schedule their own arrests," said Anne Arundel Sheriff Ron Bateman. Even so, only about two-thirds of the recipients were home for their phony deliveries.

Deliveries could also be arranged through a Web site, keystonecandigrams.com, which also includes testimonials about terrific service. One, from "Harry," said his wife was so pleased that she "threw away my 'honey do' list and let me go to the gun range."

The scheme is not unique. A 2007 Valentine's Day sting by the Arundel sheriff featured fake deliveries from Flowers By Ron, a company boasting "an arresting bouquet." (One of the people arrested Sunday was also caught in that operation.) A 2008 hoax invited unsuspecting suspects to the state Comptroller's Office to collect tax refunds.

Lawn, the Glen Burnie man, didn't hear deputies knock for the noon delivery he'd requested. But deputies called to set up a new time. He did.

"When I saw them, I figured it out,"

Lawn said as deputies led him away.

The candy box contained clues about its origins. The design featured handcuffs and scales of justice, and a turn-of-the-century portrait of former Baltimore police officer William J. Bateman, the sheriff's great-grandfather, who joined the city force in 1907. Inside, for weight: an annotated tome of state motor vehicle law.

Deputies found some surprises. During a round of calls, one person asked if the delivery request was actually a sting. If it was, the person said, don't bother: Her son, she told the deputies, had already turned himself in.

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Anne Arundel County  
Sheriff Ron Bateman said  
about targets of his sting