



Every day, computer hackers and other cyber criminals launch countless attacks that shut down Web sites and release a never-ending onslaught of worms and viruses on computers and networks around the globe. And despite the fear invoked by such terms as digital Armageddon and digital Pearl Harbor, these attacks pose no threat to life and limb. However, they do pose a significant threat to the economy. According to Computer Economics, the worldwide economic impact of attacks like these totals more than \$10 billion a year.

Not surprisingly, the federal government's Web sites and computer networks are particularly attractive targets for these criminals. So why is it that we don't read more about these attacks as they continually strike in our own digital back yard?

technology across the 13 bureaus that comprise the DOC enterprise—the three largest of which include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Patent and Trade Office. He is responsible for managing the department's IT financial resources, with an annual budget of \$1.5 billion. In addition to IT security and critical infrastructure protection, West oversees IT operations and policy, IT planning and capital investment review, IT architecture, information quality, E-government, and Next Generation Internet.

West is no stranger to the CIO role. Prior to his promotion to the DOC, he was CIO for the Federal Emergency Management Agency for three years and the National Weather Service for almost two years. Other

Becoming the Best by Preparing for the Worst

By Karen Wallingford '02 MA

"You won't read about most of them because they're unsuccessful," said **Barry West '85 BS**, who was named chief information officer for the U.S. Department of Commerce in June. West, and others like him, are a big part of the reason cyber attacks on the government's computer infrastructure have had such an insignificant impact.

With more than 25 years of experience in the IT field, part of West's success is rooted in his belief in preparing for the worst. It's something he learned from his early years as a first responder. Prior to a stint in the U.S. Air Force, he spent six years as a volunteer firefighter and emergency technician near his hometown of Smithsburg, Maryland. And now, rather than fighting fires as they happen, he's responsible for preventing them, metaphorically, from happening in the first place.

"We have more than 350 IT systems, and I have to make sure that all of these are secure and that they have proper security plans in place," he said.

IT security is a critical aspect of West's job, but it's only a part of his responsibilities. As CIO, West is responsible for leading and coordinating information

positions he has held in government include deputy director of the Office of Electronic Government at the U.S. General Services Administration, associate director for production services at the National Technical Information Service, and systems manager at the Census Bureau. All of these positions have been career appointments based on experience, accomplishments and education rather than political affiliation.

West's rise in the IT world was literally from the ground up. As a high school student, he started working for Tab Books, Inc., where he did everything from warehouse and janitorial work to helping operate the printing presses. After graduating from high school, he enrolled in a community college near his hometown and began working toward an associate degree in data processing. After two semesters, Tab offered him a job with its newly established computer department. Under his leadership,

the company converted from a manual-based operation to a completely automated system.

While his job at Tab was challenging, the hours were long and didn't afford him the opportunity to advance his education more than one class at a time. The desire to obtain a four-year degree, coupled with a healthy dose of wanderlust, prompted him to enlist in the Air Force, where he was trained as a weather specialist.

In 1984, West was stationed at the former K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base in Gwinn. With Northern Michigan University just a short drive away, he jumped at the opportunity to enroll in the College of Business's computer information systems program. His schedule was grueling.

"I did 44 credits in 15 months, and I worked full time. It was unbelievable," he said. "I graduated in '85 and then got stationed in Alaska in '86, so it was just by the skin of my teeth that I made it through the program."

After a year at a remote station in Alaska, West was stationed at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. While at Andrews, he enrolled in an extended degree program at Central Michigan University, and received a master of science in administration in 1990.

West faced and survived some of the most intense pressure of his career during his tenure as CIO of FEMA, leading the IT department during the two busiest hurricane seasons on record.

Since then he has also earned a master of science in information technology and a chief information officer executive certificate from the University of Maryland.

West left the Air Force in 1988 and went to work at the Census Bureau as they were gearing up for the 1990 census. Perhaps it's only fitting that he is returning to the DOC as the Census Bureau prepares for the decennial



The devastation of Katrina on New Orleans' 9th ward, six months after the hurricane.

Marvin Neuman, courtesy of FEMA

census in 2010. As he works to support the mission of the Census Bureau and the other 12 bureaus in Commerce, his "prepare for the worst" philosophy is sure to be put to the test.

He's up for the challenge, having faced and survived some of the most intense pressure of his career during his tenure as CIO of FEMA. West led FEMA's IT department during the two busiest hurricane seasons on record, 2004 and 2005. When asked whether or not part of the reason he left FEMA was due to the intense scrutiny the hurricane-battered agency has endured over the last few years, he said it wasn't even a consideration. While he admitted that he won't miss having to go to work every weekend during hurricane season, he said leaving FEMA wasn't as easy as he thought it would be.

"I was a perfect fit for FEMA based on my first responder background, my weather background, and my experience at NOAA. I knew the mission really well, and I had built a really strong team there. And looking back, we really put some neat systems in place."

One of the accomplishments West is most proud of during his time at FEMA was establishing more than 60 mobile disaster response centers. These roving command centers, in conjunction with an online relief registration system that he also implemented, are deployed to areas where power and phone service have been knocked out, allowing people to register for and receive aid more quickly. According to the April 2006 issue of *CIO Spotlight*, at its post-Katrina peak, FEMA registered more than 100,000 people a day for support and assistance—

45 percent online and the rest by phone—for a total of three million individuals.

“Obviously during Katrina we had some major communication issues, and major infrastructures were totally destroyed in New Orleans, but the IT for FEMA and the support that we provided did not have any issues,” West said. “We didn’t miss a beat with our network support.”

The leadership and support he provided at FEMA, West said, were a big part of the reason he got the job at the DOC. Indeed, West has an established track record for motivating employees by, among other things, establishing a solid line of communication.

“I feel in all three of the CIO positions, I’ve really changed the whole atmosphere of the IT organization. I think that’s due to my management skills, the people I surround myself with, and how I treat people. I expect a lot out of people, but we have fun while we work.”

Win Henderson, courtesy of FEMA



During his time at FEMA, West established more than 60 mobile response information centers (MRIC), where residents of damaged areas can register for and receive aid, even when power and phone service are not available. The photo on the left shows the inner workings of an MRIC in Baton Rouge, La.; on the right, FEMA specialists operate out of one in Covington, La., shortly after the hurricane.

One of the first things West did when he joined Commerce in June was visit all 13 bureaus and talk with the CIOs and other IT professionals.

“That went a long way,” he said. “I think it’s important to have that personal touch.”

Establishing a personal touch is no small task considering the DOC building takes up a full city block in Washington, D.C., and houses more than 4,000 employees. But it’s something West takes very seriously. He holds regular meetings with the council of CIOs, where they talk about hot issues facing the various bureaus across Commerce.

In addition to being CIO at the Department of Commerce, West serves as president of the nonprofit American Council for Technology, the largest federal IT association in the United States. Its mission is to bring

together government, industry and academia to improve the acquisition and use of IT resources in government. He represents the United States each year at the International Council for Information Technology in Government Administration conference that brings together more than 25 NATO countries. He lectures at various conferences across the country and also is an adjunct instructor in the graduate school at the University of Maryland, where he teaches courses in program and project management.

“When I was in the U.P., one of the forecasters I worked with at the Air Force said, ‘You’re going to burn out.’ Well here I am 20 years later, and I haven’t burned out. I do get tired, but I’ve learned that you have to balance things in life. You have to balance your job, your family, and yourself, and you’ve got to give time to each one of those things.”



Robert Kaufman, courtesy of FEMA

He maintains balance in his life by exercising, traveling with his wife, Laurie, and scuba diving. His greatest stress reducer is riding his 100th anniversary Road King Classic Harley Davidson.

Having held the top IT position at three different government agencies and now as CIO at the Department of Commerce, it’s clear that West has had a significant impact on the direction of our country’s integral information systems. The sentiment is not lost on him.

“I got my bachelor’s degree from Northern Michigan, and now I’m in this job. I feel like I’ve made it. Everything has just kind of been brought together. I love the challenges I’m faced with, solving problems and turning organizations around. When you add all that up, I’m really happy. I get up in the morning, and I’m motivated because I love my job and I love this field.” ■



GUARDING OUR GATES
BY
KRISTI EVANS

DRUG SMUGGLERS are notorious for devising extreme methods for transporting their cargo across international borders undetected. But the “kids for cover” conspiracy was downright disturbing. Infants were rented from their parents—often in exchange for cash and drugs—to accompany female couriers shuttling cocaine or heroin from Panama to Chicago, New York and London. The stash was concealed in baby formula cans. Who would dare suspect that the white, powdery contents could be anything but essential nourishment for the young child in tow? The charade worked ... for a while.

IT WAS A LATE SPRING DAY in 1999 when **Scott Hegerich '69 BA** received a tip that would trigger the defining case of his career. He was working as an intelligence research analyst in the Chicago office of the former Combined Agency Border Intelligence Network.

“The Director of CABINET was in a large corner office that was previously occupied by Eliot Ness, and the rest of us bumped into the ghosts of the ‘Untouchables’ as we performed our duties,” he said.

At that time, CABINET fell under the auspices of the U.S. Customs Service. Its mandate was to

“The British customs agent came to me one day and said a woman was arrested in London with about seven pounds of cocaine hidden in baby formula, and that the baby with her wasn’t hers.”

field database research questions from any police agency in the world. Hegerich was assigned to a British customs agent stationed in Chicago.

“He came to me one day and

said a woman was arrested in London with about seven pounds of cocaine hidden in baby formula, and that the baby with her wasn’t hers.”

Hegerich recalled. “I got on the computer to look at the immigration database, which

connections between people and identifying patterns of activity.

“My research showed that the adult and baby came through Atlanta,” he said. “The office down there had a couple of seizures of that kind and thought that was it. But these people had used Dallas a



Scott Hegerich at the Sault Ste. Marie border station in 1987.

captures information on arrivals. I ran the baby’s name, and lo and behold, this six-month old had already logged five arrivals into the United States. The woman also had a bunch of arrivals from Panama and from England. It looked pretty

couple of times before until they started getting caught. It’s what we call port shopping: Once you start arousing suspicion in one location, you move to another. The baby sometimes traveled with other adults. Once we located them, we found that there were a total of 20 children being used.”

Hegerich said it was one of the first cases to appear on the docket of Pat Fitzgerald, the U.S. attorney in Chicago. Fitzgerald more recently garnered national media coverage as special counsel in the CIA leak investigation of I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby, the vice president’s chief of staff.

Hegerich’s main role in the

ominous so we alerted our boss.”

Hegerich played an active role in the ensuing investigation. By tracing backwards and pulling up flight lists, Hegerich started making

“kids for cover” conspiracy was mining databases for information that ultimately led officials to the home addresses of those involved.

“We used the same kind of tools and analysis for drugs that they’re now using for terrorists,” he explained. “The federal databases have become more sophisticated with better and faster computers. There are also commercial databases like LexisNexis that offer information we didn’t have 20 years ago. It used to be you couldn’t verify that Joe Blow lived at a certain address. Now you can find out if he lives there, for how long and other stuff. From the perspective of someone who did that kind of work, it’s much better now. For someone trying to hide everything about themselves, it’s not so good.”

After the initial flurry of activity tapered off and it became obvious that the investigation would be long-term, Hegerich continued juggling other cases. One involved a man who was in the final stages of trying to secure U.S. citizenship. Hegerich said the State Department was trying to deport him because they believed he had participated in terrorist training in his native Middle East.

Another case involved a corrupt state department official in Guyana who was selling U.S. visas for \$10,000 each.

“He claimed he never left the U.S. that year, so they came to me and I went into the database,” he added. “I found a couple arrivals for that man with his passport number. He was convicted of criminal contempt and sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison, followed by deportation.”

Another case involved a corrupt

state department official in Guyana who was selling U.S. visas for \$10,000 each. Hegerich helped collect much of the information used against the official, who unexpectedly entered a guilty plea on the day his trial was to start.

In the wake of the 9/11 tragedy, Hegerich and his colleagues worked a 12/7 schedule



for a few months, researching the flight lists for the aircraft involved. It was a short time later that the Department of Homeland Security was established, with immigration and

customs falling under its organizational umbrella.

The “kids for cover” investigation did indeed trudge on for years, but it ultimately netted 54 convictions. Hegerich was a finalist for Chicago’s federal law enforcement officer of the year in 2001. A few years later, he was also among a group of more than 20 honored for

their work on the case by the International Narcotic Enforcement Officers Association.

“It turned out there was another group bringing drugs from Jamaica using some of the same couriers. We

came to the conclusion they were tied together as some type of south-side Chicago gang activity. Once the first few were caught, they started flipping on each other. No one indicted was found innocent. They even indicted parents of the babies. It made me feel pretty good to play a role in bringing it down. The rewards weren’t monetary or anything, but I got satisfaction from knowing that a supply of drugs was at least interrupted.”

HEGERICH COMPARED IT to the sense of fulfillment generated by seizures in his previous position as a land border inspector. He began clearing passengers and freight in 1974. Customs inspectors were not uniformly armed back then, he said. They had a choice of whether to

carry a gun. Hegerich opted not to pack protection at first. But it took him only one month to change his mind.

The pivotal moment occurred while Hegerich was part of a skeleton crew working the midnight shift on the Ambassador Bridge in Detroit. An inspector working the auto lane notified Hegerich via intercom that he was sending a car ahead for a secondary inspection. The occupants were two couples from Ohio who drove one-and-a-half hours to “see the sights in Canada,” apparently for a whopping 20 minutes in the middle of the night when nothing was open.

Hegerich sent them inside for an ID check while he started examining the vehicle. The glove compartment was locked. After retrieving the key inside, he opened it to find a loaded 38mm with a two-inch barrel. The driver claimed he had no idea of how it got there, even as Hegerich sized up the empty holster slung over the man’s shoulder. A pat-down search of the other passengers uncovered a loaded .25-caliber automatic in a jacket pocket.

“It wasn’t scary at the time because we were busy going through the seizure and arrest process, but I started thinking about it a lot more when I got home that morning,” Hegerich said. “If the driver had decided he wasn’t going to pull off to the side, he could have shot my friend who was alone in the auto lane inspection booth and been in downtown Detroit a half-mile later. Or, when I got them out of the car, they could have shot me dead. I didn’t even have a gun. That’s when I became an armed officer.”

While in southeast Michigan,

Hegerich also worked at the Detroit-Windsor tunnel and the metro airport.

A SHORT TIME after graduating from Northern, he was drafted by the U.S. Army. After two years of service and a few graduate-level classes at NMU, he decided to get a job. Hegerich took the federal civil service entrance exam. The first agency that called was U.S. Customs.

He transferred from the Detroit area to Sault Ste. Marie, the only U.P. location with full-time customs inspectors. Hegerich worked in the Soo from 1975 to ’87 before taking a foreign assignment as an inspector at Vancouver International Airport in British Columbia. He fulfilled his four-year-max assignment there before moving to Chicago to work first at O’Hare Airport, then at CABINET until it was dissolved in

The glove compartment was locked... He opened it to find a loaded 38mm with a two-inch barrel. The driver claimed he had no idea of how it got there, even as Hegerich sized up the empty holster slung over the man’s shoulder.

2002. Hegerich returned to O’Hare and closed out his career as an intelligence research specialist.

“The procedures are pretty much the same whether you’re at a land border or an airport,” he said. “The main difference is that most people who arrive on an airplane present themselves to customs with just their luggage in hand. You don’t worry too much about the commercial airplane as a hiding place because there are teams of inspectors who do that for you. But at a land border, a car or truck could serve as potential hiding places, or they could be stolen. Inspections there

take a little longer.”

Retired since 2005 and living in Vancouver, Wash., the only thing Hegerich inspects on a regular basis now is his lawn. “My hobby is keeping the yard up. It’s nice to get out for an hour or so every day. I spent a lot of time in this area while working in British Columbia and wanted to come back here. We’re about four miles from Portland, but it looks like we’re way out in the country. We can see Mount Hood and Mount Saint Helens.”

Hegerich has fond memories of NMU, and although his career was not directly tied to his degree in history, he said his education served him well in his field. He learned how to put a sentence together properly, which helped when he was asked to write reports in addition to mining data. He also worked at the campus radio and television stations,

which made him more confident and outgoing—two qualities that are essential in law enforcement. “It’s difficult to succeed in that field if you’re timid.” So his NMU experience provided some indirect benefits professionally, even though he veered from his original career goal. “I had planned to teach, but student teaching convinced me that was not the right path. I couldn’t see myself doing that for about 40 years. It was kind of by chance I ended up in law enforcement, but after more than three decades, I think it’s safe to say it worked out alright.” ■



Busting the Bad Guys

By Rebecca Tavernini

It's 11:30 at night. Two men sit in an old pickup truck in a parking lot behind a Lansing pool hall. In a brown paper bag they have a couple pounds of marijuana. They're waiting for the buyers to show up and meet them inside. Now, suddenly, the two buyers are flanking the side windows of the truck. One says to the passenger, "Show me the weed." The paper bag is lifted and opened. The buyer reaches into his pocket, and pulls out a gun; his partner does the same. Both guys in the truck have semi-automatics pointed an inch from their heads. The buyer screams, "Give me the dope! Give me the dope NOW!" He grabs the bag and runs—down the alley, the other toward the street. The guys selling the pot run after the buyer with the bag, who turns and fires a shot; they fire five back. They nearly catch up with the man, just as a

Ojibway in 2003, ready to board a helicopter in Operation HEMP to survey a three-county region in Lower Michigan for marijuana plants.

German shepherd leaps on him and bites down hard. On the ground, the pursuers pull his wrists behind his back and clamp them with handcuffs. A few weeks later, the pair will find the other buyer in a drug house and cuff him, too. The buyers are sentenced to 10 years for armed robbery.

The two men looking to sell the marijuana return it to the precinct lock-up, ready for use in another "reverse," where the good guys—two undercover cops—pose as the bad guys.

That was 10 years ago and now **Christopher Ojibway '90 BS** has learned the bad guys are getting out. After 13 years with the Lansing Police Department, having put

dozens of offenders behind bars—many who've threatened him—Ojibway, a graduate of Northern Michigan University's criminal justice program, is always alerted and aware of when prisoners get out. "It's hard for me to let my guard down," he says. "Not just because of the past, but because of the world we live in."

He's seen a lot of that world as an undercover detective with the Lansing Police Special Operations division investigating street-level drug dealers; with the Tri-County Metro Narcotics Squad, handling upper-echelon, large-quantity dealers; with the multi-jurisdictional Fugitive Team, hunting down violent offenders; as a road patrol officer; and as an investigative officer.

Sometimes the bad guys didn't make it to sentencing, like one fugitive who had shot an Ionia County

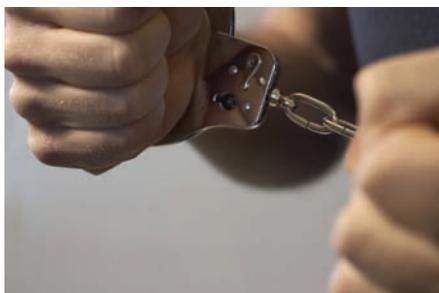
sheriff's deputy, and after being cornered in the woods by an FBI SWAT team as part of Ojibway's Fugitive Team, chose to shoot himself instead.

Despite the inherent challenges of the job, Ojibway says working as a police officer was a dream come true. "I really fell in love with law enforcement when I did a college internship with the Chocolate Township Police Department," he says, noting that Chief Greg Zyburt was a big influence, a great role model and good friend to this day. After working as a police service officer in Chicago and doing some odd jobs there, Ojibway landed the job in Lansing in early 1992, and was excited to have all the avenues and experiences of a large, metropolitan police officer available to him. Being a small-town boy (he grew up in Marquette) in a big city was eye-opening. "I had never seen cocaine before. I had never seen a prostitute. I had never seen a lot of things," he recalls. But he says he wasn't intimidated; he thought of it as an adventure.

After working road patrol, he really found his niche working as an undercover agent. Ojibway had many different looks and stories—each customized to the suspect. There was the woodsman persona, unshowered with plaid shirt and beard; the student look; the clean-shaven, well-dressed businessman look. "I'd emulate the way they talk and look—whether they're an 18-year-old student or a 40-year-old dentist—you have to make them feel like you're one of them."

On the drug stings, Ojibway would be introduced to a potential dealer by a confidential informant or by a friend of the dealer's, not knowing his true identity. After

building a certain comfort level, he'd go meet the dealer or an envoy on his own, usually in a bar or public place, and explain what he was looking for: marijuana, cocaine, crack—whatever the suspected dealer's specialty. Then he'd set up the exchange.



"You know going into this field that you will see the worst sides of people, the worst side of life."

"At one point, my partner and I were buying crack. We were driving around in our undercover car and the dealer started getting suspicious that we were cops," Ojibway recalls. "He said, 'Man, you gotta take a hit off this now,' holding out the crack pipe he'd been smoking. He was really questioning us about our true identities and started threatening us. When we refused, he gestured that he had a gun. At that point I slammed on the brakes, we jumped out and my partner pulled him out, slamming him between the door and the car. The dealer started throwing punches and it turned into an all-out street brawl. Then we pinned him and arrested him."

Just how does an agent insinuate himself with drug dealers without partaking in what they're selling?

How does an officer handle the instant life-or-death decisions that must be made in trigger-finger incidents? "The best tool, or weapon, to have is a creative mind and to know what to say or not to say," Ojibway says. "If you can talk yourself out of a dangerous situation—it doesn't matter what brawn you have or don't have—what you say is what will save you.

"We never participate in drug use," he says. "You tell the dealer or buyer you have to do a 'drop' for work (a urine test), or that you're late and the old lady's going to be pissed, or that you're already high."

The drug cases that frustrate Ojibway the most are dealers that have become so good at insulating themselves and laundering money, running it as a sleek business, that it takes an incredible amount of resources and time to get to the top and make the bust. And when and if it happens it's not a satisfying, put-on-the-cuffs moment, but rather something that comes to light on a tax document. "For a lot of these guys, their job is waking up every morning and seeing how they can make the easiest buck," Ojibway says.

Having seen so many kids dealing drugs also troubles him. "A lot of what you are like as an adult is a direct reflection of how you were raised," he believes. "I'd see people in an inner-city apartment, the mom or dad selling drugs right in front of their eight-year-old or two-year-old. I wonder, how are these kids ever going to make it?"

Still, he sympathizes with minorities in the inner city. He thinks his own Native American heritage has made him more sensitive to other people's ethnic groups.

“That’s just the circumstances some children have fallen into,” he explains. The street level drug dealers are mostly kids. “They see someone with a shiny car, new shoes, nice clothes. The only way they know how to get those things is from what they see—people selling drugs—and they emulate that. That’s all they know.”

Working as a uniformed officer, Ojibway has also experienced a lot of other terrible situations. In one stretch of four days, he was the first to respond to three suicides. He’s seen people hanging in stairwells or from an apple tree in the back yard. He’s witnessed the aftermath of many a gun to the head. And knocked on doors after a relative calls to say they haven’t heard from grandma or dad in a while, and Ojibway knows from the flies buzzing around the door what he’ll find inside—some dead from natural causes, some from foul play, some by their own hand “to get back at a spouse.” The images are sharp.

“You never forget about it,” Ojibway says. “You try, but you never will. Especially the smell of a dead body. In these situations, you just deal with it. You don’t have any other choice. And as unusual as this might sound, you try and have a good sense of humor. Your colleagues help you through it.

“You know going into this field that you will see the worst sides of people, the worst side of life.”

He adds that at times, interaction with the police is not positive—you’re getting a speeding ticket or an officer’s at your front door telling you a family member’s been in an accident or has died. It’s tough, he says. “But the people you work

around make it all worthwhile—that’s how you cope. That’s your support group. You work together for eight hours and then get together after.” And when he went home, it wasn’t work he could leave behind either, with his pager or cell phone a ubiquitous partner; on the other end an informant, a colleague, a prosecutor, needing something then. Not to mention the necessity of working at night, because that’s when the deals go down. “It’s rough on families,” he adds.



“At one point, my partner and I were buying crack. We were driving around in our undercover car, and the dealer started getting suspicious that we were cops...”

He says it takes someone who’s very understanding, flexible and supportive to be married to a cop. And that’s exactly what he’s found in his wife—fellow NMU grad **Carrie Wichar ’94 BS**, a teacher, with whom he has two young boys. They would love to return to the U.P., especially after spending an idyllic Labor Day week in a cabin near Grand Marais. “You don’t realize until you’ve gone away how beauti-

ful it is and what a nice place it is to live.” His parents have strong ties to NMU as well. Both NMU grads, his mother, **Barbara ’89 EDS ’71 MAE ’65 BA**, is an instructor at NMU and former principal in the Marquette schools, and his father, **Gerald ’81 MAE ’66 BS**, is retired as an adviser at the Jacobetti Center. Someday his own family will return to the U.P., Ojibway says.

For now, after sustaining a serious back injury on the job last year that prevents him from doing the police work he loves, he’s enjoying being a private eye, investigating worker’s compensation claims. He travels around the state doing surveillance work for numerous insurance companies—seeing if the claimed injury is authentic. Despite the empathy he’s gained from his own injury, he has found the vast majority of claims are invalid. He’ll videotape people who claim that they’re blind driving a car or who say they have bad knees playing softball. After hearing so many stories on the street, he’s not really surprised. They may not be drug dealers or fugitives, but they’re committing crimes, and he’s satisfied to still be fighting the bad guys.

Ojibway believes that it’s a combination of elements that make a good investigator or undercover agent: a mix of gut instinct, intuition, experience, and most of all, confidence. “The confidence you’ve gained through training, the confidence you have in your team, and the confidence you have within yourself,” he explains. “Being confident that you’re not going to lose when you go into a difficult situation, that’s what you have to have. That’s what will get you through it.” ■

Mild Mannered Super Hero

By Becky Kratz

Teaching all day and keeping order in a classroom full of jubilant middle schoolers would seem like enough of a hard day's work for most people. When the bell rings to signify the end of the school day, some teachers are just as anxious to get home, lounge on the couch and watch TV as the students are. But for **Sue Westrick '77 BS**, a sixth-grade science teacher at downstate Algonquin Middle School, the day is not over when she leaves her classroom.

Westrick also serves as administrative sergeant of the City of St. Clair police reserves, as a reserve officer for the Algonac Police Department, and reserve bicycle officer for the Macomb County Sheriff's Department. Some of her



manage to be able to do both," she said. "The principal and superintendent of my school have been very supportive in allowing me to take days off from teaching when necessary, and my kids and husband all help to make this possible."

Teaching and doing police work in the same community has been an eye opener for Westrick. Seeing the situations that some of her students face after they go home is difficult, but at the same time she also gets insight into why they may be struggling in school.

"We have been called to houses for domestic violence, only to find out that it is one of my student's parents who are fighting," she said. "Some of the kids' home situations

Teaching and doing police work in the same community has been an eye opener for Westrick. Seeing the situations that some of her students face after they go home is difficult.

duties include crowd control, road patrol and bike patrol.

While her two jobs appear to be polar opposites, Westrick said that there are actually many parallels between the two. "You are always keeping things under control and trying to help others," she said. "They are also both very rewarding, and every day is different. The students find it pretty neat that they see their teacher out in the police cars."

Westrick received her teaching degree at NMU, and has taught in the Algonac Community Schools district for 28 years. "I loved my time at NMU and felt that I left with a very good education. I visit whenever I can, and both of my kids are hoping to enroll there," she said.

Westrick's criminal justice side did not surface until 2004, when she began volunteering the services of her bloodhounds, Sophie and Rozzie, to the St. Clair Police Department. She had trained the dogs to track people. After finding police work to be interesting, Westrick took a criminal justice course through her local college and signed up to participate in the Oakland Reserve Police Academy. Her recent graduation is a milestone for the academy, marking the first time a teacher has passed through.

Although both of her jobs are demanding, Westrick said that the people in her life help her find the time to manage both. "I truly love both jobs, so somehow I just

are truly sad. It makes me wonder how they can come to school and concentrate on the day's lessons. I have also come across former students who are now using alcohol or drugs, which is really heartbreaking."

The most intense situation that Westrick has encountered while on duty was when a man was firing a gun outside of his residence. The conflict was resolved quickly before anyone was seriously hurt, "but we didn't know that on the way there," she said.

Long days and dangerous scenarios aside, Westrick said that every experience she has with both jobs is worth it. "It's a very rewarding perspective. I plan on continuing with all that I'm doing for as long as I'm able." ■

POLICE ACADEMY

This summer's NMU Police Academy ended not with a bang, but a crash. In their "first-aid practical," recruits had to respond to a simulated collision involving two vehicles, one of which was a bus full of kids with multiple injuries. The cadets were dispatched one squad at a time by the incident commander, recruit Ben Carlson. Also called to the scene were the Marquette City Fire department and Marquette General Hospital EMS. The recruits were required to assess and remove the victims from the bus and car in a safe manner. They received critique from local emergency personnel and even the accident victims.

The academy provides more than 800 hours of training, which exceeds the 562 hours mandated by the state. In addition to first aid/

CPR, it covers topics such as legal aspects, patrol procedures, defensive tactics, firearms, precision driving, investigations and crime scene preservation.

"We also add 40 hours of scenario-based training where we use role players to create situations that might be encountered on the job. The recruit interacts to resolve the situation," said Mike Bath, assistant director of public safety and training at NMU. "It might be a domestic violence incident, a bar argument or a drunk-driving traffic stop.

"We have almost 50 instructors involved. They range from prosecutors, judges, lawyers and current and retired law enforcement officers to defense attorneys who grill recruits on the stand in a mock trial. The idea is to throw as many real-life

situations at them as we can. It's critical to engage the recruits by providing 'hands-on' training that applies the book-work portion of the academy."

Academy cadets got a rare hands-on training opportunity when President George W. Bush visited Marquette in 2004. They assisted other law enforcement agencies with crowd and traffic control at Sawyer International Airport, in the City of Marquette, and at the NMU Superior Dome, the site of Bush's speech. When the Dead River flood of 2003 temporarily closed their training facility – the Jacobetti Center – cadets were posted at intersections on the north side of town to help stop and redirect traffic.

According to Ken Chant, director of Northern's public safety and police services, the academy was established in the early 1970s, when it became a requirement in Michigan that police officers be



NMU's program mixes real-life scenarios with intensive classroom learning and hands-on training

By Kristi Evans

certified. The training was first offered by continuing education and shifted to the criminal justice department later that decade. In the early 1980s, the academy was switched to a "track program," which was discontinued in the early '90s. Chant said the Public Safety Institute received permission from the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) to re-establish the Regional Police Academy in 1995. The 16-week session is offered each May, allowing applicants to complete 12 credits toward an associate degree in law enforcement.

"It's a state requirement that you have an associate degree after completion of the academy," Bath said. "Most of our cadets are putting themselves through the academy this

way. There are two other ways to get in. One is through a military waiver. If you serve in the military police for any branch of the service for at least a year, it waives the education requirement. The other way is to be sponsored by an agency that has hired you and pays your way through the academy as well as a wage while you're here. That's pretty rare."

Those who complete the program are "certifiable" in most states. In this case, the word has a positive connotation. It means that the hiring department activates a graduate's certification. When officers move, they are recertified by their new departments.

The nearest regional police academy that similarly caters to pre-service individuals is at Kirkland Community College in Roscommon.

"Some universities offer a track program as part of a four-year degree.

There are six of those left. Otherwise, the Michigan State Police, City of Detroit Police and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources each run their own academies and hire exclusively from them."

For Regan Cole of Manistique, law enforcement is a family affair. She followed the same career path as her father and brother when she signed up for Northern's program this year.

"I wanted to come here because this is one of the best academies in Michigan," she said. "It has a very good rating for getting a job after graduation."

Fellow recruit Jordan Bach of Rochester Hills added, "It's been hard, but it's the best experience of my life. I'm a much better person because of it. I'm also better trained and better able to handle any stress that's thrown at me." ■



Cadets at the simulated bus accident, at the shooting range and in the classroom. Northern has offered a Police Academy for more than 30 years.