

Atty. Greg Cerintelli
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Weapon returned to officer for work

Cop must leave gun at station after shift

By MICHAEL P. MAYKO
mrmayko@ctpost.com

MILFORD — A Superior Court judge gave a controversial Seymour police sergeant his gun back but ordered him and his wife to live apart and stay away from each other.

Superior Court Judge Sheridan Moore granted a request by Sgt. Richard Gittings and his lawyer, Gregory Cerintelli, to allow the police officer to carry a gun Monday through Friday between the hours of 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., his usual work shift.

Upon leaving, Gittings must secure the gun with a superior officer at the Seymour Police Department.

"We're pleased the court granted this relief," Cerintelli said. "He needed the gun to be able to work as a police sergeant in Seymour. Seymour is a relatively small department. If there is some critical incident in the town everyone has to respond. To have a supervisor show up without a gun doesn't make sense."

The judge's initial ruling, following a hearing Tuesday, came over the objections of the Milford state's attorney's office.

In papers filed Wednesday with the judge, Supervisory Assistant State's Attorney Kevin Russo pointed out that the federal Gun Control Act of 1968 declares that it is illegal for a person subjected to a domestic violence restraining order to possess a firearm. To get around that, Moore vacated dual restraining orders against both Gittings, 45 of South Main Street, Seymour, and his wife, Laurie Ann Gittings, 46 of Glen Circle, Seymour.

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That came after both parties appeared before the judge and requested the action.

Because both made the request, Russo said Friday his office "will not appeal the ruling."

Moore allowed the couple to be released on promises to appear in court on Dec. 4, with conditions.

Those conditions include living apart, refraining from restraining, threatening, harassing, stalking, assaulting, molesting or sexually assaulting the other and seeking alcoholic treatment, if necessary. The sergeant was also advised to seek anger manage-

ment counseling, if necessary.

The couple was arrested Aug. 17 on a breach of peace charge following an argument in their home.

Court papers claim an argument began when Gittings accused his wife of spending an extensive amount of time on the telephone.

He is accused of throwing an antique pickle barrel at her. A shooting match ensued. Both were under the influence of alcohol, according to the court papers.

In any 20-year relationship there is bound to be a time of tension, Cerintelli said.

The court papers maintain there was no history of domestic violence. The couple has two chil-

dren, neither of whom witnessed the incident.

As a result of the arrest, a protective order was imposed against both.

However, the one imposed on Sgt. Gittings took away his firearm, leaving him unable to work. He was placed on paid leave.

Cerintelli filed a motion on Sept. 27 requesting the firearm ban be lifted.

Before a court hearing Monday on the matter, Seymour Police Capt. Paul Beres submitted a letter to the court, which advised the judge that Gittings' duties and responsibilities require that he carry a weapon on duty. If he is not al-

lowed to do so, he cannot perform the essential functions of his job and cannot work. The Seymour Police Department does not have light duty or administrative duties which would enable someone to work unarmed.

The breach of peace arrest is only one of a number of incidents involving Gittings during his police career. These include being involved in an off-duty bar fight

ignoring Police Chief Michael Metzler's direct order to report to the police station following a Derby party, and a complaint from a cocktail waitress that he harassed her and ordered her to serve him a drink after hours.