

## **CASES PROSECUTED IN LEWIS COUNTY**

A Lewis County grand jury has indicted 10 individuals -- including Kevin Lanzara, 35, of Thomaston Connecticut; and Ben Damuth, 31, and Phillip Damuth, 56, both of Lowville -- for their participation in a cocaine trafficking organization. Lanzara has been charged with Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the First Degree, Ben Damuth has been charged with Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree; and Phillip Damath has been charged with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree, both class "A-II" felonies.

It is alleged that Lanzara, from his home in Thomaston, Connecticut, would deliver multi-ounce quantities of cocaine to Phil Damuth, who in turn would deliver the cocaine to his son Ben Damuth for re-sale by Ben Damuth to customers in Lewis and Oneida counties. Lanzara also made deliveries to other cocaine customers in Oneida and Lewis counties. In May, 2006, seven search warrants were executed, resulting in the seizure of one pound of cocaine, along with 15 guns, almost \$15,000 cash and six vehicles. The Lewis County Grand Jury also indicted Jack Simpson and another individual for their involvement in a separate cocaine distribution network that operated in Lewis and Oneida counties. These cases are being prosecuted by Assistant Deputy Attorney General James Mindell. The defendants are being arraigned before Judge Charles Merrell in Lewis County Court.

The additional defendants are: Gary Cagwin, 55, Allen Nickerson, 46, and Lauri Szablewski, 42, all of Booneville; Rebecca Becnel, 29, and David Miller, 35, of Glenfield; Jennifer Hirsch, 28, and Jack Simpson, 25, both of Trenton ; Phillip Scott Matthews, 53, of Leyden; Mark Wells, 43, Camden.

The New York State Police and Lewis County Sheriff's Department also arrested 14 other individuals for their involvement in cocaine and marijuana sales in Lewis County. Those defendants will be prosecuted by Michael Young, Lewis County District Attorney.