

Scottsburg men arrested for thriving marijuana garden in home's basement

Written by Marty Randall

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Two men remain at the Scott County Security Center after their arrests on March 23 for an indoor marijuana operation discovered in a basement on Cedar Street in Scottsburg.

Jonathan Matthew Bray, 25, the occupant of the house, and Kevin Michael Berna, 24, South Third Street, were taken into custody by sheriff's deputies. Deputies Justin Cheatham and Shawn Mayer went to the home on Cedar St. on that Sunday after receiving a tip that the house contained an illegal marijuana "garden."

A conversation with Bray led to the discovery of 22 marijuana plants secreted in a hidden basement room. Fluorescent and incandescent lighting were also seized from the residence as well as a 9mm handgun located in the livingroom and drug-related paraphernalia in a bedroom.

The house had been rented by a woman, who was contacted for permission to search the home. She and her daughter lived in the residence with Bray, court records indicated.

Bray's charges include cultivating marijuana, possession of marijuana and possession of paraphernalia, all Class A misdemeanors, and maintaining a common nuisance, a Class D felony. Berna is charged with visiting a common nuisance, a Class B misdemeanor; possession of marijuana, a Class A misdemeanor; and possession of paraphernalia.

During their initial court hearings on March 24, each had a preliminary plea of not guilty entered for him. Both received the services of public defenders. Bray's jury trial was scheduled June 19. His bail is set at \$15,000 corporate surety bond/\$1,500 cash.

Berna originally had a jury trial date of May 20 but that was later moved to June 2. He will return to the courtroom on April 14 for a bail reduction hearing. Bail for Berna was set t \$5,000 corporate surety bond or \$500 cash.