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turned out to be a dead end. "There really has been a tremendous amount of work that has gone into this case," Powers said. "It is frustrating that all this work hasn't produced any more results."

For Young and her family, the lengthy investigation has left them with more questions than answers.

Who was the last person who saw August alive? Who cut off her finger?

And what about the troubling call the maid, who found the body the day before her finger was found?

Who was the last person who saw August alive? Who cut off her finger?



Diane Augut was reported missing at age 40 on Good Friday, April 10, 1998. A week later, her finger was found.



With her daughter missing for more than two years, Mildred Young of Hudson worries that Diane Augut—who was diagnosed as being manic-depressive—may have been killed.

Young remembers the short message: "Help, help," Augut said. "There was a scuffling sound as though someone was grabbing the phone from her hands. 'Help, please,' Augut said. The call ended.

The number on the Caller ID box said the call came from someone called Starlight. When the family tried to call the number back, no one answered.

"I think she knew who she was with," Young said.

Her daughter was very trusting and liked men with money, Young said. In the years prior to her disappearance, Augut had mental illness, drug addiction and alcoholism.

She was once a housewife who dined on her three children and kept a meticulous home, the fam-

ily said. Augut loved camping, fishing and music. Family photos show Augut in happier days, a redhead with a dazzling smile on a boat and in a conservatory.

In the late 1980s, she was diagnosed as being manic-depressive and sporadically took medication that kept the disorder under control, family members said.

In 1988, the children—two girls and a boy—were removed from her custody, according to court documents, and Augut and her husband divorced in 1991.

She was arrested several times for petty crimes and was taken into custody under the state's Baker Act at least 12 times, her mother said. The Baker Act is the state's involuntary commitment law. A judge, police officer or doctor decides whether a person is potentially ill enough to require an

involuntary medical exam.

A few weeks before her disappearance, she was treated for her manic-depression at a local mental health facility. Family members think that she should never have been released from that facility, Young said.

She deeply needed institutional care, Young said.

Young said her daughter was seen in two local restaurants around the time she was reported missing. A bartender at the Hay Loft Tavern at Little Road and State Road 32 reported seeing Au-

gust on April 10.

Said Powers: "There are people out there who know something that could assist us. It's just a matter of getting them to come forward, just a matter of building trust."

And on the day that she called her family asking for help, a waitress at the Inn on the Gulf in Hudson saw Augut eating lunch, Young said.

The next day, her finger was found.

"Did someone cut her up, piece by piece?" wonders Young. "That's what I think about."

Tampa Bay Times reporter in St. Petersburg. She can be reached at 888-8246 or (813) 253-7505, ext. 6346. Her e-mail address is luh@tampabay.com.

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**December**

- Pearl Harbor Survivors Association Luncheon

Chapter 11 — Dec. 7. Call (727) 392-7385.

**Schools**

- East Lake High School (Class of 1991) — Dec. 15. Call (727) 732-2427.

**January**

- Military
- 43rd Infantry Division Veterans Association — Jan. 25-28. Call (727) 869-8908.
- Newly Mobile Construction Battalion 40 — Jan. 29-28. Call (850) 875-1300.

**Schools**

- Florida Military Academy (Juniata) — Jan. 19-21. Call (727) 442-8362.

**February**

- Fort Hamilton High School, Brooklyn, N.Y. — Classes of 43-58 Feb. 4-11. Call (727) 883-8386.
- Liberty High School, Toledo, Ohio (All Classes) — Feb. 10-12. Call (813) 986-7018 or (727) 886-7796.
- Wassell Park High School, N.J. (All Classes) — Feb. 23-24. Call (727) 367-3077.
- Union, N.J. High School (All Classes) — Feb. 3. Call (866) 8606, (800) 696-3021, (501) 285-3274 or (501) 483-3400.
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