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News about Benton County,
the mid-Willamette Valley
and the Pacific Northwest

Community



OK, hands up!
Brian Pahl of Santa Barbara, Calif., leads a drill in band conducting Sunday at OSU. Pahl works for the United Spirit Association, which runs summer camps for marching-band drum majors, flag teams and rifle corps. About 70 students from 60 Oregon high schools are at the camp, which runs until Tuesday.

Search for girl resumes

ALBANY (AP) — Rescue crews from three counties returned to the rugged Cascade back country Sunday to continue searching for a teenage girl missing since early Tuesday.

Sheriff's deputies from Lincoln and Deschutes counties combed the mountainous area near Santiam Junction all day Friday without finding a trace of 15-year-old Rachonda Lee Pickle.

Pickle was last seen near the name she shares with her mother and stepfather at the state highway maintenance complex on Oregon 30 about 70 miles east of Albany.

The girl's mother reported her missing Wednesday and the search began Thursday after investigators ruled out the possibility that she had run away from home.

Linn rescue crews remained at the scene overnight Thursday and were joined in their search Friday by deputies from the two other counties, as well as U.S. Forest Service crews and members of an Explorer search and rescue team.

On Friday, the search was extended beyond the area of the highway maintenance facility but was confined mainly to areas so close to the road.

While searching, made that way on foot and horseback through the area's back roads and densely wooded hills, Linn County mounted an air search with a helicopter.

"I think you're going to find some clothing, a shoe," said Linn County Lt. Darrell James, who is coordinating the search. "We saw no human remains at all, no tracks, nothing."

Authorities described the girl as 5-foot-6-inches tall, weighing 85 pounds, with brown hair and brown eyes. Relatives were unable to tell investigators what she was wearing when last seen.

Investigators initially thought the girl might have been rescued by her father's home in Medford, where she had visited recently. They ruled out that possibility after talking to both parents.

E. Oregon fire worsens

The Associated Press

Firefighters had nearly contained a 1,075-acre fire in central Oregon Sunday, just as the battle began to intensify against a blaze in Eastern Oregon.

The Corral Basin fire, 20 miles southeast of John Day in Eastern Oregon, had consumed 300 acres by Sunday, said Jim Payne, fire staff officer for the Malheur National Forest.

He said it was burning in suboptimal fire and lodgepole pine. Temperatures in the fire fell humidity and light winds were aiding growth of the blaze, which was consuming commercial timber and a portion of the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness.

The cause of the fire was not known. A total of 10 firefighters were either on the scene or on their way, he said. They were being aided by two water-dropping helicopters, three bulldozers and several fire engines.

The conditions are not real good," he said. "The fire is burning in heavy fuel concentrations, including insect-damaged timber. Everything depends on the winds. If the winds don't push it around, we'll contain it. We'll have to hang out."

Coast drug agents fight classy smugglers

Stories by Michael Schmieman
Gazette Times reporter

NEWPORT — Today's drug smuggler no longer fits the stereotype of a shifty-eyed, sleazy, underworld dope addict. Drug smugglers in the 1980s are more likely to have a degree from Harvard, business cards and a toll-free telephone number, says Thomas Coburn.

"If you were involved in a \$50 million operation, what kind of person would you want to have working for you?" he said.

Coburn is a special agent for the U.S. Customs Service. He is one of three agents based in Coos Bay who are responsible for sniffing out drug smuggling operations from Depoe Bay to the California border.

Despite the fact that drug smuggling is not a particularly serious problem in Newport, relatively isolated sections of the Oregon coast are becoming increasingly attractive to big time smuggling operations, Coburn said.

Some of the reasons for this include:

- Increased pressure by federal agents on western borders.
- Relatively cheap prices for coastal real estate.
- Undetected law enforcement agencies.
- Easy access to phony Oregon driver's licenses and other forms of identification.

Oregon is one of the easiest states in the country in which to set up a dummy corporation.

"Most drug smuggling organizations today are essentially very sophisticated illegal corporations that employ a hundred or more people," Coburn said.

He added that a major drug operation that ends in a large quantity of drugs being brought ashore on an isolated beach might be the culmination of more than two years of planning.

"I can't win the war on drugs, but we can win it if we work together," he said at a recent meeting of the Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce.

One of the biggest obstacles confronting drug smugglers in the fact that most of their operations must be financed with cash, he said.

"You know when a transaction feels a little strange," he said. "When a guy wearing a business suit covers into your office with a shopping bag full of cash, some bells are bound to go off in your head."

"There's nothing I like better than to hear a voice on the phone say, 'I hate to bother you and I probably don't mean anything, but...'"

Inspector keeps Newport in check

NEWPORT — Neil Rose has been keeping track of the comings and goings in and out of Yaquina Bay for almost 20 years.

Rose, the one-man staff of the U.S. Customs Department's Newport office, has been watching a neighborhood in Newport since 1970.

Though he works alone, he is a real-life James Bond agent in a neighborhood without backup assistance if he needs it.

"If I needed help, it would only take about 20 minutes to fly more people here from Coos Bay or Portland," Rose said.

Particularly, he almost never needs help.

"We're just lucky here," he said. "Newport is a busy place to try to smuggle anything illegal into. The local people are by nature about strangers."

Rose has nothing but praise for the captains and crews of the freighters that make regular stops in Newport.

"Most of the ships that come here originate in the Orient," he said. "Most of the crews are composed of family men who don't leave anything but except their money."

Rose said the crew of a large ship will spend an average of \$100,000 during its layover in Newport.

"Most of the ships are from Korea, China or the Philippines," he said.

"They are a lot stricter about drugs over there than we are," Rose said. "The ships are always clean."

In addition to the deterrent of a death or imprisonment for drug offenses in their home countries, potential drug dealers are discouraged by another incentive — a 20 percent fine for a first offense. State police crew members who turn in narcotic smugglers.

"There's not much loyalty among crews when someone has the chance to collect 20 percent of the street value of a million dollars worth of drugs," Rose said.

The five biggest changes Rose has seen in his 20 years as a government man involve paper work and the attitude of most Americans toward drugs.

He credited former President Reagan with significantly reducing the amount of paper work required of government workers.

And he praised the American public for "shaping up" and acknowledging the dangers that drugs represent to society.

"Twenty years ago, Americans seemed to think of drug smuggling as some kind of game," he said. "But today all Americans are aware, and most of them have become participants in the war on drugs."

With drug smuggling less of a concern than it used to be, Rose spends most of his time these days looking for pornography, obscene and tax-free liquor, both of which can be sold locally for substantial profits.

"I spend a lot of time making sure that the local people don't take advantage of the crews," he said.

Rose stressed the importance of the report and the mutual respect that has developed over the years between himself and the captains of the ships that call regularly on Newport.

Oregon Writers' Workshop being held in Newport

By Michael Schmieman
Gazette Times reporter

NEWPORT — Some of the nation's most noted fiction and poetry writers will participate in the annual Oregon Writers' Workshop conference, which began Sunday and will run through Friday and again July 27-28 in Newport.

Now in its third year, the summer program is cosponsored by the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts. The conference will offer 30 hours of writing instruction each morning, afternoon craft lectures and evening readings.

The first week of the conference will feature two sections of fiction writing and two poetry sections.

Award-winning novelist Robert Abel will lead the advanced fiction section. He has received a National Endowment Fellowship and an O'Hara Award. He teaches at Mount Holyoke College.

Other novels include "Treadmill Run," "The Progress of a Fox" and "Skin & Bones."

The other first week fiction class will be taught by Dominic Stansberry, a former teacher at the University of New Orleans. Stansberry's novel, "The Spouter A

Novel of Baseball and Murder," has just been released in paperback.

The poetry classes will be taught by Madeline Lefrere, Maggie Anderson and Christopher Howell.

DePree is former director of the master of fine arts program at the University of Massachusetts. She has won numerous national awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship and an Amy Lowell Traveling Fellowship.

Anderson, currently director of creative writing at Kent State University, is author of three collections of poems. She has received fellowships from the Ford Arts

Council, the National Endowment for the Arts and the McDowell Colony.

Howell's books include "The Crime of Luck" and "Why Shouldn't I?" He is a Northwest native who now lives and teaches in Kansas.

All classes, lectures and readings will take place at the historic Community Center in Newport.

Readings are free and open to the public, but donations will be accepted.

Tuition for the workshops is \$125 per week. For more information call 252-8273 in Portland or executive assistant Lynn Wake at 754-6186 in Corvallis.

In brief

Student crowned Miss Oregon
SEASIDE — Betty Gas Thompson, a college student who plans to become a nurse, was crowned Miss Oregon yesterday in ceremonies at Seaside.

Thompson, 20, will represent the state in the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City, N.J., in September.

A native of Arkansas and two-year resident of Thompson, Portland, was crowned Miss Oregon in ceremonies Saturday night at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

She entered the 44th annual Miss Oregon pageant in Miss Tri Valley.

Two arrested in death of woman
TRUDDALE — Multnomah County sher-

iff's deputies have arrested two men on aggravated murder charges in connection with the slaying of a 19-year-old woman.

Booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center were Marcus William Blacklock, 19, and Clinton Duane Dooly, 21, both of Greenham, said a sheriff's department news release.

Dooly was arrested Saturday evening and Blacklock was arrested early Sunday.

Dooly has been staying at Blacklock's residence, the release said.

Homeless activist shot
SEATTLE — Robert Willmot, a civic gadfly and advocate for the homeless, was shot and critically wounded as he sheltered by a tent who lived in apartment self-defense, police said.

The 36-year-old man who fired the shots was released after questioning and was believed to be staying with his wife and four children at a motel Sunday, said Tina Drain, a police spokeswoman.

Willmot, 66, underwent surgery after

being shot in the neck and chest late Saturday night and was listed in critical and stable condition Sunday at Harborview Medical Center, said nursing supervisor Mary Pilgrim.

A bullet was removed from his lower back, and doctors did not know when they would remove the bullet lodged in his neck, Pilgrim said, adding that he was not conscious.

Nuclear reactor back on line
RAINIER — The Trojan Nuclear Plant has resumed operations after being off line since March 19 for annual maintenance and refueling.

Oregon's only commercial nuclear reactor was brought back on line at 7:30 a.m. Sunday at 20 percent capacity and was to be slowly brought up to full power within the next three days, said Portland General Electric spokesman Dennis DeMarrais.

The reactor came three days after the utility declared an "unusual event" when steam valves reportedly malfunctioned during safety checks.

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