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Search for girl renewed

Officials say pants found weren't hers

By Amy Edwards
The Statesman Journal

Linn County searchers renewed efforts to find a 13-year-old girl missing for two weeks after hikers found a pair of black sweat pants thought at first to belong to the girl.

No new evidence was found in Sunday's search and a laboratory exam indicated that the pants did not belong to Rachanda Lea Pickle, Linn County Sheriff Art Martinak said Wednesday.

The sweat pants were found Saturday along the Pacific Crest Trail near Big Lake, about 4½ miles from the state Highway Division maintenance complex where Rachanda lived, he said.

Rachanda's mother, Linda Ackroyd, said the sweat pants looked like the ones her daughter may have been wearing when she disappeared July 10.

Martinak said authorities continued to interview people in the rugged Santiam Pass area near Rachanda's home.

Family friends and relatives are searching the Santiam Junction area in Linn County, where highways 20 and 22 meet.

Linda Ackroyd, 33, said she was convinced that someone took her daughter and left the area, but was concerned that authorities were focusing on her husband and Rachanda's stepfather, John Ackroyd, 40.

Linda Ackroyd said investigators were taking photographs around her home Wednesday and trying to find evidence of a forced entry or struggle. Rachanda was last seen at 9:30 a.m. July 10 by her stepfather.

When the Ackroyds got home from work that evening, Rachanda was gone, and the door was partly open.

"It almost seems like the investigators just want to pinpoint it on John and give up or something because he was the last one to see her," Linda Ackroyd said.

Ackroyd said she did not think that her daughter was dead.

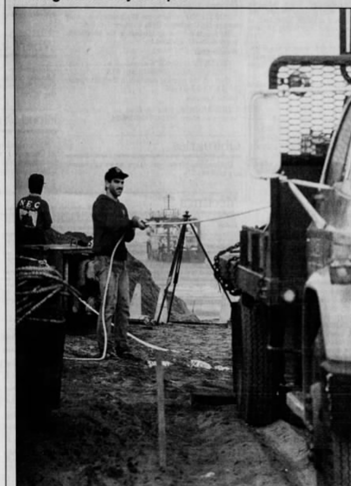
"I'm hoping for the best," she said. "I slept in her bed and kept crying, but it's not a crying like I'm afraid she might be dead. I'm crying because she's out there, and I can't find her."

Martinak did not identify the hikers who turned the sweat pants over to authorities Saturday. The sheriff said the pants were intact, but it was difficult to tell how long they had been outdoors.

Rachanda was last seen wearing a white T-shirt with New Kids on the Block on front and back, black sweat pants and white, high-top LA Gear tennis shoes.

She is 4 feet, 8 inches tall, weighs 87 pounds and has curly, shoulder-length, dark brown hair and brown eyes.

Linking Pacific City to Japan



Frank King/Statesman Journal

Crewmembers in Pacific City begin laying a fiber-optic cable that will cross the Pacific and eventually improve telephone and computer communications with Japan.

Town joins communications chain

By Frank King
The Statesman Journal

PACIFIC CITY — This tiny Tillamook County fishing community has become an important link in a high-tech, transpacific, fiber-optic cable communications system.

Work on the project ended Wednesday as crewmen buried the eastern end of a 2½-inch cable that eventually will improve telephone and computer communications between the United States and Japan.

It took one day to bring the cable ashore from the Northern Installer, the cable-laying craft, one-half mile off the Bob Straub State Park here.

The cable burial brought an end to the 1,000-mile long cable that was brought ashore and hooked into an underground utility box.

The 1,000-mile length will become part of the the 5,200-mile link between the United States and Japan following the marine shipping lanes along the great circle route — from Miura, Japan, to Pacific City.

The Northern Installer was scheduled to leave Wednesday for a rendezvous station in the Pacific where it will meet another cable ship coming from Japan. When that happens, probably in October, the eastern and western sections of the cable will be connected.

Last year, fiber cable trunk lines were laid from Portland to Pacific City to await the undersea connection.

Divers operating out of deep-sea submersible units will lay and connect the cable segments on the ocean floor.

Stephen Lovas, the president of Pacific Telecom Cable, said the fiber-optic element in the cable's center was only about an eighth of an inch thick.

The fiber-optic strands in the center element are about the size of a human hair.

If the cable breaks or is cut, customers will continue to get service through a mutual aid program being established in the Pacific. Back-up service initially will be by satellite, but as other transpacific cable systems are completed they will mutually assist each others in emergencies.

The North Pacific Cable, a $400 million project, is being built by Pacific Telecom Cable Inc. of Vancouver, Wash., International Digital Communications Inc. of Japan, and Cable and Wireless of Britain. The target operational date is December 1991.

Teacher exam splits educators

State considers basic-skills test

By David Steves
The Statesman Journal

Educators and politicians debated Wednesday whether teachers should be tested before they can take over in Oregon's public classrooms.

The Teacher Standards and Practices Commission is expected to decide Friday whether to repeal basic-skills testing as part of the teacher certification process.

During a lengthy hearing at Willamette University on Wednesday, some educators said that Oregon's competency test was an unfair barrier to minority teachers who want to work in Oregon public schools.

"These tests are culturally and racially biased," said Vicky Barrows, president of the Portland Association of Teachers, a union that is affiliated with the Oregon Education Association.

Others said teacher testing should continue.

Elizabeth Johnson, a former Teacher Standards and Practices Commission member and a retired educator, said teachers must be tested for competency even if the state's current test, the California Basic Educational Skills Test, was flawed.

"No test is perfect, nor will it ever be," she said.

The state's controversial practice of testing its teachers for basic skills was suspended for six months during the commission's May meeting. This week the commission is determining whether to repeal the test permanently.

Two powerful education groups, representing administrators and teachers, were at odds regarding the issue.

The Confederation of Oregon School Administrators urged the commission to continue testing teachers before granting them certification. But the Oregon Education Association said the testing was unnecessary and only added to the hurdles teachers must clear before they can be certified.

House Speaker Vera Katz and fellow state Rep. Phil Keisling, both Portland Democrats, urged the commission to continue testing teachers for basic skills. The two lawmakers said the step was necessary to assure the public that its teachers were competent.

Joe Franklin, a Tigard educator, said the California test did more harm than good for teachers from other states. They must pass the basic-skills exam before they can teach in Oregon.

Roberts defends closure of Trojan

She says Frohnmayer sides with utilities

The Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD — Defending her stand in favor of shutting down the Trojan nuclear plant, Democrat Barbara Roberts on Wednesday said Republican Dave Frohnmayer was more concerned about protecting utility interests than the environment.

Roberts said that Oregon residents couldn't Frohnmayer to protect them from radioactive waste and that the attorney general "has consistently sided with the utilities" during his years as the state's top lawyer.

Later in the day, Frohnmayer said Roberts' comments were a slur against him and people in his office.

The two candidates for governor continued to argue over an issue created last weekend when Roberts said she supported a Nov. 6 ballot measure that would force the closure of Oregon's only nuclear power plant.

Roberts said at the time that she supported the measure because of her concerns about storing radioactive waste.

Barbara Roberts   Dave Frohnmayer

Frohnmayer opposes the shutdown, saying Roberts has embraced an extreme position that would work an economic hardship on Oregonians.

On Wednesday, Roberts held a news conference to complain about Frohnmayer's "devotion to the interests of electric utilities" and his misrepresentations about Trojan, which is owned by Portland General Electric Co., a contributor to Frohnmayer's gubernatorial campaign.

Kopetski: Medicaid budget-cut plan would hurt elderly, ill

By Dave Berns
The Statesman Journal

A White House plan to eliminate Medicaid reimbursements for costly prescriptions that are replaceable with less-expensive drugs came under fire this week at a Capitol press conference in Salem.

The deficit-reduction proposal would save the federal budget an estimated $250 million in 1991 and an additional $300 million in 1992.

But critics contend that it would help cut the estimated $200 billion federal deficit by slashing the pool of drugs available for older U.S. citizens.

"The old, the ill . . . shouldn't be the ones in our society whose responsibility it is to balance the budget," said Democratic congressional candidate Mike Kopetski of Keizer.

He is running against U.S. Rep. Denny Smith, R-Ore.

"In the short term, it may look like it will save money," Kopetski said, "but people are going to get more . . . ill because they do not have the proper medication."

Medicaid is a needs-based health care program for low-income people.

Mike Kopetski   Denny Smith

The Darman proposal would take effect in January and would allow pharmacists to substitute less-expensive drugs for Medicaid prescriptions without a physician's knowledge. The savings would be plowed back into the federal treasury.

Federal budget director Richard Darman delivered the proposal during the ongoing round of budget-tightening talks between the Bush administration and congressional officials.

But a Darman spokeswoman contacted in Washington, D.C., Monday refused to discuss the plan.

"We have agreed not to negotiate anything through the press," Kim Gibson, the spokeswoman for the Office of Management and Budget, said.

Jim Davis, the executive director of the Oregon State Council of Senior Citizens, described the proposal as flawed and extreme.

"We feel this is a plan that is detrimental to low-income people," Davis said. He joined Kopetski at the press conference along with state Rep. Rick Kotulski, D-Corbett; and Tom Ranken, a spokesman for the Seattle-based Immunex Corp.

Other fears about the Darman proposal:

■ Although a variety of drugs can be prescribed to treat an illness, each drug can have different side effects. As a result, the health of Medicaid patients could be adversely effected by the subsitution plan.

■ Pharmaceutical sales would slump, cutting profits and the amount of money companies plow back into research and development.

Sen. David Pryor, D-Ark., chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, has introduced a modified version of the plan that opponents find more acceptable.

His proposal would develop a preferred list of less-expensive drugs and would give states the option of requiring or recommending drug substitution.

Salem

Megabucks jackpot reaches $2 million

No one won Wednesday's $1.75 million Oregon Megabucks jackpot, boosting Saturday's jackpot to $2 million.

The winning numbers were 6-18-21-27-32-41.

A spokeswoman said that 21 tickets had five numbers, worth $750.70 each, and 860 tickets had four numbers, worth $29.30 each.

Wednesday's $2 million Lotto America numbers were 3-15-17-23-26-34. No ticket purchased in Oregon was a winner.

Marion board OKs cable TV franchise

Marion County commissioners approved a request this week for a cable television franchise to serve rural residents south of Salem.

The commissioners gave the go-ahead to Interstate Cablevision, a company based in Kansas, to offer cable to residents between Salem and Jefferson who now have no service.

A company official has estimated that service would be available within six months.

The company will charge $16.95 for basic cable service and an extra fee for Showtime, Home Box Office and the Disney channel.

Officials regain most of lost computer data

A state computer malfunction that erased 70 billion bytes of data, not 1 billion as was first reported, early Tuesday was almost completely corrected by midday Wednesday, officials said.

The malfunction occurred about 2 a.m. Tuesday and wasn't detected for about three more hours.

It was caused by malfunctioning software, Floyd Cavaner, director of the Executive Department computer center, said.

Cavaner said that about 97 percent of the computer data, which included state payroll records, had been restored.

Oregon

State wants firm to test incinerator for dioxin

KLAMATH FALLS — The state Department of Environmental Quality said Wednesday that Bio-Waste Management Inc. must test for dioxin emissions from its medical waste incinerator.

DEQ spokesman John MacKellar said the decision to test for dioxin was based in part on a request from Klamath County commissioners and in part by the amount of public concern generated by the year-old incinerator.

Van swerves to avoid deer; 14 hurt in wreck

BEND — Fourteen people were injured Wednesday when a van swerved to avoid a deer and hit another vehicle on U.S. Highway 97 in central Oregon.

Five of the injured were children under the age of four, including a 1-year-old who was reported in serious condition with head injuries at St. Charles Medical Center in Bend.

Police said Marisol Calderon's mother was holding the infant in her lap in the van at the time of the accident.

Oregon law requires children under 18 to wear seat belts. Small children are required to use restraint seats.

— From staff, wire reports

Morning Salute

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You all help to make our Awards Dinner a huge success!

Nancy Givigliano
Social Committe of
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