

WEEKEND EDITION

# Democrat-Herald

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**Take the full-color comics out for a spin**



Taylor-made in USA Weekend

**LBCC makes its pitch for the playoffs**

Sports, B1

## STAR GAZER

Story by Jennifer Moody  
Photos by Mark Ylen

**Tangent's Leonard Schrock has an edge over the rest of the comet watchers.**

When Comet Hyakutake made its appearance this month, Leonard Schrock had a better view of it than most.

The 10-year-old Tangent man watched and photographed the comet's progress through a homemade telescope housed in a hand-constructed observatory.

"It's the biggest (comet) I've seen," he said. "Haley's comet I've seen, and a couple others, but I don't think they amounted to much."

Schrock built the observatory with some help from his father about 10 years ago. The round building - topped with a rotating roof that opens in the sky - is about 10 feet in diameter, just a little larger than the telescope housed in it.

The telescope body is made of an aluminum irrigation pipe. Oil cans, soldered together, form the flutes. The whole contraption is mounted on a steel pipe that once served as a lift for a service station before Schrock rescued it from a junkyard.

Through a series of viewing strengths and mail-ordered 6- and 8-inch lenses, Schrock can see celestial objects magnified up to 500 times.

He particularly enjoys looking at planets. "I like Saturn," he said. "That's the boy, one. And Jupiter. I've found them all the way to Neptune. If this thing - he nods at the telescope - was on a mountaintop in the desert, it would be possible to see clear out to Pluto."

Unfortunately for Schrock, the Willamette Valley is no desert. Sometimes the weather is so bad that he can't use the telescope for months at a time. But if there's something, he really wants to see, he just plans a trip.

An example was the full moon eclipse of July 11, 1995. Schrock took some time off from his job of 27 years at Linn Co. in



Top: Leonard Schrock of Tangent pops the hatch on his backyard observatory. Above: Schrock sets his sights for the moon with a homemade, 60-inch refractor telescope. Right: Schrock leaves the 10-year-old star-gazing post.

...of you know where to look - Schrock, a Monmouth, says he can't remember what first got him interested in astronomy. However, he knows what keeps him going - the thrill of seeing God's work in action.

"I believe what the bible says," he says. "Like in Genesis, I believe it was all created in six days. The stuff that's written in there makes sense. If you believe there's more to it, you can actually go out and see it and say, 'Boy, that's great!'"

## Skull continues to be puzzle

BY MAELVYN MONTGOMERY  
Staff Correspondent

Linn County sheriff's detectives remain puzzled about the human skull that a dog brought home near Crawfordville this week.

Two Oregon State University anthropologists and the Linn County medical examiner all looked over the partial skull Friday and none came up with definitive answers, Sheriff Dave Burritt said Friday.

Detectives will be taking the skull to Dr. Larry Lewman, its Portland medical examiner, in Portland early next week.

"The identity of the person and how, when and where the person died are, as far, speculation."

"The guess is that it's a small person," the sheriff said. "There's some speculation - and I really stress this is their best scientific guess - it's a younger female, but there's just not enough of it to pin down the age or the sex for certain."

Linn detectives have been looking since July 1996 for Rachanda Linn Fields, who was 13 when she disappeared from the mobile home where she lived at the state Highway Division maintenance yard at

Colapostan. One anthropologist said it wasn't others who saw the skull aren't sure, the sheriff said.

They agreed it had been exposed to the elements for some time.

"It doesn't look like it's been buried, necessarily, but that's not for certain either," he said.

"There's nothing for certain."

A small round hole behind the skull's right ear. "There's even debate as to whether it's a significant one," Burritt said. "The dog had played with it a while, and we don't know what other creatures had access to it."

The skull turned up on a 2½-acre parcel of land with stream running through it, Burritt said.

"During all the flooding, the creek had run high and fast, so that brings up the possibility that flood waters had unearthed the remains," he said.

Detectives found out about the skull Thursday night. The man on whom property it was found said he'd noticed his dog playing with what he thought was a ball about 3 p.m. Wednesday. When he saw the dog still playing with the object the next evening, the man went to look.

"He saw what looked like a human skull, and called police."

## Freemen's promise: 'Worse than Waco'

BY JORDAN MOSE (AP)  
Staff Writer

As the Freemen's standoff with government agents dragged into its sixth day, a cloud of doom hung over the camp. One jailed leader said it will end "worse than Waco."

A federal judge in Billings ordered Friday to release Lefly Schweitzer, 61, and Daniel Peterson, 58, both.

The two were arrested by federal agents Monday and are among 23 anti-government Freemen named in indictments. At least some of the others are believed to be held up near here in a sprawling wheat and sheep farm setting.

As Schweitzer and Peterson were being led from the courtroom in chains, both began speaking out. Their comments did not carry, but a chaotic riot for The Billings Gazette quoted Peterson as saying, "You watch folks, when you put down, it's going to be worse than Waco," a reference to the deadly April 1993 Texas standoff involving the Branch Davidians.

Schweitzer told the court: "In the eyes of simply Yahweh, we shall prevail."

## DMV chief quits

BY CHARLES E. NEGGS  
Associated Press Writer

SALZM (AP) - Departing motor vehicle chief James Case will have a future with the Transportation Department that is "both significant and successful," Oregon state transportation director Ken Hruby says.

Case announced his resignation Friday and asked to be assigned to a different, unspecified post in the Transportation Department.

"I feel my continuing presence could be a distraction" in efforts to rework the new Driver and Motor Vehicle Services computer system, James Case said in a letter to the department officials.

Department spokesman Dave Levin said Ben Wallace, deputy transportation director, would head the DMV until a replacement is named. Case's resignation is effective April 12.

Her move was not a surprise. She told lawmakers earlier this month that she doubted if she would have her position after a link force finished looking into major computer problems at her agency.

It's quite likely that I may be here after that's over," Case said. The House Task Force on Transportation Spending.

The House panel and the link force appointed by Gov. John Kitzhaber began investigating following disclosures that the projected cost of the new computer system had soared from about \$60 million to \$125 million.

The timetable for completing the changeover also was moved back, from seven months to 12.

The governor is reviewing a report from the link force. Davis said.

Case has said the DMV had to overhaul its huge data system that stores millions of driver and auto license and vehicle ownership records.

She has said the initial phase of the system is working well and has simplified transactions for motorists and the agency.

The DMV initially cut staffing too much in anticipation of savings, then had to add back employees in a move that increased costs.

Also, consultants hired by DMV warned of problems before the computer system began operation.

## Inside

BY JORDAN MOSE (AP)  
Staff Writer

Kato has made a little of a difference in the number of visitors to Newport's Oregon Coast Aquarium.

Bones, George will have bonuses in a rematch of the 1995 NCAA women's basketball title game, B1.

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Eighty-one cult members died three years ago when federal agents moved in to the Davidians' 54-day siege near Waco. Their compound burst into flames as agents punched holes in the walls of its buildings.

The FBI refused to comment Friday about the standoff on the wind-swept plains of eastern Montana. The arrival of Schweitzer and Peterson sparked the siege.

Oregon connection, A8

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