

THOMAS TAKING ON BIGGER ROLE FOR DUCKS / A10

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Line County Sheriff's detectives Mike Harmon, left, and Paul Timm talk about the arrest of John Ackroyd on murder charges.

Stepfather charged in murder of girl in 1990

BY ALEX HILL AND KYE OGDARD

On July 10, 1990, Rachanda Lea Pickle, 13, vanished from her family's home at the State Highway Division maintenance compound near the Saffian Junction, about 40 miles east of Havel, Ore.

Her body never has been found. On Wednesday Pickle's stepfather, John Arthur Ackroyd, 61, was charged with her murder in Line County Circuit Court. Bail was set at \$1 million by Judge Carol Bigham.

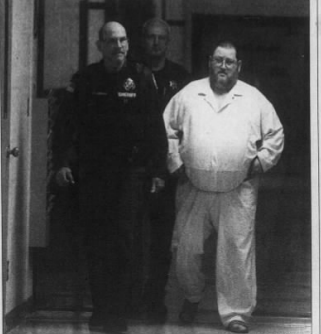
Ackroyd was represented by Line County attorney Elizabeth Baker, who said she knew little about the murder case and had been contacted to represent Ackroyd only a few hours before the arraignment.

His next court appearance was scheduled for 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, May 8.

Ackroyd was arrested Tuesday by Detective Mike Harmon of the Line County Sheriff's Office at the Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem. He is serving a life sentence for the Christmas Eve 1978 murder of Kaye Jean Turner in the Metolus River area. Ackroyd — who originally reported finding Turner's remains — and Roger Beck were convicted of Turner's murder in the fall of 1993.

Ackroyd was transferred to the Line County Jail and returned to Salem after his arraignment. An indictment prepared by prosecutors George Eder and Colleen Celesia had been handed down by a Line County grand jury.

The search for the 40-year-old, 4-foot-7-inch teenager was among the more substantial efforts in the county's history. At times, more



Line County Sheriff's deputies Jim Leebke, left, and Henry Daniels escort John Ackroyd to his arraignment Wednesday afternoon at the Line County Courthouse in Albany.

Endangered Missing Age Progressed



Rachanda Pickle's father disappeared 22 years ago. She has not seen him since she was 13. Photo by Kye Ogdard.

than 100 law enforcement officials and volunteers from seven counties participated in the effort, searching on foot, horseback and by helicopter.

Harmon said the key to the indictment after more than two decades was showing beyond a reasonable doubt that Pickle was no longer alive.

In addition, he said, prosecutors need to make a case that Pickle had been killed and that Ackroyd had killed her.

Although he did not want to divulge the details that led the Line County Sheriff's Office to take action in the case, Harmon said advancements in technology — specifically DNA testing — were the foundation for

the indictment.

"It's difficult to prove that a 13-year-old doesn't exist," Harmon said. "An adult would have a database trail associated with credit cards, utility bills, driver's licenses and property transactions. Rachanda did not have a cell phone, no Internet connection. She didn't even have a telephone in their home."

Nevertheless, Harmon believes that Pickle is dead and Ackroyd should be tried for what is known as a "no-body homicide."

"In recent years, several no-body homicide cases have been successfully prosecuted," said Capt. Paul Timm. "We're ready to show this person no longer exists."

Although the case is more than 20 years old, Harmon said the Sheriff's Office does not consider it a "cold case."

"We keep our old case files on the back wall and we constantly work them," Harmon said. "People's relationships change over the years and that can open up new opportunities for information. People get divorced, friendships break up. People who were unwilling to talk 20 years ago, may be willing to do so today."

For more on the Rachanda Pickle case, see page A2

IN THE NEWS

Authorities investigating the death of Colorado's prison chief are telling law enforcement officers to watch out for two men associated with a white supremacist prison gang. El Paso County sheriff's Lt. Jeff Kramer says deputies are seeking 47-year-old James Lott and 31-year-old Thomas Guolee in connection with the death of Tom Clements.

North Korea warned early Thursday that its military has been cleared to attack the U.S. using "nuclear, lighter and diversified nuclear" weapons, while the U.S. said it was strengthening protection in the region and seeking to defuse the situation. Despite the intense rhetoric, analysts do not expect a nuclear attack by North Korea, which knows the move could trigger a destructive, unintended war that no one in the region wants. It's not believed to have the ability to launch nuclear-tipped missiles, but its other nuclear capabilities aren't fully known.

Connecticut's Senate Wednesday approved sweeping new restrictions on weapons and large-capacity magazines, a response to last year's deadly Newtown elementary school shooting that would give the state some of the country's tightest gun control laws. The December massacre of 20 people inside Sandy Hook Elementary School, which required a national debate on gun control, set the stage for changes in the state that may have been impossible elsewhere: The governor, who personally informed parents that their children had been killed that day, championed the cause, and legislative leaders, heavily aware of the attention on the state, struck bipartisan agreement they want to serve as a national model.

A new sheriff who was cracking down on the drug trade in southern West Virginia's coalfields was shot to death Wednesday in the spot where he usually parked his car for lunch, and State Police said the suspect was in a hospital with gunshot wounds inflicted by a deputy who chased him.

Once the video went viral, Mike Rice's coaching days at Rutgers were over. Now the question is whether anyone else will lose their jobs — including the athletic director who in December suspended and fired Rice for the abusive behavior, and the university president who signed off on it. Rice was fired Wednesday, one day after a video surfaced of him hitting, shouting and beating his players with anti-gay slurs.

Associate Press

INSIDE

Table with 2 columns: Category and Value. Includes: Today's Outlook, Cover, High/Low, Classified, COMEX, Cropword, Legal Ads, Obituaries, Services, Sports, Weather.

Classified 541-812-6112 News 541-812-6095

1 hiker found, 1 still missing in Calif. forest

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, Calif. (AP) — Sheriff's officials say one of two hikers missing for three days in Southern California's Cleveland National Forest has been found alive. Orange County sheriff's Lt. Jason Park said another hiker found 10-year-old Nicholas Cendoya then told a rescue crew where to find him. Park says Cendoya was conscious and talking.

The second hiker, 38-year-old Kyrind Jack, remains missing. Rescuers working in sometimes dangerously rugged terrain combed Southern California's Cleveland National Forest for the two lost hikers late Wednesday as darkness fell. There was no evidence of foot print and authorities believe the hiker was in the area, in part because a 911 call made before their mobile phone died was traced to a cell tower near the location.

Obama to return 5 percent of his salary to Treasury

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sharing a bit of budget pain, President Barack Obama will return 5 percent of his salary to the Treasury as a show of solidarity with federal workers smarting from government-wide spending cuts.

Obama's decision grew out of a desire to share in the sacrifice that government employees are making. A White House official said Wednesday. Hundreds of thousands of workers could be forced to take unpaid leave — known as furloughs — if Congress does not reach an agreement soon to undo the cuts.

A 5 percent cut from the president's salary of \$400,000 per year amounts to \$20,000. Obama will return a full \$20,000 to the Treasury even though only a few months remain in the fiscal year, which ends in September. He will not his first check this month, said the White House official, who was not authorized to discuss the decision publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

"The salary for the president, as with members of Congress, is set by law and cannot be changed," Obama spokesman Jay Carney said late Wednesday. However, the president has decided that to share in the sacrifice being made by public servants across the federal government that are affected by the sequester, he will contribute a portion of his salary back to the Treasury.

Wednesday's notice followed a similar move a day earlier by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, who committed to taking a salary cut equal to 14 days' pay — the same level cut that other defense department civilians are being forced to take.

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