

Murder suspect wants quick trial

BY ANNE HALL
ALBANY DEMOCRAT-HERALD

John Arthur Ackroyd, charged with the 1997 murder of his stepdaughter, Rachanda Lee Pickle, has asked the Lane County Circuit Court to expedite his trial date, attorney Russell Barrett of Eugene said Tuesday.

Ackroyd, 46, did not appear in court due to health issues. He remains lodged at the Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem, serving a life sentence for the 1997 murder of Kaye Jean Turner in the Metolius River area. He was convicted of that murder in 1993.

In May, the state provided Barrett and Baker with 1,600 to 2,400 pages of discovery materials. Barrett and co-counsel Elizabeth Baker, also of Eugene, told the court they were satisfied with the discovery portion of the process and were ready to proceed to trial.

But prosecutor George Eder said he believes a jury trial would last at least four weeks, because his case is extremely complicated.

Eder said he has proposed settlement possibilities with Ackroyd's attorneys, but Ackroyd has been resistant to that proposal, believing there is only one possible outcome if he is found guilty, which is a another period of life in prison.

"We believe Mr. Ackroyd needs to hear the full range of options that are out there," Eder said. "He should at least be thinking of options and we would like to make the effort to inform him."

Both the state and defense attorneys agreed that a judge-conducted conference would work well for a settlement conference. If a date can be arranged, if a settlement can't be reached, a pre-trial hearing would be held about a month later.

Rachanda Pickle was 15-year-old when she disappeared on July 10, 1990. Her family lived at the Oregon branch of Transportation's maintenance compound at the Saffarian Junction.

Ackroyd had gone to bed the morning Pickle disappeared, but returned home early.

At the time, Ackroyd told law enforcement officials he wanted to go for a walk, but she declined. When he returned to his home about a time later, she was gone.

Handcuffed to an evidence trailer, Ackroyd was escorted by seven officers from seven counties mounted on a bus that lasted for several weeks, but to avoid a lengthy trial.

Lane County detectives formulated a "700-body homicide" case to get the indictment against Ackroyd. The basis of the indictment is that there is only one possible outcome if he is found guilty, which is a another period of life in prison.

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Suit: Police used excessive force

BY ANNE HALL
ALBANY DEMOCRAT-HERALD

PORTLAND — A photograph of an Occupy Portland demonstrator blasted with pepper spray as she poses for a photo became a defining image of the month-long encampment.

Now, the woman in the photograph is in court to seek \$15,000 in damages from the city of Portland, the officer who sprayed her and another she said put a baton to her throat.

Jury selection in a lawsuit filed by Elizabeth Evon Nichols began Tuesday. The trial will address whether Sgt. Jeffrey McDaniel used pepper spray within banned police tactics, and whether the officers' actions were reasonable. The officers' defense team responded to the suit.

Nichols was among thousands of protesters who gathered in Portland on Nov. 17, 2011, in a demonstration against foreclosures by major banks. Protesters lined sidewalks as police worked them to stay off the pavement.

Nichols was among several people who shouted at police from the sidewalk.

She said in the lawsuit that police officer Doris Patsley held a baton to her throat. When she protested, the lawsuit states, McDaniel sprayed her open mouth with pepper spray.

Nichols "was so overcome by pain that she fainted and spun away from (McDaniel)" according to the lawsuit. "She hunched over with her hands on her face. After a moment she fell her legs collapsing and sat down on the sidewalk."

Nichols is suing the city of Portland, the officers, and the officers' union. She is seeking \$15,000 in damages from the city of Portland, the officer who sprayed her and another she said put a baton to her throat.

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Trader

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John Trader was killed when his water truck overturned on a rural road, embankment early Tuesday morning outside the Big Wild complex of fires in southwest Oregon. Trader was taken from the scene by an ambulance, but emergency responders were unable to revive him.

He was the occupant of the truck. Gov. John Kitzhaber said in a prepared statement that Oregon owes "every citizen a safe and sound life."

"From at such a young age, he was already contributing mightily to his community," Kitzhaber said "and we owe him our gratitude for his commitment to helping protect his fellow citizens."

Trader's mother said his faith, and his belief her son with the reality of his death just hours after getting a call from law enforcement.

"He was always willing to share his faith with others, he never got in any trouble," Giff Trader said. "He was somebody who was going to be very successful."

Josephine County Sheriff Gil Gilbertson said it was unclear from the crash why the truck left the road and overturned. "He was coming down the hill," Gilbertson said. "The truck was heading down to get a relief driver."

Trader was the second crew member killed this wildfire season in Oregon, and the 20th nationally.

On Aug. 1, 38-year-old John Hamrick was killed in Central Oregon when the tree he was cutting fell on him.

The southwestern fires were ignited by lightning late last month. They are burning in some of the state's most difficult mountain terrain, fed by vegetation parched by a widespread drought.

The Big Wild's three fires are burning northwest of Grants, Frasn. More than 1,000 personnel were assigned to it as of Tuesday morning, and the fire area is estimated at more than 14 square miles, or more than 0.100 acres.

Fire officials hope to have containment lines around it next month but some say it could grow much larger and burn until fall rains and snow put it out.

"We're going to live with these fires until October 15th or later," Dan Thorpe, forester in charge of the state Department of Forestry's southwest district who has seen a fire season, said in an interview published Tuesday in the Medford Mail Tribune.

The fire is the Skyrope, a range that's part of the Klamath Mountains straddling southwest Oregon and Northern California.

There are six major wildfires in Oregon as of Tuesday. One of the southwestern fires, named Brimstone, is now considered 100 percent contained. The rest of the southwestern fires are burning on nearly 80,000 acres, more than 93 square miles, and have drawn more than 5,000 people to fight them.

The sixth fire, in Central Oregon, has about 400 people working on the fire and is burning on about 100 acres.

Associated Press writer Tim Fogarty contributed to this report.

Details emerge in Monday crashes

BY ANNE HALL
ALBANY DEMOCRAT-HERALD

Several wrecks occurred on Monday around the mid-valley. Here is an update that includes details and names of those involved.

At 8:15 p.m. in the 3100 block of American Drive near Haley, Justin Jones, 21, of Haley, suffered minor cuts when the sun got into his eyes on a curve and he crossed a center line, striking a car driven by Lisa Farrell, 20, of Tangent.

The Lane County Sheriff's Office said Kravill was transported by ambulance to an area hospital complaining of back pain.

Spokespersons for the hospitals in Lebanon, Albany and Corvallis said Kravill was not a patient at any of the facilities.

Names are now available of the four people involved in a crash at 0:14 a.m. at Fry Road and Midway Drive east of Albany.

Alaska Torres, 36, of Sweet Home was cited for running stop signs in her 1993 Chevy Cavalier and crashing into a 1997 Nissan pickup driven by Rosemarie Harrison, 31, of Harborside, said Lane County Sheriff Sgt. Flint LeBarb.

According to a deputy report, Torres was westbound on Midway and Harrison was taken to a medical facility, but she was not reported to be a patient at any of the three hospitals.

Alaska Torres was not reported to be at a hospital and neither was one of her passengers, Andrea Torres, 11, who complained of minor injuries.

However, Nancy Ross, 51, of Sweet Home, another passenger in Torres' vehicle, was in fair condition Tuesday afternoon at the hospital in Corvallis after being taken there by ambulance.

None was involved in a rear-end collision involving two tractor-trailers at about 10:35 a.m. about 1 1/2 miles east of Corvallis. The wreck occurred between Perla head and the Eastgate Business Center.

Jimmy Dale Murphy, 66, of Coquille, was driving east on Highway 34 in the slow lane and was slowing down for a car in front of him that was turning into a parking lot.

Lewell J. Russell, 30, of McMinnville was also going east behind Murphy about 50 miles an hour. He did not stop in time to avoid colliding with the back of Murphy's trailer. He was cited for

Boardman coal plant back on line after fires

BOARDMAN — The Boardman Coal Plant is generating electricity again after repairs to a steam pipe that cost \$10 million.

The 3-foot diameter pipe was knocked off its hinges July 1 by thermal water hammer, which is water hammer caused by in-plant generation from mixing cold and hot water.

Portland General Electric announced the repairs were completed last week.

The Boardman plant is scheduled to end coal-fired operations in by 2020. PGE is holding a natural-gas powered plant at the facility.

PGE serves more than 800,000 customers in Portland, Salem and the northern Willamette Valley.

OregonNotes

Chain saw vandals cut up Shady Cove — A man with a chain saw cut two picnic tables in half, left a couple of trees and a hole in the side of a pump house at Aunt Canoe.

Associated Press

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