

Did cop cop county's 'coke'?

EUGENE (AP) — Officials say more than \$100,000 worth of cocaine has been stolen from an evidence safe in the Lane County district attorney's office, apparently by a law enforcement officer.

Between 20 and 25 ounces of cocaine were determined to be missing last week from a safe in the office of the defunct Lane Interagency Narcotics Team. Investigators have been called from Oregon State Police headquarters in Salem.

State police Superintendent John Williams said Thursday investigators "eliminated the possibility of an accidental misplacement." He indicated

the amount of cocaine missing, but declined to disclose other details.

District Attorney Pat Horton said no law enforcement officer has been identified as having taken the cocaine and "We're not prepared to rule out anything else at this point but, unfortunately, that's a pretty strong premise. Hell, that's the obvious conclusion you would arrive at."

Horton said "a number of people from a number of agencies" had access to the evidence safe, which is in a part of the district attorney's office in the Lane County Courthouse.

Horton said the cocaine had been tied

up in the judicial process for "an extended period of time." He declined to say how the theft was discovered, and it was not clear whether it was from a single investigation or from various investigations.

Horton said the cocaine had periodically been removed from the safe in the course of the judicial process.

The interagency narcotics team was supported after its creation in 1969 by funds and personnel from five city, county and state agencies. It dissolved last winter and spring because of budget difficulties among the agencies.

Smokers stub vice on smoke-out day

From Associated Press reports

Some dined on cold turkey sandwiches. Some took bribes from their bosses. Millions more just counted the hours, snapped rubber bands or nervously drummed their fingers.

The American Cancer Society estimated that 16 million of America's 53 million smokers tried to lose the cigarette habit — and if this year is like the previous "smoke-outs," about a million smokers will bid cigarettes farewell.

Airline fares go head to head costing \$99 coast to coast

NEW YORK (AP) — A transcontinental air fare war broke out Thursday as two big carriers matched a \$99 one-way New York-to-California fare set by an upstart competitor. But travelers must meet severe restrictions to fly at the bargain rate.

The \$99 fare was set Tuesday by Capitol Air, a former charter carrier that launched scheduled service between New York and California after the airline industry was deregulated in 1978. The low fare was matched Thursday by United Airlines and Trans World Airlines.

American and Eastern airlines and Pan American World Airways were all considering their response, spokesmen said.

The new fare cuts \$40 from the prevailing advance purchase, round-trip fare for midweek transcontinental flights. And to fly at the low rate, travelers must meet several criteria:

The fare is good only on non-stop flights between New York and San Francisco, Los Angeles or San Jose, Calif.

It is good only for trips begun between Nov. 30 and Dec. 14.

Trips must begin and end on a Tuesday or Wednesday, with a layover at least through a following Saturday with a maximum stay of 60 days. Capitol, however, requires the return trip be by Dec. 14.

The ticket must be purchased at least seven days in advance.

Woman dies as couple waits in auto for 'higher power' to land on earth

GRAND MARAIS, Minn. (AP) — Drawn by messages from "some higher power," Gerald Flach and Laverne Landis drove last month from St. Paul to the snowy, frozen wilderness of north-eastern Minnesota to wait for a flying saucer, authorities say.

For more than four weeks they waited in their car, apparently eating vitamins and drinking water from nearby Loon Lake.

On Monday, a motorist found Flach, 38, an electrician from West St. Paul, semiconscious on Gunflint Trail, 41 miles northwest of here. Rescue squad members found Landis, 48, dead in the front seat of the car a few hundred yards off the main road.

An autopsy determined she died from a combination of hypothermia, dehydration and starvation.

Flach, described by a friend as having become obsessed with UFOs in recent months, was taken to Cook County North Shore Hospital in Grand Marais, where he remained Thursday.

Cook County Deputy Sheriff Frank Redfield said there was no evidence of foul play and no criminal charges were filed.

"Flach said he had been receiving messages through Landis from some higher power," Redfield said. "The most recent message directed

them to go to the end of the Gunflint Trail and await further messages.

"These people kind of believed in flying saucers."

Jack McDonnell of Grand Marais found Flach Monday, said Bruce Kerfoot of the Gunflint Trail Rescue Squad. Flach told him his friend in the car needed medical attention.

McDonnell took Flach to the nearby Gunflint Lodge where he received first aid for hypothermia — lower than normal body temperature.

The rescue squad used a four-wheel-drive vehicle to reach Landis, Kerfoot said. The car was snowed in on a small access road a few hundred yards from the main road. It was out of gasoline.

"I believe they were parked there like four to six weeks, just living in the front seat of their compact car," said Kerfoot, who removed Landis' body from the car. "Flach told me he hadn't eaten in four weeks and they both looked very, very gaunt."

Kerfoot said he saw vitamin bottles in the car, but no sleeping bags and no evidence of cooking. The couple apparently drank water from the lake.

Dr. Michael DeBevec, who treated Flach, refused to comment on the case Wednesday. Flach could not be reached at the hospital.

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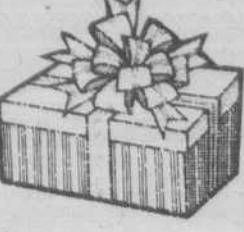



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