

Search for boy continues, foul play a possibility

(AP) Speculation that Nathan Madsen was the victim of foul play has grown as the weeks pass with no sign of the 9-year-old Veneta boy who disappeared during a southern Oregon cattle roundup Oct. 22.

"The state police are approaching it from the point of view that there was foul play," Klamath County District Attorney Edwin Caleb said. "No one knows whether it was, but they have to approach it as a potential criminal investigation."

Officially, police still consider the boy's disappearance

northwest of Chemult to be a missing person investigation.

"We've not come to any conclusions or anything of that nature," said Maj. John Collins of the Oregon State Police office in Bend. "We still have to look at all possibilities."

The boy last was seen after he complained that he was cold and headed back to camp on his 10-year-old gelding pony.

"We have a full-fledged investigation going on," Collins said. "We're not involved in the search itself, but we've had people down there standing by

in the area in case something turned up. We have to suspect everything."

The possibilities include that the boy was accidentally shot by an elk hunter or was abducted, Collins said.

Police are attempting to contact people who held permits to hunt in the Cascades region, which includes the rugged canyons along the Little Deschutes River where Nathan disappeared. Elk season in that area opened the day before the boy disappeared, Collins said.

But Collins acknowledged

that it seems likely the Madsen family would have heard a gunshot if Nathan had been accidentally shot by a hunter.

There are problems with the abduction theory as well.

The area where Nathan disappeared is along a rough dirt road perhaps 10 miles or more off Oregon Highway 58. It seems far-fetched that someone bent on abducting a child would find the area, much less be in the area at the exact time Nathan was separated from his family, Collins said.

The Nov. 14 arrest of a Van-

couver, Wash., sex offender on charges of killing three boys in the Portland-Vancouver area fueled questions about whether the suspect in those cases, Westley Allan Dodd, had traveled in the Chemult area.

Larry von Moos, a Eugene firefighter who coordinated the volunteer search for Nathan, said he looked for Dodd's name on a roster of the 509 individuals who took part in the search.

It was a long shot, but von Moos was drawing upon a rule of thumb firefighters use in arson investigations: Look around the crowd gathered at a major fire, he said, and it's likely the arsonist will be there.

But Dodd's name wasn't on the list of searchers. Although Dodd hasn't been questioned about Nathan's disappearance, Vancouver police said they have no reason to believe he was in the area.

The only break in the case came Nov. 19, when Nathan's pony, Tony, was found alive, grazing in a meadow in the upper reaches of the canyon. Nathan's father, Jerry Madsen, made the discovery.

But finding the pony only added to the mystery. It was found without its saddle and tack, and searchers reasoned that Nathan had removed the saddle and blanket to form a shelter. They also reasoned the boy might be in the same area as the horse, but again nothing was found.

"It's the strangest case I've ever been involved in," said Caleb. "There's no sign whatsoever, then the horse showing up a month later — it's just bizarre."

Veto

Continued from Page 1

Chinese students will go back to China, but just don't want to go back now," the student said, because the education acquired abroad will mean nothing under the present situation.

The student added students suspect that "Bush, or the U.S. government, will betray us" by informally sending them back when or before their visas expire, in order for the U.S. to maintain defensive listening posts along the Chinese-Soviet border.

The Chinese government "could force America to withdraw (and) George Bush is balancing how much he would lose" from such an action, the student said.

The United States Student Association is calling for students, faculty, staff and administrators "to call this number and let them know that George Bush has chosen to pocket veto" the bill, said Kelvin Wee, USSA's international representative on the USSA board of directors.

"It's a wimpy way out. We're talking about the lives of 43,000 people without something like this to protect them."

"Whether it will hinder future programs, we should consider the here and now," Wee said. "Call in from the AUSO office if you can, to expose George Bush's obvious disregard of the value of the lives of Chinese people."

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