

COMMUNITY

Eugene man declared missing; family begins statewide search

By Don Peters
Emerald Associate Editor

Jack Sampson, 51, of Eugene, has been missing since Dec. 25, and his family and friends have begun a statewide search for the mentally retarded man.

"We just need more information," said search coordinator Pamela Harbeintner. "We've got to keep looking."

Sampson had just visited his family in Portland for the holidays when his brother saw him board the Eugene-bound bus at 8:50 p.m. The bus had been scheduled to leave Portland at 7:30, but was delayed due to the weather.

"The weather was terrible," said Pam Ring of the Association of Retarded Citizens, and a friend of Sampson's. "It was Christmas night and it was hectic."

Harbeintner said she has no idea where Sampson could have gone. The Greyhound Express Sampson was on continued past Eugene to Roseburg, Medford, Redding, Sacramento and Los Angeles. It is possible he could be anywhere along that route.

Sampson has been a resident of the Eugene Donald Street House since 1984 and is on medication. That fact has given searchers more cause for concern.

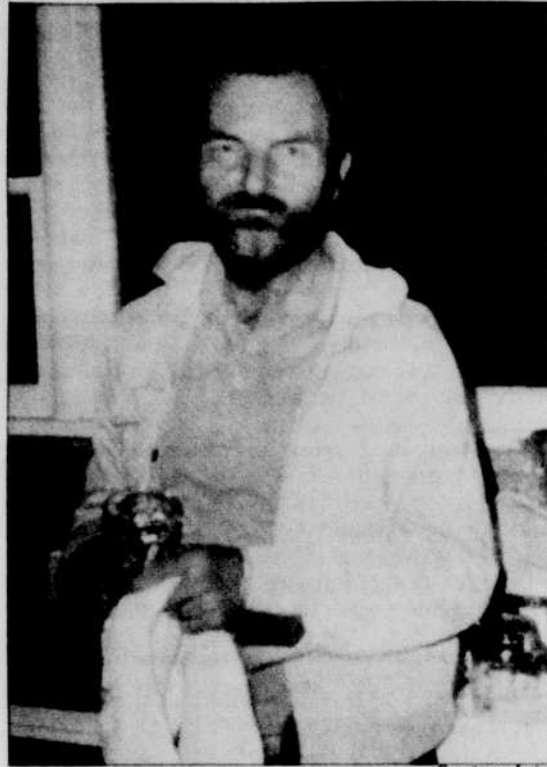
"He's never been off (his medication) as long as we've known him," Harbeintner said. "Our best guess is that he's paranoid and extremely frightened."

Harbeintner said Sampson takes similar trips two or three times a year, and has never had any problems. She wanted to emphasize that Sampson was not likely to disappear on purpose.

"He's not a runaway," she said. "He likes where he lives and is always anxious to get home."

Searchers are concentrating on the Portland area, but are looking for any of the 43 people who were originally on Sampson's bus.

"We want to talk to anyone who took a bus out of Portland that night," Ring said. "Even if people don't think they were on the same bus (as Sampson), we want to talk to them. We haven't



Courtesy photo

Jack Sampson, 51, of Eugene, has been missing since Christmas Day. Family and friends are searching for clues to his whereabouts.

found a single person yet."

Sampson is 5 feet 7 inches tall and weighs 145 pounds. He has thinning light brown hair, a brown and white beard, light blue eyes and is missing several teeth. The fingernail on his right index finger is extremely long and thick and he is a heavy smoker.

Sampson had approximately \$4 when last seen, but Harbeintner said he knows how to panhandle.

Anyone with possible information of Sampson's whereabouts, or who was on the 7:30 p.m. Express from Portland on Christmas is urged to call ARC at 343-5256. After hours contact the Eugene Police Department or Ring at 683-1647.

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