

Fourth arson suspect arrested

SALEM (AP) — A fourth person was arrested Thursday in the deaths of two people firebombed in a basement apartment.

Leon L. Tucker, 22, of Salem, was scheduled for arraignment Monday on two counts of aggravated murder, police said.

Hattie Mae Cohens, 29, and Brian Mock, 45, died after a molotov cocktail was thrown through their window Saturday, fire officials said.

Tucker was captured Thursday about 7 miles east of Newport after he was spotted by a Lincoln County road crew.

Authorities had been searching along the coast for Tucker since Tuesday evening, when he fled a Volkswagen van that was stopped by a sheriff's deputy on U.S. Highway 101.

Another man in the van, Michael W. Palmer, 22, was arrested on an unrelated felony warrant from Multnomah County.

Three others also were charged in the deaths.

Philip Bruce Wilson Jr., 20, and Sean Robert Edwards, 21, were charged with aggravated murder and arson. Yolanda Renee Cotton, 19, was charged with felony murder and arson.

Wilson and Cotton were identified by the Portland Police Bureau's gang enforcement team as "skinheads," a loose group of racist youths.

Friends said both were admitted racists but they had never been violent.

Both Cohens and Mock were homosexuals, and Cohens was black, according to neighbors and former tenants of the house.

Police have not said whether they consider the arson a hate crime, but gay groups say they consider it an act of political terrorism.

The FBI was investigating any potential civil rights violations but no federal charges had been filed, said Stephen Peifer of the U.S. attorney's office in Portland.

Salem police and the Marion County district attorney's office refused to comment except to say that a federal investigation was warranted.

Ariel Waterwoman, editor of the Portland-based publication, Just Out, said the homosexual community blames the Oregon Citizen's Alliance, the right-wing group that sponsored the anti-gay Measure 9 on the November ballot.

"We blame the OCA for fanning the flames of hate in this state and creating an atmosphere where bigotry can fester and kill innocent people," Waterwoman said in a joint statement with publisher Renee LaChance.

"Violence against the lesbian and gay community in Oregon and nationwide is on the rise and groups like the OCA are encouraging it," Waterwoman said.

Senate candidates spar over China trade policy

WASHINGTON (AP) — Oregon Republican Sen. Bob Packwood and his Democratic challenger Rep. Les AuCoin sharply attacked each other Thursday over U.S. trade policy toward China.

Packwood, siding with President Bush, placed a premium on economics while AuCoin prioritized human rights.

Packwood said AuCoin was being irresponsible. AuCoin said Packwood is "over the hill." Both said the issue is a major difference between them in one of the nation's most hotly contested Senate races.

AuCoin voted with the House majority Wednesday to override the president's veto of the bill that would have placed conditions on China's most-favored-nation trading status.

Packwood, voting to sustain Bush's veto Thursday, said China should receive the preferred status without conditions primarily because of the market's economic importance to Oregon.

Speaking on the Senate floor, Packwood singled out AuCoin as one who formerly endorsed free trade between the United States and China.

"No one has stated it better than my colleague from Oregon ... when he said way back in 1979 that normal trade relations with China would, 'translate into dollars, cents and paychecks for Oregon workers and be of substantial economic and political benefit to the United States,'" Packwood said, reading AuCoin's old statement.

"I agree with him," the senator continued. "Those words are as true today as they were then."

"It would be irresponsible for me or any member of Congress from Oregon today to vote against his own state's interests in such a blatant way as revoking or conditioning most-favored-nation status for China," Packwood said.

Packwood acknowledged there is room for China to improve its human rights policy.

"While none of us believe China is there yet, let's not stop the progress by conditioning most-favored-nation status," he said.

AuCoin, a loud critic of the slaughter of pro-democracy demonstrators at China's Tiananmen Square in 1990, said President Bush "has turned a blind eye to human rights."

Ranchers fear return of grizzlies

WINTHROP, Wash. (AP) — There is no such thing as a nice grizzly when it comes to domestic livestock, cattlemen said at a meeting to discuss plans for re-introducing the bear in the North Cascades.

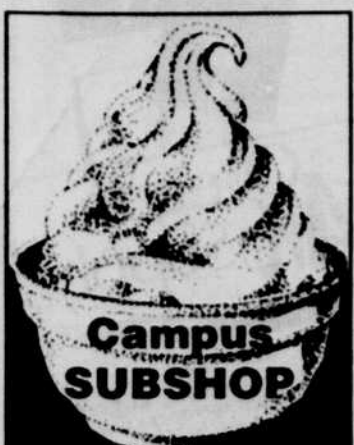
"We're here basically to stop this nonsense any way we can," said Tonasket rancher Dal Dagnon, representing the Washington State Cattlemen's Association, at the North Cascades Grizzly Bear Steering Committee meeting.

After a six-year, \$350,000 study of the threatened species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed a plan to restore grizzly populations in some parts of Washington and Idaho. Such efforts already are under way in other areas of the West, ranging from Wyoming to Idaho.

"The question is not if the grizzly bear will be recovered in Washington, but how," said Doug Zimmer, Fish and Wildlife Service spokesman.

That prospect doesn't sit well with cattle ranchers.

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