

Authorities arrest man in connection with high school fire

EUGENE (AP) — An 18-year-old man has been arrested on arson and criminal mischief charges in connection with a \$1 million fire at Willamette High School.

Jamal Seligman George was arrested Wednesday. The fire early Monday destroyed a woodworking shop, computer design lab and some office space.

Eugene police Lt. Jan Clements said investigators had not determined a motive for the fire.

George did not attend Willamette High and hadn't lived in the Eugene area for long. He may have taken classes at Lane Community College, authorities said.

George apparently had no permanent address but stayed with acquaintances in the area, Clements said.

Band director tapes students undressing, receives suspension

PORT ISABEL, Texas (AP) — A high school band director was suspended for videotaping female students changing for practice, and his assistant was suspended for going through their purses and gym bags.

Band director Joe Martinez told school officials that a video camera was placed in a storage room behind his office to catch a thief, but instead, two tapes show 10 female band members changing their clothes.

His assistant, Eugene Cottrell, was caught on tape searching through belongings, but the tape did not show him taking anything.

Cottrell didn't know about the tapes, School Superintendent Martin Pena said. "No one except Mr. Martinez was aware of the tapings," he said.

The two were suspended with pay on Wednesday. It was not immediately clear when or if the men would get their jobs back.

The tape was found in a trash can by a couple who turned over copies to the district attorney's office and a TV station, which aired segments Monday.

District Attorney Luis Saenz said he will decide whether to bring criminal charges against Martinez and Cottrell.

STRANGER THAN FICTION

"I think any time you have photos or take pictures of children undressing, that's a serious matter," Saenz said.

NJ Teachers, Seeking Pay Increases, Withhold College Recommendations

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — Teachers in some New Jersey school districts are refusing to write letters of recommendation for college-bound seniors until they get better pay, and students are getting worried as application deadlines draw near.

"I agree the teachers should get paid more money," Verona High School student council president Dave Occhino told the school board Tuesday. "Their jobs are important and they do a good job. I just don't agree with what they're bargaining with."

In Verona, teachers' pay averages from about \$30,000 to a cap of \$50,700.

The salaries are several thousand dollars below the average in comparably wealthy New Jersey communities, said Pamela Klesch, a teachers union representative.

Klesch said the association would meet Friday to try to resolve the problem. "We are trying to work it out," she said. "We want to make the kids happy."

Maurice Moran, president of the Verona Education Association, told The New York Times, "When we did job actions before, the community didn't seem to notice. We felt this would be something where people would take notice, and they did."

Teen shoots teacher, turns gun on self

BLACKVILLE, S.C. (AP) — A suspended student whose father said he sometimes got picked on because he was small walked into his high school Thursday, shot and seriously wounded a teacher, then killed himself.

A second teacher died, although authorities were unsure whether she was shot or suffered a heart attack.

Toby R. Sincino, 16, was expelled early last school year but was back in school on probationary status. He was suspended again Wednesday after making an obscene gesture on a school bus and faced another expulsion.

On Thursday, he walked through a back door at Blackville-Hilda High School armed with a .32-caliber revolver. He strode by two classrooms and entered a third where he fired the gun at math teacher Johnny Thompson, 38, investigators said.

Sincino continued down the hall where he apparently confronted another math teacher, 56-year-old Phyllis Senn, who was later found dead in a teachers' work room, State Law Enforcement Division spokesman Hugh Munn said. No wounds were visible on her body and an autopsy will be conducted today to determine how she died.

Thompson was in serious but stable condition, said Rubenia Hammond, a spokeswoman for Aiken Regional Medical Centers.

Sincino's body was found outside the school office door. He had shot himself in the right temple, Munn said.

Teacher-of-the-Year, Husband Arrested on Drug Charges

SLIDELL, La. (AP) — A former teacher of the year was arrested along with her weightlifter husband Thursday after deputies found 10 marijuana plants growing in their home.

Laurie Wilder Maschek, a fifth-grade teacher, and her 34-year-old husband, James Maschek, were charged with marijuana cultivation and other offenses carrying a total of more than 50 years in prison.

Mrs. Maschek, 32, was named teacher of the year by her St. Tammany Parish school system in 1992.

"There's no indication that they were selling at the school or out of their house at this point," sheriff's spokesman Larry Ciko said.

The marijuana, worth about \$15,000 on the street, was growing in a room with a 1,000-watt light bulb, deputies said. Officers also seized two shotguns and two bottles of bodybuilding steroids.

The couple were jailed on \$15,000 bail each.

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