

# UO takes steps to avoid future hiring slips

Officials will meet with parents to discuss concerns following an incident at two University child-care centers

BY MEGHANN M. CUNIFF  
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

The University is examining its criteria for conducting background checks on employees and volunteers after a man allowed to photograph children at two University child-care centers was arrested on prior out-of-state incest charges.

University officials will meet with parents in February to discuss the steps that have been taken and hear concerns about what should be done to prevent such an incident from happening again, Director of Student Activities Gregg Lobisser said.

Lobisser said the focus has been

on the University's background check policy and whether it needs to be revamped. Because the child-care centers are part of the University, they are subject to the same policies, Lobisser said, so changing policies at the child-care centers would mean changing policies for the entire University.

"We should be coordinating our thinking about this into a common policy and common agreement about University policy on background checks," Lobisser said.

Though no inappropriate behavior occurred during the multiple photography sessions that Stephen Dale

Jackson, 31, conducted at the center, his arrest in Portland on Dec. 2 on Louisiana felony charges of aggravated incest caused concern among University officials about how his criminal past went undetected.

The University did not issue a background check on Jackson because he was living with a family that used the center and was considered to be "a member of the child-care community," Vice President for Student Affairs Anne Leavitt said.

Lobisser said University officials have been in contact with other child-care centers and organizations across Oregon to gather information on other background-check policies and procedures, specifically those pertaining to parents and family members who want to be more in-

involved at the center.

Nancy deRonde, director of the child-care centers at Oregon State University, said criminal background checks are a regular part of the hiring process at the centers and everyone, from interns to volunteers, is subjected to one before coming into contact with the children.

Parents are strongly encouraged to spend time at the centers and become involved in activities, Lobisser said, but after Jackson's arrest it became clear that some changes to precautionary procedures are necessary.

Involvement is encouraged, but "at what point does that change their status from parent, one of the family, to someone who is serving the larger community?" Lobisser asked, adding that "maximum involvement and

maximum protection" are difficult to achieve.

The photographs Jackson took at the centers have not been recovered, Lobisser said, and the police and FBI are still working to locate them. Lobisser said it is "very disconcerting" that the photographs have not been found but said the University is concentrating on making necessary changes to policies and hearing parents' concerns rather than on the criminal investigation.

"Our task is to care for children, address parents' concerns as best we can, stay in touch with law enforcement agencies and relay information to parents," Lobisser said.

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## Presidential candidate calls Israel a 'Zionist enemy'

BY IBRAHIM BARZAK  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIT LAHIYA, Gaza Strip — Palestinian presidential candidate Mahmoud Abbas denounced Israel as the "Zionist enemy" Tuesday — his harshest language yet on the campaign trail — after Israeli tank shells slammed into a strawberry patch, killing seven Palestinians, some of them children.

Israel insisted their shells hit militants who were firing mortar rounds at Israeli targets, but relatives and witnesses said the dead were children and teenagers, and a senior army commander apologized for civilian casualties. It was the bloodiest strike in Gaza in three months.

Abbas' rhetoric has grown increasingly hard-line during a four-day campaign swing through Gaza as he

reached out to younger, more militant Palestinians ahead of Sunday's election.

But his comments condemning Tuesday's deaths were his most inflammatory.

"We came to you today, while we are praying for the souls of the martyrs who were killed today by the shells of the Zionist enemy in Beit Lahiya," Abbas told thousands of supporters, using a term for Israel usually employed by Islamic militants.

In response, Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom broke with his government's policy of not criticizing Abbas during the campaign.

"Israel is very concerned about Abu Mazen's recent statements, which are very militant ... and the like of which we haven't heard in a long time," he

said, referring to Abbas by his nickname.

In Washington, the State Department responded with strong criticism.

"Obviously, we find such language disturbing," said Rhonda Shore, spokeswoman for the Bureau of Near

Eastern Affairs. "Such rhetoric has no place in the process of resuming dialogue and rebuilding trust and confidence between both sides."

Also Tuesday, an Israeli military inquiry exonerated members of an elite Israeli unit in the killing of Palestinian

militant Mohamoud Kamil Dobie in the West Bank last month, refuting testimony from a relative that the man was murdered in custody.

The inquiry found that naval

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### IN BRIEF

#### Skull by Klamath River may be missing woman's

BONANZA, Ore. — A skull found last week along the Klamath River in Northern California might be that of a woman who has been missing for almost a year, authorities said.

Teri Renee Poe, 49, of Happy Camp, Calif., was last seen Jan. 27, 2004, when she drove to see family in Bonanza. It was snowing heavily when she left that day.

In February 2004, two people found tracks several miles southeast of Seiad Valley that indicated a vehicle may have spun out. A day later, Poe's car was found in 8 to 9 feet of murky water. Divers found no body in the car.

Periodic air and ground searches failed to find any sign of Poe.

A spokesman for the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office said a Seiad Valley man told police Friday that he found a skull along the river.

Sheriff's detectives think it might be Poe's and will attempt to determine the identity by using dental charts or, if necessary, DNA comparisons.

Poe lived for most of the past 25 years in Klamath Falls and Bonanza, where she was known as Teri Edwards. She took the Poe name after a marriage in late 2003, just a few weeks before she went missing, said her mother, Carol Kosten, of Bonanza.

"We've been praying for closure," Kosten said. "When you don't know where your daughter is for a year, and you see her car dragged out of the river, you wonder," Kosten said.

#### Two loggers injured in accident south of Dallas

DALLAS — Two loggers working south of Dallas were injured after a slipped out of the grips of heavy ma-

chinery, tumbled 300 feet downhill and struck them, sheriff's deputies said.

Jay Jones, 26, of McMinnville was transported by Life Flight to Oregon Health & Science University Hospital after the Monday accident and was reported in good condition Tuesday morning, sheriff's deputies said.

Elijah Patty, 21, of Amity was released from West Valley Hospital in Dallas after receiving outpatient treatment. Both worked for Yamhill's A-1 Logging.

The accident occurred as a crew hauled logs up the side of a canyon near Richardson Road, said Dean Bender, spokesman for the Polk County Sheriff's Department. Two logs slipped out of the grips of machinery and one of the logs struck the men, Bender said.

Both the sheriff's office and the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration are conducting investigations, Bender said.

#### Judge rules BLM timber sale endangers animals

GRANTS PASS — A judge has delayed a federal timber sale that combined logging mature trees with reducing fire danger, finding that the U.S. Bureau of Land Management failed to fully analyze the combined effects of past and future logging on northern spotted owls and salmon.

"We're hoping this legal win convinces the BLM to sit down and finally design a restoration alternative with us, instead of the old-growth logging they have pushed for over the last decade," said Spencer Leonard of the Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center, an environmental group that sued BLM.

U.S. District Judge Michael Hogan granted a preliminary injunction barring timber harvest on the Scattered Apples sale while the two sides offer suggestions on how to fix the problems identified in the ruling.

— The Associated Press



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