

NELSON,

continued from Page A1

“Chris was very good in encouraging them to assist law enforcement,” Bickers said. “Because of how sophisticated Chris is in the process, it went very quickly. In my opinion, this was the most successful overdose investigation I’ve been a part of. They went straight up vertically in four days.”

“The case was successful because of the cooperation from everyone involved,” said Nelson, who was on a DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) task force at the time. “Sgt. Andrew Cope and his team did a good job identifying everyone involved that night. They provided that information to me the next morning. We spoke to the roommate about what was occurring at the home and what she knew.”

From there, Nelson and his team found who the source of the drugs was and kept working their way up the drug supply chain.

Nelson noted a couple of suspects weren’t initially cooperative, but changed their tunes after talks with Bickers. Once the cooperation was gained, ascension up the drug supply chain continued.

“Kathleen has been a driving force behind Len Bias cases in Portland and has been recognized by many federal prosecutors,” Nelson said. “AUSAs around the country have been talking

with her.”

Likewise, people have been talking with Nelson and Roelof.

“We have used this case as a teaching tool with the National Advocacy Center,” Bickers said. “Chris and Garrett have been requested by other agencies to teach on this case. It went really well. It really was spearheaded by Chris and the Keizer Police Department.”

A top person of the supply chain, Sergio Quezada-Lopez of Mexico, was arrested a week after Putnam’s death. He entered a guilty plea in August 2014 to conspiracy to distribute heroin in quantities of one kilogram or more that resulted in death. During the investigation, it was learned Quezada-Lopez was a high level member of a large scale conspiracy involving the distribution of significant quantities of heroin in Oregon, Washington, Nevada and Colorado.

Nelson credited the hard work of all involved.

“I appreciate the recognition, but the success for this case was not done by one person,” he said. “It was done by an entire team. It was local prosecutors from the Marion County District Attorney’s office, officers with the Keizer and Salem Police Departments, all the agencies involved with the DEA, all of the police agencies in the Portland area. The success of the case was the joint effort by law enforcement and prosecutors. We could have not done it without all of the cooperation. We were the case agents, but we were really accepting the award on behalf of everyone involved.”

LUCAS,

continued from Page A1

“I called my dad and explained the opportunity. He told me to stay and do it. He’s always been my biggest supporter,” Lucas said.

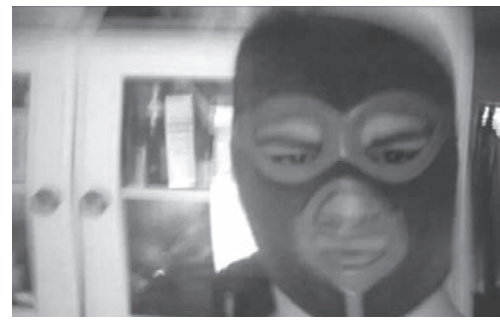
The course was intended to take about a year to complete and then the graduates would be hooked up on the local pro wrestling circuit.

“You learn how to take a bump and protect your head. Then you learn footsteps, which is the psychology of wrestling moves. It’s like being a ballerina. You have to learn certain techniques to do certain things even down to applying simple things like a hammerlock,” he said.

Lucas completed the entire gauntlet in nine months and credits his amateur background for seeing him through.

Then, on his way home from one of his two jobs on his bike, in the week set to graduate, fate dealt him a cruel twist: he was hit by a car. The bike frame crumpled causing the chain to fly free. The chain wrapped around Lucas’ arm and he was dragged along until the driver was able to stop.

“I was riding across from a park where they have softball games there. Luckily, there were games going on and, when I was run over, I had people who saw what happened and called for help. If it wasn’t for that I



Thomas Lucas in a wrestling mash from his days of training to be a pro wrestler.

Submitted

probably wouldn’t be here,” Lucas said.

He woke up six weeks later in a nursing home filled with senior citizens a few weeks before his 19th birthday. He remembers the year because he was given a WWE video game for his birthday to fill his time and the game title years always run ahead of the current one.

“I was diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury, short term memory loss and the doctors told my family that if I survived the coma I might not be able to walk or talk again or do much of anything for myself,” Lucas said. “I think I was stubborn, like all the women in my family. I think learning how to take the bumps in wrestling also helped.”

He spent the next several years learning how to function as a survivor of a brain injury, but picked up a number of skills along the way. He earned a Career Readiness Certificate and another certificate in guest and lodging services from the Arkansas Career Training Institute.

Lucas finally moved to Oregon about three years ago and began working with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to find a job. After a year of temporary job placements, Lucas decided he wanted to add a GED to his arsenal of credentials and began working with tutors at Keizer’s Mid-Valley Literacy Center. In September, he got approval for special accommodations – like extra time, a calculator for the math portions and an assisting reader – to take the tests at Chemeketa Community College where he’s just begun classes.

“Having a brain injury isn’t part of my plan, but I’ve got to deal with it,” Lucas said. “The thing I’m having difficulty with now is what to do after the GED. I get six free credits at Chemeketa if I pass the GED with them and I’d like to put them toward a degree.”

“The biggest thing for me is not letting my brain injury overpower me. If I don’t do something it should be because that’s my choice.”

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