

New mystery in Oregon woman’s disappearance

The Register-Guard

EUGENE — An observant driver, a summer drought and two rear tires peeking out of a pond. That’s all it took last fall to put one big mystery surrounding the disappearance of Linda Lee Perry — and her remains — to rest.

Perry, who had vanished eight years earlier, was an accident victim, police concluded. No foul play. Case closed.

But a new mystery emerged to replace the first one: How did Perry wind up in the pond without damaging a guardrail and without anyone witnessing the crash?

How does a person go missing all those years, only to be found near a busy interchange in an urban area?

It would take several weeks of investigation before detectives felt confident in providing their theory on how the accident occurred.

“We believe the car went airborne over the guardrail,” said Lane County sheriff’s Detective David Silano. “We go back to look where she went in at, and there is only one way we can surmise she could have done it.”

When Perry, 59, a resident of Junction City, disappeared in 2007, no one quite knew where to look for her — until an unusually dry year revealed those tires peeking out of the water off Northwest Expressway near Randy Papè Beltline last October.

Perry was headed west on Belt Line Road — as the highway was known at the time — when her car went off the road nine years ago. She had left home that day to visit some friends in Springfield and go shopping in Eugene.

Detectives believe Perry’s car, a blue 1987 Honda Prelude, must have left the roadway and crossed onto a grassy median, and then a highway onramp berm, before vaulting over

the onramp and clearing the guardrail that protected the pond.

The car then “pitch-poled” — flipped end over end — into a fir tree, detectives believe.

Once striking the tree, the vehicle spun counter-clockwise, landing on the embankment, then continued into the pond, investigators have concluded.

The vehicular damage is consistent with that theory, Silano said, as the front of Perry’s car had pop-up headlights that were not damaged, but would have been had she hit anything head-on.

The windows were shattered, consistent with hitting the tree with the top of the car, and the roof of the car was caved in from the front to the back, further suggesting that the car struck the tree vertically, Silano said.

If a car had simply traveled off the road at a normal speed, it would have lost speed on the grassy median,

so Perry’s foot presumably would have had to have been pressed on the gas pedal — hard — to launch the car over the onramp, Silano said.

There was some rain or drizzle that day, and the indicators on her recovered car show that her windshield wipers were on “low.” Still, it’s probable that the grassy median was mostly brown and dry at that time of year, thus making it easier for a car to maintain or gain speed while traveling over the median.

It’s unclear exactly when Perry left her friends’ home in Springfield, but it may have been late afternoon or early evening. However, her car’s headlights were not turned on when she plunged into the pond. She was wearing a seatbelt.

Detectives will never know with certainty that Perry didn’t fall asleep or suffer a medical problem, such as a stroke or heart attack, right before the crash, Silano said.

Affordable housing proposal makes headway

Capital Bureau

SALEM — A bill aimed at increasing affordable housing by easing Oregon’s land use requirements for two projects is making headway in the House.

Under House Bill 4079, the process for expanding “urban growth boundaries” would be expedited by exempting local governments from certain land use rules or goals on two 50-acre parcels — one next to a city with fewer than 25,000 residents and the other with more.

On Feb. 17, the House Committee on Rules passed an amended version of the bill 5-3 and referred it to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

The committee’s amendment changes the size threshold of the pilot project cities to 25,000 residents, down from 30,000 residents.

Pilot projects are excluded from Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties under the newest version of the bill.

Previously, the pilot projects were also barred in Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties, as well as a portion of Jefferson County, in addition to the Portland metropolitan area.

The bill previously won the unanimous approval of the House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use and Water on Feb. 10.

The Oregon Farm Bureau and conservation groups have opposed HB 4079, arguing that new housing developments should occur within existing urban growth boundaries where roads, powers and water are more readily available than in rural areas.

Another proposal to expedite urban growth boundaries more broadly across Oregon — Senate Bill 1575 — while allowing limited “inclusionary zoning” of housing tied to local incomes has died in committee.

Ethics complaint filed against Ammon Bundy’s attorneys

EUGENE (AP) — The Clatsop County District Attorney has filed an ethics complaint against two attorneys who represented Ammon Bundy, the leader of a standoff at an Oregon wildlife refuge.

The Register-Guard reports that prosecutor Josh Marquis said Eugene attorneys Mike Arnold and Lissa Casey may have violated an ethics rule that limits pretrial statements by attorneys. He filed his complaint Wednesday with the Oregon State Bar.

The attorneys have held news conferences to discuss the case. Marquis wrote that he believes the news conferences are designed to reach and influence possible jurors.

Casey says that she was surprised Marquis doesn’t know the law on pretrial publicity. She says it won’t deter their resolve to seek justice for Bundy.

Peter Jarvis, a lawyer who represents Arnold Law, said none

of the complaints against the attorneys have any merit.

Wildlife officials confirm wolf attacked calf in S. Oregon

KLAMATH FALLS (AP) — Oregon wildlife officials have confirmed that a wolf attacked a 10-month-old calf east of Klamath Falls.

The *Herald and News* reports that Jon Muir, a wildlife biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, says officials determined Tuesday that the calf was attacked by the wolf identified OR-33.

Muir says the calf was still alive when its owner called and hadn’t been limping or acting injured.

He says the owners noticed the smell of rotting flesh coming from their herd, which led them to a calf with severe scrape wounds on its rear left leg. Muir says wolf canines are fairly blunt and tend to scrape the skin rather than penetrate it.

OR-33 is a 2-year-old male wolf. Muir says he dispersed from the Imnaha Pack and hasn’t settled down anywhere.

State appeals ruling against trooper in excessive force case

EUGENE (AP) — The state is asking a federal appeals court to review a case involving an Oregon State Police trooper found to have used excessive force after he kicked a Eugene motorcyclist.

The Register-Guard reports the Oregon Department of Justice has filed a notice with the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The agency is seeking a review of a jury’s finding that Capt. Rob Edwards violated Justin Wilkens’ civil rights in the 2012 incident.

Wilkens filed an excessive force lawsuit against Edwards in 2014 and was awarded more than \$180,000 in damages.

Video of the 2012 incident shows Edwards pursuing Wilkens in an unmarked police car and then

rear-ending his motorcycle. He can then be seen pointing a gun at Wilkens and kicking him.

Bill would authorize project for more controlled burns

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Washington state lawmakers are considering a pilot project that would allow more controlled burning in order to reduce the severity of wildfires.

The *Capital Press* reports that House Bill 2928 would give state land managers more flexibility to permit controlled burns in Central and Eastern Washington to make forests more resilient.

The Senate Natural Resources and Parks Committee heard the bill on Wednesday and passed it with some changes. The bill was referred to the Ways and Means Committee.

Prime sponsor, Rep. Joel Kretz, a Republican from Wauconda, told senators the forests have grown choked with brush that fuels

catastrophic wildfires.

Diverse groups have supported the measure, including the Washington Farm Bureau, The Nature Conservancy and the Washington Public Employees Association, which represents state Department of Natural Resources firefighters.

Inmate, 22, found dead in Ontario prison cell

EUGENE (AP) — An inmate who recently turned 22 years old has been found dead in his cell at the Snake River Correctional Institution in Ontario.

The state Department of Corrections spokeswoman says prison staff found the body of Michael Teves early Thursday. No cause of death has been released and state police detectives are investigating.

Teves entered prison in 2014 on an assault conviction out of Lane County.

He could have been released from prison later this year.



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