

'This woman is the devil'

Woman gets 30 years for stealing \$214,000 from Diamond Heating

By Kyle Spurr
EO Media Group

A former employee at Diamond Heating in Seaside was sentenced Tuesday to 30 years in prison for stealing more than \$214,000 from the local business.

Deana Lynn Freauff, 52, was found guilty last week of first-degree theft, six counts of aggravated first-degree theft and seven counts of aggravated identity theft after a trial in Clatsop County Circuit Court.

Judge Philip Nelson said the amount she embezzled is close to the most he has ever seen as the longest serving public official in Clatsop County.

"I've seen some minor ones, candy bar money from Little League teams," Nelson said. "In your case, if it's not the most I've seen in 24 years, it's close to it."

Seaside Police arrested Freauff in October 2014 after a six-month investigation. The charges date back to January 2011. The company caught on to the theft in April 2014.

Dan Nelson, owner of Dia-

mond Heating, said Freauff started scamming his company from day one.

When she was hired as a financial manager, she was on probation from a 2009 conviction for embezzling more than \$300,000 from two title companies in the Portland-metro area.

Her probation officer should have stopped her from being hired, but she fraudulently wrote a letter to the officer that appeared to be written by Dan Nelson claiming he wanted to hire her even though she stole the money from the title companies.

Nelson never wrote the letter, and wished the probation officer would have followed up with him to confirm. He said he was unaware of her criminal past.

Freauff's crimes were discovered by an accountant who was updating the company's financial records. The accountant asked for passwords Freauff had to get into the records. Freauff never shared the passwords and quit days later.

For more than three years, Freauff used the company's ATM



Deana Lynn Freauff

'She is a predator. She is a career criminal. And this is the kind of case that does deserve the maximum.'

Prosecutor Beau Peterson

card to take out thousands of dollars for clothing, food, her cable bill, her father's car payments and furniture.

She spent nearly \$100,000 of the stolen money gambling at Spirit Mountain Casino in Grand Ronde and Palace Casino in La Center, Washington.

Prosecutor Beau Peterson said the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde voluntarily assisted in the case by providing Freauff's gambling records from Spirit Mountain. Tribes are under no obligation to assist in criminal cases, Peterson said, but the Grand Ronde's help was instrumental.

Before the judge sentenced Freauff to 30 years, Peterson asked for the maximum of 42 years.

"Not everybody deserves a maximum sentence, but some people do," Peterson said. "She is a predator. She is a career criminal. And this is the kind of case that does deserve the maximum."

Freauff's defense lawyer James von Boeckmann described his client as having a good upbringing. She joined the Peace Corps, and returned to take her first financial job at U.S. Bank. What became her Achilles' heel, von Boeckmann said, was an emerging gambling addiction.

"Gambling was the trigger that led to her first-ever criminal behavior," he said.

Freauff spoke at the sentencing hearing about how she spent her time in jail reflecting on her life and seeking treatment for her gambling addiction.

"I regret my choices and the effect those choices have had on others," she said. "Having spent the last 17 months in jail, I'm a different person."

She is ordered to pay back \$214,256 in restitution.

Although not physical harm, Peterson said, aggravated theft cases cause harm to those involved that is just as lasting. Diamond Heating is still negotiating with the IRS over back taxes.

Nelson, whose company has been in business for 27 years, said Freauff's punishment is a protection for the rest of the community.

"The devil comes to steal, kill and destroy. This woman is the devil, reincarnated," he said.



KATHERINE LACAZE/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

Chris Anderson, Kate Feddersen and Angie Whitcomb volunteer March 5 for the monthly Treasure the Beach cleanup, organized by the Beach Drive Buccaneers, Seaside Downtown Development Association and Seaside Visitors Bureau and supported by SOLVE.

Beach cleanup

Beach from Page 1A

on SOLVE's website. People can register online or with beach captains at the work sites the day of the event, Boyle said.

Group takes lead

SOLVE's semi-annual events greatly benefit Seaside's beach, but an abundance of trash still was accumulating in between the events. About 11 years ago, after Fourth of July weekend, which traditionally sees Seaside's beach getting trashed, the Beach Drive Buccaneers formed as an informal group to address the problem and make a difference.

Members of SDDA also "were concerned about the trash on the beach," and the organization joined forces with the Beach Drive Buccaneers for the monthly beach cleanups about three years ago, Dideum said.

The original initiative of the Beach Drive Buccaneers can't be overstated, Swenson said.

"For 11 years, they already had a good plan," she said, adding SDDA and other locals just hitched their wagons to the ongoing program. "These wonderful citizens of Seaside are what made this happen."

In addition to taking specific action to clean the beach, the monthly program also helps build awareness about the problem and the importance of participation and being conscientious to clean up after oneself.

During the March cleanup, Angie Whitcomb of Corvallis was volunteering for the cleanup with her young son.

"It's important for us to teach our kids the effect we can have on things, whether positive or negative," she said. "We wanted to help, and I wanted him to get involved in some community service."

Whitcomb and her family members had convened in Seaside from out of town for the weekend. They saw the SOLVE bags being handed out and decided to pitch in.

Asked what aspect of the community service project is most motivating, Whitcomb responded, "Everything."

"We have to keep the animals safe. And keeping the beach clean and safe for us is just as important," she said.

Velellas blow back on North Coast beaches

Juvenile hydrozoans wash up on the shores of Seaside, Cannon Beach

By Lyra Fontaine
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — Millions of bluish-purple jellies called Velella velellas have been washing ashore again on North Coast beaches, blown in by fierce western winds.

This year's population has been slightly different in that it consists mostly of juvenile Velellas, while last year they were larger, said Melissa Keyser, the Haystack Rock Awareness program coordinator.

"We're seeing little tiny ones, some of them as small as a grain of sand," Tiffany Boothe of the Seaside Aquarium said. "When we get them a little later, they've grown up more, so they're 3 to 4 inches."

The Seaside Aquarium first spotted them in early March. Beach visitors have asked the

aquarium why the beach is "stained purple."

The creatures, which are slick when stepped on, can sting to capture prey, but human skin is too thick to feel the stings. Velellas give off an odor because they are decomposing.

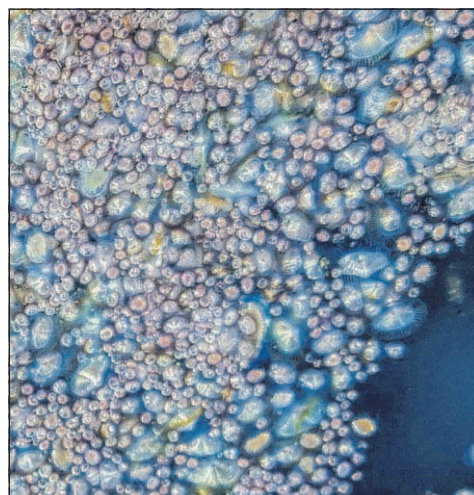
"Once they hit the beach, there's nothing we can do to save them," Boothe said.

However, she said there's no danger that the Velellas are dying off. "It's just a small portion of them," she said.

Also called "by-the-wind sailors," half of the Velella colony catches the wind one way, and the other half catches the wind the other way, Boothe said.

Keyser said Velellas wash up most years in large groups, but not every year. "It is not fully understood why they blow in some years and not in others."

Each Velella is a colony of hydroid polyps closely related to jellyfish and anemones. The translucent, triangular "sail" on their backs help the Velellas float parallel to the shoreline



TIFFANY BOOTHE/SEASIDE AQUARIUM

Velella velellas are washing up again along the North Coast.

in mild winds. However, when winds are too strong for the sails, Velellas end up on shore.

Tucker the turtle makes dramatic comeback

Olive ridley sea turtle stranded at Cannon Beach almost ready to return to the sea

By Lynda V. Mapes
Seattle Times

SEATTLE — Tucker the Turtle has had a tough time.

Tucker was far from his warm home waters off the Pacific Coast of Mexico. Perhaps he was swept off course by December storms. Or maybe domoic acid from the toxic algae bloom that bedeviled West Coast waters even into the fall last year fouled his navigational senses. Whatever the cause, he was carried on ocean currents farther and farther north — and growing colder and colder. He slowly became inert, unable to swim, his body nearly shut down.

"Basically he turned into a piece of driftwood," said Tim Kuniholm, spokesman for the Seattle Aquarium.

Finally ocean waves carried him all the way to Cannon Beach. Too cold and spent to move, Tucker was stranded, starving and helpless on the beach. But then, his fortunes changed.

Lucky for Tucker, a beachcomber found the olive ridley sea turtle washed ashore and unmoving, and reported the turtle to local authorities, who in turn called the Seattle Aquarium, the state's only recognized turtle-rehabilitation facility. The aquarium made space for Tucker, taking him in Dec. 14.

When she first saw Tucker, Lesanna Lahner, the aquarium's full-time veterinarian, wasn't sure he was even alive. She administered the standard proof of life test for a chronically cold turtle: touching him around

the eyes, to see if he would blink. Nothing. But then she pinched his tail — and he tucked it.

Tucker was named. And the rescue was on.

Tucker's internal temperature was in the mid-40s when he arrived, about half what it should be.

"He was cold stunned," Lahner said of the turtle, who is about 15 to 20 years old and weighs 75 pounds. "His organs were just in a holding pattern. When they are that cold, they are pretty much shut down. He was a particularly challenging case because he was not breathing on his own." He also had severe pneumonia.

With no ventilator suitable for an animal that breathes only twice a minute, Lahner and aquarium staff took turns pressing a bulb on a tube in his mouth to puff air into the turtle's lungs around the clock, for a week. Then Tucker finally took his first breath on his own.

Lahner and her team also slowly warmed the turtle, raising his body temperature about 2 degrees a day, by allowing him to acclimate in a room with exposure to the outside air and a heater.



ALAN BERNER/THE SEATTLE TIMES

Tucker, an olive ridley sea turtle, is being rehabilitated at the Seattle Aquarium, eating restaurant-grade anchovies, squid and shrimp. He was found in distress at chilly Cannon Beach. His natural habitat is closer to the warm waters of the Pacific off Mexico.

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