

National Datelines

Oklahoma police officer still trying to regain rank after slapping teen-ager

STILLWATER, Okla. — Former Stillwater Police Sgt. John Jerkins is still fighting to get his former rank back eight months being demoted for slapping her teen-aged daughter's boyfriend in the face.

In January, Jerkins got up in the middle of the night and found his daughter and her boyfriend having sex on the couch, he snapped, and slapped the young man in the face.

The officer was demoted and had his pay docked, despite a certain amount of understanding from the governor on down.

"I would have slapped him a lot harder," Gov. Frank Keating said.

An arbitrator is weighing Jerkins' appeal. The city, which upheld his demotion to patrolman — docking him \$705 in pay and \$350 in pension benefits every month — is considering a settlement.

"This isn't just about me," Jerkins said. "It's about parents and what their duties and responsibilities are and what they can legally do in their own home."

While prosecutors deemed it assault and battery — one specialist said the boy suffered a broken nose — they didn't pursue charges because of doubts they could win a conviction. Even the parents of the boy, who has not been identified, declined to press charges.

Jerkins' daughter later broke up on her own with the boy shortly after the incident and apologized to her parents, Jerkins said.

"All I can say is that she's a good girl and I love her dearly," he said. "She learned a lesson out of this thing."

New Nasa satellite launched Wednesday to study polar luminosity phenomena

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — NASA launched a satellite from a jet Wednesday on a mission to fly through the Northern and Southern Lights and study the luminous electromagnetic phenomena above both poles.

"Everything is going nominally, as expected," said NASA spokesman Carl Polesky.

The 400-pound Fast Auroral Snapshot Explorer was carried aboard a Pegasus rocket launched from the belly of an L-1011 jet 60 miles off the California coast. About eight minutes later, it vaulted into orbit.

Because the satellite's orbit is designed in the shape of a narrow oval, it runs the risk of passing too close to earth and burning up, NASA spokesman Bruce Buckingham said.

"Its lifetime is limited," he said.

NASA scientists hope the satellite can remain in orbit as long as five years, but said they would be satisfied with much less.

"If we get one year out of it, then it's a success for us," Buckingham said.

Wyoming Democratic Senate winner easily beats space tower advocate

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — Former Secretary of State Kathy Karpan, who now challenges Republican Mike Enzi for Wyoming's Senate seat, recently won the state's Democratic Senate primary by a 6-to-1 margin.

Karpan had an easy time winning the race, being declared the winner soon after the polls closed. She received 86 percent of the vote, while her only rival, Mickey Kalinay, received 14 percent.

Kalinay's sole campaign issue was advocating the construction of a 22,000-mile tower reaching into space.

Karpan praised Kalinay for running.

"It was just democracy in action for a guy who's got an issue and gets out there and makes a point," she said.

Dole's public image occasionally affected by World War II injury

PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE has found ways to deal with crippling wounds.

DETROIT — It was a picture-perfect campaign moment: Bob Dole, sitting with a gaggle of school children at his feet, nodding along as parents praised his education record. Until one of the fidgety boys tapped Dole's knee, asked for an autograph and started the other kids scrambling for scrap paper.

Dole clumsily balanced papers on his knee to write, then held an uncapped marker in his mouth to pass back the signed scraps.

With only limited use of one arm, autographs don't come gracefully for the Republican presidential candidate. Some situations can be near-calamitous.

At a Fourth of July parade outside Chicago, a man thrust his toddler at Dole, who buckled at the knees and nearly dropped the child before a Secret Service agent rushed behind him to support the weight.

"I'm not supposed to lift anything real heavy with my left arm," he later explained. "I don't even do suitcases or things like that."

Dole eyes with envy footage of rival President Clinton tossing the first pitch on baseball's opening day, or zipping through a crowd shaking hands two at a time.

Dole said he did not feel handicapped, though.

"It just takes a little longer and there are some things you can't do," he said.

It was in Italy in World War II that Dole, then a 21-year-old Army lieutenant, was hit by an enemy shell. It shattered his right shoulder, fractured his neck and spine, and left him hospitalized for 39 months.

His recovery — learning to walk again and dress himself, exhaustively pulling at homemade weights to force his left arm to work — has become campaign lore, though Dole and his staff once were loathe to speak of it.

"It's sort of a two-edged sword," Dole said of his new, often awkward openness — a campaign strategy meant to show voters the candidate's human, heroic side.

His right arm useless, Dole learned to write left-handed despite having limited sensation in those fingers. He typically signs autographs with personal aide Mike Glassner holding out a thick stack of folders like a portable desk.

It can be painstakingly slow, but he rarely demurs — except when asked to sign an American flag or the front of a young lady's T-shirt. He's been known to hand back autographed campaign posters with an apology: "I don't write so good."

"About the first time somebody asks for an autograph, that starts a stampede," Dole said. "You kind of hold your breath and think 'How am I going to get all the way through?'"

Getting through can take elaborate choreography. In staging campaign rallies, aides must plot Dole's path so that when he leaves the platform — down stairs specially equipped with left-hand railings — he can angle along the rope line of supporters from left to right, his

right shoulder faced away from the reaching crowd.

As he worked an enthusiastic Miami gathering recently, Florida Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen tugged at his right arm, trying to pull him into the frame of a supporter's waiting camera. Glassner, Dole's omnipresent aide, quickly swatted her hand away as the congresswoman glared.

Secret Service agents share duty pushing away the arms that naturally clap Dole's shoulder while posing for pictures.

"You have to do it in a way that you don't offend anyone because they just don't know," Dole said. A shoulder pad in his suits masks the injury and he constantly grips a pen in his right hand — "a barrier," he calls it — to warn off hand-shakers.

Campaign strategy aside, whenever a curious supporter asks why Dole doesn't shake with his right, he replies casually, "Oh, I've just been shaking a lot of hands today."

He's had to turn down Little League invitations because a baseball, for Dole, is both difficult to pitch and awkward to sign. He must sit down, grip it between his knees and leverage his arm against his thigh.

When it came time to launch a book-signing promotion for his updated autobiography, Dole took three hours one day to pre-sign 700 adhesive labels so as not to hold up the lines he anticipated at book stores.

"You know, I have a very short name," he joked. "If I were Nelson Rockefeller, I'd be in trouble."

Geologist gives details of now-famous meteorite's discovery in Antarctica

WASHINGTON — Roberta Score knew the rock was extraordinary when she spotted it on an ice field among the Allan Hills of Antarctica.

But she didn't consider that it could be a messenger of life from Mars.

"It was just lying on the surface," Score said. "I always thought that rock was special."

It has taken almost 12 years for science to show just how special that rock is. Known as Allan Hills 84001, the potato-sized specimen is the Mars meteorite that NASA researchers believe may contain evidence of ancient Martian life.

Scientists around the world are now seeking pieces of the meteorite for study, hoping to prove or disprove the presence of life.

But Score said the day she found

the rock, Dec. 27, 1984, the most striking thing about it was its size and color.

Score, a geologist who works under contract with the Antarctic program of the National Science Foundation, was on her first expedition to the South Polar continent. She was part of a team of seven that was cruising on snowmobiles among the Allan Hills looking for meteorites.

At the time, Score said, she was awe-struck at the vast field of featureless, blue ice.

"There was pure ice with no rocks around," she recalls. "Anything that you found in this particular ice field was a meteorite."

In one area, there were 15-foot-high pinnacles of ice, carved by the dry polar winds from ice that was thousands and thousands of years old.

"They are like frozen waves or ice sculptures," Score said. "We were just fascinated."

Just as they were leaving the pinnacle area, her eye captured a spot of color. It was the rock that is so famous now.

The National Science Foundation meteorite exploration program collects hundreds of meteorites each season from the Antarctica. Many, like Allan Hills 84001, have lain untouched in the ice for tens of thousands of years.

Ralph Harvey, a Case Western Reserve University geologist and leader of the annual search for meteorites, said that the Antarctic is an ideal place to look for rocks falling from space.

"If you wanted to find things that fall from the sky, you need to lay a great big white sheet and then watch it for a while," he said.

Scottsbluff hospital saves life of chimp

SCOTTSBLUFF — There was a strange patient in surgery at Regional West Medical Center: hospital staff helped to save a chimpanzee with a lung problem.

Hospital staff did the surgery free for the 36-year-old chimp named Pani on Sunday at the medical center because it had the \$50,000 in equipment needed for the operation.

Surgical nurses Julie McDonald and Christy Jay said they treated the surgery as they would any other.

"It was just like a furry small person," Jay said.

The chimp had been near death at the Riverside Zoo before the surgery. Zoo Director Caroline Meek said Pani had been ill for two weeks and antibiotics didn't work. Chest X-rays proved inconclusive until Meek brought them to Pat Eastman in the hospital's radiological department. Eastman immediately identified a pneumothorax, or collapsed lung.

When a chest tube could not inflate the lung

enough, hospital staff offered to perform the surgery needed to re-inflate and repair the area in the right lung where air sacs had ruptured. The hospital performed the procedure free of charge and all doctors and surgical staff donated their time.

Dr. Tom White, who performed the surgery with Dr. Lloyd Westerbuhr, said the congenital defect in Pani's lung had created a leak in the top of the lung. Doctors used a small scope inserted in the chimp's chest to cut and staple the damaged portion of the lung and seal the leak.

The relatively new procedure has been used only five or six times on humans at Regional West, White said, so it probably hasn't been used much on chimpanzees. He said the chimp's anatomy is almost identical to a human chest.

Linda Lund, operating room supervisor, said there was no other surgery scheduled for Sunday afternoon and there was no disruption at the hospital.

ON THE COVER

Photo of Broyhill Fountain and the Nebraska Union Plaza by Marni Speck

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