

Traffic stops result in 3 marijuana seizures

By Michelle Starr
Staff writer

The Nebraska State Patrol had a drug-filled weekend.

Troopers seized 746 lbs. of marijuana along Interstate 80 and made four arrests in three different traffic stops, said Terri Teuber, press secretary of the Nebraska State Patrol.

This weekend was not significant when compared with any other weekend, Teuber said. Some weekends there are a lot of arrests, and others pass without incident.

She said the drug seizures show that the training the State Patrol receives is paying off.

State Patrol Col. Tom Nesbitt agreed in a statement.

"These stops might never have gone beyond traffic violations if not for some very alert troopers," he said.

The first instance was at 10:37 p.m. on Friday when officers pulled over an eastbound vehicle with Illinois license plates. The vehicle was driving on the interstate's shoulder 14 miles east of the Lexington interchange.

A K-9 unit alerted officers to 374 lbs. of marijuana located in a closet and under a bed inside a recreational vehicle.

Two men, Daryl Grauman, 22, and

Troy Martin, 23, both from Illinois were arrested for possession with the intent to deliver. The second instance involved a man trying to hide drugs in a false fuel tank on Saturday afternoon.

Roy Padecky, 40, of Blue Island, Ill., was pulled over for speeding eastbound on Interstate 80 near the Highway 77 interchange.

A K-9 unit alerted officers to the phony tank filled with 72 lbs. of marijuana, Teuber said.

Padecky was arrested for possession with the intent to deliver. In the third seizure troopers pulled someone over for speeding, but this time it was eastbound on Interstate 80 east of Lexington on Sunday.

Inside a U-Haul, officers found 300 lbs. of marijuana packed inside boxes in the trunk.

Edward Yunkers, 59, of Circle Pine, Minn., was arrested for possession with the intent to deliver, Teuber said.

Teuber said the State Patrol has had single-stop incidents with the same amount of marijuana as all three offenses this weekend combined.

"The scary thing is that even with nearly a thousand pounds of marijuana in one weekend, we still believe we are only scratching the surface when it comes to the amount of illegal drugs being transported along interstate 80," Nesbitt said.

missing.

The suspects were described by police as two boys in their early teens wearing black leather jackets. No arrests have been made.

Police: Woman harassed on trail

A 72-year-old woman out for a morning walk on the bike trail at 17th and Highway 2 was reportedly harassed by a man exposing himself, police said.

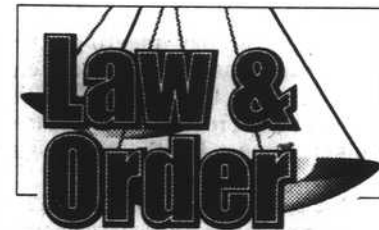
Police received a call at 9:49 a.m. Monday of the indecent exposure, Finnell said.

The woman was walking on the bike trail when a man began following her. She slowed down, and he went in front of her, Finnell said. She said he pulled down his pants and revealed his penis while grabbing it and mumbling something to the woman.

The suspect was described as a man in his late teens wearing a black Nike suit. He was said to be between 5-foot-10 and 6 feet with a lean build and blond hair.

After the incident, the man ran away, and the woman called the police. No arrests have been made yet, Finnell said.

Compiled by staff writer Derek Lippincott



Suspects nabbed in burglary

After seeing two men carrying items out of a house, neighbors of a home at 911 Peach St. notified police at 10:50 a.m. on Monday of a possible burglary.

The neighbors gave a description of the car that the suspects drove away in and its license plates. The car matched one stolen on Feb. 4, Lincoln Police Ofc. Katherine Finnell said.

Police found the suspects in the stolen car near 11th and Washington streets, but the men saw the officers and attempted to drive away.

The suspects drove down an alley, hit a car and ran away on foot.

Police found items in the car stolen from the house valuing \$965, including a television, videocassette recorder, two radios, a flashlight and compact discs.

Finnell said six shotguns and two rifles stolen from the house are still

Seizure ruled unlawful

By Michelle Starr
Staff writer

Tuesday's Nebraska Supreme Court decision was the second in a month that ruled State Patrol troopers, despite finding drugs during traffic stops, did not obtain the evidence lawfully.

The court said officers need more grounds than a suspect's nervous actions to search a vehicle for drugs during a traffic violation and that nervousness should be treated with caution as a basis for search and seizure.

Terri Teuber, press secretary for the State Patrol, said officers have to make quick decisions on the scene and have been successful at the search and seizure of drugs.

But, the court also has the right to review officers' actions during a drug seizure, she said.

On Tuesday, the Nebraska Court of Appeals ruled that a 1996 seizure of 28½ pounds of marijuana found in the trunk of a rental car driven by Robert McGinnis of Seattle was seized unlawfully.

McGinnis' car was stopped April 12, 1996, for following a car too closely,

and he was given a warning, reports said.

After the traffic stop was complete, McGinnis should have been free to go and not held just because State Patrol Trooper Andy Allen said McGinnis appeared nervous, the court said.

The opinion stated Allen was also suspicious of McGinnis' travel plans of driving across the country from San Francisco to New York, when he could have flown, and recently had flown from Seattle to San Francisco. He rented the car in San Francisco.

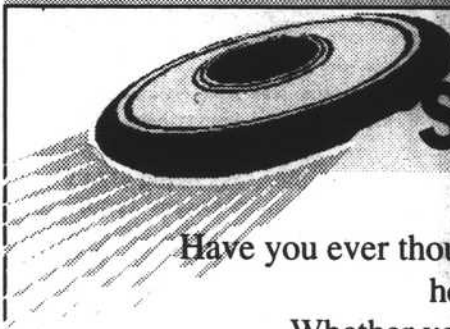
The court said "it is not a criminal conduct to desire to drive across the United States."

McGinnis was charged with two counts of possession of marijuana and sentenced in April 1999 to serve a combined sentence of about two to four years, the opinion said.

The court released a similar opinion Jan. 21, 2000, concerning an Aug. 27, 1997, search and seizure of 229 pounds of marijuana on Interstate 80 near Grand Island.

In Tuesday's decision, the state Supreme Court directed the District Court to dismiss the case.

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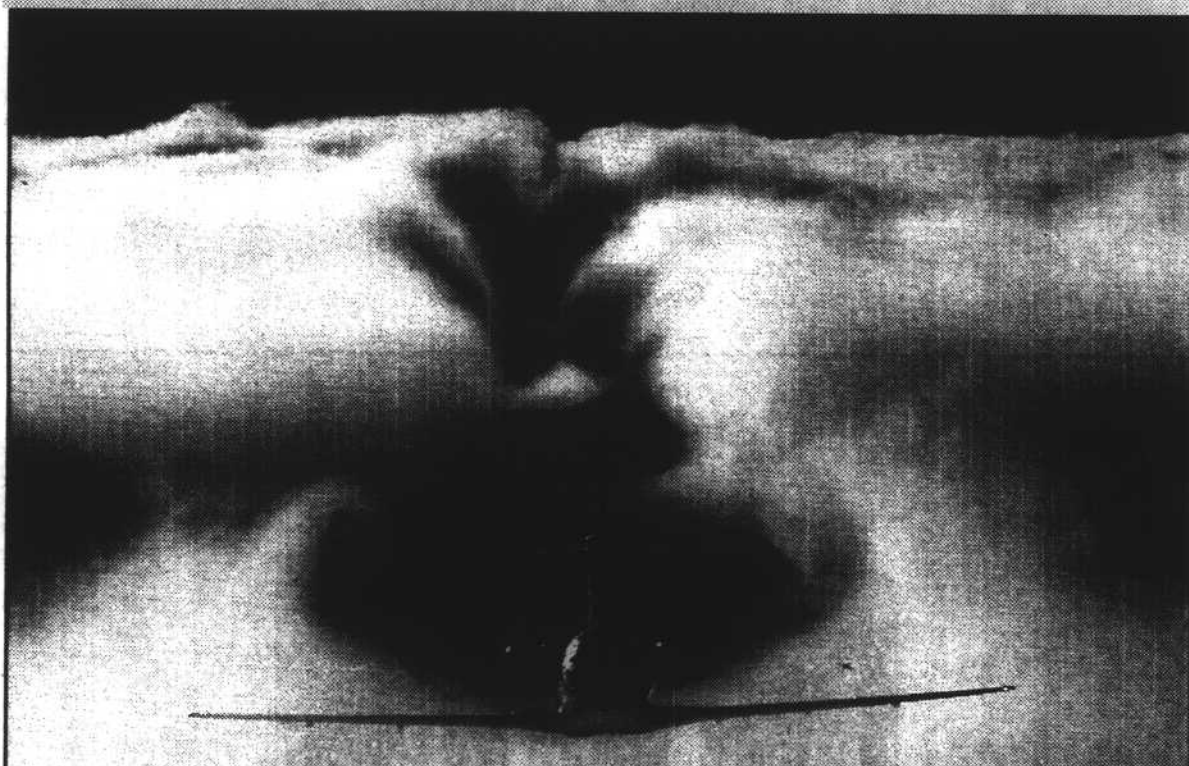
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