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Montana

Friday,
 June 11, 2004

Dasen pleads not guilty to four felonies

June trial date
 pushed back
 with addition
 of new charges

By MICHAEL JAMISON
 of the Missoulian

KALISPELL — A Kalispell businessman pleaded not guilty Thursday to four prostitution-related felonies, including accusations he paid to have sex with juveniles.

If convicted on all counts, Richard Arnold Dasen Sr. could face 310 years in prison.

Dasen, 62, made a brief appearance in Flathead County District Court early

The ISSUE Tracking the news **Kalispell prostitution case**

sexual abuse of children.

The rape- or sexual intercourse without consent — charge is related to allegations Dasen paid for sex with a

Thursday, entering a plea of not guilty to charges of sexual intercourse without consent, aggravated promotion of prostitution, promotion of prostitution and sexual abuse of children.



Dasen

15-year-old girl. Montana law states that children 15 and younger are not capable of giving consent for sex. That charge comes with a possible 100 years in prison.

The promotion of prostitution charge relates to allegations that Dasen paid for sex with at least 15 adult women who "were not prostitutes

prior to meeting Dasen nor have they engaged in prostitution with anyone other than Dasen," according to charging documents. He faces a potential 10 years on that count.

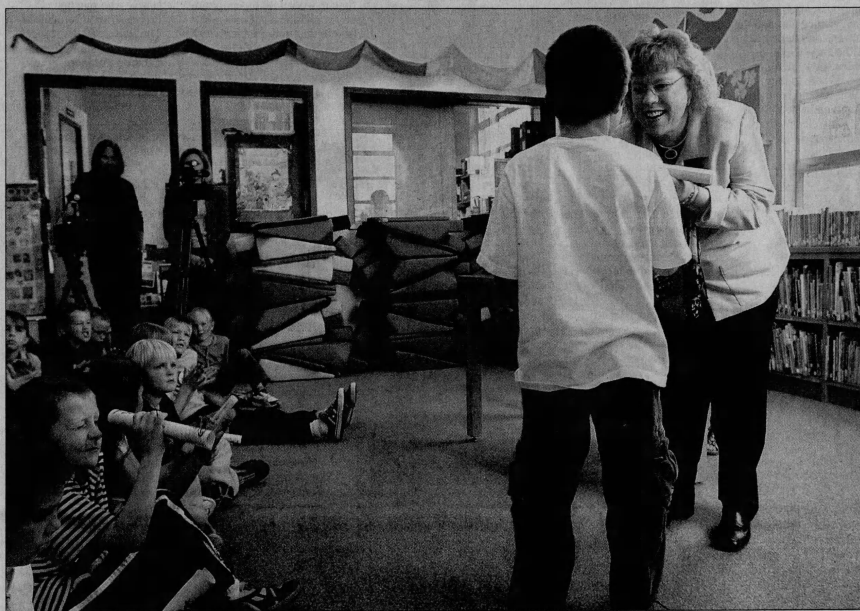
The aggravated promotion of prostitution charge involves Dasen allegedly having sex for hire with five juvenile girls, and carries a possible 100 years in prison.

And the fourth felony count,

See **DASEN**, Page B6

'This is a tribute to the Target Range School for their instruction and partnership with parents.'

— Linda McCulloch, state superintendent of public instruction



Jared Mackey, a Target Range School first-grader, receives a "Passport to Reading" certificate from state Superintendent of Public Instruction Linda McCulloch on Thursday at the school. All of the school's first-graders received the award due to their reading skills, which their teachers attribute to a new research-based reading program.

Bull's eye

Target Range celebrates 'astonishing' success of first-grade reading program

By DARYL GADBOW
 of the Missoulian

In her 35 years of teaching, Pam McAtee says this is the first time the entire first-grade class at Missoula's Target Range School finished the school year reading at or above their grade level.

In honor of their accomplishment, the school's 43 first-grade students received a special award from the state's top education official at a ceremony Thursday.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Linda McCulloch visited Target Range to present each first-grader with a "Passport to Reading" certificate.

"Reading gives children a

foundation for future success," said McCulloch, a teacher and former librarian at Bonner School. "I'm thrilled to be able to recognize these Missoula first-graders for reading so well. And this is a tribute to the Target Range School for their instruction and partnership with parents."

McCulloch also presented each student with an application for a library card so they can practice their new skills all summer.

Target Range's first-grade teachers — McAtee, Ginni McHugh and Holly Raser — attributed the success of their pupils this year to a new research-based reading program that emphasizes practice and phonics — sounding out words.

"It's a return to basics," said Raser. "But it's based on new research and teaching methods."

Raser specialized in teaching reading to students with reading disabilities. She had 10 first-graders in her class this year, who all ended up reading at least at first-grade level, and keeping pace with their classmates.

Raser credits the new research-based teaching techniques.

"It's astonishing," she said. Raser's position was funded this year under the federal Title I program, which provides additional resources to schools to enhance services for at-risk students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. However, a new formula for the

program will cut nearly all the funds for Target Range next year.

According to the new Title I funding formula, Raser said, Target Range came up one child short of qualifying.

The lost Title I funds amount to about \$48,000, according to Raser, a Title I teacher for 10 years. That would mean that her position as a first-grade reading teacher would be eliminated.

But a group of Target Range parents is coming to her rescue.

The school's Dollar Club, made up of parent volunteers, is raising money to keep the Title I reading program alive.

See **READING**, Page B2

Lake Mary Ronan Subdivision project dealt another blow

Board rejects development

By JOHN STROMMES
 of the Missoulian

POLSON — The Lake County Planning Board late Wednesday again denied a contentious proposal for a major subdivision on the shore of Lake Mary Ronan.

In April, denial was recommended by the county's planning staff. This time, the board's denial came despite the planning staff's recommendation for approval.

Dave DeGrandpre, Lake County's planning director, told the planning board at Wednesday's meeting that he changed his mind and agreed to approve the proposal after developer Mike Maddy of Polson made major changes to the original proposal, and after the county's planning staff added several additional conditions to which Maddy was expected to agree.

But the concessions by Maddy did not address the board's main concern: The impact the 26 new homes (down from 28 in the original plan) and their individual wells and septic systems will have on the lake's water quality.

The lake's water quality already is considered "impaired" by state and federal officials.

See **SUBDIVISION**, Page B2

If you're interested

The final decision on the Northridge subdivision at Lake Mary Ronan will be made by the Lake County Commission at a meeting at 2 p.m. Tuesday in the Lake County Courthouse in Polson.

Missoula teen gets probation for pellet-gun assault charge

By ERICKA SCHENCK SMITH
 of the Missoulian

A 15-year-old boy who pulled a pellet gun on several Loyola Sacred Heart High School students during an altercation last month plans to move to Arizona, where he will remain on probation until his 18th birthday, his attorney said Thursday.

Aaron Rolston admitted to a single felony count of assault with a weapon during a court appearance Wednesday. He was charged as a juvenile.

Although the prosecution and defense recommended a six-month probationary sentence, attorney Paul Ryan said District Judge John Harkin chose a longer sentence to ensure Rolston stays out of trouble.

Rolston, a freshman at Hellegate High School, was arrested May 21, after a clash between two groups of local high school students outside Loyola. Police said Rolston and two other boys went to a house on Edith Street, picked up the gun and returned to the school, where Rolston waved the gun at several Loyola students from an area just off campus.

Ryan said Thursday that Rolston may have been defending himself, but shouldn't have had a gun.

"These kids had beat him up two days before and were coming after him again," Ryan said.

Conference focuses on helping disabled beyond school

If you're interested

The Region V Comprehensive System of Personnel Development conference "Sharing the Success: Transition Ideas that Work" will be held Monday and Tuesday at the University of Montana's University Center. Registration is available on site or online at www.cspd.net. For more information, contact Nancy Marks at admin@cspd.net or 728-2400, Ext. 5036.

Two-day event to promote assistance programs for housing, jobs and more

By JANE RIDER
 of the Missoulian

When a person with special needs is a child, the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act guarantees him or her an education and a range of other services.

But when that child becomes an adult, the entitlement disappears. The new young adult and his or her family now must learn how to navigate a new

system of state and federal programs that often are overloaded with requests and underfunded. Services are rationed and those in greatest crisis receive support first.

On Monday, the state's Region V Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, or CSPD, will host a two-day conference designed to provide educators, families and people with disabilities with information about services and partnerships in the areas of housing, employment and education to assist students with special needs who are transitioning out of high school.

The conference, titled "Sharing the Success: Transition Ideas that Work," aims to do what the title says — share success stories from across the region and state with those who can benefit from them the most. The event will be held at the University of Montana's University Center and is sponsored by CSPD, the Rural Institute Transition Projects, the Office of Public Instruction and IDEA-PTA.

The CSPD for Region V serves seven counties in western Montana — Lincoln, Flathead, Sanders, Lake, Mineral, Missoula and Ravalli. It ensures personnel is adequately trained and also tackles recruitment, retention, training and shortage issues.

See **CONFERENCE**, Page B2

FROM PAGE B1

Dasen

Continued

sexual abuse of children, centers on allegations Dasen "knowingly photographed, filmed or recorded children engaged in sexual conduct." Charging documents filed in District Court indicate images found on Dasen's computer show at least two local juveniles engaged in sexual acts, adding that "the pictures appear to have been taken in Dasen's residence."

One of the girls has said Dasen took the pictures himself. That crime also comes with a potential 100-year sentence.

"That's a lot of life sentences," Kalispell Chief of Police Frank Garner said after the charges were filed. "And I suspect this investigation is nowhere near over."

Garner's investigation began two years ago, when a tipster told police "that a wealthy businessman named 'Dick' frequently paid to have sex with younger females."

Police records show that, in following up the tip, investigators spent more than a year interviewing witnesses and collecting evidence.

In February, Dasen was arrested in a local hotel during a sting operation by Kalispell police. Police records portray Dasen

as a wealthy businessman who used his various financial institutions, including Christian Financial Counseling, to make loans to young women, many of them poor methamphetamine addicts. When they could not repay those loans, documents allege, Dasen offered prostitution as an option.

According to court records, "when Dasen was not satisfied with the sexual services that he was receiving, it was common for Dasen to arrange for repossession of vehicles that he has purchased or funded for these females, through the finance company."

Following his arrest, police say Dasen admitted to paying in excess of \$1 million for sex with

dozens of women over the past several years.

Court records say Dasen paid about \$1,000 per sexual encounter, with some of the young women receiving more than \$100,000.

Dasen, who is free on \$50,000 bond, also initially faced a misdemeanor solicitation of prostitution charge, but that count was dropped when the felony charges began stacking up.

And more felonies could still be coming; police have said detective work continues, including investigation into possible fraud charges if Dasen is found to have misused funds from his businesses.

Dasen's trial was set to begin

June 14, but the recent addition of three felonies to the initial rape charge has forced prosecutors to delay. No new trial date has been set.

In addition to the counts against Dasen, several women and girls have been charged with prostitution in relation to their alleged involvement with Dasen. One has pleaded guilty and was fined \$250 in Kalispell City Court.

Police also have charged Kimberly Hope Neise, 23, with

helping Dasen find teenage girls, including underage girls. Neise faces 10 years in prison on two counts of promoting prostitution.

Neither Dasen nor his attorney, George Best, have commented on the allegations. Dasen's home phone has been disconnected, and his attorney has declined to speak publicly about the charges.

Reporter Michael Jamison can be reached at 1-800-366-7186 or at mjamison@missoulian.com

MONTANA

UM student pleads guilty in dorm-trespass case

A University of Montana student has a final, court-ordered assignment to complete this summer — a 1,000-word essay about why it was wrong to enter a female student's dorm room and photograph her as she slept in her underwear.

In the essay, part of a plea agreement in which Daniel Lamborn, Dyer III admitted to two misdemeanor charges, he

must also explain why the victim should be violated by what he did, how he'll change his future behavior and what he's learned.

In a brief court appearance Thursday, Dyer pleaded guilty to criminal trespass and surreptitiously photographing the young woman. In addition to the essay, he was given six-month suspended jail sentences

for each count and a total of \$500 in fines. He must also get a chemical dependency treatment and stay away from drugs, alcohol and bars.

Dyer took the photos with his cell phone on the night of April 14, later showing them to several people, according to an affidavit filed in Justice Court. Although he initially told the young woman he hadn't

photographed her, he later admitted to University police that he had taken the pictures as a joke.

Although Dyer told police the young woman had asked him to check on her that night because she'd been drinking, the affidavit said she denied allowing him into her room.

Ericka Schenck Smith, Missoulian

Former Polson hospital employee sentenced for rape

POLSON (AP) — A former employee of Shodair Children's Hospital was sentenced Wednesday to 15 years in prison for having a sexual relationship with a 15-year-old female patient.

Harry Miller, 38, of Helena pleaded guilty in March to one count of rape and one count of unlawful transactions with a

minor for the ongoing relationship.

Miller worked for nine years as a mental health technician at the hospital.

According to court documents, he admitted in court to having sex with the girl and buying her alcohol in late 2002 and 2003.

Miller sobbed loudly throughout his sentencing, apologizing for his actions before his prison term was handed down.

"I should have been a positive influence instead of a deterrent," he said.

Similar charges involving the victim were dismissed in Lewis

and Clark County due to lack of evidence, according to testimony in court Thursday.

Court documents indicate the 15-year-old girl received treatment in a locked unit at the hospital from October 2002 to January 2003, and Miller was assigned to her case soon afterward.

BRIEFS

Schweitzer, Brown to debate at newspaper convention

GREAT FALLS — The first debate between gubernatorial candidates Brian Schweitzer and Bob Brown is scheduled for Friday as part of the Montana Newspaper Association convention here.

The face-off between the newly nominated Democratic and Republican candidates is set for 2 p.m. at the Heritage Inn. A debate between incumbent Republican U.S. Rep. Denny Rehberg and Democratic challenger Tracy Velazquez is planned for 2 p.m. Saturday. Both events are open to the public.

The convention also will feature an address at noon Saturday by Tom Curley, president and CEO of the Associated Press.

During the convention, former Hardin Tribune-Herald Publisher Helen Peterson will be inducted into the Montana Newspaper Hall of Fame. Peterson was the association's first president.

The association's Master Editor/Publisher awards will go to Terry Dwyer, retired Great Falls Tribune managing editor, and Marc and Ginny Wilson, former owners of the Bigfork Eagle.

Associated Press

Expense estimates soar for new Kalispell school

KALISPELL — Rising construction costs may push the price of a planned high school beyond the school district's borrowing power, officials say. Members of District 5's board took a look at preliminary costs at Tuesday's meeting, where estimates for building a second high school in fall 2007 were put at \$36.2 million. Renovations at Flathead High School were estimated at \$5.5 million. The projects' combined total would top the district's bonding total capacity of \$39.9 million.

Board members and school architects say costs are preliminary and would change before any proposal to voters. Refined cost estimates will be presented to the board July 19.

On June 21, the board plans to look at cost estimates for converting Kalispell Junior High to a middle school. That project would be funded from the elementary district budget which has a different bonding capacity.

The board has an Aug. 1

deadline for submitting ballot information to county officials if they plan to seek voter approval for the projects in the November election.

Associated Press

Sidney triplets each land presidential scholarships

BOZEMAN — Three Sidney brothers have become the first set of triplets to win Montana State's Presidential Scholarship, the highest academic scholarship for incoming freshmen.

Aaron, Brock and Jared Hedegaard were among 13 state high school seniors to receive the honor. Each brother won a renewable tuition waiver plus \$2,000 annually. The Hedegaards said the scholarships, the good reputation of Montana State's engineering programs and staying close to home were all reasons they chose to go to school in Bozeman.

Aaron Hedegaard is a National Merit Scholar and co-vice president who plans to major in chemical engineering. He, along with Jared, works at Sidney's U.S. Department of Agriculture Research Center. Brock Hedegaard, also a National Merit Scholar and co-vice president, wants to study civil engineering. He works as a county engineer's assistant, drafting bridges and maps and occasionally surveying. Jared Hedegaard was salutatorian, and is planning to study computer science. He was a member of Sidney's football and track teams.

Nancy Hedegaard, mother of the new MSU students, said she and her husband, Tom, merely told their sons to do their best in school. Neither parent graduated from college.

Associated Press

McGrath promises tougher drunken-driving legislation

BUTTE — Attorney General Mike McGrath is promising tougher drunken-driving laws in the next legislative session.

McGrath, speaking this week at an alcohol awareness class, said he'll push for a law banning open containers of alcohol in vehicles.

McGrath noted that lawmakers have already toughened some laws, including lowering the legal threshold of intoxication from 0.10 to 0.08 blood content. Second-time offenders may

now have vehicles confiscated and four-time offenders face a felony charge.

Stilly, McGrath said the state is lagging behind others. He noted that Mothers Against Drunk Driving recently gave Montana a grade of F for its drunken driving laws.

Associated Press

Horizon to cut air fares in effort to boost business

GREAT FALLS — Horizon Airlines says it plans to lower fares and eliminate weekend-stay restrictions in an effort to boost business travel from Montana and increase air travel overall.

Horizon offers Montana travelers the strongest link to Seattle, Portland, Ore., and other spots in the Northwest.

The Seattle-based air carrier says all its fares from Montana cities will require no more than an one-night minimum stay or may have no stay requirements at all. Horizon also said it has eliminated fuel surcharges.

"Fuel prices go up and go down," said Dan Russo, a Horizon spokesman. "We are taking the long view in trying to increase travel from Montana."

The fare restructuring covers flights from Great Falls, Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Helena, Kalispell and Missoula. Horizon is the state's third-busiest air carrier, trailing Skywest and Northwest. For the first four months of 2004, its share of the Montana air travel market was 15.9 percent, according to the Montana Aeronautics Division.

Horizon, the nation's eighth-largest regional airline, is a subsidiary of Alaska Air Group Inc. The airline began flying to Montana in 1986.

Associated Press

Former Great Falls officer sentenced for molestation

GREAT FALLS — Former police officer Jeffrey D. Cathel was sentenced Tuesday to 40 years in prison for having sexual relations with children.

With nine of those years suspended on each of two counts, and the sentences running concurrently, Cathel, 42, would be eligible for parole in about eight years if he has completed court-ordered sex-offender treatment.

"I'm deeply sorry" for the pain caused to the victims and my family, Cathel said from the stand.

District Judge Kenneth Neill said Cathel was in a position of authority and control when he took advantage of the children and, "The seriousness of the offenses merits serious consequences."


As a result of a plea agreement, two charges of abusing two other underage girls were dropped.

Neill also designated Cathel a Level 2 sex offender, which means he is deemed at a moderate risk to reoffend, ordered him to pay \$8,500 in restitution and gave him credit for 204 days served.

The 13-year Great Falls Police Department veteran originally was charged with four counts of molesting four girls over a five-year period, from May 1998 through May 2003. One was 10 and two were teens when the abuse allegedly began; he is also the father of one of the girl's 5-year-old son.

Cathel was fired Nov. 5, the day he was charged with having sex with the first two girls. He was free on \$25,000 bail when he fled the state. He was arrested Nov. 18 in a Tempe, Ariz., motel room.

Associated Press

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