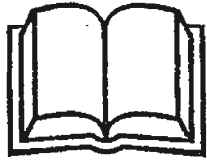



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Sept. 1: Nelson & Stipp, Hoopeston

Lourdine Osborne editor

just the facts

Susan Comstock ad manager

Monday, Aug. 29, 1994

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★ **Police News** ★

A boy's black John Deere bicycle with a yellow seat was found Thursday in the alley behind 525 E. Main. The bicycle was later claimed by Brian Hollen.

Warren J. Watkins, 19, of 816 E. Seminary, was arrested at 9:50 p.m. Thursday, charged with possession of cannabis under 2.5 grams, driving while license suspended and operation of an uninsured motor vehicle. Watkins was arrested after police allegedly saw him spinning his tires at the intersection of East Main and South Market. He was released on \$100 cash bond.

Wanda J. Kitchens, 919 W. Penn, reported Friday that someone took a video cassette recorder from her residence.

Steve A. Miller, 20, of 512 E. Thompson, was arrested at 10:30 a.m. Friday, charged with aggravated assault and assault on a complain from Shannon J. Hardy of the same address. Miller was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville.

Richard L. Giles, 402 W. Maple, reported Friday that someone took a lawn mower from his garage.

Steve Highfill, 827 E. Penn, reported Friday that someone damaged a wicker rocker, wooden hummingbird and wicker straight back chair at his residence. The windshield wiper of his car was also broken.

No tickets or injuries were reported in an accident at 5:30 p.m. Friday. A 1988 Chevrolet driven by Barbara Sanford, 204 N. Chicago, Rossville, backed into a parked 1992 Ford Mustang owned by Daniel Reed, 931 Birch Lane.

Mary Koonce, of 917 W. Penn, reported Friday that someone entered her mother's apartment. #4

Parkview Court, and took a 40-channel scanner.

Police are investigating a hit-and-run accident reported Saturday. An unidentified vehicle struck four posts and the fence at McFerren Park, then left the scene.

Three boys, ages 15, 14 and 13, were charged with curfew violation Saturday. Police said the boys were knocking on windows in the 800 block of East Penn at 1 a.m. The boys were released to their parents on notices to appear.

A key ring was found Saturday on Penn Street in front of John Greer Grade School. The owner claimed it Sunday at the police station.

Stanley Garrison, 851 E. Seminary, reported Sunday that his daughter's 20" bicycle was stolen from his residence. The bicycle is pink with a pink seat and handle bars.

Obituaries

HALL - George Junior Hall, 58, of Fort Myers, Fla., formerly of Hoopeston, died at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 25, 1994, at home. Funeral services will be at 2 p.m. today at the Hamilton-Orr Funeral Home. Burial will be in Floral Hill Cemetery. Visitation was held Sunday at the funeral home. Memorial contributions may be made to Hope Hospice Foundation Court, Suite 100, 8290 College Parkway, Fort Myers, Fla., 33919.

Weather

Partly sunny today. High near 80. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low near 60. Tomorrow, scattered thunderstorms. High near 79, low near 65.

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Coverage of Catron case made difficult by story's other side

Anyone who's covered news in Hoopeston for any length of time has to admit that while we may be the Sweetcorn Capital of the world, we're certainly not the Hot News Capital.

We don't have ex-football players accused of almost decapitating their ex-wives and we don't have boatloads of refugees sailing for our shores.

Once every 25 years, there's a shooting and occasionally, we have a flood to boast about.

Other than that, news coverage in these parts is pretty routine.

That may be why when "big" stories happen, media goes ga-ga.

Last week's sentencing of Dennis Catron falls in that category. It's not every day (thankfully) that a former Hoopeston city and school official gets arrested for molesting a child.

It's BIG NEWS!!!

But there's another side to covering such stories: the families left behind.

Yeah, it's BIG NEWS alright, and I guess, as such, it should be splashed across newspaper pages and given prominent air time on radio and tv.

But, I keep asking myself, what about the families?

What about the youngster who was molested?

What about Catron's family?

Keeping the story alive has to be hard on them.

I even had people ask why the media didn't identify the alleged local "stars" of a porn video the victim says he and Catron watched.

The answer is simple. There was no need to make the families of the "stars" suffer by dragging their names through the mud.

I imagine this case was also difficult for local police because everyone who investigated it knew Catron.

We can only imagine what it must have been like for them to investigate someone who had overseen their children in school, who'd served

on their city council

The police deserve an "atta boy" for their diligence in investigating the case and their professionalism in the way it was handled.

Catron's sentencing may be the end of the story. Police had tracked him to Bangkok, Thailand. Because of the cost involved, it may not be possible to bring him back.

Also, officials say, because the culture is different, Thailand officials may be loathe to go to the trouble of extraditing him, even if he is found.

Those familiar with the culture say that in Asian countries, molesting a child does not carry the stigma it does here.

And maybe that's OK.

Oh, it's always nice to see someone punished when they've done something wrong, but maybe in this case, there are worse punishments than going to prison.

As a fugitive, Catron will never be able to return to Hoopeston. As a father on the run, he'll miss major events in his family's life.

That's got to be punishing.

Catron will spend the rest of his life looking over his shoulder, wondering if he's just one step away from being picked up.

He may not be in jail, but he'll never be free.

He has lost the degree of respect, of authority, that he once had. That's a lot to lose once you've had them.

In all, maybe it's not such a bad thing that he's not here. The punishment he chose to inflict on himself is worse than what our judicial system could impose, and it's not costing taxpayers a single cent.

And, as long as he stays away, the story will die down, people will lose interest, and his loved ones can get on with their lives.

And those of us in the media can go back to covering routine news while we wait for the next big story.



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