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SUNDAY Statesman Journal

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Night of lights brightens downtown Salem



Above: Viesko Quality Concrete was the PGE Award winner for Santa's Helper Express float in the Festival of Lights Parade on Saturday. Below: DeeDee Blake danced her way down Court Street NE as a Macy's star.

Thousands watch parade procession

Dry weather encourages
more spectators
to attend annual event

By EUSTICE KIM
Statesman Journal

Doug McLean of Salem always wanted to go to the PGE Festival of Lights holiday parade, but had never made it. Rainy, cold weather seemed to be the constant deterrent.

Not this year. Bundled under blankets, McLean, 55, sat in a camping chair on Court Street NE and watched the parade, an event he considers one of the highlights of the holiday season in Salem.

"If this doesn't get you in the holiday spirit, nothing will," he said.

Crowds of people gathered downtown Saturday to watch the annual Festival of Lights parade. They lined the 3 1/2-mile parade route, cheering as marching bands, old-fashioned cars, fire trucks, floats and other vehicles decorated in lights rolled by. The parade, with the theme "Toys on Parade," drew adults and children alike, many of whom had been coming for years.

It was a tradition for Bonnie

Online

Go to StatesmanJournal.com for a photo gallery and audio slide show of the Festival of Lights parade.



Strunk's family and family friends to watch the parade together. This year, they brought with them dinner, hot chocolate, sugar cookies and popcorn in a toy wagon.

"It's a family affair," said Strunk.

Lighting the season

Hundreds of people and animals, including this dog, gathered at Riverfront Park on Saturday afternoon for the lighting of the holiday trees.



Statesman Journal

Families slipped on hot chocolate and ate cookies as they were entertained by musicians. The crowd got to test their vocal chords, too, with the singing of Christmas carols under the park pavilion.

See story, Page 1C

37, of Salem. "We look forward to it every year."

Lena Carrasco, 20, sat on a sidewalk near Court and Church streets NE with her two nieces Breanna, 1, and Allison Walker, 3. They had staked out the location — between a sign that said "TV" and the Capital

See Parade, 9A

Security slips at hospital still a problem

Several psychiatric
patients escaped
in past two years

By ALAN GUSTAFSON
Statesman Journal

Locked up in Oregon State Hospital's crowded forensic psychiatric program for the criminally insane, Gino Pugliese used pay phones to run up sports-gambling debts and to enlist conspirators to help him escape.

Contraband came to him through the mail. In one envelope addressed to Spiderman, Pugliese's nickname, he received a cell phone, \$1,000 cash and hacksaw blades, according to a state police investigative report obtained by the Statesman Journal.

Pugliese, 30, pulled off an elaborate escape plan last February, when he cut through a security fence with bolt cutters provided by a former hospital employee. After nine days on the run, he was arrested by police in Beaverton and charged with escape, attempting to elude police and possession of morphine.

Sent back to the psychiatric facility, Pugliese picked up where he left off — determined to bust out. In October, police arrested two people who drove to the hospital campus along Center Street NE in a stolen car.



Pugliese

Online

See this story at StatesmanJournal.com to read Oregon State Police reports connected to an investigation into the Feb. 14 escape of Oregon State Hospital patient Gino Pugliese.

They allegedly had cutting tools and methamphetamine.

The October incident remains under investigation. However, hospital employees and patients say the two suspects intended to help Pugliese escape.

Hospital officials recently breathed easier after Pugliese was transferred to the state prison system following his conviction on escape and drug-possession charges stemming from the February breakout.

"He was a handful," said Maynard Hammer, the hospital's interim superintendent. "That last one took some doing. I mean you bring in two persons with police records and a stolen car from Washington to try to cut a secure perimeter (fence)."

Pugliese's case sheds light on the kinds of security risks — and lapses — that crop up in the state hospital's largest and most volatile program.

In the last two years, a dozen forensic patients have escaped. Other patients have smuggled in methamphetamine, marijuana, weapons and other contraband. Still

See Prison, 9A

Juvenile crime and punishment

A generation after the U.S. decided to get tough on juvenile crime — sometimes locking up children for life — the tide may be turning.

States are rethinking juvenile sentencing laws. Some states are reconsidering life without parole for teens, while others are exploring ways to offer children a second chance.

These stories are part of a series about how some



states are reconsidering the get-tough approach to juvenile justice.

A states take a second look at prosecuting children as adults, Page 1A.

■ Teen brain may be key to understanding behavior that leads to crimes, Page 1A.

ELSEWHERE IN THE NEWS

Memorial greets shoppers at mall where 8 were killed

People returned to the Westroads Mall in Omaha, Neb., on Saturday, most to shop for the holidays but some came to grieve at the place where a young gunman killed eight people and himself three days earlier.

Inside the mall, however, the Von Maur department store where Robert Hawkins, 23, fired an AK-47 on Wednesday remained closed.

A makeshift memorial had been assembled at its inside entrance. Wreaths sat on tripods just outside the doors and a note from management said the store will reopen soon. No date was given.

Page 4A

Episcopal diocese splits over role of gays, lesbians

An Episcopal diocese in central California voted Saturday to split with the national

denomination over disagreements about the role of gays and lesbians in the church. The Fresno-based congregation is the first full diocese to secede because of a conservative-liberal rift that began decades ago and is focused on whether the Bible condemns gay relationships.

Page 8A

Beating holiday stress is only a breath away

For many people, the holiday season means stress — frenzied days spent trying to buy presents, entertain guests and spend time with family along with the daily obligations of work or life.

But experts say the six weeks from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day don't have to be that way.

To combat stress, experts give several recommendations to help harried people find balance.

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Prison

Continued from 1A

others have become entangled in romantic relationships with hospital staff members.

Most forensic patients were committed to the psychiatric facility instead of jail or prison because judges found them guilty of crimes but insane at the time. Their crimes ranged from shoplifting to murder.

Forensic wards chronically are overcrowded and currently hold about 460 patients — exceeding the budgeted capacity by about 30.

Program managers and staff juggle dual responsibilities — dispensing therapy, which often includes doses of freedom for patients granted passes for community outings, and running a safe and secure institution. It's a tough balancing act in a cramped, woefully outdated facility that is part hospital, part prison.

Citing patients' civil rights, Hammer said there's nothing to prevent troublesome patients from using phones to gamble or set up deals to get contraband.

Most forensic patients — even on maximum-security wards — have access to hallway phones.

"They have phone privileges unless there's something particular that causes them to lose them temporarily," Hammer said. "We have some patients that tend to like to dial 911 continually, and we'll often block that. But generally speaking, that's not the case."

Few patients match Puglisi's talent or zeal for poking holes in security. Hammer said. But he acknowledged some patients have similar tendencies.

"They're intelligent folks. They know the street. They know how to manipulate and organize things," he said. "They've got a lot of time, and they've got access to (phone and mail) communications. Sometimes, they keep us on our toes."

Escape details revealed

On the night of Feb. 14, Puglisi had his time in a hospital gymnasium.

Complaining that the gym was stuffy, he convinced a staff member to open a door leading to a fenced recreation area.

Puglisi took a folding chair into the enclosure, walking past a sign reading "Please Do Not Take Chairs Outside."

About 6:30 p.m., he cut through the security fence and raced to a nearby getaway van.

Details about Puglisi's escape, and the gambling bets he placed using hospital phones, emerged in state police reports recently obtained by the newspaper through a public records request.

■ A former patient identified as Flynn became acquainted with Puglisi during her stay at the psychiatric facility and played a key role in paying off his gambling debts and supplying him with contraband. Flynn told investigators that she received money from Puglisi and other patients in order to do so.

"Ms. Flynn said she would get instructions from Mr. Puglisi about what to do, what to buy and how to send it or who to send things to," a state police detective wrote in summarizing an interview with the former patient. "Ms. Flynn said each time she got instructions she was to destroy them after following them and she said she had."

Flynn said she paid off the gambling debts via Western Union money orders to the Philippines and Costa Rica.

"Ms. Flynn said specifically she received several thousand dollars from a patient at the Oregon State Hospital named Tony Gagliano (see attached Washington Mutual wire transfer notice for \$3,219 dated 1/16/2007), the police read. "Part of this money was to pay for gambling debts for Mr. Puglisi and the other part was to pay for a cell phone, hawk saw blades and \$1,000 cash and



LORI LAIN / Statesman Journal file

At Oregon State Hospital in the last two years, a dozen forensic patients have escaped. Other patients have smuggled in methamphetamine, marijuana, weapons and other contraband.

a gift for a staff member named Diane Raines."

■ Flynn reportedly told investigators that she didn't want to mail contraband to the hospital but complied with Puglisi's commands because he threatened to send people to harm her if she failed to deliver.

■ Flynn said she routed the candy package to hospital staff member Raines, who then passed on the envelope addressed to Puglisi. "Also contained in the package was a Wal-Mart gift package of female bath items for Ms. Raines as a gift from Mr. Puglisi for Ms. Raines for her help," states the police report.

Interviewed by detectives after Puglisi's escape, Raines explained that she had opened the package "a little bit." Just enough to see a box of peanut brittle and Almond Roca. Describing herself as an "old softy," Raines forwarded the package to Puglisi.

The police report states: "Ms. Raines said she did not know there was anything else in the package except for candy. When asked if there was anything else in the box from Mr. Flynn, Ms. Raines said no. (Ms. Raines did not disclose the gift pack she received in the box from Mr. Puglisi as a thank you for her help and for her being so nice.)"

■ Puglisi's fence-cutting bolt cutters reportedly were supplied by a former hospital employee named Cassandra Alvarez, who was employed at the psychiatric facility for about five months in 2004. Interviewed by state police, Alvarez reportedly said she purchased the tools at a Keizer hardware store and delivered them to the hospital recreation yard.

■ From his hospital ward, Puglisi made arrangements to obtain a getaway van. He reportedly selected the vehicle from a classified ad in a Eugene newspaper, then made phone calls to Alvarez and persuaded her to drive it to the hospital for use in the escape.

■ On the day of the escape, Alvarez reportedly parked the van along D Street near the hospital grounds and waited for Puglisi.

■ After Puglisi ran to the van, the two drove to Alvarez's apartment, where they reportedly smoked marijuana. Puglisi told a detective that he paid Alvarez \$200 for helping him escape; she denied receiving such payment.

■ Another forensic patient, David Anderson, reportedly had planned to escape with Puglisi. However, Anderson got cold feet and backed out.

■ At the time, Anderson reportedly was involved in a romantic relationship with Bonita Tucker, then a hospital staff member. Tucker and Anderson had planned to go with Texas after Anderson escaped with

Puglisi

■ On the night of Puglisi's escape, Tucker showed up at Alvarez's apartment. She reportedly was surprised to discover that Anderson wasn't there. "Where is David?" Tucker asked.

■ In the wake of Puglisi's escape, Tucker reportedly resigned from her hospital job on March 23 but subsequently stayed in contact with Anderson through phone calls to the hospital.

As of 5 p.m. Friday, the Marion County district attorneys office had not answered a Statesman Journal inquiry asking whether criminal charges had been filed against anyone reportedly involved in the contraband and escape scheme besides Puglisi.

Puglisi recently was transferred to the Oregon prison system, after his conviction on charges of escape, eluding police and drug possession. He is locked up at Snake River Correctional Institution in Ontario.

Hammer said it was hard to predict how Puglisi might adjust to prison routines.

"He may find it easier to cope there, he may do fine if he doesn't make too many enemies," he said.

Puglisi apparently got off to a rocky start at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility — the entry point for new state prison inmates. He was charged with violating rules by giving his medication to a fellow inmate.

At Snake River — the state's largest prison — Puglisi now is housed in the Disciplinary Segregation Unit, where inmates are kept in their cells for at least 23 hours per day. Inmates call DSU "the hole" or "the bucket."

His medication violation resulted in Puglisi's stint in the segregation unit, and he is set to stay in the lock-down unit until the end of December, said Amber Campbell, public information officer at Snake River.

Prison officials denied the newspaper's request to conduct a telephone interview with Puglisi.

Supervision easily evaded. In contrast to Puglisi's elaborate escape efforts, Christopher Walker made his getaway by closing a door on his staff escape.

Walker, 46, slipped away from his guard on Nov. 21. He received a day pass to make a supervised visit to his mother's care facility in Portland.

It became a headline-grabbing debut because Walker had a history of murder, arson and assault. He fatally stabbed his girlfriend almost 20 years ago during a drug-induced psychotic episode.

Conditionally released from the hospital in 1996, Walker reportedly caused no problems for years, but he demonstrated his good behavior

record in 2003, when he tried to blow up a propane tank at a Portland business.

In that episode, Walker lit the end of a propane hose and used it like a flamethrower to keep officers at bay. Firefighters doused the flames, and Walker was arrested.

Sent back to the state hospital, Walker reportedly made enough progress in treatment that his doctors gave him the privilege of supervised visits out of the hospital.

At the Portland care facility, Walker reportedly used a building access code to enter the facility. He then closed the door to prevent his staff escort from getting inside. According to police reports, the guard called the state hospital to report what had happened, but nobody called police for at least 45 minutes.

The delay gave Walker time to flee. Police spotted him the next morning in a Portland neighborhood. Walker tried to run away but officers caught him.

Hammer said the incident prompted a sweeping review of forensic program pass privileges and staff supervision for patients on such outings.

"We're reviewing our own procedures to make sure we're following what we should be following," he said. "That's part of our commitment to the community when we say we have a secure facility."

Pass restrictions

As forensic patients undergo treatment for mental illness, community outings play a key part in preparing them for life after the institution, hospital officials said. In a typical month, they said, hundreds of patients benefit from leaving the hospital for approved outings.

Passes allow them to visit relatives, shop, exercise, attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, visit libraries, conduct job searches, enjoy rating trips and more.

Community outings provide welcome relief from hospital strife and stress for patients cooped up on crowded hospital wards. In most cases, they cause no problems when they leave the hospital.

Good intentions can go awry, however. Some patients bolt from supervised passes, like Walker, and others fail to return from unsupervised outings.

Richard Laing, an outspoken critic of hospital conditions and care, said he escaped because he was frustrated by futile efforts to win his discharge from the state Psychiatric Security Review Board.

On Nov. 18, 2005, Laing failed to return to the hospital from his unsupervised pass, ostensibly to visit Salem Public Library.

After nearly two years on the lam, police recently collared Laing in Portland. His arrest came after he

Dangerous escapees

Here's a look at some of the dangerous patients who have escaped from Oregon State Hospital's forensic psychiatric program for the criminally insane:

2004: Mother killer Thaddous Zerniak escaped by running away from a staff member while visiting the Big 5 Sporting Goods store on Lancaster Drive NE. Two days later he was captured 350 miles away in Wenatchee, Wash.

2003: Robber and hostage taker Michael Marks escaped by scaling a 12-foot fence topped with four feet of coiled razor wire. He was captured a week later in Vancouver, Wash. Police said Marks had two stolen guns, a television set and other stolen items stuffed in pillowcases.

1996: Killer David Ball, committed to the hospital for stabbing to death his stepdaughters, escaped by scaling a fence from a work site. He turned himself into authorities three days later, calling police from a West Salem phone booth.

1995: Double killer Michael McCormack slipped away from a hospital staff member by using an outing to the Oregon Supreme Court law library. McCormack traveled across the country, disguising himself as a woman. Three weeks later, the FBI collared him at a Western Union office in Canton, Ohio.

1985: Michael Perrine sawed his way out of the hospital, and later was accused of stabbing to death a Texas cook. After being caught by police, Perrine was mentally incompetent to stand trial. He was extradited to Oregon and held back at the state hospital in 1983. Within days, he hanged himself by tying a sock around his neck and strapping it to a window screen in his room.

was spotted by Mary Claire Buckley, the director of the Psychiatric Security Review Board. Buckley notified police and officers nabbed Laing.

Unlike Laing, most escapees are caught within hours, or days, of getting away, records show. Of the 1985 escapees, 10 were recaptured during the past two years, half were caught on the same day they took off.

As part of the security review launched in the wake of Walker's escape, hospital officials temporarily suspended pass privileges for nursing staff.

Hammer said passes were rescinded for patients not currently on a planning track to be conditionally released from the hospital. Passes continued for patients with release planning, he said.

"There was no blanket revocation of passes," Hammer said.

Still, the clamp down on pass privileges prompted grumbling from some patients.

"It's like a concentration camp," Reynaldo Rice said, calling the newspaper from his forensic ward.

Longtime patient Robert Martyr described the clamp down as "the typical knee-jerk reaction" to a high-profile escape.

Hammer said hospital officials took Walker's escape seriously because it raised questions about staff diligence and the use of one-on-one supervision for patients.

"I had a question myself when it was reported to me: Why did we send him up there with one escort? That doesn't necessarily seem to how dangerous the patient is; it speaks to the fact that anything can happen with one escort. What if the person gets sick or you have a car accident? So there's a number of reasons we needed to kind of look at the whole process."

Hammer said he anticipated that pass privileges gradually would be reinstated for those patients who lost them.

"What we're trying to do is make sure that the passes are consistent with treatment needs, and there are passes and privileges, that's with the appropriate level of security and the appropriate number of escorts," he said.

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