

JOHNSON COUNTY

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Suspect caught in stereo thefts

By ANNIE GOELLER

DAILY JOURNAL STAFF WRITER
agoeller@thejournalnet.com

A man who was arrested Sunday morning reportedly spent his Sunday night breaking into cars, landing him in jail again, police said.

Eleven residents of Westminster Apartments found their car windows broken and their stereos missing Monday morning, Greenwood Police Chief Joe Pitcher said.

Police believe Roger Dale Bell, Indianapolis, broke into the cars while visiting a resident of the apartment complex. The woman worked with police to get Bell to return the stereos, according to a police report.

Nine stereos were recovered by police and will soon be returned to their owners, Pitcher said.

Detectives received several tips about the thefts that occurred late Sunday night and Monday morning.

One tip led them to Bell, Greenwood police detective Matt Fillenwarth said.

The name was familiar to police. They had arrested Bell on a charge of possession of marijuana/hashish about 5 a.m. Sunday, Pitcher said.

Bell, 21, told police during questioning about the thefts that he had broken into the cars and showed officers cuts to his arms, hands and stomach from broken glass in the vehicles, according to the report.

The Indianapolis man brought two bags containing the stolen

stereos to a woman who lived in the apartments.

Police contacted her, looking for the person involved with the thefts from a tip they received. She agreed to work with detectives and told Bell she would be evicted if he didn't return the stereos, according to the report.

She asked him to meet her in a Greenwood business parking lot to return the stolen stereos. Police were with the woman and arrested Bell when he arrived, according to the report.

Bell told police he was bored and stole stereos from unlocked cars first and then broke into locked cars with a screwdriver. He then sold the stereos to another man but bought them back when the woman called and asked for them, according to the report.

Police received reports of vehicles that had been broken into parked along Brittany Lane, Parliament Place and Scarborough Lane, all located on the west side of the apartment complex.

Bell couldn't remember the street names where he said he broke into vehicles but indicated a similar area on a map, according to the report.

Residents who think their stereos have been stolen should provide police with a description so they can try to return their stolen property, Pitcher said.

Bell, 1554 Ringgold Ave., was arrested on a charge of criminal mischief, theft/receiving stolen property and possession of marijuana/hashish. He was released from the Johnson County jail after posting \$10,000 bond.

Town's VFW moves after payment woes

By ANNIE GOELLER

DAILY JOURNAL STAFF WRITER
agoeller@thejournalnet.com

Back taxes and unpaid building payments forced Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7964 out of its Edinburgh facility.

But post visitors won't have to look far for a new location: The group is moving across the street.

The owners of the former building located at 120 E. Main Cross St. filed a lawsuit against the post on Dec. 14. Hannah and Shirley Dyke, Mountain View, Ark., claim the post has not paid for the building according to contract agreements and owe more than \$50,000.

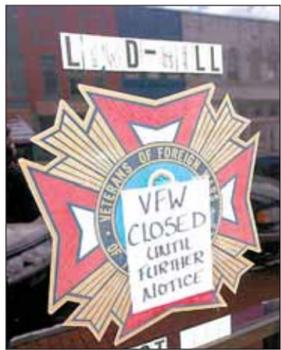
The owners also cite liens, or holdings, on the building from the Internal Revenue Service as violating the contract, according to court documents.

More than \$24,000 in withholding for federal taxes, Social Security and unemployment insurance was not paid for employees working at the post from 1999 to 2002, according to lien documents filed in April 2004.

Former management of the post was not paying for bartenders' taxes and got behind in payments on the building.

Now, workers are volunteers, and the post is working to reorganize and get new leadership, interim post commander Mike Kursey said.

Kursey didn't know how much if any money had been paid back on what the post owes in taxes or payments.



STAFF PHOTO BY MATT OOLEY

A sign on the Edinburgh Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 7964 advises visitors that the building is closed. Members of the VFW have moved their location after the building was relinquished to the owners.

At a meeting last year, post officials decided to turn the building back over to the owners. The plan now is to move the post across the street to a vacant building that formerly housed Schaffer's Olde Towne Inn, located at 107 E. Main Cross St., he said.

Hopefully, the new post will be opened soon, Kursey said.

Interest and late fees since the filings could have already added more onto the total that the post owes, said Pat Brummer, spokeswoman for the Indiana Internal Revenue Service.

She could not give an estimate of how much could be owed now or say whether the post started payments on the owed taxes, Brummer said.

Teen sentenced in standoff at Columbus credit union

The Republic (Columbus)

COLUMBUS

A judge sentenced a teenager to six years in prison for holding about 20 people at gunpoint in what authorities said was an attempt to provoke police to kill him.

Galen Kroger, 18, was arrested in July after a three-hour standoff at the Central Credit Union in Columbus.

A charge of attempted murder was dropped, and Bartholomew Circuit Court Judge Stephen Heimann on Tuesday sentenced Kroger to 10 years for criminal confinement with a deadly weapon and three years for criminal recklessness.

The judge ordered the sentences to be served at the same time and suspended all but six years. He also recommended the

Indiana Department of Correction place Kroger in a medium security prison.

During the sentencing, Kroger apologized but said he still does not fully understand what happened.

"I realize that what I did was wrong," Kroger said. "I'd like to move forward with my life."

The judge reviewed opinions from two court-appointed psychiatrists and notes from a psychologist Kroger talked to in 2003. All said he suffered from depression.

According to court records, Kroger said he drank two wine coolers before he entered the bank, believing the alcohol would dull the pain when police shot him.

At his November plea hearing, he answered yes when Prosecutor Bill Nash asked if he was trying to provoke police to shoot him.

WEDNESDAY'S DEVELOPMENTS IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE

Health officials urge state lawmakers to support increase on cigarette tax

A 25-cent increase in Indiana's cigarette tax could push some smokers, especially teenagers, to quit, the state health commissioner said as she and others urged lawmakers, some of whom are cool to the idea, to support the proposal.

The current rate of 55.5 cents per pack would go to 80.5 cents per pack if Gov. Mitch Daniels' idea passes. Beth Kohli, a Hamilton resident who smoked for 20 years, said she quit once the price rose to more than \$3 per pack.

Health officials say the tax would have tremendous health benefits, but convincing lawmakers to raise any taxes in an election year could be difficult.

Senate panel backs tougher restrictions on those convicted of child molesting

A state Senate panel approved measures that would place future child molesting convicts under lifetime parole and electronic monitoring and restrict where so-called "sexually violent predators" can reside, work and volunteer.

A third bill approved Wednesday by the Senate Corrections, Criminal and Civil Matters Committee would help the state keep closer tabs on paroled sex offenders.

All three of the bills received unanimous approval. The lifetime supervision bill now goes before the Appropriations Committee to consider possible fiscal impacts, while the other two measures advanced to the Senate floor.

Daniels' highway, transportation plan receives first legislative hearing

Gov. Mitch Daniels has tagged his major highway and transportation plan "Major Moves," and is trying to sell it to lawmakers as "the jobs vote of a generation."

His Republican administration called it a bold proposal during the plan's first hearing before a legislative committee on Tuesday, and said its passage would create tens of thousands of jobs and was the best way of funding numerous transportation projects that would enhance economic development for decades.

The plan would allow the state to lease the Indiana Toll Road in northern Indiana to a private venture for an upfront sum the administration hopes would be \$2 billion or more.

Activists rally outside of statehouse in support of heating assistance to poor

Activists concerned about this winter's high heating bills held a rally Wednesday in the cold outside the Statehouse to call on lawmakers to help cash-strapped Hoosier families by providing \$20 million more in state heating assistance.

More than 100 people listened in 25-degree temperatures as speakers described the burden that high natural gas and heating oil prices have created for lower-income Indiana residents.

Dave Menzer, the utility campaign coordinator for the consumer watchdog group Citizens Action Coalition, told the gathering that high energy costs are forcing the working poor, elderly and middle class to scale back on food and medical expenses to pay for their heat.

SNOWY SURPRISE



STAFF PHOTOS BY SCOTT ROBERSON/sroberson@thejournalnet.com



Above: Snow covered trees line Olive Branch Road near Eagles Trace in Center Grove.

Left: Berries got a touch of frost during a surprise snowfall Tuesday night. After several days with above-normal temperatures, the area was blanketed with 1 to 3 inches of snow. Temperatures today are expected to reach into the low 50s with light rain.

BRIEFS

LOCAL

FRANKLIN

Cinergy grant allows city to beautify interchange

New signs, trees and landscaping will greet motorists traveling into Franklin from Interstate 65 along State Road 44.

Cinergy PSI awarded the city a grant, \$8,000 of which is earmarked for making the I-65 interchange more attractive. The remaining \$3,000 is for printing brochures about downtown Franklin, city planner Krista Linke said.

The city is allowed to use its Cinergy grant money to plant trees and landscape around the interchange, as well as install welcome-to-the-city signs.

Planners do not have details of the project worked out yet but hope to begin in spring.

City leaders have had downtown development at the top of their priority list for years.

They want to revitalize downtown into an area that people want to go. Discover Downtown Franklin plans to distribute brochures to surrounding businesses and hotels to spread the word about what the downtown has to offer in terms of shopping, restaurants

and entertainment, Linke said. The brochure tells people where to park, too.

A group of community members is working with the city to promote downtown businesses and collect grant money to pay for landscaping and infrastructure improvements to the area.

But getting new business downtown is going to require some work.

The city is pursuing grant money to improve downtown and surrounding areas by installing new signs and ornate light posts, planting trees and improving sidewalks and pathways. Landscaping improvements help attract new businesses because companies want to move into places where their employees will want to live, Mayor Brenda Jones-Matthews has said.

City officials also hope to get \$500,000 in federal grants to use for improving downtown.

WHITELAND

Food pantry seeking donations during slump

After two months filled with giving, workers at a local food pantry said donations have

slowed to the point of almost stopping.

The InterChurch Food Pantry of Johnson County is in need of food and volunteers to help stock pantry shelves and sort food orders.

The number of people helped by the pantry in Whiteland has risen in the past two years.

In 2004, the pantry helped 3,693 county families and 13,590 people. In 2005, it was 4,383 families and 16,325 people.

Donations poured in during November and December, which manager Barbara Schooley said are typically generous months for giving to the pantry.

The pantry still has an overflow of December donations that Schooley said should last them for the next month or two.

But if donations don't pick up, the pantry will have to buy food. Pantry staff prefer to wait until they have to use their funds, as the summer months usually bring a halt in donations.

"I will buy what I need to buy," Schooley said. "Hopefully, we'll get through these few months."

The InterChurch Food Pantry, located at 60½ N. Railroad St., is open 1 to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

It is closed on holidays.

ON THE RECORD

Police/fire

Franklin

Criminal mischief

• 200 block of South Main Street: A woman reported that someone broke a window on her van between Monday and Tuesday morning.

Property-damage accidents

- 7:46 a.m. Wednesday — Northbound Interstate 65 at State Road 44
- 9:04 p.m. Tuesday — King Street and Middleton Drive
- 7:51 p.m. Tuesday — Interstate 65 at 90-mile marker
- 4:19 p.m. Tuesday — U.S. 31 and Earlywood Drive
- 2:15 p.m. Tuesday — 965 Branigin Road

Greenwood

Thefts

• American Home Mortgage, 1799 Michelle Lane: An employee reported that someone entered the locked business between Friday evening and Tuesday morning and stole a laptop computer.

• 900 block of Parliament Place: A woman reported that someone stole her underwear from the laundry room between 6:30 and 7 p.m. Monday.

• 1200 block of Carson Way: A woman reported about 12:30 p.m. Tuesday that someone broke a window on her vehicle.

• 800 block of Briarwood Drive: A woman reported that someone stole CDs and the stereo from her car Monday night.

Shoplifting

• Sears, 1251 U.S. 31 North: A loss-prevention officer reported at 10:19 a.m. Tuesday that a man filled a shopping cart with items valued at \$675 and attempted to leave the store without paying. The man was arrested and taken to the Johnson County jail.

Personal-injury accident

• 7:15 p.m. Tuesday — Smith Valley Road, east of Hacienda Drive: Chris A. Adams, 55, Greenwood. Adams complained of back pain.

Jail bookings

The following people recently were arrested and booked into the Johnson County jail:

Gary Allen Tharp, 39, 337 Country Lane, Apt. A, Plainfield; arrested on a warrant for failure to appear in court; released on \$300 bond.

William Dean Zell, 34, 601 Howard St., Shelbyville; arrested on a charge of probation revocation; held without bond.

Derek Marcus Zinda, 20, 4816 Magnolia Drive, Franklin; arrested on a Marion County warrant and a charge of driving while suspended; held without bond.

Robert Darrel McClurg, 47, 7602 E. 13th St., Indianapolis; arrested on a charge of probation revocation; held without bond.

Adam Richard Buis, 22, 473 Redwood Court, Apt. C, Greenwood; arrested on a charge of probation revocation; held without bond.

Jason R. Bishop, 21, 1320 S. County Road 100E, Lebanon; arrested on a charge of probation revocation; held without bond.

Porfirio Fernandez Marin, 21, 830 N. Gladstone Ave., Indianapolis; arrested on a charge of driving while suspended; held without bond.

Jesse O. Vasquez, 23, 5011 S. Shelby St., Indianapolis; arrested on a warrant for failure to appear in court; held on \$500 bond.

Births

Johnson Memorial Hospital

Craig and Crystal Shepherd, Franklin, girl born Jan. 16.

Derek and Kristina Baird, girl born Jan. 16.

Joseph and Renee Castle, Greenwood, girl born Jan. 16.

Minutes

Greenwood

City council

On Monday, the council:

- Learned that eight homeowners want to sell about four acres to the city. The land is located off of Meridian Street, across the street from the city library. Homeowners approached city Judge Lewis Gregory, who spoke on their behalf. Now city council members need to decide if they want the property. If so, they will pay appraisers to determine the land's cost. Council member Ron Deer asked Gregory if he wanted the land for a new courthouse, and Gregory said no.
- Approved 6-0 the use of \$1.6 million for road reconstruction in Valle Vista subdivision. Council member Bill Bless was absent.
- Voted 6-0 to give Endress + Hauser Flowtech a tax abatement for an expansion project.

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