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Police investigate Hamilton student's 'hit list'

LISA BAUMANN
Staff Reporter

A Hamilton High School junior was taken into custody Wednesday after he allegedly created a "hit list" of about 20 students and faculty he was planning to harm.

Last Wednesday morning, Hamilton High School officials were notified that Randy King, 18, had created the list and had told an acquaintance he was thinking of killing those people with a

firearm, Hamilton Police Chief Allan Auch said.

School officials told Chris Hoffman, a Hamilton police officer assigned to the high school, who took the teen into custody that day, Auch said.

Once in custody, King went with officers to his Grantsdale home and turned over the list, according to Auch. The alleged "hit list" had about 20 names on it but is not identified as a list on the piece of paper.

In a hearing held in district court Thursday, King was committed to Providence Center in Missoula for mental health testing and evaluation.

As of Friday afternoon, no criminal charges had been filed against King, County Attorney George Corn said.

"I was coming from the perspective that (King) had mental problems and was a danger to others," Corn said. King could remain at the center for up to 90 days, according to Corn.

Corn said he is reviewing the case to see if charges are warranted. "I may ask for further investigation," Corn said.

If no charges are filed, doctors at the center will determine the best treatment for King, according to Corn.

If center personnel feel King's discharge is appropriate, Corn will have 10 days to respond, before King is released. Hamilton High School will have their own proceedings concerning suspension and expulsion, Auch said.

Principal Kevin Conwell was not available for comment late Friday.

Auch said that because someone was concerned enough to make a phone call, a potential tragedy was avoided.

"When people get into (these situations), they need to call and tell someone," he said.

"It can happen anywhere," he said. "I think the recent (school shootings) across the country prove that no area is safe from this."

North of Hamilton:

Driver dies in U.S. 93 accident

A heart attack is suspected to be the cause of a fatal truck accident about two miles north of Hamilton Friday afternoon, officials said.

John Foley, a 61-year-old Hamilton man, was driving a Ford F-250 pickup north on U.S. 93 at about 2:25 p.m., when he appeared to slump over and drift off the road, according to Highway Patrol officer John O'Neill. He said an off-duty Montana Highway Patrol officer was driving behind the truck at the time and witnessed the accident.

The truck veered into a ditch and through bushes before stopping.

The driver was taken by ambulance to Marcus Daly Hospital and pronounced dead. A 76-year-old passenger, Jacob Roemmich, was taken to Marcus Daly Hospital and later transported by ambulance to a St. Patrick Hospital where he is listed in critical condition, Sheriff Perry Johnson said.

Neither was wearing seat belts at the time of the accident, O'Neill said.

Lisa Baumann,
Staff Reporter



Corvallis volunteer firefighters discuss the specifics of a fatal traffic accident north of Hamilton Friday afternoon. Officials suspect the 61-year-old driver suffered a heart attack, which may have caused the accident.

Good morning to...

Kathleen Dent of Missoula. Kathleen loves downhill and cross-country skiing, reading and writing.

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Weather

High 46 Low 33 Forecast
Mostly cloudy with a slight chance of rain.
Yesterday High 42 Low 28
WWW.RAVALLINEWS.COM

County's brown-bag lunches offer opportunity for open communication

JAMIE OGDEN
Staff Reporter

County officials and employees are trying to improve life at the courthouse.

Every Friday, employees and elected officials are invited to a brown-bag session to cooperate with each other on ways to make working at the courthouse easier, safer, and more enjoyable.

Spearheaded by Commissioner Betty Lund, each session is a chance for employees to touch base with each other and work on common goals.

"That's one of the problems at the courthouse - communication," Lund said. "So, I just thought it's all get together."

'That's one of the problems at the courthouse - communication. So, I just thought it's all get together.'
- Commissioner Betty Lund

come, but that doesn't usually happen. At last Friday's meeting, seven people were present, among them justice of the Peace Jim Bailey, Fair Manager Gary Wiley, Commissioner Jack Anthone, and Chief Youth Court Probation Officer Carol Stratemeyer.

One of the group's goals is to organize monthly professional development opportunities for county employees. In April, Anthone will host a smoking-cessation workshop. In May, Jim Bailey will provide a drug identification and awareness seminar.

Other training ideas include seminars on time management, public relations, communicating at work, delegating, and working with others. The "brown bag lunch bunch," as they call themselves, is also working on improving parking and loading around the courthouse, building safety, and internal communication.

And the group has started a courthouse newsletter to improve information flow between offices. All county employees are welcome to attend.

Second forgery suspect makes initial appearance

LISA BAUMANN
Staff Reporter

A Mexican man accused of participating in common scheme felony forgery appeared on that charge in Ravalli County Justice Court Friday morning, with the help of a Spanish translator.

Alejandro C. Garcia, 18, is one of two men accused of cashing nearly \$7,000 in altered checks stolen from Mountain Logs in Victor last July.

Rene Hernandez, 28, also known as Willy S. Maya, allegedly forged the name of Mountain Logs owner Keith Robinson on eight stolen paychecks, according to court documents.

Hernandez and Garcia allegedly cashed the checks by providing green

Montanans for Multiple Use seminar: New Mexico officials want to take control of national forests



Richard Zierlein, Otero County commissioner from New Mexico, holds a copy of a resolution declaring a state of emergency in his county because of federal "mismanagement."

BUDDY SMITH
Staff Reporter

New Mexico officials who want local authority over a national forest that they say has been mismanaged told their story in Hamilton Saturday.

The three-hour-plus assembly on local government empowerment also featured J. Zane Walley, who writes about issues ranging from conservation easements, ranching and the spotted owl issue.

"You've got to have elected officials involved, the people behind you, the law behind you," said Mike Nivison, county commissioner from Otero County, N.M.

He spoke to more than 75 people who attended the seminar sponsored by Montanans for Multiple Use. In part the grassroots group called the meeting to discuss what it called an eroding

Talk about logging or ranching alone and you're labeled a misfit, he said, or they are called just another Sagebrush Rebellion.

Nivison's forested county is a fire threat, and the watershed is in trouble, he said. Local government is a way to bring about change, according to the Otero County commissioners, who govern a county that is 88 percent federally owned.

Talk about logging or ranching alone and you're labeled a misfit, he said, or they are called just another Sagebrush Rebellion.

"(There are) more issues, more endangered species than there are us," Nivison said.

The New Mexico commissioners said state sovereignty issues are important to healthy watersheds, public safety, health

and welfare and are a way toward healthy forests through the coupling of private industry.

New Mexico, he said is a state divided among conservatives and liberals on a roughly a north-south line.

His county's emergency declaration will end when the catastrophic fire danger is over, he said. Fires last year in the Lincoln forest, the commissioners said, burned 14,000 acres in six hours and claimed two lives and 64 homes.

Ravalli County Commissioners Betty Lund and Alan Thompson attended the meeting. Asked by an audience member if he supports the New Mexico commissioners' actions, Thompson said he would have to take a "good, close look at it."

Thompson, who vice-chairs