

McClish trial to begin Monday

By Chuck Anderson
Press-Banner

Michael McClish of Ben Lomond, caught up in the killing of market cashier Joanna "Asha" Veil last year but not charged in that case, will get a day in court on unrelated charges next week.

McClish's jury trial on sexual assault charges is scheduled to begin Monday, June 11, before Santa Cruz County Superior Court Judge Robert Attack. Attorneys said the trial is expected to take about three weeks.

No charges have been filed in the September double homicide of Veil and her unborn daughter.

After eight months of investigation, Sgt. Mario Sulay of the county sheriff's office labeled McClish as one of the suspects in the case. He was named publicly after the court threw out evidence of an earlier alleged assault, half of the current case against McClish.

Detectives in April and May collected DNA samples from other male Ben Lomond Market employees. Investigators have not said why they needed the samples, although defense attorney Mark Garver considered it good news.

"If the DNA that they have matched that of Mr. McClish, we would have heard about it already, and they wouldn't be taking more samples," he said.

As investigators conducted numerous interviews last fall in the Veil killing, a female employee of Ben Lomond Market, where McClish had been grocery manager, told them she had been raped and threatened with a hatchet by McClish during an 18-month affair.

Those claims are the basis of the trial. The accuser has not been named publicly. McClish was arrested shortly after the accusations and has been in jail with bail set at \$1.5 million.

McClish, who turns 38 on the trial's opening day, faces one count of rape, two counts of sodomy and allegations that he used a weapon to cause serious injury. Defense attorney Mark Garver has said McClish is innocent of all charges.

Monday will be devoted to motions on admissibility of evidence, followed by two or three days of jury selection. Next will be opening arguments.

■ To comment on this story, e-mail editor Chuck Anderson at chuck.anderson@pressbanner.com or call 438-2500.

SCOTTS VALLEY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Sunday, June 3

- Police pulled over a driver on Highway 17 at Mt. Hermon Road for following a car too closely. Officers discovered the too-close driver had a suspended license, so they made sure his car was towed.

Friday, June 1

- A 32-year-old woman was arrested on suspicion of shoplifting on the 200 block of Mt. Hermon Road. Officers discovered that she had a prior conviction and was on probation for having drugs. Officers didn't find anything more from the shoplifting spree in a strip search, but they did discover she was carrying methadone.

Thursday, May 31

- A recreational-vehicle owner on the 400 block of Whispering Pines Drive reported that someone hit his RV and drove away without stopping. The so-called hit and run occurred a month ago, he said.

Wednesday, May 30

- Two people were caught on tape stealing two bottles of alcohol from a store on the 200 block of Mt. Hermon Road. The video footage was given to the police for investigation.

Tuesday, May 29

- A man reported that he lost his cell phone while eating at a fast-food joint on the 200 block of Mt. Hermon Road. He said he reported the loss to quality for insurance to replace the phone.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Thursday, May 24

- Someone on the 3500 block of Mill Street in Ben Lomond called to report that her cell phone had been missing for nearly three weeks. She also said that when she tried calling her phone, a Spanish-speaking man answered. It is unknown as to whether the woman decided to turn off her cell phone service.
- A driver on Highway 9 at Lorenzo Street in Boulder Creek was pulled over at 10:10 a.m. by a sheriff's deputy for turning without using a signal. The deputy discovered that the driver had a suspended license and cited and released him.
- A man on the 100 block of Maywood Drive in Boulder

Creek called at 12:22 p.m. to report a burglary.

- Deputies took a man into custody at 9:43 p.m. on the 5900 block of Highway 9 in Felton after discovering he had a warrant out for his arrest. When his vehicle was searched, deputies found drugs. The man was taken to Santa Cruz County Jail.

Wednesday, May 23

- A man on the 200 block of Farmer Street in Felton reported that someone he didn't know had attempted to use his CitiBank credit card. Luckily, the thief was unable to successfully purchase anything with the card.

■ This column includes items reported in the Scotts Valley Police Department and Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office dispatcher logs and records of area fire departments. Additional informa-

Water district awards \$13K in grants

Press-Banner

San Lorenzo Valley Water District has awarded grants totaling \$13,318 to four local teachers and two nonprofit organizations as part of a district program to advance understanding and environmental health of the San Lorenzo River watershed.

Allison Birkhead, a teacher at San Lorenzo Valley High School's Watershed Academy, received a grant of \$1,718 for her proposal, "Water Quality Testing for Watershed Studies." Funds will be used to purchase lab testing equipment, as students learn concepts of chemistry and lab techniques through water quality testing.

Jane Orbuch, who also teaches at the Watershed Academy, was awarded \$2,500 for her proposal, "Wireless Weather

Station for Watershed Studies." Money will be used to purchase a weather station so students can monitor real-time weather data collection from the classroom, as part of learning environmental concepts.

Erin Mongiello and Tina Andes, both teachers at San Lorenzo Valley Middle School, were awarded \$2,500 for their joint proposal, "Exploring Watersheds." Grants will be used to purchase classroom supplies for a sixth-grade watershed curriculum and topographic maps for field and classroom work.

Monterey Bay Master Gardeners received \$2,500 to help fund its annual Smart Gardening Faire, a public education event that focuses on landscaping to conserve water, use of native plants and reduction of pesticide/herbicides.

The event will be June 23 at Sky Park, in Scotts Valley.


Valley Women's Club was awarded \$2,500 for its proposal, "Runoff to the River," to design, print and distribute a brochure on non-point source pollution.

Earlier this year, the water district awarded science fair project grants of as much as to \$200 to four local high school students.

Winners were Emma Stokes and Ruth Talbot for their project, "The Pollutant Levels in the San Lorenzo River"; Zack Seftel for his project, "Bacterial Pollution at the San Lorenzo River and Pacific Ocean Conflux"; and Cameron Kirby for his project, "The Effect of Residential Herbicides on Freshwater Invertebrates of the San Lorenzo River."

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