



Colleton deputies shoot, kill bank robbery suspect; K-9 hurt

BY ANDY PARAS
The Post and Courier

WALTERBORO — Colleton County sheriff's deputies shot and killed a bank robbery suspect Thursday afternoon after the man shot and wounded a K-9 about four miles northwest of Bells Crossing. Terry Kinard, 54, of Ruffin, was airlifted to the Medical University Hospital, where he died a couple of hours later. An autopsy is scheduled for today. Sheriff George Malone said Kinard shot a deputy's dog that was trying to subdue him. Deputies had pulled Kinard over in connection with a robbery at Enterprise Bank in Ehrhardt.

Once the shooting was over, the dog's handler put the bleeding Belgian shepherd named Truetis into his cruiser and rushed him the 12 miles to his veterinarian in Walterboro. Dr. C.J. "Buddy" DeLoach said he expects the dog to fully recover. A bullet passed cleanly through the dog, between his tibia and Achilles tendon, without hitting any bones or tendons, the veterinarian said. "The dog is really lucky it was where it was," DeLoach said. "It sure looked like a large-caliber bullet." Malone said the incident occurred at 2 p.m., shortly after deputies were alerted by the Bamberg County Sheriff's Office

that a bank robbery suspect was heading southeast toward Walterboro on S.C. Highway 64. Three or four deputies, including one who patrols the northern end of Colleton County, headed toward Ehrhardt on S.C. 64. Deputies passed a car matching the description of the suspect and turned around. At that point, the suspect turned right onto Cayce Road and stopped the car. Malone said the armed suspect got out of the car but refused deputies' orders to get on the ground. Please see ROBBERY, Page 6B



Colleton County paramedics rush a bank robbery suspect to a Careforce helicopter waiting to take him to the hospital Thursday. Sheriff George Malone said deputies shot the suspect after he wounded a deputy's K-9 when the suspect was stopped about 12 miles north of Walterboro.

Judge cuts guardian's jury award

Damages now \$1.7M in defamation suit

BY SCHUYLER KROPP
The Post and Courier

A judge has reduced the \$6.5 million award a jury gave a former Dorchester County guardian in a defamation lawsuit. Circuit Judge J.C. Nicholson Jr. reduced the award granted to Linda Erickson to about \$1.7 million in combined actual and punitive damages. The change came under guidelines that allow judges to reduce awards on several grounds, one of which includes whether the amount would bankrupt the defendants.

Erickson's attorney could not be reached Thursday. Erickson in March won a lawsuit against a group that said it was trying to reform the guardian ad litem system.

The formal term "guardian ad litem" refers to court-appointed representatives of children in custody cases.

Erickson claimed the group, which included four members of organizations called the Justice Seekers and the Domestic Court Reform Movement, hatched a "conspiracy to destroy" her by publicly characterizing her as unfit.

Erickson at the time was a private guardian ad litem who represented a child in a contested divorce case some of the defendants had an interest in.

The jury awarded Erickson nearly \$500,000 in actual damages and \$6 million in punitive damages, which the defendants subsequently appealed.

Nicholson reduced the amount to \$243,540.82 in actual damages, and \$1.44 million in punitive damages. The award was cited against four individuals.

The civil trial ran for nearly a month. Terry Wheatley, the director of the Dorchester County guardian ad litem program, was also sued in the case, as was the governor's GAL office. Both of those lawsuits were dismissed by the judge at the close of the plaintiff's case.

Former Dorchester County Family Court judge Alvin Biggs had also sued the group but was unsuccessful.

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South Carolina Department of Natural Resources media coordinator Anna Martin helps biologists Al Segars (left) and Mike Arendt return a loggerhead sea turtle to the ocean. The turtle received an identification tag as part of a joint SCDNR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in-water sea turtle study project.

In-water loggerhead study shows more juvenile turtles

BY CHRIS DIXON
The Post and Courier

A mission off the coast has given researchers optimism about the future of loggerhead sea turtles. But a day's work studying the animals off Charleston Harbor also offered a graphic illustration of the threats these animals face on a daily basis.

State Department of Natural Resources scientists have been conducting a two-week in-water sea turtle study aboard a converted shrimp boat called the Lady Lisa in a program funded by the National Marine Fisheries Service. On Thursday, the Lady Lisa's haul was a trio of loggerhead sea turtles — two living and one very recently deceased.

According to research team leader Al Segars, the study is showing significantly higher numbers of turtles across Southeastern waters and adja-



A sea turtle named David sits atop a tire before his release into the ocean off Charleston. On his back sits a satellite transponder that will enable researchers to track his movements.

cent to the Charleston shipping channel — an area that was last studied from 1991 to 1992.

That study began shortly after area shrimpers were mandated to begin using turtle exclusion devices, or TED's,

On the Web

Track the movements of David and other satellite-tagged turtles at www.seaturtle.org.

on their nets to prevent the creatures from drowning if they were unintentionally netted.

"We're seeing a lot more juvenile turtles," Segars said.

DNR biologist Mike Arendt said that during the 1991 study, researchers caught 53 or 54 loggerheads between central Florida and Georgetown. Today, they are catching that many in two weeks.

"When we started the program in 2000, people said, 'You go out looking for turtles in the open ocean and you're not going to catch squat,'" he said. "But we caught over 300."

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Folly singer killed in fire

Rick Huff recorded 2 CDs chronicling life at the beach

BY NITA BIRMINGHAM
AND PRENTISS FINDLAY
The Post and Courier

FOLLY BEACH — Singer Rick Huff, who penned songs that captured the soul of this Mayberry by the Sea, died Thursday in a fire at his house.

Huff's death in the 10 a.m. blaze stunned local musicians and friends, who called him the poet laureate of Folly Beach and an icon. Huff recorded two CDs that chronicled everyday life on Folly, from the big orange trash truck to the veteran city clerk.



The Charleston County Sheriff's Office and State Law Enforcement Division are investigating the fire, but there was no word Thursday on how it started.

Huff, 60, was found in his bathtub. An autopsy determined that he died of smoke inhalation, Deputy Coroner Dottie Lindsay said.

The fire burned through the roof of the house at 34 W. Second St. and gutted the upper floor.

"I walked out of the back door and the windows were popping out. It just went up like a matchstick," said a neighbor, who would identify himself only as Paul.

The fire was so hot that a propane tank in the yard was hissing.

"I was calling his name," Paul said, but there was no way to reach the house.

Firefighters first thought Huff was at Our Lady of Good Counsel for a memorial service for the mother of a close friend. Then someone went to look for Huff at the church and discovered that he wasn't there, city officials said.

Huff was part of a year-round population of about 2,000 people. He came to the island by way of Atlanta about 15 years ago, said former Mayor Bob Linville, who sold Huff his house.

"It's kind of like he showed up here on Folly Beach and we took a liking to him and he's been here ever since," Linville said.

Huff was a fixture at the island's Sea and Sand Festival. He entertained at Pet Helpers benefits and organized the Folly Beach Songwriters Guild. His bands included the Honey Canyon Yodelers, Nacho Momma and Rick Huff and the Outpatients.

Huff released the CD "Cheaper Than Therapy" in 1997 and "Come On Down" in 2003. Within hours of Huff's death, the seven remaining copies for sale at Bert's Market were disappearing.

"It's a sad story," one woman said. "Knew him 16 years," said a somber man wearing paint-spattered clothes as he took a CD to the cash register.

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Conserving cemetery stones 'sacred work'

BY JACKIE ALEXANDER
The Post and Courier

David Via tenderly strokes a broken, moss-covered headstone in the French Huguenot Church's overgrown graveyard. Letters appear as he rubs, as if by magic: Mrs. Catharine Lafar.

"You can only do that trick a couple of times a day," Via says with a mischievous wink.

Via, a monument conservator, completed a cemetery conservation project with the American College of the Building Arts at the church Thursday after weeks of work.

"It's sacred work for me," Via said. The project began in partnership with the French Heritage Society during the college's 2004 Building Arts Festival, said Matthew McLaughlin, the college's senior development officer.

"We collaborated with them and pitched the idea to their donors," he said.

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David Via, a monument conservator from Virginia, works on a gravestone Thursday at the French Huguenot Church at Church and Queen streets.

To our readers

The Post and Courier will be published as usual on Memorial Day, but the advertising, business and circulation offices of the newspaper at 134 Columbus St. and 6296 Rivers Ave. will be closed.

Deadline for classified advertising in Monday's and Tuesday's newspapers will be 3 p.m. today.

Circulation department operators will be on hand 6-9 a.m. Monday for calls about delivery problems.

Normal business hours for these departments will resume Tuesday.

