

NORTHWEST NEWS

Officer involved in crash had blood alcohol level of .08

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEATTLE — A laboratory test of blood from a Bellevue police officer arrested after a fatal crash on New Year's Day indicates he had a blood alcohol level of .08, investigators said Thursday.

A preliminary breath test showed the officer, Eric J. Thomas, had a blood-alcohol level of .26, according to a Jan. 2 Bellevue police search warrant affidavit. However, Bellevue police spokesman Mike Johnson said the lab test on Thomas' blood showed the .08 level, which is the state's new legal threshold for intoxication.

Thomas, 29, of Renton, made an initial court appearance Thursday in King County Superior Court. He had been arrested for investigation of vehicular homicide and vehicular assault. Bail was set at \$20,000. Thomas posted bail later in the day and was released from the King County Jail.

A spokesman for the King County prosecutor's office said it may file charges early next week.

Three hours into the new year, a 1998 Dodge Stratus driven by Thomas crossed the center line on Coal Creek Parkway in suburban Bellevue and collided with an oncoming sport utility vehicle, Bellevue police say.

One of Thomas' passengers, Brian Grooms, 26, of Columbus, Ohio, was killed. Another, Washington State Trooper Jeremy Reid, remains in a coma at Harborview Medical Center here.

Thomas and Reid were off-duty when the crash occurred.

The driver of the sport utility vehicle, John B. Bell of Bellevue, was not hurt. His wife, a passenger, was hospitalized for two days.

A second breath test administered at the accident scene also showed that Bell had an alcohol level of .11. Police cited him for investigation of driving under the influence.

A police search turned up two bottles of vodka in Bell's vehicle. The warrant did not say whether the bottles were open.

According to the search warrant

affidavit, Thomas' blood-alcohol level registered 0.26 percent on a portable breath test administered by a police officer at the scene. The subsequent blood test, however, showed the much smaller reading. Breath tests administered with hand-held devices cannot be introduced in criminal trials; blood tests can be used as evidence.

Carol Reid, the trooper's mother, said in a statement that she hopes authorities do not punish Thomas.

"Jeremy and Eric are friends, and this tragic accident does not change that. No other punishment or prison time will change the life sentence Eric will live with," she said.

Reid, who turned 27 Monday, has been able to respond to voices and tactile stimulation and lift and squeeze his right hand.

While doctors were encouraged by his responses, they remained cautious about his chances for recovery.

Grooms, who was Reid's boyhood friend, was a national sales manager for a long-distance carrier. His funeral was Thursday in Ohio.

Police scold Disneyland in death investigation

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Police who were criticized for taking 4 1/2 hours to arrive at the scene of a Disneyland accident that killed a Washington state man told park officials to call them promptly and to leave evidence untouched in the future.

"(We have) met with Disneyland management staff to reinforce that any major injury, fatal accident or crime scene be immediately preserved and prompt notification be made," Police Chief Randall W. Gaston

said in a written statement issued after Saturday's meeting at the park.

"This department will then manage the scene through the conclusion of the investigation," the statement said.

Police arrived long after a tourist was fatally wounded on Dec. 24 by an 8-pound metal cleat that ripped loose from the sailing ship Columbia as it was being moored at a Frontierland dock.

Luan Phi Dawson, 33, of Duvall, Wash., was struck in the head. His wife and a park employee were hurt.

Second suspect arrested in Moses Lake killing

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SPOKANE — Police have arrested two Spokane men in the slaying of a 23-year-old man whose body was found in Moses Lake, and more arrests were expected, police said Sunday.

Margarito L. Ramirez, 19, was arrested Saturday night at a Spokane home and was booked into the Spokane County Jail for investigation of complicity to commit murder, police spokesman Dick Cottam said.

On Friday, Spokane police arrested 22-year-old Joseph B. Jordan, who was held for investigation of accessory to murder.

Initial court appearances for Ramirez and Jordan were scheduled Monday.

Moses Lake and Spokane detectives investigating Eric

Brace's slaying expect more arrests, Cottam said.

Brace, of Spokane, had been reported missing shortly before his body was found Tuesday on the shores of Moses Lake, about 110 miles southwest of Spokane. His car was found abandoned Thursday west of Spokane.

An autopsy concluded Brace died of a fractured skull.

Investigators have not discussed a motive, and have declined to say where, when or how they think Brace was killed.

Jordan denied involvement in the slaying during a jailhouse interview published Sunday in The Spokesman-Review newspaper.

Jordan said he had last seen Brace on Jan. 2 as Brace dropped off him and a friend in downtown Spokane.

So, in those rare instances when you actually have money, where are you going to put it?

Let's say you've got a few bucks you want to deposit and you don't want to hand it over to some *bank*, for crying out loud. What you *need* is a financial solution that will give you fast, convenient, free access to your account. Like your credit union.

Introducing the Foundation Account at Washington State Employees Credit Union. With Free Checking. Free ATM use.* Free 24-hour account access. And, if you want one, a no-annual-fee Visa at just 10.9%APR.

Call us or log on to find out how to join. And enjoy the benefits of membership today.

WSECU Foundation Account: It's What You Need.

*Free ATM at any Exchange, Accel, or Plus cash machines. Certain very uncool locations may levy a surcharge for transactions at their machine. Avoid them.

On Campus: 1st floor, CUB
Downtown: S. 1220 Grand Ave.

1-800-562-0999
www.wastatecu.org



WASHINGTON STATE
EMPLOYEES CREDIT UNION

Charles
HAIR STUDIO

\$2.00 Off
Hair Cut

10% OFF HAIR CARE PRODUCTS

334-7993
in the CUB Building

WANTED

- Resident Advisors
- Peer Advisors
- Residential Education Advisors

FREE ROOM AND BOARD

All peer advisors and resident advisors receive free room and board. Residential Education Advisors receive free room and board and a cash stipend.

INFORMATION SESSIONS:

Dec. 2, 1998 6:30 pm Heritage House, Cleveland 57
Dec. 7, 1998 6:30 pm GLBA Center, CUB B19
Jan. 13, 1999 6:00 pm Chicano/Latino Center

APPLICATION INFORMATION:

Applications are available at residence halls, the Department of Residence Life (Streit-Perham Admin. Suite), and various student centers.

If you have additional questions, please contact Jim Bajczyk at 335-6278 or by e-mail bajczyk@wsu.edu