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Duncan gets death penalty

Pedophile killed family to kidnap two youngsters, abusing both and killing one at a remote campsite

By REBECCA BOONE
OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOISE — A longtime sex offender was sentenced to death Wednesday for the 2005 kidnaping, torture and murder of a 9-year-old northern Idaho boy after federal jurors who watched video of some of the brutality deliberated just three hours.

The jurors' recommendation was binding on U.S. Dis-

trict Judge Edward Lodge, who thanked them, dismissed them and then sentenced Joseph Edward Duncan III.

Relatives of the victim, Dylan Groene, remained somber as the jury's decision was announced. Duncan murdered Dylan's mother, older brother and his mother's fiancé to kidnap him and his younger sister, who was sexually abused along with her brother but survived.

Duncan showed no reaction other than smiling as the verdict was passed to the judge.

"We're happy with the verdict, but it's a shame — this should have been limited to one death," said Steven Groene, the father of the children. "He should have had the courage and the guts to kill himself before killing anyone else."

Duncan took Dylan and the boy's then-8-year-old sister,

Shasta, to a remote western Montana campsite where he raped, tortured and threatened them before shooting Dylan in the head and burning his body. Jurors viewed horrifying video Duncan made of him sexually abusing, torturing and hanging Dylan until the boy lost consciousness.

"This defendant is dangerous. He is a predator who takes

> See **DUNCAN**, page 5A

Election08 Democrats make historic nomination with Obama

Democratic presidential candidate will deliver his acceptance speech today

By DAVID ESPO
OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DENVER — Barack Obama stepped triumphantly into history Wednesday night, the first black American to win a major party presidential nomination, as thousands of Democrats transformed their convention hall into a joyful, shouting celebration.

The son of a black Kenyan father and a white American mother is now one victory from becoming president of a nation where, just decades ago, many blacks were denied the vote.

Competing chants of "Obama!" and "Yes we can!" surged up from the convention floor as the outcome was announced. Later, when their nominee paid a late-night visit to the hall,

Obama embraced running mate Joe Biden and implored the delegates to help him "take back America" in the fall campaign against Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona. "Change in America doesn't start from the top down," he told the adoring crowd, "it starts from the bottom up."

But even as he won the nomination, there was open talk in the convention city that Obama's race remained a stumbling block to winning the White House.

"A lot of white workers ... and quite frankly a lot of union members believe he's the wrong race," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka told a breakfast meeting of Michigan delegates.

Obama will face McCain, who will accept the Republican nomination next week in St. Paul, Minn.

Earlier, former rival Hillary Rodham Clinton asked the convention to interrupt its roll call of the states and make its verdict unanimous "in the spirit of unity, with the goal of victory." And they did, with a roar.

The polls show a close race ahead with McCain, a former Vietnam prisoner of war a few days shy of his 72nd birthday, and Obama was hoping Democrats would leave their convention united despite the hard feelings remaining from a bruising primary campaign that stretched over 18 months.

Former President Bill Clinton did his part, delivering a strong pitch for the man who defeated his wife for the nomination. "Everything I've learned in eight years as president and the work I've done since, in America and across the globe, has convinced me that Barack Obama is the man for this job," he said, to loud cheers.

Michelle Obama, watching from her seat in the balcony, stood and applauded as the former president

> See **OBAMA**, page 3A

Little scholars begin their studies

Kindergartners ease into academics with one-hour first day of class at Orchards Elementary School

By KERRI SANDAINE
OF THE TRIBUNE

The 5-year-old girl wearing a pink shirt and matching headband bounced down the sidewalk to Orchards Elementary School on Wednesday with a big smile on her face.

"I was nervous, but now I'm great," said Rashelle Hodge as she neared the door. "I did have a little stomachache at home. This is my first-ever time going to school."

Rashelle and other kindergartners throughout the region are making their elementary-school debuts this week. The kids at Orchards went for one hour on the first day. Their parents stayed in the gym, filling out paperwork and going over bus schedules and other details.

Trixie Groat was teary-eyed as she said goodbye to her son Warren. "I'm very sad because they grow up so fast. This is a new life for them, meeting new friends. It seems like he was just born."

Groat said she had fun school shopping for her oldest son and was fine until she arrived at the school and realized she'll be going to his high school graduation in the blink of an eye.

Warren, 6, was more excited about the big step. He woke up early, wanted to fix his own lunch and picked out his favorite outfit. "Look at my shoes," he said, showing off some bright white sneakers before he and the other kids headed to class.

As they settled into their seats, the children were talkative and enthused about their new surroundings. They compared clothes, crayons and flashy Spiderman and Hannah Montana backpacks while working on a coloring project.

The teacher, Cathy DeSart, clapped her hands to get their attention and had them clap in return.

"This is a fun game, teacher," said Gesa Lynn, 5, as she mastered the pattern.

DeSart complimented the group on how well they follow directions. "Are you sure you're in kindergarten? You're not first-graders?"

The kids giggled as they found a spot to listen to her read a story about Clifford the Big Red Dog. The time passed quickly and soon parents began trickling in to take the young students home.

"In kindergarten, we expect the unexpected, and we have to be very flexible," DeSart said after the children left. "That's the bottom line for the first day."

DeSart, who has taught kindergarten for 17 years, said it's a great age.

"They're happy to be here. The progress they make is amazing. They're eager to please. I wouldn't teach anything else."



Tribune/Steve Hanks
Rashelle Hodge



Tribune/Steve Hanks

Kindergartners at Orchards Elementary School in Lewiston settle in to their seats and get their bearings in Cathy DeSart's class Wednesday morning.

Sandaine may be contacted at kerris@lmtribune.com or (208) 848-2264.

Lonely voter is looking for love in all the wrong polling places

SWM, 47, enjoys hiking, birding, movies. Seeks fiscally responsible presidential candidate for possible four- or eight-year relationship. Age, race, sex and physical appearance unimportant. Intelligence and cooperative spirit are a must. Prefer forward-thinking statesman; ideological autocrats and indecisive flip-flopers need not respond. Must like cats.

This is so humiliating. How is it possible I'm reduced to this, trolling for presidents like some bait



UP FRONT/
COMMENTARY
William L. Spence

fisherman going after trout? I'm better than this! I should be beating candidates away with a stick! I should have choices up the kazoo! So why do I feel like I'm settling for leftovers once again, picking

through the dregs of yet another interminable election season, looking for the least-objectionable candidate rather than the best?

I remember having a conversation with two college friends 20 years ago about marriages of love versus marriages of convenience. I was still young and naive at the time. Life was still a sweet plum bursting with vitality, begging to be plucked. It hadn't yet turned into the biological equivalent of a failed political campaign, the relentless erosion of all hopes and dreams that leaves behind with-

ered disillusionment, followed by gradual physical decline, senility, then death ...

Um, anyway, I was still young and naive. Up to that point, I'd never even considered that someone might marry for reasons other than love. In fact, I was shocked that anyone would settle for simple companionship — for the convenience of sharing life with a pleasant helpmate — rather than search the world for some mythical "other half" who completes their soul.

What a doofus. I look back on

that idealistic youth I was and wonder how he had the sense to tie his shoes. I've come to understand that his insistence on "love" stemmed from an unrealistic conception of what relationships entail. Good marriages aren't all heart-pounding romance and wild sex. Now, the quiet enjoyment of another's presence doesn't seem like settling at all.

But that's a discussion about marriage. When it comes to political relationships, I've never

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Coming in Friday's Tribune

Tori Amos called his brain a comic book tattoo. In A&E, Clarkston High School graduate Rantz Hoseley talks about the comic book world he lives in.

