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Details on C8



Missing teen held captive found

Accused man, grandmother appear in court

BY CHRIS MCDANIEL
AND STEPHANIE WILKEN
SUN STAFF WRITERS

A man who allegedly held a juvenile hostage in his grandmother's home for 68 days and repeatedly sexually assaulted her appeared in Yuma Justice Court Thursday.

During his initial appearance at 1 p.m., 18-year-old Manuel Swayze was told by Justice of the Peace Pro Tem Yolanda Torok he was being held for three felony counts of sexual conduct with a minor and one felony count of kidnapping.

Swayze's grandmother, Ramona Swayze, who also made an initial appearance in court, was told she was being held on one felony kidnap charge and one felony charge for hin-

dering prosecution.

The Yuma County Attorney's Office has 48 hours to charge Swayze and his grandmother with the crimes.

Even though she had not been officially charged, Ramona asked to address the court.

"Well I'm pleading not guilty," she said.

Acting on a tip on Wednesday, officers with the Yuma Police Department found the 15-year-old female at a residence located at 3845 W. 3rd Place in Yuma.

A police report about the girl had been filed on May 14 alleging she had run away.

Considering the age and the nature of the alleged crimes, the Yuma Sun will not identify the girl.

YPD spokeswoman Leanne Worth-

en said the parents of the girl, who was 14 at the time she disappeared, called YPD Wednesday with information the female was at the residence.

"That led to the fact that we got over there and got her back," Worthen said, adding the parents were concerned the entire time she was missing.

Police said they had reasonable suspicion to believe Manuel Swayze kept the girl against her will at that location and was having sexual contact with her.

Both Swayzes were arrested at the residence.

Ramona Swayze was allegedly aware of the female being held and assisted in keeping the child against her will, police said.

The victim's mother was also in court and asked the judge not to let either defendant out of jail.

She said her daughter had been held



PHOTOS BY CRAIG FRY/YUMA SUN
RAMONA SWAYZE (LEFT) and Manuel Swayze (right) had their initial court appearances Wednesday.



Cloud testifies

BY JAMES GILBERT
SUN STAFF WRITER

Lois Kay Cloud took the stand in her own defense during her capital murder trial Thursday, testifying that while she was unhappy in her marriage, she didn't conspire to have her husband killed nearly 13 years ago.

"It was a struggle," Cloud admitted of her marriage. "Things were not real well at all. We hardly ever spoke to each other anymore."

Cloud is facing charges of first-degree murder, solicitation to commit first-degree murder and hindering prosecution in the in the Dec. 9, 1997 slaying of her husband, Bard farmer Kenneth Cloud. Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty.

She is accused of hiring Vincent Lee Accardo to kill her husband, Kenneth Cloud, who was 55 when he was shot to death while sitting inside his pickup in the parking lot of Burgers and Beer, located at 321 W. 20th St.

Under the questioning of her defense attorney Michael Donovan, Kay Cloud spent the entire day on the stand testifying about some of the events in her life that led up to the time of her husband's murder, such as her employment at the bank where she had worked for many years, how she knew Accardo, and how her marriage had changed over the years.

Cloud was 26, and was

LOIS KAY CLOUD

(ABOVE), wearing a sound amplifying device, took the witness stand for the first time Wednesday in a surprise move by the defense. Cloud is facing the death penalty for the 1996 murder of her husband Ken Cloud.

PHOTO BY CRAIG FRY/YUMA SUN

working at Valley National Bank in 1975 when she met Kenneth Cloud, who came in to the bank to inquire about a charge on his credit card. When asked how long she had been working there, she answered by saying, "Long enough to know a good-looking man when he walked through the door," Kay Cloud said of the man who would become her third husband.

"He won my heart pretty quick when on our second date he suggested my daughter come along."

Two weeks later, Kay Cloud said Kenneth Cloud called and asked her out. When she mentioned Kenneth Cloud's name to her mother, Kay Cloud said her mother insisted that she go out with him.

"She knew who he was and was very impressed," Kay Cloud said. "She even volunteered to babysit."

Their relationship was going so well that Kay Cloud said she moved into his Bard farmhouse shortly after they started seeing each other.

"I was excited, but also

SEE CLOUD/A5

Colonia sewer work progresses



PHOTO BY RANDY HOEFT/YUMA SUN
Workers with Blucor Contracting make their way across Avenue C north of 8th Street Tuesday morning as work on the Avenue B & C Colonia sewer project gets into full swing. The project will bring city sewer services to the county island, where 322 of the 323 acres will be connected. The project is expected to take up to 18 months to complete.

County jobless rate still on the rise

BY JOYCE LOBECK
SUN STAFF WRITER

Arizona's unemployment rate remained at 9.6 percent in June, but Yuma County wasn't so fortunate.

According to the latest unemployment data released Thursday by the Department of Commerce, the Yuma area's jobless rate reached a seasonally adjusted 23.2 percent for June.

That compares to 22.6 percent in May of this year, and 20.6 percent in June 2009.

It means 23,700 workers of the total civilian labor force of 89,800 were without jobs in June.

None of this is a surprise to John Morales, executive director of Yuma Private Industry Council.

"We're still getting a lot of job seekers coming in," he said of the agency that provides work force development and placement services.

Some of it is the time of year.

"We're going into the slow part of the year," Morales noted, when unemployment tends to increase with the loss of temporary jobs tied to winter visitors and the winter vegetable industry.

"We're in our normal seasonal shift," he said. "We see it in traffic patterns and I think you can tell it in some restaurants. They're not as full."

Add in that the Census 2010 jobs are winding down, he said.

"That was a nice shot in the arm" for employment, he said. "But those were temporary jobs."

There have also been business closures, such as the NCO call center in late May, resulting in a number of people losing their jobs.

And the area likely hasn't seen the end of the gloomy jobless reports, Mo-

SEE JOBS/A5

Breaking ground: Solar project in east county under way

BY STEPHANIE A. WILKEN
SUN STAFF WRITER

The temps aren't the only things heating up in Yuma County — east county residents may have noticed some changes with the construction of the Agua Caliente solar project.

The Yuma Sun spoke with representatives Jim Woodruff and Alan Bernheimer about the project Wednesday, and both said it's in the "early site mobilization" mode.

The project near Dateland, 70 miles east of Yuma, covers about 3,000 acres that will use photovoltaic pan-

els to turn "photons into electrons," said Bernheimer.

The Yuma Sun previously reported that power will be sold to California utility Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E). When finished, the plant is expected to generate about 700 million kilowatt hours of electricity a year — enough to meet the annual energy needs of more than 100,000 homes, according to a previous statement from the company.

"It will be the largest photovoltaic facility in the U.S. and the world," Woodruff said.

NextLight Renewable Power LLC was sold by its parent company to First Solar Inc. earlier this month, creating a partnership between the two teams as the Agua Caliente project moves forward.

NextLight obtained permanent clearances to begin construction, a process that wrapped up last fall.

Woodruff and Bernheimer said the project is still on track to begin major work in the fall.

About 30 workers are on site helping with grating the land, cutting ser-

SEE SOLAR/A5



LOANED IMAGE FROM FIRST SOLAR
THIS COMPUTER-GENERATED photo illustration shows what the solar plant could look like.