

**Student Loan Consolidation - If you have \$10,000 or more in student loan debt and have started student loan repayment or are in your grace period, you may qualify for the Federal Student Consolidation Loan. Consolidation can save you up to 54% a month and could possibly lower your interest rate to 1.6%. [Click here for more info](#)**

**News Business Sports Entertainment Living Classifieds Jobs Cars Homes**

Search Last 7 Days

[Search Archives](#)

**PIONEER PRESS**

**Local News**

- **Capitol and Politics**
- **Education**
- **Lottery**
- **Wisconsin**

**Columnists**

**Obituaries**

**Sports**

- **Vikings**
- **Football**
- **Twins**
- **Baseball**
- **The Wild**
- **Hockey**
- **Timberwolves**
- **Basketball**
- **Gophers**
- **High Schools**
- **Golf**
- **Outdoors**
- **Fishing**
- **Minnesota Lynx**

**Business**

- **Entrepreneurs**
- **National**
- **Personal Finance**
- **Regional Briefing**
- **Stocks & Market**

**Nation**

**World**

**Showtime**

- **Movies**
- **Music**
- **Eat**
- **TV and Radio**
- **Onstage**
- **Art**

**Your Tech**

**Express**

- **At Home**
- **Books**
- **Bulletin Board**
- **Faith**
- **Family & Friends**
- **Health**
- **Hobbies**
- **In Gear**
- **Shopping**
- **Travel**

**Opinion**

- **Editorial**
- **Letters to the Editor**

**Corrections**

Browse  
Local  
Bargains

Search

Articles-last 7 days



for

[Back to Home](#) > [Pioneer Press](#) >

Friday, Oct 31, 2003

**PIONEER PRESS**

**Local News**

Posted on Fri, Oct.  
31, 2003

**PIONEER PRESS**

## METRO/REGIONAL BRIEFING: CAMBRIDGE: Hospital guard dies in workplace fall

A 69-year-old Cambridge Medical Center guard fell 9 feet to his death while making security checks.

Another hospital worker, looking for the guard, found him early Thursday when he fell into the same construction pit, suffering a slight injury.

Roy Cobb was making his rounds Wednesday night and was last seen at 9:30 p.m., said Cambridge Police Chief Rick Wilson. Police believe he was checking a door that opens to the outside and is a seldom-used exit in an administrative part of the hospital. Cobb apparently wasn't aware the sidewalk had been removed on the other side and excavation for an expansion project had begun that day, Wilson said.

When Cobb, of Braham, opened the door, he took a step and immediately fell, Wilson said. The door wasn't secured and there was no notice posted about the construction, Wilson said.

Another guard came to relieve Cobb of his shift, but couldn't find him. He and a man who works in the hospital's building services department, 47-year-old John Harshberger, began looking for him. At about 12:30 a.m., the men opened the same door that Cobb had, and Harshberger, who was a step ahead of the replacement guard, fell in the pit. He found Cobb at the bottom, dead. Harshberger, of Isanti, was treated for a sprained ankle.

Cobb had worked for a Roseville security firm, Initial Security, contracted by the hospital. The company declined to comment.

The door is now secured, a hospital spokesman said. The hospital plans an internal investigation, and state officials also are investigating.

**MINNEAPOLIS**

### Two men sentenced in meth operation

Two men convicted of running a methamphetamine operation in Austin, Minn., were each sentenced in federal court Thursday to 40 years in prison.

Peter George Noe, 26, and Timothy James Schultz, 22, were convicted in June of distributing large amounts of a high-purity form of meth known as "glass," using a network of sellers in the Austin area in 2001 and 2002. Their operation was brutal, with Schultz at one time ripping out the teeth of a young man behind on his drug debt, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Paulsen.

"These defendants introduced an extremely dangerous drug into the Austin community," Paulsen said. Their clientele included many young users, who were then recruited to become sellers. The pair distributed at least 11 pounds of methamphetamine, enough for 50,000 individual doses.

Three co-defendants in the case have pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute more than 500 grams of methamphetamine. Terry Bauman, 30, awaits sentencing. Michael Arthur Clennon, 22, was sentenced earlier to seven years in prison. And Amy Marie Placek, 40, is scheduled to be sentenced Nov. 5. All are from Austin.

— Phillip Piña

**ST. PAUL**

### Gunman sought in bank robbery

A gunman wearing a black ski mask robbed the Hmong American Credit Union on Wednesday, St. Paul police said.

**Shopping & Services**

Find a **Job**, a **Car**,  
an **Apartment**,  
a **Home**, and more...



**Sponsored Links**

### [Join CPAWS](#)

Your donation will help protect and maintain Canadian wilderness.  
[cpaws.org](http://cpaws.org)

### [Literacy Cambodia](#)

Help Educate Children. Learn More & Plan Your Trip of a Lifetime.  
[www.roomtoread.org](http://www.roomtoread.org)

### [Top Ranked in Efficiency](#)

Since 1948, providing humanitarian aid to people in need worldwide.  
[www.directrelief.org](http://www.directrelief.org)

### [Want to Volunteer?](#)

We can help you make a difference in your community. Start today!  
[www.VolunteerMatch.org](http://www.VolunteerMatch.org)



A panic alarm summoned police to 302 W. University Ave. at 2 p.m. When police arrived, they were told that a man had entered the building, pointed a gun at the teller and demanded money, said St. Paul police spokesman Paul Schnell.

There were apparently no customers inside during the robbery, Schnell said.

The robber took an undisclosed amount of money. The FBI asks anyone with information to call 612-376-3200.

— Mara H. Gottfried

DULUTH, MINN.

Woman will plead guilty in boy's killing

The girlfriend of the man accused of fatally shooting a 5-year-old boy will plead guilty to aiding unintentional second-degree murder during an attempted aggravated robbery, her defense attorney said this week.

Abigail Margaret Fleissner, 18, is accused of driving her boyfriend, Gary LaQuier, and two of the other three people accused of taking part in Marcus Johnson's murder, to and from the murder scene at the St. Regis Apartments on Sept. 24.

Fleissner told police she waited in the car while the others went to rob Clifford Brown, Marcus' stepfather. LaQuier is accused of firing a shot through the doorway that hit Marcus as he lay on a sleeper sofa.

If District Judge Carol Person accepts the plea, Fleissner would receive a 12-year prison sentence, defense attorney Kevin Cornwell said. A formal plea hearing is set for Nov. 17.

— Duluth News Tribune

MINNEAPOLIS

Lawyer charged with defrauding client

Bruce Kiernat, a Minneapolis attorney, was charged Thursday in federal court with misappropriating \$53,000 he improperly received from a client.

Kiernat, 62, was a trustee for the Alice S. French trust and issued a series of five checks to himself in April 1999 for legal services, according to federal authorities. When he learned in the spring of 2002 that he had double-billed the client for approximately \$53,000, he allegedly concealed and lied about the misappropriation, according to the U.S. attorney.

Kiernat, who lives in St. Paul, was charged with one count of mail fraud.

— Pioneer Press

MINNEAPOLIS

Ex-bank employee sentenced for theft

A former Wells Fargo & Co. worker was sentenced in federal court Thursday to two years in prison for embezzling more than \$566,000 from the bank.

Linda Jean Decker, 33, of Minneapolis pleaded guilty in May to bank fraud. Prosecutors said she submitted false expense reports, fake invoices, and improperly used her supervisor's and her own corporate credit card to buy personal items. The thefts all took place between September 2001 and August 2002. Decker was an administrative assistant with Wells Fargo at the time.

On Thursday, Chief U.S. District Judge James Rosenbaum ordered Decker to pay \$309,663 restitution to Wells Fargo and another \$11,170 to a bank insurance firm.

— Phillip Piña

DULUTH, MINN.

Homeless pair found beaten to death

Duluth police and St. Louis County investigators searched a campsite Thursday where two homeless people were found beaten to death Wednesday night.

The campsite was located between Interstate 35 and the harbor just west of downtown Duluth, police said.

The dead man was identified as Donald Erwin Smith, 48, of Duluth. Police Chief Roger Waller said the identity of the middle-aged female victim hasn't been confirmed.

Waller said the victims "appeared to be maybe boyfriend-girlfriend, but we're not sure."

Stocks

Enter symbol/company name

go

Police have not determined the specific cause of the deaths. No weapon was found.

Deputy St. Louis County Medical Examiner M. Kent Froberg said autopsies will be performed today.

"Indications are that the person responsible may have known these people because of the campsite," Waller said. "It's just an odd place. I just don't see that someone would happen upon there unless they knew about that place."

— *Duluth News Tribune*

#### MINNEAPOLIS

##### Judge assigned in court shooting case

A judge has been named to preside over the trial of Susan Berkovitz, the St. Paul woman accused of shooting one person dead and injuring another at the Hennepin County Government Center on Sept. 29.

Hennepin County District Judge Thor Anderson was assigned the case Thursday, officials said. Hearings are expected to be held at the county's new Family Justice Center, which features security screening, so the case will not be held in the same building where the shootings took place, officials added.

Berkovitz was indicted earlier this month on charges of first-degree murder and attempted first-degree murder. She was arrested shortly after the shootings on the 17th floor of the Government Center outside a courtroom.

Killed was Berkovitz's cousin Shelley Joseph-Kordell. Injured was Joseph-Kordell's attorney, Richard Hendrickson. Berkovitz and Joseph-Kordell were involved in a long-running dispute over the estate of Berkovitz's parents.

— *Phillip Piña*

#### MINNESOTA

##### MPCA levies fine on sugar beet plant

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has fined American Crystal Sugar Co. \$117,000 for alleged violations of hydrogen-sulfide emission standards at its sugar beet processing centers in Moorhead, East Grand Forks and Crookston.

Hydrogen sulfide gas is one of several compounds that contribute to odors associated with processing sugar beets, but the only one for which state standards exist. The alleged violations occurred from 1999 to 2001.

American Crystal Sugar has spent more than \$13 million since 1999 to control its hydrogen-sulfide emissions from wastewater ponds, including \$1.3 million at Crookston, \$2.9 million at Moorhead and \$9.2 million at East Grand Forks, the MPCA said.

As part of an agreement with the agency, however, it is taking further steps to control emissions by installing covers over wastewater-treatment ponds at the Moorhead and East Grand Forks sites.

— *Dennis Lien*

— *Mara H. Gottfried*



[email this](#)



[print this](#)



Of Media Income  
see website content  
Real Cities stories

[News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Living](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Homes](#)  
[About TwinCities.com](#) | [About the Real Cities Network](#) | [Terms of Use & Privacy Statement](#) | [About Knight Ridder](#) | [Copyright](#)