

Naked driver arrested after hitting vehicles, dog, cow

BY NATALIE JOHNSON

Mazama residents were frightened by an afternoon of mayhem Wednesday (Oct. 20), when a reportedly naked man in a truck spent about two hours evading police while throwing items out of the windows, hitting other drivers, a dog and a cow and just missing a person installing new gas pumps in front of the Mazama store.

Nickolas G. Schultz, 26, was booked into the Okanogan County Jail at 12:45 a.m. Oct. 21 and later charged in Okanogan County Superior Court with disorderly conduct, second-degree malicious mischief, three charges of hit and run, second-degree criminal trespass and second-degree assault. The assault and malicious mischief charges are class B and class C felonies, respectively.

He was also initially booked on

charges of littering and indecent exposure, but wasn't formally charged with those offenses.

Schultz is being held in the Okanogan County Jail on \$30,000 bail, and his next hearing is scheduled for Nov. 1.

According to court documents, an Okanogan County Sheriff's Office deputy first responded just before 3 p.m. Wednesday to a report of a naked man sitting in a truck who appeared to be unconscious near Wolf Creek Road outside of Winthrop. The truck matched the description of one involved in a threat complaint earlier in the day in Mazama, the deputy reported.

A sheriff's deputy, Winthrop deputy marshal and a Washington state Department of Fish and Wildlife officer responded and found the black 2006 Dodge truck with a homemade camper in the bed parked in the road.

The deputy recognized Schultz

from past contacts, according to court documents. Schultz exited the vehicle, got on his knees and put his hands behind him. At the time, the deputy reported officers didn't believe they had probable cause to arrest him. However, he reported that Schultz became uncooperative, swore and refused to move the truck.

At that point, officers planned to arrest Schultz on suspicion of disorderly conduct, but Schultz allegedly left the scene before the arrest could be made.

The officers headed toward Mazama, where the previous complaint regarding Schultz originated. While on the way, they saw "swerving marks" in the dirt on the side of the road, and came across items lying in the road, including an axe, a chainsaw and a partial case of Coca-Cola.

Over the next hour, law enforcement officers were on the lookout for Schultz as more

reports came in. At 3:45 p.m., deputies received a report of the truck driving erratically west-bound on Highway 20, and a few minutes later received a report that the driver had hit a dog, Sheriff Tony Hawley told the Methow Valley News.

A few minutes after that, the truck allegedly hit a cow in the 400 block of Lost River Road. During that general time, Schultz is also accused of intentionally ramming another vehicle and also nearly missed a person in front of the Mazama store, owner Missy LeDuc told the Methow Valley News.

"He was about a foot and a half from the guy who was working on our gas pumps," LeDuc said. "That was scary, everyone was really freaked out by that. He's just lucky and we are all lucky there wasn't more harm."

At 3:56 p.m. a deputy reported finding Schultz's truck near the

Lost River Airport. Clothing was strewn outside the vehicle and deputies reported hearing yelling from the direction of the runway, Hawley said.

Deputies took the vehicle's keys, which had been left behind, and also disconnected its battery so Schultz couldn't get back into the truck and evade them again.

By about 4:40 p.m., deputies caught up with Schultz, who was still naked, and took him into custody.

While in the deputy's vehicle, Schultz reportedly hit his head repeatedly on the partition, causing himself to bleed, and also allegedly urinated in the vehicle, which had to be taken out of service for deep cleaning. That led to the second-degree malicious mischief charge, Hawley reported.

Schultz was taken to Mid-Valley Hospital before being booked into the Okanogan County Jail.

911 Blotter

Okanogan County Sheriff's Office

- At 8:12 a.m. on Oct. 18, police received a report of gunshots on Alder Street in Twisp.
- At 8:34 a.m. on Oct. 18, a residential burglary was reported on Highway 153 in Methow.
- At 11:45 a.m. on Oct. 18, a burglary to a shed was reported on Alder Creek Road in Twisp.
- At 10:31 a.m. on Oct. 19, stray cows were reportedly roaming on Prairie Flats Road in Methow.
- At 8:19 a.m. on Oct. 20, a person on Highway 20 complained about cattle on their property.
- At 1:56 p.m. on Oct. 20, threats were reported on Lost River Road in Mazama.
- At 7:59 a.m. on Oct. 21, a person at the intersection of Bear Creek Road and Twisp-Winthrop Eastside Road reported a horse was hit by a car, and the person responsible drove away.
- At 2:54 p.m. on Oct. 21, a wood chipper was reported stolen on Twisp River Road.
- At 7:22 a.m. on Oct. 22, a trespasser was reported on Twin Lakes Road in Winthrop.

Twisp Police Department

- At 3:35 p.m. on Oct. 19, fraud was reported on East Third Avenue in Twisp.

Winthrop Marshal's Office

- At 9:30 a.m. on Oct. 15, a domestic dispute was reported on Kennison Avenue in Winthrop.
- At 3:54 p.m. on Oct. 18, a vehicle collision was reported on Highway 20 near Mazama.
- At 11:44 a.m. on Oct. 19, police responded to a report of a theft on Highway 20 in Winthrop.
- At 1:04 p.m. on Oct. 21, a hunting violation was reported on Cub Creek Road in Winthrop.

LAW

From Page A1

employees to be fully vaccinated or obtain a valid exemption by that date.

Of the 127 total employees, 74 were commissioned officers, including 67 troopers, six sergeants and one captain.

Five of those commissioned officers were assigned to WSP's district six, which includes Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Grant and a portion of Adams counties.

District 5, which includes Lewis, Cowlitz, Clark Skamania and Klickitat counties, lost the most troopers of the state's eight districts with 14.

The state patrol isn't releasing official numbers for losses in specific detachments or patrol areas yet, WSP communications Director Chris Loftis told the Methow Valley News.

"We want to give our commanders the chance to make necessary adjustments before we share tactical information about our deployment strategies," he

WSDOT loses 28 from North Central Region

While law enforcement patrol Okanogan County's highways, it's the Washington State Department of Transportation that makes sure those roads are plowed through heavy Methow Valley winters.

Overall, the WSDOT lost 402 employees at the end of the day Oct. 18 due to the mandate, including 358 employees who were terminated, 35 who retired in lieu of being vaccinated and another nine who retired without stating a reason.

In the WSDOT's North

said.

However, local law enforcement agencies told the Methow Valley News that they knew of three troopers assigned to the Okanogan County area who left due to the mandate.

"Operationally it's a 50% reduction in what the Okanogan office has," Johnson said.

It's early to know exactly how

Central Region, which includes Loup Loup Pass and the North Cascades Highway, 24 employees were terminated and four retired in lieu of getting vaccinated.

Sheriff Tony Hawley expressed some concern last week about plowing on state highways, especially Loup Loup Pass, in light of the losses.

Kris Rietmann, communications director at WSDOT, said it's too early to tell exactly how the staffing losses will affect opera-

the loss will affect policing on Okanogan County's highways, but Hawley said it will involve continued cooperation between the state and local agencies. The agencies already work together to cover the county effectively, he said.

"We've always worked well together because we are rural," he said. "I did reach out and talk with the captain, so we may be

tions at the agency.

"We know at a high level that these departures will affect our general staffing, Washington State Ferries, maintenance, winter operations, the staff that maintain the equipment we use for maintenance operations and our construction projects," Rietmann said. To your specific questions about winter operations within North Central, it will take some time for us to assess that now that we know how many have left, what their positions were and where they were located."

asked to do a few more collision investigations for them and we're not sure how that's going to look at this point."

On Monday, Twisp Police Chief Paul Budrow said the area had already seen a negative effect from the WSP staff losses. On Tuesday (Oct. 19), the day after the state patrol firings, there was a rollover crash on Highway 153 at Ross Road. Budrow

said a trooper had to come from the East Wenatchee area because staffing was so short in Okanogan County.

Johnson and Budrow said the state patrol didn't give their offices any warning about the staff losses.

The state patrol has about 2,200 employees statewide, spread out over eight districts. It is primarily tasked with policing on state highways.

WSP Chief John Batiste commented on the separations in a news release on Oct. 19.

"We will miss every one of them," he said. "I extend a hardy thanks to those who are leaving the agency. I truly wish you were staying with us."

Batiste said remaining troopers will need to be prepared to do more with less for the time being.

"COVID is a killer and the state is taking action intended to improve public safety," Batiste said. "I thank you for staying on post and staying in service to this state and agency. Better days are ahead. Believe that and know I believe in you."

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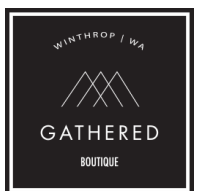


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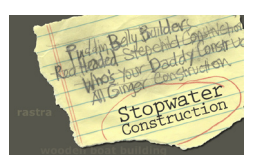
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And lots of working people in the Methow Valley