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Neighbor: Phillips lied about Blumberg

Suspect in court this week

BY BETH HUNSDORFER
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MOUNT STERLING — The man accused of killing a Collinsville college student told a friend that he had been in an O'Fallon dance supply store, saw a bleeding Amy Blumberg lying behind the counter and checked her for a pulse.

Stacy Scheer, a former neighbor of Edward Scott Phillips, 38, of Mount Sterling, revealed in an interview Tuesday that Phillips had told her he was covered in Blumberg's blood because he touched her blood-soaked body.



Phillips

Phillips, a driver for the state Department of Corrections, told Scheer he got scared, fled the store and drove straight home.

"I don't believe it anymore," Scheer said. "I can't. He's told too many lies."



Blumberg

Phillips told Scheer the story on her front porch after a September court hearing on his divorce from his now ex-wife Dawn Ritchey.

"He told me that Dawn may have something on him that would hurt him in the divorce," Scheer said. "After I heard it, I just couldn't believe it."

Something else Scheer couldn't believe was how much Blumberg resembled Emily Hea, who with her husband, Joe, purchased Scheer's house next door to the Phillipses in August 1999.

The Heas were questioned about Blumberg's homicide by O'Fallon Police in December, but Emily Hea said she didn't see a picture of Blumberg until police returned earlier this year.

"I have three sisters, and none of them look as much like me as she did," Hea said. "I looked at a copy of her driver's license — even the height and weight are the same. The only thing different is she had brown eyes and I have blue."

"It's like looking at a ghost," said Scheer, who also was shown Blumberg's photo by O'Fallon Police.

This week, Phillips is on trial in Brown County on charges of obstruction of justice, violating an order of protection, burglary and perjury. Brown County is located east of Quincy.

Please see PHILLIPS, A2

GASOLINE PRICES		
\$1.28 Dec. 18	\$1.46 Dec. 20	\$1.67 Jan. 12
\$1.70 Dec. 27	\$1.78 March 22	\$1.88 May 4

Today

\$1.99

Motorists balk at buying costly fuel

BY RAMONA CURTIS
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There was no one at the BP service station at South Belt West and South Illinois Street in Belleville, but Sue Brooks chose to wait in line across the intersection.

"My sister just called me and told me CFM had gas for \$1.85," said Brooks, a Belleville resident. "I already have half a tank, but I'm going to fill up."

The era of \$2 a gallon gas had arrived in the metro-east.

On Tuesday morning, Convenient Food Mart, QuikTrip and Shell still had not increased their prices. The BP service station was charging \$1.99 per gallon for regular gasoline, in line with the state average, according to AAA.

"One of the reasons that we're paying higher prices for gasoline is because of the cost of crude oil," said AAA spokesman Mike Right. "To put that in perspective, you're talking about \$40 a barrel now versus \$26 a barrel last year."



TIM VIZER/News-Democrat

The QuikTrip station at Old Collinsville Road and Lebanon Avenue found customers lining up for gas before it raised its prices.

The AAA Web site lists the price of regular gasoline one year ago as \$1.50 a gallon. Just one month ago, regular gas cost about \$1.80 a gallon.

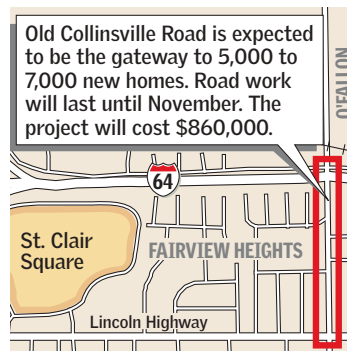
And while consumers trying to avoid the pinch on their wallets were lining up at stations selling at \$1.85 a gallon, gas stations selling at \$2 had few customers at the pumps.

"I've been here since 6 a.m. and it's much slower than normal," said

BP cashier Tina Delisle. "I've been trying to find things to do."

James Ferry, a parole officer who received a call that a juvenile fugitive had been located, had to leave the line in which he was waiting at CFM to buy gas at a higher price at BP.

"I'm only here because of time constraints because normally I would be trying to save a few dollars," Ferry said.



O'Fallon prepares for more houses

7,000 are expected to be built in decade

BY PATRICK J. POWERS
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O'FALLON — As many as 7,000 new homes are expected to be developed in the next 10 years on either side of Old Collinsville Road north of Interstate 64, city leaders said Tuesday.

"This is going to be major," O'Fallon Mayor Gary Graham said. "And if O'Fallon builds another school out there, it will be even faster."

Metro-east developers already have plans for at least five new subdivisions on O'Fallon's side of Old Collinsville Road, Graham said. Three separate developments, adding a total of more than 800 homes to the area, already have come forward to have their plans approved.

West of Old Collinsville Road in Fairview Heights, Vantage Homes recently started construction on the 190-home Fountains Place subdivision along Fountains Parkway. Plans for the neighborhood also include 64 villa-style homes.

On Tuesday, city leaders from both communities broke ground on a joint \$860,000 project to widen Old Collinsville Road from U.S. Highway 50 north to Salem Place.

"This is another example of government at its best," U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello, D-Belle-ville, said. Costello, who attended a groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday, was instrumental in obtaining \$562,000 in fed-

Please see O'FALLON, A2

Ex-Mayor Paul Sauget dies; popular figure in his village

But credit card scandal dogged his final days

BY MIKE FITZGERALD
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SAUGET — Paul Sauget, the former mayor of the village that bears his family name, died Tuesday morning after being hospitalized with a broken hip last week. He was 78.

Paul Sauget, who died at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, had served as mayor for 34 years of the village that straddles Illinois 3 and is best

known for its chemical plants and nightclubs.

Chosen to succeed his father, Leo Sauget, as mayor in 1969, Paul Sauget remained a popular figure in the hamlet of 250 people, running unopposed for eight consecutive terms.

He quit suddenly as mayor in early October, following news reports that he had used city-issued credit cards for thousands of dollars in unauthorized purchases. The village trustees replaced him with his

Please see SAUGET, A2



Education Secretary Rod Paige cancelled a visit to Jackson School in East St. Louis because of tension between state officials and the school district.

Secretary cancels visit to Jackson School

Wants to stay out of spat between district, state

BY TANIA E. LOPEZ
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Problems between the state and East St. Louis School District 189 caused U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige to cancel a visit to an East St. Louis elementary school this week.

Paige was scheduled to visit Jackson Elementary School on Thursday to talk about the 50th anniversary of the Brown vs. Board of Education court decision and President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act, according to Susan Aspey of the U.S. Department of Education.

"There were some issues between the school and the state," Aspey said. "... We didn't feel that it would be appropriate for the federal secretary of education to do the visit at this time."

On Monday, the U.S. Department of Education e-mailed a media advisory to the press detailing Paige's schedule. The visit to East St. Louis was not on it.

Karen Craven, spokesman for the Illinois State Board of Education, said state Superintendent Robert Schiller received a call from Paige's office Tuesday morning notifying the state of his intention to visit the East St. Louis elementary school.

Craven said Schiller was in the process Tuesday of pulling up Jack-

son Elementary's state report card and shifting his schedule for Thursday so that he could be there when Paige arrived.

Craven said the state did nothing to deter Paige's visit and that the decision to cancel the visit to Jackson was made "before (Schiller) could talk to them about Jackson School."

"It's well known that East St. Louis has issues with the oversight panel, special education," Craven said. "But I don't know what specific issue they are talking about."

In December, six administrators were demoted by the District 189 school board after a state investigation found nearly 160 special educa-

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LOTTERY FOR ILLINOIS

- Pick Three-Midday: 7-1-8
- Pick Three-Evening: 8-6-4
- Pick Four-Midday: 9-9-6-1
- Pick Four-Evening: 6-8-0-8
- Little Lotto: 02-13-26-28-29
- Jackpot: \$3 million

MEGA MILLIONS Game: 9-25-30-34-37

Mega Ball: 30

FOR MISSOURI

- Daily Pick 3: 1-8-2
- Daily Pick 4: 6-3-9-7
- Show Me 5: 3-5-13-15-26

Jackpot: \$10 million

