

Bear

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Response team who were in town looking for the bear. The wildlife staff tranquilized the bear as police stood guard with shotguns. Wildlife staff member Chuck Sliker said the bear was awake when he approached, but was not alarmed by people. Sliker shot the tranquilizer dart at the bear, which then fell asleep.

Six officers helped state staff carry the bear from the yard around 2 p.m. and load it into a pickup to be taken to a state facility. It was euthanized soon after.

Nirmeen Ibrahim, who lives at the home where the bear had been sleeping, said she had seen it walking through the neighborhood recently but had no idea it was living under her backyard deck.

"I feel bad for the bear, but it could have been dangerous," said Ibrahim, who was home with her infant daughter. "I'm glad it's taken care of. I'm worried about the kids here. ... It's kind of scary."

The incident occurred as the state's Fish and Game Council is to unveil the new Black Bear Management Policy. The Council will meet Tuesday and is expected to introduce the policy, a first step before the state can consider holding another bear hunt after a moratorium of several years.

The policy will contain an updated population estimate based on a DNA study by East Stroudsburg State University. It also will explain the state's strategies for dealing with bears, including public education, garbage can maintenance and hunting.

The dog's owner, Marian Szal, said she was relieved to learn that the bear had been caught and would cause no further harm.

Szal said she had let the dog out one last time before bedtime. When Bear did not bark to come back in, Szal looked out a glass door and saw what seemed like the back of the bruin on all fours.

She rushed upstairs, and she and her husband shone flashlights through the door. When officers arrived, the couple went outside and called for the dog, in vain. Police followed bear tracks and found the dog dead on a hill near Szal's property.

"You hear about bear sightings, but not in your own yard," Szal said. "It's a tremendous loss. He [Bear] had a beautiful disposition, and he was great with everyone."

Szal said her family is devastated by the loss of the gentle dog they adopted as a puppy from the Wayne animal shelter 16 years ago. He was named Bear because the fuzzy, black puppy looked just like a cub.

Precautions

The Fish and Wildlife Division of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection offers the following tips to avoid attracting bears:

- Use certified bear-resistant garbage containers, and store them outdoors. Those not using certified containers should place their refuse in containers with tight-fitting lids and store them in a secure location — a basement, for example — until the morning or evening of garbage collection.

- Wash trash containers with a disinfectant at least once a week to eliminate odors. Carefully rinse recyclables to rid them of food residue that can attract bears.

- Pet owners should avoid feeding their animals outside.

- The use of birdfeeders is discouraged in areas frequented by black bears. Those who insist on feeding birds should do so only in daylight hours between Dec. 1 and April 1, when bears are least active. Store feeders indoors at night, and clean up any spilled seeds daily.

- Clean outdoor grills after use. Never dump grease on the ground. Store grills in a shed or garage.

Source: The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

— William Lamb

"He made our day every day," Szal said. "He was a gentle, gentle soul, very smart, very well-mannered, very affectionate."

State officials said the black bear was killed because, in killing the dog, it was involved in a so-called Category 1 incident, exhibiting aggressive behavior.

The dog apparently died of a broken neck, which suggests the bear either took a swipe at it, or clenched it with his jaws, said Larry Herrightly, assistant director for the Division of Fish and Wildlife. He called the incident "an unprovoked attack." But bird feeders in the yard might have attracted the bear, he said.

And the recent mild weather might have stirred this bear to activity. Because of the state's mild winters, bears in New Jersey don't hibernate. They enter a winter dormancy called torpor and can rouse to forage for food.

"In another month, bears will be up and become very active," Herrightly said.

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Turner, prosecutor clash

Defendant says he stated an opinion, not a threat

By PETER J. SAMPSON
STAFF WRITER



TURNER

Shock jock Hal Turner of North Bergen sparred with a federal prosecutor on Thursday as he deflected efforts to portray him as a white supremacist who used his clout with extremist groups to intimidate judges and public officials with whom he disagreed.

Under cross-examination by Assistant U.S. Attorney William Hogan for most of his second day on the witness stand in Brooklyn, Turner emphatically rejected the portrayal and insisted he never threatened the three federal judges he is accused of threatening last year.

"I know I couldn't intimidate them," he declared at one point. "They're surrounded by U.S. marshals."

Heated clashes between the defendant and prosecutor led to U.S. District Judge Donald E. Walter admonishing both men.

"This is not a high school debate," Walter interjected during one raucous exchange. "This is a question and answer by an officer of the United States. Everyone will hold

their voices down."

Hogan spent the day attempting to poke holes in Turner's testimony, pointing to writings and e-mails that seemingly contradicted his testimony while painting him as a racist, a liar and someone with a faulty understanding of Supreme Court rulings on protected speech.

Turner, in turn, accused the Chicago-based prosecutors of withholding some of the records of his work as a confidential informant for the FBI from him and his lawyers.

In his second trial — the first ended in December with a deadlocked jury — Turner is accused of threatening to assault or murder three Chicago federal appeals court judges with the intent to intimidate or retaliate against them for upholding a municipal gun ban.

The charge is based on a pair of postings Turner made on his blog last June, in which he said the judges "deserved to be killed" and published their photos and court-

house addresses. He could face up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

Turner, who built an audience of neo-Nazis and white supremacists, testified Wednesday that the FBI recruited him in 2003 to gather intelligence on extremist groups. Code-named Valhalla, he said he was paid more than \$100,000 over five years and coached on how to make violent statements that would not violate the law.

Quoting from Turner's commentaries, Hogan noted the talk-radio host regularly used highly offensive and racist language in attacks on ethnic, religious and racial groups and periodically targeted judges, saying things such as he didn't believe that killing a judge would be wrong.

Turner insisted he is not a racist and the people he singled out were either murderers — as in the case of the Washington, D.C. snipers — terrorists, illegal aliens, or others engaged in criminal activity.

He said his vitriolic commentary was just for show, part of his shock jock persona. "I don't hate Jews, blacks and Mexicans," he said.

"Isn't it a fact that you were a member of the Aryan Nation?"

Hogan asked at one point, suggesting his prominence in the white-supremacist movement was the reason his FBI handler contacted him.

"That's an outright falsehood," Turner shot back.

He also denied telling his handler that he was a member of the National Alliance, the largest neo-Nazi group in the U.S., though he did give speeches before the group.

Turner said that patriotic feelings sparked by the loss of a friend on Sept. 11 motivated him to help the FBI fight domestic terrorism.

Turner told Hogan that he was investigated by various law enforcement agencies for his radical comments, but until now prosecutors had declined to charge him based on his right to free speech.

Turner acknowledged that the First Amendment doesn't protect against a "true threat" and the speaker need not intend to carry out the threat.

"But I didn't make a threat. I rendered an opinion," he told Hogan.

"In your mind?" Hogan asked. "Yes," he replied. "I never said I was going to do anything."

The cross-examination was to continue today.

\$1.6M: Fell House

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amassed an \$800,000 Bergen County Open Space grant and a \$500,000 Green Acres grant.

But the homeowner was firm on the \$1.6 million price tag — which Concerned Citizens learned from the tax office is fair market value, said Pat Finn, president of Concerned Citizens of Allendale.

So the group closed with its grant money and a \$300,000 promissory note. It has applied to the county for additional grant money and is continuing its fund raising.

The public will be invited in for an open house in the next few weeks. "Hopefully they will be so enchanted by it they will want to help," Finn said.

Concerned Citizens hopes to use the home for educational programs, workshops, lectures and as a meeting space. The barn could be a gallery for local artists to display their work.

"We want to grow the next generation of preservations and environmentalists," Finn said. "But I think the first steps will be getting the house in shape."

The house will need a roof and "some typical things an older house needs," Finn said, adding, "We're very pleased that basically it's in good shape."

The group is also looking to local landscapers to help restore the once award-winning gardens, which are now overgrown.



JON CHIN/SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

The group Preservation New Jersey named the Fell House one of the state's most endangered historic sites in 2009.

Democrats: Pick candidates

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Wilson of Leonia and Maywood Mayor Timothy Eustace — dropped out of the race before Thursday night's convention.

The Democrats may face the toughest challenge to their power on the county level in several years. The BCDO has experienced a series of setbacks during the past two years, including the federal corruption convictions of former Chairman Joseph Ferriero and the party's chief counsel, Dennis Oury, as well as losing two county freeholder seats in last year's election.

Michael Kasparian, who took over as head of the BCDO in the aftermath of Ferriero's fall from grace, promised to reform the party when he took control of it in January 2009, but some members contend that change did not come quickly enough.

"We have a chance to choose the right candidate who is not affiliated with the old regime,"

Kovic said. "We need to be the first people to challenge our own people when they do something wrong ... this is going to be the biggest challenge in the election."

Kasparian acknowledged that the Democratic Party has had challenges on the national level during the past year, but described the county party as unified and said he expects a strong showing in November.

"I can't think of another time that the Democratic message has had more resonance," he said.

The Democrats still hold five of seven freeholder seats, but control of the board is at stake this year, with three seats to be contested. Until this year, the freeholder board had been filled entirely by Democrats since January 2007.

County Clerk Kathleen Donovan, a moderate Republican, plans to face McNerney in the general election, and, in contrast to recent primary election cycles, the Bergen County Republican

Organization appears to be unified in its support of her.

Democrats expressed mixed feelings about their chances in the November election.

McGuire describes his five years of work as a sheriff "as unprecedented" and specifically cited his office's implementation of "telepsychiatry" to save the county money on psychiatric evaluation costs.

The program uses teleconferencing to initially evaluate detainees who claim psychiatric problems before further evaluation.

"The energy is here in Bergen County for the Democrats this year," he said.

Assemblyman Gordon Johnson of Englewood gave a more muted response when asked about the party's chances.

"It's going to be a very difficult fight," he said. "We in the Democratic Party had better have a strategy in place."

Woman charged with prostitution

TENAFLY — A Palisades Park woman was charged Wednesday with engaging in prostitution after she offered sexual services for money to an undercover detective at a spa, police said. Li Hua, 43, was released pending a court appearance. The arrest was the result of a joint investigation between the Tenafly Police Department and the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office's Special Investigations Squad.

"We received information that there may be some type of activity going on there related to prostitution," Police Chief Michael Bruno said of the Day Spa on South Summit Street. The spa was shut down due to code violations.

— Karen Sudol

Road: Lights out

From Page L-1

But you won't see workers from the Bergen County road department changing bulbs on this bridge. At first, county officials weren't sure who controlled the lights. So, we called the electricity supplier — Public Service Electric & Gas Co.

"We notified Rutherford some months back that the lights were the responsibility of its owner," said PSE&G's Beth Kramer.

Rutherford?

The borough, of course, is the Bergen town that anchors the span's eastern side. So, we asked police if they'd reported any outages since the day in 2005 when two Randolph teens, Jonathan and James Zarate, tried to throw a suitcase with the dismembered body of 16-year-old Jennifer Parks into the river there. Thanks to an alert Secaucus cop who thwarted them, the victim got a proper burial, and the Zarates were dispatched to prison after two tortuous trials.

Changing the bridge lights, though, has taken much longer.

"We got a few calls about them," said Rutherford Police Director John Thompson, "so we called DOT but they referred us to PSE&G."

PSE&G again!

Anybody who has ever seen three cooks manage the same Thanksgiving dinner can appreciate how a kitchen can be thrown into chaos, especially when one of them forgets to buy stuffing.

Actually, the Union Avenue lights represent child's play compared to a westbound stretch of Route 4 near the George Washington Bridge. For 20 years, this column and its readers have been bounced from Fort Lee to Bergen County to the Port Authority to PSE&G. On occasion, the lights come to life — but only briefly.

Route 4 lights in Teaneck and

Hackensack aren't any brighter. Neither are those on Route 21 not far from Union Avenue. In Central Jersey, the king of chronic jurisdictional darkness is the dizzying confluence of Route 287 and the New Jersey Turnpike traversed each day by 105,000 cars. Several lights there actually work, but several don't.

These roadways are controlled by the DOT and the turnpike authority which cite aging underground components that require costly digging to repair. "It's an uphill battle," said DOT's Tim Greeley, adding that fixes are most cost effective when timed to spring paving.

The prospects for things lighting up anytime soon aren't very, uh, bright. The state's highway trust fund, its chief funding source for maintenance (besides Congress), is on life support, and the governor was elected partly on a pledge not to raise the gas tax which feeds the fund. And the budget-squeezed DOT now operates with nearly half the manpower it had 15 years ago.

So, under these circumstances, what are the chances that DOT or Bergen County or PSE&G or Rutherford or somebody with a truck, a ladder and several light bulbs will be able to find his way to Union Avenue?

By Thursday, Bergen officials had dug deep enough into its record to realize that county responsibility for the PSE&G meters that monitor the lights there began in 2002 when the span was built, said county spokeswoman Sheri Hensley.

An electrical contractor is due there today with a truck full of \$50 bulbs.

Road Warrior passes through here Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. E-mail cichowski@northjersey.com.

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