

## BAY AREA

## SEBASTOPOL

## Grieving family ripped off by thieves

By Ellen Huet

A Sebastopol family already stunned by the mysterious death of an 18-year-old son in Peru was rocked even further Wednesday and Thursday after two separate incidents robbed them of more than \$3,000, authorities said.

The family of Kyle Nolan, 18, has been grieving since Sept. 11 when they got the news that the teen, who had been missing since Aug. 27 after he failed to return from a spiritual retreat in Peru, was found dead there apparently after consuming a hallucinogenic drink.

Neighbors and friends of the family sent donations and condolences to the Blue Sky Veterinary Clinic in Rohnert

Park, where Nolan's mother, Ingeborg Oswald, has worked for 12 years caring for pets. A tissue box decorated with yellow and orange hearts and a picture of Nolan sat on the counter at the clinic for donations to help cover Oswald's expenses.

But Thursday morning, a woman came in, snatched the box and fled with approximately \$2,000, police said.

"She said, 'I'm going to put the appointment card in my car!'" said Phylis Accornero, who runs the office and was the employee on duty at the time. "I said OK — I was getting her a brochure on some flea medicine. I turned my back to do that, then turned back around and I thought,

'Why isn't she back?' I looked outside and didn't see a car. I turned and looked through the office and then I saw — and thought, 'Oh my God, the box. The box is gone.'"

The woman had been talking to Accornero for about 40 minutes before the grab and run.

"She talked my ear off until I turned my back, and, man, she was gone," Accornero said. "What is wrong with people? Have they no sense of decency?"

The thief is described as a thin woman, about 5 feet 4, with brown, collar-length hair with gray streaks. She's likely in her 50s and is missing several top front teeth, Taylor said.

A day earlier, a scam artist

conned Nolan's grandmother out of more than \$2,000.

According to Accornero, Nolan's grandmother got a call at her home in Southern California from a man pretending to be Kevin, one of Nolan's two siblings. The scammer said he was in jail and needed money for bail but didn't want the grandmother to tell his mom (Oswald), because she was distressed with Nolan's death.

The grandmother agreed and wired \$2,100 to the man before she realized it was a scam, Accornero said.

Nolan was supposed to return Aug. 27 from a 12-day retreat at the Shimbre Shamanic Center in the Peruvian jungle.

When he didn't, his mother

finally reached the program, who said Nolan had taken his belongings and walked away on his own. Oswald and Nolan's sister flew to Peru to find him, passing out flyers, Accornero said.

But after they returned, Oswald got a call from Peruvian authorities: The man who ran the retreat confessed to having found Nolan's body after a ritual in which he consumed ayahuasca, a psychoactive brew. He and two other retreat staff told police they buried the body, Accornero said. Oswald flew to Peru to retrieve the body.

The stolen donations are meant to help offset the costs of Oswald's two last-minute trips to Peru after Nolan first went missing, Accornero said.

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Lea Suzuki / The Chronicle

## Off the wall performance at the Renoir Hotel

Sandia Langlois (left), Caity Beard and Jennifer Chien rehearse Friday for the production "Niagara Falling," which will be performed on the west wall of the Renoir Hotel in San Francisco from Wednesday through Friday at 8:30 and 9:30 p.m.

## ALBANY

## Whole Foods drops plans for store

By Henry K. Lee

Citing years of delays, Whole Foods said Friday that it was ending its 2007 lease agreement with the University of California for a planned store near a graduate student housing complex in Albany.

In a statement, the grocery said terms of the lease for a vacant parcel at San Pablo Avenue and Monroe Street had not been met and that the "project has been delayed for several years." Details of what terms had not been met were not disclosed.

"Whole Foods is very interested in serving this community and will continue to actively pursue location op-

portunities, and when a site has been secured, we will announce it on a quarterly earnings call, when all new store locations are publicly announced," said Whole Foods spokeswoman Jennifer Maples.

Whole Foods, headquartered in Austin, Texas, had planned to build a 55,000-square-foot store as part of a mixed-use retail space and 175-unit senior housing project not far from the existing University Village in Albany, a residential complex for UC graduate students. The project is south of the UC Berkeley research farm known as Gill Tract, the site of recent Occupy the Farm protests that led

to arrests.

UC Assistant Vice Chancellor Robert Hatheway said in a statement that the university regretted the loss of the "project's anchor retail tenant" but that it understood the store's frustration over delays and lawsuits filed against the city of Albany.

"To serve the needs of the Albany Village residents and the broader community, we are beginning the process to find a new retail grocery store partner for that location," Hatheway wrote.

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## OAKLAND

## \$917,400 is going to outside vendors over police reform

By Demian Bulwa

The city of Oakland has agreed to pay \$917,400 to nine outside contractors so far this year in a bid to comply with court-ordered Police Department reforms and avoid a federal takeover of the force, according to records released Friday.

The city is spending nearly all of the money — \$775,000 — on investigations into whether officers should be disciplined for their actions during clashes with Occupy Oakland protesters.

The use of outside vendors, and its high cost, have been questioned by a federal judge and an independent court-appointed monitor overseeing the reforms in Oakland. U.S. District Judge Thelton Henderson had ordered the city to detail its use of consultants by Friday.

City officials have said they had no choice but to seek outside help with the Occupy-related disciplinary cases, given the scores of complaints — many from people who said they were offended by images shown in media reports.

Oakland officials also said they wanted to win public trust with an independent review. In addition, many internal affairs officers, including the head of the division, were assigned to street duty during the protests.

The city is also paying consultants to help with crowd control, crime prevention strategy and overall

performance, records show.

One consultant, Karen Ijichi Perkins of Oakland, has a \$24,900 contract to "cultivate internal organizational and cultural changes that will create a community-friendly and well-respected" police force.

The Police Department has been trying for a decade to make reforms ordered by a federal judge after four officers, who called themselves the Riders, were accused in 2000 of imposing vigilante justice in West Oakland.

The officers were never convicted, but a lawsuit filed by more than 100 of their alleged victims resulted in a civil judgment against the city of \$10.9 million, as well as the ordered reforms.

The plaintiffs' attorneys are preparing to ask Judge Henderson to place the department under federal receivership for failing to implement all the reforms. A hearing is set for Dec. 13.

Records show the city's contractors in Occupy-related disciplinary cases are the Frazier Group; DR Associates International; Belcher, Ehle, Medina and Associates; Michael Glenn Investigations; Renne Sloan Holtzman Sakai; and Burke, Williams & Sorensen.

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## FROM THE COVER

## Doubt casts shadow on campus opening

CCSF from page C1

The 14-story building, a \$138 million glass and steel structure at 800 Kearny St., will serve thousands of students who had been studying at smaller sites leased from churches and the San Francisco school district.

Most classes will be non-credit, including business, vocational, citizenship and English as a second language.

Credit classes will include architecture, culinary and math.

College Trustee Lawrence Wong has been the force behind the building, with his family contributing \$400,000 to help furnish it with top-of-the-line decor.

"I'm excited!" Wong said before the ribbon cutting. He recalled the pleas of Chinatown residents asking for better facilities in 1994, as he

campaigned to be a trustee. Students were attending class mainly at 940 Filbert St., an old primary school. Wong made a new campus his priority.

City College bought the site in 1998 with funds from a bond measure. The remainder came from two more local bond measures, \$48 million in state funds and donations.

A 2008 lawsuit from the Hilton Hotel over blocked views added about \$3 million to the cost, Kamer said. Two other lawsuits also failed.

"We went through tremendous opposition," said Wong.

Campus Dean Minh Hoa Ta said, "All education institu-

tions should be like this."

What the college's officials could not say was whether the new facility — and two others nearby they are keeping at 880 Clay St. and 731 Commercial St. — would cost more or less than the old sites.

The lack of understanding by City College about its own budget was among the managerial and financial problems identified in July by the Accreditation Commission of Junior and Community Colleges, which gave City College until March 15 to fix the problems. If it does not, the college will be forced to close.

Closing some City College

campuses has been discussed as one way to save money. But even the state's Fiscal Crisis & Management Assistance Team — brought in to help City College — was frustrated because the college is unsure of how much any of its campuses cost.

"They don't have the data to show whether they're saving money or not" in the new campus, said Michelle Plumbtree, an analyst with the team. "It's definitely a problem."

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