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Cop convicted of theft

County officer stole thousands from police lodge as treasurer

BY BILL DOLAN
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CROWN POINT | A Lake Criminal Court jury convicted a suspended Lake

County police sergeant of stealing fellow police officers' money while he was treasurer of their Fraternal Order of Police lodge. Jurors deliberated less than an hour Thursday afternoon before finding Mitchell King Jr., a 40-year-old veteran police officer, guilty of felony theft. He faces a maximum penalty of three years in prison when Criminal Court Judge Thomas Stefaniak Jr. sentences him Sept. 30.

King had been suspended from police duties without pay for more than a year and a half after he was accused of stealing at least \$9,000 from the Fraternal Order of Police's Chris Anton Lodge 125 between January 2004 and June 2005. He was serving as treasurer of the social organization for county police officers, which also acts as a bargaining agent for many of the 170 uniformed officers on the county sher-

iff's police staff. King, who didn't testify, did not betray any emotions when the verdict was read except for a slight shrug. Defense attorney John Cantrell said afterward, "We were blown away by the decision and disappointed. We still believe Mitchell King didn't steal. We will appeal." King's defense hinged on the

THE DEFENSE: The attorney said Mitchell King Jr. got into trouble when he got into an argument with the sheriff over labor issues and switched political allegiance to former Sheriff John Bunch.

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E.C. Central High students learn to sail, courtesy of PUC professor



CHRISTOPHER SMITH PHOTOS | THE TIMES

Geoff Barrow, left, training captain for the Indiana Sailing Association, and his Cardinal Sailing students from East Chicago Central High School take to the lake on a perfectly breezy afternoon for sailing class.

Testing the WATERS

BY JEFF BURTON
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EAST CHICAGO | As he felt the cool breeze along the docks at the East Chicago Marina, Geoff Barrow knew it was going to be an excellent afternoon.

"This is some great wind," he said. "We've got to go out."

A professor in Purdue University Calumet's Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Barrow has spent his last 21 summers teaching East Chicago Central High School students the ins and outs of sailing. For Barrow, who grew up in Cheshire, along England's western coast, sailing comes naturally.

"I've been sailing all my life," he said. "I went on a boat before I ever went on a car."

He founded the nonprofit Indiana Sailing Association in 1989 as a way to reach out to a changing community.

"At the time, I knew the principal at East Chicago Central," Barrow said. "We thought it was a good idea."

He started out that first summer with six teenagers, teaching them about sailing



PUC professor Geoff Barrow offers direction to East Chicago Central High School student Adam Serrano as he steers a 37-foot sailboat on Lake Michigan during a sailing lesson.

ON THE WEB: See a video of the class on Lake Michigan at NWI.COM.

and safety in the classroom before they headed out into Lake Michigan.

Rose Amaro, office manager at the East Chicago Marina, said Barrow has shared his love of sailing with hundreds of young people over the years.

"It's a labor of love for him," she said. "He loves taking the kids out there."

Amaro said in addition to the summer program, Barrow also involves the youth groups from Holy Trinity and St. Patrick's churches.

"They come out and they have a picnic, and he takes them out sailing," Amaro said.

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Cash for Clunkers program depleted

Popularity could mean end of vehicle rebates

BY SUSAN ERLER
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Local auto dealers grappled with the news late Thursday that the wildly popular Cash for Clunkers car trade-in program could be suspended.

"I hope it's not true," said Danny Allen, general manager of Webb Ford in Highland.

Sales at the dealership this week shot to triple what they had been before the government-sponsored program got under way July 24.

"It was like the old days," when booming auto sales were routine, Allen said.

The White House said Thursday it was reviewing the program amid concerns the \$1 billion budget for rebates for new auto purchases may have been exhausted in only a week. A White House official said the program was not suspended and options

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Tavern is sued in fatal DUI accident

Suit filed by estate of man who drove drunk

BY BOB KASARDA
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VALPARAISO | A representative of a Chesterton man who reportedly drove drunk and killed himself in a crash earlier this year has filed a lawsuit placing blame on the bar where the man had been drinking and the owner of the truck with which he collided.

The suit on behalf of Eugene Joseph claims the 42-year-old man became visibly intoxicated while drinking Feb. 22 at the Shift Change Tap in Burns Harbor, yet a bartender continued to provide him with alcohol.

Joseph drove away in his pickup truck and was traveling at an unsafe speed south on U.S. 421 when he collided with a semitrailer that crossed his lane while turning west from the northbound lanes of the highway into the Gas City truck stop just south of

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