

Private parties help in search of Fossett

BY PAUL ELIAS
The Associated Press

MINDEN, Nevada — The search for missing aviator Steve Fossett has generated Internet tips and volunteer pilots, though whether the extra aid is helping or hurting the rescue effort is still an open question.

Driven by Google search technology that enables couch potatoes to view from their computers high-resolution photographs of the rugged Nevada landscape where Fossett went missing, thousands of amateur volunteers are trying to help the hundreds of official searchers.

"This is kind of a new thing for us," said Civil Air Patrol Maj. Cynthia Ryan, who said every Google-generated tip is reviewed and the best ones passed on to pilots. So far, there have been several false sightings of Fossett's airplane.

A private search effort also is being driven in part by hotel mag-

nate Barron Hilton, who has opened the airstrip at his Flying M Ranch to search planes and helicopters. Fossett took off from the ranch's runway more than a week ago.

While the private effort has worked side by side with the government during the eight-day hunt, officials said they are becoming worried that the latest call for volunteers could bring in people who are unfamiliar with the vast and often dangerous landscape.

"It has not been condoned, nor is it necessarily helpful to the law enforcement community," Lyon County Undersheriff Joe Sanford said Sunday. "We don't want searchers to have to go out to look for searchers."

On Monday, Sanford explained he was most concerned with the possibility that untrained searchers would begin conducting independent ground searches in the rugged, sparsely populated areas where Fossett is believed to be



Sanford

lost.

Sanford said a lack of oversight sometimes leads to the official search effort covering ground already searched by the private effort. He said the private effort was still welcome, but noted that it is "impossible to track."

On Fossett's Internet site, a link is offered to the satellite image analysis project, and search coordinator Mark Marshall has asked for help from pilots trained in search and rescue.

The 63-year-old Fossett was last heard from Sept. 3. Authorities believe he was carrying only one bottle of water, but he is considered an expert pilot and survivalist.

High blood pressure rises among children

BY ROB STEIN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The rate of health-threatening high blood pressure has started rising among America's children for the first time in decades, researchers reported Monday, a trend long feared by experts worried about the consequences of the obesity epidemic.

After dropping steadily since the 1960s, diagnoses of early hypertension and full-blown high blood pressure began creeping up among children and adolescents beginning in the late 1980s as the obesity epidemic apparently began to take its toll, according to an analysis of data collected from nearly 30,000 youths by seven federal surveys.

Although the increases so far have been small — just 1 percent for early hypertension and 2.3 percent for full-blown hypertension — they translate into hundreds of thousands more children developing what often becomes a chronic, lifelong condition. Long considered primarily an affliction of the middle-aged and elderly, high blood pressure is a leading cause of a host of health problems, including heart attacks and strokes — the nation's top killers.

"This is a major public health problem," said Rebecca Din-Dzetham of the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, who led the study, which will be published in the Sept. 25 issue of the American Heart Association journal *Circulation*. "Unless this upward trend in

high blood pressure is reversed, we could be facing an explosion of new cardiovascular disease cases in young adults and adults."

With an adult form of diabetes already being diagnosed more frequently in children and more young people developing high cholesterol, the new finding is another indication that the obesity epidemic is spawning a generation at heightened risk for illnesses that struck their parents and grandparents only later in life, experts said.

"This is very worrisome," said Elizabeth Nabel, director of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. "Typically in the past we didn't begin to see high blood pressure until someone was in their 30s or 40s. This is another piece of evidence suggesting that the obesity epidemic will likely turn into a heart disease epidemic."

Previous research had indicated that the obesity epidemic was driving up blood pressure levels among children. But the new research is the first to document that the higher levels had begun translating into medically significant high blood pressure and a recently defined condition known as "pre-hypertension."

Although other factors may be playing a role, such as children getting as less exercise, eating more salty fast food and prepared foods, and experiencing greater stress, researchers believe obesity is the main culprit.

"If you were going to make a list of the factors that are driving this, obesity would be numbers one through 10," Nabel said.

6 arrested in W. Virginia hate crime

The Associated Press

LOGAN, W.Va. — A woman who authorities said was sexually abused, beaten and stabbed while held captive for at least a week was repeatedly called a racial slur during the attacks, the victim's mother said.

Six people, all white, were arrested in connection with the alleged abduction of the 23-year-old black woman, sheriff's officials said Monday.

State, local and federal officials planned to meet Tuesday to decide whether to file hate crime charges, Logan County sheriff's Sgt. Sonya Porter said. An FBI spokesman in Pittsburgh, Bill Crowley, confirmed that the agency is looking into possible civil rights violations.

Authorities were still looking for two people they believe drove the woman to the home where she was abused, said Logan County Chief Deputy V.K. Dingess.

The woman's abductors called her the N-word "every time they stabbed her," the woman's mother told The Charleston Gazette.

Deputies found the woman Saturday when they went to the home in Big Creek, about 35



Frankie Brewster



Karen Burton



Danny Combs



Bobby Brewster



Alisha Burton



George Messer

miles southwest of Charleston, to investigate an anonymous tip from someone who had witnessed the abuse, Porter said Tuesday.

One of the suspects, Frankie Brewster, was sitting on the front porch and told deputies she was alone, but moments later the woman limped toward the door, her arms outstretched, saying "Help me," the sheriff's department said in a news release.

Besides being sexually assaulted, the woman had been stabbed four times in the left leg and beaten, Porter said. Her eyes were black and blue. The wounds were

inflicted at least a week ago, deputies said.

The woman was forced to eat rat and dog feces and drink from a toilet, according to the criminal complaint filed in magistrate court. She also had been choked with a cord, it alleges.

One of those arrested, Karen Burton, is accused of cutting the woman's ankle with a knife. She used the N-word in telling the woman she was victimized because she is black, according to the criminal complaint.

Deputies say the woman was also doused with hot water while being sexually assaulted.

Clinton to return donations made by fundraiser under federal investigation

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's presidential campaign says it will return \$850,000 in donations raised by Democratic fundraiser Norman Hsu, who is under federal investigation for allegedly violating election laws.

Clinton previously had planned only to give to charity \$23,000 she received from Hsu for her presidential and senatorial campaigns and to her political action committee, HillPac.

The FBI is investigating whether Hsu paid so-called straw donors to send campaign contributions to Clinton and other candidates, a law enforcement official said Monday.

"In light of recent events and allegations that Mr. Norman Hsu engaged in an illegal investment scheme, we have decided out of an

abundance of caution to return the money he raised for our campaign," Clinton spokesman Howard Wolfson said in a statement Monday night. "An estimated 260 donors this week will receive refunds totaling approximately \$850,000 from the campaign."

Wolfson said the Clinton campaign also will vigorously review its fundraisers, including thorough criminal background checks, in the future. "In any instances where a source of a bundler's income is in question, the campaign will take affirmative steps to verify its origin," he said.

The amount that the campaign identified as raised by Hsu would make him one of her top fundraisers. During the first six months of this year, her presidential campaign raised \$52 million from individual contributors, second to Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., who raised \$58.5 million.

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