

## 'Local News'

Cont. from Page 13

counters for sale. Nothing for sale has been stolen. Vigorous laws in effect force the pawn store to report all items in detail, including serial numbers. The GemsN'Loans shops do not deal in guns.

More and more people are discovering the value and good sense of obtaining money from a pawn shop, as well as shopping there for genuine bargains.

GemsN'Loans Headquarters and primary store is located at 3753 Mission Avenue in Oceanside. Phone 760-722-2762. The other two stores are at 925 South Santa Fe in Vista, 760.732.3999, and at 327 West Mission Road in Escondido, 760.722.PAWN.

### San Marcos Families Frustrated Over Student Transfer Plan

Parents of students who live in the Old Creek Ranch area are crying 'foul' over plans to move about 200 of San Elijo Elementary School's 940 students to other schools in the district.

Many parents complained that one of the reasons they bought where they did was the opportunity to be close to San Elijo Elementary school which is less than a mile from much of the neighborhood.

Another elementary school was to have been built to serve the area back in 2005. The first school, which was to have cost \$6.5 million, ultimately cost \$20 million, officials said. The skyrocketing real estate prices prevented the school district from acquiring the second parcel of land, they said.

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in the Marines for 3 1/2 years, was married briefly, had a child, and divorced. He received a psychiatric discharge from the Marines in 1987. Since then, he lived on money he made from selling drugs and other illegal activities. He was working at a carnival in Oceanside at the time of the murder.

Michaels presented evidence at trial that his girlfriend, 16-year-old Christina Clemens, had been sexually abused repeatedly by her mother. She testified at trial that she asked Michaels to kill her mother and that, if he didn't, she would commit suicide.

An autopsy showed numerous stab wounds and blunt force injuries to the head. Two stab wounds to the neck were fatal.

Police caught Popik near the apartment complex and arrested him. A witness identified him as one of the persons she had earlier seen working at a carnival in Oceanside. On October 17, 1988, police arrested Michaels at the carnival. He confessed immediately after his arrest.

In the first case at the Vista courthouse to result in a death sentence, Michaels was convicted of the throat-slashing murder of his girlfriend's mother, JoAnn Clemons, 41, of Escondido.

Superior Court Judge J. Morgan Lester imposed a death sentence July 31, 1990.

The state Supreme Court upheld a death sentence in July, 2002.

### 'Crazy Lucy . . .' Cont. from Page 13

*the door . . .but when they heard us trying to gain entry we surmise they jumped from the balcony. This was on the third floor so we're kinda surprised they weren't injured in the jump. They fled from the area.*

*However, we had some witnesses who gave us a description of some guys that looked suspicious. One witness had seen the guy that jumped from the balcony. We got clothing descriptions, height, weight . . . and began an immediate search of the area.*

*We caught one guy within a half-hour. One of our responding perimeter units spotted him and took him into custody. In time, two others would be taken into custody, tried, convicted and sentenced.*

*It turns out the daughter of the woman killed was also arrested. She, in fact, was the instigator of it all. She had persuaded her boyfriend, Kurt Michaels, a recently discharged Marine, to kill her mom for the insurance money. Michaels was sentenced to death and is still on death row; Darren Popik got life, the other, Joseph Paulk, the driver of the getaway car, a long term, I believe 18-20 years.*

*I guess the reason this case sticks with me is it was so needless, senseless, so brutal, so vicious.*

Court records show that 16 year old Christina Clemens was living with her mother temporarily while on leave from an adolescent rehabilitation facility.

Michaels, who was known as "Moccasin Kurt," was 22 at the time of the killing. He served

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