

## Five sex offenders sentenced for failure to register

Contributed by Editor  
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LAKE COUNTY &ndash; A report from the office of District Attorney Jon Hopkins states that five registered sex offenders who failed to register according to law have been sentenced to prison terms over the last three months.

Prosecution of sex offenders in Lake County remains a top priority for the District Attorney's Office, according to a statement from Hopkins' office.

From April 27 through July 27, five registered sex offenders were sentenced to lengthy prison commitments for failing to comply with registration requirements. William Leland Fred, Clarence McCarty, Charles Sparks, Alberto Mendoza, and Jeffery Lee Hackler-Knight each violated Penal Code section 290, the sex registration statute, and received prison sentences as a result.

Deputy District Attorney John R. DeChaine prosecuted each of the five defendants, with help in several of the cases coming from Det. Mike Curran of the Lake County Sheriff's Office.

Fred sentenced to four-year term

On July 27, Judge Richard Martin sentenced William Leland Fred, age 51, to four years in state prison for failing to register as a sex offender.

Fred is required to register pursuant to penal code section 290 as a result of a felony 1976 conviction, because he was found guilty of rape in concert with others while armed with a knife.

He pleaded guilty on June 29 to one felony count of failing to register as a sex offender, in violation of Penal Code section 290(a)(1)(D) and the District Attorney's Office required that he admit that he had suffered a prior strike conviction.

The court sentenced Fred to two years in prison for failing to register. However, because he was required to admit the prior strike conviction, his prison sentence of two years was enhanced to a total of four years.

The admission of the prior strike conviction also mandates that Fred will not be eligible for parole until he serves at least 80 percent of his prison commitment. Had he not been required to admit his prior strike conviction, he would have been eligible for parole after serving only 50 percent of his time.

Prior to being sentenced, Fred was held in custody with bail set in the amount of \$50,000.

Det. Curran of the Lake County Sheriff's Office investigated the case with the assistance of Deputy Fidjeland.

McCarty sentenced to five years

On July 2, Judge Arthur Mann sentenced Clarence John McCarty, age 36, to five years in state prison for failing to register as a sex offender. McCarty is required to register pursuant to penal code section 290 as a result of a felony sexual battery conviction in 1999.

McCarty pleaded guilty on Feb. 23 to one felony count of failing to register as a sex offender, in violation of Penal Code section 290(a)(1)(D).

A felony penal code section 290 violation normally exposes the perpetrator to a maximum prison commitment of three years. However, McCarty admitted at the time of his guilty plea that he had previously served two prior prison terms and had not remained free of prison custody for more than five years between each prior prison commitment.

McCarty's admission to both prior prison terms was that his prison sentence of three years was enhanced to five years.

At the conclusion of the sentencing hearing, Judge Mann remanded the defendant into custody.

Curran investigated the case with the assistance of Deputies Chwialkowski and Hall.

Sparks sentenced to four years

On June 22, Charles Henry Sparks, Jr., age 40, was sentenced to four years in state prison for failing to register as a sex offender. Sparks is required to register with law enforcement as a result of a rape conviction in 1995.

Sparks pleaded guilty on April 6, to one felony count of failing to register as a sex offender, in violation of Penal Code section 290. He had been registering at one address but the investigation revealed he had in fact been spending significant time at a second address and not registering at the second address. Sparks had been out of custody on bail of \$15,000 throughout the prosecution of the case.

Pursuant to Penal Code section 1203(e)(4), probation cannot be granted to an individual who has two or more prior felony convictions unless the court first determines that the particular case is an unusual one and that the interests of justice would best be served by a grant of probation. The District Attorney's Office alleged such a probation limitation against Sparks and probation was subsequently denied.

Because Sparks admitted to having served a prior prison term at the time of his plea, his prison commitment was increased to a total of four years.

Judge Martin presided over the taking of Sparks's guilty plea as well as the June 22 sentencing hearing. Curran investigated the case.

Mendoza sentenced to six years

On April 27, Judge Stephen O. Hedstrom sentenced Alberto Mendoza, age 30, to six years in prison for failing to register as a sex offender.

Det. Martin Snyder of the Clearlake Police Department investigated the Mendoza case after Clearlake Police Officer Timothy Hobbs learned that Mendoza had moved into Lake County and that he was a sex offender who was likely out of

compliance.

The investigation revealed that Mendoza had been living in Clearlake for approximately eight months before coming to the attention of law enforcement. His violation was aggravated in that he had been registering as a sex offender in Sonoma County, but had moved to Lake County without notifying the authorities.

On Feb. 2, Mendoza pleaded no contest to violating Penal Code section 290.

The District Attorney's Office required Mendoza to admit that he was previously convicted of committing a lewd and lascivious act with a child under 14, in violation of Penal Code section 288(a), which served to double his sentence to six years pursuant to applicable law.

**Hackler-Knight receives 13-year sentence**

On April 27, Judge Hedstrom sentenced Jeffery Lee Hackler-Knight, age 22, to six years in prison for failing to register as a sex offender.

Det. Curran investigated the Hackler-Knight case. In doing so, Curran obtained evidence that Hackler-Knight had moved from his Middletown residence to Clearlake without notifying the authorities. The Lake County Sheriff's Office has jurisdiction over registrants in Middletown and should have been notified by Hackler-Knight within five business days of any change of residence.

On March 9, Hackler-Knight pleaded guilty to failing to register as a sex offender in violation of Penal Code section 290. He also was required to admit a prior felony strike conviction at the time of his plea, which doubled the sentence to six years pursuant to applicable law. Committing Lewd and Lascivious Acts with a Child under the age of 14, in violation of Penal Code section 288(a), was the prior strike Hackler-Knight admitted.

Because Hackler-Knight was on felony probation for his underlying sex offenses at the time he violated the registration law, he also was found in violation of that probation and was simultaneously sentenced to state prison for his underlying sex crimes.

In total, Hackler-Knight was sentenced to 13 years and four months in prison.

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