

## Accused murderer investigated for possessing weapon in jail

by Cheryl McDermott

BEND, Ore. -- Although no charges have yet been filed in connection with a county jail inmate allegedly possessing a weapon, the La Pine man accused of murdering his wife and burying her remains in a barrel is under investigation for the alleged crime, officials reported. Darrell K. Middlekauff - DCJ photo Few details have been released, but Deschutes County Sheriff's Captain Marc Mills and District Attorney Mike Dugan did reveal with correction deputies located contraband within the county jail facility on March 15, and an investigation by the patrol division began at that time. The Sheriff's Detective Division is continuing the investigation, and upon completion will forward the findings to the district attorney's office.

While the news release prepared by Mills and Dugan did not reveal what "contraband" was found, the sheriff's logs available indicate references to "gun, firearm offenses, CCW (carrying a concealed weapon), etc." and possession of a weapon by inmate Middlekauff. The alleged weapon possession involves 45-year old Darrell K. Middlekauff, a La Pine resident that was arrested in December, 2006, for the alleged murder of his wife, Brenda, who was 39 when she went missing in July of 2002. According to then Sheriff Les Stiles, a co-worker of the woman reported her missing which prompted an investigation into her disappearance. In mid-2005, Brenda Middlekauff's remains were found about 1/2 mile from her La Pine home in a partially buried barrel. Middlekauff was arrested for aggravated murder and first-degree sexual abuse, and was transferred to the Deschutes County Jail from an Oregon State Department of Corrections Facility. Middlekauff had been imprisoned in DOC since March 2005 on unrelated drug and burglary offenses, and was scheduled to be released eight days after his arrest for murder.

Middlekauff pleaded not guilty in November, 2007, but his trial is not expected to begin until 2009.

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