



Stan Bird/North County News
Orange police Officer Mike Streed applies his artistic skills in forensic science to sketch a missing person on a new computer-imaging system.

POLICE

Artistic license

Orange officer mans area's sole linkup to find long-missing children, suspects

By Anne M. Peterson
North County News

Part of Mike Streed's job requires he stretch people's faces and watch them grow old.

Streed isn't a plastic surgeon but as a police officer and head of the Western Regional Age Progression Imaging Center for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, he uses his knowledge of forensic science to help locate missing children, fugitives, and suspects and to identify John Does.

Because of Streed's expertise, the Orange Police Department was chosen as the western regional center which will concentrate on finding missing children from Washington to New Mexico.

A \$500,000 grant from the Federal Office of Juvenile and Justice Training provided the money for the five US regional centers in New Jersey, South Carolina, Minnesota, Illinois and California.

Streed said the national center started using computer imaging for age progression of missing children in 1989.

"They started finding out that there was a striking similarity between the kids they found and the

age-progression photos," he said.

During the age-progression process, Streed is able to use a computer program to manipulate images so that children who have been missing for more than two years take on features of older children.

Through the computer Streed can stretch the face and overlap photos of older siblings so the missing child looks older.

A similar process is used for fugitives, suspects who have been at

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RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Brandied Roasted Chicken

- 1 (5-6 lb.) roasted chicken
- 1 can (20 oz.) sliced pineapple
- 1 can (6 oz.) pineapple juice
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1/3 cup brandy
- 2 tablespoons corn starch
- 2 teaspoons freshly grated orange peel
- 3 whole cloves

Place chicken in roasting pan. Roast in 425 degree oven 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 degrees, roast 1 1/4 hours or until done. Drain pineapple, reserving all liquid. Combine liquid with remaining ingredients. Cook, stirring, until clear and thickened. Add pineapple, heat through. Baste chicken every 10 minutes during last half hour. Garnish platter with pineapple slices. Serving with brandy sauce.

IMAGE: Computer system helps police find youths, suspects

FROM 5

large for a long time and unidentified bodies.

"The bottom line is even though people die, they've still got a family and they're still human," Streed said. "And the family deserves to know what happened."

In the case of missing children, Streed said most parents abduct their own children.

"If they were taken by someone else, it's likely they were murdered within the first 24 to 48 hours," he said. "What we're doing is providing hope for parents that their children will be found."

The process can be extremely labor-intensive, taking anywhere from eight hours to three days to age one photo. Missing children

photos are shipped back to the national center where they are distributed to police agencies.

Streed recently worked on a photo of an 8-year-old Los Angeles girl who has been missing for seven years. On the computer Streed stretched her face longer and closed the bridge of her nose, but he didn't move the eyes at all.

"The eyes are the identifier," Streed said. "Hopefully, they'll find her. The more you do, the more your chances are of finding her."

Streed said local police and county agencies are interested in the program.

"Everyone's interested in it because it's new and innovative," he said. "It'd be pretty exciting if we had an Orange County case."

Streed became interested in forensics more than 10 years ago as a sheriff in Santa Barbara.

"I've been fortunate to study with the best," he said. "The more I learn, the more I realize there is to learn. The only limit is your imagination."

"Police work has always been considered very macho and artists have always been thought of as 'out there,' but I never thought you'd be able to blend the two."

Streed said the work is rewarding when a child is found or some-

one is identified from a suspect photo as happens on the television show, "America's Most Wanted."

"It's a victim's service," he said. "We're dealing firsthand with these people. We're getting information out of the people that detectives can't always get."

Ideally, Streed is seeking grants to fund his forensics work full-time. He is only able to work on the computers for about 10 hours per week. He said Orange County does not have a full-time forensic artist but desperately needs one.

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