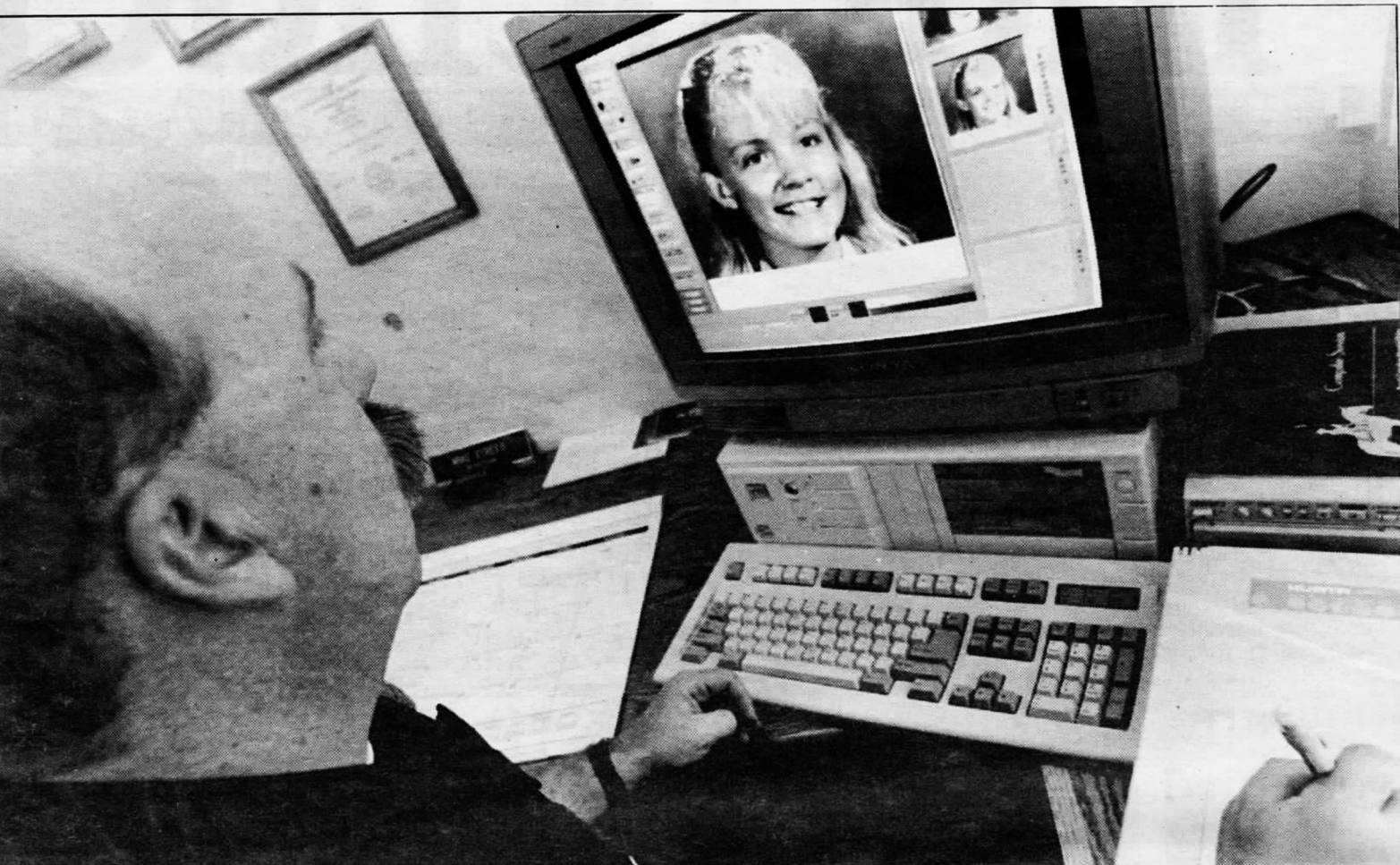


locals only

MICHAEL STREED



The likelihood of being able to identify a person whose last available photograph is several years old is enhanced through the work of Michael Streed, a master officer of the Orange Police Department. His work stresses the hunt for missing children.

Nothing sketchy about his work

By Kyra Kirkwood, Staff Writer

Writing tickets and patrolling the streets of Orange aren't the only skills that Master Officer Michael Streed brings to the Orange Police Department.

His contributions also include helping to locate missing children.

Through his work as a police forensic artist for the past 16 years, Streed has created courtroom drawings, had his renditions of fugitives on the news, sketched suspects after a crime, enhanced pictures of unidentified corpses and created computer-generated age-enhancement photos of missing, abducted and run-away children.

"I blend this with my patrol duties," he said of the position he created due to his love for art and the police department.

"I wanted to find a way to marry police

work and art...I saw a need for (a forensic artist) in the police department."

Although his work as a forensic artist doesn't take up his 40-hour work week, it could, he said.

"I wanted to find a way to marry police work and art."

— OFFICER MICHAEL STREED



"It's not uncommon to take work home with me."

It's only done part-time, but Streed hopes to eventually create a full-time forensic artist position in Orange where facial images for the police department and for missing children cases can be generated.

"I carry the gun, I do all that, but when I come in here, I drop the gunbelt in the corner."

Last Monday, the Villa Park Women's League donated \$500 to help with equipment purchases. Streed is striving to design one of the most technologically advanced forensic art units in the country at the Orange Police Department.

"I've created a unit from scratch here with the whole goal of assisting law enforcement and the community," he said.

This informal aspect of the police department, which subsists completely on donations, currently uses equipment bought two years ago with a grant from the National Center of Missing and Exploited Children in Arlington, Va. The grant was awarded to allow Streed to work with the organization on missing children cases.

Streed and his team of three volunteers work with the Adam Walsh Center in Orange, along with the National Center, to do just that.

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Artist

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Streed's goal is to do age-enhancement in one or two missing children cases each month, he said.

"There's no reason we can't do California cases. There's no reason we can't do Orange County cases," said Streed. "My first priority is Orange County cases...We want to take care of what's happening in this county."

When using age-enhancement techniques on a photo of a missing child, Streed and his volunteers receive permission and a request by the family to enhance the picture. The last known photo of the child, who must be gone for two or more years, is used as well as other family member's pictures to see any dominant traits, said Streed.

New hairstyles are added, baby fat is reduced, adult teeth take place of baby ones, jaws become more structured, the face is stretched all by using a high-tech computer and a talent for details.

"We don't mess with the eyes, because the eyes are a big identifier."

— MICHAEL STREED



"We don't mess with the eyes because the eyes are a big identifier," he said.

Streed emphasized how members of the police department have been nothing but encouraging and supportive of his "double life" on the force.

"You can have the best equipment in the world, but if you don't have the support of co-workers, it's meaningless....The Department has been 100-percent supportive. They've never hindered my progress at all," he added.



Greg Fry/Independent

Michael Streed used many aids to help produce images of the missing and unidentified.