

The Columbus Dispatch, Friday, Oct. 6th, 2006, p. B2

HARTMAN COED MISSING

Police searching for Hartman student

Tom Frazier
THE DISPATCH

As she left her friends at a south Columbus flea market Sunday afternoon, Stephanie Dempsey told them she would probably see them at a campus party that night.

No one has seen or heard from her since.

Dempsey, 21, a junior at Hartman College, has apparently vanished into thin air.

The computer and information science major never made it to her 11 a.m. class on Monday or any of her other classes, her brother said. She also never attended a Wednesday night practice for her intramural field hockey team, a friend said.

Campus police found no signs of foul play when they searched the South Residential parking lot where her car was recovered, Chief Rick Meyers said. They also have detected no ATM, credit card, or e-mail activity on her accounts, Meyers said.

"I'm worried about her. It's not like her to do this," said Annabeth Kohart, one of Stephanie's friends.

"This is really scary. We have no idea what happened to her. She's just not the kind of person who goes off and disappears."

Family and friends describe Dempsey as mature and responsible.

"It's not in her character," her older

brother James said. "She's not a wild party girl. She's not impulsive and reckless. She doesn't get drunk or do drugs. She wouldn't do this to her family and friends."

His sister hadn't expressed any problems of any kind, James Dempsey said.

Dempsey is described as 5 feet 6 inches tall, 120 pounds, white, with blonde hair, and brown eyes. She was last seen wearing a pink T-shirt, jeans, and flip-flops. She has a tattoo of a butterfly rising from thorns on her lower back.

Anyone with information is asked to call Hartman College Police at 740-555-1221 or Crime Stoppers at 1-877-555-CLUE.

The Hartman Herald, Friday, Oct. 6th, 2006,
p. A1

Student Missing

Stephanie Dempsey Last Seen Sunday Afternoon

by Tim Fitzgerald

The Herald

Friday, October 6, 2006

A Hartman College student is missing.

No one has seen or heard from Stephanie Dempsey, a junior in computer and information science, since last Sunday afternoon.

"She's just vanished," said James Dempsey, Stephanie Dempsey's brother.

Stephanie Dempsey was last seen by her friends Annabeth Kohart and Megan Andersen on Sunday afternoon when she left a Columbus flea market the three had attended.

"She was happy and laughing," said Kohart. "She was excited about the stuff she got and looking forward to decorating her room with it. We were going to meet her at a party that night."

James Dempsey said his sister made it back to campus because her car was found parked in the South Residential Lot. "We know she made it back to her room in Dunn Hall because the things she bought at the flea market were in her room."

Currently, college police are handling the case, but there are no leads, said Rick Meyers, Chief of the Hartman College Police.

"We're continuing to work the case and talk to people," Meyers said.

Both police and the family have been trying to get the word out to see if anyone knows where Stephanie Dempsey might be.

Stephanie's family and friends have been putting up posters around campus and distributing fliers to see if anyone has any information about Stephanie's disappearance.

"Somebody must've seen something. Anything--no matter how small--could be the thing that leads us to Stephanie." Said Dempsey's brother.

Campus police are currently checking video from the parking lot where Stephanie Dempsey's car was found.

"We haven't seen any video with her in it yet," Meyers said.

College police are working with the family and friends to try and find a reason for Dempsey's disappearance.

"There is nothing to suggest a crime," Meyers said, "but we don't know where she went, why she left, or who she left with."

"This is completely out of character," James Dempsey said. "None of us believe she just went off for the past week without telling anybody."

Dempsey is white, 5 foot 6 inches tall, and about 120 lbs. She has blonde hair and brown eyes. When last seen she was wearing a pink top and blue jeans. She has a tattoo of a butterfly, a rose, and thorns on her lower back.

Anyone with any information regarding the Dempsey cases should call Hartman College Police at 740-555-1221 or Crime Stoppers at 1-877-555-CLUE.

The Columbus Dispatch, Saturday, Oct. 7th, 2006, p. B3

New information in case of missing student

Tom Frazier
THE DISPATCH

While friends passed out fliers today at the flea market where she was last seen, Hartman College police released new information about the student's mysterious disappearance.

"We've looked at her computer," said Rick Meyers of the Hartman College Police, "based on what we found we can narrow down the time of her disappearance."

Stephanie saved a copy of a class project on her computer at 11:33 pm on the night of Sunday, September 3.

"She spent Sunday evening alone in her dorm room working on this project. The document was edited and saved multiple times from 5 until 11:33 pm." said Meyers.

Posters and publicity also produced recollections of sightings of Stephanie Sunday night.

Residents of Dunn Hall reported seeing Stephanie buying snacks from a vending machine about 7 pm and in the 4th floor women's restrooms about 10:30 pm.

"Stephanie made it home safely from Columbus and spent the evening in her dorm. Sometime between 11:33 pm and 11 the next morning, she disappeared.

"Everything in her room seems to be in order," Meyers added, "except there were a large number of miscellaneous objects spread out on her bed." Discussions with Dempsey's friends revealed that these were items she'd purchase in a box at the flea

market early last Sunday. "It's a real grab bag of stuff. She must have been looking at her new things when something happened."

One item, a small, old hand made doll constructed out of wood and cloth was found on the floor next to the bed.

In other news, campus police traveled to Columbus to interview Stephanie's ex-boyfriend, Mike Huber. Huber and Dempsey had broken up acrimoniously last summer. Police mentioned a e-mail of interest from Huber to Dempsey was found on her computer.

The Columbus Dispatch, Tuesday, Oct. 10th, 2006, p. B1

Police question ex-boyfriend in disappearance

Tom Frazier
THE DISPATCH

Police today searched the room and car of Mike Huber as part of the on-going investigation of the disappearance of his ex-girlfriend, Hartman College coed Stephanie Dempsey.

After two hours of searching, police left the premises with Huber's personal computer and two boxes of other evidence. Jim Nixon, a spokesman for the sheriff's office, would not detail what the other items were, for fear of compromising the investigation.

Huber went along voluntarily to police headquarters to answer questions for the second day.

Huber, 19, became a suspect in the disappearance when police learned of his acrimonious break-up with the missing girl.

Huber and Dempsey had dated for about a year before breaking up over the summer, friends said.

"Mike thought they were really serious but Stephanie wasn't interested enough in Mike to settle down," said a friend of Stephanie.

"When Mike went off to do an internship in Baltimore last summer, he expected Stephanie to remain faithful but she hadn't made him any such promise. She met a guy at the restaurant where she worked and they had a fling.

"When Mike found out about it, he was furious. He blew off his internship and came

storming back. Stephanie dumped him but he wouldn't get the message."

Hartman College Police confirmed that they had escorted Huber off campus in late August.

"He had come to see Stephanie. She came down to talk to him in front of Dunn Hall. He must not have liked what he heard because he started screaming and throwing things. She told him to leave but he became more abusive. Stephanie's friends called campus police.

"We were going to take him in but she didn't want to prosecute so we just took him off campus and told him not to come back.

Campus police also confirmed that they had been working with Stephanie regarding a series of harassment incidents.

"Someone had tied a soiled condom to the door knob of her room and someone had smashed a window on her car. There were also harassing calls late at night from a pay phone in Columbus.

"She had already shared some e-mails from Huber with us before she disappeared. They were very hostile. She was concerned what he might do."

Friends filled in the details, "Michael was cyber-harassing Stephanie. Everyday, he sent her these crazy, hate-filled emails. He would go on and on about how she had done him wrong.

"He put up a fake profile of her on MySpace.com. Supposedly, he put some intimate and bikini photos of her on the Internet too.

"He never out-and-out said he was going to hurt her but some of them were kind of threatening."

Anyone with any information regarding the Dempsey case should call Hartman College Police at 740-555-1221 or Crime Stoppers at 1-877-555-CLUE.

The Columbus Dispatch, Friday, Oct. 13th, 2006, p. A1

Body of missing college student found

Tom Frazier
THE DISPATCH

The search for missing Hartman College junior Stephanie Dempsey came to a tragic end Thursday afternoon when Hartman College Police announced that a body found last week in Candell County was that of the missing student.

“Yesterday, officers from the Hartman College Police drove out to Tafton to meet with the Candell County Sheriff’s Department and coroner about a ‘Jane Doe’ who turned up there last week.

“We have confirmed that this body is that of Stephanie Dempsey.” said Chief Meyers.

Stephanie was positively identified by one of her friends. The identification was confirmed with dental records.

The chief announced that Stephanie had been murdered in an abandoned rural house on Old Rt. 40 , about 20 miles from where she was last seen.

“At present, we have no suspects,” said Candell County Sheriff Kates. “Now that we know who this woman is, where she was last seen, and what she was doing, that opens up new avenues for us to investigate.

“We are going to find out who did this and see them get the punishment they deserve.”

Dempsey was last seen in her dorm building on the Hartman College campus about 10:30 pm on the evening of Sunday, September 3. A class project she was working on was saved to her computer hard

drive at 11:33 pm. She has not been seen since.

According to police, Dempsey disappeared from her dorm room in Dunn Hall without money, keys, her cellphone, or even her shoes. Her vehicle was still parked in the dormitory parking lot.

Dempsey’s body was discovered the following evening by a man walking his dog past the old house. The dog began acting strangely and the man smelled an odor coming from inside. He investigated and saw the body on the floor.

The house was formerly an inn but has been unoccupied for the past twenty years. Locals say it is a popular hangout for underage drinkers, drug dealers, and juvenile delinquents.

Dr. Paul Montgomery said that forensic evidence placed Stephanie’s time of death between midnight and 2 am Monday morning.

Montgomery said Stephanie had been pushed down a stairs and broken her neck. Her left hand had been severed from her body after she died.

The body was partially dressed but there was no evidence of sexual assault.

Ministers call for church unity

By **Steven O'Conner**
CANDELL REPUBLICAN

Local ministers called a press conference yesterday to ask church leaders in Candell County to stand together during difficult times.

"Right now this community needs us, needs the Lord, more than ever," declared Rob Sage, pastor at the Blood of the Savior Worship Center. Sage was joined at the podium by Reverend Mark Warner from the Tafton's First Baptist Church and Gary Nicholson, minister of Tafton Presbyterian.

Warner said that increased drop-out rates and drug problems among today's teenagers were primary concerns for all three men.

"Young people today need to know that there's hope, that they don't need to throw their lives away. Just because the job market is bad right now is no reason to despair.

"Faith still has a role to play in our lives."

Nicholson says he sees the signs of economic desperation all around him, even at a church that was once home to some of Tafton's wealthiest families.

"I have folks coming to me almost every week who don't know how they're going to pay their bills or put food on the table. Most of the good jobs are gone. Now it's a retail, fast-food economy.

"The adults have it bad enough. The kids look at it and see nothing for them here. If they have the skills and the grades, they head out for Columbus or Newark as soon as they can. If not, they don't see much reason to hope."

"Our church gave almost a quarter of a million dollars over the last two years to help feed families in southeastern Ohio." Sage said, "and it's just like a drop in the ocean. "

Warner agreed that churches need to come together to provide food and shelter for the needy, as well as educational and job support. He said the three men are working out to pool some of their churches' charitable resources and

hope that other area congregations will join them.

Sage fears that despair has led many to embrace evils worse than apathy and drug addiction. "A lot of these kids, the biggest thing in their lives is surfing the internet for pornography," Sage said. "They become easy pickings for cult leaders and other false prophets."

Citing the recent discovery of murdered Hartman College student Stephanie Dempsey in an abandoned building on Walnut Fork Road, Sage says he fears a recent increase in Satanic cult activity in the area.

"I know that Sheriff Kates and Dr. Montgomery don't agree," he said, "but that girl was killed by Satanists. It's going to come out sooner or later. We need to cast out these evil doers from our midst."

Nicholson said he did not believe that Dempsey was murdered by cultists.

Candell County Republican, Monday,
Oct. 16th, 2006, p. B1

Sheriff still searching for answers

By Janet Park

CANDELL REPUBLICAN

The solution to one puzzle has led to more unanswered questions for Sheriff Ray Kates.

Last Thursday, with help from Hartman College police, Kates was able to positively identify the body of a young woman found in an abandoned building on Walnut Fork Road as missing Hartman co-ed Stephanie Dempsey.

Although Kates sees the identification as a crucial step in solving the crime, he admits it has not yet helped as much as he had hoped.

"Right now, it's left us with a lot of questions but still not many answers," Kates admitted this morning. "Since no one saw her leave the Hartman campus, we have no idea who she was with. And since her car was still parked at her dorm, we know she didn't drive herself."

Kates said he needs to reconstruct a timeline of Dempsey's movements. Such timelines are always important he says, and may be even more important in this case given the puzzling lack of physical evidence in the case.

"Except for the fact that the body was there, you would not have thought anyone had been in that basement for years."

Kates said the heavy coat of dust that covers most of the objects in the basement was generally undisturbed, and that the single sock that Dempsey was too clean to have been worn across any of the floors in the house.

"We're hoping that someone, anyone, can come forward with some details on Miss Dempsey's movements on the night of Sunday, October 1st.

"The crime scene has not given us much to go on. Neither has her dorm room or interviews with her friends.

"Some time between 11:30 and about 2 in the morning, that young woman traveled over fifty miles. So far as we know, she came to a

place she where she had never been before, had no ties. She was alive when she got here, but not for long."

The sheriff said he has sent crime scene analysts back to the building to search for evidence that may have been previously overlooked. He refused to comment on stories that Miss Dempsey's boyfriend, Mike Huber, is under investigation in the slaying.

Anyone with information regarding the Dempsey case should call Hartman College Police at 740-555-1221 or Crime Stoppers at 1-877-555-CLUE.