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Shooting at Penn State

Sniper kills one student, wounds another

by Danielle M. Murphy
and
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Editors in Chief

Despite a purple mowhawk and a high-powered rifle, no one noticed a young woman sitting on a tarp under an apple tree Tuesday morning at University Park.

But she became the center of attention when she allegedly opened fire on students at approximately 9:35 a.m., killing one and injuring another.

Jillian Robbins, 19 of State College,

fired five shots toward College Avenue from the northwest corner of the Hetzel Union Building, said David Stormer, assistant vice president for safety and environmental services.

A 19 year-old Communications major at Penn State, Melanie Spalla was shot from about 138 feet away and died at the scene.

Another student was injured; Nicholas Mensah, 22, was shot from about 300 feet away in his abdomen and was operated on Tuesday afternoon at Centre Community Hospital where he is in the intensive care unit listed in guarded condition.

UPDATE: D.A. wants capital case, no bail

Jillian P. Robbins, 19, who allegedly opened fire on Penn State students changing classes Tuesday, is expected to be arraigned when her health permits by District Magistrate Carmine Prestia.

Centre County District Attorney Ray Gricar held a press conference at 3:00 p.m. on yesterday in Bellefonte to announce the charges against the suspect Robbins.

She has been charged with first-degree murder in the death of 19-year old Melanie Spalla. In addition, several murder and assault charges have been

filed in relation to the shooting incident.

During the press conference, Gricar said he is considering this a capital case because he believes that Robbins knowingly created grave risk of death to others in addition to the victim of the murder.

In capital cases, there is no bail.

A preliminary hearing has been scheduled for Sept. 26. Gricar emphasized that the charges against Robbins are "merely an accusation, and she is considered innocent unless and until she is proven guilty."

Anyone seen an ark?



Wendy Schell/Collegian Photographer

Singing in the rain: Behrend students and faculty were lucky to be on top of a hill.

by Doreen Foutz
News Editor

It rained for forty days and forty nights, or so it seemed after the intense rain Tuesday.

Several Millcreek homes collapsed, and one floated off of its foundation. The Millcreek Mall parking lot was inundated with approximately three and a half feet of standing water. As mall employees rolled up their pants and donned rain slickers and umbrellas in an attempt to forge through the lake, many of their

cars were only visible from the hood up.

Although there were no storm related injuries, the storm left many people with pools in their basements and some, even had pools in their living rooms.

According to the National Weather Service the cause of the torrential rainfall was a strong upper-level storm system, which in crossing the Great Lakes on Tuesday picked up moisture. Upon reaching land, all of the clouds gave way at once.

The National Weather service

measured from two to seven inches of rainfall throughout Erie County. The highest rainfall measured was approximately seven inches in McKean Township near Interstate 79 off West Road.

For comparison, the normal September rainfall is 2.40 inches, this year's rainfall for the month of September is already up to 6.40 inches.

The current rainfall for the year is 35.97 inches. The normal year-to-date total is 28.16.

A witness to the shooting tackled Robbins while she was hunched over her the 7mm Mauser trying to load the second clip according to Stormer; Brendon Malovrh, an aerospace engineering student from Downingtown, Pa, subdued Robbins and wrestled the gun away from her.

While struggling with her, Stormer reported that Robbins pulled a knife and tried to stab Malovrh who stepped back; Robbins stabbed herself in the leg, severing an artery.

When University police arrived at the scene, Malovrh had already fashioned a tourniquet on Robbins with his belt.

Stormer said Mensah was probably shot first. He had been walking along a path between the HUB lawn and Health and Human Development Building East near the gazebo, he said.

According to police, the investigation is still continuing and they will try to reconstruct the event in the upcoming weeks.

Stormer said that Robbins gave no reason for the shooting.

"They asked her why she did it. She kept saying, 'I don't know. I don't know,'" said a witness to Robbins' arrest, John Lazo (administration of justice, senior).

Another witness, Kara Pehanich (secondary education,

"She said she fired five shots and saw two people fall."

--David Stormer, on conversation with Jillian Robbins

Robbins remains at Centre Community Hospital under police guard where she is recovering from surgery. She was arrested at the scene.

According to Stormer, Robbins, who is not a Penn State student, knew none of her victims.

"She said she fired five shots and saw two people fall," Stormer said.

Police said that a third student later gave them a book from his bag that he had been wearing during the shooting which had a bullet lodged in it.

sophomore) said that she heard the shots before seeing anything.

"I heard the first two shots and when I looked over, I saw the person with a gun under a tree in the corner," she said. "Then I heard two more shots."

She said that shrubs around the lawn prevented her from seeing the victims fall, but she heard a man ask for someone to call University Health Services and the police.

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