

Sun Herald, The (Biloxi, MS) April 29, 2005 REWARD OFFERED FOR TWO MISSING ROBIN FITZGERALD, THE SUN HERALD GULFPORT --- A poem on T-shirts worn by Robin Michelle Smith's relatives says "pain is endless when a loved one is missing." The poem describes a hopelessness shared by families with a loved one who has disappeared. But relatives of Smith and Ruth Annette Barber, another woman missing from Gulfport, found new hope Thursday. The families were with Gulfport Police Chief Steve Barnes as he announced a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the women's locations. The rewards are from The Carole Sund/Carrington Memorial Reward Foundation, organized after rewards led to the discovery of three missing people found murdered near Yosemite National Park. Barnes said his agency contacted the foundation for help with the local cases. Smith, 28, was last seen getting into her 1997 Mitsubishi Galant as she left work at Memorial Hospital around 11:25 p.m. on Sept. 2, 1998. She was on her way to Pass Christian to pick up her children from her mother's home. Gulfport police found her car Oct. 28 at Southern Pines Apartments on St. Charles Street. "It seems like it just happened a week ago," said Mary Graves, one of Smith's sisters. Barber, 36, disappeared May 31, 1984. Police said she was intoxicated and left her new job at Bobbie Magee's lounge on Hewes Avenue in a cab with a co-worker. They stopped at the Holiday Inn on U.S. 90 in Gulfport. The co-worker left the cab. The cab driver roused Barber, who had passed out, and Barber walked toward the highway and the beach. She left her purse in the cab. The foundation was established in Modesta, Calif., after relatives of Carole and Juli Sund and Silvina Pelosso, who disappeared while sight-seeing, offered rewards to find them. Anyone with information about the disappearance of Robin Michelle Smith or Ruth Annette Barber is asked to call Detective Lt. Craig Petersen at the Gulfport Police Department. Telephone: 228-868-5920

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MOST WHO VANISH TURN UP, AREA LAW OFFICERS SAY  
BY KAREN NELSON

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Karen Nelson / The Sun Herald

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Detectives on the Coast say most women who are reported missing show up. But not all of them. There are at least three active cases on the Coast that detectives check on periodically, including one dating back to the 1980s.

In some cases there is foul play. But in most cases, the women either return home to family or call within a few days.

Detective Danny Holloway said Gulfport police begin investigating missing-person reports for either gender right away. But if they had a policy of waiting 24 hours, he said, many of the cases would solve themselves.

"It's the one or two," Holloway said, "that if we hadn't gotten on them right away, the case would have gotten cold."

Robin M. Smith is the active case that comes to Holloway's mind. Smith was 29 in 1998 when her family reported her missing. She was living with her mother in Pass Christian, had two children and was estranged from their father for two weeks when she vanished.

She left her clerk job at Memorial Hospital at Gulfport late on a Wednesday, called her mother to say she was picking up groceries in Long Beach on her way home, and never arrived. Her car was found weeks later.

"Basically, she's still missing," Holloway said. "We've not developed new clues. We've checked all the ones we had. The family doesn't think she ran away. But right now we're at the stage where we have to wait."

Annette Barber is another Gulfport missing-person case that hasn't been solved. Her file was not readily available Friday, but Gulfport detectives believe she has been missing since the 1980s. Deputy Chief Steve Barnes revisits that case periodically, Holloway said.

He said investigators have learned that people don't always act like society or police might expect. He said he couldn't bear to leave without calling his family, but some people can.

Ocean Springs Detective Mary Brown said she has a case of a woman living in Ocean Springs who had been listed missing for more than a year by a family member in another state.

The woman is living in an abusive relationship and doesn't want to be found or have to deal with her relatives, Brown said. The detective canceled the national missing-person report on the woman and suggested she call her relatives, but added that not much more can be done in such a case.

In Harrison County, Angela Lynn Williams was 21 in 1995 when her stepmother reported her missing. She was living in Harrison County near Pass Christian and did not report to work at the Copa Casino. Detective Bill Haden has that case.

Harrison County Lt. Ron Pollen said Friday that the county doesn't give up on cases like Williams'.

"Not at all," he said. "It remains open indefinitely."

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About me:

Call 228-868-5920 Gulfport MS Police if you've seen her or know her whereabouts. HELP BRING HER HOME SHE HAS BEEN MISSING SINCE MAY 31, 1984 Vital Statistics Date Of Birth: November 26, 1948 Age at Time of Disappearance: 36 years old Height and Weight at Time of Disappearance: 5'4 - 5'6"; 150 - 165 lbs. Distinguishing Characteristics: White female. Bleached blonde hair with dark roots; hazel/green eyes. Marks, Scars: Scars on head and hands and scars on legs from infentigo. Dentals: Dentures and/or natural teeth Other: Fingerprints available

Who I'd like to meet:

Circumstances of Disappearance Ruth Annette Barber left her new job at a Gulf Coast lounge called Bobbie Magees Club. She was intoxicated. She got into a cab with a co-worker and was taken to the Holiday Inn on Highway 90 in Gulfport, Mississippi. When they arrived and the co-worker got out, Barber had passed out in the backseat. The cab driver woke her and she vacated the cab and walked towards Highway 90 and the beach. No one has seen her since that evening. Barber left her purse in the cab and it was later turned in by the cab driver. From that day on she has never been seen or heard from again. Barber had recently been in California. Barber was also a licensed cosmetologist in the State of Mississippi.