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LONG ISLAND BRIEFS

Jail in Gas-Tax Scam

A Smithtown man has been sentenced to 10 years in prison and fined \$500,000 on federal money-laundering charges related to a multi-million-dollar oil and gas tax-fraud scheme.

U.S. District Court Judge Eugene Nickerson sentenced Vincent Aspromonti, 41, of 4 Stanwich Rd., Friday on three counts of money laundering and one count of conspiracy, said Edward McDonald, head of the federal Organized Crime Strike Force in Brooklyn.

Nickerson noted that the penalty was severe because Aspromonti put the government to the expense of trial and because other defendants who pleaded guilty also have received stiff sentences.

Aspromonti, whom federal officials describe as an associate of Michael Franzese, was convicted of participating in a \$11.5-million money-laundering scheme that was part of an effort to evade oil and gas taxes. Franzese, an alleged Colombo crime family captain, is serving a 10-year federal term after pleading guilty to involvement in the gasoline-tax scheme and other crimes.

In the Aspromonti case, the laundering of more than \$2 million was alleged to have taken place in the Hauppauge branch of Extebank, one of Spain's largest banks, over six months in 1982, according to federal officials. Money that was supposed to go for payment of state and federal gasoline taxes was diverted to two Long Island corporations and then transferred into accounts at Extebank, authorities said.

—Robert E. Kessler and Carolyn Colwell

Teen Driver Killed

Rocco Regina left his home in Shirley at about 11 p.m. Friday to take a friend to her house in Rocky Point. Several hours later, Suffolk County police arrived to tell Rocco's parents that their 16-year-old son wouldn't be coming home.

The 11th-grade honor student at Longwood High School in Middle Island was killed when the 1984 Chrysler Le Baron he was driving veered off the William Floyd Parkway near Longwood Road at about 11:50 p.m.

Suffolk police said the teenager, who was alone in the car, was taken to University Hospital at Stony Brook, where he was pronounced dead.

Police said a silver or gray Chevette was seen driving in a hazardous manner eastbound on Route 25A in Shoreham and then southbound on the William Floyd Parkway at about the time of the accident. The Chevette may be connected with Rocco's crash, police said. Anyone with information is asked to call Sixth Squad detectives at 451-4452.

In a separate accident Friday afternoon, a 28-year-old man died after his 1973 Dodge veered off Fifth Avenue in North Bay Shore and hit a utility pole. Eugenio Bolta was taken to Southside Hospital in Bay Shore and was pronounced dead shortly after arrival, police said.

—Lisa Ruppel

Conviction in Murder

A North Amityville man was convicted of second-degree murder Friday in the October, 1986, hatchet slaying of his great-uncle.

Joey Abney, 24, had lived with the great-uncle, Christopher E. Pimble Sr., 75, for about nine months at the time of the slaying, according to Assistant District Attorney Randall Hinrichs.

After his arrest, Abney told police that he had been drinking and using crack the night before the killing.

During the trial before County Court Judge Morton Weissan, police testified that the house at 9 Williams Ave., North Amityville, had been ransacked. Authorities contended that Abney had been looking for money that his great-uncle, a retired postal worker, kept in the house.

The jury reached its verdict Friday, following deliberations that began Thursday. Abney was ordered to continue to be held without bail for sentencing on March 7, when he faces a maximum sentence of 25 years.

update