

## Shorts

The last interview for student ambassador positions in the Friendship Force exchange program is Thursday, Feb. 23 at the First Methodist Church, 72nd and Cass streets in Omaha from 5 to 8 p.m. Selected ambassadors will be notified by March

2. The trip to various foreign countries is June 13 to 27.

For more information, contact the Friendship Force of Greater Omaha, 11444 Hascall St., Omaha, Neb., 68144 or call 333-2922.

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## Off The Wire

National and international news  
from the Reuters News Report

### Senate approves bill expanding capital crimes

WASHINGTON — The Senate Wednesday approved a Bill that would restore the death penalty for major federal crimes such as treason or espionage and authorize it as punishment for attempted assassination of the president. Existing federal law provides for the death penalty for treason, espionage, first degree murder, felony murder, rape and kidnapping. The new bill would add attempted presidential assassination and murders behind bars by prisoners serving life sentences. The bill was approved 63-32 by the Republican-dominated Senate. It now goes to the House, where the Democrats have a majority and its fate there is unclear.

### Reagan: Deficit at top of list

WASHINGTON — President Reagan said Wednesday night that reducing the federal budget deficit is one of three items at the top of the domestic policy agenda. He told a news conference that Democrats in Congress have been dragging their feet on his proposal for negotiations to make a "down payment" on reducing the deficit. Some Democrats have agreed to meet his representative today and the White House is prepared to discuss cuts in defense spending, he said. Reagan said that in addition to the deficit, crime legislation and an amendment allowing prayer in the public schools also deserved priority attention from Congress.

### Gemayel, mediator discuss plan

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Artillery fire hit Moslem and Christian areas in and around Beirut Wednesday as a Saudi Arabian mediator and President Amin Gemayel discussed a new peace plan. Hospital sources reported at least seven people killed and 30 injured in the exchanges. The U.S. Marines, meanwhile, continued withdrawing from their base at Beirut airport to warships off the coast. The Marines' spokesman would not say, for reasons of security, how many men had gone today. About 1,100 Marines were believed still at the base early Wednesday.

### Vietnam to step up cooperation

BANGKOK, Thailand — Vietnam has agreed to step up cooperation with the United States on the problem of U.S. servicemen missing in action during the Vietnam War, the U.S. Embassy here said in a statement Wednesday. The brief statement was issued after the arrival here from Hanoi of the highest-level U.S. delegation to visit Vietnam since the end of the war in 1975. The delegation, led by Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Armitage, discussed the MIA issue with a Vietnamese Foreign Ministry team Monday and met Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach Tuesday, the statement said.

### Canada: U.S. shirks treaty

OTTAWA, Canada — A Canadian official Wednesday accused the United States of shirking its treaty obligations by refusing to act now to combat acid rain. Ottawa says a cleanup campaign should start immediately but Washington argues that more scientific research needs to be done. "The continued delay in adopting effective abatement measures is not acceptable to Canada," External Affairs Minister Allan MacEachen said in a statement.

### Swearing raven brings bedlam

PORT COLBORNE, Canada — A foul-mouthed raven who flew around a local shopping center swearing at Canadians has now brought bedlam to a schoolyard in nearby Barker, N.Y. The bird spent three weeks in the small Canadian town of Port Colborne greeting afternoon shoppers with what was coyly described as "a common two-word directive." After his departure, the local newspaper received a call Tuesday from Dan Dune, working at a school in Barker, just across the border. "We have your talking bird here. He showed up about 8:30 this morning and has certainly become the rage around school. No one is getting their work done," Dune said. The mystery of who owns the bird has not been solved. One Port Colborne woman said she had given the bird, named Henry, to a local game farm because its language was an embarrassment, but it had flown away. Another woman claimed the bird, named Cheeko, had learned its blunt language from neighborhood boys and escaped when her husband angrily hit it.