

News Digest

By The Associated Press

In Brief

Councilman Simon elected mayor

OMAHA — City Councilman Bernie Simon was elected mayor on the first ballot at Tuesday's council meeting.

Simon, 59, will fill the remaining 2 1/2 years of the term of Mike Boyle, recalled in a special election Jan. 13.

Simon received four votes from the seven-member council. Councilman Walter Calinger received two votes and Councilman Richard Takechi received one.

Four votes were needed to elect a new mayor. After the balloting, Takechi offered a motion of congratulations to Simon.

"May you serve again and maybe even as real mayor," Takechi said. Simon said he was "absolutely overwhelmed."

Simon said that in the past two weeks he had received calls from hundreds of supporters asking what they could do to help him become mayor. To each he replied, "Say a prayer," he said.

Simon, an Omaha native, was elected to the City Council in 1981. He was re-elected in 1985. Simon, like Boyle a Democrat, has served four times as council president.

Debt drove man to kill his family

LINCOLN — A lawyer frustrated by a large debt that apparently threatened his marriage killed his family in "an act of desperation," Lancaster County Attorney Mike Heavican said Tuesday.

Debts surpassing \$200,000 apparently drove Stan Gushard, 54, to kill his wife, Judy Gushard, 42, and their three children — Brandon, 17, Dylan, 16, and Vanessa, 10 — before turning the gun on himself, Heavican told a news conference.

"I think it was a man who was frustrated because of his own inability to provide a living for his family," Heavican said. "They just couldn't keep up with the bills."

Police, responding to a note sent by Gushard asking them to check the house, found the bodies Monday throughout the split-level, brick home in a quiet middle-class neighborhood in southeast Lincoln.

Stan Gushard was a former Lincoln police officer and former counsel for discipline for the Nebraska State Bar Association. Mrs. Gushard, a former registered nurse, was chief investigator for the state Health Department's Licensing Division. Both were attorneys.

Heavican said authorities found significant evidence that the family had a number of unpaid bills. Gushard, whose private law practice from his home was unable to make enough money, had a habit of borrowing money from friends, often without repaying them, he said.

In three notes that he left in the house, Gushard indicated that he loved his family and didn't want to cause them further pain, apparently because of the financial difficulties, Heavican said.

"He kind of did it as an act of desperation," Heavican said. The notes said the victims were taken by surprise to avoid causing them shock or pain, Heavican said. There was no sign of struggle by the victims, who were shot in the head with a handgun, he said.

"It's clear that he had a plan in his mind and that he carried it out fairly flawlessly," he said.

Buchanan resigns to further conservative cause

WASHINGTON — Patrick J. Buchanan, President Reagan's combative chief of communications, added his name Tuesday to a growing list of administration resignations, saying he could work for conservative causes more effectively outside the White House.

Buchanan, who announced last month that he would not run for president, has seemed frustrated in his two-year campaign to get the administration to

follow a hardline conservative script.

Announcing the resignation, presidential spokesman Martin Fitzwater said Buchanan "feels he can better influence the issues and politics of 1988 and the direction of the conservative movement and Republican Party by speaking and writing from a vantage point outside the White House."

He will leave the \$77,400-a-year job

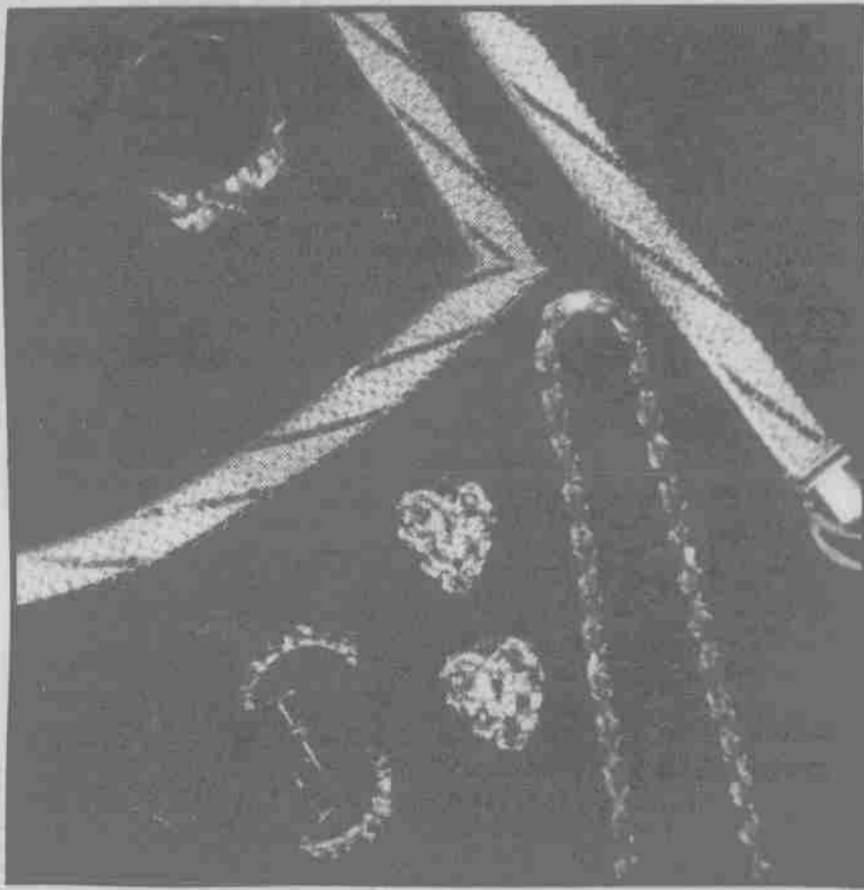
March 1, joining an exodus of top administration officials departing with two years left in the administration.

Some people delayed their departure, Fitzwater said, "because of the Iranian situation and didn't want to leave while there was difficulty." He was referring to the controversy over the secret sale of arms to Iran and the diversion of profits to Nicaraguan rebels.

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U.S. warships near Lebanon

BEIRUT, Lebanon — U.S. warships were reported within 50 miles of Lebanon on Tuesday and official sources in Cyprus said civilian aircraft flying near the ships were ordered by radio to veer off.

The sources in Cyprus, which lies 100 miles northwest of Beirut, spoke on condition of anonymity.

The United States marshaled a strong battle group in the eastern Mediterranean over the past week in response to rising tensions in the Middle East and following a spate of kidnappings of foreigners in Lebanon.

The kidnappers, and Moslem leaders in Lebanon, warned that any military action by the United States would mean death for the captives.

Pentagon sources stressed in Washington on Tuesday that the U.S. battle groups had received no orders to prepare for any military operation.

The sources, who demanded anonymity, said the carriers Kennedy and

Nimitz and a Mediterranean Amphibious Ready Group of roughly 1,900 Marines were steaming on a "routine patrol pattern" in the southeastern Mediterranean, south of Cyprus and relatively close to Lebanon.

The force consists of about 22 warships, and 1,900 more Marines were moved out of Spain on Tuesday to join the battle fleet.

Also Tuesday, Iran's Foreign Ministry denied reports that Anglican Church hostage negotiator Terry Waite was held by Iranian Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon.

The fate of Waite, 47, remained a mystery. The 6-foot-7 emissary has not been seen since he left his hotel in Moslem west Beirut on Jan. 20, apparently for a meeting with the Shiite Moslem kidnappers of two Americans held since 1985.

Lebanon's justice minister, Nabih Berri, said in Damascus, Syria, on Monday that Waite had been "arrested" by the kidnappers. He did not elaborate.

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