

Bush names Sununu and Atwater to top positions

WASHINGTON — President-elect George Bush on Thursday named New Hampshire Gov. John Sununu White House chief of staff and tapped wily campaign strategist Lee Atwater as chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Bush's selection of Sununu as his top White House adviser prompted the resignation, effective in January, of long-time aide Craig Fuller, who said he had told Bush he was eager for the job.

Bush said he would like Fuller, co-chairman of the transition team and his chief of staff since 1985, to con-

sider a role in his administration but that he chose Sununu because he was the "right man for the job."

"John Sununu has the background and experience necessary to work not only with his former colleagues in the nation's statehouses but also to build a constructive relationship with the U.S. Congress," he said.

Sununu, the first Washington outsider to be named by Bush, will bring "a refreshing new perspective" to the job, the president-elect said.

Atwater will succeed Frank Fahrenkopf Jr., who announced months ago that he would relinquish

the GOP chairmanship at the end of President Reagan's term and return to Nevada to practice law.

The Republican National Committee will formally act on Bush's choice in January.

Bush made the announcements after meeting over breakfast with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and his customary weekly lunch with Reagan.

Both Sununu and Atwater share reputations as adept players of political hardball.

Atwater is considered a master of negative campaigning, and was an

architect of the strategy that helped Bush wipe out a 17-point poll lead by Democrat Michael Dukakis and romp to a 40-state victory in the presidential race.

Sununu, 49, an engineer by training and a former Tufts University professor, has no previous experience in Washington. He has a reputation for being a quick study, highly intelligent and assertive. Some also regard him as arrogant and abrasive, traits that could hurt him in working with Congress.

Sununu made light of that reputation Thursday.

"I'm a pussycat," Sununu said. "Let me tell you about Washington. Certainly I have a lot to learn in regard to the details. I think I'm a quick learner. I consider a great number of congressmen to be close friends, both Democratic and Republican."

Jewish lobbyists have criticized the New Hampshire governor for being the only governor to refuse to endorse a proclamation attacking a 1975 U.N. resolution that equated Zionism with racism.

"I'm very sensitive to that issue," said Sununu, who is partly of Arab descent.

Millions try to kick habit

Millions of smokers on Thursday swapped their cigarettes for apples and gum, went cold turkey for free turkey sandwiches and tossed their tobacco into bonfires as part of the 12th annual Great American Smokeout.

Newborns in several hospitals wore "I'm a Born Non-Smoker" T-shirts, city workers in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, sported pins and stickers that said, "Kiss Me, I Don't Smoke," and non-smokers joined "adopt-a-smoker" programs to help smokers through a smokeless day.

The American Cancer Society estimates nearly 40 percent of the nation's 50 million smokers tried to quit for the day. About one-tenth, or 2 million people, will kick the habit permanently, said Paul Rosenberg, a cancer society spokesman in New York.

"My grandkids keep telling me it's time to quit smoking," said Pat

Zielke, mayor of La Crosse, Wis., and a pack-a-day smoker for 40 years. He quit smoking for the day and was "adopted" by a cancer society volunteer.

Smokers traded their cigarettes for apples in several cities, including New York, Norwalk, Conn., and Philadelphia. Non-smokers got apples, too, along with a "good for you."

The grandson of tobacco magnate R.J. Reynolds joined with Pleasanton, Calif.-based publisher SyberVision to launch a \$20 million television advertising campaign accusing the tobacco industry of addicting millions of Americans.

"My grandfather, R.J. Reynolds, helped get America hooked on cigarettes through clever advertising. Now, I'm going to use the power of advertising to get America unhooked," Patrick Reynolds said.



Andy Manhart/Daily Nebraskan

Kentucky leads smoking deaths

ATLANTA — On the day of the Great American Smokeout, a government report released Thursday shows Kentucky with the nation's highest smoking-related death rate. Utah has the lowest.

Kentucky reported 176 smoking-related deaths for every 100,000 residents in 1985, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control reported. Utah reported just 45 smoking-related deaths for every 100,000 people over the course of the year.

Nationwide, smoking killed 314,574 Americans that year.

The worst states, after Kentucky, were West Virginia, with 172 smoking-related deaths per 100,000 people in 1985; Arkansas, 164; Rhode Island, 164; and Florida, 161.

Best on the list, after Utah: Alaska, 54; Hawaii, 77; New Mexico, 85; and Colorado, 94.

The report is based on computer

analysis of statistics from 1985, the latest CDC analysis available. And while the state-by-state totals are not age-adjusted - to compensate for areas with more older or younger people - the rates provide valid "ballpark comparisons," said Dr. Thomas Novotny, a specialist in the CDC's Office of Smoking and Health.

For instance, it stands to reason that Utah, with its large Mormon population, would have a lower rate of death from smoking, he said. The Mormon Church discourages smoking.

"Even as smoking prevalence declines in this country," the CDC said, "smoking-attributable illness will continue to produce an enormous disease burden well into the 21st century."

About 27 percent of the nation's adults are smokers, according to the latest national estimate. Four decades ago, it was 41 percent.

Landlady captured in boarding house murder cases

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A landlady suspected of killing seven elderly tenants at her boardinghouse to collect their Social Security money said Thursday she had cashed some checks but was no killer.

Dorothea Montalvo Puente, who vanished Saturday after police unearthed the first of seven bodies buried in the yard of her boardinghouse, was arrested at a downtown Los Angeles motel late Wednesday after a pensioner she had approached in a nearby bar became suspicious.

Detectives brought Puente back to Sacramento early Thursday in a jet rented by a Sacramento television station. She was being held in Sacramento County Jail on one murder count, awaiting arraignment in Municipal Court later Thursday.

During the flight, she granted a brief interview to KCRA-TV.

"I have not killed anyone. I told you that. I

have not killed anyone. The checks I cashed, yes," Puente said.

She also said, "I used to be a very good person at one time."

KCRA-TV reporter Mike Boyd described Puente as "not in the least" emotional or upset during the flight.

The 59-year-old ex-convict was wearing the same pink dress and bright red coat that she was seen in five days earlier, when she walked away from her home.

At that time, police said they didn't have enough evidence to detain her. But after the other bodies were discovered, a murder warrant was issued for Puente and a search launched in California, Nevada and Mexico.

Police Chief John Kearns said she apparently went to West Sacramento on Saturday, then took a cab to Stockton, where she boarded

a bus for Los Angeles "and has probably been there since that time."

Puente was arrested after CBS television told Los Angeles police that a viewer called to report meeting her in a downtown bar. She had given the man the name and room number of the motel where she was staying, and police arrested her there a few minutes later.

"The suspect had struck up a conversation with a male subject in a bar. They had been talking about Social Security," Kearns said. The two went to her nearby motel room and "during the time he was talking to her, he realized it was the murder suspect he had seen on television."

The man, Charles Willgues, 67, said he became suspicious after Puente, who called herself Donna Johanson, questioned him at length about his Social Security benefits.

The arrest warrant charges Puente only with the murder of Alvaro Montoya, 52, a tenant missing from her boardinghouse, but police Sgt. Bob Burns earlier called Puente a suspect in the killing of all seven people buried in her yard. None of the seven has been positively identified.

The disappearance of Montoya, a mentally disabled transient, led a counselor with Volunteers of America to contact police, leading to the diggings.

Police believe Puente killed tenants of her eight-bedroom boardinghouse for their Social Security benefits.

Puente has a criminal record dating to a 1948 conviction for forging checks. She served 2 1/2 years in state prison in the 1980s for drugging and robbing three men she met in a Sacramento bar.

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U.S., allies move to stop slide of dollar

WASHINGTON — The United States and its major economic allies successfully intervened Thursday to halt a slide in the value of the dollar, but economists predicted that the Federal Reserve will be forced to boost U.S. interest rates in a further defense of the beleaguered U.S. greenback.

The coordinated intervention in the currency markets by the United States, Japan, West Germany, England, France, Italy and Canada was the most widespread dollar rescue effort since last April, when the markets were stampeded into a dollar sell-off following a bad monthly trade report.

Despite the success of Thursday's rescue effort, many traders foresaw renewed selling pressure in the months ahead because of fears that President-elect George Bush and the new Congress will be unable to reach agreement on ways to trim the budget deficit.

Investors are concerned that the

enlarged Democratic majorities in Congress and Bush's tough no-tax stance guarantee further budgetary gridlock.

For this reason, many economists predicted the Federal Reserve will be forced in coming weeks to begin pushing interest rates higher in the United States. Some analysts said they would not rule out an increase in the discount rate, the interest the Fed charges to make loans to member banks.

A boost in the discount rate is the most dramatic signal the Fed can send of its intention of driving interest rates higher.

Higher interest rates make dollar-denominated investments more attractive to foreigners and help relieve the pressure to sell off such assets. Higher interest rates also dampen inflationary pressures brought on by a weaker currency.

Intervention is the process by which the Federal Reserve or other countries' central banks buy and sell currencies in an attempt to

influence the market price.

The intervention Thursday was begun by the Bank of Japan, which started buying dollars after the U.S. currency fell to near 40-year lows in trading in Tokyo.

After the initial purchases by the Bank of Japan, currency traders reported that the central banks of the major European allies of the United States bought dollars, followed by buying by the U.S. central bank.

The concerted dollar-buying helped to push the U.S. currency up to 122.70 yen by midday in New York trading. It had closed at 121.52 yen in Tokyo, down 2.02 yen from Wednesday's close of 123.54 yen.

But traders said they doubted the joint intervention effort would have more than a temporary restraining effect on the downward pressure on the dollar.

"This will only provide temporary relief," said William Hand, a trader at First Pennsylvania Bank

in Philadelphia. "The market wants to see some concrete kind of plan on how the budget deficit is going to be solved."

Robert Hormats, an economist with Goldman, Sachs, predicted that the currency markets and the stock and bond markets would continue to be in turmoil between now and Bush's inauguration on Jan. 20.

"I think the market has confidence in the economic team Bush is putting together, but the market is impatient because the budget and trade imbalances are so big," he said.

On Wednesday, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan added the strongest voice yet to calls for urgent action on the deficit, telling the National Economic Commission that the deficit, which climbed to \$155.1 billion in the last fiscal year, "already has begun to eat away at the foundations of our economic strength."