

NewsDigest

McCain, Gore win primary

■ Sen. McCain had a surprise victory margin, with 49 percent of the vote.

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — Arizona Sen. John McCain scored a landslide victory over George W. Bush on Tuesday in New Hampshire's lead-off primary, puncturing the Texas governor's aura as the inevitable Republican nominee. Vice President Al Gore survived a toe-to-toe challenge from Bill Bradley in the Democratic duel.

The former New Jersey senator congratulated Gore and told The Associated Press: "We're going to keep moving forward."

With more than half the precincts counted, Gore had 54 percent of the vote, Bradley 46.

It was a typical New Hampshire primary, with voters delivering a lecture to the front-runners and recasting the GOP race as the candidates looked to larger states ahead.

McCain rolled up 49 percent of the GOP vote, Bush 31.

Before heading back to the campaign trail, McCain was savoring his triumph and celebrating his surprising victory margin. He watched returns

with his wife, Cindy, who put a trembling hand to her mouth and said: "It really happened."

"We have sent a powerful message to Washington that change is coming," McCain told cheering supporters, crediting his agenda of political and campaign finance reform for his victory. "The Republican Party recovered its heritage of reform. And it's the beginning of the end of the truth-twisting politics of Bill Clinton and Al Gore."

The vice president cast his victory as a bad omen for Bradley, who lost the Iowa caucuses to Gore last week by a much wider margin.

"If he cannot win here, then that's a devastating blow to him," Gore told reporters. Bradley, however, has enough money to compete with Gore in a coast-to-coast series of primaries March 7.

In returns from 56 percent of New Hampshire's 300 Republican precincts, McCain had 49 percent of the vote compared to 30 for Bush. Millionaire publisher Steve Forbes was a distant third at 13 percent and former ambassador Alan Keyes was at 6.

An AP analysis predicted McCain would get 10 out of the total 17 delegates at stake Tuesday. Bush was predicted to get five delegates, and two would go to Forbes.

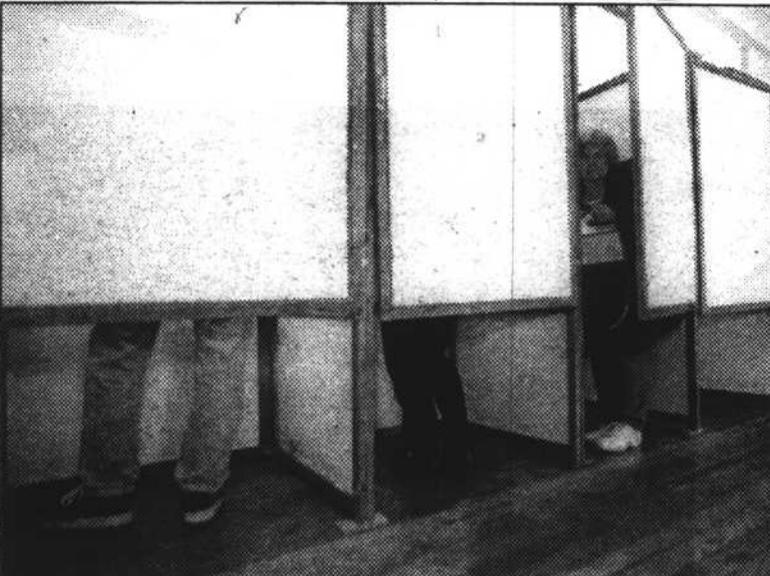


Photo by Steven E. Frischling/Brattleboro Reformer
NEW HAMPSHIRE voters stand inside polling booths at Chesterfield's Town Hall while filling out Presidential Primary ballots during the First in the Nation Presidential Primary on Tuesday.

Social conservative Gary Bauer barely registered and was struggling to survive. "I'm a fighter, but I'm not delusional," Bauer said, before flying home to Virginia to take stock of his candidacy. Aides said campaign stops were still on this week's schedule.

Bradley was rocked by last week's landslide loss to Gore in Iowa's caucuses. The New Hampshire campaign was close enough to give Bradley hope, but made his work all the harder against the sitting vice president backed by the Democratic Party's establishment.

California crash inquiry continues

OXNARD, Calif. (AP) — The pilots of Alaska Airlines Flight 261 struggled with a sudden control problem for six minutes before the jetliner crashed into the ocean off California with 88 people aboard, federal investigators said Tuesday.

The last minutes of the MD-83's flight Monday may have been witnessed by pilots aboard four other aircraft over the Santa Barbara Channel, and the National Transportation Safety Board was seeking to interview them.

Investigators also said Tuesday they had recovered four bodies and heard "pinging" from the ocean, apparently from the aircraft's flight recorders. One of those could reveal what went wrong with the jet's tail controls.

NTSB member John Hammerschmidt released preliminary transcripts of air traffic control communications with the airliner at a news conference Tuesday while the search continued offshore for any signs of sur-

vivors.

The last routine transmission came at 3:55 p.m. PST, when the flight from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, was cleared to continue on up the California coast to San Francisco.

At 4:10 p.m. the pilots advised they had control difficulties and were descending through 26,000 feet. A few seconds later they advised they were at 23,700 feet, and there was "some discussion about their ability to control the aircraft," Hammerschmidt said.

Over the next few minutes, the pilots said they "were kind of stabilized and going to do some troubleshooting," but then said they had a jammed stabilizer. At 4:16 they were cleared for an emergency landing in Los Angeles.

The controllers cleared Flight 261 to 17,000 feet. The crew acknowledged that was "the last known transmission from Flight 261," Hammerschmidt said. At 4:21 p.m. the aircraft dropped from radar.

"This is still a search for human life. The decision to stop searching is mine, mine to make, and it's a difficult one."

Tom Collins
Coast Guard vice admiral

The plane crashed in water 300-feet to 750-feet deep. A witness described it as a nose dive, officials said.

Coast Guard ships, Navy vessels and a private boat combed the choppy sea about 10 miles off the coast Tuesday for additional debris that could help explain the crash. The position of the pinging was pinpointed by a Navy underwater demolition team helping with the search.

Coast Guard Vice Adm. Tom Collins said the bodies recovered were those of an infant, two women and a man.

"This is still a search for human life. The decision to stop searching is mine, mine to make, and it's a difficult one," Collins said during a news conference.

Monday night, commercial squid boats used nets to haul in grim reminders of lives lost: a tennis shoe, a stuffed animal and a number of small

souvenirs from Mexico. A stench of jet fuel hung in the air as the nets were pulled to the surface.

Near the entrance of Port Hueneme, where the search effort was based, a 7-foot wooden cross festooned with flowers was erected Tuesday. A white plastic angel sat at the base with a candle blowing in a jar.

Some local residents bowed their heads in prayer. From the site they could see search aircraft patrolling offshore above the crash area.

"They just stand for a while with their own thoughts. It's tragic," said Neal Silverman, 47, who moved into his beach house just a week ago.

Both pilots were Alaska Airlines veterans. Capt. Ted Thompson, 53, was hired Aug. 16, 1982. First Officer William Tansky, 57, was hired July 17, 1985, and had 8,047 flying hours with the Seattle-based airline.

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World and Nation

Datelines

Northern Ireland

IRA fails to surrender promised weapons

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP) — Northern Ireland's Protestant-Catholic government was plunged into crisis Tuesday after a report by an independent commission confirmed that the Irish Republican Army has failed to begin turning over its weapons.

Amid doubts that the 8-week-old Northern Ireland administration could survive, the major Protestant party, the Ulster Unionists, accused the IRA-linked Sinn Fein of failing to deliver on its side of an American-brokered deal that led to their power-sharing Cabinet.

New York

Trial begins for NYPD shooting of unarmed man

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — A 12-member jury, including four blacks, was seated Tuesday for the trial of four white New York City police officers charged with murdering an unarmed African immigrant in a barrage of 41 bullets.

State Supreme Court Justice Joseph Teresi scheduled opening statements for this morning.

Amadou Diallo, 22, was gunned down last February in the vestibule of his apartment building in the Bronx, shot 19 times by members of an elite street-crime unit who said they thought the street vendor was armed.

New York

Advocacy group: Reeve commercial misleading

NEW YORK (AP) — A dramatic commercial aired during the Super Bowl left some paralyzed people believing Christopher Reeve could walk again and wanting to know where they could find the same help, the leader of an advocacy group said Tuesday.

"We've received a number of phone calls from persons who are paralyzed or their parents or relatives, saying, 'What research institute did Mr. Reeve go to in order to receive his cure?'" said Thomas Countee Jr., executive director of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association.

In the computer-engineered ad for Nuveen Investments, the "Superman" actor is among those assembled in an auditorium of the future to honor research that cured spinal cord injury. Reeve was paralyzed in a 1995 horse riding accident.

In the commercial, he gets up from a chair, then walks haltingly to the stage and stands with other research beneficiaries.

California

'Simpsons' character to meet doom

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A character on "The Simpsons" is going to kick the cartoon bucket this month during the February sweeps period.

Maude Flanders, wife of do-good Simpson family neighbor Ned Flanders, is rumored to be the character that dies in the Feb. 13 episode, although the makers of the Fox animated series refused to confirm her passing.

Executive producer Mike Scully said Maude is among the possibilities.

The others are school principal Seymour Skinner and Mo the bartender, a man close to beer-guzzling dad Homer Simpson's heart.

WEATHER

TODAY

Partly cloudy
high 55, low 31

TOMORROW

Partly cloudy
high 63, low 35

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THE DAILY NEBRASKAN

District judge gives inmate expected stay of execution

OMAHA (AP) — A U.S. district judge has granted a stay of execution for death-row inmate Charles Jess Palmer.

Judge Joseph Bataillon of Omaha issued the stay Tuesday. Palmer was scheduled to be executed in Nebraska's electric chair on Feb. 15.

Palmer filed the appeal in U.S. District Court last Friday. Last week the state Supreme Court rejected a stay.

The stay was expected because Palmer's appeal had not been heard in federal court.

In addition to issuing a stay, Bataillon appointed two Omaha attorneys, Michael Nelsen and Steven Achepohl, to represent Palmer in his federal appeals.

The state Supreme Court ruled last year that Palmer, who has been convict-

ed three times for killing a Grand Island coin dealer during a 1979 robbery, would not get a fourth trial.

Palmer's earlier request that the U.S. Supreme Court hear his request for a stay of execution was rejected until the Nebraska high court ruled on the matter.

Palmer's defense argues, among other things, that Palmer had ineffective counsel during the sentencing phase of his first trial.

Palmer's lawyers also said his death sentence was arbitrary and capricious because people convicted on similar crimes have received life in prison.

They also argued that Palmer's jury should have been given the option of convicting him of a lesser offense, such as second-degree murder or manslaughter.