

Columbia Missourian

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Good Morning! It's Thursday, Dec. 8, 1977

2 Sections — 24 Pages — 15 Cents

FBI probed JFK death instantly

By Jeremiah O'Leary and James R. Dickerson
Washington Star

WASHINGTON — Documents released Wednesday show the FBI was involved within hours after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in an intense investigation that included checking out bizarre tips from citizens and close scrutiny of individuals already regarded as radical by the agency.

One of the documents was a message labeled "urgent" from James Walsh, otherwise unidentified, on a Department of Justice communications section letterhead.

Written less than one hour after the shooting on Nov. 22, 1963, it read: "Get everyone involved in shooting the president and get them fast."

The 40,000 documents were made

public Wednesday by the FBI under the Freedom of Information Act.

An urgent teletype message from FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to all FBI offices instructed agents to "immediately establish whereabouts of bombing suspects, all known Klan and hate group members, known racial extremists and any other individuals who, on the basis of information available in your files, may possibly have been involved."

And less than four hours after Kennedy was assassinated during a motorcade in Dallas, Tex. — and two hours after the arrest of Lee Harvey Oswald — Hoover told Washington officials that Oswald "very probably" was the killer.

Hoover said he would classify Oswald "in the category of a nut and the extremist pro-Castro crowd."

In a memo to the FBI's top echelon,

dated Dec. 12, 1963, Hoover wrote:

"... We have several letters, not in the report (to the Warren Commission) because we were not able to prove it, written to him (Oswald) from Cuba referring to the job he was going to do, his good marksmanship and stating when it was all over he would be brought back to Cuba and presented to the chief."

But Hoover's memo said, "We do not know if the chief was Castro and cannot make an investigation because we have no intelligence operation in Cuba."

"I personally believe Oswald was the assassin," he wrote, but he said he was greatly concerned as to "whether he was the only man."

Hoover told his aides the Justice Department wanted to issue a statement saying Oswald was the assassin and there were no foreign or subversive elements involved in the

killing. The statement also was to say there was no connection between Oswald and Jack Ruby who shot him dead two days after the assassination.

"I flatly disagreed," Hoover said, and new President Lyndon B. Johnson agreed with him that no conclusions ought to be drawn at that time.

The FBI files indicate that the bureau tracked down every lead, however remote, from people who overheard conversations in which people predicted the president would be assassinated if he went to Texas, or expressed anti-Kennedy sentiments. Many of these conversations were the result of people's concern about the right-wing and anti-Kennedy sentiment in Texas.

The FBI also checked out anyone who talked or asked about guns, such as a man in a service station near Dallas who asked another customer where he

could get a silencer or a high-powered rifle.

The bureau investigated statements by waitresses and service station attendants and others who felt they had seen people resembling Oswald, his wife or his mother in the days and weeks before the assassination.

Other documents portrayed the FBI as being wary and truculent in its dealings with the CIA during this period. At one stage, an assistant to Assistant FBI Director William Sullivan wrote a memo saying the only way to deal with CIA agents was to treat them firmly for the best protection of the FBI's interests.

A day after Oswald was killed by Ruby, Hoover sent three basic questions to the Dallas field office. He ordered them to find out: if anyone had

(See QUESTIONS, page 9A)

In town today
9 a.m. Boone County Court meets, fifth floor, County-City building.
4 p.m. "The Adventures of Benjamin Beetle," Warehouse Theatre, Stephens College.
7:30 p.m. Hickman High School PTSA and Hickman Music Boosters meeting and concert, Hickman auditorium.
8:15 p.m. University Symphony Orchestra and chorus perform holiday music, Jesse Auditorium.
Exhibits
See Sunday's Vibrations magazine for continuing exhibit schedules.
Movie listings on Page 11A

Insight
Two states make parole antiquated
By Adam Clymer
N.Y. Times Service

PORTLAND, Maine — Parole may be an idea whose time has gone. In Maine and California, criminals are now sentenced to fixed prison terms and giving time off for good behavior is the only normal way of shortening them.

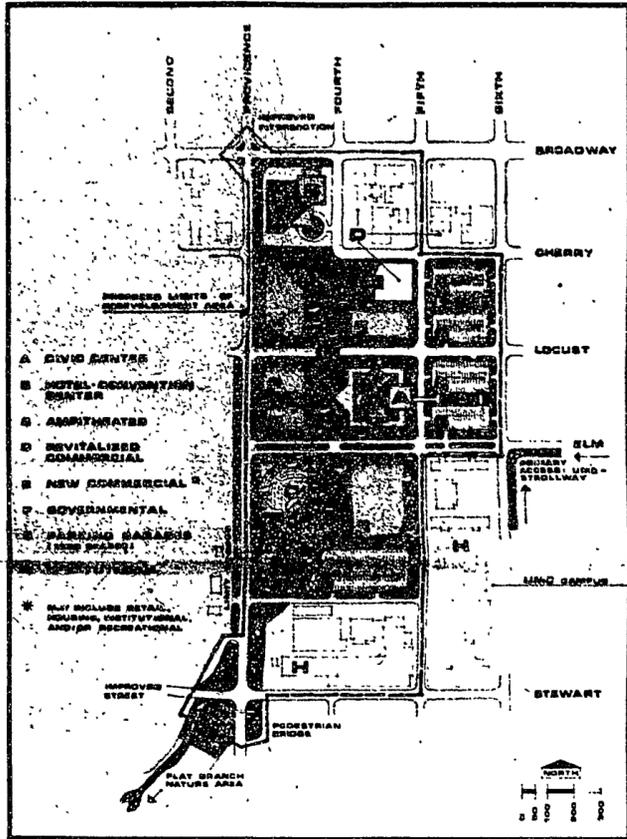
Several other states are considering similar approaches, and in Washington the Senate Judiciary Committee is about to recommend a thorough revision of the federal criminal code to make fixed sentences by judges the rule for federal prisoners and early release on parole the exception.

The system took effect in California only this summer, and in Maine only in the summer of 1976, and the time since has been too short for firm conclusions to be reached about how it has worked. In the Capitol and in most states, the arguments are theoretical.

In Maine, corrections officials think judges are sentencing prisoners to more time in prison than they would have under the old system and are compensating for the lack of parole supervision by stressing work release, near the end of prison term, since that leaves them some control.

Arguments for change vary from place to place. In Maine, complaints about crimes committed by parolees were important. In California and the state of Washington, there have been strong arguments that variations in sentences for similar offenses, compounded by the unpredictability of parole, made convicts restive and aroused prison unrest.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., the leading force behind the Senate bill, has argued that justice must be made (See NUMEROUS, page 12A)



Flat Branch revival plan wins favorable reaction

By Daniel Ray
Missourian staff writer

About 50 community leaders watched Wednesday as former Mayor Bob Pugh and Columbia architect John Cooper presented their ambitious redevelopment ideas for the Flat Branch area.

Judging from the applause at the presentation's end, the leaders liked what they saw.

They saw a tentative plan to turn what Pugh called "the front door to our city" from a hodge-podge of 32 separately owned property parcels into a hub of civic activity.

About 40 acres would be involved in the project, bounded roughly by Broadway, Providence Road, Stewart Road and Fifth Street.

Cooper's drawing had these major features:
A civic center on Fifth Street between Locust and Elm streets to attract convention business that now eludes Columbia. The center also could be used by local groups such as the Maplewood Barn, Pugh said.

A hotel-convention center at the corner of Broadway and Providence Road.

An outdoor amphitheater on the corner of Elm Street and Providence Road.

Revitalized commercial buildings. Cooper said buildings that can be adapted to fit into the plan should be reclaimed "wherever possible." Katy Station restaurant is in this area.

New commercial buildings to house shops and offices. Other areas are earmarked for governmental and University use. Parking garages with 1,500 spaces also are

included. Meandering through the area would be a cleaned and expanded Flat Branch Creek. A small lake also is envisioned.

Cooper said the area would be pedestrian-oriented. An overpass at Stewart and Providence roads would aid persons using the pedestrian walkway along the abandoned Missouri-Kansas-Texas railroad right-of-way.

And only "tightly controlled" traffic should be allowed into the area, Cooper said. So the Elm Street extension, drawn into the plan to ease the passage of rush-hour traffic from the University, could be closed except during peak traffic hours.

The support expressed at the meeting did not surprise Pugh. "At this stage of the project, we expect near-unanimity," he said, adding that the plan has "something for everybody."

But he said opposition could surface later from displaced property owners and from taxpayers asked to vote for the general obligation bonds the project could require.

Other possible sources of funds are donations from private citizens, businesses or the University, the city's capital improvements budget and federal community development money, Pugh said.

"Don't ask us how much it's going to cost, because we don't know," Pugh said. Cooper estimated that the hotel alone could cost \$30 million. But "community pride and community interest" dictate that "we ought to clean up our front door."

"We've got an opportunity to do something, and we ought to do it quickly," he said.

Revision of subdivision rules may end 'headache'

By Sherie Winston and Lynn O'Shaughnessy
Missourian staff writers

The city planning department's two-year headache could be relieved tonight if the Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission approves revised subdivision regulations.

The public hearing will end two years of revising the city's subdivision regulations. A citizens' advisory committee, a planning and zoning subcommittee and the city staff have

bickered over the wording to satisfy both the city on one side and developers, Realtors and property owners on the other.

Complete agreement was not reached.

The main purpose is to tighten up the regulations to promote "orderly urban growth," said city Planning Director Michael Bathke.

The public hearing will begin at 7 p.m. in the County-City Building.

The most controversial and important change is a new definition of

"subdivision." Now only land subdivided for development must meet subdivision regulations. If the revisions are adopted, land divided solely for sale also would be subject to the regulations.

Bathke said these restrictions are needed to prevent growth from becoming haphazard. Every year, several cases come to Bathke's attention in which a developer has bought land and then finds there are no provisions for access roads, sewage mains and utility lines. The developer then finds himself trying to gather

signatures from adjacent landowners to allow the road and sewage construction before he even can obtain a building permit.

The new definition would require the seller to designate easements for utility lines and access roads before transactions occur in anticipation of later development.

Bathke said most cities in Missouri already have adopted this definition of subdivisions. Bathke said he hopes this revision will result in better planning. "It is meant as a device to help, not to

hinder," he said.

Engineer Jim Reed, who chaired the 18-member citizens' committee, is unhappy with the new definition. He said it is "fine in theory," but not in practice. "People can't live with it. Everytime they want to buy a piece of land they have to go through the whole subdivision process."

The commission is expected to approve the revisions.

Reed said he believes the commission's decision "is all rubber stamped." He said he doubts anyone

will speak against the regulations even though many are in opposition.

Former city councilman Gene Ruether, a real estate dealer, said the citizens' committee, composed primarily of engineers, developers and Realtors, did not favor the definition change. "The present definition has served us for many years and has served us well," he said. "Why change it?"

The commission will forward its recommendation to the City Council for a final vote.

Cruise missiles may be limited

BRUSSELS, Belgium (UPI) — Defense Secretary Harold Brown confirmed Wednesday the United States plans to trade "a pause" in cruise missile deployment against a new SALT agreement with the Soviet Union.

Brown said after a meeting with NATO defense ministers that land and sea-based cruise missiles would be restricted to a 375-mile (604-kilometer) range as a concession toward obtaining a SALT II agreement.

Air-launched missiles, which would be carried only by U.S. heavy bombers, would be restricted to a 1,500-mile (2,414-kilometer) range, Brown said.

Man, 19, held in shooting

By Larry King
Missourian staff writer

Mike Brown lay semiconscious Wednesday night in the University Medical Center. He awoke once to recognize a friend. "They shot me four or five times, man," he said.

At 3:24 a.m., police had received a call from a scared young man who, officers said, admitted shooting Brown during an argument. Andre James Harvey, 19, of 609 Banks Ave., was arrested but had not been charged late Wednesday night.

"I've never seen Andre or Mike like that before," said John Tucker, 19, who also lives at 609 Banks Ave. Police said Brown, 20, of 17 Columns IV Traller Court, was shot soon after two fights with Harvey.

Police and witnesses said Brown and his girlfriend were in a bedroom of the Banks Avenue house when Harvey walked in. An argument was followed by a brief fight,

police said, after which Harvey left the room to cool off. The same sequence of events was repeated a short while later. But this time, Brown tried to pursue Harvey.

Although several persons inside the house tried to restrain him, Brown broke free. He was shot moments later, police said.

Harvey told police he had acted in self-defense.

Harvey was being held without bail Wednesday night in Boone County Jail. He had not yet been arraigned.

Brown was taken to the hospital by his girlfriend. By Wednesday night he had been transferred from the intensive care unit, and doctors said his condition had stabilized.

Brown only recently had returned to work at the 3M Company, 5400 Paris Road, after being unemployed for almost a year because of back injuries aggravated by a collision with a sheriff's patrol car.

Police charge Columbian in strangulation of wife

By Phil Randall
Missourian staff writer

A University dormitory custodian was charged with second-degree murder Wednesday in the strangulation of his wife.

Adrian Verschuere, 36, of 3204 Northland Drive, was arrested about 10 a.m. after he had called police to his home about 2:30 a.m. Wednesday. His 32-year-old wife, Shirley Verschuere, was found dead in her bed and appeared to have been beaten, police said.

Medical Examiner Dr. John Townsend referred inquiries about the time and cause of death to the prosecuting attorney's office, where a spokesman

said Mrs. Verschuere died of strangulation.

An investigating officer said "there were signs of a struggle," but would not elaborate.

Police said Verschuere told them that his wife had gone to bed between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tuesday and that he had fallen asleep in the living room about 11 p.m. Verschuere told police he was awakened by the sound of his wife moaning, then went to the bedroom doorway and called to her. There was no response, he told police, but he did not enter the bedroom at that time.

He returned to the adjoining living (See MAN, page 9A)

Committee endorses stricter fire code for county

By Betty Connor
Missourian staff writer

County building and fire codes as stringent as those used by the City of Columbia were explored and unofficially endorsed Wednesday night by a committee formed by the Boone County Fire Protection District.

If the codes are adopted, rural Boone County would be under the tightest such restrictions it has ever known.

Although committee members said the codes would make firefighting easier, they also said their consideration is part of a continuing effort to impose some kind of guidelines on the sprawling growth of rural Boone County.

Members of the committee chose to examine codes drafted by Building Officials and Code Administrators because the codes are considered comprehensive and have been tested

and accepted nationally. Columbia already uses the BOCA building and fire codes.

The committee will invite Columbia Building Inspector Charles Scheurich and representatives of the county's 15 fire districts to its next meeting Dec. 15. Chief Steve Paulsell said Scheurich already has said he would be willing to inform district officials about the code and its enforcement.

"I don't see a thing in these articles

that would be addressed in the city that wouldn't be addressed in the county," said Bill Westhoff, former district fire chief.

Under state statute, the fire district's board of directors has the authority to "adopt and amend bylaws, fire protection and fire prevention ordinances... necessary for the carrying on of the business of the board."

Fire district officials see this as giving them authority to adopt even a

full building code, since many of its regulations are aimed at fire safety.

The district's three-member board of directors, however, may be slower than the committee to move in that direction.

Paulsell said the board, considered more conservative than the committee that met Wednesday night, would scrutinize the code carefully before taking action on it.

"They're conservative, yes. I think

that's indicative of the county. They represent county residents well."

Pat Barnes, a volunteer first assistant fire chief for the district as well as Columbia First Ward councilman, said county residents have a vested interest in seeing the BOCA codes adopted.

"Once people understand that enactment of the BOCA code will stop further annexation, they will be very receptive," Barnes said.