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Police study possible link in slayings

By LORRIE GAY
Times staff writer

MERRILLVILLE — A man arrested in Oklahoma for a series of four murders in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas is being considered as a potential suspect in the March 3 slaying of two Days Inn Motel clerks in Merrillville and the slaying of Michael Frank Greene, 37, was arrested in a Lawton, Okla., hospital

Lawton Police Chief Robert Gillies said today that Greene had been transferred this morning to Ardmore, where he was wanted on a murder warrant for the convenience store slaying.

Locally, police are looking at Greene as a possible suspect in the murders of Mary Margaret Gill, 24, of Ross Township and Jeanne Marie Gilbert, 24, of Bensenville.

On March 3, Gill was the lone night auditor at the Days Inn at U.S. 30 and Interstate 65.

Sometime after 2:30 a.m., Gill was robbed of \$179 and then led to a deserted wing of the motel, where she was shot twice in the head.

About 6:30 a.m., Gilbert was robbed of \$247 and abducted from the Days Inn at I-65 and U.S. 24 in Bensenville.

Shortly before 8 a.m., Gilbert's male, bullet-riddled body was found along Interstate 65.

Both women had been sexually assaulted.

Jasper County Sheriff Cpt. Bob Hulse said investigators involved with the Indiana cases have been in contact with police in the Midwest.

However, he said a positive link between the slayings is not clear.

See POLICE, Back Page This Section

Today

Monday, July 24, 1989

Late breaking

Thatcher to shuffle cabinet
LONDON — Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher announced today that she will reshuffle her cabinet ministers for private interviews ahead of the July 24-25 talks called changes aimed at halting her Conservative government's slide in popularity.

A senior Thatcher aide, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a "reshuffling" of the Cabinet would likely be announced this evening. Thatcher appeared certain to appoint a new chairman of her Conservative Party.

Nation/world

'We were beaten.'
Japan's Prime Minister plans to resign after party's electoral defeat.
Page A-4.

Indiana

Allison shifts workers
INDIANAPOLIS — Allison Gas Turbine will reduce its ranks by transferring 50 production jobs to another General Motors Corp. division, officials said.

Loser's corner

These are the Fax
BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Fax machines can be fun, particularly when a newspaper receives a governor's private memo instead of an intended press release.

Gov. Guy Hunt's press secretary, Terry Abbott, inadvertently sent The Birmingham News a memo addressed to Hunt.

Abbott, who the newspaper said was obviously embarrassed, called The News and explained the error in transmission. Destroy the memo, he said.

"We shall — eventually," the newspaper replied in a story.

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Regional forecast

Tonight, partly cloudy and sticky. Low of 68. More weather on back page, this section.

Vlasic wins 5th tournament title

By JOHN HURMEK
Times staff writer

HAMMOND — When Dave Vlasic won The Times Illiana Amateur Championship for a fourth time last year, he set his sights on a sixth title.

Sunday afternoon, Vlasic moved a step closer to John Dobro's tournament record six titles with a one-stroke victory over Roger Cole at Woodstar Country Club, site of the 53rd Times championship.

He needed a Sover par 146 for the 96-hole tournament, which is set in 1979. He finished Sunday's final round with a Sover par 72.

"I can't believe somebody can win it six times. To win the tournament once is tough enough," said Vlasic, a 41-year-old resident.

"The average just to win it five times," he continued. "Maybe I could win a sixth. I hope so."

Vlasic also became only the second golfer to win three straight Times titles. Bill Ragner, a four-time champion, accomplished that between 1972-74.

In addition, Vlasic is the only player to successfully defend the championship three times. He did that in 1970, last year and Sunday.

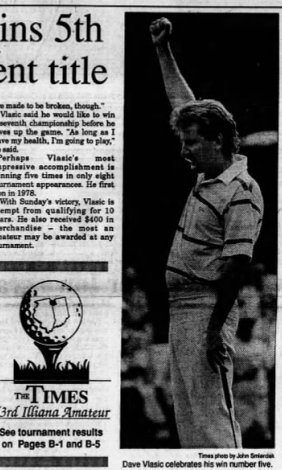
"I hope it's next year," he said of winning a sixth title. "Now, it's really making the incentive to win better."

"I'm sure back when he (Dobro) won six titles (1943-54) that nobody ever thought that would be beaten," he continued. "Records are made to be broken, though."

Vlasic said he would like to win a seventh championship before he gives up the game. "As long as I have my health, I'm going to play," he said.

Perhaps Vlasic's most impressive accomplishment is winning five times in only eight tournament appearances. His first win in 1978.

With Sunday's victory, Vlasic is exempt from qualifying for 10 years. He also received \$400 in merchandise — the most an amateur may be awarded at any tournament.



Times photo by John DeBenedictis
Dave Vlasic celebrates his win number five.

Officials comb site of crash

SIoux CITY, Iowa (AP) — Investigators stepped up a hunt for pieces of the rear engine from United's ill-fated DC-10, training infrared cameras on a 60-mile radius from the crash site and asking farmers to search their land.

At Sioux Gateway Airport, officials on Sunday were painstakingly reassembling the tail section of Flight 238 in hopes of determining what caused the jet to lose hydraulic power and tumble out of control above the runway. In Des Moines, meanwhile, a United official told about 200 people at a service for survivors and victims that it was time for healing after Wednesday's crash.

"There is little to say to ease the sadness. We at United feel deeply your pain and loss. We have lost members of the United family. And we offer thanks for those who were spared," said Capt. William Swab, United's vice president of flight standards in Denver.

Authorities were beginning to return home the bodies of crash victims. A spokesman for Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad said more than 20 bodies had been sent home by Sunday.

According to a list compiled with information from United, relatives and employers, 105 people were confirmed dead and five were still listed as missing. Another 186 passengers survived the crash, United said.

Hospital officials said 40 people remained hospitalized.

Jim Barnatt, a member of the National Transportation Safety Board, said farmers in a 16-square-mile section

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Law gives councils control over zoning

By LORRIE HICKS
Times staff writer

A little publicized law may find town and city councils up to their agendas in zoning matters.

The law has transferred the decision-making authority governing special zoning commissions, special uses and use variances from municipal boards of zoning appeals to their respective city and town councils.

House Act 1246 became law on July 1 and encompasses all 124 in Lake and St. Joseph counties.

The bill, which was sponsored by Rep. Patrick Bower, D-South Bend, is designed to put the authority for zoning policy decisions in the hands of the elected municipal officials.

It also will now set more an advisory bodies on zoning petitions. They'll make only recommendations — favorable, unfavorable or none — then forward that to the council for final approval.

The council will then have 30 days to act on the petition.

If there is no action in that time, it will be approved automatically — even if it received an unfavorable recommendation from the ISA.

Bower said the new law will force municipal officials to take personal responsibility for decisions involving

special zoning.

"People should have some recourse to unseat the decision makers if they are unhappy with the outcome of zoning changes," Bower said.

Bower said in the South Bend area of St. Joseph County, special exceptions and use have been permitted in areas where the resulting use is clearly

Mayor believes future will bring cooperation

By LORRIE HICKS
Times staff writer

HOBART — Will the future of Hobart be a tale of two cities?

It is destined to be a city divided by annexation — split along an invisible line that once marked the boundaries between unincorporated Ross Township and Hobart.

Hobart Mayor Margaret Kuchta said she believes it won't. When she looks to the future, the mayor said she sees unity and cooperation.

"I really believe once the people of Ross Township see we are not using annexation to gobble up their land, they will change their minds," she said.

And talk of land gobbling leads

First in a series

Kuchta to defend Hobart's decision to annex.

The mayor said she has been actively involved with the annexation issue since 1988. She says administrative functions in the annexation has not been pursued actively in the past.

"Previous administrations just never believed to have a formal annexation study done," she said. "They were happy with Hobart as it was and wanted to keep it that way."

Kuchta said her philosophy is different. She said she wants to see Hobart grow, and to make that happen the city needs to expand.

She said Southlake Mall and the business strip along U.S. 30 were not the focal point of the annexation. "I am happy for U.S. 30, but what we are really looking for is the well-planned community where families can put down roots and grow."

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