

in Brief

Veterinarian At Zoo Gets National Post

Dr. William J. Boever, director of research at the St. Louis Zoo, has been elected president of the American College of Zoological Medicine, spokesmen for the Zoo have announced.

The college is a specialty board of the American Veterinary Medical Association. The college determines board certification in zoo animal medicine. In 1983, Boever was one of only eight veterinarians from the United States and Canada who were chosen as charter diplomats of the college.

Boever, senior staff veterinarian at the Zoo, received his doctorate in veterinary medicine from the University of Missouri at Columbia. He has worked for the Zoo for 15 years.

Early Trial Date Sought For Abortion Protesters

The attorney for four anti-abortion protesters who are being held in jail has asked that their trespassing trial be set for Thursday. The four were charged with trespassing last Friday at the Regency Park office building, 13945 Manchester Road.

The four remained at the St. Louis County Jail at Gumbo because they did not put up the \$500 cash bond required by Associate Circuit Judge Joseph A. Goeke III.

Timothy Belz, the lawyer representing the protesters, said he had filed a motion asking for a speedy trial "because that looked like the only way to keep them from spending time in jail."

The four protesters will be arraigned before Goeke today.

The Regency Park complex has been the site of frequent demonstrations recently, including one last Aug. 10 organized by Ryan. Sixty-one people were arrested at that time.

Ceremony Held Today For \$300,000 Hangar

A ground-breaking ceremony will be held today at Spirit of St. Louis Airport for a new \$300,000 hangar that will be used by Wings of Hope Inc.

The St. Louis-based non-profit organization provides aircraft used for medical, missionary and development work in remote parts of the world. The organization now rents space at various airports.

County Executive Gene McNary and two Wings of Hope officials — George Haddaway and Paul Rodgers — will take part in the ceremony at 10:30 a.m. at the airport. The county-owned airport is at Chesterfield Airport Road, south of U.S. Highway 40. The hangar will be built in an area of the airport that is part of a \$6.2 million expansion program.

New Life Center Gives Vehicles To 6 Families

Six needy families in the St. Louis area got free used vehicles Tuesday to help them "break the cycle of poverty," said the Rev. Larry Rice, head of the New Life Evangelistic Center.

The vehicles — four cars and two pick-up trucks — were donated to the center, at 1411 Locust Street, Rice said. The recipients were chosen from among 287 applicants, he said.

"We had so many apply that we had to decide how could the vehicles help the most people," Rice said. One elderly couple will use their pick-up truck for hauling jobs and for volunteer work they do for other agencies, Rice said.

One woman who got a car needed a vehicle to haul wood to heat her house, Rice said. A man from Valley Park got a pick-up truck to do hauling jobs and to transport his wife to a city hospital, where she is treated for an illness, Rice said.

Judge Sets Aside Verdict In Firing Of Policeman

U.S. Magistrate Judge William S. Bahn has ordered the setting aside of a jury's verdict against the city of Overland in the firing of a former police officer, Ralph Crump, in 1982.

The jury awarded Crump \$80,500 in damages Sept. 12 on the ground that the town had violated his constitutional rights. Crump worked for the Overland Police Department for 18 years. The Board of Aldermen fired him on April 26, 1982.

The judge's order means that Overland does not have to pay the jury's damage award. Both Crump and Overland signed mutual releases. That means neither will file suit against the other on the matter. Bahn has ordered the file sealed.

Lottery Numbers

Illinois Lottery Daily Game
Tuesday's winning number 309

Pick-Four game
Tuesday's winning number 2330

■ The grand prize in this week's Lotto game is estimated at \$6 million.

st.louis/wednesday

Shooting Victim Ready To Challenge Parole

By Thom Gross
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

Lester Ficke shows a command for detail that only a former detective could possess as he recounts the day he became a victim — instead of a fighter — of crime.

As he prepares to travel to Jefferson City on Monday to testify in a parole hearing, Ficke, 77, is reliving the day in December 1978 that he was shot four times in a robbery attempt.

Ficke is expected to be the first victim to appear at a parole hearing under a new program of the state Board of Probation and Parole. Since Oct. 1, the board has been inviting victims of crime to appear at hearings for consideration of parole for the criminal.

The program, part of a "get-tough" policy announced Sept. 6 by the Parole Board, also allows victims to submit written statements on possible paroles. Gail B. Hughes, chief supervisor of the Parole Board, said Tuesday that although many people had responded in writing, Ficke would be the first victim to appear at a hearing.

Ficke was notified Nov. 20 that the Parole Board had set a hearing for Ronald E. Burton, 26, formerly of the 6000 block of Cates Avenue. Burton was sentenced Nov. 9, 1979, to 50

years in prison on charges of assault with intent to kill and attempted robbery.

Ficke is a 30-year veteran of the St. Louis Police Department who spent many years with the bomb and arson squad. He had been retired for several years when he was shot.

He still can't believe that his assailants "got the drop" on him.

He recalls that he was collecting rent at an apartment building he owned in the 5300 block of Pershing Avenue when Burton — accompanied by two other men — announced a holdup and immediately fired a bullet into Ficke's neck.

"I charged at him and grabbed his arm, forcing his gun-hand straight up in the air," Ficke said Tuesday. "I almost had the gun, and if I'd got it, I'd have made him eat it. But he pointed it down and shot me in the shoulder, and that's what knocked me down."

"I rolled under a car, and that saved my life. But he bent down and shot me two more times in the legs. Then they ran off, leaving me for dead."

Ficke said he would be traveling to Jefferson City because he felt strongly not just about his own case but about the whole issue of early release of convicts.

"It's just gotten out of hand," he said. "I know how hard the police and

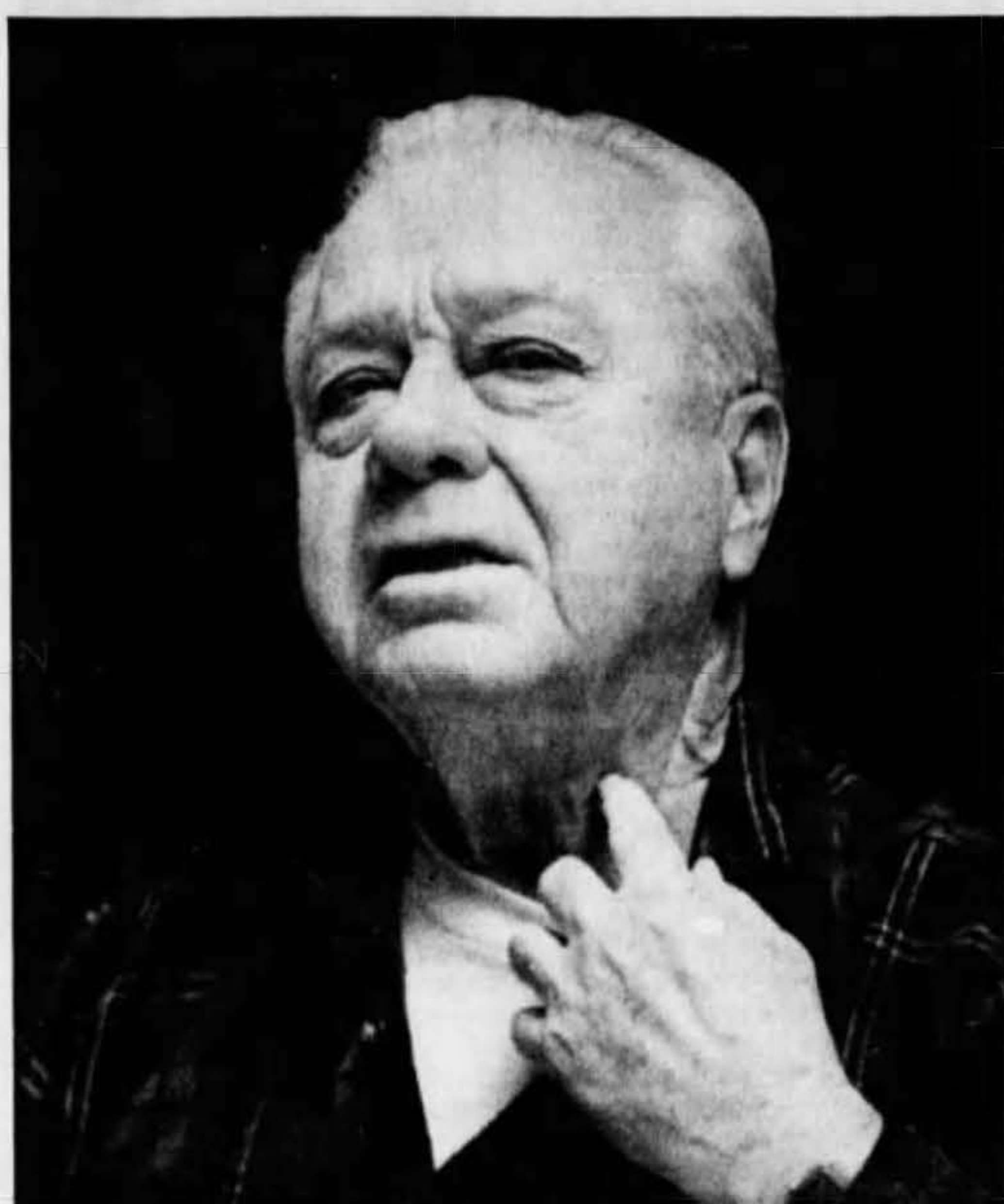
the circuit attorney work on these cases. Then they send them up there, and a short time later they release them. It doesn't make sense."

He said he would "like to explain what type of person" Burton is. "He tried to kill me. If they release him, he might shoot someone else in a little time. He might try to shoot me again. I feel a little like a sitting duck here waiting for him to come get me."

Ficke said he hoped his experience as a police officer would lend weight to his testimony. "I certainly hope they'll listen to me. I'm going to plead with them not to release him... You hear so often about these guys, as soon as they're released, they stick up somebody else. If they figured they wouldn't be getting out so soon, they wouldn't take such chances."

Ficke said Circuit Attorney George Peach and Chief of Detectives James J. Hackett were writing to the Parole Board on his behalf. And he said the detective who found him near death in the street seven years ago had volunteered to go with him to Jefferson City.

That detective, Laird Kelly later pieced together information from a confidential informer to identify Burton as the assailant. And he brought Burton back to St. Louis after he was arrested on another charge in Kansas City.



J.B. Forbes/Post-Dispatch
Lester Ficke showing where he was struck by a bullet during a robbery attempt in 1978.

"I think it's the thing of the future to also consider the victim's rights," Kelly said. He said he had planned no statements, and would appear at the hearing mostly to support Ficke and answer questions about the case.

"I do know this guy had three prior felony convictions before this happened," Kelly said. "The jury felt that he should serve more than six years in prison, or else they wouldn't have given him 50."

Fire Dept. In De Soto Shifts Rules

By Mary E. Chollet
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

The volunteer Fire Department in De Soto has a new policy: to fight all fires reported within its area, regardless if the owner fails to hold a tag entitling him to fire protection.

The policy change was made Monday, in a letter hand-delivered to the De Soto Police Department and written by Fire Chief Don Null of the De Soto Rural Fire Protection Association.

Null wrote: "As of Nov. 29, all calls for the De Soto Rural Fire Department are to be dispatched out, regardless of what type of call they receive."

Firefighters were notified "that they are to respond to all calls, tag or no tag," Null said.

Under the new policy, if the fire victim is not a tagholder, he or she will have to sign a contract on the spot for fire protection. The fee will be \$250 for the first hour and \$100 for each additional hour. If the victim is not at home, the fire will be fought and the victim billed later at the same fee.

The De Soto Police Department does the dispatching for the Fire Department, the city has no other connection with the Fire Department.

Last Thursday, area residents said that De Soto firefighters had stood and watched as Tom and Debra Weindel's trailer home burned to the ground. The department questioned whether the Weindels had a "fire tag," a blue metal plate showing that they had paid \$12.50 to support the volunteer Fire Department.

The Weindels have a current tag, but their friends and neighbors could not convince the Fire Department of that. The Weindels and their four children lost everything they owned in the fire, which broke out while they were away from home. The family's dog was killed.

The family is living temporarily in the three-room apartment of Tom Weindel's sister in Crystal City, where Weindel works as a baker in his parents' doughnut store. Weindel said he intended to buy and install a new double-wide trailer on the same concrete pad where his trailer had burned.

"If the pad's not cracked, we could be back in by Christmas, hopefully," Weindel said.

He said his attorney was looking into the possibility of filing a suit against the De Soto Fire Department if his insurance company didn't do so.

In a statement late Tuesday, the Fire Department's attorney said "inaccurate information" given to the De Soto dispatcher had been responsible for the incident.

The attorney, Brian P. Taylor, said that the dispatcher had received only two calls Thursday and that neither caller had identified the Weindels' home. The statement said that the department saw the Weindels' fire when responding to another call and that the home was "a total loss" when the department arrived.

But four neighbors told the Post-Dispatch that they had reported the Weindels' fire; three neighbors said they had named the Weindels as the owners of the property, and the fourth said the location of the home had been given. One neighbor noted that the department had not tried to contain the fire even after the home was damaged. The Weindels live about a mile from the Fire Department.

All fire calls to De Soto are tape-recorded. City Manager Larry Palmer said. But Palmer said the transcripts of the calls cannot be made public without the Fire Department's approval.

The statement from the attorney for the Fire Department also says that the department is studying the possibility of setting up a tax-supported fire district.



Karen Eishout Whiteley/Post-Dispatch
Volunteer Judy Dixon ringing a bell for the Salvation Army across from St. Louis Centre on Tuesday. The Tree of Lights campaign is ahead of last year's pace.

Volunteers Want To Chime In At Malls

By Victor Volland
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

Salvation Army bell ringers and their familiar red kettles are missing again this year from area shopping malls.

Mall operators here and in other cities adopted a blanket policy four years ago banning all solicitations, charitable or otherwise, on mall property. They said that the groups sometimes harassed and annoyed shoppers and added to holiday congestion, and that to admit one group was to open the mall to all.

Since then, the Salvation Army has been discreetly negotiating for a return to the malls. It may be

making some headway.

Lt. Col. Edgar A. Overstake, commander of the Midland Division here, said Tree of Lights committee members with clout with businesses were talking again this year with mall operators. They include this year's campaign chairman, Lee M. Liberman, president of Laclede Gas Co., and Edward Schnuck, president of Schnucks Markets.

"We're not raising a big fuss because we don't want to embarrass them and get their backs up. We just want to sit down and discuss how we can help each other," Overstake said.

A trump card for the Salvation Army this year was the invitation to set up a satellite Tree of Lights with attendant bell ringers and kettles in Union Station.

Another encouraging development, Overstake said, was an overture by Venture Stores, one of the excluders, to help the Tree of

Lights through the sale of specially designed ornaments. All proceeds from the 99-cent ornaments will go to local Tree of Lights drives. The ornaments are being sold at the 62 Venture stores in seven states.

About 50 uniformed Salvation Army and volunteer bell ringers with kettles are still to be found on street corners downtown and in front of some drug discount stores and suburban supermarkets.

To fill the gap left by the mall kettles, Schnucks supermarkets last year introduced small countertop plastic kettles at checkout counters and free apples for donations. They are joined this year by Medicare-Glaser drugstores, Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants and Wehrenberg movie theaters.

The Salvation Army's Tree of Lights campaign for the area's needy stood at \$351,747 late Tuesday. The goal is \$1.3 million, with a "stretch" goal of \$1.5 million.

Truck Crashes At Risky Site On I-55-70

The driver of a tractor-trailer loaded with bottled water was injured Tuesday when her rig hurtled through a guardrail on a stretch of Interstate 55-70 in East St. Louis that has a reputation for truck accidents, authorities said.

The impact of the crash tore the engine from the truck and left the driver, Doris M. Marcusiu, 27, of Urbana, Ill., pinned in the shattered wreckage for about 15 minutes, police said. The East St. Louis Fire Department used bolt cutters to free the woman from her mangled cab.

"I was surprised that she wasn't all cut and broken up," said Fire Chief

Bruce Hill. "The transmission and motor were lying 75 feet from the cab."

Marcusiu was cited for speeding, said a spokesman for the Illinois State Police. She was reported in satisfactory condition Tuesday afternoon at St. Mary's Hospital in East St. Louis.

Police said the tractor-trailer had been headed west on Interstate 55-70 about 7:45 a.m. when the driver apparently lost control, clipped a car and plowed through the metal guardrail and a chain-link fence in the median. The truck finally stopped in the eastbound lanes, they said.

The driver of the car, Tari Good-

brake, 19, of Cottage Hills, Ill., escaped serious injury, police said.

"The truck just broke up into pieces," said Goodbrake, who was driving to her clerical job at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis when the accident occurred. "They had to carry the parts away in a dump truck."

Goodbrake said the truck had pushed her car into the guardrail. Her Chevrolet Camaro was heavily damaged, she said.

The accident occurred near the Exchange Avenue overpass — the site of numerous tractor-trailer accidents, especially in wet weather.

57 Tapes Readied For Trial

By William C. Lhotka
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

The 57 tape-recorded conversations that prosecutors are prepared to play next month at the fugitive-harboring trial of former Alderman Sorkis J. Webbe Jr. include tapes of Webbe talking with David Leisure, a fugitive whom Webbe is accused of hiding.

According to documents on file in U.S. District Court, some of the conversations involve talks between Webbe and convicted mobsters Paul Leisure and his cousin, David Leisure, on April 14, 1983 — the day the Leisures were indicted on first-degree murder and racketeering charges.

The apparent close relationship between the Leisure and Webbe families was hinted at but not fully disclosed during the racketeering trial of the Leisures early this year nor during the vote-fraud trial of Webbe and three others last month.

One reference to the Leisures was expunged from a tape that the jury heard in the vote-fraud trial. The tape dealt with Webbe's hatred for a political opponent, Robert Brandhorst. James E. Crowe, assistant U.S. attorney, quoted the expunged remarks at the end of trial when he unsuccessfully asked U.S. District Judge Stephen N. Limbaugh to cancel Webbe's bond.

The jury had heard Webbe say he would take Brandhorst's head "off his shoulders." Crowe said the deleted remark that the jury had not heard was "... and Paul Leisure will tear his eyes out."

According to the documents that were filed recently, Webbe had conversations with Paul Leisure at 11:12 a.m., 12:27 p.m. and 12:28 p.m. on April 14, 1983. Webbe had conversations with Paul's cousin, David, at 11:55 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on April 14 and at 3:56 p.m. on April 15.

The tape-recorded conversations are six of 38 conversations involving Webbe on April 14 and 15, 1983, that the government intends to play before a jury in the court of Chief U.S. District Judge John F. Nangle.

The trial is set for Jan. 27. Webbe is accused of harboring David Leisure in the Mayfair Hotel on April 14, knowing that Leisure was wanted on charges of murder and racketeering. David Leisure was charged with murder in two car bombings, which authorities said had resulted from a feud between two organized crime factions here.

David Leisure was convicted on the federal charges and was sentenced May 2 to 55 years in prison. Paul Leisure also was sentenced to 55 years. Paul's brother, Anthony, was sentenced to 40 years. One associate got a 36-year sentence; another got a 40-year sentence.

The first-degree murder charges in state court against the Leisures are pending. They could get the death penalty, if convicted.

Webbe, 31, and three associates were convicted Nov. 14 of vote-fraud charges. Limbaugh set sentencing for Jan. 3.

A Post-Dispatch reporter obtained the document — a proposal for a stipulation by Rosen listing a synopsis of the "tapes we intend to use in our case..." — from motions filed in opposition to some of the tapes. The motions were filed by defense attorneys for Webbe.

At the time of the conversations, offices of Webbe and his father, the late Sorkis J. Webbe Sr., had been bugged, the proposal for the stipulation says. Those offices are in the Mayfair Hotel, which is downtown. Three telephone lines also had been bugged, the document states.