



## Robbery possible motive in La Crosse triple murder

By Marvin Balousek  
Regional reporter

LA CROSSE — Robbery was the apparent motive in the murders of a man and two women on this city's North Side, police said Saturday.

Police said they had found no evidence that the killer knew the victims.

Lt. James Schliefer, head of the La Crosse Police Department's detective bureau, said the killer probably fled the house at 2638 Prospect St. in a brown 1981 Buick Century station wagon with Wisconsin license number NG1973.

Killed were Lila Bush, 73; her son, Ken, 32; and his girlfriend, Debbie Reget, 35. The car was registered to Steve Reget, of Onalaska, Debbie's estranged husband, but driven by her, police said.

"At this time we have no named suspects," Schliefer said. "We have numerous leads we are pursuing."

Reget was interviewed but isn't considered a prime suspect, Schliefer said.

The victims were found shot to death, possibly with a small-caliber handgun, shortly before 11:30 a.m. Friday, although some sources said the murders may have occurred the night before. A relative found the bodies, Schliefer said.

Autopsies of the victims were con-



James Schliefer

ducted in Madison Saturday by Dr. Robert Huntington. Schliefer said a substantial amount of evidence from the house was sent to the State Crime Lab for analysis.

He said autopsy results may not be released until Monday.

"We're hoping we can determine more through the medical process," he said.

Schliefer said Mrs. Bush's body was found in her bedroom. Her son was found in the living room and

Reget's body was found in a second bedroom, not in an unattached garage, as a neighbor had indicated earlier.

The robber apparently was seeking cash when breaking into the modest home in the mostly residential area a few blocks east of Highway 53, Schliefer said. An undetermined amount of cash was taken, he added.

"There is evidence that the house was entered forcibly through a window in the basement," he said. "The vehicle was, from our understanding, taken from the scene of the crime."

Schliefer said no evidence was found so far to indicate any prior connection between the killer and the victims.

"I think we feel that the situation that occurred was random in that we cannot pinpoint any specific reason for going to that house," he said.

He said a description of the car has been distributed nationwide, and 10 La Crosse investigators are assigned to the case.

"We are expending all the manpower we have available to us," he said. "We've received quite a bit of information concerning the car, all of which is being checked out."

He said anyone with information about the car or the murders can call the La Crosse Police Crimestoppers number, (608) 784-8477.



The body of one of three murder victims is removed Friday.

—AP Laserphoto

The killer probably fled the La Crosse area, Schliefer said, and no neighbors reported hearing anything unusual Thursday night.

Mrs. Bush was the victim of an earlier, unspecified crime but,

Schliefer said, that incident wasn't related to the murders.

The murder brought a tragic end to a difficult life for Mrs. Bush. Her first husband died in a car accident and her second husband disappeared,

when her son, Ken, was 1½ years old, they said. She recently had heart surgery.

Neighbors said they didn't know the Bushes well because family members usually kept to themselves.

## 'Country lawyer' flies to the rescue in Belize

By Richard W. Jaeger  
Regional reporter

OREGON — Add "Soldier of Fortune" to Jack McManus' list of exploits.

The colorful Dane County lawyer, tanned and weary, is back from five weeks in Central America, where he flew a medical rescue plane for the Wings of Hope Inc., a volunteer humanitarian organization headquartered in St. Louis, Mo.

For those who know McManus' forceful courtroom tactics and outspoken approach to life, his adventure comes as no surprise.

"The spirit of adventure is natural for me. I like to think of myself as a soldier of fortune, ready to go anywhere at anytime to help the oppressed," McManus said, leaning back in his chair, drawing a puff on his crooked Irish meerschaum.

"I'm no bleeding heart. I know that. I also am not into arms and ammunition, so this work gave me the chance to have the challenge of adventure and to do some good for those in need," he added.

The oppressed and needy in this case were the natives of Belize. They were the injured, the pregnant and the sick from the inland jungles of the former British colony on the eastern coast of Central America.

The mission for McManus was to fly the Wings of Hope's six-passenger, single-engine Cessna 206 into



Jack McManus, right, prepares for emergency flight.

those jungles and transport the injured and ill to the country's only hospital, a wood-frame barracks in Belize City. He also flew medical supplies and personnel into the jungles and into neighboring Guatemala.

It was strictly a voluntary, no-pay, no-reimbursement job — a one-man, one-plane, around-the-clock opera-

tion.

"That may sound a bit overwhelming, but it's not as big as it sounds. We are talking about a small country, only 200 miles long and 65 miles wide, about the size of three of our counties," McManus said.

"However, you have to remember we're talking primitive conditions

down there, none of this big-city municipal airport stuff," he added.

Most of the airstrips where McManus put his Cessna down were just that — strips of hard-packed soil cut out of the jungle trees. Even his home base at San Pedro, on the island of Ambergris Cay, had only an asphalt-and-soil runway.

The 58-year-old lawyer-pilot is used to those conditions, however, which is one of the reasons he was accepted for the job.

"They were looking for a bush pilot, and you could call me that. I've put my own planes down on some pretty rugged soil in the backwoods fishing camps of Alaska and in the Caribbean," McManus said, pointing to various photographs of some of those ventures on his office walls.

He once owned a resort in the Cayman Islands in the Caribbean where he dodged palm trees to land his planes. Even the airstrip outside his rural Oregon office is nothing more than a swath cut out of a cornfield. He calls it the Hoonch-Na-Shee-Kaw Airport which is the Winnebago Indian term for Big Bear Standing Alone.

"I did a lot of seat-of-the-pants, dead-reckoning flying on this mission because of the unpredictable weather. Squalls would pop up at any time when the warm air from the sea blew inland to the mountains. I spent many days hopping from one airstrip to the other sitting there waiting for the weather to clear. We had to fly no

matter what — the sick and the wounded don't wait," McManus said.

"It was fun," he added, shrugging and grinning.

McManus' penchant for flying goes back to his days in the Marines in China from 1945 to 1948. He worked as a courier and was taxied about the Asian continent "by some pretty slick fliers."

"When I got out and went to college on the GI bill I decided to learn to fly. I almost made that my career rather than the law," he said.

McManus now owns five airplanes. He has logged 5,800 hours of flying time and holds three classes of licenses including multi-engine.

Even his law office has the trappings of his aviation background, right down to the glass-topped coffee table that sits on a 450-horsepower Pratt and Whitney radial airplane engine.

The flying part of his month-long stint wasn't the only adventure to capture McManus' interest. The work he was doing and the people he met also provided some new experiences.

"I have a great admiration for the medical people down there. They are working with primitive resources but doing a great job with what they have," McManus said.

Although most of his flights were normal illness cases, he did have a couple of exciting medical evacuations. One was a man who had been shot in the stomach.

"I don't know who shot him or how — I didn't want to ask because it wasn't my job. All I know is that he was a real problem, kicking and fighting as we loaded him into the plane. I had to stop just before takeoff and strap his legs down," McManus said.

"I really couldn't blame him for not wanting to sit still. They had slapped a big bandage on his gut. He was bleeding and his innards were hanging out," he added.

Belize and the rescue flying he did will probably be the closest "Flying Jack" will come to fulfilling his adventurous dreams of being a soldier of fortune.

"Belize City is today's city of intrigue like Seoul, Tangier and Casablanca were in the past," McManus said. "It is a very cosmopolitan seaport with many foreigners of varying backgrounds."

"English is the main language, but some speak Spanish and a native Mayan is spoken. That was no problem for me because I know a little Spanish," McManus said. "Belize City also is very dangerous to the point that you don't dare go out after dark."

Will he go back?  
"You bet — probably this fall or winter as soon as I can set a month of time aside from my practice. Now that I'm a widower, and my family is grown, I can take the time to do something like this. Call it a service to God and my country," he said, his eyes twinkling.

## New maps to feature governor

By David Stoeffler  
State government reporter

Gov. Tommy Thompson has decided he'd like to have his mug on the map in your car's glove compartment.

The Republican governor, who took office in January, has reversed a four-year-old policy to use a scenic picture, such as one of the state Capitol. The policy was ordered to reduce the numbers of maps rendered obsolete by quickly changing governors.

"We need that person-to-person touch," Transportation Secretary Ronald Fiedler said Saturday of the new maps, scheduled to be available May 1.

Printing of about 1.4 million state highway maps — a one-year's supply distributed free by tourist centers, legislators and others — has been delayed in order to put Thompson's picture on the map, as well as for other changes, Fiedler said.

A redesigned map has been in the works for several months, as the Department of Transportation (DOT) has worked with the Division of Tourism and the Department of Natural Resources to spruce up the back side with more tourist-oriented photos and information, DOT officials said.

With the emphasis on tourism and on generating new business for Wisconsin, "we'd like to have a picture of the governor to say, 'Welcome to Wis-



Tommy Thompson

consin," Fiedler said. "It bears on his (Thompson's) image as pro-business," Fiedler continued.

Some could view the move as political, "but gosh, that's not the way I view it," Fiedler said, adding it was a marketing — not a political — decision. The change was made with Thompson's approval, Fiedler said.

Republican Gov. Lee Dreyfus' picture was the last to appear on the maps, ending a tradition that had lasted at least 20 years. Dreyfus' Transportation Secretary Owen Ayres announced the change in September 1982, saying the decision to drop the governor's picture would save time and money, but especially would increase the map's life, because a map with an old governor's photo appears outdated.

Maynard Schneider, DOT spokesman, said Western Publishing of Racine was the low bidder to print 1.4 million copies of the new map at a cost of 85 cents each, down from the previous cost of 95 cents by a Missouri publisher.

## State Journal appoints 4 editors

The Wisconsin State Journal has appointed four new editors and added a new computerized graphics service as part of an increased emphasis on national/foreign news, television coverage and graphics in the newspaper.

Donald K. Davies, features editor, will become TV editor, a new position, and will be succeeded as features editor by Genie Campbell, assistant features editor.

Anita Clark, a State Journal reporter since 1975, will be the paper's first national/foreign editor.

Kenneth A. Miller, editorial graphic artist for the Philadelphia Inquirer, will become the paper's first graphics editor.

"These appointments are good news for our readers," Frank Denton, editor of The State Journal, said. "Don Davies has served this newspaper 34 years, and his new assignment shows the importance we will place on coverage of TV, locally and nationally."

"Genie Campbell has understudied Don for almost 10 years, and now she will have a chance to try out some of her own ideas for improving our lifestyle, entertainment and arts sections."

Denton pointed out that readers increasingly are asking for better coverage of national and foreign news. "That's why we are



Donald K. Davies



Genie Campbell



Anita Clark



Kenneth A. Miller

assigning this responsibility to Anita Clark, one of the most respected journalists in town.

"We invited Ken Miller to join the State Journal after a national search for the best person to be responsible for the look of the newspaper. His appointment — and our signing on with the new Knight-Ridder Graphics Network — will mean visible improvements in the State Journal every day."

The network, coordinating with the Knight-Ridder news service, provides graphics — maps, charts, graphs and drawings — on deadline via computer from the network's base in Washington and from staff artists at Knight-Ridder newspapers around the country. Examples in today's State Journal are on Section 1, Pages 12-13, and

Section 4, Page 4.

Campbell, 39, a graduate of Indiana University, joined the State Journal staff in 1977 after working as entertainment editor for a chain of suburban Chicago newspapers. She began the popular "Diner's Scorecard" restaurant review for The State Journal. Her husband, Thomas Rostad, is president of Dane County Title Co.

Clark, 37, joined The State Journal as a general assignment reporter and has covered courts for the paper for a decade. In 1978, she won a National Headliner Award for the story that led to the recall of Dane County Judge Archie Simonson.

She is a graduate of the University of Michigan and has a master's degree from Northwestern

University. She is married to Richard Eggleston, a Madison reporter for the Associated Press.

Davies, 58, a graduate of UW-Madison, has been a State Journal staff member since 1953. He was Sunday editor before becoming the paper's first feature editor in 1977. His wife, Bonnie, is a UW-Madison employee.

Miller, 38, a graduate of the Hussian School of Commercial and Fine Art in Philadelphia, has worked as an artist for the Bloomsburg, Pa., Press-Enterprise, and the Easton, Pa., Express. He was editorial art director for the Houston Post before joining the Philadelphia Inquirer in 1984. He and his wife, Marty, who also is an artist, and their two sons will live in Fitchburg.