

MAR 03 2000

FRIDAY

WEATHER

44 34

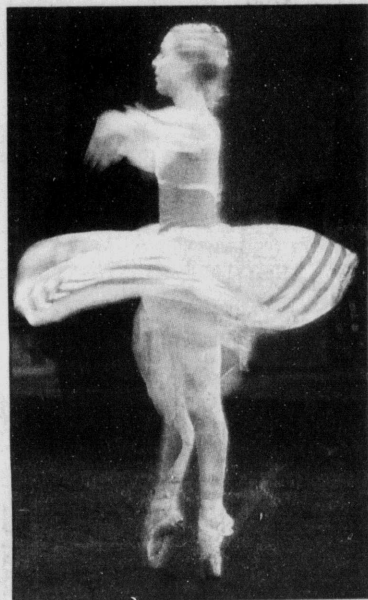
Complete report:
8A

ENJOY



The bed
and breakfast
capital
1D

LOCAL



Ballet: Give
it a twirl
3A

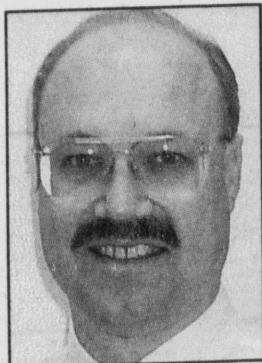
INSIDE

Classifieds	2C	Horoscope	7C
Deaths	1C	Lotteries	2A
Enjoy	1D	Sports	1B
Family Fun	4D	Your Money	4B

COFFEETALK

Echoing the old political promise of a chicken in every pot, Maine Gov. Angus King wants to put a computer on every child's lap. Starting in 2002, he wants to give every one of Maine's 17,000 seventh-graders a laptop computer that will be theirs to keep, regardless of whether they have one at home.

MILLENNIAL WISHES



"That my children would clean their rooms on a regular basis."

Rod Surber,
public information director,
Missouri Southern State College,
Joplin

Friday



THE JOPLIN GLOBE

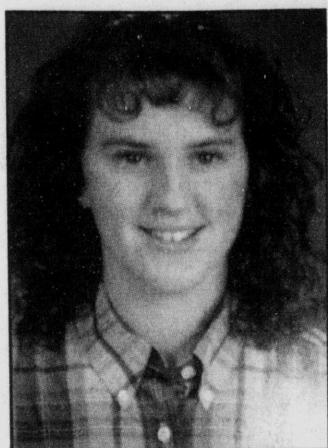
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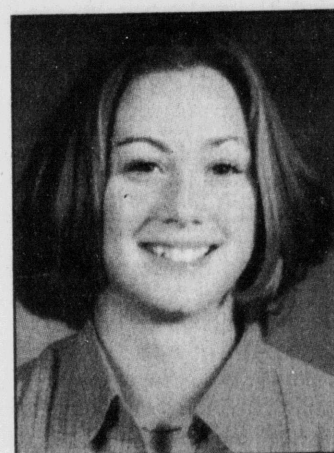
March 3, 2000

DAILY 50¢ — SUNDAY \$1.50

'Are they still alive?'



Lauria Bible



Ashley Freeman

For missing girl's parents and Oklahoma town, hope is haunted by feelings of despair

"You have a really heightened awareness. You notice now when someone drives by you and they look at you a bit too long."

Deanna Dorsey,
Welch, Okla.

"No one stays at the house by themselves, and they don't really want to because they're scared."

Katie Dorsey,
Welch, Okla.,
friend of Ashley Freeman's

"It scares people to think that could happen to them or their kids. This is a small town, and stuff like this just doesn't happen."

Rocky Bullard,
Welch, Okla.,
Ashley Freeman's boss

"We're very much still hopeful and keeping our resources on it. It's bothering us. It's tearing us up. It haunts us."

Gary Johnson,
FBI spokesman



Stan and Lorene Bible put 200 to 300 miles a day on their van to distribute leaflets and to search the countryside.

By **Katy Schrader**
Globe Staff Writer

BLUEJACKET, Okla. — At Stan and Lorene Bible's home in rural Bluejacket, it feels a little like time has stopped.

Yellow ribbons of hope adorn the pillars of the couple's modest, two-story farmhouse. A fully decorated Christmas tree stands oddly out of place in the front room.

That's where the tree has stood since shortly before the night their daughter, Lauria Bible, and her friend Ashley Freeman disappeared in an apparent murder-kidnapping that has gripped this small community with shock and grief.

"I've been telling people I'm leaving (the tree) up for her to take down when she gets home," says Stan Bible. "That's what we're hoping and praying for... for her to get home real soon."

The Bibles' nightmare began the morning of Dec. 30, when the Freeman girl's home was found burned to the ground. Her parents, Danny and Kathy Freeman, had been shot to death and were found in the rubble.

Lauria had stayed overnight at the Freeman mobile home north of Welch to help celebrate Ashley's 16th birthday. The two teens have been missing since.

With no new information in the case, the Bible family and the community have pulled together to try to find the girls.

But with each day that passes, they find themselves coping with increasing frustration, fear, disbelief and confusion.

"I've looked at every angle of this, every possible way I can, and it just doesn't seem to fit, all the pieces. It just doesn't make sense," says Marty Patrick, a longtime friend of the Bible family.

"I wonder if it'll ever be resolved," says Clark McKeon, principal at Welch Junior-Senior High School, where Ashley attended. "The FBI's come up with nothing by nothing. You just wonder and shake your head, 'What's next?'"

Life stopped

In many respects, Lorene Bible's life stopped on Dec. 30. When she learned her daughter was missing, she put in for vacation time on her job as manager of the McDonald's restaurant at Vinita. When her vacation time runs out, she plans to take a leave of absence.

"To run that business, you have to give it 100 percent, and I would not do that," she says.

Lorene Bible's days are consumed with the effort to find her daughter. She wears a mobile-telephone headset constantly, hoping for news. She invested in a color copier, and spends her days making and distributing posters of the missing teens. She and her husband estimate they've put 12,000 miles on their Chevy van since she started.

"It's nothing to drive 200 to 300 miles a day," she says.

The driving does more than take her from place to

See **Missing**, Page 8A

Debt settled with gunfire

Neosho man hospitalized with gunshot wound to back of head

By **Debby Woodin**
Globe Staff Writer

NEOSHO, Mo. — A dispute over money erupted into gunplay early Thursday, leaving a Neosho man seriously wounded and his alleged shooter in jail.

The victim, Daniel Gildea, was

listed as being in stable but guarded condition with a small-caliber gunshot wound to the back of the head, said Newton County's chief deputy, Chris Jennings.

Douglas Alan Ralston, 31, of Pineville was charged with first-degree assault and armed criminal action. He was in custody in lieu of

\$100,000 bond.

Investigators said they were unable to talk to the victim Thursday because of his condition. Jennings said investigators had learned that the shooting stemmed from one man apparently owing the other several hundred dollars. Jennings said he did not know which man al-

legedly owed the money.

The shooting took place in a concrete block building at 16980 Business Highway 60, near Highway 71.

The shooting was reported at 1:38 a.m.

Gildea was taken by helicopter ambulance to St. John's Regional Medical Center in Joplin.

Investigators allege a small-caliber automatic pistol was used.

Man allegedly shoots neighbor's dog

By **Debby Woodin**
Globe Staff Writer

SAGINAW, Mo. — A Saginaw man, allegedly angered by a neighbor's barking dog, was charged Thursday with shooting the dog in the mouth.

Mark W. Isbell, 43, was in custody in the Newton County Jail at

Neosho in lieu of \$5,000 bond on felony charges of animal abuse and armed criminal action.

The dog and its owner, Patricia Hammonds, 202 Rock Lane, live next door to Isbell, authorities said.

Lt. David Hart of the Newton County Sheriff's Department said investigators were told that Isbell drove up in front of Hammonds'

house at 5:49 p.m. Wednesday and fired from inside his van at the dog. Hart said authorities do not know what kind of gun was used.

The dog was being treated at Main Street Pet Care in Joplin. A veterinary assistant at the clinic said Thursday she would have to have permission from the dog's owner to release information about the con-

dition of the dog. Attempts to contact the owner were unsuccessful.

Hart said the shooting apparently culminated a long-standing neighborhood feud.

"Apparently there had been an ongoing argument about dogs barking out there," he said. "There had been threats back and forth about shooting the dog."

Bill would keep
Joplin customers
from paying
for St. Joe plant

By **James F. Wolfe**
Globe Special Correspondent

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — The battle against rate increases sought by Missouri-American Water Co. is being fought in the Capitol as well as in the Public Service Commission offices across the street.

A bill that got a fast start in the Senate provides that capital expenses in one service area should not be the basis for rates charged in another service area.

That would keep customers at Joplin and other places served by the company from paying for a new \$75 million plant at St. Joseph.

The company's request originally would have meant a 51 per-

See **Plant**, Page 8A