

Man killed, two wounded over \$28 poker pot

One man was killed and two others injured when a dispute over part of a \$28 poker-game pot erupted into gunfire at a Beacon Hill home yesterday.

The dead man was identified by the medical examiner's office as Spencer Durant Jr., 25, of 1751 31st Ave. S. James Robinson, 33, and John Bradford, 53, were wounded in the shooting, police said.

Robinson, who was hospitalized with wounds in the

hand and leg, was booked into jail in absentia for investigation of homicide, police said.

The shooting erupted on the back porch of Essie Mae Carter's home on 19th Avenue South as four men were playing poker at 3:30 a.m. Carter said Durant's father, playing in the game, had tried to recover \$7 from the pot.

The other players objected, she said, and Durant Jr. defended his father. Two men traded gunshots

with the younger Durant, who was shot in the chest, Carter recalled.

An autopsy on Durant was scheduled for today. "We were having a birthday party for a lady, with coffee and cake, and a little booze was around but not much," Carter said. "There were 13 or 14 people in the house. Then this guy started shooting. It got so it was clear out of hand. But nobody was drunk or anything."

Robinson was in satisfactory condition at Harborview Medical Center. Bradford was not admitted to the hospital, and Carter said she believed he suffered a hand wound.

The elder Durant testified twice in trials in the early 1970s that he had operated dice games in the Central Area in 1967 and had paid off police to be allowed to continue the games.



Asian refugees work on area rugs in the upstairs warehouse of Lee's Fleas, a surplus shop that provides work for refugees.

Ann Yow / Seattle Times

Unusual refugee project stresses getting job done

by Dee Norton
Times staff reporter

A polished bureaucrat with a retinue of aides met a rough and rumpled merchant in a cluttered Pike Street warehouse and got a close-up look at a low-budget employment program for refugees.

Phillip Hawkes, director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement in Washington, D.C., initially didn't quite know what to make of the shaggy proprietor of Lee's Fleas, a rug and surplus store operating at 1016 E. Pike St.

"We put some discretionary funds in Oregon and Washington last year," the bureaucrat noted. His visit last week was to see how the money — \$1.9 million to Washington state and \$1.2 million to Oregon — was spent. The funds are part of a special grant for refugees who don't qualify for conventional welfare programs.

Rod Guiberson, who operates Lee's Fleas, did not appear intimidated by his guests. Guiberson has received \$1,280 of the discretionary funds as wages for four women. His profit comes from sale of their products.

Dressed in jeans, flannel shirt and stained nylon jacket, Guiberson ushered his pinstripe-suited visitor around his place of business.

Several state and federal officials accompanying Hawkes turned their heads and smirked when the merchant extended an unwashed hand for the bureaucrat to shake.

The contrast between them faded during the tour of Lee's Fleas. The visitors, including several women in high heels, picked their way carefully up creaking stairs to a surprise.

Three Cambodian-refugee women worked as Guiberson explained their use of carpet remnants and roll ends, assembling colorful custom-made rugs. The visitors were impressed.

"We sold one last week for 600 bucks. A guy wanted a happy elephant and four-leaf clovers" in a pattern, said Guiberson. "He must have won on the lottery. These gals almost had it done before he wrote the check."

Another refugee woman toiled at a sewing machine, obtained by Guiberson in trade for a wood stove, making a new cover for a davenport bought at a swap meet. "I'll send them out this weekend and



Rod Guiberson, owner of Lee's Fleas, stands in front of a carpet made by Asian refugees.

they'll sell it and buy some more," Guiberson told Hawkes.

The refugees are paid \$4 an hour for "jobs other people don't want. They have a lot of talent and they work hard and they are learning a trade. They want to work," said Guiberson.

Ducking water pipes as they wound their way downstairs to the basement, Liz Begert Dunbar, director of this state's Bureau of Refugee Assistance, wondered aloud, "What are we going to find down here?"

They found Guiberson's newest project for the refugees — auto detailing and body repair. Work on three cars was already under way using equipment and tools obtained through wheeling and dealing.

Ever the optimist, Guiberson pointed at some rusting metal frames blocking Hawkes' path. "That stuff will be out of here next week and we'll be able to get 60 cars in here."

He's arranged several deals for what he expects to be a steady stream of vehicles needing cleaning and straightening. "It may take some talking but I'll get 'em," the merchant vowed.

Looking relieved when they returned to the main floor, the visitors moved among rows of surplus clothing until they were confronted by a hanging display of products on the second floor.

The visitors admired the workmanship of the goods as Guiberson lectured Hawkes on plans to find

better housing for the refugees by having them repair a fire-damaged apartment house. "The damage is all cosmetic and they can get a few months' free rent for doing the work."

Stephen Masciocchi of the VOLAG Roundtable of Seattle, a local job developer who arranged the tour, endorsed Guiberson's swap-meet methods. "We had a couple short-term contracts to place people up here for training and then Rod just took over," Masciocchi said.

Guiberson later outlined his hip-pocket job-referral service. "I was talking to a friend over in Kirkland, runs a woodworking shop. He said he was a refugee once, from Yugoslavia I think, and said to send him out a Cambodian because he needed some help."

"He called back a couple days later, happy as hell, and said to send him a second one," said Guiberson.

Hawkes noted that Guiberson's enterprise has been in operation a short time and it's too soon to pass judgment on it. Masciocchi was enthusiastic. He said Guiberson "calls me every morning with new ideas — he's the most energetic guy I have seen."

Guiberson may herald a trend in the philosophy of refugee resettlement, Masciocchi added. "We could use a few more, but not too many, like him. He wears me out."

Alleged \$1 million embezzler had plain lifestyle

by Peyton Whitley
Times staff reporter

The domed home at 50 Glacier Key in Bellevue's Newport Shores looks little different from its neighbors.

Yet, according to a federal indictment, the man who lived there from 1978 to 1980 committed one of the most audacious white-collar crimes in state history, singlehandedly embezzling more than \$1.1 million from the company that built computers and propellers for six new state ferries.

The indictment, issued Thursday, accuses Victor T. Vasale of three counts of failing to pay income taxes on the money, plus one count each of mail fraud and making a false financial statement. It says he "engaged in a systematic practice of embezzlement" while serving as vice president of finance for Kent's Propulsion Systems Inc.

The amounts described in the indictment are substantial. The figure given for 1979 alone is \$566,200 — and the \$1,117,356 total far exceeds the firm's net worth of \$700,000 as described by its president in 1979.

But aside from the house and a Porsche automobile he owned, Vasale's lifestyle didn't seem to hint of \$1 million going through his hands.

Vasale liked to play tennis at the community club-

style Newport Yacht Club, where he once served as treasurer. But the government says even that activity was a fraud; the indictment charges Vasale failed to pay taxes on \$30,300 embezzled from the club in 1978.

The loss of that amount would have been noticed in a normal year, but in 1978 the club was spending about \$500,000 to install new piers, a club officer said.

The house on Glacier Key is for sale now. Vasale and his wife are separated and she is holding down two jobs and helping operate a small shop.

Vasale himself has been unavailable for comment on the charges. His initial court appearance is scheduled Wednesday.

The federal charges say Vasale invested the money in stock accounts opened in his name and the names of nominees at three Seattle brokerage firms, Faine Webber, Jackson & Curtis, and Piper, Jaffray & Hopwood.

Vasale was known as a "big player" at the firms, according to a member of the financial community.

However, he got into a legal disagreement with Faine Webber. The brokerage contended Vasale owed it money, but problems with its computerized records system kept it from proving what Vasale had bought and sold. Vasale, in fact, eventually ended up recovering money from the firm. The whole matter

was handled privately through channels within the New York Stock Exchange.

Vasale left PSI in January 1981 and went to work for a Kent T-shirt company. He learned several months ago that he was under investigation by the Seattle office of the Internal Revenue Service.

PSI was a relatively small company, employing about 40 people and doing about \$3 million worth of business a year. One question raised by the federal indictment is how so much money could have disappeared from such a small company without being noticed.

PSI eventually was taken over by Seattle's Marine Power & Equipment Co., builder of the six Issaquah-class state ferries, and was placed in bankruptcy in February 1981. The bankruptcy filings said many of PSI's financial records were missing — records that Peder K. Wennberg, then PSI's president, indicated were in the care of Vasale.

Later, in a June 1981 deposition made in connection with the bankruptcy proceedings, Wennberg was asked what happened to PSI's money.

"It's gone," he said. "It was used to pay operating

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'Nuclear' train continues west at snail's pace

by Tom Brooks
and Constantine Angelos
Times staff reporters

A 14-car train, which nuclear-disarmament supporters believe is carrying 100 nuclear warheads to the Trident submarine base at Bangor, continued its snail's pace through the West this morning as protesters in Washington planned nonviolent trackside vigils.

Several Montana communities held peaceful vigils along the route yesterday.

Early today, Lois Wythe, Ground Zero representative at Sandpoint, Idaho, said the train was near Whitefish, Mont., at 6:30 a.m. PST. It wasn't expected to reach Sandpoint until about midmorning.

In Spokane, meanwhile, peace organizers prepared for the train's arrival today.

"We'll just have some folks as close to the tracks as we can get," said Joe Gaffney-Brown, director of the Spokane Peace and Justice Center.

The train includes two Burlington Northern engines, 12 white freight cars, two security cars with gun turrets and a caboose.

Jim Douglass of the Ground Zero Center for Non-Violent Action near Bangor said he wasn't sure when the train would arrive at the Trident submarine base on the Kitsap Peninsula, because it is traveling at a variety of speeds and over undisclosed routes.

Federal officials and spokesmen for Burlington Northern have refused to disclose the train's cargo or its route.

A network of disarmament supporters along possible routes has monitored the train's progress since Friday, when it was spotted in southern Colorado after leaving the Pantex Corp. weapons plant in Amarillo, Texas.

"It's kind of like Paul Revere in the nuclear age," Douglass said.

He expects the train will travel from Spokane to Everett, south through Seattle and Olympia, then north to Elma and the Kitsap Peninsula. A similar train in December traveled along that northern route, he said.

The train could follow a southern route through the state, but Douglass said, "It would seem taking another route would be for political considerations," referring to the government's possible desire to bypass vigils planned in Ephrata, Wenatchee, Sultan, Everett, Edmonds, Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia and Elma.

Douglass said contingency plans for other demonstrations are ready should the train take a southerly route from Spokane to the Tri-Cities and then either north through Yakima and Auburn or west along the Columbia River.

Ten people were arrested in Denver and Fort Collins, Colo., during trackside demonstrations Saturday.

In Billings, Mont., about 30 demonstrators held banners and sang in a peaceful protest yesterday, said Jan Duvall, a member of Clergy and Laity Concerned.

Federal and railroad security personnel appear to be traveling with the train in a convoy of unmarked cars, she said.

The train has been traveling about 35 mph, but yesterday that pace slowed and the train stopped several times along track sidings, witnesses reported.

Human Life meeting's call changes subtly

by Carol M. Ostrom
Times staff reporter

In some ways, this year's Human Life Convention, a gathering of about 300 anti-abortion activists, was most remarkable for what didn't happen.

For example, no pickets appeared, as they have at times in the past.

The scheduled dinner speaker, Dr. Lendon Smith, a well-known Portland pediatrician and author, was abruptly canceled from the program when it was learned that he wasn't "anti-abortion enough," said conference chair Sue King. ("He's against abortion," King said *sotto voce*, "but he believes that if a woman is determined, she must have access to safe and legal abortion.")

And a press conference Saturday assembled a table full of speakers — but only one reporter.

After all, the anti-abortion message, including the usual display of literature and plastic fetuses and fetuses at various stages of development, is little changed from the message of past years.

Even some of those who came to Olympia for the Friday and Saturday conference admitted that the movement was essentially "at a standstill," and that it sometimes appears that just about everyone has chosen a side.

But it was time for the "pro-life" movement's 10-year checkup, and subtly, a message of change was sounded throughout the conference, against a backdrop of gurgling and crying babies.

Certainly the movement should learn from its 10 years of experience, said Nellie J. Gray, who mobilized the Washington, D.C., March for Life, which for several years has brought tens of thousands of abortion protesters into the streets.

Those protesting abortion, Gray said, must take a hard line.

"There is no moderate position," she said, facing the crowd with a steely look, "and we have learned that with 10 years."

A split in the movement over troubling cases — such as those in which the life of the mother is in danger, or when the pregnancy results from rape — have caused the original principles of the movement to be "watered down," she said.

As a result, she said, several pieces of proposed federal legislation don't have even a "nodding acquaintance" with the organization's "life princi-

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