

Mostly sunny
High 75, low 54
Details on 2A

Arkansas Gazette

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In the News

Charles Jones, 49, a pharmacist who killed a young man he believed fatally abused his 2-year-old grandson, was convicted at Nashville, Tenn., of a reduced charge of voluntary manslaughter by a jury that said it did not want Jones imprisoned because he was justified in acting as "prosecutor, judge, jury and executioner" to avenge the boy's death.

Edwin Meese III, the attorney general, speaking to the United States Chamber of Commerce at Washington, endorsed workplace surveillance of suspected drug users, saying employers can help curtail narcotics abuse by keeping a close watch on employees in parking lots, locker rooms and even in nearby taverns.

John R. Block, president of the National-American Association of Wholesale Grocers, issued at Washington a how-to guide for setting up employee drug testing programs, saying, "It's a response to President Reagan's call for a drug-free workplace."

Victor H. Hanson II, publisher of the Birmingham News, said the newspaper began about six months ago requiring new employees to take acquired immune deficiency syndrome tests because "we don't want knowingly to get involved with somebody who has a debilitating illness that would be very costly to us."

Edward Arlen Marks, 25, an unemployed stockbroker known as "Fast Eddie," was sentenced at Orlando, Fla., to 27 years in prison for trying to manipulate stock prices by contaminating a pharmaceutical company's over-the-counter drug capsules with rat poison and cyanide.

President Reagan, who signed a record spending bill October 17 that was passed in the closing minutes of the 99th Congress even though two important pages were missing, re-signed the measure at Spokane, Wash., where he was campaigning for Republican candidates, after a special Air Force jet flew the papers to him from Washington.

Robert Warren Nelson, 23, of Tacoma, Wash., who authorities said had compiled a list of license plates belonging to cars driven by Secret Service agents, was arrested at Spokane, Wash., shortly before the arrival of President Reagan and was charged with threatening Mr. Reagan's life.

Benjamin Novoselsky, a circuit court judge, carrying out the dying wish of Ben Kamin, a World War II combat veteran, turned over to federal Treasury Department officials at Chicago Kamin's estate of \$270,000 to be applied to reducing the country's national debt, now at \$2.2 trillion.

Ralph Nader, the consumer advocate, announced at Cambridge, Mass., that he was setting up a new group, Harvard Watch, to scrutinize corporate-sponsored research, outside activities by professors and students' roles in decision-making at the country's oldest university.

William J. Bennett, the Education secretary, said at Washington that an unidentified college official has warned him to stop his criticism of the nation's institutions of higher learning or risk not being welcomed back to academic life and exclaimed, "I may be banished from paradise."

Thomas A. Flannery, a federal judge, dismissed at Washington a challenge to the constitutionality of a section of the recently enacted changes in the nation's gun control laws that halts the production and sale of new machine guns for private ownership.

Caspar Weinberger, the Defense secretary, charged at Washington that some members of Congress were trying to turn the United States into a second-class power by chopping defense spending while pushing pet military projects back home.

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Gazette sold to Gannett Co.

By Bob Stover and James Scudder
GAZETTE STAFF

The Arkansas Gazette, the oldest newspaper west of the Mississippi River, has been sold for \$51 million to the Gannett Co., Inc., of Arlington, Va., the nation's largest newspaper chain.

Hugh B. Patterson Jr., the Gazette president and publisher, announced the sale at 10:30 a.m. Thursday in a staff meeting in the Gazette newsroom and later at a press conference at the Capital Hotel. At his side were Allen H. Neuharth, Gannett chairman, and other Gannett executives.

The sale still is subject to some final legal details and regulatory matters being worked out, but "It's a done deal," Neuharth said. The sale should be closed in about a month, he said.

The Gazette had been owned by the family of Judge Carrick White Heiskell since 1902, but Patterson has been considering selling the newspaper for some time, primarily because the intense competition with the Arkansas Democrat has depleted the company's resources. The company has continued to make money, but the margin has been narrowed considerably.

Decision 'difficult'

In making the sale announcement to the Gazette staff, Patterson said the decision to sell was "a difficult one, but it is clear to us that the Gazette's strong voice in this community and this state can be continued by Gannett."

Neuharth, who later responded to employees' questions, was asked whether Gannett was ready to commit its resources to respond to the "newspaper war" that has been declared against the Gazette by Arkansas Democrat executives.

"My understanding is that war already has been declared," Neuharth said. "Our resources will be put to work to help you win that war." Gazette employees applauded the announcement.

Neuharth said Gannett would "continue the Gazette traditions and professional standards," adding that "we not only preach but

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Publisher Hugh B. Patterson Jr. waves before announcing sale as Allen H. Neuharth looks on.

Publisher of Democrat 'not afraid'

By C. S. Heinbockel
GAZETTE STAFF

Walter E. Hussman Jr., publisher of the Arkansas Democrat, said Thursday he was not trembling at the prospect of going head to head with the newspaper group that is buying the Gazette.

"We are not afraid of competing with Gannett," Hussman said Thursday morning. "We welcome the opportunity."

And for his part, Gannett chairman Allen H. Neuharth told a gathering of Gazette employees Thursday morning: "Our resources will be put to work to help you win the war." The employees applauded and cheered.

Hussman didn't get to hear that

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comment, but he did attend a noon press conference at the Capital Hotel announcing the agreement to sell the Gazette. Afterward, Hussman had an additional reaction.

He pointed to Neuharth's response to a question about whether Little Rock could support

two newspapers. Neuharth responded that he was concerned primarily with Gannett and the Gazette.

"I thought that last statement was sobering," Hussman said. He interpreted Neuharth's statements to mean that Gannett didn't care if the Democrat went out of business.

The Democrat, which has been losing money, is relying on increasing its share of the advertising to become profitable, Hussman said. That will be tougher for the Democrat to do with Gannett trying to build up the Gazette's market share at the same time.

"We're very close to making a profit," he reported, adding his

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Some are surprised at news, some not
Leaders note economics Sad staff likes choice

By Jerry Dean
GAZETTE STAFF

Community and political leaders expressed some surprise Thursday at the announcement by Arkansas Gazette publisher Hugh B. Patterson Jr. that the 167-year-old, family owned newspaper had been sold to the Gannett Co., Inc. But generally, they understood the economic necessity for the decision.

Governor Bill Clinton, interviewed while campaigning at McCrory, said he hoped the newspaper would "continue to be, as nearly as possible, a completely independent newspaper that is deeply involved in Arkansas."

Mr. Clinton noted the Gazette's

tradition as "the oldest family owned newspaper west of the Mississippi." He said he liked what he knew of the Gannett chain and Allan H. Neuharth, Gannett's chairman.

"I recognize," Mr. Clinton said, "that we live in a world where we've got all these buyouts and mergers, and the economics often dictate it. But I hope that we will continue to have an independent Arkansas-oriented newspaper" in the Arkansas Gazette. He wished both the Patterson family and the new buyers well.

L. Dickson Flake, chairman of the Greater Little Rock Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors,

(See LEADERS on Page 8A.)

By James Scudder
GAZETTE STAFF

Gazette employees responded with predictable sadness Thursday when Hugh B. Patterson Jr., the Gazette president and publisher, announced that the newspaper had been sold to Gannett, but most conceded that, if the newspaper had to be sold, Patterson had chosen the new owner wisely.

Patterson and Gannett executives met at 10:30 a.m. Thursday with Gazette employees before holding a public press conference at 11:30 a.m. at the Capital Hotel.

Most Gazette employees weren't surprised by the announcement because, during recent months,

there had been persistent rumors that the newspaper would be sold. Patterson read a prepared statement to his employees, saying one of his primary concerns in choosing a buyer had been to protect the interest of "our larger loyal, talented and devoted executives and employees whom I have always considered members of our larger family, without whom the institution could not exist."

Patterson, who later told reporters at the press conference, "You may detect a lump in my throat but you won't see tears in my eyes," was applauded enthusiastically by Gazette employees who filled the second-floor newsroom for the an-

(See EMPLOYEES on Page 8A.)

'Pot' fight is begun by agency

Crackdown planned in national forests

WASHINGTON — The Forest Service Thursday revealed a plan to crack down on the widespread and rapidly expanding practice of growing marijuana in the national forests.

Using new authority provided by the National Forest Drug Control Act of 1986, part of the recently enacted drug-enforcement legislation, the Forest Service will deploy 500 special agents and spend up to \$20 million a year to halt the illegal use of the forests for cultivating marijuana.

Federal felony

From now on, Forest Service officials said at a news conference, growing and distributing marijuana in the national forests will be a federal felony, punishable by a prison term of up to 10 years and a fine of up to \$10,000, rather than a misdemeanor trespass violation.

The 500 agents will receive drug law-enforcement training and will be given firearms and equipment to conduct investigations. They will have authority to conduct surveillance, make arrests, execute warrants, seize evidence and, it was suggested indirectly, engage in undercover operations.

The new policy applies to the nation's 156 national forests, covering 191 million acres in 41 states, which are under the Agriculture Department. It does not apply to national parks, which are under the Interior Department. The money for the new program is to come from the general revenue fund.

Agriculture Secretary Richard E. Lyng said cultivation of marijuana in the forests had increased "dramatically" in recent years. "I consider this an intolerable situation," he said.

Forest Service figures indicate that 20 per cent of the domestic marijuana crop is now grown in the national forests compared with 5 per cent six years ago. Forest acreage under marijuana cultivation rose from 280,000 to 946,000 in that period.

\$1 billion annually

The street value of the marijuana grown in the forests is now an estimated \$1 billion annually, according to the Forest Service.

The State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics Matters recently reported that domestic production of marijuana was 2,100 metric tons in 1985 and is now the third highest source of the illegal substance after Mexico and Colombia.

George Dunlop, assistant Agriculture secretary for natural resources, said that in the past the Forest Service's response to marijuana in the forests was to "back off" from confrontation with the growers, who frequently resorted to firearms and other forms of violence.

Employees of the Forest Service were ordered to stay out of large

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Lasater, Locke plead guilty to cocaine conspiracy

By George Wells
GAZETTE STAFF

Former investment firm partners Dan R. Lasater of Little Rock and George E. (Butch) Locke of Chicago pleaded guilty Thursday in federal court to charges of conspiring to possess cocaine for distribution.

Their other former partner, David A. Collins of Little Rock, pleaded innocent to a similar charge in an appearance before federal Magistrate John F. Forster Jr., but his attorney said Collins "will plead guilty, but not today."

All three were indicted last week by the federal Grand Jury, which also charged seven other persons in related cocaine cases. Four of the others pleaded innocent Thursday and two of them indicated they would change their pleas to guilty later. Another suspect in the case had said Tuesday he would plead guilty.

Two suspects charged with mis-

(See PLEAS on Page 12A.)



DAN R. LASATER



GEORGE E. (BUTCH) LOCKE



DAVID A. COLLINS



KEITH PETERSON

—Staff Photos