

Buus says she didn't ask to toss ticket

Former Lennox council member wants to defend herself in misconduct trial

BY RANDY HASCALL
Argus Leader

CANTON — A Lennox City Council member pleaded not guilty Monday to misconduct by a municipal officer regarding actions she is accused of taking after her teenage daughter was issued a traffic ticket.

Shortly after entering the plea in Lincoln County Court, Lorie Buus told Magistrate

Judge Patricia Riepel that she plans to represent herself, without a lawyer, in a jury trial. The judge set the trial for 8:30 a.m. June 12.

"I strongly suggest you hire a lawyer," Riepel advised Buus, who could face a maximum penalty of 30 days in jail and a \$200 fine.

Buus' daughter, Ashley, also entered a plea of not guilty to a charge of running

a stop sign. That violation typically results in a \$50 fine, although the maximum penalty is 30 days and \$200. Her trial is scheduled for 2 p.m. May 28.

Lori Buus talked with reporters outside the courthouse and defended the actions she took after part-time Lennox police officer Steve Schwartz issued her daughter a ticket Jan. 25.

She telephoned Schwartz, on-duty police officer Patrick Boll and Police Chief Myron Kranz during a three-hour period that night.

"As a parent, I had every right to ask about that ticket," Buus said. "I deserved at least an answer."

Buus also rode with Boll during part of his patrol, an action she said was her right as a member of the council

and city's public safety committee.

Five days after the incident, Kranz decided not to file the citation. He later said that decision "was a grave error" and that he regrets his action.

Buus said Monday that she didn't ask the chief to destroy the ticket.

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VAL HOEPPNER / ARGUS LEADER

Former Lennox City Councilwoman Lorie Buus talks with the media as her daughter Ashley waits in the background Monday outside the Lincoln County Courthouse.

► TIKRIT

Capture of Saddam's hometown marks end of large conflicts

► BAGHDAD

Looting tapers off, large weapon caches found

► SYRIA

Charges of harboring fugitives mount, sanctions considered

'Major combat' complete

BY DAVID ESPO
Associated Press

Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit fell Monday with unexpectedly light resistance, the last Iraqi city to succumb to overpowering U.S.-led forces. A senior Pentagon general said "major combat engagements" probably are over in the 26-day-old war.

As fighting wound down, Pentagon officials disclosed plans to pull two aircraft carriers from the Persian Gulf. At the same time, Iraqi power brokers looked ahead to discussions on a postwar government at a U.S.-arranged meeting set for Tuesday.

"I would anticipate that the major combat engagements are over," Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal said. Tikrit fell with no sign of the ferocious last stand by Saddam loyalists that some military planners had feared.

Secretary of State Colin Powell hinted at economic or diplomatic sanctions against Syria, saying the government is developing a weapons of mass destruction program and helping Iraqis flee the dying regime. Syrian officials denied the charges.

Looting eased in Baghdad after days of plundering at government buildings, hospitals and an antiquities museum, and groups of religious and civil opposition leaders met in the capital to plan efforts at renewing power, water, security and other vital services.

American forces found prodigious amounts of Iraqi weaponry, French-made missiles and Russian anti-tank rocket launchers among them. And Army troops discovered thousands of microfilm cartridges and hundreds of paper files inside a Baath Party enclave as the dead regime began yielding its secrets.

In Tikrit, 90 miles north of Baghdad, "There was less resistance than we anticipated," Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks said, as American ground troops moved into the city after days of punishing airstrikes.

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DAVID GUTTENFELDER / AP

U.S. soldiers arrest a group of men Monday in a Baghdad street, accusing them of driving a vehicle with weapons and attempting to ambush American troops. U.S. soldiers and locals claimed that the men were non-Iraqi Arab fighters. The American military continues to try to secure control of Iraq's capital city.

Factional quarrels disrupt postwar planning

BY JEFF WILKINSON,
SORAYA SARHADDI NELSON
AND STEVEN THOMMA
Knight Ridder

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait — Just hours before Iraqis were scheduled to meet Tuesday for the first time to start charting their path to democracy, one faction said it would boycott the session and two others broke into infighting.

A major Iraqi Shiite Muslim group said Monday that it would not attend today's conference in Nasiriyah, called under U.S. tutelage. The group protested even temporary U.S. involvement.

"We will not accept if they even stay one day in Iraq," said Abdul Aziz Hakim, the No. 2 leader of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

At the same time, the leader of the country's largest Kurdish group accused the leader of another Kurdish group of making a grab for the oil-rich city of Kirkuk in violation of a U.S.-brokered accord.

Massoud Barzani, the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, said the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan took advantage of the collapse of Kirkuk's defenses Thursday to pour into the city. Unchecked by U.S. forces, the broad Kurdish advance triggered looting and chaos, he said.

"What happened was definitely a violation of what we had agreed upon," Barzani said.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan did not immediately respond. The two groups fought for years, and their feud escalated into civil war in 1996. But they have worked together in recent months, coordinated by the United States, to challenge Saddam Hussein.

Another fight among Shiite Muslims ended Monday without violence.

Armed Iraqis threatening to kill a Shiite spiritual leader and two other clerics in Najaf fled in the pre-dawn hours after busloads of his tribal followers rumbled into the central Iraqi city to rescue the holy men, sources close to the besieged clerics said.

The senior cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al Sistani, remained in hiding, as he has been for the last nine days, said his son-in-law Javad Shahrestani, reached in Iran's holy city of Qom.

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Hopeless plight fuels anger in Mideast, ex-hostage says



Terry Waite speaks Wednesday at SDSU

BY JENNIFER SANDERSON
Argus Leader

Terry Waite was chained in a Beirut prison when hammers and bare hands brought down the Berlin Wall.

In his solitary cell, he listened for the rough code. One tap for "A," two taps for "B," three taps for "C." Huddled around a radio on the other side of the wall, fellow hostages passed along condensed reports from the BBC's World Service News.

While their Islamic Jihad captors slept, Waite composed stories in his head. Years after his release, when pencil and paper became everyday objects again, he'd write of this ordeal.

Waite had nearly five years, four of them spent walled up alone, to sort his thoughts. What he couldn't answer is how the fighting and killing and land disputes in the Middle East had festered to bring so

many lives to a stalemate in Lebanon.

Wednesday, Waite will try to make sense of the ongoing hostilities during a lecture in Brookings. The former negotiator will speak on a type of violence he's felt firsthand as he explores the root of international terrorism.

He'll lay out his concern for the British hostages whose release his government had sent him to secure. And, if asked, he'll again deny that his association with U.S. Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North gave him a role in arms-for-hostages deals.

"The principal victims of open conflict are women and children," Waite says. "Following warfare, there will be reconstruction. And it isn't difficult, given money, to rebuild roads and bridges and schools and factories. But it's extremely difficult — sometimes impossible — to rebuild the lives of

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CAROLYN COLE / LOS ANGELES TIMES

Family members mourn the death of three relatives in Baghdad. A father, his teenage son and another male relative were shot and killed by U.S. Marines after the car they were driving allegedly did not stop while passing a building occupied by Marines. The victims' relatives were waiting for their return. They did not know about the incident until relatives towed the car, containing the three bodies, to the family's home. Families ravaged by decades of war are thrust into a cycle of desperation, says former hostage Terry Waite.

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