



Olympics guide

A special full-page guide to the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid appears today inside the Sports section on 4D.

Travel/People

Beginning today Sunday travel coverage moves to the cover of section E and the People pages appear inside that section.



Sunday Journal-News

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'Son of Sam' case

How arrest could have come sooner

By MAURY TERRY and TOM BARTLEY
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First of a series

David Berkowitz could have been jailed on a number of serious charges that would have taken him off the streets two months and four victims before his capture in August, 1977, as the Son of Sam killer.

By mid-June, 1977, the Yonkers Police Department had a resident's complaints that Berkowitz might well have committed those local crimes. And, unknown to the Yonkers police, the Westchester Sheriff's Office had by that time a key letter linking Berkowitz to the crimes.

Moreover, two Yonkers policemen, investigating an independent theory, believed that

Berkowitz was not only some neighborhood nuisance but might be the Son of Sam as well.

New information shows that not only private citizens but Berkowitz himself provided the Yonkers Police Department and Westchester Sheriff's Office with all the leads they would have needed to arrest him by at least mid-June, 1977, nearly two weeks before the shootings of Judy Placido and Salvatore Lupu

and almost two months before the murder of Stacy Moskowitz and blinding of Robert Violante.

Indeed, the evidence suggests that Berkowitz was at the very least taunting local police and perhaps even fashioning a deliberate trail of obvious clues. In any event, the trail was not followed until it was too late.

(Please turn to 3A)

Inspectors failed to visit site of fatal house fire

By RICHARD WOLF
Staff Writer

A Clarkstown boarding house destroyed by fire Monday morning that claimed three lives may not have been inspected by town building department officials for almost six years in spite of town code provisions.

In addition, fire inspections scheduled annually under the code were not performed for at least three years because owners of the 38 Clinton Ave. structure failed to pay \$7 permit fees for multiple dwellings, according to Building Inspector Robert Bowman.

Housing officials from the county Department of Health did conduct routine inspections during the past two years and found several violations, but subsequent visits found the two-story house in compliance with public health codes.

An investigation of conditions at the boarding house before the fire continues under the direction of District Attorney Kenneth Grietz.

The blaze, which took 56 firefighters almost 12 hours to contain and injured 14 persons, is believed to have started accidentally.

Despite the building's original designation in 1927 as a two-family home, Bowman acknowledged his department was aware of its boarding house status. The \$67 fees, he said, were payable annually based on the existence of 24 rooms.

He also said faulty bookkeeping or a lack of manpower may be at the root of his inability to confirm the performance of an inspection since March 27, 1973.

"If the owners don't make applications each year, I should pick it up," he said, referring to the lack of payments since 1976. "But that's only one of the things we do here."

Chapter 24 of the town code dictates that the building inspector should insure inspection of all residential premises at least once every five years.

Chapter 47, known as the Fire Prevention Code, includes the fees

for multiple dwellings which Bowman maintained should be paid before annual inspections are conducted.

"You get the fee and then you do the inspection," he said. "It's not like getting your car inspected."

In a memorandum written more than two years ago to protest planned budget cuts in his department, Bowman listed the duties of his inspectors under the town code and pleaded for adequate manpower. The Town Board eventually maintained the staffing level in the department.

The Fire Prevention Code, Bowman wrote at the time, "provides for the regular inspection on an annual basis and the issuance of permits for compliance with the requirements of this fire code and, in particular, the multiple residence inspections and public assembly inspections so essential to the safety of the residents of our community."

Residents of the boarding house have complained the structure lacked sufficient heat and was infested with rats and roaches. The owners, listed as Isadore Steiner, Mame Cohen and Herbert Liebman, were unavailable for comment.

A routine inspection by Health Department officials last November revealed combustible materials stored in a second floor room, but Public Health Housing Inspector Frank Haera said the violation had been cleared by Dec. 4.

At that time the building was listed as having a 28-tenant capacity, but a total of 34 persons were accounted for after the fire. Three of them — Crystal Smith, 23, Fred Gouley, 26, and Aaron Jones, 45 — died as a result of the fire.

Some tenants complained the rooms were too small and the building overcrowded, but Bowman said no complaints ever were made to him.

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Heavy rains threaten

Police weren't 'singin' in the rain' late Saturday night, as they watched potential flood areas in the county following forecasts of heavy rain in Rockland.

The local forecast called for a near 100 percent chance of precipitation today, possibly changing to snow before ending tonight.

The probability that poor drainage areas and small streams would overflow was on the mind of Clarkstown police Lt. Ron Purdum Saturday night.

Purdum said that two major flooding areas — Klein Avenue in West Nyack and the New City Condominiums — were showing signs of imminent problems.

One basement at the condominiums had already been flooded, he said, though no details were available.

Klein Avenue, where water made roads impassable several weeks ago, was not yet flooded.

Police in local departments were also anticipating similar problems, but in Saferm they already had one to deal with.

The Weaver home at 24 Lexington Avenue called police complaining of severe back yard flooding. "It's been accumulating," said Mrs. William Weaver. "It's the low end point around and drains about 12 properties and part of Route 902. It's like a lake out there."



Blumenthal arrives

Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal shakes hands with China's Finance Minister Zhang Jinfu Saturday night after arriving at Peking airport. Blumenthal is scheduled

to open the U.S. embassy, conduct trade talks, and convey to Chinese leaders President Carter's views on the invasion of Vietnam.

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Eclipse

Get the full rundown on Monday's solar eclipse, the last in view in North America in this century — Sunday Magazine

Vietnamese, Cambodians trade accusations at U.N.

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Vietnamese and Cambodian delegates to the United Nations exchanged bitter charges Saturday at the Security Council debate on China's invasion of Vietnam and Vietnam's military intervention in Cambodia.

Vietnamese Ambassador Ho Van Lau condemned China's "open and deliberate aggression" and rejected any link between the fighting in Cambodia and the Chinese invasion of his country.

He criticized the United States for naming both conflicts in its call for the Security Council meeting and said the main problem in Indochina is "the war of aggression by Peking which must be condemned."

The Vietnamese ambassador said China's invasion involved 25 infantry divisions backed by warplanes and heavy artillery, proving it was "in no way a frontier war" as stated by Peking.

Cambodian Ambassador Theano Prasth, who represents the Cambodian regime that was ousted last month by the Vietnamese army and Cambodian rebels, accused

Vietnam of pursuing a "deliberate policy of genocide" against Cambodia.

He said the new Vietnamese-backed government in Cambodia is "nothing but a Vietnamese provincial administration."

"Wherever they go the Vietnamese herd our death and destruction," Prasth said. "Barbarian and perfidious as they are, the Vietnamese are aiming at destroying the substance and identity of Cambodia."

Prasth said the Vietnamese have about 150,000 soldiers in Cambodia but that supporters of ousted Premier Pol Pot were still fighting.

The Vietnamese ambassador called on the council to approve the Soviet Union's draft resolution condemning China for invading Vietnam. The only other resolution presented so far came from China, which wants the

(Please turn to back page)



The Yonkers neighborhood in which Berkowitz waged his guerrilla war.

Berkowitz — Did he try to trap himself?

(Continued from 1A)

That trail led directly to Berkowitz, then 24, and a Bronx postal clerk living in an apartment house at 35 Pine Street in north-west Yonkers.

From his spacious, seventh-floor studio, Berkowitz says, he sallied forth to firebomb neighbors' homes, shoot their dogs and mail letters threatening their lives.

And although the Yonkers police and Westchester sheriff's officers say they investigated these crimes, Berkowitz was not arrested until a quirk of fate linked a Yonkers police dispatcher, the daughter of one of the local crime victims, with the New York City Police Department.

A Gannett Westchester Rockland Newspapers investigation has found that if all the evidence had been put together it could have led to Berkowitz' arrest as a suspect in a host of state and federal crimes including arson, attempted murder, reckless endangerment and threatening lives through the mails.

Attempts to document the bizarre crimes of Berkowitz in Westchester were rebuffed in Yonkers by the police and the city's corporation counsel, who said they could not comment officially or allow inspection of records while lawsuits challenging the city's handling of the case were pending in the courts. The Westchester Sheriff's Office agreed to interviews but refused access to official records, including critical orders requested under the state's Freedom of Information Law.

Nevertheless, from material already on the record and through interviews with key figures—including Berkowitz—and police and legal sources who would speak only if granted anonymity, the scope of Berkowitz' Westchester criminal career, and the free hand he had in pursuing it, were pieced together.

That criminal career and the police responses to it will be detailed in succeeding installments of this series.

Briefly, the information obtained by this newspaper shows that Berkowitz waged a violent but systematic guerrilla war against

Key figures in the Berkowitz drama

This is the cast of key Westchester residents in the guerrilla war of firebombings, dog shootings and threatening letters and telephone calls carried out by David Berkowitz in the 13 months before his arrest in Yonkers as the Son of Sam killer.

● **Sam Carr**, a retired City of Yonkers public works employee, who, with his wife, Frances, operate an answering service from their home. The Carrs were subjected to a firebombing and threatening letters, which he turned over, with a postcard sent to a New Rochelle resident he believed written by the same hand, to Yonkers police. Their dog, Harvey, was shot twice and still carries one slug in his body. Sam Carr became the unwilling "father" of Son of Sam.

● **Mabel Carr**, their daughter, who, as a civilian dispatcher in the Yonkers Police Department at the time, took a key telephone call from the New York City

Son of Sam task force about a traffic ticket issued to David Berkowitz in Brooklyn and told the New York officers of an investigation by two Yonkers officers of Berkowitz' possible involvement in a series of bizarre local incidents.

● **Jack Cassara** and his wife, Nann, who received a puzzling get well card at their New Rochelle home "signed" by the Carrs and listing their address. They contacted the Carrs.

● **Steven Cassara**, their son, who remembered after the Cassara family met with the Carrs, that the Cassaras had a dog-hating tenant who moved out in a buff over the Cassara dogs. They found his name, David Berkowitz, and his address, 35 Pine St., in the telephone book. They notified Sam Carr.

● **Joachim Neto**, his wife, Maria, their daughter, Sylvia, and Mrs. Neto's mother, Andrea Almeida, the first victims. Their

house was firebombed, their dog, Rocket, shot to death, their telephone calls and mail containing filth and threats.

● **Craig Glassman**, a male nurse and civilian volunteer member of the Westchester Sheriff's Emergency Force, who lived in the apartment beneath Berkowitz and triggered Berkowitz' wrath by falling asleep one night and leaving his television set on. The letter threatening his life became vital evidence.

● **Thomas Chamberlain and Peter Intervalla**, the Yonkers police officers who saw a pattern to the firebombings, dog shootings and hate letters. They saw in Berkowitz the possibility of a Son of Sam suspect and relayed that information to New York City authorities on Aug. 3—five days before Wheat Carr received the call that turned Berkowitz into a suspect instead of a possible witness to the killing of Stacy Moskowitz in Brooklyn.

three neighbors in Yonkers. These victims were, in the order of Berkowitz' first attacks on them, the Joachim Neto family of 18 Wicker St., a half block from 35 Pine St.; the Sam Carr family of 316 Warburton Ave., directly behind Pine Street, and Craig Glassman of 35 Pine St., in the apartment directly beneath Berkowitz.

In 13 months, Berkowitz started fires at all three addresses, shot to death the Neto family's dog, wounded the Carr family's dog and barraged all the victims with a stream of vile phone calls or anonymous threatening letters or both.

The Carrs reported the attacks and letters to the Yonkers police; the Netos reported the attacks but not the letters. Glassman, a volunteer deputy sheriff, reported the letters, which threatened his life, to the sheriff's department.

Taken alone, as they were by the authorities, there was nothing exceptional in any of the crimes. But, in addition to an identical pattern of firebombings and shootings at homes only a dog's bark away from one another, Berkowitz used the mails for more than messages of hate. He used them to paint a circle around himself and the victims of his violent crimes in Yonkers.

—In writing to Carr and threatening his life, Berkowitz complained about the barking dog just one week before he shot the black Labrador at Carr's backyard on April 27.

—On June 6, Berkowitz sent a mysterious get-well card to a perfectly healthy Jack Cassara, his former landlord, at 174 Colgate Ave. in New Rochelle. It was Berkowitz' most recent former address, one he had angrily left a year earlier after an emotional outburst about the Cassaras' barking dogs. Berkowitz

chose a card with a picture of a dog, inscribed a message in red ink and signed it with Sam Carr's name and return address.

—The next day, in writing to Glassman and threatening his life, Berkowitz used his own former address—Cassara's—on the envelope.

The Sheriff's Office did not contact the Cassaras, however. Instead, treating the letter as the work of a crank, possibly someone in the department, the Sheriff's Criminal Investigations Division turned over the letter to its identification section in a futile check for fingerprints.

The Sheriff's Department also did not notify the Yonkers police that someone was threatening to kill a resident of that city, a move that could have resulted, if now is clear, in Berkowitz' immediate arrest.

While the Westchester Sheriff and the Yonkers police sat at separate tables, the Carrs and Cassaras, strangers until joined by the writings of Berkowitz, met and compared notes, so to speak. Satisfied the handwriting matched, they sought at their meeting to identify someone they had in common. Unable to find anyone either family knew, let alone someone capable of the crimes that had been committed, the Cassaras went home. There, the Cassaras' son, Steven, recalled Berkowitz, a former tenant who rallied against the Cassaras' barking dogs. Berkowitz, they learned from the phone book, was a current Carr neighbor. The similarity in handwriting also suggested to the Cassaras that he could be the same person who rallied against Carr's barking dog, threatened Carr's life because of the barking dog, and finally shot the dog.

Jack Cassara that night called back Sam Carr and related the story of his strange tenant.

The next day, which was two weeks before the shootings of Judy Placido and Salvatore Lapo outside a discotheque in Queens, Carr went to the Yonkers police. He presented copies of the correspondence that he and the Cassaras considered an obvious match. He also gave them Berkowitz' name, his address directly behind the Carrs and his phone number. He went on to relate his suspicion that Berkowitz might also have been the man who had shot his dog barely more than a month ago and firebombed his home the previous October.

Did the police investigate? The city-imposed ban on official comment or even access to public records makes it difficult to determine with precision what steps were taken. Sources say efforts were made to compare Berkowitz' handwriting with the threatening letters to Carr. These sources also indicate that only two Yonkers foot patrolmen considered Berkowitz as a serious suspect in any of these crimes. The question remains: Should he have been?

TOMORROW: Berkowitz begins his guerrilla war in Yonkers.

Schlesinger jumps on solar energy bandwagon

WASHINGTON (AP) — Energy Secretary James Schlesinger, never known for his staunch advocacy of solar power, is trumpeting the political and economic advantages of spending \$2.5 billion on technology that would enable the nation to rely more heavily on the sun as an energy source.

In a confidential memorandum to President Carter, Schlesinger, a one-time chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, indicated a five-year government effort to stimulate solar advances. He also urged Carter to "give serious consideration to establishing a goal" for the amount of energy the United States can tap from the sun.

Despite all the clamor about dwindling supplies of fossil fuels, the nation currently satisfies only 3.4 percent of its energy demand with solar technologies.

The Schlesinger memorandum, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press, was presented to Carter as the president continues his review of U.S. solar policy.

Sources said that within several weeks, the president will decide precisely how far the government should go in stimulating solar technologies. The sources declined to be identified.

In a meeting with solar lobbyists here Friday, Carter declared he is "as enthusiastic as anyone in this room"

and vowed he'd make good on commitments to a strong solar policy, according to participants in the session.

With oil shortages on the horizon and fuel prices rising steadily, Schlesinger reminded Carter, "There is a growing interest in the possibilities that solar energy holds for reducing our vulnerabilities from an overdependence on imported petroleum-based products."

Thus, he said, "It is my conviction that there is a growing base of support for your campaign promise to investigate the development of environmentally safe sources of energy, such as solar."

The sources said Schlesinger's memo is likely to have a considerable impact on the president. The memo was

described by one source as the result of an enormous struggle at the highest levels of the Energy Department, where several top officials pushed a go-slow approach.

Solar lobbyists who have heard about the memo said they were pleasantly surprised.

"It could have been stronger, but it is better than most of us expected," said one lobbyist who asked to remain anonymous.

Among the solar policy options prepared for Carter is one that calls for few solar incentives and no dramatic increase in the amount of energy available from solar technologies.