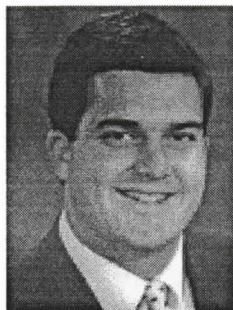


Lawmakers, continued from page 1

"when Sen. Stipe entered the Senate. I grew up in his district, but I had to move out of it to get elected."

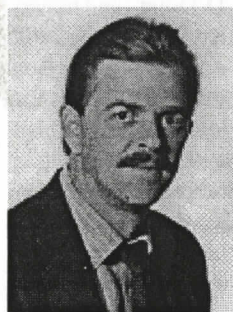
The scene was much the same in the House, where Speaker-elect Loyd Benson, D-Frederick, presided over his first gathering of all 101 representatives.

Rep. Wayne Pettigrew, R-Edmond, used his time on the House floor to introduce his new wife, Toni, who he met during his first campaign for office.



Rep. Sean Voskuhl

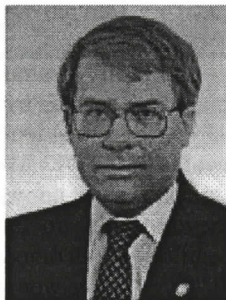
Rep. Sean Voskuhl, D-Marshall, joked about the narrow margin by which he won reelection, 18-votes, saying he was "back by popular demand."



Rep. Mike Mass

Rep. Mike Mass, D-Hartshorne, said his wife and daughter had come to the capitol, "because they heard they could get a free airplane ride," referring to the controversy surrounding the recently-purchased governor's airplane. Ironically, Benson then called on Rep. Russ Roach, D-Tulsa and the most outspoken critic of the airplane purchase. The

laughter in the House soon died as Roach described a recent conversation with his wife in which she, citing personal attacks during the recent election, said she hoped their son never sought public office.



Rep. Russ Roach

"That's something we should think about," Roach said, wiping away tears. "That's something we can change."

Only moments earlier, Roach's son appeared to become the youngest person ever to take the oath of office, standing beside his father with his hand raised, reciting the oath along with his father.

The impact of the general election was also evident in places other than the House and Senate floor. A notecard placed on the House pressboard, for example advertised a cottage for rent, where "Rep. Stottlemire stayed (here) for three terms.

Stottlemire, D-Tulsa, lost his District 77 reelection bid to Mark Liotta, R-Tulsa.

**LIBERTARIAN PARTY SUES
STATE ELECTION BOARD**

**By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer**

■(GIT) The state chapter of the Libertarian Party asked a federal judge on Monday to prevent the state election board from enforcing a law that would put an end to the party's official recognition, effectively removing them from future ballots.

The party's presidential candidate, Harry Browne, garnered only 5,005 votes in the general election, a little less than one-half of one percent and well below the 10 percent of the votes cast in a general election needed to remain a recognized political party.

"The law requires that political parties receive at least 10 percent of the vote in a general election," said Lance Ward, state election board secretary, "and that if they do not, they will cease to exist as a recognized party. That is exactly what happened here."

The statute, the lawsuit alleges, favors the established and more entrenched political parties — Republicans, Democrats and Reformers — over smaller, fledgling organizations.

See Libertarian, page 3

**DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONS:
PAINTING BY NUMBERS**

**By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer**

■(GIT) Numbers are not a game for the Department of Corrections.

According to a facility capacity report released Monday, the comments of the department's interim director and its governing board, numbers are the most important factor influencing the agency's decision making. Under current conditions, the report, staff and board agreed, that generally means making do with less than what is needed.

That situation was reflected in a supplemental budget request and fiscal year 1998 budget request recently approved by the board for the department. In order to meet the department's anticipated population growth by the end of the current fiscal year, officials say \$25.3 million will be needed. For fiscal year 1998, the department is seeking its largest state appropriation in history — \$350.5 million for operations and \$326.9 million for capital outlay, including the construction of additional prison space.

Currently, department records show, the agency is responsible for the supervision of 51,284 convicted criminals, including:

- ✓ 19,918 inmates;
- ✓ 28,589 probationers; and
- ✓ 2,777 parolees.

Of the inmates, 14,932 are locked up in Department of Corrections facilities, while 1,510 are housed in private prisons in Oklahoma and Texas. An additional 316 are backed up in county jails, waiting to be introduced in the department's system. The remaining inmates are housed in county jails and other contract facilities, such as halfway houses.

By the end of the current fiscal year, department officials project they will need room to house 19,825 inmates. That number grows to 21,256 by the end of fiscal year 1998. Including private prison space, the department projects it will have beds for 17,700 inmates by the end of the current fiscal year, some 2,125 beds short of the number projected to be needed.

Those projections, David Miller, the department's chief of staff and operations, noted Monday, are made under current conditions, absent the introduction of programs such as truth in sentencing, which are expected to increase the flow of inmates into

See Corrections, page 3

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