Deputy: 'Ray arrest like old home week'

By JIM CULLUMBER

ALTON, Ill. — Madison County deputy Sgt. Conrad "Pete" Baetz calls his meeting with and arrest of bank robbery suspect John Larry Ray "like part of an old home week."

Baetz, a deputy sheriff since 1970, became well-acquainted with Ray when he served as a background investigator for the House Select Committee on Assassinations, which looked into the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Conrad Baetz

Ray's brother, James Earl Ray, had been convicted of the crime and the committee concluded he had killed King.

Baetz, in a telephone interview Tuesday morning, said he and his wife were driving on Illinois 140 near Alton when they saw a man walking on the east side of the road.

"I thought I recognized him, and so I drove around another time," Baetz said.

Baetz said he identified the man as Ray and went to a telephone to call the sheriff's department for assistance.

"Then I just waited in the general area for a backup," Baetz said.

Baetz said when the backup arrived, he parked his car along the highway in front of Ray. When Ray passed the car, Baetz left his car, drew his gun and ordered Ray to stop and put his hands on his head.

A loaded handgun was found in a shopping bag Ray was carrying, but he was arrested without incident, Baetz said.

"After we made the arrest and I told him my last name, he (Ray) recognized me and called me by my first name," the deputy said. "I was amazed — and so was my wife."

"We just talked about his brother and the old days," he said.

Baetz had been an investigator with the house committee for about 18 months during which time he did extensive background research on the Ray family.

He interviewed John Ray several times when he was in the federal penitentiary in Marion (Ill.) to serve an 18-year prison sentence for the robbery of a St. Peters, Mo., bank. Ray escaped from federal officials months ago.

consumer price

gas actually declined slightly, according to the monthly Labor Department report. But officials said that decline was more statistical than real.

And recent price hikes by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries are likely to boost gasoline and fuel oil prices in coming months.

Food prices also declined more slowly in May, with food and beverages combined rising 0.3 percent, compared to 0.5 percent the month before. There were substantial declines in beef, pork and egg prices. But agricultural economists expect many food prices to rise in coming months.

Housing was a big disappointment in the May figures. The cost of financing a home rose a full 3 percent. While VA and FHA mortgage rates fell, conventional mortgage rates continued to climb.

The Labor Department said that is because recent declines in conventional mortgage rates quoted to customers around the country have not begun to show up in the figures for the Consumer Price Index, which measures actual mortgage rate figures.

month or two behind the quotes.

The CPI stood at 244.9 in May.

goods and services which cost now cost $244.90. To put it another 1967 dollar is now worth 40.8 cents.

Labor Department analyst Norman said mortgage rates could start pushing the CPI down in the months ahead, while rising food prices may pull the other way.

The overall outlook is for somewhat inflation, which many experts to reach a 9 percent or 10 percent rate by the end of this year — by historical standards.

May Prices continued to rise as wages, and the purchasing power of hourly earnings of blue collar workers continued to slide.

Hourly earnings of blue collar workers, adjusted for inflation declined 0.2 percent in April to May. The number of hours worked by blue collar employees

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The final vote shortly after midnight ended Kennedy's

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