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☆ **Ballot battle**
Please turn to Page 7

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☆ **Drug overdoses**
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Custody case may have link to baby's death

By **KIMBERLY HOUGHTON**
Democrat Staff Writer

ROCHESTER — While police investi-
gate the suspicious death of a baby girl, a
local woman has been denied permission
to keep her 3-year-old son away from his
father — a man who allegedly lived with
the toddler at the time she died.

Strafford County Superior Court Judge
Peter Fauver denied the request of Tristan
Evans on Wednesday in wake of the death
of 21-month-old Cassidy Bortner at her
baby sitter's residence in Kittery, Maine
on Nov. 9. The request was made in a cus-
tody case involving the woman's ex-hus-
band, 29-year-old Chad E. Evans.

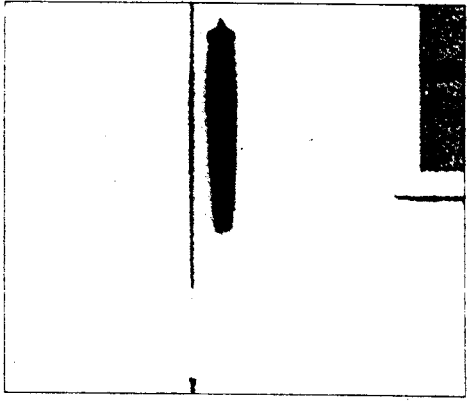
Cassidy and her mother, 18-year-old
Amanda Bortner, reportedly lived with
Evans, Bortner's boyfriend, at 191 Milton
Road in Rochester. Police, however, have
not confirmed that Bortner and Evans
lived together.

On Wednesday, the front door of the
Rochester home was secured with police
tape. In the midst of the investigation of
Cassidy's death, suspicions of child abuse

☆ **Custody case**
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Tim Boyd/staff photographer
PART OF HOUSE SEALED — A section of
this house on Milton Road in
Rochester was sealed off by police tape
recently as part of an investigation into
the death of a toddler. Below is a close-
up of the tape on the door.



call for rail safety

highlights need for increased vigilance at crossings

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**Who are the key
players in
restructuring**

her path and as she backed up,
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The driver was shaken up by the

Since the incident, Guilford has visited
the site three times to trim the brush, but
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Robert Blouin, 44, was controller ing about \$70,000 by using company boro on Nov. 27.

Custody case

Continued from Page 1

have been brought to light and officials remain tight-lipped about the probe.

Tristan Evans filed the request on the recommendation of the state Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Children, Youth and Families.

"There is reasonable cause to believe the child's circumstances would present imminent danger to the health or life of (the 3-year-old)," states the request.

Although the request was denied, Fauver gave the mother sole custody of her son, allowing only supervised visitation by Evans, who is on probation for a domestic assault conviction out of Rochester District Court. The two parents previously had joint custody of the 3-year-old

boy prior to Wednesday's court order. The custody order issued by the judge did not include a reason for the denial.

The emergency request also claims that Evans has a "domestic violence history."

Records at Rochester District Court state that Evans was convicted of two counts of simple assault for slapping his ex-wife in the face and grabbing her by the throat in March. He was sentenced to 360 days in jail, all of which were suspended pending he demonstrate one year of good behavior.

Evans also was charged with a third count of simple assault and one count of false imprisonment in connection with the same incident. Those charges were dropped.

In a separate incident, Evans was charged with second-degree assault and criminal restraint in connection with an April 1999 incident. Those charges were also dismissed, according to court documents.

Information was unavailable on why charges were dropped in the two cases.

"The (mother) does not want any visitation to occur between Chad Evans and (the 3-year-old), not even at her discretion, until the criminal and civil investigations are complete," states the request, clarifying in parentheses the investigation of "the suspicious death of a child that resided with Chad Evans."

Police have not confirmed if Evans, Bortner or the Kittery man who cared for the child at the time of Cassidy's death are under investigation.

No charges have been brought forth, and police have not commented if any charges will be raised.

The office of Maine's chief medical examiner concluded an autopsy on the girl Friday, however, the results are being withheld pending further study. The cause of Cassidy's death may not be released for up to three months, according to a spokeswoman for the medical examiner's office.

The girl was dropped off at the Kittery residence about 8 a.m. on Nov. 9, according to police. Kittery police then received a call about 12:41 p.m. from an unidentified man calling from a Rogers Road residence requesting paramedics for a child who had reportedly fallen.

However, Maine State Police said the man caring for the child called police to report she was "unresponsive" when he tried to awake her from a nap.

Cassidy was transported to York Hospital, where she was pronounced dead.

One of the baby sitter's neighbors has told Foster's Daily Democrat that Bortner or Evans told the baby sitter that Cassidy had been struck in the head with a baseball while playing with it at her home the night before her death.

On occasions prior to the day she died, the neighbor said, the little girl was brought to the Rogers Road residence with bruises on her face.

Charles Putnam, senior assistant attorney for the New Hampshire attorney general's office, would not comment on the investigation. He referred all questions to Chris Carter, an the assistant attorney general, who was unavailable for comment.

Maine State Police have been working in conjunction with Kittery and Rochester police as well as New Hampshire State Police on the investigation.

Democrat Staff Writer Jennifer L. Saunders contributed to this report.

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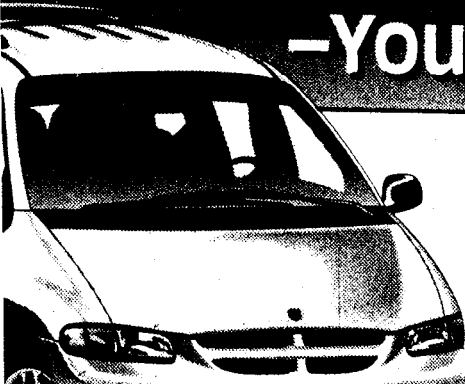
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