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CORRIDOR

CEDAR RAPIDS

C.R. man held in probe of fire that killed 2

Brian David Zirtzman, 39, 3748 H Ave. NE, is being held in the Linn County Jail in connection with the investigation of a house fire that killed his neighbor and his neighbor's daughter.

Fire investigator Al Brockhohn said Zirtzman was arrested Thursday as a suspect in the April 6 fire at 3755 H Ave NE. The fire claimed the lives of Jay Grahlman, 38, and his daughter, Jaymie, 6. Brockhohn declined to elaborate on why Zirtzman was arrested.

Zirtzman helped coordinate a collection of household items for the Grahlmans following the fire.

Also in the home at the time of the fire were Vickie Reed-Grahlman, 32; Kylie Reed, 9; Nicole Reed, 7, and Ida Mae Grahlman, 3, who all survived.

Check www.gazetteonline.com for updates on this story today. Friday

Judge in Army Reserve gets high-profile case

A year after being sworn in as a judge for the U.S. Army, Col. Patrick Reinert is presiding over a high-profile case.

The reserve officer will serve as judge in the case of Sgt. Hasan Akbar, a 32-year-old Muslim accused of killing two and wounding 14 in a March 23 grenade attack on a group of U.S. officers' tents in Kuwait.

The attack happened during the beginning of the war against Iraq.

Akbar was a soldier with the 101st Airborne Division.

The trial is being held at Fort Campbell, Ky.

In civilian life, Reinert, 42, is an assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Iowa in Cedar Rapids. He has held his present position since he stepped down from active duty in 1990.

Arson suspected in fire at school playground

Fire destroyed a piece of playground equipment near Jackson Elementary School, 1300 38th St. NW, last night. No one was injured.

Firefighters were on the scene at 5:21 p.m. and had the fire out in a few minutes, Cedar Rapids fire Capt. Tonya Ross said.

Arson is the suspected cause of the blaze, she said.

Witnesses saw two boys playing in the area shortly before the fire was reported.

Pieces of rubber used to line the area around the equipment produced a cloud of thick black smoke during the fire.

MARION

Red Cross volunteer heading to W. Virginia

American Red Cross volunteer Bev Kriegel of Marion will leave today for central West Virginia to provide relief to flash flood victims.

Kriegel will be talking to families affected by this flooding to ensure they have food, clothing and a place to stay. This is familiar work for the veteran volunteer, who just a year ago was providing flash flood assistance to her neighbors here in Eastern Iowa.

She will remain in the area for up to three weeks.

RAMBLIN'

Dave Rasdal is on vacation. His next Ramblin' column will be published Monday.

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