

TODAY'S HEADLINES

STATE

Suspect in fatal fire arrested

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) — A man who is considered a suspect in a fire that killed his neighbor and his neighbor's daughter has been arrested, fire officials said.

Brian David Zirtzman, 39, of Cedar Rapids, was being held Thursday in the Linn County Jail in connection with the April 6 fire that killed Jay Grahman, 38, and his daughter, Jaymie, 6, said fire investigator Al Brockhohn.

Zirtzman was charged with one count of first-degree arson, a Linn County Jail official said Friday.

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

Fire investigators have said that the fire started in a waste basket in the kitchen.

Dubuque Catholic schools face closings

DUBUQUE, Iowa (AP) — At least three Catholic schools would close under proposals presented to the Holy Family Board of Education.

Board members were presented with several versions of a restructuring plan Wednesday. Several of the scenarios call for the closing of Sacred Heart, St. Patrick and St. Joseph Key West schools. Other options include the closing of Nativity and St. Joseph the Worker schools.

Some of the buildings could be used for expanded early childhood programs, officials said.

Holy Family officials have been discussing a possible restructuring to improve efficiency within the school system and address enrollment concerns.

Don Miller, Holy Family chief executive officer, said the process has been difficult.

"It is very emotional for people," he said. "The challenges we are faced with are difficult, they are real. But if we try to look at the best for the most, I believe we can come out a stronger, healthier educational system."

Board President Mike Sullivan said the decision that need to be made are not set in stone.

"This begins a long process for us," he said.

Bible college official arrested

ANKENY, Iowa (AP) — A top official of Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary resigned following his arrest in a prostitution sting in Kansas, school officials said.

James Collogan, 54, the executive vice president of the fundamentalist Baptist school, was charged June 12 in Merriam, Kan., municipal court with patronizing a prostitute, a misdemeanor. He faces a \$500 fine or up to six months in jail if convicted.

School officials said he submitted his letter of resignation Monday.

Collogan said Thursday that he didn't want the incident to reflect poorly on the college, where he worked for 5 1/2 years.

"It wasn't the school's fault," Collogan said. "I take full responsibility for it."

He would not comment further on the incident.

It was shock and sadness over Collogan's arrest and resignation for Faith Baptist President Richard Houg.

"Our hearts go out to the Collogan family," Houg said. "Sin has consequences, and the steps Mr. Collogan has taken are certainly appropriate, given the moral failure that has surfaced in his life."

Houg said the college, which has about 500 students, has begun a search for a new executive vice president.

A vice squad in Kansas City, Mo., along with 31 other law enforcement agencies carried out the investigation, which targeted escort services using the Internet to advertise, vice Officer Victor Zinn said.

NATIONAL

Charges against 2 pilots dropped

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The Air Force has dropped criminal charges against two F-16 pilots who mistakenly bombed Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan last year, killing four. But while both pilots have avoided court-martial and lengthy prison sentences, one may not have been entirely cleared in the incident.

Maj. Harry Schmidt, who released the 500-pound bomb, still faces two counts of dereliction of duty. The charges are for not ensuring that the troops he attacked were the enemy, and for disobeying air controllers' directions to "stand by" before he dropped the bomb.

Schmidt's lawyer, Charles Gittins, said he might take the case to trial instead of accepting the dereliction allegations.

McDonald's targets livestock drugs

CHICAGO (AP) — Responding to rising concerns about antibiotics in livestock, McDonald's Corp. is telling its suppliers to phase out the use of the growth-promoting drugs in animals, a move advocacy groups say could help curb the practice worldwide.

The fast-food giant announced a new policy Thursday on the use of antibiotics in food animals after a year of consultations with environmental, science and consumer groups that have pushed for cutbacks.

The concern is that feeding antibiotics to chickens, cows and pigs so they'll grow bigger and more rapidly weakens the effect of antibiotics used in human medicine.

Under the four-page policy, McDonald's is telling its direct suppliers — which provide most of its poultry and 20 percent of all its meat — to phase out the use of antibiotics that promote growth in animals by the end of 2004. They will be asked to submit annual certifications testifying they are complying and face periodic audits.

Indirect suppliers, those providing beef and pork, also are being encouraged to stop the practice or risk losing business clout with one of the world's largest meat buyers. McDonald's said those seeking preferred status will have to certify compliance and maintain records of their antibiotic use.

The new policy does not prohibit the use of antibiotics to treat sick animals.

Air Force inquiry draws criticism

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. (AP) — The first investigative report of sexual assaults at the Air Force Academy shows no "systemic acceptance" of abuse, but critics of the probe say it fails to identify the root of the problems and who was to blame.

The report, released Thursday, said there was no indication the academy accepted sexual assaults or avoided the issue.

"I think we are more than disappointed about this," said Kate Summers of the nonprofit Miles Foundation, which helps victims of violence in the military.

Sen. Wayne Allard, whose office has received dozens of complaints of sexual assault or abuse, called the report a good-faith effort to suggest ways to deal with future problems, but said it came up short.

"I thought that the Air Force tried to use language that didn't hold the academy and the academy officials fully responsible, and I was disappointed in that regard," Allard said.

"I think there is a systemic problem and I think that their recommendations suggest that, but I think they tried to deny that in their report," he said.

The panel of Air Force officials found "no institutional avoidance of responsibility or systemic maltreatment of cadets who report sexual assault."

Iowa jobless rate climbs to 11-year high

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Iowa's unemployment rate hit a nearly 11-year high in May, state officials said.

At 4.5 percent, the state's jobless rate was as high as it's been since October 1992, when the rate was 4.6 percent. A year ago in May, the unemployment rate was 4 percent, according to figures from Iowa Workforce Development, an employment agency. May's jobless rate increased slightly from 4.2 percent in April.

"The May unemployment rate increased as a result of the ongoing weakness in the state's economy," Richard Running, director of Iowa Workforce Development, said Thursday.

The state continues to struggle to recover from the economic recession that started in March 2001 and the effects are seen in a variety of ways in Iowa, economic officials said.

Five months into the year, Iowa bankruptcies are on pace to exceed a record set last year when 11,472 cases were filed.

"I thought last year was bad," Des Moines bankruptcy lawyer Don Neiman said.

Food banks and social service agencies are seeing more requests from people wanting help paying for food, rent and utilities.

"It's very depressed here," said Karen Blumberg, director of the Food Bank of Siouxdand, which fills the pantries of 215 nonprofit groups in western Iowa.

"We're seeing a lot more people calling in, looking for food."

Few companies are expanding. The ones that are, like Target Corp.'s regional distribution center in Cedar Falls, are receiving thousands of applications.

The company recently got 7,500 applications for about 500 jobs, said general manager Mike Robbins.

Most of the job losses in Iowa have occurred in manufacturing. During the past year, the number of Iowans in manufacturing jobs has shrunk by 6,600.

Experts believe the Iowa unemployment rate masks a larger unemployment picture in this state.

In May, Iowa had 9,800 fewer workers than in April, and there were nearly 36,000 fewer workers than a year ago.

"The labor force is shrinking," said David Swenson, an Iowa State University economist. "People are dropping out."

Even if an economic recovery takes hold, it may be some time before Iowans begin to see a better job market.

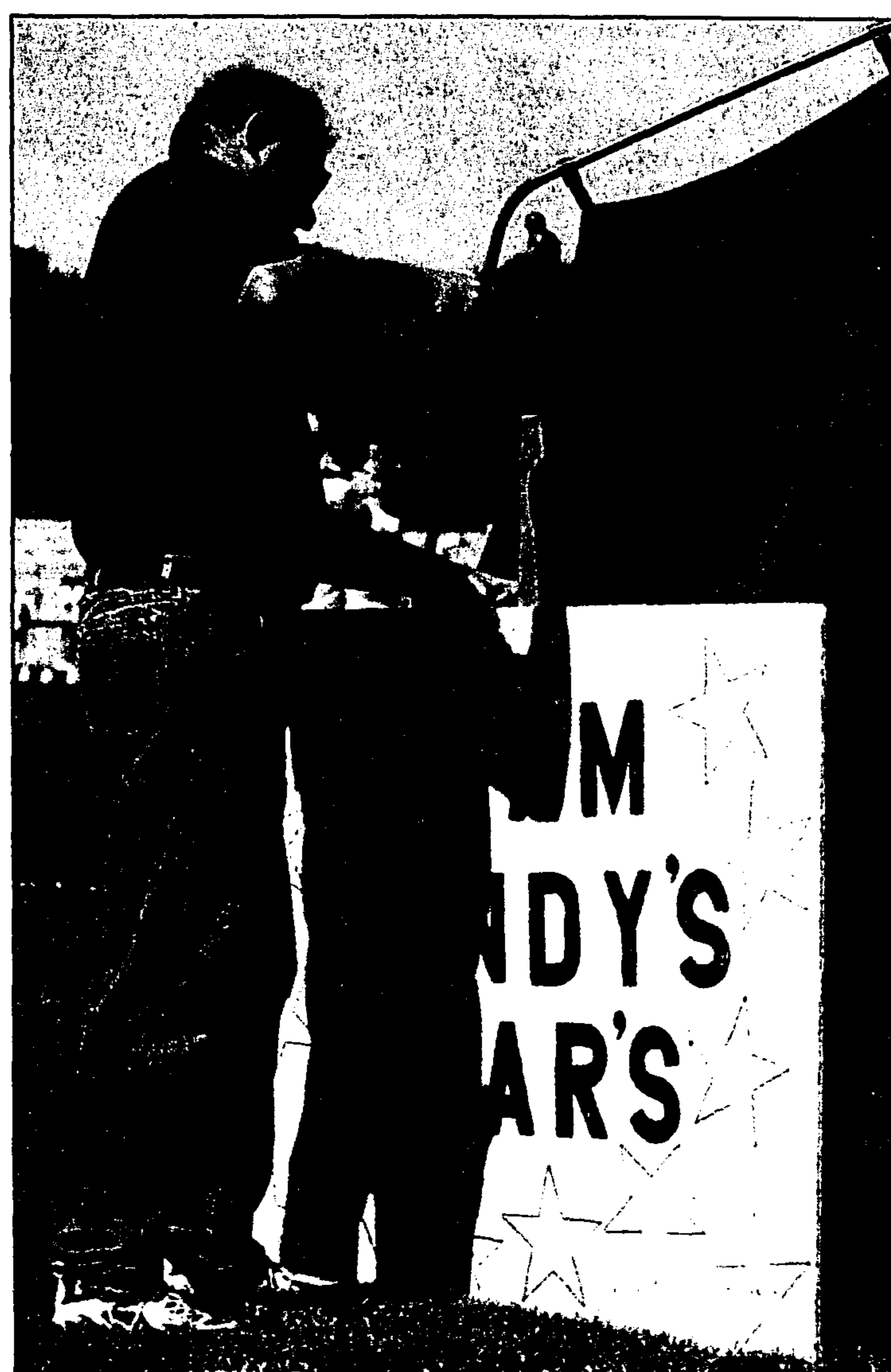
"There's a lot of excess capacity," said Swenson, the ISU economist. "Even if the recovery does pick up steam, it will be slow."

Unemployment rates include: 3.2 percent in Audubon County, 3.4 percent in Calhoun County, 2.1 percent in Carroll County, 3.0 percent in Crawford County, 2.9 percent in Greene County, 3.5 percent in Guthrie County, 2.8 percent in Sac County and 3.2 percent in Shelby County.



Daily Times Herald Photos by Jeff Storjohann

Relay for Life celebration under way



Tyler Eisenbacher, 9, joins his mother, Kim Eisenbacher as they place luminaries along the running track at Carroll Athletic Field this morning while helping set up for today's Carroll County Relay for Life. Several thousand of the sand-filled paper bags will be lit this evening in tribute to cancer victims and survivors. Each luminary carries a special message, many of which are artistically drawn by family or friends. Team names and creativity can be found everywhere. Paul Sievers posts a sign for a team he is supporting: "Team Candy's Star's."

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