

Lazy day treats

After a batch of simple baking, the summertime living is easy, 1E

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B The Gazette
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CORRIDOR

MARION

Man faces charges in Keokuk County rustling

Norman Davis, 49, of 32 39th St., Marion, has been accused in Keokuk County of cattle rustling.

Davis was arrested by the Keokuk County Sheriff's Office at 1:30 a.m. Monday. He's accused of second-degree theft and third-degree burglary.

The arrest concludes an 18-month cattle theft investigation by the Keokuk County Sheriff's Office in conjunction with the Iowa County Sheriff's Office.

Davis was nabbed Monday morning after he was seen by Keokuk County deputies stealing cattle from a feed lot near Sigourney. After leaving the location, the tailgate of the vehicle Davis drove fell open and the stolen cattle spilled out.

Keokuk County authorities said Davis admitted stealing cattle at least twice before in the county.

Davis is in the Keokuk County jail in lieu of \$20,000 bond.

HILLS

EPA schedules meeting on contaminated water

The Environmental Protection Agency has scheduled a meeting Thursday as investigators return to study perchlorate found in the ground water.

The meeting will take place at 6:30 p.m. at the Hills Community Center on Main Street. Officials from the EPA will be on hand to provide additional information and receive comments.

Investigators are expected to return to Hills beginning Monday to continue ground-water and soil sampling. They are expected to remain on the scene until July 31.

The source of perchlorate remains unknown, but it has been detected in shallow drinking water wells.

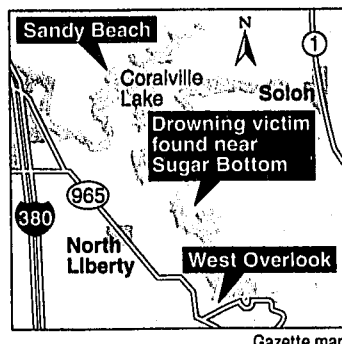
WALKER

DNR still seeking source of fish kill

The Department of Natural Resources is still searching for the source of the elevated levels of ammonia that killed an estimated 7,744 fish over the weekend in a 1.5-mile stretch of Blue Creek near Walker.

Minnnows, shiners, chubs, darters and white suckers, with an estimated value of \$1,341, were killed in the stream, the DNR said Monday. The cost of the investigation is \$191, bringing the total for the fish kill to \$1,532.

Drowning victim's body found



UI medical student, 27, fell in Coralville Lake on Saturday

By Zack Kucharski
The Gazette

CORALVILLE LAKE — Search teams pulled the body of 27-year-old Aaron Hill from the waters near the Sugar Bottom Recreation Area in Coralville Lake on Monday, more than 40 hours after he

fell from a boat.

Hill, a fourth-year University of Iowa medical student originally from Ellsworth, went missing after slipping off the boat and going into the water around 8 p.m. Saturday night. Crews spent Saturday evening and much of Sunday and Monday searching for him before recovering his body around 3:30 p.m. Monday afternoon.

Searchers dragging the



lake's bottom found Hill's submerged body in water about 30 feet deep.

Friends and family waited patiently while investigators searched, but they declined comment.

From the beginning, rescue workers believed Hill had drowned because witnesses

saw him fall into the water, said John Castle, operations manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Coralville Lake.

Johnson County Sheriff's Detective Kevin Kinney said witnesses and dogs helped narrow the search. The dogs are trained to detect the scent of gases emitted from human bodies in the water.

► DROWNING, PAGE 5B

TRANSPORTATION



Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette

Becky Langridge shops at the Fareway on 10th Avenue in Marion earlier this year. Langridge, a legally blind single mom, depends on city buses for transportation. Long bus routes can make running errands time-consuming, and Langridge had to change her plans while house-hunting so she and her son could live within walking distance of a grocery store.

Changes in store

Rerouting may help those who depend on bus for transport

By Nicole Schuppert
The Gazette

MARION — Becky Langridge thought the house she found on McGowan Boulevard last year was perfect — partly because it was a mere five-minute drive from a grocery store.

But the legally blind single mom can't drive. She decided the house wasn't so perfect after checking Marion's bus routes.

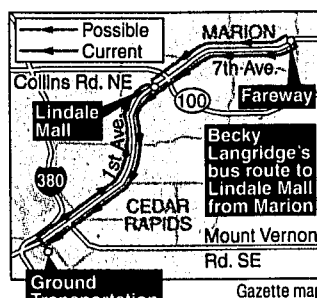
Moving there would have

made her depend on public transportation to run errands, which, in this case, would have made buying a jug of milk an afternoon project.

"It would take me three hours to go to the store, which kind of rules out getting any perishables," said Langridge, 51, who settled for a condo within walking distance of Marion's Fareway.

"I can get to a grocery store," she said. "As basic as it sounds, it just takes a huge load off of me."

Bus routes in Marion and Hiawatha will change by August, and the changes will likely draw mixed re-



Gazette map

views.

The proposed changes are expected to help keep the buses on time. They'll also put newer parts of Marion and Hiawatha on bus lines.

The down side: The changes will extend most of the routes by 10 minutes, making an even longer ride for people in Langridge's situation.

Brad DeBrower, operations manager for Five Seasons Transportation, has spoken to the city councils and bus drivers in both towns, and he plans to hold public hearings before any changes are made.

Marion's public hearing is set for Thursday during the 7 p.m. City Council meeting, and the Cedar Rapids one will be scheduled for late July.

► BUS, PAGE 5B

CRIME & COURTS

Origin of fatal C.R. fire disputed

Dissenting expert cited at Zirtzman trial

By Elizabeth Kutter
The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — An insurance investigator said that a fire, which claimed the lives of a father and his daughter, started in the kitchen, although two other investigators have said it started in a utility room where the furnace is located.

The location and cause of the fire are important details as lawyers battle in the trial of Brian Zirtzman, who is accused of setting the fire and faces life in prison if convicted of first-degree murder in the two deaths.

Two investigators have ruled out that the April 5, 2003, fire started in the kitchen.

The insurance investigator listed the utility room as a second possible site for the fire's origin.

Assistant Muscatine Fire Chief Garry Lee, who investigated the fire for Farmers Insurance, did not appear at trial in person Monday.

Lee testified by deposition — the reading of questions and answers presented to him by defense attorneys in a June 15, 2004, interview.

In the deposition it became clear that Lee believed the fire started in the kitchen next to the refrigerator.

But he made no comment on the cause of the fire. "Origin means nothing about the cause," Lee said. "You can think it started anywhere you want, but unless you have the cause, you have nothing," he said.

Cedar Rapids fire investigator Alan Brockhohn testified last week that Zirtzman, 40, confessed to tossing

► TRIAL, PAGE 8B

Good scenery, good times, good food . . . not bad

No matter how corny it sounds — no pun intended — it's good for a native Iowan to be reminded from time to time how pretty the Midwest can be.



Mike Deupree
The Gazette

Not spectacular, as in mountains and oceans and forests and so forth, but just darned pretty. It's easy to take the scenery for granted if you've lived in Iowa so long you remember when "knee-high by the Fourth of July" meant something.

I think I've mentioned before the view from the seventh tee at Airport National Golf Course, which is at the top of a hill. The other day I was up there, getting mentally

ready to launch yet another ball into the adjoining field, when my partner remarked that the vista before us had too many shades of green to count.

He didn't say "the vista before us." That kind of language by a guy golfer would be equivalent to failing to hit one's drive past the ladies' tees. But he was right about the colors.

AN EVEN BETTER reminder occurred Saturday. A group of us chartered a bus to the Jimmy Buffett concert at Alpine Valley, near Milwaukee, and our driver took mostly two-lane roads all the way. Up through Dubuque, across the Mississippi River and through the hills and dales of Wisconsin made for a very nice trip.

It was easy to understand the nickname "Little Switzerland." Put

an alp or two in the background and it would look a lot like the real thing.

Not the kind of scenery that would take anybody's breath away, but it was beautiful in a natural, Grant Woodish, restful kind of way.

THE CONCERT itself was a pleasant experience, too, and it also provided a reminder, although "restful" isn't a word I would apply to it.

We left from Springville about 10 in the morning, drove the four-plus hours to Alpine Valley, socialized for eight or 10 hours with about 35,000 close friends, attended the concert, piled back in the bus and rode back to Iowa. When we finally got back to suburban Shuerville about 6 a.m. Sunday morning, a Buffett lyric came to mind.

The one that goes, "I'm growing

older (but not up)."

ANOTHER BEAUTIFUL sight that says "Iowa" this time of year is also starting to appear.

I'm referring to the roadside stands selling sweet corn.

If the sweet corn is ready, can the tomatoes be far behind? Life is good.

At least until the annual onslaught of heat and humidity strikes, and the people officially hand over sovereignty of the Midwest to the mosquitoes.

IF YOU SAW the photos from last week's "In the Neighborhood" gathering in the Rompot area and are planning to attend the one this afternoon at Granger House in Marion, we're looking forward to talking with you and answering questions.

If your attention was attracted to the photos because they showed people chowing down on burgers, bratwursts and hot dogs, though, a clarification: Don't be disappointed to discover you can't count on today's gathering for your supper.

The Gazette provides popcorn, cookies, lemonade and iced tea at these functions, but that's it. The more elaborate fare last week was thanks to the Cedar Valley Neighborhood Association, which decided the newspaper's visit to its turf was a good excuse for a block party.

Don't let that deter you from coming out this afternoon, though. We'd like your company. Besides, free popcorn, cookies, lemonade and iced tea isn't a bad deal in itself.

Mike Deupree's column appears Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. He can be reached at (319) 398-8452 or mike.deupree@gazettecommunications.com (Previous columns at www.gazetteonline.com)

Trial/Case may go to jury today or Wednesday

► FROM PAGE 1B

or laying a piece of combustible clothing near the furnace in the utility room.

Zirtzman is on trial for first-degree arson and two counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of Jaymie Grahlman, 6, and her father, Jay Grahlman, 38, who died from injuries suffered in the fire.



Brian Zirtzman
On trial for murder, arson

Grahlmans' house.

Vickie Reed-Grahlman and three children survived.

Zirtzman was the last one awake. Vickie Reed-Grahlman and the children went to bed

and Jay Grahlman fell asleep in the living room recliner sometime after 11:30 p.m.

Falling debris from the fire awakened Reed-Grahlman shortly before midnight. She was able to pull three children and her husband from the fire. Firefighters rescued Jaymie.

Zirtzman confessed to Brockhohn and to jailhouse informant Lawrence "Foley" Jones, according to testimony last week. Brockhohn said

Zirtzman told him he set the fire to be recognized, to be a hero. He said he didn't intend for anyone to be harmed.

Lawrence Jones testified that he met Zirtzman only once, during a church service at the Linn County Jail. Lawrence Jones said he and Zirtzman talked about his case during the service and that another inmate, John McCauley, heard Zirtzman confess.

McCauley, the first witness

for the defense, was brought to trial from Pekin Federal Prison in Illinois, where he is serving a 30-year sentence on a drug conviction. He said he remembered sitting by Zirtzman and Lawrence Jones during a church service in January.

McCauley said he did not hear Zirtzman confess to

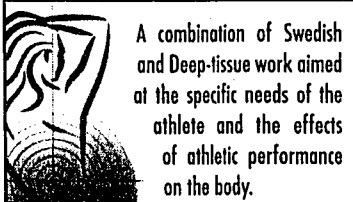
Lawrence Jones. He said Zirtzman was not a talker. "He didn't talk to people," McCauley said of Zirtzman. "He kept to himself. He was shunned by other inmates."

The defense case will continue today beginning at 9 a.m. in Linn County District Court. It is on schedule to go to the jury for deliberation

this afternoon or Wednesday, Judge David Remley said.

■ Contact the writer: (319) 398-8263 or betsy.kutter@gazettecommunications.com

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