

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Arson case closed

Acquitted man was only suspect in fatal C.R. fire, officials say

By Elizabeth Kutter
The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — Fire investigators and the prosecutor in the arson and murder case against Brian Zirtzman believe they caught their man, even though a jury found him not guilty.

A Linn County jury on Wednesday freed Zirtzman, 40, of 3748 H Ave. NE, finding him not guilty of setting the April 5, 2003, fire that killed his friend and neighbor, Jay Grahlman, 38, and Grahlman's daughter, Jaymie, 6.

Zirtzman had faced life in prison on the first-degree murder charges.

"There are no other suspects," said County Attorney Harold Denton, who prosecuted the case.

"The case is inactive pending further information," said Capt. Alan Brockhohn, who investigated the fire for the Cedar Rapids Fire Department.

"This fire was not accidental," Brockhohn said. "It was started by human hand. The system is not perfect, but I do believe in the system and a jury of his peers found him not guilty and that's what we have to accept."

Zirtzman's family is just as convinced that he is innocent.

"I'm just happy because I haven't suspected him from the beginning," Zirtzman's mother, Orion, said.

"The (defense) lawyers presented the truth," Zirtzman's twin brother, Brad, said.

Shannon Salmons, 30, of Logansport, Ind., Jaymie Grahlman's mother, said she intends to file a civil lawsuit against Zirtzman.

"I don't want him to get away scot-free," Salmons said. "I'm not going to let it rest for Jaymie or Jay

► ARSON, PAGE 8A

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Something 'phishy'?

Beware of identity thieves who go 'phishing' online for your credit information

By Dave DeWitte
The Gazette

The growing wave of e-mail "phishing" scams is becoming a financial risk not only for consumers who fall prey to them, but to some of Iowa's banks.

The scam artist "phishes" for information that can be used to steal money from the recipient — account numbers, passwords, even credit card numbers — offering different justifications for needing the information.

Phishing artists have been at it for well over a year, experts say, and now they are getting good. Some of their e-mails claim to be from Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge.

E-mail often poses as security officers from bank and credit card companies trying to protect consumers from the very identity theft they are perpetrating.

"The audacity of some of these predators people would find hard to believe," said John Kenjar, vice president and marketing director of Iowa State Bank & Trust in Iowa City, which so far has largely avoided the scams.

Iowa Bankers Association spokesman Ben Hildebrandt said phishing scam artists in Iowa have mainly posed as agents of larger Iowa banks.

Catching the crooks is difficult, said Lt. Jim Steffen of the

Source: Federal Trade Commission and Anti-Phishing Working Group

Source: Anti-Phishing Working Group

Source: Federal Trade Commission and Anti-Phishing Working Group

► PHISHING, PAGE 8A

RACE RELATIONS

Blacks denounce column

Views expressed in newsletter raise concerns about race at UI

By Tom Owen
The Gazette

IOWA CITY — The president of an African-American organization at the University of Iowa has denounced a newsletter column written by the director of the UI's Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development.

Victor Rodgers, president of the African-American Council, said the article by Nicholas Colangelo raises questions about African-Americans' intellectual abilities, damaging black students in the process.

"To even consider this approach to addressing an achievement gap requires one to ignore about 20 years of scientific research ranging from molecular biology to psychology," he stated in an e-mail.

"Most embarrassing is that the article ... makes one question our serious efforts to address this difficult question. Sadder still, since this is coming from the director of our

► RACE, PAGE 8A

POLITICS

Ready for prime time

Iowa's first lady is gearing up for spotlight at Dem convention

By Rod Boshart
The Gazette

DES MOINES — Iowa first lady Christie Vilsack said Thursday she has vivid memories of watching the 1960 Democratic National Convention on television as a youngster.

"When I was 10 years old, my bike was covered with Kennedy-Johnson stickers, and I was right there watching the convention in 1960," she said. "No, I certainly never dreamed that I would be standing on the podium or would have the role that I've had the last few months."

On July 27, Vilsack — a Mount Pleasant native whose endorsement was credited with helping Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry win the Jan. 19 Iowa caucuses — is scheduled to deliver a prime-time address on Midwestern values on the second day of Democratic National Convention in Boston.

Vilsack and her husband, Gov. Tom Vilsack, have seen their political stock rise to dizzying heights since she played a key role in making Kerry the party's presumptive presidential nominee in 2004 and the Iowa governor was a finalist to become Kerry's

► VILSACK, PAGE 8A



Nicholas Colangelo
Author of column

On the Net

■ To read Nicholas Colangelo's column from the February issue of Vision newsletter, go to www.uiowa.edu/%7EBel/lnctr/pubs/vision/index.html

Inside



Christie Vilsack
Iowa's first lady to speak at convention

Inside

■ Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., will introduce her husband at the Democratic National Convention, 2A
■ Kerry accuses Bush of dividing U.S., 2A

phishing: Sending e-mail to a user falsely claiming to be a legitimate enterprise in an attempt to scam the user into revealing private information that will be used for identity theft.

Phishing targets

Top 10 targets of reported specific phishing attacks reported in May

1. Citibank ... 370
2. eBay ... 293
3. U.S. Bank ... 167
4. PayPal ... 149
5. Fleet ... 133
6. Visa ... 21
7. AOL ... 17
8. Lloyds ... 17
9. Barclays ... 15
10. Westpac ... 12

Source: Anti-Phishing Working Group

Study sees improvements in well-being of children

Strides are made in health and education, but child poverty rises

WASHINGTON (AP) — The family life, education and health of America's children are generally improving, though child poverty has risen for the first time in a decade, according to the government's broadest measure of children's well-being.

The report today by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics Children finds that

children are doing better for the most part. The teenage birth rate is down, young people are less likely to be involved in violent crimes and the death rate for this group has declined.

Still, children are more likely to be overweight than they were before and child poverty has inched up after several years of decline, according to

Inside

■ Childhood TV viewing linked to smoking, obesity in adults, 5A

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Changes in children's well-being

A government study on children's well-being found that more children live in poverty, are overweight and live in areas with poor air quality while fewer teens smoke and participate in violent crimes.

Children under age 18 in poverty	2001 15.8%	2002 16.3%
Children under age 18 living in areas that do not meet national air quality standards	2001 19%	2002 34%
Overweight children ages 6-18	1988-94 11%	1999-2002 16%

Students who reported smoking daily in the previous 30 days	'02 5.1%	'03 4.5%	Eighth grade
	2002 10.1%	2003 8.9%	10th grade
	2002 16.9%	2003 15.8%	12th grade
Serious violent crime offending rate per 1,000 youth ages 12-17	2001 19	2002 11	

SOURCE: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics

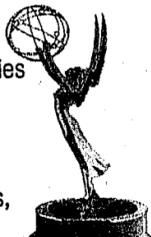
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TODAY'S GAZETTE

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EMMYS

HBO mini-series "Angels in America" receives 21 Emmy nominations, Page 2E



GO FOR IT

If your life isn't working, then change it.

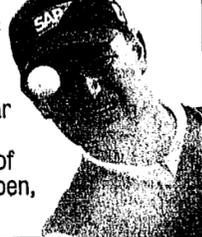


IN THE PENTHOUSE

Four young osprey move into a hack tower at the Wicklup Hill Learning Center, Iowa Today

HOLE IN ONE

There was no shortage of spectacular shots on the opening day of the British Open, Sports



TOMORROW

The ABC drama "The Days" dares to be different, TV Vision



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Phishing/People behind scams are hard to catch

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Iowa City Police Department, which has had at least three reports of phishing artists posing as security officers for large banks. The address of the sender on the e-mails is usually forged, and consumers are typically directed to a fraudulent Web site to enter their account information. "Jurisdiction becomes a real issue," Steffen said. "They may be e-mailing from outside of the country, or from New York or California, and by the time we find out where they are, they're long gone." Many victims may not report losses to phishing because of embarrassment, said Computer Forensic Investigator Greg Koenighain of the Cedar Rapids Police Department. He said phishing is just one component of an Internet fraud problem that is growing faster than crime overall. While he's investigated a few reports of phishing, Koenighain said other frauds such

as failing to supply merchandise purchased on Internet auction sites or using e-commerce sites to steal personal information are still more common. In May, the Anti-Phishing Working Group recorded 1,197 distinct kinds of phishing attacks. Most of them adopted the identities of financial institutions. Among those financial institutions, Citibank was the most common target, with 370 attacks reported. The group's report for May ranked U.S. Bank the No. 3 target, with 167 reported attacks, up 170 percent from the previous month. One of the newest phishing attacks against U.S. Bank, ironically, preys on fear of phishing. It convinces customers to yield their account information by asking them to register to "protect your identity against phishing." Wells Fargo, which has the largest banking presence in Iowa, also has been hit by phishing problems. Examples of the U.S. Bank

and Wells Fargo phishing e-mails are found on the Anti-Phishing Working Group Web site www.antiphishing.org. U.S. Bank spokeswoman Amy Franti declined to discuss specifically the phishing threat directed at U.S. Bank customers, but said the bank is improving its programs and education to assist customers in the area of fraud. Last year, U.S. Bank opened a 24-hour Fraud Liaison Center in Portland, Ore., that can immediately check the status of affected accounts, close them down and create new customer accounts. The center deals with all kinds of fraud against bank customers, a small percentage of which involves phishing. U.S. Bank Regional Manager Laura Law said activity has been up "a little" in recent months because of changes in the type of fraud activity. Banks often bear financial liability for fraudulent thefts from customers accounts. Responsibility for fraud losses is typically

spelled out in contracts the customer signs to establish a checking account or credit card contract, Hildebrandt said, and often require the consumer to report the fraudulent loss within a prescribed period — say 60 or 90 days. Hildebrandt said banks have had some success at recovering losses through automated clearinghouse fund transfers. Credit card contracts typically limit consumer liability for fraud losses to a modest amount, such as \$50 or \$100, if it is reported within the established time frame. Increasingly, smaller community banks are taking the threat seriously. Kenjar said Iowa State Bank & Trust keeps its bankers posted whenever a customer encounters a potential scam. A "scam alert" on the bank's Web site explains how to avoid phishing. ■ Contact the writer: (319) 398-8317 or david.dewitte@gazettecommunications.com

Race/UI provost to hold meetings

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gifted and talented program, this very question can negatively impact all our youth in both athletics and academics." UI's provost, Michael Hogan, plans to meet with Colangelo and his critics during the next week or two, UI spokesman Steve Parrott said. Colangelo's column appeared in the February issue of Vision, the Belin-Blank Center's newsletter that has a nationwide circulation of 27,000. The column is also on the center's Web site. In an interview this week, Colangelo said he has not heard anyone express anger about his column.

"My guess is that some people are not reading it very closely, and say, oh, it feeds into that (stereotype). It doesn't. For people who know me and the work we base it on, it's real clear-cut," said Colangelo, a professor of gifted education. Rodgers said he is not asking for an apology from or discipline for Colangelo. "I just want to bring it to people's attention," he said. "We need to find out what the climate is on campus." He said the UI Committee on Diversity has met to discuss the column and will meet again within the next week with the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity. In the column, titled "The Gap," Colangelo writes that educators widely acknowledge that education achievement levels vary by ethnicity, gender and family income. Caucasians and Asian Americans, he noted, are "statistically overrepresented" in some talent areas, and they are underrepresented in other areas like sports "such as basketball, football, baseball and track."

He did not identify any racial or ethnic groups as lower academic performers, but said Wednesday that lower test scores are usually associated with African-Americans, American Indians or Hispanics. Sometimes, he wrote, reports appear noting

a closing of "the gap," but that usually refers to the average performance of groups rather than performance at the "elite level." Colangelo offered a series of explanations for such gaps, including racism, sexism, economic disadvantages or lack of family support. But when educators raise issues about the motivation of a particular group, or its natural ability, he wrote, they are "immediately labeled in politically negative terms (e.g., racist, sexist and elitist) and the evidence they present is given no pause. They are shouted down more than disproved."

In an interview, Colangelo said the column was meant to point out issues that need to be discussed rather than offer an opinion on those issues. He said that he believes that, even though there are differences in test scores — between people of different races, genders and incomes — those scores are only a "bit" of the engine driving success. Colangelo said all students of every race and both genders could probably come much closer to their true potential if teachers and parents didn't reach for convenient excuses — such as economic background or race — for a child's mediocre performance.

"What I have learned in 27 years is that attitude is an amazing propellant," he said. "I think, as a society, we have gotten to the point where we don't tell kids honestly, 'I don't want to hear it. This is hurting yourself.'"

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Arson/Girl's mother plans civil suit

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because he died thinking he caused the fire." She noted that Denton, the county attorney, called her Wednesday "to say how sorry he was" with the trial's outcome. Brockhohn, too, said, "I feel I failed the Grahlmans."

"We try our cases the best way we can," Denton said, noting that arson is always difficult to prove because much of the evidence is destroyed. Arson is the leading cause of fire in the United States and the second leading cause of death in fires, according to the U.S. Fire Administration. Each year, an estimated 267,000 fires are attributed to arson.

In 2003, the year of the Grahlmans fire, Iowa reported



Jay Grahlmans
Jaymie Grahlmans

Died in Cedar Rapids fire

610 arsons, 10 in Linn County. Half of all arson arrests are juveniles.

Zirtzman has two arson convictions on his juvenile record, but that information was not given to the jury during the six-day trial in Linn County District Court.

Those fires, on the same street where he and the Grahlmans lived, happened more than 20 years ago, too distant to be relevant, the

court ruled.

Also not allowed into evidence was a confession allegedly made by Zirtzman.

Information he provided was consistent with the information collected at the scene, Brockhohn said.

"We knew the fire started in the laundry room, but he told us how it started," Brockhohn said.

Zirtzman refused to sign his confession and invoked his right to an attorney, which kept it out of the trial, Brockhohn said.

A defense expert said Zirtzman has an IQ of 67 and was only trying to please the investigator when he confessed. His income is from Social Security disability based on his mental handicap.

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Vilsack/Speech topic is values

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running mate. Vilsack said she finished writing her convention speech Wednesday and has submitted it for editing. She will deliver it on a night that also will feature Massachusetts Sen. Edward Kennedy, Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano and Kerry's wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry.

Because she's lived in a small town most of her life, she said she's qualified to talk about the values of America's rural communities as part of a theme to drive home a point that Democrats relate closely to the values of working families.

"I'll be talking about Main Street values because I live on Main Street, and I hope that I'll represent all Iowans, particularly the women in Iowa," she told reporters Thursday.

Vilsack also will use the national stage to promote her pet project of literacy, leading a "Books for Boston" effort to get convention delegates and attendees to donate books for the Boston school system. On July 26, she will be host of a reception for U.S. senators who have written books, which could draw Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., and many others.

Some Clinton backers were dismayed that she was passed over as a convention speaker, while Iowa's first lady landed a prime spot. Vilsack sidestepped the issue, saying it was "not my call" who was picked as convention speakers. But, she added, "I'd love to hear her speak at the convention or anywhere else."

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Youths/Teen birth rate hits record low

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the report, which draws together findings from many federal agencies.

The study paints a mostly upbeat picture. The teenage birth rate — steadily declining since 1991 — hit a record low in 2002.

Teenagers who give birth are less likely to finish high school or to graduate from college than other girls their age, said Duane Alexander, director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development at the National Institutes of Health.

Also, infants born to teenage mothers are more likely to be of low birth weight, which increases their chances of blindness, deafness, mental retardation, mental illness and cerebral palsy.

In school, more children are taking advanced courses and studying a second language. At home, more parents are reading to their children.

The report pointed to progress in the area of crime. Young people were less likely to be victimized in a serious violent crime — murder, rape, robbery or aggravated assault — or to commit one. In 2002, there were 11 serious violent crimes per 1,000 people age 12 to 17, compared with 15 per 1,000 youths in 2001, the report said.

Child mortality declined, too. In 2000, there were 18 deaths for every 100,000 children age 5 to 14; a year later, there were 17 deaths for every 100,000 children in this age group.

The infant mortality rate slightly increased. Seven of

every 1,000 infants died before their first birthday in 2002, compared with a record low of 6.8 per 1,000 in 2001. Most of the increase in deaths occurred among infants younger than 28 days old.

The number of overweight children increased to 16 percent between 1999 and 2000, compared with from 11 percent in the early 1990s and 6 percent in the late 1970s.

That development "jeopardizes our children's future, making them vulnerable to chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension previously associated more with adults than with children," said Edward Sondik, director of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics.

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