

# POLK HANDGUN SALES DOUBLE

## Expect Ouster of Decker From D.M. Project 2,081 GUNS PURCHASED THIS YEAR

### CHURCHMEN ALSO WANT AN INSPECTOR

#### Move to Assure Quality Housing

**By James Risser**  
The Des Moines Area Council of Churches is expected to tell the City Council Monday night that Omaha builder Don Decker will be dismissed as construction manager of the church group's low-income housing project.

The churchmen reportedly also plan to recommend the hiring of an independent architect as a sort of super-inspector to keep an eye on the construction.

**Certify to City**  
When the 300-unit Homes of Oakridge project is completed, the architect would certify to the city that it has been built properly and according to specifications.

Officers and directors of the Council of Churches' housing corporation met in private Thursday morning in the office of their attorney to discuss recent disclosures of Decker's background, which includes a federal court conviction for making false statements to obtain a loan insured by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA).

Spokesmen for the church group declined to say what took place at the meeting, but said a statement will be presented to the City Council at its regular meeting at 7 p.m. Monday at City Hall, E. First and Locust streets.

The Sunday Register learned from reliable sources, however, that "Decker will go." The churchmen agreed to ask their contractor, Lloyd E. Clarke of Des Moines, to see that Decker does not take part in the project, the sources said.

The FHA-approved project, designed to partly alleviate the acknowledged need for housing for low-income families here, will be built on 16 acres of Oakridge urban renewal land.

**DECKER** —  
Continued on Page Six

### WEITZ TO BUILD POST OFFICE

The Weitz Company, Inc., of Des Moines has signed a contract to build the new \$7-million main post office at Second and University avenues, it was announced Saturday.

The owner-lessee of the new postal facility is a joint venture of C. H. Leavell and Co., of El Paso, Tex., and McCloskey Co., Inc., of Philadelphia, Pa.

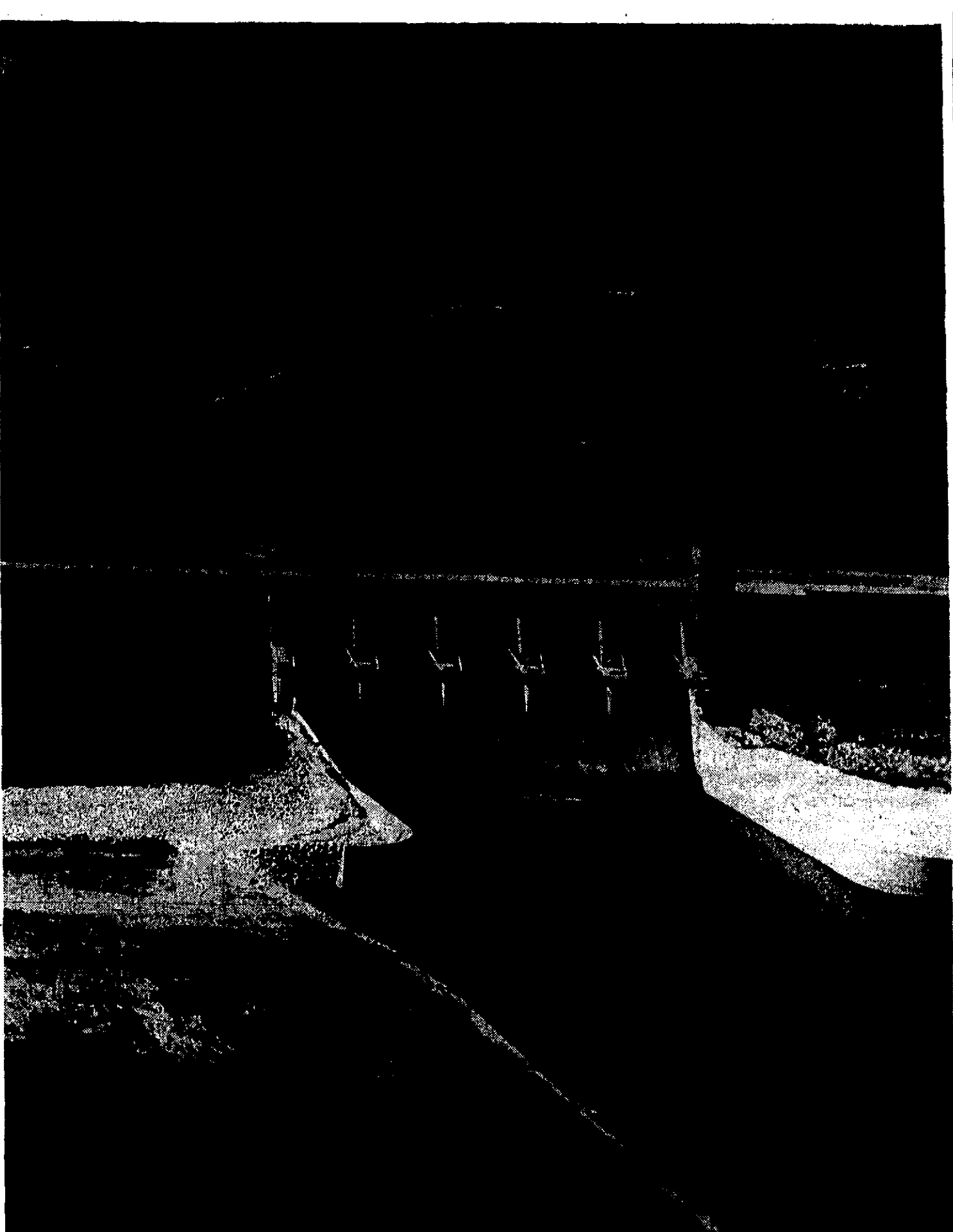
Both firms are in the construction business. The Leavell firm, which is the sponsoring partner, picked Weitz to do the actual construction.

The 113-year-old Weitz firm has built many large Des Moines buildings and currently is constructing a parking ramp at Fifth avenue and Locust street, an addition to the Des Moines Art Center and several other large projects.

Construction of the new, main post office and regional mail distribution facility will begin immediately on the southeast corner of Second and University, in the River Hills urban renewal area. Construction will take two years.

Project architect is Emery, Prall and Associates of Des Moines.

The Leavell and McCloskey firms will own the postal facility, leasing it to the federal government at an annual rent of \$684,575 for 30 years. The Leavell-McCloskey joint bid was the lowest of nine bids received by the Post Office Department, and the contract was awarded to the two firms on Apr. 16.



REGISTER PHOTO

### A Step Closer to Completion

Completion of the huge Red Rock Dam on the Des Moines River moved a step closer last week when the Army Corps of Engineers diverted the river through the dam to signal the final stage of construction. The diversion, which had been planned for late June or early July, was decided upon last week when a weather forecast indicated the usual

June floods would not be forthcoming this year. With the river now flowing through the dam's outlet structure, construction of the dam's earth embankment across the old river channel has been started. The dam, which will back up 9,000-acre Lake Red Rock, is scheduled to be completed June 30, 1969.

### Campaign Plank: Waste Baskets on Every Corner

**(The Register's Iowa News Service)**  
PLYMOUTH, IA. — The first grade students of Mrs. Ellen Harris at Plymouth Elementary School have some definite ideas on how this country should be run.

The first graders were asked by their teacher what they would do if they were a candidate for president. Their platform statements clearly sum up the nation's problems and goals in a few short words: The young candidates have also discovered some problems that not even the adults knew existed.

The first graders' views on what should be done to correct the nation's ills:

"I would say no more shooting birds" — Lorna Stone.

"I would have puppet shows" — Debbie Severson.

"I would say the world would never stop" — Tim Holden.

"I would stop riots" — Henry Wong.

"I would not let kids quit schools" — Becky Johnson.

"I would keep the animals safe" — Randy Schmidt.

"I would stop people from robbing" — Pam Anderson.

"I would put waste baskets on every corner" — Kevin Sutton.

"I would stop the war" — Tammy Yezek.

"I would answer good questions" — Sherry Hennigar.

"I would help stop bad fires" — Mike Garvey.

### Over the Coffee. Film Replaces Real Tragedy

**JUDGED AS A communication medium, on the basis of day-to-day performance, television ranks somewhere between a Captain Midnight Secret Code Badge and a commencement speaker with laryngitis.**

In times of crisis, however, it sometimes falls to lower heights.

As the California primary moved toward its moment of horror early Wednesday, viewers of KRNT-TV in Des Moines were watching a third-rate Italian movie.

While other stations were involved in the unrewarding business of covering an important election, KRNT was running off "Stronboli," a film whose chief distinction is that its star, Ingrid Bergman, and its director, Roberto Rossellini, carried on a scandalous love affair during its production some 15 years ago.

This is not to say that KRNT-TV ignored the election. No, it carried the CBS coverage.

But the coverage was so expeditious — so efficient — that the station felt secure in leaving the scene early, much in the manner of a

### Seventh Day of Summer Heat

Hot, summer-like weather continued in Iowa Saturday for the seventh straight day, and is expected to remain in the state today.

Saturday's high temperatures ranged from 96 at Mason City to 87 at Dubuque. Des Moines' high was 91.

Light thundershowers moved across the extreme northwest counties in the morning and again in the evening.

Winds were again from the south at 15 to 25 miles an hour. In the eastern counties there were occasional gusts of more than 30 miles an hour.

### LINKS DEATHS ON HIGHWAYS TO ASSASSINS

#### Patrol Chief Tells Of Youth 'Concern'

**By James Flansburg**  
Do the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King have a bearing on auto accidents?

Col. Howard Miller, chief of the Iowa Highway Patrol, thinks there's the possibility.

Seven hours Saturday morning—midnight to 7—saw seven persons killed on Iowa highways.

Only one of the victims was more than 22 years old; he was 32.

Eleven persons were injured in auto accidents during approximately the same period. The eldest was 25.

Of seven accidents, six were single-car accidents. The only two-vehicle crash involved the 32-year-old and the 25-year-old.

In Des Moines, Colonel Miller reported that preliminary studies indicate a rash of single-car accidents in Iowa and most other states this spring.

He emphasized he was speaking generally, and not specifically about any one accident, and then explained his view:

"I'm trying to blame it on a state of mind. I know that it's a hard theory to believe.

"But I think it has to do with the whole generally-disturbed view people have of things right now.

"Quite a few of these non-collision type accidents—that's the term for an accident involving only one car—have involved the under-25 driver, the obviously-concerned group.

"We've always contended that driving is a full-time job. It needs your full attention, and you run dangers if you're involved mentally with other things."

### Convertible Crash

**CEDAR RAPIDS, IA.** — Jayne Floyd, 17, and Steven Wharff, 22, both of Cedar Rapids, were killed and three others were injured in a spectacular convertible crash about 2:30 a.m. Saturday on old Highway 30, seven miles east of Cedar Rapids.

The Highway Patrol said the car, believed to have been driven by Donald Wermer, 17, of Ottumwa, missed a curve, traveled 300 feet through a small grove of trees, went over a 50-foot embankment and flew 150 feet through the air, coming to rest upside down.

Wermer was at a Cedar Rapids hospital in serious condition with head injuries. Also injured were David Dillard, 18, of Cedar Rapids, listed in serious condition.

### ACCIDENTS—

Continued on Page Three

### Car Splits in Two But Driver Safe

A Navy recruiter suffered only minor injuries Saturday in a spectacular one car accident on the MacVicar Freeway in which his automobile flipped over on its top and split in two.

Police said the car, driven by Signalman 1st Grade G. Parnell, 27, of Altoona, apparently went out of control when the right front tire blew out. The car, which was going east on the freeway, skidded into the guardrail in the median and turned over, pinning Parnell beneath it.

The engine and front section of the car broke away from the body and went about 90 feet on the south side of the freeway near the Easton boulevard turn off.

Parnell was taken to Veterans' Hospital where he was treated for lacerations.

### Probe Major Fish-Kill on Cedar River

#### By William Simbro (Register Staff Writer)

**CEDAR RAPIDS, IA.** — Officials are trying to determine the cause of a massive fish-kill on the Cedar River resulting in hundreds of dead fish being washed onto the west shore of the river.

A State Conservation Commission official expressed fears that similar fish-kills may be experienced around the state if the present hot weather continues.

There were reports of dead fish as far downstream as Palisades-Kepler State Park, 12 miles southeast of here near Mount Vernon.

City officials ordered a clampdown on all recreational activities on the river within the city limits.

The two main theories of the cause were a combination of unfavorable natural factors and the possibility of an unknown pollutant being dumped into the stream.

State Conservation officers Ralph Leigh of Marengo and Robert Mineck of Tipton, assisting with the investigation, were leaning toward the first theory.

Leigh said the sudden hot weather and the low river level combined with the lack of spring flooding could cause the fish-kill.

Leigh explained that flooding scours out pollution and organic matter that settles to the river bottom. The lack of flooding this spring means the river bottom contains excessive accumulation of such material.

He said that on very hot days oxygen in the water is used up rapidly. The water temperature was 85 degrees at the point of one test Saturday, Leigh said.

Fish reportedly were jamming up near a dam south of Cedar Rapids. An official said this indicated a desperate search for oxygen.

If this theory of the fish-kill is correct, other parts of Iowa may be in for similar trouble, Leigh said.

Officials were not discounting the possibility of an unknown pollutant. Many of the dead fish were put on ice. They and samples of the river water will be tested Monday at the State Hygienic Laboratory in Iowa City.

The kill, no respecter of species, included minnows, carp, walleye, northern pike, bass and catfish.

City personnel were patrolling the stream, warning people to stay away from the water.

### Beer-Drinking Thieves Get Final Grades—Everybody's

#### By Robert Kistler (Register Staff Writer)

**ANAMOSA, IA.** — High school students have never been noticeably reluctant to discuss grades — especially if the grades belong to someone else.

At the end of a school term, they manage — through casual conversation, rumors, or just the look on another student's face to ferret out "What Joe got in algebra."

But, it's an inexact process at best.

So, imagine the feeling of raw power to be able to sit calmly in the Anamosa High School library, a can of beer at your elbow, and thumb through the final grades for the 580 students in the school.

That's what happened here last weekend.

When school officials came to work Monday — the day the grades were to be mailed to individual students — the 580 envelopes containing every student's grades were missing.

The envelopes, each containing grade slips for each pupil,

### Rise in Permits for Concealed Arms

#### By George Mills

Increasing numbers of law-abiding Iowans have been arming themselves with handguns such as revolvers and pistols.

Sale of such guns so far this year in Polk County has reached 2,081—nearly double the 1,059 sold to this date in 1967.

Sales also are up sharply in Black Hawk County and perhaps elsewhere.

The only restriction in the Iowa law on sale of such weapons is a prohibition against selling handguns to minors.

The seller, however, must report the sale within 24 hours to the county recorder's office. Among facts required on the report are: Name and address of purchaser, age, occupation and the make and number of the gun.

In addition to the sales increase, the number of permits required to carry concealed weapons also has risen sharply in Polk and elsewhere.

One major reason why more Iowans have been buying and carrying guns is the fear aroused by riots and increasing crime and violence.

Public attention centered on handguns last week when Senator Robert Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles. He was slain by bullets from a .22-caliber revolver.

**Fear Riots**  
The interest of Iowans in weapons of that character has become more widespread in the last year or two, records show.

The Polk County Sheriff's office estimates that close to 6,500 permits to carry concealed weapons have been issued to county residents so far this year, compared with approximately 5,000 in the corresponding 1967 period.

It appears safe to say there are at least 10,000 revolvers, pistols and similar weapons in possession of private citizens in Polk County, which includes Des Moines, and which has a population of approximately 275,000.

**Guns \$16 to \$160**  
Places to buy such guns are not hard to find. They frequently are sold in discount stores, shopping centers, sporting goods stores and pawn shops. One Des Moines merchandising unit had a display of nearly 50 handguns last week, varying in price from about \$16 to \$160.

Waterloo figures show handgun sales in Black Hawk County rose from 645 in 1966 to 1,351 in 1967.

**GUNS—**  
Continued on Page Four

### Power Fails in Sector of D.M.

About "seven to 15" homes in northwest Des Moines were without electricity for about three hours Saturday night when an overloaded transformer at Forty-fifth street and Beaver avenue blew a fuse.

An Iowa Power and Light Co. spokesman said the power outage occurred about 5 p.m. and was repaired about 8:30 p.m.

