

# Iowa Couple May Again Lose Children

DES MOINES (AP) — It took six years, but Charles and Darlene Alsager won custody of their children last Christmas despite a court ruling branding them "mentally deficient."

Now they face losing their children again.

The Polk county department of social services filed a custody petition Wednesday. The department said it feared for the safety of the seven children — four boys and three girls, 10 months to 14 years old — who still live with the family. The eldest son, 18 years old, no longer lives at home.

The county cited alleged incidences of sexual abuse and incest among the children, threats by two Alsager boys to kill two other children, a threat by Mrs. Alsager to kill the entire family

and other problems plaguing the Des Moines family in its petition.

### Better Situation

"Being alive in a foster home situation is better than being dead where they are," said Quentin Emery, director of the social services department.

Last New Year's eve, after the family was reunited, Mrs. Alsager said:

"People have told me I'm stupid to fight for my kids, but I'm fighting for those people the same as for me. We had all eight of our children at home for Christmas and that's something to celebrate. I just hope everyone had as merry a Christmas."

Three of the children had remained with the family throughout the long legal fight. But five of the children were taken from the family

in June, 1969, by a juvenile court.

The parents had been found "mentally deficient" after tests indicated intelligence quotients in the low 80s. Experts say IQs of 90 to 120 are considered normal and that an IQ of 80 is usually considered "dull normal."

### Unconstitutional

The children were placed in foster homes, but a U.S. district court judge last December ruled that a juvenile court hearing at which parental rights were terminated had been unconstitutional. The children were returned to their parents.

But now, said Emery, it has become "quite apparent the Alsagers are not capable of rehabilitation."

The Alsagers were not available for comment on the petition filed in Polk county juvenile court charging that they had failed to adequately care for their children. It asked that the county be allowed to take custody of them.

Two homemakers and a financial caretaker assigned to the family by the county kept diaries. Based on those diaries, the petition alleged that sexual abuse and incest frequently occur among the children; that two of the older children threatened to kill two of the younger children, and that Mrs. Alsager last July threatened to kill the family, but said she "didn't have the guts" to do it.

### Played in Freezer

The petitions also said that 4-year-old Sally Alsager was allowed to play in a walk-in freezer and occasionally smoked cigarettes, that the Alsager house was littered with dirt and garbage and that Charles Alsager lost his job as a taxicab driver at the beginning of the year and has not had a regular job since.

Emery estimated his department has spent \$44,000 on the Alsager family from September, 1975, through last month for salaries of the three workers assigned full-time to the family, aid to dependent children grants, other general relief and the cost of foster care when several boys were removed from the home temporarily.

## Debates Between House Candidates Are Canceled

DES MOINES — The series of debates between Iowa congressional candidates which had tentatively been scheduled for this fall has been canceled, Iowa Public Broadcasting Network has announced.

Cancellation came about, IPBN said, because an insufficient number of candidates accepted the proposal.

Among the Eastern Iowa candidates, Congressman Edward Mezvinsky and James Leach, his Republican challenger in the First district, agreed to the debates.

In addition, Second district Congressman Michael Blouin and Republican challenger Tom Riley accepted the invitation.

In the Third district, however, Democratic challenger Stephen Rapp failed to respond to the invitation, although Republican Congressman Charles Grassley agreed to a debate.



## Registers Voters

Sen. Walter Mondale of Minnesota, left, the Democratic vice-presidential candidate, assisted Gregg Sieleman in registering student voters on the University of Northern Iowa campus in Cedar Falls Wednesday. Mondale later spoke to about 1,000 students at UNI.

## Hospital-School Pacts Are Awarded

By Harrison Weber

DES MOINES (IDPA) — Contracts totaling \$6 million have been awarded for the construction of 20 cottages at the Glenwood and Woodward state hospital-schools.

State Social Services Commissioner Kevin Burns said the cottages, ten at each institution, will be used to improve the day-to-day environment of the patients.

"We hope the cottages can be completed by the fall of 1977," said Burns.

The legislature has appropriated \$4.5 million for the cottages with the remainder,

\$1.5 million, coming from the federal government.

The new buildings are part of an overall plan to update the facilities and program at the two institutions.

Both Glenwood and Woodward have qualified as intermediate care facilities for the mentally retarded under the Title XIX program.

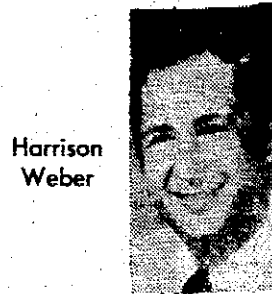
"This means any patient who is being served who meets the basic eligibility requirements as a disabled person gets reimbursement for their care and treatment," said Burns.

### 700-750 Patients

He anticipates approximately 90 percent of the patients at Glenwood and 87 percent of those at Woodward will qualify. There presently are between 700 to 750 patients at Glenwood and 650 at Woodward.

"Ultimately," said Burns, "we think this per diem (from the federal government) will amount to about \$30 per day for the patients who qualify."

Contracts have been awarded to the Webster Construction Co., Ames, for construction of the cottages



Harrison Weber

at Woodward, while Knudson, Inc., Council Bluffs, got the award for building the cottages at Glenwood.

Cost of the project at Woodward is pegged at \$2.9 million, while Glenwood came in at \$3.1 million.

Basically, said Burns, each cottage contains 6,000 square feet and costs roughly \$290,000. This includes all site preparation, paving, sewer and the like.

### Use Will Vary

"Once the cottages are completed, the use of the existing buildings will vary. Some of the buildings are being remodeled for program usage, others will be demolished. Some will be used in part only, such as the first floor," said Burns.

## No New Leads In Coed's Death

KNOXVILLE (UPI) — Private funeral services were to be held Thursday in the Marion county town of Knoxville for Marie L. Peak, 20, a Wartburg college student whose body was found in a ditch on Tuesday.

Miss Peak died of suffocation from a broken neck, according to an autopsy report released Wednesday by the Bremer county sheriff's office. The coed, who had been reported missing early Tuesday, also had been beaten and sexually assaulted.

No other leads were reported in the death, but authorities were investigating a possible connection between her death and a sex extortion ring in Mason City.

Miss Peak's body was found Tuesday morning at the edge of a cornfield on the John Amhalt farm about a quarter-mile northwest of Waverly. She had told friends Monday night she was going to a shopping center near the Wartburg campus, which is in Waverly.

### Other Murders

The Iowa bureau of criminal investigation, Bremer county sheriff's office and Waverly police are investigating the death, which is similar to two other murders in the area within the last 10 months and the third in

## Concert Scheduled for Band Uniform Fund

DELHI — "Home Brew" will present a benefit concert at Maquoketa Valley gymnasium here Sunday at 8 p.m. to help raise funds for high school band uniforms.

"Home Brew" is made up of Mr. and Mrs. Scott Orberg, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Flanagan and Gary Kenny.

The Maquoketa Valley band and faculty will provide intermission entertainment.

## Blouin Appointed to Education Committee

WASHINGTON — Second district Congressman Michael Blouin (D-Iowa) has been appointed to the conference committee which will consider major education legislation passed this year by congress.

The committee will work out differences between the senate's omnibus education amendments of 1976 and four separate house bills.

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Marie Peak

five years. None of the other cases has been solved.

Authorities confirmed earlier Wednesday that Miss Peak was one of the victims of a bizarre sex and extortion scheme uncovered in Mason City last year. John J. Carmody, Mason City, was charged with rape and extortion in connection with that case and later pled guilty. He is serving a 40-year sentence at the Iowa state penitentiary at Fort Madison.

Miss Peak had been working with a newspaper reporter on a book about the Carmody case.

### No Definite Link

Although no definite link has been established, Mason City police said they will offer protection if requested to other women who had been victims of the Carmody scheme.

Investigators also were investigating a possible connection with the death of Julie Ann Benning, 19, Waverly, last spring. Miss Peak's body was found about six miles from where Miss Benning's body was found last March 18.

Miss Peak's father, Dr. Frank Peak, is a veterinarian and former member of the Knoxville city council.

Her mother said Miss Peak did not feel she was in danger but "was so scared of getting into a car with strangers after the Carmody thing . . . she wouldn't have voluntarily gotten into a car with anybody without force."

Mrs. Peak also said she was upset because as late as Wednesday morning, she had received "no official word from anyone about my daughter's death." She said she received information only after calling police officers and questioning them.

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## Rivers, Streams Near Record Low Levels

DES MOINES (AP) — A summer-long drought has dropped Iowa's rivers and streams to or near record low levels, and officials are wary about possible cutbacks on water use.

The Mississippi river at Davenport stood at 2.6 feet Wednesday, a tenth of a foot above the record low set in August, 1941.

Barge line operators are being advised not to overload their barges, said Bill Koellner, chief of the U.S. army corps of engineers regulation section for the Rock Island district. However, navigation is still possible because of the lock and dam system.

"These are exactly the conditions for which the system was built in the 1930s," said one official.

The Des Moines river at Fort Dodge is at a record low, but the situation is somewhat better at Des Moines, where the Raccoon river adds its waters.

A flow of at least 300 cubic feet per second is needed out of the Red Rock reservoir on the Des Moines to adequately supply cities downstream. But the flow Wednesday was

only 280 cubic feet per second and dropping, said Koellner.

Similar situations exist on the Iowa river at the Coralville reservoir above Iowa City and at Lake Rathbun on the Chariton river near Centerville.

Streams in northwest Iowa appear to be the lowest in the state. Only the Missouri river seems not to be affected.

Officials said levels in the river's huge storage reservoirs in Montana and the Dakotas have been high all summer.

## Guenther Quits Buchanan Post

INDEPENDENCE — Dwight Guenther, jr., 27, a Buchanan county deputy sheriff who was found innocent last month of manslaughter charges in connection with the shooting death of Donald Mayner, 19, Winthrop, has submitted his resignation as deputy to the county board of supervisors.

The resignation became effective Sept. 5. Guenther had been suspended as deputy following the fatal shooting of Mayner April 16 near his rural Winthrop residence.

A Buchanan county grand jury later indicted Guenther with aiding and abetting Winthrop police officer Phil Adreon in the incident.

Guenther, however, was found innocent by a Marshall county district court jury after a week-long trial.

Adreon is to be tried in Scott county district court in October.

According to the Iowa bureau of criminal investigation, Mayner was killed by a bullet fired from Adreon's handgun.

### The Cedar Rapids Gazette

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## CLASSES BEGIN WEEK OF SEPT. 13

For a complete course listing, see Section A of last Sunday's Gazette, or call 398-5546 to obtain a copy.



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