

NEWS JOURNAL

CEEDAR RAPIDS

3 confronted by gunmen

■ A knock on the door wasn't the pizza delivery person some residents of Park Towne Apartments were expecting last night.

The group told police that three masked men with a gun were at the door just before 11 p.m.

Cedar Rapids police Sgt. Brent Long said no one was injured in the incident at the apartment complex off 42nd Street NE, near Center Point Road.

The group had been expecting a pizza, he said, but when they answered the door, they were met by the gunmen.

Long said he didn't know of anything that was taken, but details of the incident were sketchy late last night. Descriptions of the suspects were unavailable.

Reward grows in murder case

■ The family of Traci Evenson has boosted the reward for information in her murder to more than \$16,000.

Evenson, 22, was discovered June 22 in her apartment at 438½ Ninth Ave. SW by her sister. Evenson died of suffocation, and police ruled her death a homicide.

Evenson's family has increased its contribution to the reward fund to \$11,000, according to Police Sgt. Mark Andries. The family lives in Minnesota. Combined with \$5,000 from APAC TeleServices, Evenson's employer, and \$500 from a friend, the fund totals \$16,500.

Anyone with information about Evenson's death is asked to call the Cedar Rapids Police Department's investigative unit, 286-5400.

Glitch stops KCRG news show

■ A technical problem that arose eight minutes before airtime prevented KCRG-TV (Channel 9) from airing its 11:30 a.m. news on Tuesday.

The exact nature of the problem has not been determined, but it centered on a large console that controls all incoming and outgoing video, said Bob Allen, vice president and general manager of KCRG.

By 11:45 a.m., technicians had patched together equipment to allow for a broadcast, but it was decided there was not enough time to go forward with the newscast. In its place, KCRG broadcast a feed from the All News Channel.

By 4 p.m., two-thirds of the console was up and running — enough to allow KCRG to broadcast at 5, 6 and 10 p.m.

Allen said this type of malfunction has not happened in his 11 years with the station.

LINN COUNTY

Church plans to be discussed

■ A proposed church at 8210 C Ave. Extension that has at least some of its neighbors worrying about drainage problems will go to the Linn County Board of Supervisors twice today, first in a public hearing at 8:30 a.m. and then for a final vote tonight.

The county's Planning and Zoning Commission approved the site development plan of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in September.

The public hearing is in the board room of the Linn County Administrative Office Building, 930 First St. SW.

Supervisors, who have the final say on the site plan, are scheduled to vote on it tonight during a 7 p.m. meeting being held in Marion City Hall council chambers.

IOWA CITY

6 candidates selected

■ In a record turnout for a primary, residents selected incumbent council member Ernie Lehman, writer Derek Maurer, businessman Mike O'Donnell and University of Iowa instructor Ross Wilburn to square off for two open at-large seats in November's municipal election.

Lehman received 2,671 votes; O'Donnell, 1,879; Maurer, 1,587; and Wilburn, 1,494. Other candidates were John Jones, 237 votes; John Lohman, 480; Gary Sanders, 1,433; and Allen Stroh Jr. 148.

According to the Johnson County Auditor's Office, the 5,496 voters who turned out was a record for a primary.

In the District B race, Connie Champion will face incumbent Larry Baker in the November election. She garnered 1,362 votes to Baker's 738. Russell Lovetinsky received 713 votes.

Jury deliberates today in Keyes trial

Testimony ends with 2 rebuttal witnesses

By Dick Hogan
 Gazette staff writer

OSCEOLA — Clarke County jurors will begin deliberations this afternoon in Stephen Keyes' double murder trial.

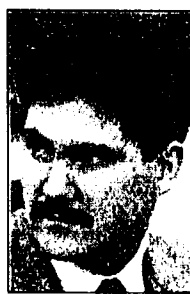
Jurors will hear about three hours of closing arguments beginning at 9 a.m. from prosecuting and defense attorneys. Before submitting the case to the jury, the 10-woman and five-man panel will be pared to a dozen with Judge Thomas Koehler drawing three names. Those three jurors will be the alternates and will not be involved in the decision.

Court was held for only about an

hour Tuesday afternoon with jurors hearing short testimony from two state rebuttal witnesses. Koehler also read the court's 39 instructions to the jury Tuesday afternoon.

One rebuttal witnesses, Mike Hiles, a state fire investigator, had testified earlier. The second rebuttal witness, Brenda Crowley, a nurse at Mercy Medical Center's emergency room, was a new witness.

Keyes, 28, faces two counts of first-degree murder in the Dec. 26 deaths of



Stephen Keyes
 Accused of killing wife, son

his wife, Sandra, 26, and son, Joshua, 2, in a fire at their rented home on County Home Road, near Springville and Whittier.

The state alleges Keyes intentionally set the fire. Keyes and two other children, Michael, 8, and Miranda, 6, escaped the fire. Because of heavy pretrial publicity, the case was moved from Linn County to Clarke County District Court at Osceola, a town of about 4,100 about 48 miles south of Des Moines.

Crowley testified only to seeing Keyes at the hospital the morning of Dec. 26 and did not medically treat him or his children. She did recall seeing Keyes leave the hospital with a woman and saw them hold hands and kiss before they exited the building. She did

not know who the woman was and did not hear what was said, but thought it strange, she said.

Crowley said after seeing them she checked to see if Keyes had been told that his wife and child had died and learned he knew.

Assistant Linn County Attorney Jerry Vander Sanden recalled Hiles in an attempt to discount some of the things the defense's expert, Bruce Johnson of Ames, said Monday.

Hiles denied Johnson's claim that Johnson had been to a fire scene to watch Hiles use his accelerant-sniffing dogs.

Hiles again emphatically stated the Keyes fire was no accident. The fire

■ Turn to 3B: Keyes



Gazette photo by David Lee Hartlage

“Fortunately, I have this opportunity to write most days. I’ve been incredibly busy.”

Allen Koepke

Allen Koepke has continued writing music in the 20 months since he was diagnosed with cancer. He initially was given only months to live, but results of a recent blood test are encouraging. Doctors say they see no evidence of the tumor growing.



Steve Noll
 Top vote-getter in race for mayor



LuAnn Yarbrough
 Second in mayoral vote

Yarbrough, Noll win in Lisbon

Only one-third of voters turn out for mayoral primary

By Adam Lowenstein
 Gazette staff writer

LISBON — Steve Noll and LuAnn Yarbrough earned the most votes in Tuesday's mayoral primary election and will face each other in the municipal election Nov. 4.

In a vote that drew only a third of Lisbon's 1,101 registered voters, Noll received 167 votes, or 44.8 percent, while Yarbrough garnered 108 votes, or 29 percent. Rex Cook got 96 votes, or 25.7 percent. There were also two write-in ballots.

The total of 373 voters is 33.8 percent of those registered to vote, making this the lowest primary turnout in Lisbon in more than two decades, according to unofficial figures from the Linn County Auditor's Office.

Still, the candidates are eager heading into November.

“I’m excited,” said Noll, 43. “I’m looking forward to getting the election process over to get on to business.”

Yarbrough, 35, said, “I’m very happy. Lisbon has never had a woman mayor, so if I was to make this, it would be history. I’m going to give it my best shot.”

For Cook, 51, the defeat means he will serve the final two years of his second four-year City Council term. There will be his last years as a City Council member, he said, although he has not counted out running for mayor in 1999.

“Two years is a way off. We’ll see who gets in there, how they do, and go from there,” said Cook, who said he is now supporting Yarbrough.

Noll and Yarbrough both plan to actively woo voters in the next month.

“Small-town politics in Lisbon, a lot of that is face-to-

■ Turn to 3B: Lisbon

Extended work

C.R. composer overcomes prognosis on cancer

By Becky Stover
 Gazette staff writer

Excitement and emotion show on local composer Allen Koepke's face as he listens to a piece he has written with his daughter, Amy Hanisch.

“The words are so powerful,” he says, looking up from the score, his eyes misting.

Music has been a key part of Koepke's life and has continued to be in the 20 months since he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Initially given only months to live, Koepke said his prognosis is still unclear. Yet a recent trip to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., produced a pretty good report. Results of a blood test were encouraging, and doctors don't see any evidence of the tumor growing at this time.

“Dad has been shown mercy here. At this time, I don't think it's luck. It really is a miracle.”

Amy Hanisch, daughter of Allen Koepke

any evidence of the tumor growing at this time.

“Dad has been shown mercy here,” Hanisch said. “At this time, I don't think it's luck. It really is a miracle.”

Koepke said he is not sure if a series of surgeries and treatments has killed all the cancer cells. Doctors say it might be five years before they would declare

FYI

■ The Cedar Rapids Symphony and Cedar Rapids Concert Chorale will perform Koepke's “Missa Brevis” on May 2 and 4.

him cancer-free, he says.

“I'm not saying I'm cured,” he said. “Let's just say things are looking OK or as well as they can be at this point.”

KOEPKE CONTINUES to pour himself into writing music and was recently named this year's composer-in-residence for the Cedar Rapids Symphony.

Koepke, former professor of music at Kirkwood Community College, has conducted more than 20 national and international tours, and his choirs have won numerous awards.

He composed a choral work, “Missa Brevis,” for the University of Northern Iowa chorus, which performed it at Carnegie Hall in 1994.

Lately Koepke has been busy putting the finishing touches on “Trixie's Trunket,” a children's choral and orchestral piece that will be performed by the Discovery Chorus and the Cedar Rapids Symphony on March 28.

Among the commissions he also has are ones for St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids, Prairie High School and Lovers' Lane United Methodist Church in Dallas.

“Fortunately, I have this opportunity

to write most days,” he said. “I've been incredibly busy.”

Koepke, who serves as music director at Christ Episcopal Church, said he doesn't feel as well as he did before but is grateful for the “miracle or act of God” that has allowed him to continue living.

The Rev. Gary Coffey of Christ Episcopal Church said Koepke's recovery has been amazing.

“It was fair to say that Allen was pretty close to death's door there,” Coffey said. “He had the whole church and others throughout the community praying for him and has made a remarkable recovery.”

“That's certainly not to downplay the role of the doctors at the Mayo Clinic. I don't see it as a medical science over here and a spiritual healing over here. God was working through doctors and our prayers.”

KOEPKE, FROM the beginning of his illness, was determined not to feel sorry for himself. He attributes his recovery to his faith in God, his family, including his wife, Sherril, and many friends.

“I've been very fortunate to have that many people caring for me,” he said. “It makes it easier to cope with all this.”

Everett Johnson, executive secretary of the Iowa High School Music Association, has known Koepke for years.

“He is writing extremely well right now,” Johnson said. “He was kind of given a second lease on life.”

Linn supervisors call it quits on night meetings

Accessibility experiment fails to generate interest

By Beth Chacey
 Gazette staff writer

A nine-month experiment with night meetings by the Linn County Board of Supervisors is history.

Board Chairman Jim Houser, who began the once-a-month night meetings in January to make county government more accessible to the working public, said the public wasn't taking advantage of the flexible scheduling.

With a combination of low attendance and having to pay staff for overtime, Houser said it was time to call it quits.

“It hasn't panned out that it's worthwhile for us to continue,” he said.

The year's first night meeting, in Alburnett, drew more than 100 people. But it was an annual meeting for town

trustees, where attendance is historically sizable.

Since then, a few night meetings attracted crowds if a controversial — and usually road-related — topic was on the agenda.

But more often the only people who showed up were a Gazette reporter and Supervisor Lumir Dostal's wife, Sara.

By springtime, with a slew of land-use and landfill night meetings also on the supervisors' calendars, there was grumbling. In May, Supervisor Dostal called the monthly night meeting a waste of time.

A night meeting in August had zero general public attendance and lasted 20 minutes. At September's night meet-



Jim Houser
 “It hasn't panned out”

Often the only people who showed up at the night meetings were a Gazette reporter and Supervisor Lumir Dostal's wife, Sara.

ing, when hog confinement unexpectedly ended up being discussed, Sara Dostal was the only one there to listen and comment.

Houser said Tuesday that night meetings will still be held quarterly outside the county seat on the second Thursday of the month. And night meetings will be scheduled for controversial issues, he said.

Houser also said Tuesday — during a day board meeting that briefly had a one-person audience — that he's switching the board's Wednesday formal meetings to Thursday. That will give staff more time to prepare between Tuesday's informal meeting dis-

cussions and Thursday's votes, he said.

Houser's decision-making power as board chairman ends in January. Supervisor Lu Barron will take over the chair in 1998 and has the option of setting her own board meeting schedule.

Barron, who campaigned last year on public accessibility to government, said she supports the meeting switch to Thursdays but is still thinking over the night meeting schedule.

Supervisors will have a night meeting tonight at 7 in Marion City Hall Council Chambers, 1100 Eighth Ave.

NEWS TIPS

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