

### Call of the colors

The most scenic routes for leaves; apple recipes; best hiking trails; much more (Special section)



## Death on the

Names change, but stories of tragic farm accidents are the same; one family's story (lowa Today)

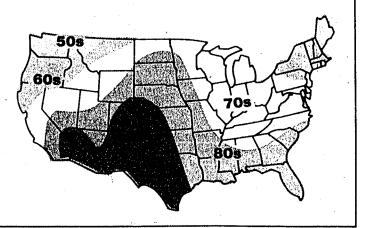


Presidential treats and retreats: Quiz, page 3C



#### EAST IOWA'S WEATHER

Sunny and warm today. Clear and cool tonight. Sunny Monday. Highs, 78-86; lows, 50-58. See



IN OUR 107th YEAR

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THE GAZETTE/CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

**VOLUME 107, NUMBER 251/FINAL EDITION** 

# 'The robbing hours'

Should Cedar Rapids give up its all-night convenience stores?



Cathy Kloubec, the all-night clerk at HandiMart on Blairs Ferry and Edgewood roads NE, waits on early-morning customers. Because of a recent murder at a 24-hour convenience store, some say these stores should close early, have more than one clerk on hand, or perhaps install surveillance cameras.

By Rick Smith Gazette staff writer

ulie Brown already had jotted down the license plate of one old brown van. Its driver had come into her HandiMart early Friday, acting oddly, not seeming to know what he wanted.

Now at 3:15 a.m., a second man in a brown van pulled up and jumped out, keeping the engine running. He was in the store in a flash.

His arrival came almost to the minute of a stormy Cedar Rapids morning a week before when a robber slashed the throat of convenience store clerk Brian Schappert.

Police detectives say the murder suspect was driving an old brown van.

On this night, the 25-yearold Brown had just been talking about how drugs were changing Cedar Rapids and how the killer must have been a man desperate for drug money. Now here was a man driving a brown van assaulting her with a torrent of words.

"The police stopped me four times tonight," he was saying. 'Twice they pointed guns at my head. Once that scared me so bad I (wet) my pants and had to go home and change

them." Brown, rattled by the murder just a week before, remained calm now. This man

was a familiar face to her. He worked early-morning hours and came to the store frequent-

ly. "He's been here before. He's OK," she said.

In the coming and going of familiar faces, all-night convenience store clerks seem to find their greatest solace. A single customer can mean a crowd too big for a robber to take on.

"Especially after this murder, it's nice to see some face you know, that you see every day," Brown said.

But that march of regular customers slows and nearly ends most weekday early mornings, giving way to what all-night clerk Cathy Kloubec

called "the robbing hours."
In most Cedar Rapids area stores the robbing hours are from about 2:45 to 4:30 a.m. That's the time when regular customers stop coming in and before others begin to trickle in on their way to morning

The vicious slaying of Schappert Sept. 8 took place as he clerked alone at the Kum & Go convenience store on Mount Vernon Road SE between 2:30 and 3 a.m.

A disturbing notion for Brown and Kloubec is that Schappert may have been killed by one of his familiar, regular customers, one whom



Julie Brown, a graveyard-shift employee at HandiMart on First Avenue and 35th Street NE, waits for customers to arrive.

police, had he lived.

ONE WEEK to the hour of Schappert's murder, the afterbars customers had slowed nearly to a stop for Kloubec, the all-night clerk at the HandiMart at Edgewood and

Blairs Ferry roads NE. Kloubec, 41, pointed to her age and experience at raising children as maturing forces when she said she feels at ease as a night clerk. In talking early Friday about the robbing

he could have identified to hours, she didn't take the concept altogether seriously. She said the belief in robbing hours grows as a person lets the imagination wander.

"Don't you think there's danger in any job you have?" she asked.

Still, early Friday, she was referring to the dead convenience store clerk, whom she had never met, by his first name. She admitted she had stopped going outside the

■ Please turn to 11A: Stores

# Congress could be forced to live by the law

By David Lynch Gazette Washington reporter

WASHINGTON - Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, has started a movement that could force Congress to live by the same laws it passes for others.

Grassley recently won passage of an amendment to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), making all provisions of that antidiscrimination law applicable to Congress.

Written by Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, the ADA would make it illegal for anyone to discriminate against another person because of disabilities, including, in some instances, AIDS.

As originally offered to the Senate, the bill exempted Congress, which has traditionally operated under its own rules.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, the ranking Republican on the Senate Labor Committee that has jurisdiction over the ADA, considered offering an amendment to include Congress in the bill. But under pressure from colleagues who warned such a move could kill the bill, Hatch decided not to intro-

duce the amendment. Grassley, who has long been concerned about exempting Congress from civil rights, privacy and employment legislation, picked up the cause. He intro-

#### Congress is exempt from:

Social Security Act, 1933.
National Labor Relations Act, 1935.

Minimum Wage Act, 1938. ✓ Equal Pay Act, 1963. Civil Rights Act, 1964.

Freedom of Information Act, 1966. ✓ Age Discrimination Act.

1967. Occupational Safety and Health Act, 1970.

✓ Equal Employment Opportunity Act, 1972.

Rehabilitation Act, 1973. Privacy Act, 1974.

Age Discrimination Act Amendments, 1975.

Ethics in Government Act.

Civil Rights Restoration Act, 1988.

duced the amendment during the final hours of the daylong debate on the legislation.

Grassley made his intentions clear, but he still caught managers of the bill off-guard when he introduced the amendment. They thought once Hatch backed off, the issue was settled.

■ Please turn to 10A: Congress

## **Hugo charges toward** islands; 'dangerous'

Residents are bracing for Hurricane Hugo, headed straight for them with deadly winds of up to 140 mph.

Saturday they boarded up homes and stockpiled supplies as

Map on page 10A

the storm churned toward the popular resort islands of the eastern Caribbean.

Forecasters described Hugo as "extremely dangerous" and said it could be the most powerful hurricane to hit the region since Hurricane David in 1979. That storm killed an estimated 1,200 people in the Caribbean and Florida.

At 8 p.m. CDT, Hugo's center was near 16.1 north latitude and 60.4 west longitude, or about 75 miles east-southeast of Guadeloupe. It was expected to hit the French island last night, then move north toward Puerto Rico, said forecaster Martin Nelson at

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) the National Hurricane Center near Miami.

The hurricane was moving west-northwest at 12 mph, sending showers and gusty winds to the eastern edge of the Caribbean and threatening islands over a 600-mile arc stretching from St. Lucia to Puerto Rico.

"It's a very dangerous storm, extremely dangerous in fact," Nelson said.

The National Weather Service in Miami issued hurricane warnings at 2 p.m. CDT for the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, which previously had been under a hurricane watch. The warnings were posted from Martinique northward and westward through Puerto Rico, including the British Virgin Islands and St. Martin and

surrounding islands. Tropical storm watches for the islands of Barbados and St. Vincent were discontinued, and a warning for St. Lucia was changed

■ Please turn to 10A: Storm

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#### TODAY'S CHUCKLE

By the time your kids reach an age when they stop embarrassing you in public, you start embarrassing them.

### Stores: 'It could have been any of us that night'

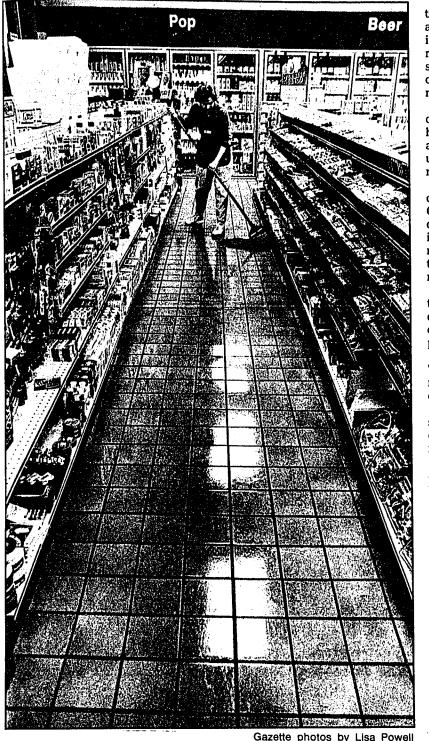
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store to check gas tanks. And she wasn't sure her 20-year-old daughter, "Kitten," who also works as a HandiMart clerk, should be working the all-night shift.

Across town, Brown was working the HandiMart store on First Avenue at 35th Street NE. Brown is an advocate of convenience stores and is eager to move up in the operation. Yet the week-old murder continued to wear on her.

"It's only natural," she insisted. Brown remembered hearing of Schappert's murder at 6:30 that morning. "It was a rainy night, perfect timing for something like that to happen," she said. "It could have been any of us that night.'

Schappert's murder has some in Cedar Rapids suggesting that allnight convenience stores are robberies waiting to happen.



Julie Brown, an employee at the HandiMart on First Avenue and 35th Street NE in Cedar Rapids, mops the floors while working the graveyard shift.

The Kum & Go store in which Schappert died is closing from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. "for the time being," a daytime clerk at another of the company's stores said Saturday. The murder has increased the resolve at a few other stores to stay closed for the night.

Dave Nordstrom, vice president of Nordstrom Oil Co., which owns HandiMarts, said he is concerned for the safety of his store clerks.

He is the first to admit that there is some danger to working as a night clerk. But Nordstrom insisted that robbery and murder remain uncommon at convenience stores in the Cedar Rapids area, considering that on any given night 30 stores might be open.

There are crimes that happen once in a while and they seem to happen at night," he said, "but as a whole, Cedar Rapids is not unsafe. It's safe to be out at

Nordstrom doesn't believe Cedar Rapids is like inner-city Chicago or New York where closing stores at night and encasing clerks in bulletproof cages is necessary. It also isn't cost-effective for two clerks to work the night shift, he said.

'We think we can do other things through training, store design and special pieces of equipment that will handle the problem," Nordstrom said.

He added that several stores "where we think we have a higher risk" will be getting surveillance

Nordstrom attributed his store's safety record to strategy, one not all of his competitors follow, he added.

HandiMart stores, for instance, are designed to make the clerk as visible as possible to people and police driving by. The stores are well-lit inside and out and there are windows nearly the height of the store on two sides. Signs, displays and shelving do not obscure a view inside.

There are also what Nordstrom calls "subtle things," like trying to keep stores clean to give the impression they are professional operations and poor targets for robberv.

Two practices, he said, are important. First, clerks are taught always to comply with a robber. Second, at no time do all-night clerks have access to the safe key, nor do they keep more than \$30 in the cash register. The safe has a delay function that permits a clerk to get small amounts of change from it only in two-minute inter-



Cathy Kloubec, right, watches to see if customer Larry Jayne, of Toddville, scratches off the winning numbers on his lottery ticket. Kloubec is an all-night clerk at the HandiMart at Edgewood and Blairs Ferry roads NE.

Nordstrom said a clerk at his Mount Vernon Road SE store, three blocks from the Sept. 8 murder, quit the night shift in the aftermath of the slaying. And he said the night shift isn't the easiest one to fill, even with an incentive of 95 cents per hour over daytime pay.



A sign on the door to HandiMart warns would-be robbers that they won't find much money inside.

But he said his HandiMarts will stay open 24 hours because people want them open.

EARLY FRIDAY, Larry Jayne, an insurance salesman from Toddville, was among the last customers to come into Kloubec's Handi-Mart before the so-called robbing hours.

Jayne's is a familiar face to Kloubec. He was there for a candy bar, a little conversation and a little Kloubec luck as he scratched

"I think she's got one of the most dangerous jobs in the city," Javne said. "She's got to be brave, sitting out here on the edge of town with the interstate close by. There should be a sealed-in area. that's the way I feel about it."

Kloubec disagreed. She said a competitor's store near the interstate at Blairs Ferry Road was a much better target.

Across town, at Brown's Handi-Mart on First Avenue and 35th Street NE, Terry Bean was buying cola at 2:30 a.m. on his way home.

"She's in a hell of a lot of danger," Bean, a warehouse worker, said of Brown. "Anybody working here at night has their lives up for grabs. I think you should have two clerks on hand at

Elizabeth Jameson, a 22-yearold who said she rarely was out at this time of night before a workday, had Brown's well-being on her mind, too.

"I have trouble understanding, with so few people out there at night, why they have to be open all night. Convenience is one thing. But if it's damaging people's lives?" Jameson said.

As the customers became few and far between, all-night clerks at HandiMart, 75 percent of whom are women, set out to give the store the thorough cleaning it gets for the day.

In the cleaning work, Kloubec said she finds distraction. "It keeps my mind off excess thinking, imagining what could hap-

She does some thinking, though. For instance, when Bartles & Jaymes was promoting its wine coolers with a lifelike cardboard sign of the two men, she moved it around the store from night to night to give the impression to anyone lurking outside that the men were customers.

AT 4:30 A.M., Dave Erb's headlights pierced the morning darkness. Erb, of Palo, came in Kloubec's door needing coffee on his way to a 10-hour shift at Rockwell-Goss.

"As a small inconvenience to the owners, but more for the wellbeing of the workers, why can't they install surveillance cameras in these convenience stores?" Erb said. Other early workers followed him in and out of the store.

The robbing hours had ended. "No," Kloubec said, "I really don't think, 'Hey, I've been safe one more night,' that it's an ordeal that I'm getting through. I'm just not afraid of it out here.

"I don't want to die like that poor boy," said Kloubec. But it's 'a terrible thought" that Cedar Rapids would have to build stores where clerks worked like "caged animals" for their safety.

