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The Gazette

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EDUCATION

Kirkwood deems pay competitive

By Diane Heldt
The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — Salaries of faculty, staff and administrators at Kirkwood Community College are at a competitive level, officials there said, although Iowa's community college salaries are behind national averages and those of most neighboring states.

Salary competitiveness is a top concern at the University of Iowa, Iowa State University and the University of

Inside

■ What top Kirkwood officials make. **Chart, 7A**

cruit top staff.

But officials at Kirkwood said they feel their salary levels are, for the most part, appropriate and competitive.

"We're below the Midwest average, for sure, but generally speaking, we feel we have a very competitive salary situation," said Steve Ovel, executive director of government relations at Kirkwood.

Kirkwood President Mick Starcevic's salary of nearly \$193,000 in 2005-06 was the second-highest among Iowa community college presidents. Des Moines Area Community College President Rob Denson had the highest last year, at \$203,000. The president of the University of Northern Iowa, a regent institution with about 2,500 fewer students than Kirkwood, earns \$275,000 this year. Kirkwood had more than 15,100

► **KIRKWOOD, PAGE 7A**

CRIME

JonBenet arrest fills East Iowans with new hope

By Christoph Trappe
The Gazette

The arrest this week of a man in the murder of JonBenet Ramsey in 1996 gives hope to families of Iowa's unsolved murder victims.

Inside

■ JonBenet's dying mother was asked to meet with Karr, **3A**
■ Unsolved murders in Eastern Iowa, **8A**

of Marion, was stabbed to death in Des Moines in 1997. Nobody has been charged.

The arrest of John Mark Karr, 41, in the JonBenet murder "really gives us

► **UNSOLVED, PAGE 8A**

PARENTING

You pay extra

When kids pursue their passions, the costs can run into thousands



Cliff Jette/The Gazette

Andy Stastny of Hiawatha helps his son AJ, 10, adjust his helmet before a practice ride at Cedar Rapids BMX. Daughter Tori, 10, retrieves her helmet from the family's trailer. Three of the four Stastny children and their father race BMX bikes with the family's team, McBoz Racing. In the summer, the family spends about \$400 a month on race entry fees. Equipment and trip costs also add up.

Benefits outweigh sacrifices, parents say

By Nicole Riehl
The Gazette

Tabatha Stastny hasn't calculated the cost of her family's extracurricular activities, but she can safely say it's thousands of dollars per year.

Three of the four kids, along with her husband, Andy, race BMX bikes. In the summer, they spend roughly \$400 a month on entry fees. Then there's equipment — \$275 bikes, \$100 shoes, \$60 pedals — and occasional \$1,000 trips to races.

"We don't live on steaks. We live on hot dogs and macaroni and cheese," said Tabatha Stastny, 28, of Hiawatha. "Every penny that we have extra goes to racing. I work more hours through the summertime to cover it."

Whether it's trumpet lessons, ballet or baseball, the cost of extracurricular activities adds up for parents.

"It's painful," said Terri Davis, 39, of North Liberty. "I prefer not to think about it."

In the past year, Davis and her husband, Neil, handed over at least \$8,620 for their two teenage sons' activities.

That includes \$650 for show choir, \$450 for swimming, \$1,000 for jazz and tap lessons, \$720 for voice lessons, \$2,500 for the speech team and travel, \$500 for suits to wear to speech competitions and \$2,800 to send the boys, along with mom as a

► **EXTRA, PAGE 7A**



"Every penny that we have extra goes to racing. I work more hours through the summertime to cover it."

Tabatha Stastny
Hiawatha



Brian Ray/The Gazette

Dan Davis of North Liberty, an Iowa City West High School student, shows some of the clothing, shoes, equipment and music that his parents have had to purchase for his numerous extracurricular activities. Dan's parents have spent at least \$8,620 in the past year on things such as show choir, swimming and voice and tap lessons so their two teenage sons would have what they need to participate in their endeavors.



The Gazette

Osada Apartments (shown here in May) is an affordable-housing complex on Third Street SE in Cedar Rapids. The complex is owned by Mid-America Housing Partnership.

Plans to fix problems break down

C.R. apartment complex's upkeep, vandalism frustrate owners as well as residents

By Janet Rorholm
The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — Residents of Osada Apartments, 905 Third St. SE, continue to be frustrated about upkeep at the affordable housing complex owned by the struggling non-profit MidAmerica Housing Partnership.

"I'm so disgusted I don't know what to do anymore," said resident Sandra Yanda.

MAHP officials vowed changes at the complex after a Gazette article in May highlighted the filthy conditions and lack of maintenance, but initiatives put in place to improve conditions and get tenants to help resolve the problems themselves haven't worked.

Recent visits to the apartment complex show trash everywhere inside and outside, along with filthy carpets, walls and elevator. Leaks and mold continue to be a problem, residents say.

Some Osada residents said things never improved.

"In fact, it got worse," said former Osada resident Lillian Holladay.

Osada is at 78 percent occupancy after having been at almost 100 percent this spring. Overall, MAHP — which has 400 apartments, townhomes and houses — is at 85 percent occupancy.

MAHP President Doug Wagner said he's frustrated as well.

"We are trying to build a community there, but it's been difficult to get people involved. We have people who come on a regular basis to clean and, within hours of cleaning it up, it's trashed again," he said.

Security cameras were installed in hopes of catching who is vandalizing and trashing the property, but tapes haven't been regularly maintained, he said.

Per Mar security was hired to patrol the

► **OSADA, PAGE 8A**



Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette

Osada residents have complained about the condition of stairwells and elevators. This photo, taken in April, shows the cracked floor of an elevator that smelled of urine. Residents and the apartment owner say vandalism and upkeep continue to be problems.

RECREATION / 6C

**BMX RIDERS ARE STILL
FLYING HIGH IN C.R.**



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WEATHER**



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Duane Crock/The Gazette

Virginia Moore's ceiling collapsed in July at the Brown Apartments in Cedar Rapids. Moore notified Mid-America Housing Partnership in May that the ceiling needed repair.

Osada/Progress elusive

► FROM PAGE 1A

area periodically to improve safety, and the Cedar Rapids Police Department did a sweep for drugs with a drug dog that culminated in one arrest for drug paraphernalia and an eviction.

To help get residents involved in the upkeep of the building, MAHP and police trained residents to act as door and building monitors to watch who was entering the building and to fill out work orders, but the program never really got off the ground. Both sides blame each other for that.

Wagner said parents who let their children run wild are partially responsible for the problems. He thinks residents will see improvement once school starts.

He said he plans to hire an on-site building manager to live there and be there 24 hours, seven days a week, a move he had hoped to avoid.

"It's pretty clear they need a continuous presence there," Wagner said.

Maintenance continues to be a problem, not just at Osada, but at MAHP's other sites as well.

Earlier this month, Holladay and her family moved to Cedar Valley Apartments,

3000 J St. SW. She's happier there but can't get things fixed so the apartment passes a city inspection and she can receive leased housing assistance.

Virginia Moore, who lives at MAHP's Brown Apartments, 1234 Fourth Ave. SE, said she complained about a crack in the ceiling in May. It wasn't fixed and, in the midst of the heat and humidity in July, the crack spread and chunks of her ceiling fell.

Wagner said MAHP has experienced significant turnover in its maintenance crew. The normal eight-person crew is down to three to handle MAHP's living quarters in the Cedar Rapids metro area.

Jane Benning, director of Cedar Rapids Housing Services, said MAHP passed its follow-up inspection at Osada, though she knows some of the same issues continue.

MAHP fixes problems, though it often takes it a long time to do so, she said.

"There's a minimum standard you have to meet," she said. "It may not be where we'd like to see it, but it meets the minimum."

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Unsolved/Families want closure

► FROM PAGE 1A

hope," Bell said.

When Brandi Hoffmann, 31, whose niece was killed last year in north-central Iowa, heard about Karr's arrest, what she felt was: "We don't want to wait 10 years for closure. One year is bad enough. Waiting 10 is inconceivable."

Hoffmann's niece, Evelyn Miller, 5, of Floyd, disappeared July 1, 2005, spurring a huge manhunt around her home until her body was found July 6.

She said Evelyn's family can relate to the finger-pointing JonBenet's parents endured over the past 10 years. "JonBenet's case should be a reminder there's a lot more going on behind the scenes, a lot of information that's never publicly released until an arrest," Hoffmann said.

Janelle Stonebraker, 57, of Salem, S.C., whose sister Michelle Martinko, 18, was murdered in Cedar Rapids on Dec. 19, 1979, said there is always hope the killer will be found.

"I think it is possible they could still find the person," Stonebraker said. "But it's one of those things that past the first two years it was never an overriding consideration of who did it. It was that we missed her so much."

Stonebraker said Cedar Rapids police have a DNA sample they are using that could possibly solve the case. That news came within the past year.

Martinko died of multiple stab

wounds to the head and chest. She was found in her parents' car in the parking lot of Westdale Mall.

Her parents, Albert and Janet Martinko, died believing they knew who killed their daughter, Stonebraker said.

In Iowa, about 150 murders investigated between 1960 and 2000 by the state's Division of Criminal Investigation remain unsolved. In Eastern Iowa, more than 30 unsolved murders date back to the late 1950s.

Emily Blomme, director of the Cedar Rapids-based Survivors Program, said police in some open murder cases know who the killer is but don't have enough evidence to arrest anyone. Prosecutors "only get one chance," she said. "Once they lose, they lose."

Steve Bogle, DCI assistant director, said cold cases are solved because of technology — DNA testing that wasn't available years ago — and because people decide to step forward.

Sometimes, people may be reluctant to give information because of their relationships to those involved. If that relationship changes, that person can provide information, Bogle said.

But no matter what the outcome of the criminal case, a murder is final, said Bell, the sister-in-law of murder victim Julie Davis.

"It's never going to bring Julie back," she said.

Gazette staff writer Jason Kristufek contributed to this report.

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Unsolved murders in Eastern Iowa

Here are some of the unsolved murder cases still active in Eastern Iowa:

■ **Anthony Posley**, 22, shot in Cedar Rapids, July 23, 2006.

■ **Evelyn Miller**, 5, of Floyd, body found July 6, 2005.

■ **Joseph Harris**, 23, of Chicago, shot in Cedar Rapids, Jan. 6, 2003.

■ **Jay Grahman**, 38, and his daughter, **Jaymie**, 6, died in fire set in their Cedar Rapids home on April 5, 2003. Brian Zirtzman was tried and acquitted.

■ **Tyrone Gilbert**, 21, shot in Cedar Rapids, June 21, 2001.

■ **Willie Junior Brooks**, 49, shot in Cedar Rapids, Nov. 27, 1999.

■ **Judith Weeks**, 44, wound to forehead in Cedar Rapids, April 5, 1999.

■ **Jamar Maggett**, 19, of Chicago, shot in Cedar Rapids, May 10, 1999. Paul Gilbert was tried and acquitted.

■ **Traci Evenson**, 22, suffocated in Cedar Rapids apartment, June 22, 1997.

■ **Frances Bloomfield**, 57, of Iowa City, strangled in her home and body dumped near Rockford, Ill., Sept. 25, 1997.

■ **Julie Davis**, 33, of Marion, stabbed in her Des Moines office, Aug. 28, 1997.

■ **Laura Van Wyhe**, 21, of

Iowa City, found barely alive along northeast Missouri highway, died Oct. 26, 1996.

■ **Donna Lee Marshall**, 37, of Iowa City, shot in her home, Jan. 9, 1996.

■ **Susan Kersten**, 38, of Iowa City, body burned in her car, Sept. 24, 1995.

■ **Corey Wieneke**, 22, beaten in his rural West Liberty home, Oct. 13, 1992.

■ **Unidentified baby**, found in Iowa City landfill, Dec. 21, 1991.

■ **Tom Mather**, 32, of Springdale in Cedar County, shot and stabbed in his home, Sept. 30, 1991.

■ **Brian Schappert**, 22, of Cedar Rapids, stabbed during apparent robbery at Kum & Go store in southeast Cedar Rapids, Sept. 8, 1989.

■ **Matt Pusateri**, 26, of Cedar Rapids, shot while driving a cab, Nov. 12, 1988.

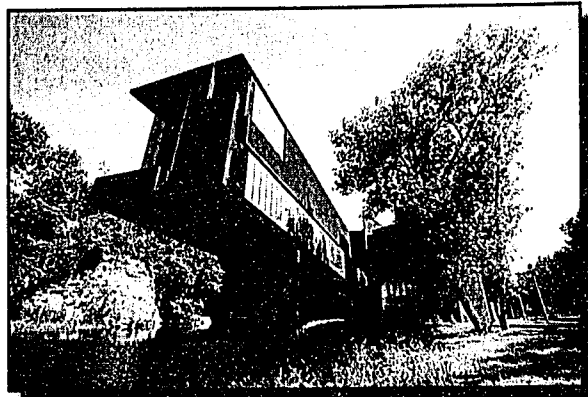
■ **Lance DeWoody**, 22, of North Liberty, shot on Oakdale campus in Coralville, Aug. 13, 1985.

■ **Rose Burkert** and **Roger Attkisson**, bodies found chopped up at Amana Holiday Inn in Iowa County, Sept. 12, 1980.

■ **Michelle Martinko**, 18, of Cedar Rapids, found stabbed to death in her car at Westdale Mall, Cedar Rapids, Dec. 19, 1979.

Source: Gazette files and police records

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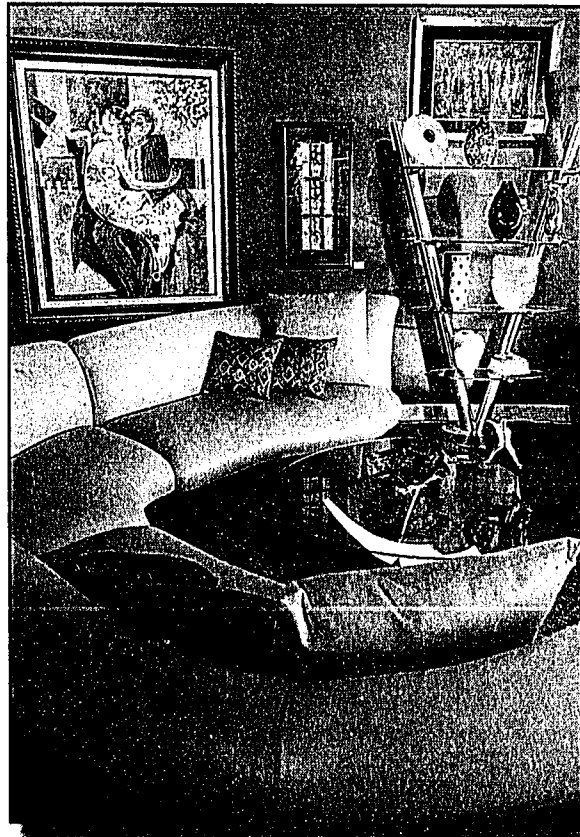
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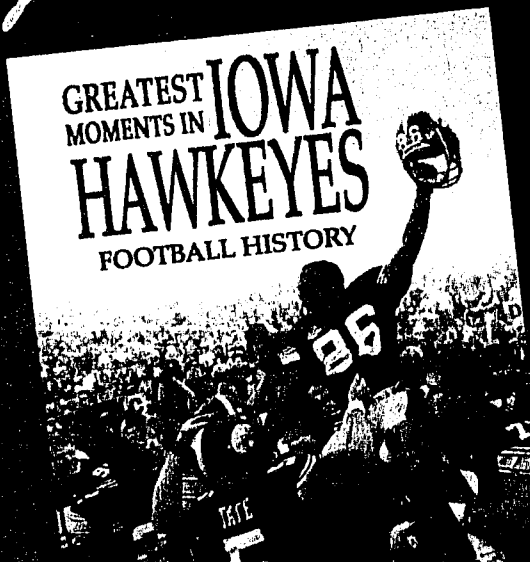
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