

Significance of Islamic university remains unclear

By Molly Rossiter
The Gazette

It's too soon to know what the significance of a proposed four-year accredited Islamic university in California will be for the Muslim community at large, Eastern Iowa Islamic leaders said.

"I am not sure the Muslim community in America has decided that this is important," said Ahmed Souaiaia, assistant professor of Islamic studies at the University of Iowa. "It is important that Islamic studies and Arabic studies are made part of the curriculum of major universities in the country, which is happening. But there is no emerging consensus that an Islamic university or college is critical at this time."

The founders of the proposed Zaytuna University may disagree. Imam Zaid Shakir and Sheikh Hamza Yusuf of California have dedicated years to developing the school, which will offer liberal arts degrees and training in Islamic scholarship. At a New Jersey conference for Muslim professionals earlier this month, Shakir

told participants that "we need to develop institutions to allow us to perpetuate our values."

A vote is scheduled in June to determine whether the school can open in the fall of next year. If approved, Zaytuna would be the first accredited Islamic school in the United States.

"The Muslim community has grown tremendously, not only in population but in realizing their hopes and dreams," said Imam

Ahmed Elkhaldy, president of the Muslim American Society's Iowa Chapter, based in Cedar Rapids. "We are realizing we can no longer be considered a group of immigrants. We have fourth and fifth generations here now."

Having an accredited Islamic university, Elkhaldy said, "is very promising."

"I hope in the long term we see community colleges and universities that are sponsored by Muslim Americans," he said.

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Ahmed Souaiaia
University of Iowa



Imam Ahmed Elkhaldy
Iowa Chapter, Muslim Society of America



Steve Gravelle photos/The Gazette

ABOVE: Carolyn Pospisil (third from left), stepmother of Erin Pospisil, says a few words Sunday afternoon at Van Vechten Park in southeast Cedar Rapids in recognition of the eighth anniversary of the girl's disappearance. Family and friends, including Erin's father, Jim (left), gathered to release balloons in her honor. BELOW: The balloons bore tags listing information about Erin Pospisil, who was 15 when she disappeared in 2001.

Family remembers missing girl

Cedar Rapids girl last seen in 2001 when she was 15

By Steve Gravelle
The Gazette

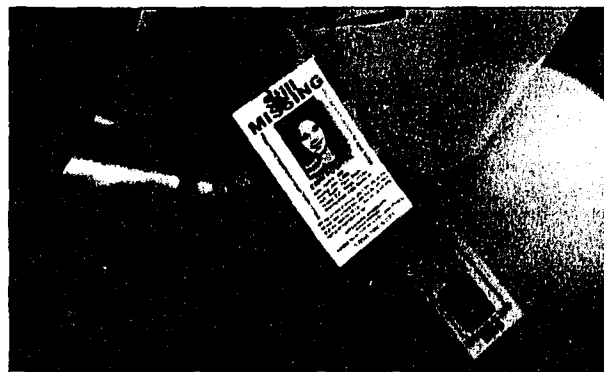
CEDAR RAPIDS — As they have every year for the past eight around the first week of June, Carolyn and Jim Pospisil gathered Sunday afternoon with friends and family.

They met at the Van Vechten Park pavilion with chips, summer salads and meat for a cookout, but first they paused to remember the one who wasn't there.

"I was 35 when she disappeared,"

Jim Pospisil, 43, said of his daughter Erin Pospisil. "This gets easier after the long time."

Erin, then 15, was last seen June 3, 2001, getting into a black Chevrolet Cavalier in the 100 block of 12th Street SE. Friends said they didn't recognize the car, but said Erin seemed to know the people inside and went with them willingly.



Erin remains missing despite the efforts of her father and stepmother Carolyn Pospisil. They've distributed fliers and posted billboards with Erin's photo and description, to no effect beyond a few tips that prove unfounded.

The family founded Help Find a Child, a non-profit that helps keep unsolved missing-persons cases before the public.

The Pospisils have moved to Omaha, where Jim manages an auto repair shop and Carolyn, 39, manages the municipal housing authority.

Carolyn Pospisil fields tips, passing leads on to police, and often consults the state's missing person's Web site, www.iowaonline.state.ia.us/mpic/

"When I looked in

April, there were 57 kids" listed, she said.

Tips continue to come in. After a company that mails supermarket coupons to consumers included a leaflet in its envelopes with Erin's photo and information about the case, the family received more than 50 tips. One woman thought she saw Erin in a truck stop along Interstate 80 in the Eastern U.S.

"The police went and checked the video, and it wasn't her," said Jim Pospisil. Still, the family takes comfort that people are still looking.

"There's always hope, because there's people found after 20 years," said Jim Pospisil. "Even longer than that. So there's always hope."

"A hopeful outcome would be that she shows

On the Net

Help Find a Child:
www.helpfindachild.com

up tomorrow," said Carolyn Pospisil. "At this point, I'd take any outcome, so we'd know something."

Shortly after 1 p.m., the Pospisils gathered up the several dozen balloons Jim had filled with helium and attached a ribbon with a small card bearing Erin's description, photo, and a toll-free phone number. Each holding a cluster of balloons, the group moved to a clearing near the playground.

"We love you, Erin," Carolyn said, and everyone released their balloons. The group stood along time watching the balloons rise above the trees into the clear sky, pushed north by the prevailing breeze. The youngest children, like Erin's cousin Rachel Minney, 20 months, watched the longest, waving as the balloons drifted away.

"Bye-bye," said Rachel.
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I.C. man asks court to prevent dog's death

By Ashton Shurson
The Gazette

IOWA CITY — An Iowa City man has gone to court to try to regain custody of his dog to keep authorities from euthanizing it as vicious.

Brad Arvidson, 48, of 500 Terrace Road, filed an appeal Tuesday of the city's April 15 decision to remove his dog, T-Bear. A hearing is set Thursday in Johnson County District Court.

Two days before that, the city will hold its own public hearing about Iowa City Animal Service's request to euthanize T-Bear after it says he bit two Animal Service employees and a volunteer since his April impoundment. The meeting will take place at 4 p.m. in the City Manager's Conference Room.

During the meeting, Doug Boothroy, director of Iowa City's Housing

and Inspection Services, will hear all parties and decide whether T-Bear will be euthanized.

It was the second time the Rottweiler and Labrador mix was impounded because of complaints.

Arvidson contends in court documents that he was not made aware that T-Bear would be euthanized and objects that the city gave him no options to prevent the euthanasia.

Julie Colony of Iowa City was dating Arvidson when the two got T-Bear in February 2007. She wants a board-certified animal behaviorist to determine whether T-Bear is vicious.

"We don't take dog bites lightly," Colony said. "But it breaks my heart to think he gets a label slapped on him and he's dead."

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Linn County AmeriCorps program receives funding

The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — The Linn County Conservation/Eastern Iowa Conservation Alliance AmeriCorps Program will receive \$184,794 to support 17 members working to improve and preserve

Iowa's natural resources.

The funding is part of a \$1.3 million grant to eight AmeriCorps programs across the state, which comes from the Corporation for National Community Service.

The Linn County group

receiving funds works to improve Iowa's environment and recreational opportunities, according to a release.

Dubuque will receive \$198,909 to support 50 members of the Partners in Learning program.

TV Vision is delivered Saturdays

Students fulfill classmate's dying wish

WATERLOO (AP) — Fourteen-year-old Adnan Malkic's dying wish has been fulfilled.

The eighth grader at Waterloo's Hoover Middle School died of cancer Friday.

Principal Don Blau said Malkic had asked for classmates, faculty and staff to assemble at the

school after his death to celebrate his life and also for a procession to go by his home. That happened Saturday, and students released balloons into the air in Malkic's honor.

Malkic played tuba in the school band. Band director Ken Henz says the ever-smiling teen was well-liked.

Post-Menopausal Women Needed for a Research Study

If you are post-menopausal women 70 years of age or younger with high blood sugar but do not have diabetes, you may qualify for a 19 month research study evaluating the effects and safety of an investigational use of an approved medication used to treat Type II diabetes compared to placebo (an inactive substance) on bone metabolism.

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To learn more about the bone metabolism research study, please call



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