

IOWANS ALIVE AT INDY 500

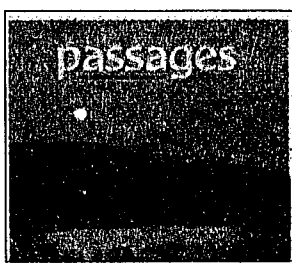
The Cahill Racing Team has a spot in the field but could lose it as qualifying continues today

SPORTS

DEALING WITH DEATH

A guide for funeral planning and grief support

SPECIAL SECTION



ALE TRAIL

Sipping suds on The Gazette's Iowa brew tour

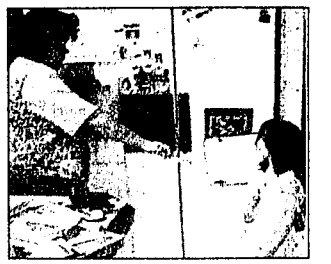
TRAVEL & ARTS



NO DAY OF REST

Time crunch spills over to Sunday

LIFE & LEISURE



The Gazette

Sunday May 17, 1998

GOOD MORNING

TODAY	MONDAY
Mostly sunny Wind: SW 7-12	Isolated storms Wind: S 10-15
High 85 Low 65	High 88 Low 61

Weather Report, 18A

Latest forecasts online <http://www.kcrg.com>

FINAL / VOL. 115 NO. 128

THE NEWSPAPER OF EASTERN IOWA

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA \$1.75

Cyclone puts climb of Everest in jeopardy

Time is running out for Iowa City man

By Lyle Muller

Gazette Johnson County Bureau
IOWA CITY — An approaching cyclone threatens to dash Dr. Chuck Huss' attempt to be the first Iowan atop the world's highest mountain.

A British weather agency says Mount Everest stands a 50 percent to 60 percent chance of being hit by the storm about midnight Tuesday, Everest time.

Huss' expedition is holding out hope, however, because of a second, conflicting forecast.

A European weather agency was predicting the cyclone would veer to the northeast and miss Everest, Matt Gaumer of Iowa City told The Gazette on Saturday from Everest's base camp.

Climbers were hoping that is the more accurate forecast, Gaumer said. Still, the mountaineers were concerned.

If the storm hits, it could wipe out not only the summit attempt by Huss, an Iowa City doctor, but the entire summit season for climbers at the mountain, said Gaumer, who accompanied Huss to base camp and is staying there while Huss is on the mountain.

Huss, 49, and the other members of the Everest Environmental Expedition '98 were to hear an updated forecast about 2 a.m. today, Iowa time, and decide whether the storm will pass or if they have to head back down the mountain, Gaumer said. A forecast at 6 p.m. Saturday offered no changes from what was predicted earlier.

Huss is at Everest's Camp 2, elevation 21,000 feet, which is one of four camps between the

mental Expedition '98 were to hear an updated forecast about 2 a.m. today, Iowa time, and decide whether the storm will pass or if they have to head back down the mountain, Gaumer said. A forecast at 6 p.m. Saturday offered no changes from what was predicted earlier.

Huss is at Everest's Camp 2, elevation 21,000 feet, which is one of four camps between the

Turn to 12A: Everest

TORNADO CLEANUP IN EASTERN IOWA



Gazette photo by John F. Martin

Chris Snyder retrieves a couple of rolls of paper towels from the rubble of his aunt's garage behind her home on Fifth Avenue in Washington, Iowa, on Saturday. A tornado hit the town on Friday. Snyder's aunt, Genie Davis, said, "The house was destroyed, but my most valuable possessions were untouched." She was referring to a curio cabinet filled with collectibles. It remained standing in her living room.

Picking up the pieces

Tornado shatters homes and lives but not the spirits of people who live in and near Washington, Iowa

By Rick Smith

Gazette staff writer
WASHINGTON, Iowa — A cleanup effort starring more than 500 volunteers hit this county seat town Saturday as spectacularly as any storm.

But not so hard that anyone here could or would ever forget Friday's all-but-fatal tangle with the town's first twister.

"I was out on the deck when I watched it coming," said Randy Tisor, who drives a firetruck for the city. "When I saw lumber twisting, that's when I headed to the basement."

Claudia Hunter was driving across town with the tornado closing in her rearview mirror. "I thought, 'This is going to be my last. This is it. I'm going to die right here,'" Hunter said.

"I've never been close to a tornado before, but everybody says it sounds like a freight train," Tony Mondia said. "So

INSIDE

More photos, 6-7A
Following the path of destruction northeast from Washington, 7A

ONLINE

For additional photo coverage of the destruction, visit The Gazette's Web site: <http://www.GazetteOnline.com>

I'm down in the basement waiting for the choo-choo and the whistle and all I hear is this whoosh. That's all there was to it."

Everybody knew exactly where they had been.

The homes of Mondia and Hunter, on the city's southwest side, and Tisor's on the edge of the most heavily damaged neighborhood on the city's far north edge, all sustained damage, as did about 50 to 60 others in this town of

Sandy Petersen, mother of tornado victim Kim Lang, reacts as she surveys the scene outside her daughter's damaged house in rural Iowa City on Friday. High winds tore off the roof of the house, which is along Highway 6 just west of American Legion Road.



Gazette photo by Buzz Orr

7,300. Sixteen to 18 rural Washington County homes and farms were also damaged.

An uncountable number of trees and limbs were knocked down along the storm's path

through town.

They included dozens of the city's Sunset Park. Two pioneer cabins and an elaborate

Turn to 6A: Tornado

MURDERS

www.fyiowa.com/murders/

Classic whodunit still open

Thousands of hours spent on C.R. case, but answer is elusive

By Steve Gravelle

Gazette staff writer

Traci Evenson died on a warm Saturday night last June. The young woman's world, though, lives on inside three thick, heavy white loose-leaf binders at Cedar Rapids police headquarters.

Those hundreds of pages represent thousands of hours of investigation by city detectives.

There are pages of names: friends, acquaintances and co-workers of Evenson, 22, who had been suffocated in her upstairs apartment at 438 1/2 Ninth Ave. SW.

"We've talked to every single person on this list, some of them more than once," says detective Stan McClurg.

A sketched map depicts the 400 block of Ninth Avenue SW and the streets on each side of it. The occupants of all 44 homes on the block are noted.

Manpower for the investigation's early stages depended on the detectives' answer to a key question: "Is this a whodunit?" says Capt. Glen Fox of the department's investigative unit. "Often, the cases we have are committed by someone we know."

Evenson's death was, and remains, a whodunit.

As an unsolved case, it's also somewhat unusual. Of all crimes, murders are easily the most often solved. According to the FBI, an arrest was made in 67 percent of all murders nationwide in 1996. The overall clearance rate was 22 percent.

The murder arrest rate for cities in Cedar Rapids' population group is 73 percent. Small towns and rural counties have the best arrest rates for murder — 79 percent.

First in a series



Traci Evenson Cedar Rapids woman died in June

Turn to 8A: Murder

INDEX

Arts.....	G	Jumble.....	12D
Automotive.....	D	Life/Leisure.....	F
Births.....	17A	Lottery.....	17A
Bondy.....	2C	Milestones.....	M
Books.....	4F	Money.....	C
City Briefs.....	20A	Movies.....	5F
Classified.....	D	Older.....	7F
Crisscross.....	22D	People.....	12A
Crossword.....	11D	Pol. Notes.....	11A
Deaths.....	16A	Real Estate.....	E
Deupree.....	2A	Sports.....	B
Editorial.....	9-11A	Tel*Us.....	17A
Family.....	3F	Travel.....	G
Farm.....	12C	TV list.....	5F
Home.....	E	Weather.....	18A
Horoscope.....	20D	Wuzzles.....	17D
Iowa Today.....	15A		



Does ice rink figure in C.R.'s future?

Questions remain about the viability of an indoor facility

By Douglas Neumann

Gazette staff writer

Cedar Rapids youths who persuaded their parents to ante up for hockey gear or figure skates this season likely have packed the equipment away still smelling like new.

A warm winter cut the outdoor ice sports season to three weeks. Even in a typical Iowa winter, skaters usually enjoy only about a six-week season.

The solution, ice enthusiasts believe, is an indoor skating facility that would extend the season year-round.

A local option sales tax package proposed for Cedar Rapids includes \$2 million of the \$2.5 million projected for that facility. The rest would come from fund raising done by a group

called SKATE Inc. (Supporting Kids and Their Environment).

An election on the 1-cent tax will be held June 23.

SKATE Inc.'s plan would put the rink along Rockford Road SW at the Kingston Stadium complex.

The skating rink has been designed to coordinate with a proposed new ballpark and to fit in with overall changes the city is planning at Kingston.

Parks Commissioner Dale Todd advocated the switch to Kingston from Ellis Park.

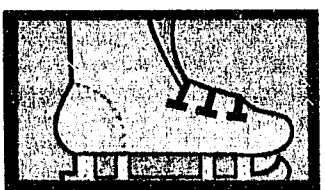
"Here is a public site close to

An 1% extra

Linn County local option sales tax proposal

www.GazetteOnline.com/special/tax/

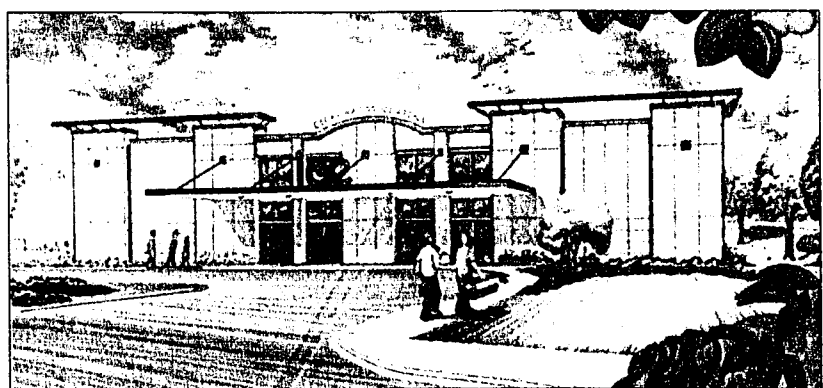
Ice rink



the center of the city that has been used for sporting events for generations," Todd said. "This gives us a chance to work with the groups that are there now to improve the site for their use and add more opportunities for the citizens of Cedar Rapids."

Little, if any, opposition has been raised about the Kingston site. The apparent acceptance is contrary to the controversy that arose two years ago when Noelridge Park was identified as a favored site and again last year when Ellis Park was chosen.

The ice rink project, though,



The exterior of the ice rink has been redesigned to coordinate with the proposed new Memorial Stadium. The interior remains the same as earlier SKATE Inc. plans with an Olympic-sized rink and seating for about 500. This is the view from Rockford Road.

doesn't come without opposition. The primary questions have been:

- Should it be a multipurpose facility that also would include speedskating and a host of summer sports?
- Can the rink operate without future tax subsidies?
- Will there be a demand for

the facility in Cedar Rapids with rinks already operating in Dubuque, Waterloo and Davenport and one to soon open in Coralville at the Coral Ridge Mall?

• Should the ice rink be privately financed rather than included in the sales tax package?

Turn to 13A: Rink

Murder: Despite few tips, investigators pursue killer

From page 1A

"I think Evenson probably brought the fewest tips of any homicide I've ever investigated," says McClurg, a detective for about 25 years.

Still, the tips come. Some are prompted by a \$16,000 reward funded through Evenson's insurance settlement and employer, APAC TeleServices.

"When we get a tip, even though it may sound off the wall, we still take the time to check it," Fox says.

Police canvassed the neighborhood in the hours after Evenson's body was discovered Sunday morning, June 22, by her sister Jodi Jackson.

A medical exam later determined Evenson died about 9:30 the night before her body was

UNSOLVED MURDERS

www.fyiowa.com/murders/

discovered.

Fox says a handful of detectives, accompanied by at least two identification officers who collect evidence, were sent to the scene as soon as officers determined they had a suspicious death.

As a matter of routine, residents at the Department of Correction's Hinzman Center were accounted for. Prisoners furloughed, paroled or released on probation to the Cedar Rapids area were checked.

"We just try to check every single person who comes to our attention," says McClurg.

The operative theory is that Evenson was killed by someone she knew, at least well enough to let into her apartment.

Norma Zillyette, Evenson's mother, isn't hopeful the killer will be found.

"I think police departments tend to be a little optimistic than most people," says McClurg. "But as time goes by and years pass, you kind of wonder."

Evenson's sister Jodi and her family — husband Anthony Jackson and their two small

Can you help solve murders?

Do you have information about this case or the other cases in the "Unsolved Murders" Read It/See It series? Call the CITYLINE Tip Line at 363-7000 or 337-7000, category CLUE (2583) or send e-mail to gazette@fyiowa.com



children — died in an automobile accident Nov. 26. Fox hopes their deaths won't harm the investigation. "By not having them now, if new information would come to light we're no longer able to go back and talk to them again," he says.

Jeff Senese, a criminologist at the University of Baltimore, says quick police work is crucial to solving a murder.

"If you're not asked to recall details within a few hours of a specific event, you're going to lose them," he says.

Based on his research of 20 years' worth of cases in South Bend, Ind., Senese says the odds of solving a murder drop dramatically if an arrest isn't made within 72 hours.

As the Evenson investigation continued without producing a solid suspect, detectives began casting a wider net. Inquiries were posted with the state Division of Criminal Investigation and the Midstates Organized Crime Information Center seeking information on similar cases in Iowa and the region.

The DCI's Law Enforcement Intelligence Network issues monthly reports to state, federal and local agencies, says Cedar Rapids detective Rich Hamblin.

"You can review what's going on around you, what's going on across the state," says Hamblin. "The bad guys are mobile more now than they've ever been."

The DCI also organizes regular meetings for local investigators to share information.

Midstates' Crime Information Digest is mailed every other month to member agencies in the seven states reporting to the Springfield, Mo., center. The center's staff also passes information about potentially linked

crimes to local departments.

Where have the tips and the hours following them led?

Concern for their investigation, and the charges they hope it will someday produce, prevents detectives from discussing any active case. And the Evenson case is very much an active one.

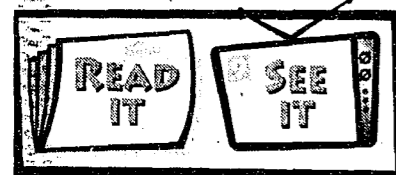
"I don't think we ever forget them," says McClurg. "I still follow up leads on homicides from a long time ago."

McClurg says he's counted only a handful of unsolved murders in Cedar Rapids dating back to the early 1950s. But he notes that sometimes solving a murder and proving it are different things.

"A murder is unsolved if we don't know who did it," says McClurg. "There's murders I investigated that I know damn well who did them" but was unable to develop the evidence to bring charges.

"I don't call that an unsolved murder."

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The series

In The Gazette

Today: The death of Traci Evenson last June in Cedar Rapids: Police struggle with few tips.

Monday: As investigators look for the killer of Frances Bloomfield of Iowa City, friends are looking for closure on the case. So are relatives of victims of other unsolved murders.

Tuesday: Despite an eyewitness, the fatal beating of Erin Miller Darnall at her Shellsburg home last September remains unsolved.

Wednesday: The fatal stabbing of Julie Bell Davis of Marion: Des Moines police admit their investigation is at a standstill.

On KCRG-TV9

Today: The 1988 death of Cedar Rapids cab driver Matthew Pusateri: a classic case that may never be solved.

Monday: Investigators may know who killed Susan Kersten of Iowa City in 1995, but don't have enough evidence.

Tuesday: The 1978 murder of Lynda Manuel of Anamosa: How investigators solved a 17-year-old case.

Wednesday: Sheriff is determined to solve the 1992 slaying of Rhonda Knutson of rural New Hampton.

KCRG reports air at 10 p.m.

At FYIowa

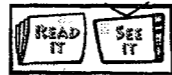
Full reports online at www.fyiowa.com/murders



Dave Franzman has covered Cedar Rapids government for a number of years at KCRG-TV9. Before joining KCRG in 1978, he worked at stations in Alabama and Indiana. He lives in Robins with his wife and two children.



Steve Gravelle covers law enforcement for The Gazette. He joined The Gazette two years ago after working at newspapers in Minnesota. He lives in Cedar Rapids.



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