

C.R. donations headed to Afghanistan

Seattle agency agrees to deliver goods collected by Women for Peace

By Cindy Hadish
Gazette staff writer

CEDAR RAPIDS — More than a ton of blankets and warm clothing is making its way from Cedar Rapids to Afghanistan.

The Seattle-based aid agency, World Concern, will distribute the donated items, an arrangement made after assets of another group were frozen

by the U.S. government.

Global Relief Foundation was shut down by the U.S. Treasury Department in December, just after the Cedar Rapids group Women for Peace arranged to have donations from its clothing drive delivered by the group.

The Chicago-based Global Relief, which had offered to pay half of a \$5,000 shipping cost, is accused of funneling money to the al-Qaida terrorist network.

Women for Peace, which formed after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, had to scramble to find another relief agency to deliver the items donated

by Cedar Rapids-area residents.

The shipment of 2,885 pounds of goods, which left Cedar Rapids on Thursday, should reach Seattle by the end of the week.

"We were very pleased," said Zeneb Mehdi of Women for Peace. "It was a big sigh of relief. I think it was heard all over Cedar Rapids."

Computer Transportation Services of Denison, in western Iowa, arranged for the national carrier, Roadway Express, to carry the 10 pallets of goods to Seattle at a reduced cost of \$500.

From there, no cost is expected

when World Concern takes the goods to Tajikistan and through the northern border of Afghanistan, Mehdi said. The items should arrive there by the end of February.

Sen. Chuck Grassley's office provided Women for Peace with a list of relief organizations. Mehdi said many of those groups, like Global Relief, had already been shut down by the government, however.

"God was watching over us," she said, of World Concern's cooperation.

Mehdi said about a dozen people helped sort items at Cedar Graphics in Cedar Rapids. Packages were la-

beled in English and in Farsi, a language similar to Arabic. Packaging was provided by Midamar Corp. of Cedar Rapids.

Any surplus money — the group collected nearly \$1,500 — will be sent for food relief for Afghan refugees.

Mehdi praised the residents who donated clothes and blankets.

"People were still bringing stuff" as the truck was being loaded, she said, adding the Roadway truck driver was "very patient."

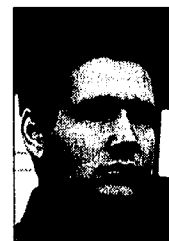
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Convicted murderer's 2nd trial begins today

By Elizabeth Kutter
Gazette staff writer

CEDAR RAPIDS — A Des Moines man already sentenced to life without parole for the 1993 strangling death of a hotel guest will go on trial today in Cedar Rapids for a second, similar 1997 murder.

Donald Piper, 40, is accused of stabbing and strangling Zuri-jeta Sakanovic, 21, at the Clive Budgetel on Sept. 4, 1997. Sakanovic, a Bosnian refugee, was employed at the hotel as a maid. Her body was discovered by hotel staff in a guest room two hours after she reported for work.



Donald Piper
Sentenced to life in prison for D.M. murder

Polk County Judge Linda Reade moved the trial from Des Moines to Cedar Rapids after a survey indicated the Polk County jury pool was tainted by its knowledge of the first trial.

Piper was convicted June 4, 2001, of first-degree murder in the strangling death of Patricia Lange, 36. Her body was found in a room at the University Park Holiday Inn in West Des Moines the night of Aug. 22, 1993.

Piper was employed as the maintenance chief at the hotel until two months before Lange's death. His DNA was found in the victim's room.

He is a suspect in a third motel murder that remains unsolved. The Jan. 17, 1998, killing of 15-year-old Ecuadoran immigrant Mariana Redroban led police to believe Piper might be a serial killer. Like Sakanovic, she was at work as a motel maid when she was stabbed to death. She was found by her supervisor in a guest room at a hotel in West Des Moines.

According to Detective Thomas Boyd of the West Des Moines Police Department, "Piper has not been eliminated as a suspect in Redroban's murder."

No charges have been filed against Piper or anyone else, and the case remains under investigation, Boyd said.

DNA linking Piper to the Sakanovic crime scene led prosecutors to charge him with murder. Jurors in the Lange case said DNA evidence convinced them of Piper's guilt.

Piper is currently being held in the Polk County Jail, according to Polk County Assistant Attorney Steve Foritano.



Gazette photo by by Jim Slosiarek

Back in the groove

Ken Zenor of Robins makes a turn as he tries out his old speed skating form Sunday at the Lou Dennis Skating Rink at Ellis Park in northwest Cedar Rapids. This is the first time Zenor has been on these skates in about eight or nine years.

Police find stolen vehicle linked to murder suspect at airport

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A stolen vehicle linked to a Des Moines native whose wife and three young children were slain in Oregon was found Sunday at San Francisco International Airport, the FBI said.

Christian Longo, 27, is accused of killing his wife and children and dumping their bodies into two Pacific Coast inlets near the towns of Newport and Waldport, Ore.

A warrant for his arrest was issued Dec. 28, and he is the subject of a nationwide manhunt. Police have not revealed a possible motive for the killings. But they say Longo, who owned a construction cleaning company in Michigan, had faced a multitude of legal and financial problems.

Longo was last seen in San Francisco on Dec. 26, according to District Attorney Bernice Barnett in Lincoln County, Ore.

The stolen Dodge Durango believed driven by Longo was found Sunday morning in an airport parking lot, said FBI spokesman Andrew Black.

Police departments in Cedar Rapids, Iowa City and Waterloo reported last week they had received numerous tips of the vehicle bearing Michigan license plates "KID-VAN" being spotted in Eastern Iowa. The car found in San Francisco had its original Oregon license plates, police said.

San Francisco Police Officer Roy Heavey said investigators found a parking receipt in the car dated Dec. 26 and other receipts dated between Dec. 24

and Dec. 27.

Officials were unsure whether Longo took a flight or simply left the car there. Black said all flight logs and area hotel registers were being reviewed.

Evidence found in from the vehicle indicated Longo had been using the aliases Jason Joseph Fortner and John Thomas Christopher and three different birth dates. Police would not give specifics about the evidence.

The body of Zachary Michael Longo, 4, was found in a coastal inlet near Waldport, Ore., Dec. 19. Three days later, the body of his sister, Sadie Ann, 3, was found in the same shallow inlet.

On Dec. 27, divers found the bodies of the children's mother, Mary Jane Longo, 35, and younger sister Madison, 2, at a Newport, Ore., marina.



Christian Longo
D.M. native is accused of killing family

Contact writer Betsy Kutter at (319) 398-8263 or betsyk@fjowa.com

Library to host Irish music

CEDAR RAPIDS — Lively folk songs and Irish tunes will be performed in the downtown library cafe on Wednesday at 11:45 a.m.

Glenn Lonsdale, a local entertainer, will present light-hearted music in Flavorable Reviews Cafe on the second floor of the library.

There is no charge to attend the 60-minute performance. For more information call the library (319) 398-5123.



Gazette photo by Susan Leksander

Moving day

The Shambaugh House, former home to the University of Iowa's Honors College, will soon be going for a ride. The house will be moved on Tuesday from 219 N. Clinton St. to 430 N. Clinton St. to make room for a new honors and career center.

Student testing forums will be offered in C.R.

Public invited to learn more about school process

Gazette staff report

CEDAR RAPIDS — People who want to learn more about student testing in area schools are encouraged to attend a series of public forums sponsored by the Learning Alliance.

"These sessions are designed to give the public a broader understanding of what testing is all about — how the tests work and what the scoring really means," said Les Garner, chairman of the Learning Alliance and the president of Cornell College. "These meetings are free and open to every interested parent, teacher or concerned citizen in the area."

The forums, scheduled for the next two Wednesdays, will be held at Grant Wood Area Education Agency, 4401 Sixth St. SW. Two 90-minute sessions will be held each day — one from 4 to 5:30 p.m. and another from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

The Learning Alliance is a not-for-profit organization that focuses on the betterment of education in the Cedar Rapids area.

This Wednesday's forum will feature David Frisbie, professor and associate director for the Iowa Testing Programs at the University of Iowa.

Frisbie is also one of the authors and designers of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, which is produced by Iowa Testing Programs. Frisbie will talk about the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and provide information about "norm-based reference" testing.

Also attending the meeting

C.R. library to present program on stress management, goals

CEDAR RAPIDS — Finding a balance between work and home life and managing both stress and time are topics of an upcoming two-part program at the Cedar Rapids Public Library.

Both free 90-minute sessions with Debra Salz, president of Prevention Strategies and Services of Cedar Rapids, will begin at 6:30 p.m.

During the "Any Time for Desserts?" session on Thursday, Salz will define stress, explain how attendees can recognize it at home and in the work place and illustrate its

effects on the mind, body and spirit. Audience members will also learn how to organize and prioritize for successful time management.

"Clearing Through the Clutter," presented Jan. 14, will aid attendees in the exploration of personal dreams and goals. Salz will help participants learn how to balance work and home life better.

Salz is a licensed social worker and is active in the community.

Both sessions are in Beems Auditorium. For more information, call (319) 398-5123.

Garner said additional seminars about testing are being planned.

Cronin was president of the Council Bluffs Catholic School System from 1996 to 1998. He served as project director for school transportation for the Loess Hills Area Education Agency in western Iowa from 1991 to 1996.

Local educators Rick Ironside, curriculum director for the Linn-Mar school district, and Betty Coleman, principal of North Linn Middle School in Troy Mills, will follow Cronin's 7 p.m. Jan. 16 presentation. They'll talk about how criteria-based testing is being applied in their districts.

Garner said additional seminars about testing are being planned.

Wedding stories run Sunday

Information: 368-8873.

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