



## Brush time

Paige Lemke, 18, of Iowa City, combs the hair of her horse, Wizzet, at the Free Rein Ranch on Monday near North Liberty.

Gazette photo by Buzz Orr

## Jury selection begins in Des Moines man's 2nd murder trial

By Elizabeth Kutter  
Gazette staff writer

CEDAR RAPIDS — Jurors called to serve in the first-degree murder trial of Donald Piper filled out a six-page questionnaire Monday morning and were promptly dismissed until after lunch.

When they returned, some jurors were questioned by Polk County Judge Linda Reade with defense and prosecuting attorneys present. Jury selection is expected to continue through this morning.

Piper, 40, is being tried in Linn County for the murder of Bosnian refugee, Zurijeta Sakanovic, 21, at the Budgetel Inn in Clive where she was a maid.

Her body was discovered in one of the hotel's guest rooms just two hours after she reported for work on Sept. 4, 1997. She was found stabbed and strangled. Her body was found naked from the waist down with her wrists bound.

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 Piper's previous murder conviction.

Piper was convicted in June of first-degree murder in the death of Patricia Lange, 36. Like Sakanovic, Lange was found strangled in a guest room of the University Park Holiday Inn in West Des Moines in 1993.



Donald Piper  
On trial for allegedly killing hotel maid

Piper is currently serving a life sentence with no parole for the murder of Lange.

Piper is a suspect in a third West Des Moines motel murder that remains unsolved. In 1998, Ecuadoran immigrant Mariana Redroban, 15, was found stabbed to death at Walnut Creek Inn in West Des Moines where she worked as a housekeeper.

John Pless of Indianapolis, president of the National Association of Medical Examiners in 1998 when Redroban was found, said then that the similarities among the three murders should not be underestimated.

"You shouldn't have to have more than three," he said. "When you have three, you should assume you have a serial killer."

West Des Moines police, investigating the deaths of Sakanovic and Redroban in 1998, were reluctant to say the three murders were linked. Despite the similarities, there were also differences, they said.

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## Schools regroup after grant loss

Year-round C.R. elementaries may cut classes, staff

By Janet Rorholm

Gazette staff writer  
CEDAR RAPIDS — Loss of grant money means the Cedar Rapids school district's year-round elementaries may have to eliminate enrichment classes during breaks and cut staff. But it shouldn't mean a change in the school calendar.

Results from a questionnaire conducted recently by Polk and Taylor elementary schools show that parents overwhelmingly support sticking with the non-traditional school calendar, even if intercession programs are eliminated.

"We will continue with the

year-round calendar and look for other funding sources. We might have to be creative in our programming," said Jane Loneragan-Highley, principal at Polk, 1500 B Ave. NE.

The search for additional grant money, however, has proven unsuccessful so far.

"Right now it doesn't look good, but I don't give up hope," said Denise Pape, principal at Taylor, 720 Seventh Ave. SW.

The school year begins in July at Taylor and Polk. Students attend classes for nine weeks, with three weeks off in fall and spring and a six-week summer break, rather than the traditional 12-week break.

Both schools offer 16 optional days of instruction during fall and spring breaks. While focusing on fun, the extra days also stress reading, writing and

math.

"It is wonderful. It is an added bonus for kids," Pape said.

This fall about 45 percent of Polk students participated in the intercession class. About 60 percent of Taylor students participated.

The schools have funded the programs with two primary grants: a state K-3 At-Risk grant, which is in its fourth and final year, and federal Title I funds disbursed through the state.

Those grants also fund several reading specialists and teacher associates at each school.

Those positions will likely have to be cut, as well.

The state does not plan to fund the K-3 At-Risk grant next year and Title I funds, which

were cut this year, are expected to be cut again as the state continues to face budget problems, Pape said.

Intercession programs cost about \$20,000 a year at Polk and \$30,000 at Taylor.

The main cost is staffing. The classes are free to participants.

When asked whether loss of intercession programming would impact their feelings about the year-round calendar, 84 percent of Taylor parents and 89 percent of Polk parents said they preferred to retain the current calendar.

Six percent of Taylor parents and 5 percent of Polk parents favored the traditional calendar. The remainder did not respond to that question.

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## I.C. restaurant smoking ban OK expected

By Tom Walsh

Gazette staff writer  
IOWA CITY — The City Council agreed Monday not to disagree further on the issue of banning smoking in restaurants. At least not tonight.

A work session last night included a discussion of tonight's third and final reading of a proposed ban on smoking in any Iowa City business that derives 50 percent or more of its revenue from preparing and serving food for on-premise consumption.

The proposed ordinance also calls for tougher standards in two years. After March 1, 2004, smoking would be allowed only in businesses for which alcohol sales represent 65 percent or more in gross revenues.

The same four council members who twice before voted in favor of the proposal — Steven Kanner, Irvin Pfab, Dee Vanderhoef and Ross Wilburn — agreed to support it again at tonight's meeting, without amendment.

Vanderhoef said she considers the ordinance under final consideration tonight a first step toward an eventual 100 percent ban on smoking in all restaurants and bars.

"Our goal is to get to zero," Vanderhoef said. "And I think we'll go to zero in the very near future."

Council member Mike O'Donnell tried unsuccessfully last night to win support for a less stringent 65/35, food/alcohol percentage, as first suggest-

ed months ago. He also failed to win support for reconsideration of a "red light/green light" ordinance that would prohibit smoking until a specified time in the evening.

The council agreed the new ordinance will take effect March 1. The council agreed that date will give restaurant owners time to provide the city with required affidavits indicating food/liquor revenue breakdowns. Those accountings will determine which businesses must ban smoking and which will not.

Restaurants that seat fewer than 50 customers will be exempt.

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## Casino: Pate says idea is just one to revitalize C.R.

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sion about a casino. Public Safety Commissioner David Zahn said the social costs and public safety problems he sees coming with gambling were apt to outweigh any benefits. But he said he would listen to the arguments.

Wagner said he, too, worried about the social costs.

"I'd like to see some very keen and compelling evidence on what the implications would be for us economically, socially and politically before I would take a stand on it," Wagner said. "But I'm also willing to let people in this community make up their minds about what they want and what they think is important."

A local Vision Iowa Planning Committee of 50 members will hold a first community public forum, tentatively set for Jan. 31, to invite community ideas for a major development project in Cedar Rapids.

The riverboat casino idea, no doubt, will get some reaction there.

Pate, a member of the planning committee, emphasized that the casino idea enjoys no inside track as the committee looks for a big-ticket tourist attraction or development idea to support.

"This visioning process to revitalize Cedar Rapids does not hinge on gambling," Pate said. "It is one issue being brought to us as many others will be."

Pate said his transitional advisory team of 14 community leaders has discussed the casino idea in recent days.

He said the advisory team noted no reason to "overreact" to the idea because the developers have gigantic obstacles to overcome before a casino becomes reality. Not the least of those hurdles, he said, is public opposition that is sure to come.

The state also currently has a moratorium on new riverboat licenses. However, all 10 of the state's riverboat casinos must return to the voters in 2002 to get permission to con-

tinue to operate. A license could theoretically become available if one of the 10 counties with a riverboat votes to discontinue gaming.

A citizen petition with about 9,200 signatures would be required to prompt a referendum on a casino in Linn County, Linda Langenberg, Linn County auditor, said Monday. That represents 10 percent of those who voted for president in the last general election.

The Linn County Board of Supervisors must hold a referendum if presented with sufficient signatures.

Pate said his advisory team concluded that the best approach was to sit back and listen.

"We thought it would be fair to let the developers do their homework and present their ideas," he said. "And I think the citizens will pretty well step up one way or another pretty quickly."

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## Former C.R. Mayor Canney to host knife workshop

CEDAR RAPIDS — Former Cedar Rapids Mayor Don Canney will present a program on selecting, caring for and sharpening knives at 7 tonight at the Indian Creek Nature Center.

Canney, who served as mayor of Cedar Rapids from 1969 to 1992, is owner and founder of Leech Lake Knife Co., which sells between 2,000 and 3,000 hand-made filet knives each

year. Admission is \$2 for Nature Center members, \$3 for non-members.

For more information, call 362-0664.

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