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People in News..... 85



This is it! NCAA Final Four to begin

Reagan off hook in North's trial

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Sports, 1S

THE NEWSPAPER IOWA DEPENDS UPON Des Moines, Iowa, Saturday, April 1, 1989 Price 35¢

ISU players nabbed in robbery

U.S. farmers plan 8% rise in corn acres

By DAN LOOKER

Register Agribusiness Writer As the nation attempts to rebuild its drought-shrunken store of grains and soybeans, U.S. farmers are planning to boost corn acreage 8 percent from a year ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said Friday.

Iowa farmers plan a 9 percent boost in corn seeding — to 12.3 million acres.

It was the USDA's first attempt to gauge the size of the 1989 crop.

The report, based on a national survey of 65,000 farmers and ranchers conducted in the first half of March, said U.S. producers expect to plant 73.3 million acres of corn this year.

More Soybeans

National soybean acreage is forecast to rise 5 percent — to 61.7 million acres — and Iowa soybean acreage will creep up by 2 percent — to 8.2 million acres.

Those increases fall short of the nation's record 84 million-acre corn planting in 1981 and its biggest soybean planting, 71 million acres, in

And they also failed to meet the grain trade's anticipation of more rows of corn and soybeans marching across the heartland.

The corn acreage expected by the USDA is 5.6 million acres more than was planted last year. Early last week Richard Feltes, an analyst for the giant commodity futures brokerage, Refco Inc., predicted an 8.6-million-acre increase and much of the trade was expecting a boost of about 8 million acres.

Too Cautious

Friday's report could turn out to be too cautious.

"The planting intentions tend to be conservative estimates of actual plantings," said Robert Wisner, Iowa State University grain-marketing specialist.

In 11 of the past 14 years, farmers planted more corn than they said they would when asked by the government. In eight of the past 14 years they planted more soybeans than they planned early in the year.

The federal government is encouraging larger crop acreage this year by requiring farmers to idle only 10

By DAN JOHNSON

Daylight-saving

Register Staff Writer

- gray.

time

Spring

PLANTING Please turn to Page 4A

Strong wagering boosts

track to break-even point

strong, but attendance is lower than After one month of operation, Praianticipated. The net effect is that betrie Meadows' financial performance ting is about 20 percent less than is like the color of some of its horses projected, but just strong enough to be at Prairie Meadows' break-even The track has reached some of its

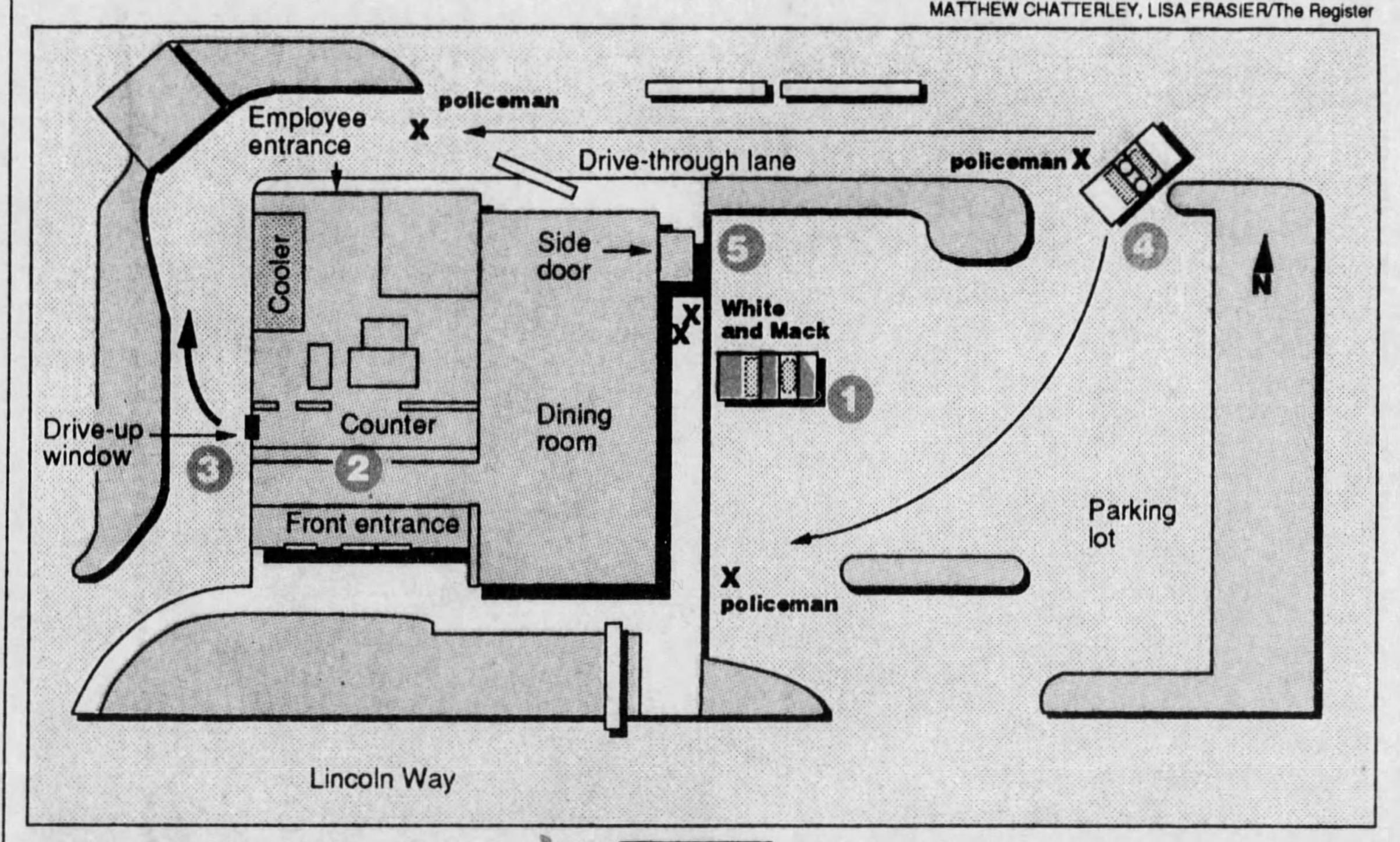
projections, but has fallen short on others. The per capita wagering is Track officials say considering the harsh March weather, which forced LISA FRASIER/The Register cancellation of three racing days,

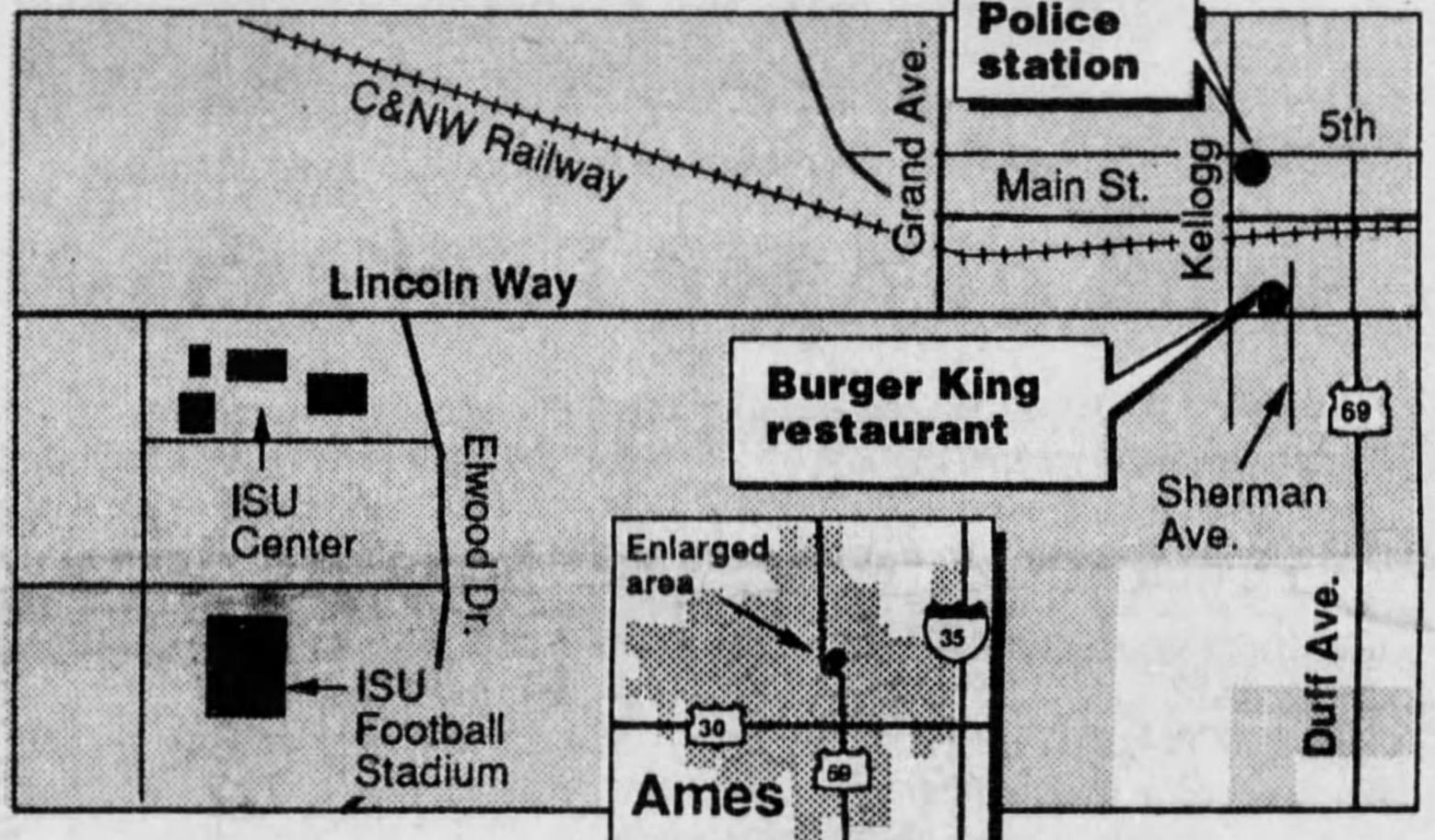
> they're pleased. "The thing that's so encouraging right now is we've gotten the bad weather behind us and we've held our own," Prairie Meadows General Manager Stan Bowker said. "Now I think the momentum is with us. Spring is here."

> Polk County Comptroller James Koolhoff said, "The per capita wagering looks better than projected. It looks real encouraging. Attendance looks a little less than projected, but the weather they've had may have something to do with that. It's definitely not discouraging at this point.

"I think it's way too early to guess where it's going to go," Koolhoff said. "They've had the benefit of a new opening, but the detriment of the

> PRAIRIE MEADOWS Please turn to Page 8A





What happened:

Robbers park car and enter through

Employees and customers ordered into walk-in cooler. Robber fires shot into wall.

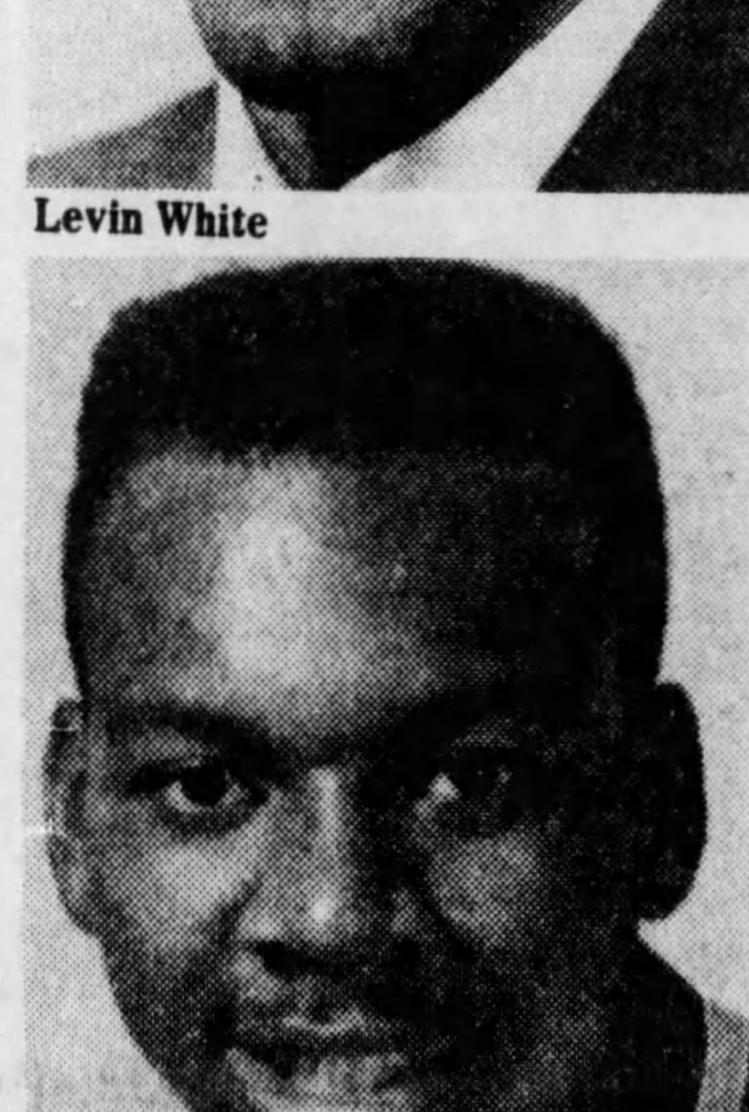
Employee Amy Konek crawls through drive-up window and runs for police.

Officers confront men as they leave,

Three officers arrive in minutes.

SOURCE: Ames police and witnesses.

Mack and White are shot.



Sam Mack

Worker runs for help as robbers bag money

By KEN FUSON Register Staff Writer

AMES, IA. — At 10 minutes before closing Thursday night, Amy Konek was preparing to clean the Burger King milkshake machine when she heard the gunshot.

There was only one way out. Guided by a surge of adrenaline, the 20year-old woman squeezed her 5foot-2, 108-pound frame through the 2-foot-wide opening at the drive-up

window. "All I thought was, 'I've got to get out of here,' so I dove through the window," Konek said. "I just put my arms through and dove. I can't believe I did it.

"Two seconds after that gunshot,

was out." While Konek sprinted toward the

Ames police station, two men identified as Iowa State University athletes ordered Bill Cole, 26, the night shift manager, to open the restaurant's safes and cash registers.

Filled Paper Sacks

Cole said he watched as Sam Mack, a sophomore on the ISU basketball team, stuffed wads of money into sacks normally reserved for Whoppers and french fries.

On Friday, Konek and Cole said they still were unsettled by the previous night's events, in which Mack and Levin White, a junior football player, were shot by police as they fled from the restaurant. Police said both men were charged with first-degree rob-

Pictures of ISU athletic teams including the football and basketball squads - decorate the walls at the Burger King, a popular stop for col-

lege students. At 10 minutes before 11 Thursday night, Konek was cleaning her work area, Cole was stationed at the front counter and two other employees, Chris Anderson and Ben Baccam, were in the kitchen. Two customers

were in the restaurant. Then, Cole said, two men walked in wearing turtleneck sweaters stretched over their noses.

"The first guy walked in carrying a

WITNESSES Please turn to Page 8A



Amy Konek peers at the drive-up window that she squeezed through Thursday to summon police during an attempted robbery at the Ames Burger King.

Surprise at ISU over incident

By TOM WITOSKY

Register Staff Writer Iowa State University athletes, including basketball player Sam Mack and football player Levin White, received stiff warnings from their head coaches within the last week to behave themselves and pay attention to their studies, ISU Athletic Director

Max Urick said Friday. "That's why what happened last night is so mind-boggling," Urick said. "If we hadn't had meetings with our players recently, I could see how someone could accuse us of being der-

Urick, who often says, "Nothing surprises me anymore," expressed shock and bewilderment Friday at the arrest of Mack, 18, and White, 21, after they were shot and wounded by Ames police during the robbery of a fast-food restaurant.

"It is just unbelievable," Urick

University officials took immedi-

REACTION

Please turn to Page 8A

Police shoot athletes at restaurant

By VERONICA FOWLER and TOM WITOSKY Register Staff Writers

AMES, IA. — Two Iowa State University athletes charged with armed robbery after being shot by police were the focus of a mystery Friday about why the incident occurred.

"Stupidity, plain stupidity, seems to be the key here," Ames Police Chief Dennis Ballantine said.

Sam Mack, a basketball player, and Levin White, a football player, were under police guard at Mary Greeley Medical Center. They were in satisfactory condition after being treated for gunshot wounds suffered when police opened fire during a robbery late Thursday at a Burger King restaurant near downtown.

No customers or employees of the restaurant were hurt.

Ballantine said the two athletes were fortunate to be alive Friday because Iowa police officers are trained to shoot at the torso. He said it was only by chance that Mack was shot in the hip and thigh and White was shot in the foot.

Both were charged with first-degree robbery in their hospital rooms, officials said. Bond was set at \$28,750 for both men. A conviction on that charge carries a prison term of up to 25 years. But inmates normally serve six to 12 years before being paroled on such convictions.

Additional charges, such as kidnapping and terrorism, could be filed by Story County Attorney Mary Rich-

No motive for the robbery

emerged.

No Sign of Drugs

Ballantine said officers talked to Mack and White after the incident and neither seemed to be under the influence of any drug. Police said urine samples were taken from both men, but results will not be returned until Monday.

Ballantine said two men entered the Burger King about 10:50 p.m. Thursday. Employees said the men wore no masks, but they attempted to hide their faces by pulling turtleneck sweaters up to their noses.

Police said White carried a .22-caliber rifle and Mack had a knife.

The men forced one employee and the two customers in the restaurant into a walk-in freezer. Ballantine said White fired one shot above the heads of employees into a cooler "to get their attention."

Worker Escaped

One of the four employees on duty, Amy Konek, squeezed through the window of the restaurant's drive-up window after hearing the shot. Konek went to the police station three blocks away and flagged down three officers, who drove to the Burger King.

At the restaurant, the robbers ordered employees to take money out of the safe and cash registers, police

When police arrived, the officers parked their patrol car at the edge of

SHOOTINGS

Please turn to Page 8A

Getting into the swim of things on April Fool's Day

By DEBORA WILEY

Of The Register's Cedar Rapids Bureau

San Juan Capistrano has its swallows and Loch Ness its Nessie.

Today, the mermaids and mermen return to Jackson County.

It's a fishy tale, which is even more finny when you consider they always return on April 1, according to Mike Jones, official Jackson County meteormermaidologist and economic development direc-

"They always arrive, by some fluke of nature, on April Fool's Day in the coastal waters off Jackson County," said Jones, inventor of the equally mythical Jackson County University and something of an April fooler himself.

Using a tracking system similar to that used by the National Weather Service for storms, Jones has glasses are helpful, too.

been sending out MER watches, warnings and alerts. Earlier this week, area officials issued a MER III alert, the highest stage of mermaid preparedness.

"MER III is an actual mermaid warning and indicates that mermaids have been spotted - some are striped, too - and boaters and anglers should exercise extreme caution along the Mississippi River shores of Jackson County," Jones said.

Visitors congregating in Bellevue will be able to hear the beautiful siren song at noon - when the town whistle blows.

Mermaids are difficult to see, and visitors often need the assistance of longtime local "river rats" to spot the creatures, Jones said. He adds that 3-D

Merpersons, you see, often dress as red herrings if they suspect someone is watching.

Jones and his friend, Otis P. Hackenbush, professor of taxonomy at Jackson County University, have studied the habits of these elusive ichthyohominoids, which are believed to have originated in Finland.

"For example, mermaids and mermen are very smart, because they always travel in schools," Jones said. "When they die, there's always a wake." When asked to speak publicly, they often floun-

der for words as the audience waits with baited

MERMAIDS

one hour before going to bed tonight.

Daylight-saving time begins

at 2 a.m. Sunday, and lowans

should set their clocks ahead

Please turn to Page 2A

Worker runs for police while robbers bag money

WITNESSES

Continued from Page One

rifle," Cole said. "I thought it was a toy gun at first. He jumped up or the counter and ordered me to get back in the kitchen.

"He saw me and Chris and ordered both of us to get down. He ordered Chris and the two customers to get in the walk-in cooler and ordered me to open the safe. I guess we weren't moving fast enough, because that's when he shot."

Cole said he believes White was carrying the rifle, which police described as .22 caliber. He said Mack was holding a small hunting knife.

The bullet struck a different walk-in freezer than the one where Anderson and the customers were waiting. Nobody was injured, and Cole said neither robber threatened to harm employees during the inci-

"They were as nervous as I was," he said. At one point, Cole said, the bullet clip fell out of White's gun.

Cole said White told him to open the office safe and then began grabbing money. The robbers apparently were not aware of Baccam, who was hiding by the restaurant's fryers, he

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window and racing north toward the police station. Two blocks away, on Main Street, she flagged down two women in a car, who took her to the

The whole time, she thought the robbers had killed someone.

"We saw three cops in a car," she said. "They were changing shifts. So we all got in the car. We started going really fast, and that's when we saw the train."

A train was blocking the patrol car's route to the restaurant.

"So we had to go back over the overpass a few blocks away," Konek said. "We were going so fast. I was clinging to the cop's arms."

"You've Got All of It"

Inside the restaurant, Cole said, Mack instructed him to open the cash

"He grabbed the sandwich bags and began stuffing money into them," Cole said. "Then they asked me to open another safe in the front. I showed them it was empty. I said, 'You've got all of it.' "

Cole said the robbers were heading out the front door when they saw a police car arrive.

"One of them said, 'The cops are here,' and they started duckwalking" - walking in a crouch, close to the By then, Konek was through the floor - "toward the back of the res-

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Surprise registered at ISU over incident

REACTION

two men.

Continued from Page One

ate disciplinary action against the

"Pending a legal resolution of the case, their team memberships and athletic-department privileges have been suspended by the director of athletics," ISU President Gordon Eaton said in a statement. "Their status as students at Iowa State University will be determined through existing procedures within the Office of Student Affairs."

The robbery and shootings come at a time when several universities around the U.S. have had to cope with publicity about criminal behavior and academic problems among college athletes.

In recent weeks, attention has cen-"I ran out the front door and met a tered on the University of Iowa athcop there," Cole said. "I heard the letic program, which last year paid for drug-abuse treatment for three police yelling for them to drop the weapons and to freeze. I remember members of the Hawkeye basketball team — Edward Horton, Curtis Cuth-

> pert and Roy Marble. In addition, the federal trial of sports agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom on charges of extortion, racketeering and fraud has raised questions about the lack of academic progress by former Hawkeye football players Devon Mitchell and Ronnie

> Earlier this week, that focus shifted to Iowa State when Time magazine raised questions about whether former baskethall forward Lafester Rhodes should have been allowed into school and whether the education he received in five years at ISU was adequate.

Those disclosures, including publicity about several crimes involving athletes from the University of Oklahoma, University of Colorado and Georgia Tech University, plus allegations of academic problems and corruption at the U of I and other Big Ten "She got home and we talked for schools, prompted Urick to direct quite a while," said Mary Konek, that ISU coaches meet with their

"I just sent out a short note last

This article includes reports by Register correspondent Dan

week because of all the publicity college athletics has been getting, and I know both coach Johnny Orr and coach Jim Walden had meetings," Urick said. "I just wanted them to remind the players of their accountability and that their behavior is watched carefully."

Lindsay Hughes, who has been an assistant football coach for Walden for 12 years, said Walden met with his team Monday before going on vacation. Spring practice for the Cyclones begins next week.

"He really ripped them," said Hughes. "He was angry about some of them missing meetings with their academic advisers and for messing around at training table."

Mack, a sophomore from Dalton, Ill., was a part-time starter for Orr's team, and he helped lead the Cyclones to an unexpected bid in the NCAA college basketball tournament. White, a junior from Alta Loma, Calif., transferred to ISU from San Bernardino Valley College and was listed on the Cyclones' defensive lineup.

"It's a complete shock to me, " Orr said Friday from Seattle. "It's something that I can't believe happened. I just can't believe it's true."

Like Urick and Orr, several of Mack's and White's teammates and friends said they were having trouble believing the two men had robbed the Burger King restaurant and ended up being shot.

"I don't know what the hell is going on," said a bewildered Victor Alexander, who starred at center for this year's Cyclone basketball team. 'There has to be an answer to it. But I don't know what it is."

Alexander, Mack and sophomore Mark Baugh made up the starting front line for the Cyclones for most of the season, after senior forward Elmer Robinson and junior center Darryl Spinks left the team for academic reasons in early January.

Until then, the Cyclones had trouble winning. But after Robinson's and Spinks' departure, the play of the three sophomores improved the team's record and gave many Cyclone fans hope for a Big Eight basketball championship during the next

two years. The three sophomores are close friends, along with sophomore forward Norman Brown, who sat out the past season as a redshirt. Brown, who

is Mack's roommate, declined to be interviewed. Alexander and Baugh were at a loss to explain Mack's involvement in

the incident. "His family has money. He has

money," Alexander said. "So I know that wasn't it."

Baugh said Mack's involvement in the incident was "very uncharacteris-

"If he really needed money, something probably could have been done that was OK," Baugh said. "But I don't really think he needed it." Baugh said he believed Mack and

White became friends after meeting at the school's athletic training table. "I saw them talking a couple of times, but that is all I know," Baugh said. Ray Carreathers, a Cyclone defen-

sive back who finished his college football career last fall, said he ate dinner with White at the ISU training table Thursday evening. "There was nothing unusual about it. We talked and got along just fine," he said.

He added that several of his friends met White after dinner. "They told me he was acting just fine. Nothing unusual," he said.

Jason Lauritsen, a freshman from Fairfield, lives on the same dormitory floor as White. He described White as "always friendly."

"I don't know about Sam Mack, but Levin doesn't seem to be a person who would do something like that,". Lauritsen said. "I was really impressed with his attitude and how really open he was."

ISU athletes shot by police after restaurant robbery

SHOOTINGS

job," he said.

3:30 a.m.

Bill Cole

Restaurant night shift manager

taurant. They walked right by me.

Konek said she waited in the police

The employees said Mack and

Cole said the entire day's proceeds

were in the restaurant at the time of

the robbery. Restaurant owner Larry

Jones declined to say how much was

But he did talk about his employ-

Cole said he had been trained to fol-

After talking to police, Cole and

Konek went to their homes about

Amy's mother. "She hasn't had much

low a robber's instructions. "The

money is replaceable," he said.

ees. "I thought they did a fantastic

White were shot outside the northeast

corner of the restaurant. Workers re-

placed glass there Friday afternoon.

hearing one shot. That's all."

Shot Outside Restaurant

car while the officers went inside.

Continued from Page One

the parking lot. One officer stayed by the car to the northeast of the building; one went to the southeast corner and one went to block an employee entrance on the north side.

As the robbers ran outside with a

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bag of money toward a red 1986 Ford ball programs. Escort owned by Mack's father, officers ordered the men to stop.

Police said White lifted the rifle and aimed it at an officer posted by a patrol car. Two officers began shooting their .38-caliber handguns, firing several times, smashing two windows, a glass door and chipping brick along the building.

Police said the number of bullets they fired had not been determined

Before the shots were fired, police said, Mack attempted to run back into the restaurant. Ballantine said police feared that he would take hostages.

State law and Ames police policy allows police to use force "to protect themselves and others." That justified the shooting of the men, Ballantine said.

Ames police said they had not counted all of the money that was recovered. But Bill Cole, the restaurant's night shift manager, said the robbers took the entire day's pro-

Reaction

The incident left much of Ames in shock Friday, particularly those associated with the basketball and foot-

Ironically, the Burger King that was robbed is decorated in cardinal and gold and is laden with ISU memorabilia. A photograph of the 1988-89 basketball team, including Mack, hangs on a wall. Mack, an 18-year-old sophomore,

was this season's third-leading scorer on the Cyclone basketball team. White, 21, is a junior transfer student from San Bernardino Valley College in California.

After a football team meeting Friday afternoon with Athletic Director Max Urick, senior Cyclone running back Joe Henderson summed up the sentiment for both the basketball and football players who know Mack and

"It is just a waste of two good careers," Henderson said.

"A Tragedy"

ISU President Gordon Eaton issued a statement saying the two players had been suspended from their teams and lost all athletic department privileges, pending resolution of the charges to be filed against them.

"This is a tragedy for the students and their families and for the Iowa State University family," Eaton said.

Under university policy, school officials have the power to kick any student out of school for violation of state, city or federal law. Eaton said a determination on the status of the athletes will be made by the Office of Student Affairs.

Urick said that as part of routine athlete drug testing, White had undergone a drug test Monday, but results had not been received yet. Mack was tested for drugs within the past two weeks as part of the Cyclones' participation in the National Collegiate Athletic Association basketball tournament, basketball Coach Johnny Orr

"Never Been a Problem"

Orr, in Seattle to watch the end of the tournament, was bewildered.

"He has a good family and everything," Orr said of Mack in a telephone interview. "I can't figure it out. Sam has never tested positive for drugs and he has never been a problem. I feel terrible especially for Sam's mother."

Police said the incident was the first time Ames police officers have used their weapons in 10 years.

Neither White nor Mack had a local police record, Ames police said.

Fitting Big & Tall Men is our only Business! Strong wagering boosts track to break-even point 462-4812 IOWA'S ONLY MEMORIAL MANUFACTURER PRAIRIE MEADOWS Continued from Page One

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March weather." Koolhoff and Polk County have an interest in Prairie Meadows since the county guaranteed the bonds used to build the track. If Prairie Meadows

could not pay all of the \$1,681,616 due each June 1 and Dec. 1, the county would have to make up the differ-The state receives 6 percent of all money bet; 5 percent of that goes to bond interest payments.

If contributions from the state tax are not enough to cover the entire \$1.6 million, the track has several other funds it can dip into to make up the difference: it receives 5 percent of the handle from straight betting (6 percent from exotic wagers) for track maintenance, and profits from admission and concessions amount to about \$27,000 per day. Prairie

Moreover, Prairie Meadows has another \$3.5 million stashed away because construction costs were less than projected. That bankroll will be used to pay whatever part of the interest the 5 percent state tax does

Meadows also has \$3.6 million in es-

"Even if the track, in a worst-case scenario, did 50 percent of what we projected, that in itself would pay for about 75 percent [of the interest]," said Kevin Swartz, vice president of finance. He said the remaining 25 percent would come from the reserves, "so not one dollar would come from the taxpayers."

If the track showed absolutely no growth in April and May, its present rate would raise slightly more than \$1 million of the bond interest.

"That's a worst-case scenario," Swartz said. "It'll probably be more like \$1.4 million."

Prairie Meadows projected an average attendance of 4,900 for March, with a per capita wager of \$80 for an average handle of \$392,000. Actual daily attendance through March 31 was 3,846 with a \$77.17 per capita and a \$296,759 handle. Bad weather forced cancellation of races

Prairie Meadows Outlook Avg. Per

Handle Capita \$392,000 \$80.00 \$374,800 \$80.00 3,846 \$296,759 \$77.17 * Adjusted totals to take into consideration three days lost to poor weather.

on the opening Friday and Saturday, as well as St. Patrick's Day. "We lost three real good days,"

Bowker said. He said, based on the number of tickets sold, crowds of 7,000 were expected for both March 3 and 4. With good weather, the track anticipated a 5,000 turnout for St. Patrick's Day.

But even taking the cancellations into account, Prairie Meadows' attendance through March 31 was more than 830 per day under the adjusted projection. Track officials argue that other racing days were hindered by the cold. In fact, the temperature was 32 or below on nine of the 23 scheduled days in March.

"If it was like March of last year, it'd be great," Bowker said. "This March, it made me sick to go home every night and watch the weather. A year ago, it'd be 48 or 52 degrees. [This year] I'd look at the thermometer and it'd be 17 degrees."

Likewise, Richard Wilkey, president of the Racing Association of Central Iowa, said he was happy with the March numbers.

"I think the meet is going fine," said Wilkey. "I'm pleased with the attendance, considering the weather we've had, and the per capita is very encouraging."

The track's break-even point is approximately 20 percent below its projected averages, Swartz said. Prairie Meadows is also counting heavily on interest in the sport to grow. Its projections called for average attendance to rise to 5,080 in April and then to 5,500 in May for the end of the Thoroughbred meet. Officials now say the track may come up short of those figures.

"If you look at where we are now, we may not average those numbers

next month, but I think by the end of April, we'll be above them [the 5,080] projected attendance]," Swartz said. "The last month of any meet, you see a real substantial increase in attendance. If you look at any track, it. shows that."

While attendance projections have been high, the per capita forecasts have been right on the money. The amount bet per person started at \$61.22 and has grown steadily. It was n \$76.89 through March 30 and is projected to increase to nearly \$85 by the end of the Thoroughbred meet.

"Our per capita will rise as we go along," said Bowker, who also helped start up Canterbury Downs in Minnesota. "When we started out at Canterbury, the first two or three weeks we only averaged about a \$60 per capita. By the end of the year, we got to \$77. That only happened because we had \$100 per capitas late in the meet. We've already had a \$100 per capita "You can see it grow. Then when

we go to the harness meet [starting May 26], we'll have to go back a step. It's a whole new product. It's an educational process of how familiar people get with racing."

By the end of the fall Thoroughbred meet, the per capita is projected to be

"A guy who gets to a \$100 only has to have \$20 or \$25 in his pocket at the beginning of the day," Bowker said, "because he'll win some and he'll lose some throughout the day. That's how handles are built."

One plus for the track is that revenues from concessions are above what was anticipated. Many patrons are dining, as well as betting, at Prairie Meadows, so while \$5.50 in concession sales per person were anticipated, the figure is actually between \$6.50 and \$7, said Swartz. Approximately 50 percent of that is profit, which is applied toward track main-

"It's an important part of our operation," Bowker said. "Not only because when people dine, they spend money on our facility, but because the dining helps attract people here."