

Ambush in the schoolyard

More coverage of the shootings, Pages 9A, 10A, 11A.

Arkansas Democrat & Gazette

5 dead at Jonesboro

Two camouflage-clad boys arrested in schoolyard shootings

Did suspects spell trouble? **Opinions** split

BY JOE STUMPE

JONESBORO - Teachers and students split over the reputations of two boys arrested in the shooting of 15 people near the city Tuesday.

"The students I have heard are suspected of this are not troublemakers," Pamela Carlisle, a sixthgrade reading teacher at Westside Middle School near Jonesboro, said in a voice that sounded weary from crying "They'd say, 'Yes, ma'am, no ma'am,' and never get in trouble for doing more than talking too much.

But students said at least one of the boys, whose names weren't released by authorities Tuesday. had a reputation as a trouble-

Amber McBroome and Sherri VanHorn, both 12 and sixth-graders at the school, said the older suspect had gotten into trouble Monday for pulling a knife at the school and threatening to kill his ex-girlfriend and a teacher. It was unclear whether the youth had been suspended or otherwise punished. "He'd been in a lot of trouble."

Amber said.

Law enforcement authorities said two boys, armed with rifles and dressed in camouflage, lay in wait on a wooded slope near the school as students filed out of the school after a false fire alarm was sounded.

Then the pair opened fire, fatally wounding four students and a teacher and injuring nine more students and a teacher, police

Police captured the two boys about 200 yards behind the school as they ran toward a white van that held more ammunition, au-thorities said. No charges were filed against the two as of Tues-

Students said the older susex-girlfriend. Candace pect's ex-girlfriend, Candace Porter, and a teacher, Sara Thetford, were among those wounded

A Westside Middle School stu-dent told reporters that one of the suspects was upset after breaking up with his girlfriend, but author-ities did not confirm that at a news conference Tuesday after-

But a student said the breakup of two of her classmates did occur This one boy, the boy who supposedly I guess framed it all, had said that nobody ever broke up Jennifer Nightingale said. 'He told me after seventh period [Monday] that he was never going to see me again and I would-See ARRESTS, Page 10A



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BENJAMIN KRAIN

Football coach Steve Williams and a woman grieve Tuesday after gunfire at West-

10 others in the schoolyard. "Everybody was falling, screaming and crying," said Jennifer Nightingale, 13, who saw a friend fall dead. "Blood was everywhere

'I never dreamed it would happen here'

False fire alarm led pupils, staff into gunfire

BY KEN HEARD KRISTEN EVERETT SETH BLOMELEY AND OLIVIER UYTTEBROUCK ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Several teachers and staff members at Westside Middle School were interviewed. Tuesday afternoon about the shootings earlier in the day that killed four students and one teacher and injured 10 other

people. Here are their stories

All the years I've taught here, I thought it was the safest school in the nation," said Debbie Pelley, who has taught English there for 24 years. "This year, the middle school had the best atmosphere

and best-behaved students. Pelley said that when she heard the fire alarm ring Tuesday after-noon, she led students out the south entrance and heard shots. The children began screaming and running toward the neighboring gymnasium, she said.

Pelley attended a female student who had been shot in the arm

"The kids were crying and shaking," she said. This is the most horrendous thing I've ever heard. I never dreamed it would

happen here." See INTERVIEWS, Page 11A



scy workers rush an injured student to an ambulance Tuesday at Westside Middle School near Jonesboro, where authorities said as many as 27 shots were fired at children and teachers outside because a fire alarm had sounded.

BY SANDY DAVIS ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

JONESBORO - Two boys firing guns Tuesday killed four girls and a teacher and wounded nine other students and one teacher as the youngsters poured out a side en-trance of Westside Middle School in response to a false fire alarm at 12:41 p.m.

The two suspects, who have not been charged, are believed to be 11- and 13-year-old cousins who attend the school. Police arrested them as they reportedly ran away from the campus outside Jones

About half of the more than 250 sixth- and seventh-graders en-rolled in the school and some teachers were leaving the building as the two boys began shooting from woods about 50 yards away, Craighead County Sheriff Dale

The two boys, whom authorities refuse to identify, were apprehended within minutes after police arrived at the school. The boys were dressed "head to toe" in camouflage clothing and were armed with rifles and handguns, police said. Sixth-grader Wesley Cogburn,

said he was playing tag in his fifth-period gym class when the school's fire alarm rang.

"We walked outside and heard big, loud noises," Wesley said. "I was sort of standing to the side, and I saw a couple of things flying in the air like dirt.'

"Then girls started running up saying, 'People are being shot! People are being shot!' " He saw one of his teachers fall

to the ground, he said.
"I was thinking that this was all just a big, bad dream, and I would wake up soon and it would be over," Wesley said.

No one knows who pulled the fire alarm or whether that was part of a plan to get the students out of the school, Haas said. Unofficial sources, however, said the alarm was set off by one of the suspects to draw the students into an ambush

"It was chaos when I first got there," Haas said. "The kids were running around crying. Some parents were starting to arrive.'

At least five ambulances went to the school, and St. Bernards Regional Medical Center, one of two hospitals in Jonesboro, had been notified that a "tragedy" occurred, the sheriff said. Extra doctors were on hand as the victims arrived.

Police identified the dead as Natalie Brooks, 11; Paige Herring, 12; Stephanie Johnson, 12; Brittany Varner, 11; and teacher Shannon

Teacher Sara Thetford, 42, was in stable condition after undergo ing surgery Tuesday night.

Amanda Five students Barnes, 13; Ashlee Betts, 12; Jennifer Jacobs, 12; Brittney Lambie, 13; and Candace Porter, age un-See SHOOTINGS, Page 10A

WEATHER



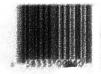
Little Rock Sides will become partly dictudy after morning clouds. Highs will be in the raid-70s. Partly dictudy and mild conditions tonight

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Privilege claim kindles debate, GOP rebuke

BY TERRY LEMONS ND JANE PULLERTON

WASHINGTON - Legal servers and Republican leaders on Tuesday picked at President Clinton's decision to invoke executive privilege to block prosecutors from questioning Hillary Rodham Clinton and White House sides

about the Monica Lewinsky case. The White House reportedly filed sealed documents last week invoking the privilege claim to keep independent counsel Kenneth Starr from questioning long-time Arkansas aide Bruce Lindsey and other White House advisers

However, several experts be lieve the effort to keep the prest deptial conversations secret is agally weak and they were even See DEBATE, Page SA

Presidential welcome





President Clinton joins the celebration Tuesday as Ugandan children welcome him to the Kisowera School in the village of Mukono. Clinton promised new friendship and help for \$25cs. Article, 7A

Federal highway bill giving Arkansas 35% more clears House committee

BY SUSAN ROTH AREANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTI

WASHINGTON Arkansas could get an extra \$124 million in federal money for road projects under a highway funding bill that cleared a House committee Tues-

day.
The bill authorizing \$218 billion in national highway and trans-portation spending for the next six years is expected to pass the House next week. Then, it will have to be reconciled with the Senate's version in a conference committee of the two houses

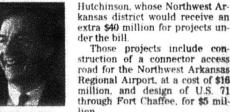
Under the latest figures distributed Tuesday, the House measure would provide Arkansas an aver age of \$360 million a year, a 35 per cent increase over the state's aver age allocation of \$266 million for the pastiax years



Asa Hutchinson

Department I really believe this markup is good for Arkansas," said Rep. Asa Hutchinson, R-Ark., and a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee that passed the measure.

It's a significant increase in highway funding for the state, and it will allow continuing develop-ment of our new corridors," said



Those projects include con-struction of a connector access road for the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport, at a cost of \$16 million, and design of U.S. 71 through Fort Chaffee, for \$5 mil-

Rep. Vic Snyder, D-Ark, said the extra \$18 million for his central Arkansas district was a bit higher than he expected and will help the projects, particularly \$7 million for the North Belt Free way off Interstate 40 in North Lit-

tle Rock. The measure also includes authorization for the riverfront rail line planned to connect Little See ROADS...Page 9A