



TAMPA & STAFF



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Kids are taken after slaying

Investigators are appalled by the squalor at the crime scene.

BY **ABBIE VANSICKLE**
AND **S.I. ROSENBAUM**
Times Staff Writers

GIBSONTON — The four children were watching cartoons when the man came into their home, a fillet knife in his pocket.

"I'll be honest with you," he told the children's mom. "I'm here to kill Jimmy."

By the night's end, the man with the knife was in jail, the children's uncle

dead, the children in state custody. Michael E. Smith, 29, of Apollo Beach admitted killing Jimmy Peak on Monday evening at the Pinewood Mobile Home Park, according to the Hillsborough Sheriff's Office.

Smith told deputies he believed that Peak, 32, of Gibsonton was messing around with Smith's ex-girlfriend.

He grabbed a fishing knife and two of his own children and headed for the mobile home Peak shared with his

brother, Jason Peak, 28; his brother's wife, Amy Peak, 28; and the couple's four children, ages 3 to 8.

Smith arrived in the late afternoon, when Amy Peak was at home alone with the kids. Jason Peak and his brother were out doing construction work.

At first, Smith seemed normal, chatting away, Amy Peak recalled. He asked for something to drink, and she went » See STABBING, 7B



KATHLEEN FLYNN | Times
Amy Peak and her husband, Jason Peak, both 28, talk to a reporter Thursday, a day after Jason's brother Jimmy was stabbed to death.

From science fiction to fact



DANIEL WALLACE | Times

People at the Florida Conference on Recent Advances in Robotics and Robot Showcase on Thursday at the University of South Florida mill around some of the displayed hardware, like a robotic arm attached to a wheelchair that is controlled by electronic impulses from the user's brain. The two-day conference ends today.

With a gun in his face, he still said no

Luckily for the plumber, the gun two 14-year-olds were packing shot BBs. They are arrested.

BY **SARAH MISHKIN**
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — John Stofer III's



"I said, 'Well, shoot' and

BB gun. The BB left a small red dot on the left side of his nose, near his eye. that the attackers expected him to concede to their demands. Tampa police arrested two 14-

Couple wanted 2 kids; 6 on way

Big sister Zoe will have plenty of company when sextuplets arrive.

BY **BRIDGET HALL GRUMET**
Times Staff Writer

WESLEY CHAPPEL — Karoline Byler is just four months into her pregnancy, and already the first stretch mark appeared.

A little early for most pregnancies — but not when you've got sextuplets.

With her 3½-year-old daughter, Zoe, she didn't get the marks until about month six, she said Thursday.

But with sextuplets, she said, "Everything is multiplied by six."

Six times the morning sickness. Six times the exhaustion. And six times the anxiety of any parent-to-be.

As with many parents of multiples, Karoline and Ben Byler used infertility treatments to get pregnant. She had always planned on having just two kids, and since they already had Zoe, this pregnancy would be it.

But an early sonogram found two heartbeats. Twins would be near, Mrs. Byler, 29, thought.

A more sophisticated screening confirmed those two heartbeats.

Then two more. "I got nervous." And two more. "Of course I was floored. I was screaming, the whole thing." » See SEXTUPLETS, 6B

Fly through Tampa at