



COLBY FREE PRESS

Preliminary hearing held in fatal two-car crash

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

The case against a Colby High School senior alleged to have caused the death of two young people and injuries to three others, including himself, is moving forward following a preliminary hearing held late last week.

Thomas County District Magistrate Judge Rick Ress ruled there was sufficient probable cause to arraign Michael Thompson, 18, on charges of either murder in the second degree or involuntary manslaughter while under the influence of alcohol in the deaths of Angela Duden and Justin Shaw, both 17 and from Colby.

Thompson is also facing aggravated battery charges stemming from the same crime involving William Peterson, 17 and Brice Reynolds, 21, Colby.

In addition, he is being charged with driving while under the influence of alcohol and reckless driving.

All charges resulted from a two-vehicle collision on Jan. 29, 2000 on US Highway 24 about 8 miles east of Colby.

At that time, the Kansas Highway Patrol said that Thompson's vehicle failed to stop at a stop sign on Thomas County Road 27 and the oncoming car on Highway 24 driven by Duden collided right front to left front in the intersec-

tion.

Officials said both vehicles came to rest on their wheels in a field northwest of the intersection and three people were ejected from the cars.

In reconstructing the accident, troopers placed Thompson behind the wheel of his 1976 Cadillac with Shaw as the passenger. Duden was the driver of a 1995 Ford Probe, with Reynolds and Peterson in her vehicle.

Following the wreck, Shaw was pronounced dead at the scene and Duden was flown to St. Anthony's Hospital in Denver and died at 10 a.m. the next day.

Thompson and Peterson were also airlifted

to Denver and were in critical condition for months after the accident.

Reynolds, who was also flown to Denver, was in fair condition and released not long after the incident.

The next step in the proceedings will be the arraignment on Wednesday, Nov. 7, said Allan Taylor, Thomas County Attorney. During this phase, he said, Thompson will have the opportunity to plead guilty or not guilty to the charges.

At this point, Taylor said it is undecided whether Thompson will be prosecuted for second degree murder or involuntary manslaughter. The state's definition of a second degree

murder charge means that Thompson is alleged to have unlawfully and feloniously killed a human being, which was done unintentionally, but recklessly under circumstances manifesting extreme indifference to the value of human life.

The definition of involuntary manslaughter while under the influence of alcohol means that Thompson is alleged to have unlawfully and feloniously killed a human being and it was done while in the commission of the crime of driving a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol.

Thompson is being represented by Colby attorney Calvin Williams.

The gangs all here



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Students at Puddle Duck Preschool were out trick or treating with their parents and teachers on Tuesday in preparation for tonight's annual Halloween tradition of getting dressed up in costume and going door-to-door for candy and other treats.

Bills, routine business

Commissioners hold brief session

By **MAXINE NELSON**

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Commissioners met briefly on Wednesday to pay bills and conduct routine business before leaving for a meeting of local officials on combating terrorism.

The commissioners spent the first 25 minutes of the meeting in closed session with County Attorney Allan Taylor discussing a matter of attorney/client privilege.

In other business:

- Marilyn C. Timbers, financial representative with Ing Aetna Financial Services, updated the commissioners on tax law changes for investments. She said Aetna offers an investment plan for state of Kansas employees and also to cities and counties.
- They deferred payment to Jaws Recycling of Lakin which had crushed the concrete at the landfill.
- The company crushed 4,000 tones of concrete, and presented a bill of \$34,000.
- The concrete can be used for road

construction.

The city of Colby will purchase \$11,900, the Thomas County Road Department will purchase \$5,100, and the landfill has \$11,152.77 in buildings and grounds, for a total of about \$28,000, leaving about \$6,000 which the county will obtain from the money set aside for landfill closure, which is invested in a CD at Gold Bank.

The county will pay the bill as soon as they get the money from the city, county, and bank.

- The commissioners voted to pay the rest of the bills.
- The commissioners received a letter from Sandi Swob, household hazardous waste director, concerning hours and salaries for the collection site.

They will invite her to the Monday meeting for discussion.

The commissioners will meet next at 9 a.m. Monday in the commissioners room of the courthouse.

All meetings are open to the public and input is welcome.

Teacher recalls shooting victim as good kid; shocked at past

By **Rachel Miscal**

The Goodland Daily News

Greg Gossard said that in Sherman County Mark Palmer is the 19-year-old Indiana man officers shot to death on I-70 Friday after he wrecked six vehicles and stole three, threatened and injured officers and put hundreds of people in danger.

But the political science teacher at Carmel High School in Hamilton County, Ind. said he knows a different Mark Palmer — a funny, popular boy who always wore a smile and had a

joke to tell.

"I've been thinking about this," he said, "and all you know about Mark Palmer is from the events that occurred on Friday. That image will stick with most of you for sometime, but that's not the person I know."

Palmer, who grew up in Carmel, was



Mark Palmer

a student in Gossard's government class in the spring of 2000. He said the young man graduated in May and enrolled at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, where he attended school through this past spring semester.

Outside of class, Gossard said, Palmer was friendly, relaxed, funny and popular.

"He had a close group of friends," he said, "but he was friends with everyone. He always had a smile on his face. He was always good for a laugh, but he wasn't the class clown."

In class, Gossard said, the young man was a perfect gentlemen, who helped to keep the other students in check.

"He truly was an asset to the class," he said, noting that if discussion was lagging and students were looking bored, he would ask Palmer a question and the boy would invariably pep things up with a funny story.

Gossard said he remembers Palmer being about 5 feet 11 inches tall with a trim and fit body, brownish hair and a big smile.

"Frankly," he said, "I can't visualize Mark having a mean bone in his body."

The people and officers Palmer stole from, threatened, hurt and crashed into during the 30-minute chase, which started in Colorado and ended near the east I-70 exit in Goodland, saw a different man. They said he looked "crazy" and "wound up on something."

Gossard said he was shocked when Jeff, a former student and childhood friend of Palmer's, who now attends Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., called him Monday to read him a newspaper article describing Friday's events.

Without using Palmer's name, the article said he rolled his car about 2:30 p.m. on I-70 between the exits in Burlington, Colo., running from the scene and hiding in a group of trees.

When the Kit Carson County sheriff and a Burlington police officer approached him on a county road, he took off. The sheriff grabbed him, but

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Briefly

Weather: More like fall

The Colby region's forecast through Sunday takes on a more fall-like feeling, says the National Weather Service.

Tonight partly cloudy, lows in the upper 30s and north winds 15-25 mph, decreasing to around 10 mph late. Thursday, mostly cloudy, highs in the 60s and northwest winds 5-10 mph. Thursday night, mostly cloudy, lows in the middle 20s. Friday, Saturday and Sunday, partly cloudy, lows in the upper 20 to lower 30s and highs generally in the 60s. Colby's high Tuesday was 65 and the overnight low this morning was 37. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 51 degrees. The month will close out with only 0.45 inches of precipitation. The records for Oct. 31: 87 in 1950 and 12 in 1905. *(The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)*

Cemetery donations sought

Donations are still being sought for the Beulah Cemetery archway, said Dale Deaver, cemetery board member. The idea for the archway was prompted, he said, to give the location a more distinguishable appearance. Those wanting to contribute to the \$1,800 project can send donations to: Dale Deaver, Box 43, Levant, Kan., 67743.

Negotiations on agenda

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will meet at 7 p.m. Thursday in the board room of Thomas Hall, to discuss negotiations.

Donations needed by Thursday

Citizens Medical Center Auxiliary is planning its second annual recycled holiday sales and is looking for donations of new or good used holiday items, said Carolyn Miller, one of the organizers. Donations can be left at 545 Woofter Ave. Thursday, Nov. 1. For those with questions or to make other

arrangements, call 462-7777 or 462-6898. The actual sale will begin on Friday, Nov. 2 from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 3, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at 545 Woofter Ave.

World Community Day set

Church Women United in Colby will gather to worship and pray as part of the annual observance of World Community Day on Friday, Nov. 2, at the Colby Presbyterian Church. Coffee time is 9:30 a.m. with the service at 10 a.m.

Halloween escorts tonight

The Future Teachers Organization of Colby Community College will provide safe escort for groups of children on Halloween. Children grades K-5 are invited to meet in front of the Colby Grade School at 5:30 p.m. and they will walk from the school. No driving will be involved.

Students to rake leaves

The Colby High School Service Club is planning a community-wide fall leaves clean-up day beginning the first weekend of October and continuing through until the second weekend of November, said Roni Dietz, adult advisor. "Residents interested in having students rake their yards are asked to call the school at 465-5300 and leave name, address and telephone number on my voice mail."

Genesis gears up for holiday project

Genesis-Thomas County, which is the area food bank, is again planning to help families during the holiday season, said Marcy Wasson, chairperson of the Christmas basket project. Families in need and who are interested in receiving food and services during this special time are asked to pick up forms at the Genesis-Thomas County office, 350 S. Range, Colby, or call, (785) 462-7930 for information or questions. All applications must be returned to the office by Friday, Nov. 2.



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Max and Roberta Brewer, senior volunteers, share a mystery reader Halloween story with Vicki Nickols' afternoon kindergarten class.

Volunteers become 'Book Buddy' buddies

By **JAY KELLEY**

Colby Free Press

Senior citizen volunteers are again helping Colby Grade School students with reading through the "Book Buddy" program.

Members of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program applied for and received a grant through the Program of National Significance for volunteers to tutor grade school children on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.

"Volunteers work in the classroom for an hour or two with individual students or small groups," said program

director Laura Withington.

There is also a Mystery Readers program where younger children learn to experience the joy of reading through volunteers presenting stories to the kindergarten classes using puppets or other methods.

Withington said the program is in need of additional volunteers.

"The senior volunteers are positive role models and encourage the children in their learning, with special emphasis on reading," she said.

For more information call 462-6744.

