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Businesses promote services at home show

The Colby Better Home and Living Show, in its 23rd year, was held Friday through Sunday at the Community Building. Vendors included hardware stores, real estate agents and appliance dealers, as well as providers of pest control services, garage doors, insurance, spas and specialty food items. American Implement (top) displayed some of its smaller machinery and handed out balloons for kids. Michelle Morris (above right), owner of Fotogirl Photography, discussed her services with people. Robin Delzeit (left) of Great Western Tire twisted balloon animals for kids. Vernon and Linda Wranosky (below) perused homemade blankets and other crafts offered by vendors in the show's craft area.

HEATHER ALWIN/Colby Free Press



Defendant found guilty of murder

By Stephanie DeCamp
The Oberlin Herald
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An Oberlin man was found guilty of second-degree, nonpremeditated murder and aggravated battery this morning following a week of witness and expert testimony from the state and cross examination by the defense in Decatur County District Court.

Charges of aggravated burglary and an alternate charge of felony murder had been dismissed Monday by Judge Preston Pratt, who ruled that the state had not shown enough evidence to prove them.

After the verdict was read, the jury resumed deliberation on aggravating factors in the case, then decided to approve what is known as "upward departure" from state sentencing guidelines, which means that Judge Pratt can sentence Coryell for more than the usual prison time. His sentencing was scheduled for 10 a.m. Monday, June 17, at the Decatur County Courthouse, and his bond was revoked until that time.

With the upward departure, Judge Pratt will consider two factors when giving the sentence: First, that Airman Corey Cook was killed while he slept and second, that the shot was fired knowing that it could kill both Cook and Sarah Campbell, who lay in bed with the victim.

Coryell has been on trial since last Monday <m18> the shooting death of Cook in the early morning hours of Oct. 16, 2011. The prosecution rested its case Monday morning, and defense attorney Justin Barrett requested dismissal of all the charges against Coryell.

On the first charge of premeditated murder in the first degree, Barrett argued that the state had failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Coryell had thought or planned out the shooting beforehand.

"I think there has been ample evidence," Barrett told the court, "that ... the intent of all three of the men that night was that a fight would occur.... One thing that remains through all of this testimony is that they wanted a fist fight."

Nicole Romine, an assistant attorney general who is prosecuting the case, argued that the jury had heard evidence of how Cook died, that Coryell was the one holding the gun and that the gun had to be loaded and cocked and the trigger pulled for it to fire.

"Whoever had action on that gun," she said, "had to complete three acts in order to discharge it."

Furthermore, she argued that the jury had heard ample evidence that there were grudges against Cook, and had seen with their

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Testimony often confused

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Of the many witnesses who testified in the first week of Dylan Coryell's trial in the shooting death of Airman Corey Cook, those who were present the night of Oct. 15, 2011, were the most revealing — if not the most clear — of them all.

The lack of clarity may stem from the fact that everyone who testified had been at one of the two parties that Coryell and Cook attended that night, and all had been drinking beer or hard liquor, or both. Their testimony often conflicted, and some witnesses even had their recollections challenged by text messages pulled from their phones during the investigation.

One of the most anticipated witnesses was Sarah Campbell, who was at the center of a love triangle the prosecution argues prompted Coryell to pull the trigger. But the defense argues that another triangle, this one between Jordan and Everett Urban and Cook, was what really stood at the center of the evening. The following was pulled from the testimony of Campbell, the Urbans, Keithen and Logan Fortin, Mika Hack-

ney, Andrew Richards, Cameron Weishapl, Killian Dellere, Rachel Montgomery, Danyel Jeffrey, Ryan McEvoy and the victim's brother, Dakota and his father, Todd Cook.

Sarah Campbell

Campbell had just broken up with her boyfriend of three years, she said, when she moved in with Jordan and Everett Urban and began dating Corey Cook in early September 2011. They'd been dating about a month by the time he came back on leave.

In late September, she said, she began a sexual relationship with Coryell after they met at a party. They were "just friends," she said, and only slept together twice, just days before Cook arrived back in Oberlin on leave.

When asked if she had ever discussed their status with Coryell, she said yes, and that he wanted a relationship and she didn't. Alcohol was involved during both times that she and Coryell had sex, she said.

Campbell said she confessed to Cook after a few days, and initially, he broke up with her. But the next day they met to talk, and he took her back. She testified that

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Midwest Energy will hold meeting about self-regulation vote

Midwest Energy will hold a member meeting to discuss getting the cooperative out from under state regulation at 6:30 p.m. Thursday in Room 108 of the Student Union at Colby Community College.

The company, which supplies natural gas in Colby and other Kansas towns, and provides electricity in rural areas, plans a vote of its customer-owners in May to become self-regulated, returning most decision-making authority from the Kansas

Corporation Commission.

"Self-regulation would benefit members by returning most decision-making authority on rates, rate design and terms of service to our member-elected board, who share a common ownership interest with all customer-owners," said Pat Parke, the company's vice president for customer service. "We will be more efficient and transparent, at a lower cost. But customers will still have an appeals pro-

cess to the KCC on rate decisions."

Parke said members of 27 of the 29 Kansas electric cooperatives have voted to self-regulate since the Legislature first allowed it in 1992.

Midwest has mailed brochures to members in preparation for the meetings, which will also be held in Great Bend, Scott City and Hays.

Members are encouraged to attend one of the meetings, where they can address

questions to management and the board.

"By being self-regulated, we can respond faster to the changing needs of our customer-owners and the changing nature of our business," said Earnie Lehman, president and general manager. "Our board can make decisions faster as well as better than a regulatory agency with no local ties."

Lehman added that ballots will be going out to all customers after the last

member meeting in April.

"If you pay a Midwest Energy bill, you have an ownership stake in our cooperative," Lehman said. "We encourage our members to exercise their rights and vote 'yes' when their ballot arrives."

