



COLBY FREE PRESS

Jury says 'guilty' in elder abuse case

By Heather Alwin

Colby Free Press
colby.society@nwkansas.com

Josephine Monk was convicted Tuesday of mistreatment of a dependent adult for failing to properly care for a resident at the Deseret Care Center in Colby.

In October of 2011, Monk was an employee at the center, working an overnight shift.

Testimony at the trial indicated she refused to clean up an elderly resident after he had a bowel movement.

She told coworkers the fecal matter, which extended from his groin to his abdomen, was left

there by an attendant on the shift before hers, witnesses testified. She refused to clean it up and left the resident in the mess, saying she wanted to teach the previous attendant a lesson.

"She did not clean him up even though she knew he needed it," said County Attorney Kevin Berens during his closing argument.

Monk's defense attorney, Charles Peckham, argued there were gaps in the state's case. He emphasized that the case was based on oral statements and included no photographs and no interview with the victim.

"If you look at all the gaps," he said, "they have not met their bur-

den of reasonable doubt."

The jury disagreed, returning a guilty verdict less than two hours after entering deliberations.

After the jury returned its verdict, Judge Glenn Schiffner questioned each juror, ensuring each agreed the verdict was unanimous.

Monk was released pending sentencing, scheduled for Dec. 4.

Rhonda Barton of Deseret Care emphasized that Monk is a former employee.

"We will continue to investigate any allegation or concern or complaints regarding resident care," said Barton. "We will continue to provide the highest quality of care to all our residents."

Fair Board fills vacancy

The Thomas County Fair Board voted to nominate Kayla Sloan of Colby to replace Bill Shields at its meeting on Sept. 12.

She must be appointed to the board by the county commissioners; County Clerk Shelly Harms said she will put the appointment on the agenda for the commissioners' meeting Friday, Sept. 30. Audrey Hines, secretary for the board, said Sloan was the only person to submit a resume for the position.

"I want to be involved in the community and be able to make a difference in one of the biggest events that we have throughout the year," Sloan said.

Sloan, daughter of Ross and Jeanne Sloan of Thomas County, is a credit analyst and insurance agent at Farm Credit of Western Kansas, where she has worked since May 2012 after graduating from Kansas State University with a degree in animal science and ag communications.

She graduated from Colby High School in 2009.



BRUCE BANDY/Commercial Sign

While a worker waited on a ladder, the new Eagle statue at Colby High School was lowered onto its base.

Eagle's landing takes teamwork

By Heather Alwin

Colby Free Press
colby.society@nwkansas.com

Generous donors and a lot of hard work went into the installation of the Eagle statue dedicated last week at Colby High School.

When Lana Johnson first saw the statue in Colorado, she said, she remembered the Wiedeman Beautification Fund she had learned about through the Thomas County Community Foundation and brought the possibility of buying the statue to Brent Wiedeman, president of Farmers and Merchants Bank in Colby.

Wiedeman and a team of volunteers from around Thomas County worked for a year and a half to get

the eagle to its final landing out front of the high school.

Wiedeman, who administers and contributes to the beautification fund, said he worked with representatives of Commercial Sign to design the base.

It was not an easy task, said Velma Goodheart, vice president of the bank. Several bases were considered and rejected as too dangerous or not sturdy enough.

Finally, with the help of school administrators, those involved decided on the steel base where the eagle rests today.

Roadrunner Manufacturing made the unique bend in the metal base, donating its services to the proj-

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Courthouse checked

HEATHER ALWIN
Colby Free Press

Lurita McIntosh Blank (above) and Geoffrey Hose inspected the Thomas County courthouse earlier this week. The pair works for Walter P. Moore, a structural engineering firm with offices in Kansas City. Their task was to evaluate the condition of the historic building to help the county determine whether to repair or replace it. Blank said it will take about a month for her to write up her findings for the county commissioners.



Boulder flood damages apartment; former Colby woman cleaning up

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press
sdieter@nwkansas.com

A former Colby woman is putting her life back together after her apartment in Boulder, Colo., was flooded earlier this month.

Monica Schlut and her husband Joe were forced out of their apartment in the historic flooding, which left eight people dead and hundreds stranded in mountain towns as it wiped away roads and buildings. Her mother, Yvonne Wingard of Colby, said the couple lived in an apartment in north Boulder with their son Wyatt. She thinks they noticed the flooding the night of Sept. 11.

"Their neighbor called in the middle of the night and said the water was rising," Wingard said.

The couple wanted to get across the street to the house of their neighbor, Dan Cordes, where they had some of their things stored, but the water was too high. They saw one of their cars float down the street.

So they went to the second floor of the nearby apartment of a neighbor Wingard knew only as David and spent several days there. A friend, Jane Rodgers, got Wyatt the next day and took care of him until the evening of Friday, Sept. 13.

Now, the Schluts are living with Monica's aunt and uncle, Donna and Howard Tuttle, in Louisville, a town east of Boulder that did not

flood. Donna Tuttle is Gary Wingard's sister.

The wall of their garage caved in, and the garage and basement flooded, Wingard said. And about four feet of water rose up to a sliding door on the patio side their apartment.

"If that window would have broken, they probably would have had four feet," she said.

But the first floor of their apartment only got 10 inches of water. Most their belongings inside the basement and garage were lost, in-

cluding their other car, which was flooded up to the door handles.

The sheetrock and flooring in their apartment have been stripped away to dry it out, Wingard said. The windows, sheetrock and probably the electrical system will have to be replaced.

"It wasn't as bad as some, I'll tell you," she

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Groundwater head retires

Wayne Bossert, manager of the Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4 for the last 36 years, will be honored at an open house from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday at the district's new office at 1290 W. Fourth St.

Everyone is invited to come tour the building and congratulate Bossert on his retirement.

Bossert came to Colby in March 1977 with his wife, Linda, and baby daughter, Erin, from Norman, Okla., where he worked for the Oklahoma Water Resources Board. On March 15, 1977, he started as the first manager of the newly formed district.

Bossert has a bachelor's degree in geology from the University of Oklahoma. He has been active on community boards, including

the county Hazardous Waste committee and the county Local Environmental Protection Group, state committees and as president and secretary/treasurer for the state Groundwater Management District Association.

Bossert's son, Alan (Jessica) Bossert lives, in Kansas City, Mo., and his daughter, Erin (Shawn) Carpenter, lives in Andover with Bossert's granddaughters, Emelyn and Ava.

Bossert said he and his wife plan to move to Wichita to be near the girls.



W. Bossert

