



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Thomas Countians aiding New Yorkers

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Three Thomas County people took time out of their busy lives to help with disaster relief efforts in New York City.

Jim and Molly Oliver, Colby, have been helping in one of the kitchens at "ground zero" since Friday, Nov. 16 and Kathi Hapke, Rexford, will begin her assignment today in the mass care unit on Liberty Island.

All three are members of the American Red Cross Chapter in Thomas County and each of them have described the situation in New York as "unbelievable."

"This is the largest disaster response in the history of the American Red Cross," Molly said earlier this week. "Since Sept. 11, more than 47,231 Red Cross disaster relief workers have provided assistance and served more than 10,500,000 meals."

After three days of training and orientation, Hapke said she will be starting her first shift today at noon until 8 p.m. and will continue that way for the remainder of the week.

"I came as a registered nurse, but the biggest service I will probably try to provide is just listening to families who have lost their loved ones," she said. In addition, Hapke will be assisting people in figuring out what they need. "There are a lot of people still in shock," Hapke said, "and many have not been in yet for help."

Hapke added that she is keeping a journal of her daily encounters and hopes to be able to share that informa-



Kathi Hapke



Jim Oliver



Molly Oliver

tion with others in Thomas County when she returns.

The Olivers have a somewhat different job than Hapke's because they are located in the "hot zone area," serving meals to support crews, police, and firefighters.

"We don't go to ground zero every day," Molly said, "but rather Red Cross personnel take turns."

The logic, she said, is that the area is so overwhelming that it's best to not be there day in and day out.

When she and Jim do take their turn entering the devastated area, there are a lot of precautions that must be taken.

For example, Molly said that all Red Cross workers must wear hard hats, masks and goggles. "If we don't remember to wear these things," she said, "there's a \$2,000 fine."

Since ground zero is being treated as a crime scene, Molly said they are not allowed to pick anything up and it's very toxic.

"We must spray our shoes before we can enter a building and the emergency response vehicle must also be entirely

sprayed when leaving the restricted area," she said.

There are two respite centers at ground zero, which are set up by the Red Cross so that police officers, firefighters, federal agents, and others have a place to eat, relax and escape.

"Most of the police and firefighters have told us that they are working 12-hour shifts, six days a week," she said. "One of the officers told me that the American Red Cross is like family now."

He told Molly that he sees volunteer workers during most of his waking hours and the few hours he does go home, it's just to sleep.

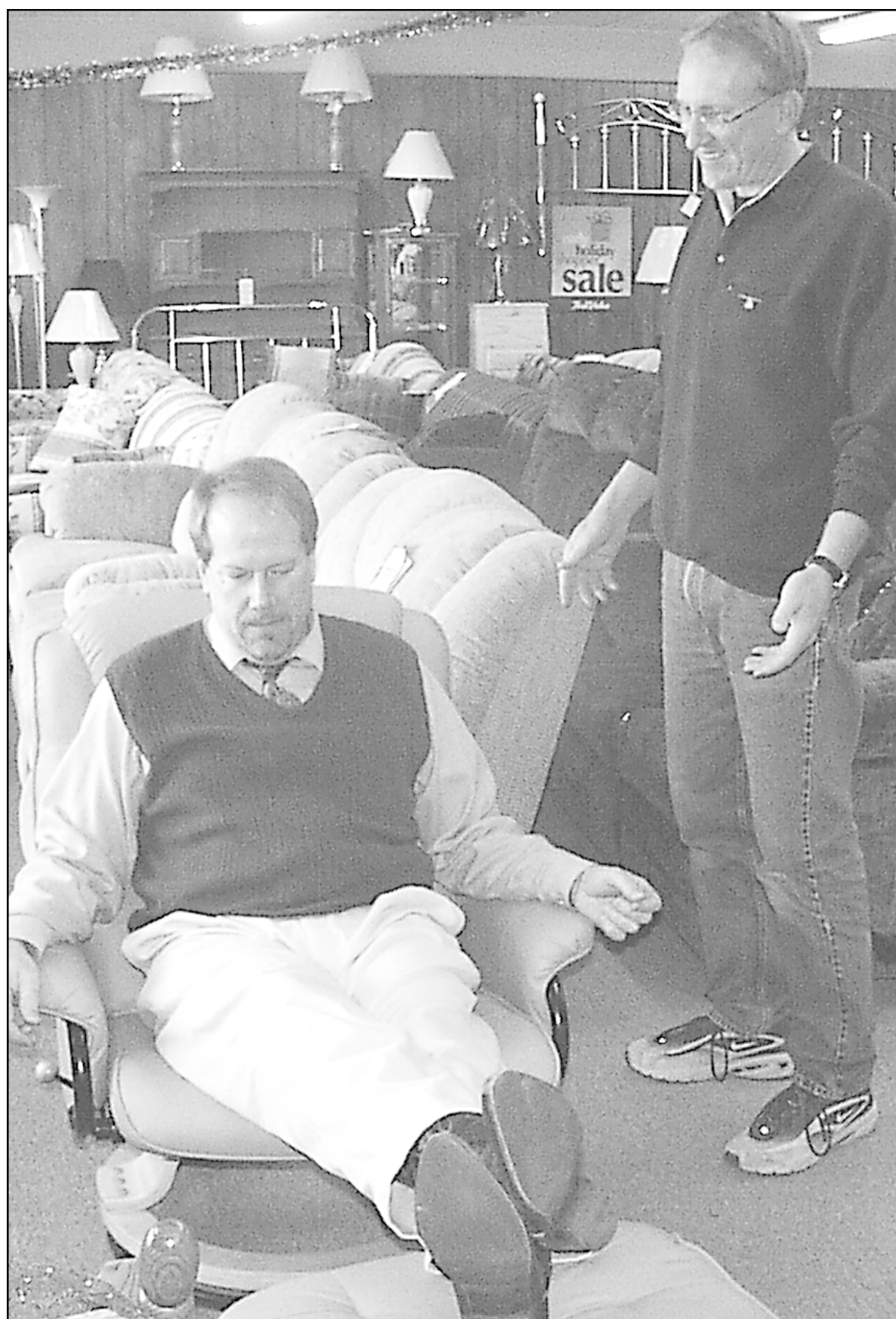
The Olivers will be in New York for another 10 days and Hapke, who just began her assignment, will be there for two weeks more.

"I am just really proud to be here helping in whatever way I can," Hapke said, "and I want to thank my employers, the Thomas County Sheriff's department and Citizens Medical Center, for allowing me to come here."

As for the Olivers having to spend their Thanksgiving holiday at "ground zero," was okay with them.

"We were glad to share Thanksgiving 2001 with those affected by the World Trade Center tragedy," she said.

### 'Kecking' around some ideas



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Dave Keck, owner of True Value Hardware, 395 N. Franklin in Colby, offered Michael Gee of Oakley (seated) some possible gift ideas today. Keck, along with other downtown merchants, said that sales are comparable to last year as they all look forward to the busier holiday shopping season. Beginning on Sunday, Dec. 9 and up to Christmas, most downtown businesses will stay open until 8 p.m., Monday through Friday; Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Sunday hours from 1 to 5 p.m.

## Suit contends time has run out

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Three Hoxie men connected with the Sheridan County Hospital have fired the second salvo in a court battle accusing them of breach of privacy.

Attorneys for Donald Laevenstein, Richard Leiker and Karl Neuenschwander each claimed that time has run out on the claims made by Dorothea Mauck and Becky Scott.

The lawyers filed their claims in the Sheridan County District Court this

week. Mauck and Scott alleged that Laevenstein taped cellular phone conversations between the pair in an effort to fire them and Brian Kirk, former hospital administrator.

Mauck and Scott said their conversations, which included negative comments about hospital board members, were played before selected board members in Leiker's home and then discussed in a closed board session.

The suit seeks \$75,000 from each of the three men for intentional invasion

of privacy. The trio's attorneys have filed to have the charges dismissed because the events took place July 1-Nov. 1, 1999 and the statute of limitations is generally only two years.

Laevenstein and Leiker had entered diversion agreements in criminal action and have provided written apologies to both Mauck and Scott.

In addition to denying the charges, Leiker's attorney, Bradley C. Ralph, Dodge City, has filed charges requesting a jury trial.

## State troopers cleared in shooting death of 19-year-old man

By RACHEL MISCALL

The Goodland Daily News

After reviewing reports on the fatal shooting of a 19-year-old Indiana man last month, County Attorney Bonnie Selby has ruled two Kansas Highway Patrol troopers were justified in shooting to protect the public and other officers.

"...I have determined that the actions taken by Trooper Brian Horney and Trooper David Albers were totally justified to protect not only the general public, but other law enforcement officers and themselves," Selby said in a letter to Mark Kendrick, senior special agent for the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. Selby's office

faxed the letter to *The Goodland Daily News* this morning.

The letter said Selby received reports from the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Colorado Highway Patrol, the Kit Carson County Sheriff's Office, the KBI and the Goodland Police Department about the incident, which resulted in the death of Mark Christopher Palmer. Selby received the reports last week, but said she needed time to sort through the information.

On Oct. 26, Palmer rolled his car on I-70 in Burlington, Colo., running from the scene and from Kit Carson County officers who approached him on a gravel road. After stealing

three cars, including Trooper Alber's, and wrecking seven, Palmer met his end on I-70 in Sherman County west of the east Goodland exit.

After he was already shot and injured, the young man, who witnesses described as looking "crazed," tried to steal trooper Horney's cruiser while he was still in the driver's seat. Troopers Horney and Albers wrestled Palmer out of the vehicle, and after he allegedly grabbed for Horney's gun, Albers shot and killed him.

Palmer, a former Colorado State University student who was apparently driving from Fort Collins, Colo., to his home in Carmel, Ind., died

from four gunshot wounds on the way to the hospital. Deputy Robert Lamb and Undersheriff Kevin Butts also went to the hospital for injuries they received while they were trying to catch Palmer.

Selby wrote that she hasn't received the autopsy or toxicological reports. The Shawnee County Coroner performed the autopsy the weekend after the shooting.

"I have no concern that the contents of those reports will alter my decision about the actions of either Trooper Horney or Trooper Albers in their use of force..." the letter said.

Selby said the reports aren't open for the public to see because she didn't file any

charges. "I don't know if the actual reports will ever be available," she said, noting that she will likely not release the autopsy or toxicological reports, either.

Selby did say that while she will not release the actual autopsy and toxicological reports, she will probably release information from the reports because the public is interested in knowing why the young man acted the way he did.

Both troopers were on administrative leave while the investigation was going on but Selby said she sees no reason why they can't return to work now.

## Kansas House Republicans' map creates phantom 126th District

By JOHN HANNA

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA (AP) — Republicans thought they had a strong proposal for redrawing state House districts.

It seemed ideal, except for the new 126th District.

The House has 125 members, the limit set by the state constitution.

The extra district sent GOP legislators back to work on a new map for

House districts. It also prevented the Special Committee on Redistricting from having a Republican proposal to review Wednesday, before it finished a two-day meeting at the Statehouse.

Rep. Mike O'Neal, R-Hutchinson, the co-chairman, said the problems that created the extra district aren't serious but will force "tweaking" in the redistricting work and more behind-the-scenes talks among legislators. He said

a plan should emerge within two weeks.

"We overshot," he said.

Republican senators weren't as far along in their discussions but still expected to have a proposal before the committee meets again Dec. 20 and 21.

By custom, senators are supposed to stay away from work on House districts, and House members aren't supposed to get involved in a Senate propo-

posal. Democrats continued to wait for Republicans to come up with proposals. The committee has 34 members, and 23 of them are Republicans, reflecting the GOP's large majorities in both chambers.

Some Democrats viewed the House map and its phantom 126th District with amusement.

"They wouldn't let us go into Okla-

homa," said Rep. Troy Findley, D-Lawrence.

The 2002 Legislature must approve new district lines to reflect shifts in population documented by the 2000 census. Districts are supposed to be as equal in population as possible.

Legislators expect Johnson County to pick up three House seats, to make its total 21. The Wichita metropolitan area also will pick up a seat, making its

total 22. Losing a seat will be northwest Kansas, southeast Kansas and Wyandotte County. In addition, Republicans say population declines will force them to collapse a district in north-central and central Kansas.

Rep. Laura McClure, D-Osborne, is likely to end up in a district with a colleague. O'Neal predicted it would be Rep. Dan Johnson, R-Hays.

### Briefly

#### Weather: Pleasant

Pleasant weather returns to the Colby area, the National Weather Service said this morning. Tonight, expect partly cloudy skies, lows around 20 and south winds up to 15 mph, turning to the west late. Friday, lots of sun, highs in the lower 50s and northwest winds 10-15 mph. Friday night, clear, lows in the lower 20s. Saturday, sunny, highs in the upper 40s. Saturday night and Sunday, clear, lows in the 20s and highs in the 50s.

Colby's high Wednesday was 28 and the overnight low this morning was a windshield scraping +4. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth has dropped to the freezing

mark. Precipitation remains at 0.98 inches for the month to date. The records for Nov. 29: 75 in 1932 and -7 in 1896. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

#### Commissioners meet Friday

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Friday in the commissioners room of the courthouse to pay bills and conduct routine business. They will pick up bid openings for the road department at 9 a.m. Darren Miller, Southwestern Bell representative is on the agenda at 9:30

a.m., Dennis Chandler, Extension agent, at 10 and Undersheriff Mike Baughn will discuss plumbing repairs at 10:30. The public is welcome to sit in on the meeting.

#### School to hold special meeting

The Colby Public Schools Board of Education will hold a special meeting on Monday, Dec. 3, at 7 a.m. in the board room of the administration building. The special meeting was called to discuss employee benefits.

#### Legion plans childrens party

Members of the American Legion in Colby will hold their

annual children's Christmas party on Saturday, Dec. 1, beginning at 3 p.m.

The party will be held at the Legion post, 1850 W. 4th, said Don Birzer, one of the organizers.

#### Pancake feed Saturday

The High Plains Lions Club is sponsoring a pancake feed from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, at the Colby Community Building.

The cost of the all-you-can-eat feed is \$3, with proceeds going toward community projects, organizers said.



