

# Opinion



## A Kansas Viewpoint

### Tragedy

Robert T. Stephan

Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board

Kansans were shocked to learn of the tragic murder of Jana Mackey July 3.

Ms. Mackey, 25, was a second year law student at the University of Kansas and grew up in Hays. She was found dead in the home of her ex-boyfriend, Adolfo Garcia-Nunez who was eventually apprehended in New Jersey and subsequently committed suicide while in custody.

Citizens must be outraged not only by this homicide but also all the domestic violence homicides that occur in our state. The Governor's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board will expedite the review of the case.

In October 2004, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius created through executive order, the Governor's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board. This board is charged with reviewing all adult domestic violence related fatalities in the state and recommending improvements to prevent future fatalities.

There are no words to ease the pain or help the family and friends of Jana, or other family members who lose their loved ones to domestic violence, understand their tragic loss. We must find a way in which future domestic violence crimes can be stopped.

The board will review Jana's case and forward to the Governor any recommendations to consider.

This case involves the recent release from parole supervision of the alleged offender. Policies and guidelines should be considered to ensure proper and intensive supervision of parolees particularly where there is a history of domestic violence.

In addition, inmates, prior to release from the correctional facility, should be screened and assessed for interpersonal violence tendencies and comprehensive supervision and participation in batterer intervention programs should be recommended. The fatality review board has made similar recommendations in its past reports.

One of its goals is to identify systemic changes within all the organizations and agencies that work with domestic violence victims, offenders and families to learn new ways of reducing the number of fatalities by better identification of risk factors and improvement in the coordination of services that our state provides.

This process includes identifying high risk factors, current practices, gaps in systemic responses and barriers to safety in domestic violence situations. About 15 to 20 percent of all homicides that occur in Kansas are the result of domestic violence.

If you are a victim of domestic violence or know someone who is, you can call (888)-END ABUSE (1-888-363-2287) to find resources for help.

#### Where to write, call

- U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774
- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521
- U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail [jvannostrand@nwkansas.com](mailto:jvannostrand@nwkansas.com) or [pdecker@nwkansas.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkansas.com). Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963  
Colby, Kan. 67701

### COLBY FREE PRESS

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

**John Van Nostrand - Publisher**  
[jvannostrand@nwkansas.com](mailto:jvannostrand@nwkansas.com)

#### NEWS

**Patty Decker - Editor**  
[pdecker@nwkansas.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkansas.com)

**Jan Ackerman - General Assignment**  
[jackerman@gmail.com](mailto:jackerman@gmail.com)

#### ADVERTISING

**Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director**  
[crystal@nwkansas.com](mailto:crystal@nwkansas.com)

**Jasmine Stewart - Advertising Sales**  
[j.stewart@nwkansas.com](mailto:j.stewart@nwkansas.com)

**Steven Matthews - Graphic Design**  
[smatthews@nwkansas.com](mailto:smatthews@nwkansas.com)

#### BUSINESS OFFICE

**Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping, Ad Building**  
[japplegate@nwkansas.com](mailto:japplegate@nwkansas.com)

**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**  
[support@nwkansas.com](mailto:support@nwkansas.com)

#### NOR'WEST PRESS

**Jim Bowker - General Manager**

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Becky Foster, Jim Jackson, Kris McCool, Betty Morris, James Ornelas, Cheryl Holub, and Amanda Campbell

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$40, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$74. By mail within Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$53, 8 months \$65, 12 months \$82. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$60, 8 months \$70, 12 months \$85. All other states, \$85, 12 months.

BRACKINS RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH 7/08



## Park party near; new website worth a look

Summer is winding down and that's not a bad thing. After four or five days of 100 degree-plus temperatures, I am looking forward to cooler days and nights.

It's also the time of year when children are getting school supplies, new clothes and registering for classes.

Another popular event in Colby for college students is the "Party in the Park." This year the festivities begin at 11:30 a.m., Monday, Aug. 18, in Fike Park.

The idea is a good one and a win-win situation for everyone — matching businesses in Colby with new and returning students.

Holly Stephens, director of the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce said it's an excellent opportunity for chamber members to join forces with Colby College in welcoming these students to our community.

The goal is to invite college students for a picnic and local businesses are encouraged to participate by setting up a display booth/table showcasing merchandise and services available to the students.

For those businesses unable to attend, the Chamber hopes merchants can provide information, coupons and promotional items in the welcome packets which will be distributed to the students. These items must be to the Chamber office by Wednesday to be included.

Another highlight of the event is the annual Scavenger Hunt.

Immediately following the picnic, from 1:30 to 2:45 p.m., there will be a scavenger hunt for the students. The scavenger hunt will require students to pick up logo items (ink pens, napkins, key chains, business cards, etc.) while visiting various businesses around Colby. Students completing the scavenger hunt



**Patty Decker**

#### • Deep Thoughts

will be eligible to win prizes.

It's a great way to let new members of our community know how much we care about them and it's a perfect time to reacquire ourselves with people we haven't seen during the hot summer.

For questions, call Holly, Leilani Thomas, director of Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau at 460-3401.

Although this next tidbit has nothing to do with the picnic/party, it was still interesting and I thought others might agree.

It's a new website that boasts it has the answers to life's questions. The site is sponsored by Kansas State University's Research and Extension office and is free.

The website: [eXtension.org](http://eXtension.org) was introduced almost six months ago and officials said it promises to be a gateway to answering all of life's little questions — from parenting to saving and investing, entrepreneurship and vegetable gardens.

The creators of the site call it a "next-gen Google" where curious minds can find a range of answers including how to calculate retirement readiness score, tips to easing credit card debt, how to grow the best tomatoes on the block or ways to set a schedule for a new born baby. Even better, if the consumer can't find

the information he or she is looking for, real live authorities in their area of interest monitor and answer questions through the site. Again, there's no cost.

I checked out the site myself and it was informative — bringing consumers the best knowledge from the sharpest minds in higher education, sources said.

In addition, users can rate [eXtension.org](http://eXtension.org) articles based on their usefulness, with the "most useful" articles ranking the highest on searches. If an article does not answer a user's question, he or she has the option to "Ask an Expert."

Normally, I wouldn't recommend sites; however, this particular website is affiliated with Cooperative Extension, a nationwide, non-credit educational network. Each U.S. state and territory has a state office at its land-grant university and a network of local or regional offices.

According to K-State officials, due to its relationship with Cooperative Extension, [eXtension.org](http://eXtension.org) is able to pull the best, most researched knowledge from the smartest land-grant university minds across America, connecting knowledge consumers with knowledge providers. Anyone interested in viewing the site can find: credible expertise; reliable answers based upon sound research; connections to the best minds in American universities; creative solutions to today's complex challenges; customized fields to your specific needs; trustworthy, field-tested data and relevant and timely answers.

Let me know what you think?  
\*\*\*

Patty Decker is editor of the *Free Press*. Her column appears on Mondays.

## To the rescue

By John Schlageck

Kansas Farm Bureau

Like the cavalry sweeping out of an old black and white movie, Farm Bureau and two other agricultural groups rode to the rescue of livestock producers across this wide country of ours.

Yep, the good guys won this one. The guys in white Stetson hats beat back those wearing headbands, crushable cotton and do rags.

The victory was secured for America's farmers when a federal judge in Seattle ruled to conditionally allow haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program acreage. Those provisions were part of the Critical Feed Use program announced in May by the Agriculture Department.

The judge issued a narrow permanent injunction to allow those producers with approved CRP contracts to continue operations through the program's original Nov. 10 deadline. Farmers and ranchers who sent applications but have not received approvals will have their applications processed. If approved, those producers may hay until Sept. 30 or graze until Oct. 15.

The critical feed-use program was designed to give eligible farmers and ranchers permission for a special one-time hay and forage use. CRP acreage was to be released only after the primary nesting season ends for grass-nesting birds.

This program was developed with the goal of providing relief for livestock producers by

reducing record-high feed costs. According to USDA estimates, the initiative would generate approximately 18 million tons of hay, worth approximately \$1.2 billion. The critical feed-use initiative is not related to emergency use of CRP land.

Farmers and ranchers who have not yet sent applications may do so provided they submit in their application a statement explaining their reliance on the CFU program. The reliance statement should indicate whether the producer made investments or preparations of \$4,500 or more and provide documentation. If the contract is approved, those producers also will be able to hay until Sept. 30 or graze until Oct. 15.

For those who missed the movie, here's how the battle unfolded.

Critical summertime Kansas haying and grazing schedules were thrown into turmoil after judicial wrangling essentially stopped farmers and ranchers from cutting and baling hay or allowing livestock to graze on land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program. The temporary restraining order was issued in mid-July.

The National Wildlife Federation provided the fly in the ointment. NWF contended the USDA failed to comply with federal environmental laws in authorizing the critical feed use program. In case you don't know, NWF represents that bastion of "overseers" who look after prairie dogs, spotted owls, snail darters and many of the other creatures that inhabit

our trees and grasslands.

Acknowledging what he called "substantial competing hardships," the Seattle-based judge in this case, who grew up on a Kansas farm, indicated the impact could be devastating to farmers and ranchers, who trusted the USDA knew what it was doing when it allowed the haying and grazing of CRP acreage.

There's no doubt documentation of the good faith efforts and investments taken by farmers and ranchers to participate in a program, which was announced in May, weighed heavily in the judge's deliberations.

This reversal was critical for farmers and ranchers because many had already spent plenty of money preparing to either graze cattle or to hay the land. They need this extra forage because feed input prices are so high.

The ruling really did establish some important precedents for farmers and ranchers because usually in this court when the National Wildlife Federation or any environmental group wants to challenge a rule they will seek an immediate injunction. And they usually get it.

Hopefully this will be a sign of things to come and farmers and ranchers will have their say when they face similar challenges.  
\*\*\*

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

