

On-call disaster workers enjoy hard work, hours

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the shuttle at 7 a.m., then work until 6 or 7 p.m.

"When we got to the job site, we would have to sign in with Red Cross identification and anytime we went outside, we checked out and back in with the guard at the door," Mary said.

Ten days into the job, Red Cross officials decided to move another disaster operation which had been in the basement of the American Red Cross National Headquarters to the warehouse site.



Marlin and Mary Zimbelman

The group was set up but there were no computers available for them. There

were approximately 100 to 150 American Red Cross workers with the operation and the Zimbelmans again helped check them in and get them situated. This group had the job of making contact with all the people who lost family members in the disasters.

"Most people didn't know how or where to get help," Mary said.

This group was to help the families with things such as mortgage or rent payments, utility bills, funeral and other related expenses as well as transportation, food, clothing and other time-sensitive and expenses.

One evening, a bomb threat created some excitement.

"We had to evacuate the building for about two hours," Mary said.

Other highlights included large wall hangings made by schools, churches and corporations close to the Pentagon with their name on it in big letters and signed by all the people around it saying thank you for helping. The school children wanted to do something so they made thousands of handwritten notes and tied them on bottles of water and taped them to snacks for us.

The Zimbelmans volunteer their

time with the Red Cross. The agency provided them round-trip plane tickets (tickets are provided when the disaster is out of state), the motel room and an allowance for food.

Marlin said he called Rep. Jerry Moran's office to let him know he and Mary were in Washington and the congressman called back. He said to let him know if he could help them.

The North Central Kansas Chapter of Red Cross at Salina is honoring all the workers who went to the East Coast for the disasters later this month.

"We were proud to have gone and

helped," Mr. Zimbelman said, "Many people have said thank you both here and there for helping but we were very glad to get back to Kansas, where we can see for miles and only have to deal with two traffic lights."

Marlin has been an active member of the American Red Cross since 1991 and Mary started in 1992. Mary comes into the Red Cross well qualified as a nurse, emergency medical technician and CPR instructor.

Marlin and Mary have done on-call disaster work for the Red Cross in previous years.

Judge dismisses school suit

TOPEKA (AP) — A judge has thrown out a lawsuit that claimed the formula the state uses to fund schools unfairly denies minority and disabled students their fair share of funds.

But the state still faces a legal challenge in federal court.

The lawsuits, filed by the Salina and Dodge City school districts with the support of 12 others, claimed that the way Kansas divides about \$2.9 billion puts some schools at a disadvantage.

The lawsuit in Shawnee County District Court was set to go to trial Dec. 3. But Judge Terry Bullock issued an order Wednesday rejecting the legal challenge.

Bullock said that although funding disparities exist, that did not mean the school finance system was unconstitutional.

The districts claim the funding formula provides more funds to smaller, mostly white districts, while allowing larger, wealthy ones access to more local tax revenue to supplement education costs.

"The fact is school finance in Kansas is at an inadequate level and hurts the minorities, the disadvantaged and disabled more than anyone else," said the districts' attorney, Alan Rupe.

He said he and the districts had not decided whether to appeal Wednesday's decision.

Bullock's opinion in an earlier lawsuit led the Legislature to enact a new school finance law in 1992. The Kansas Supreme Court upheld that law in 1994.

Rupe has said changes legislators have made to the school finance formula since 1992 have put some schools at a disadvantage.

For example, the base state aid per pupil is \$3,870 for the 2001-02 school year. However, extra money the state provides based on a school's enrollment and the number of poor children it put the actual range between \$5,000 and \$12,000 among districts.

Senate President Dave Kerr, R-Hutchinson, said the legal challenge was "flimsy" and criticized the plaintiff school districts, saying they were wasting money in court that could have

been spent on educating children.

"I don't know why they keep listening to those attorneys," he said.

Gov. Bill Graves' spokesman Don Brown said that while the ruling shows the formula is "appropriate," it does not take pressure off the 2002 Legislature to increase funding for schools.

"They are two entirely separate issues. Maybe now it's easier to push forward with additional commitment to education," he said.

Although he considers Wednesday's ruling a setback, Rupe said it would improve the legal challenge in federal court.

"It enhances our arguments in the federal court case — the state has turned its back on the problem. It underscores the need for the federal court litigation," Rupe said.

A judge already has ruled the districts can sue the state in U.S. District Court. The state has appealed, and both sides are scheduled to present arguments to the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver on Jan. 17.

Woman arrested in death of American student

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (AP) — An arrest in last May's killing of University of Kansas student Shannon Martin brought scant relief to her mother.

"My reaction was not one of 'Oh, great.' It's such a tragedy, and now it's even harder," Jeanette Stauffer said Wednesday from her home in Topeka, Kan. "Because now my focus isn't on the investigation, it's on what happened and 'My God, how could they do this?'"

Martin, 23, was stabbed to death May 13 in Golfito, Costa Rica, where she was working on a research project on the Central American country's

firms.

On Wednesday, Costa Rica's Public Security Ministry announced that a 27-year-old woman — identified only by her last name, Cruz — had been arrested late Tuesday. The ministry said the woman, who has not been charged, was from Golfito, 210 miles south of San Jose, the capital.

Newspapers reported that a scrap of clothing clutched in the victim's hand led officials to the woman, but security officials would not confirm that.

Martin had been with some friends at a disco close to the Golfito airport hours before her body was found. Police

ruled out robbery as a motive, saying that Martin appeared to have all of her belongings with her.

Stauffer said Wednesday that the suspect had been among several people detained after the search of a home about four miles from Golfito led to the discovery of a bloody T-shirt and knife. Those people were released after police failed to find sufficient evidence to make any arrests.

"She is the one they talked about last summer," Stauffer said. "They went into her house and found the shirt."

The 27-year-old woman was ordered jailed for six months.

Grant writer gets city OK

CITY, from Page 1

by May, Goodwin said. Time will be needed to write up the bylaws and hire and train a grant writer.

A grant writing class is taught in Colby, he said, and 200-400 people have taken it. They are possibilities to hire for the job.

The commission looked at estimates to replace the street lights on K-27 and decided not to do it. The city had hoped to put the old light poles back up, but City Manager Ron Pickman said many of the bases were damaged during construction. The city's contract with the state says the state, or its contractors, are not responsible for the damage, Pickman said.

The cost of replacing all of the lights is \$21,113 plus labor. The cost of putting up lights from Eighth Street to U.S. Business 24 on the east side of the street is \$10,526 plus labor. And the cost of lighting both sides of the street from U.S. 24 to 16th Street is \$9,262.

"With the agreement we have with the state," Commissioner Curtis Hurd said, "I don't think we should spend any money on the lights."

"The state could decide to do construction next year and take them all out, and we would have to pay for it."

That agreement is that the city can put the lights in, but is then responsible for all the costs of repair or replacement even if a contractor hired by the state causes the damage during construction.

The commission agreed to let the lights go for now, but may address putting in some lights after the construction is done next summer on the intersection of U.S. 24 and K-27.

In other business, the commission:

- Approved an agreement with the county to renew cooperation between the two entities for the City/County Recreation Department.
- Tabled the appointment of a replacement on the recreation advisory board for Sally Pettibone, whose term will expire soon. She does not wish to continue on the board, but a replacement has not been found.
- Approved a special use permit for Pamela Galindo to operate a daycare at 521 W. 15th Street.
- Decided not to buy a street stripper after hearing that the cost would be between \$28,000 and \$40,000, depending on the model chosen. The purchase would have been joint with the county, but commissioners said the city needs too many other things right now.

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