

# Colby woman's furniture held hostage

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

A dispute between a Colby woman and a moving company she believes is holding her furniture hostage may be headed to court.

When Barbara Young of Oberlin, 71, married Ben Duell of Ruleton, 74, they decided to sell her home in Oberlin and his in Ruleton and move to Colby. But a move Young-Duell thought would cost her less than \$3,000 could end up with a price tag of \$11,000 and \$15,000.

Her move was shifted from one firm to another, and the movers say she asked for extra services. The former Oberlin woman doesn't see it that way, though, and she's asked the sheriff to do something about it.

Young-Duell said she contracted the move of her four-bedroom with basement household to Wilson Moving Co. of Hays, but shortly before the June 6 packing date, the company went out of business. Wilson subcontracted the job to Wegele & Wegele Vanlines Inc., of Pratt.

"I talked to Wegele on the phone and she told me they needed cash to deliver my furniture," Young-Duell said. "I told her I'd pay cash and I'd get about \$2,600. She told me that would probably be enough."

The dispute started when Blaze Wegele and his crew tried to deliver Young-Duell's furniture at the house in Colby.

"Blaze came in and started figuring my bill," she said, "and he said I needed \$8,880 in cash. I just couldn't believe it. He said he hauled 16,000 pounds."

Young-Duell said when she disputed the cost, Wegele reloaded some of the 3,000 pounds he'd already set out and left for Pratt. She said Wegele left her a kitchen table, three mattresses, a card table and chairs, a few clothes and odds and ends of boxes.

"Basically, he is holding my stuff hostage," Young-Duell said. "I'm paying \$300 a month for storage fees and it's going into the third month."

According to paperwork Young-Duell received from the Wegeles, she can go to Pratt and pick up her belongings for \$11,088, or have them delivered for \$14,065.

Young-Duell has filed a complaint with the Thomas County



Barbara "Bobbie" Young-Duell stood in an almost empty living room in her home in Colby.

Photo by Jan Ackerman/Colby Free Press

to permanently deprive, whereas the intent of criminal deprivation is to temporarily deprive. The basis of my case is information from the victim."

Young-Duell said everything was done orally, with nothing in writing.

However, Dena Wegele said paperwork she received from Wilson Moving showed a written estimate of \$1,631 for the 50-mile move from Oberlin to Colby was given to Young-Duell. She also said what actually took place was outside Wilson's estimate and included packing the household.

"When Barbara did the order with Wilson Moving, she did it correctly," Dena Wegele said, "but when she called back, she wanted more packing done. I totally understand Barbara's frustration, but when you pack twice the estimated weight and a full-pack, it costs more."

Tom Whitaker, an officer with the Kansas Motor Carriers Association, said the Wegeles are members of the group and use the current tariff, a cost rate plan, governing all Kansas movers.

"To my knowledge, the Wegeles have never been out of compliance," Whitaker said.

Mike Hoeme, an officer with the Kansas Corporation Commission, said he is aware of the dispute between Young-Duell and Wegele & Wegele. He said moving companies pack and move items by weight, size and bulk.

"Every carrier that is a (Kansas Motor Carrier Association) member charges the same prices and they all follow the same guidelines," he said.

Hoeme said moving companies which are not members of the association, can charge different rates only if they file a tariff exception with the corporation commission. Whether Wilson was a member of the association could not be determined.

"The initial move was for furniture only, and then (Young-Duell) decided to have a full move," Hoeme said. "The (full move) prices would have been the same from both companies working under state guidelines."

## Couple reunites after 52 years

By Jan Katz Ackerman

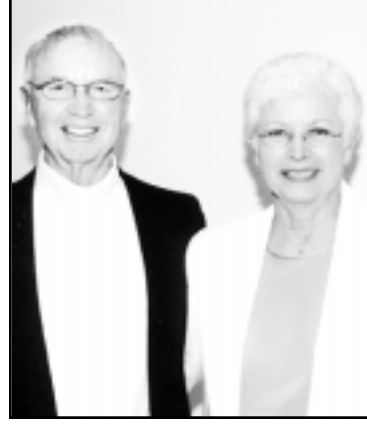
Colby Free Press

A momentary encounter 52 years ago has developed into a marriage for an Oberlin woman and a Ruleton man.

Barbara "Bobbie" Young's fiancé had just drowned in a boating accident when she was introduced to Ben Duell. She said Duell asked her out, but she was "still healing and not interested."

Both married other people. Barbara's husband, Chuck Young, died 17 years ago, leaving her alone.

"He was a quite a supporter of wrestling at Colby Community College," she said of her



Ben and Barbara Duell

late husband.

Duell's wife, Evelyn, who taught school at Burlington, Colo., died about a year ago.

While content as a single woman, Mrs. Young-Duell said she relied on her faith in God to lead her in life.

"I said, 'God, if there's somebody out there, you'll just have to throw him at me,'" she joked.

"Ben and I met at a Gaither concert," Mrs. Young-Duell said. "My daughter-in-law, Holly Young, and son, Kirk

Young, wanted me to attend the concert with them and Rich and Judy Epp. I thought if they drove all the way to Denver for a concert, I'd better attend."

It was at that concert that the couple became reacquainted.

"He called me by my maiden name, Jeffus," she recalled, "and said, 'Wow, you look good. I'll be in touch.'"

They were married on May 29, and they plan to live in Colby.

"We decided since I lived in Oberlin and he lived close to Goodland, we'd sell our homes and buy one in Colby, which is half way," Young-Duell said. "Besides, I have kids here in Colby."

Together, in fact, the couple has 19 children, Duell having 15 from his first marriage and Young-Duell four from hers.

sheriff's office and the Kansas attorney general.

Sheriff Mike Baughn said he gave Wegele an opportunity to file

a written statement about the situation, but he declined.

Late last week, Baughn said, he filed paperwork with Thomas

County Attorney Andrea Wyrick charging Blaze Wegele with criminal deprivation of property, a class A misdemeanor. The charge carries a

prison sentence between 30 and 365 days, and a fine of not less than \$100. "We are looking at the intent," Baughn said. "The intent of theft is

# Political action group looks to spread message to Kansans

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

About 20 people attended a dinner meeting last Monday at the Howard Johnson Hotel to hear about efforts of the political action group Americans for Prosperity to establish chapters across Kansas.

Alan Cobb, state director of the Americans for Prosperity Foundation, talked about the purpose and objectives of the organization.

He said the three main goals are to help pass a Taxpayer's Bill of Rights in Kansas, reduce the ability of government to use eminent domain to take property for private use, and to change how judges are selected by having the nominees confirmed by the state senate.

Cobb said the organization is working on a model budget for legislators as a tool in developing the state budget.

The Taxpayer's Bill of Rights would be a constitutional amendment.



Cobb

Cobb said it would limit the growth of tax revenue and government spending to the rate of inflation plus population growth.

He said the amendment would require surplus revenue be returned to taxpayers through tax rebates or tax cuts.

Any tax or debt increase over the limit would have to be approved by the voters, he said.

Kansas has the 15th highest local tax burden of any state, Cobb said, in figures compiled by the Tax Foundation.

Nebraska and New Jersey were two examples of states with a higher local tax burden. Cobb said Nebraska has the eighth-highest tax burden and New Jersey ranks 14th. Cobb said all of the surrounding states rank lower, including Iowa, 26th; Colorado, 37th; Oklahoma, 40th; Missouri, 41st; and Texas 43rd.

He singled out Colorado as an example of a state where the people

passed a Taxpayer's Bill of Rights in 1992, and said Colorado has refunded over \$3 billion to state taxpayers.

Cobb said members of American for Prosperity can make a difference in the effort to get a constitutional amendment approved in the state Legislature next year.

State Rep. Jim Morrison, R-Colby, who was at the meeting, said he supports the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights.

Cobb said there will be a statewide bus tour to promote the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights Sept. 27-30, and it will stop in Colby the afternoon on Tuesday, Sept. 27.

"We know Jim's (Morrison) going to vote the right way," Cobb said. "I hope you (all) are interested in supporting Americans for Prosperity. One of my jobs is to raise money, but we are not asking for dues yet."

He said Kansas is one of the worst

states for using the power of eminent domain as a tool for economic development.

He said the power has been abused where government takes land from one person to allow another private business use the property.

Changing the state constitution to prevent this is another of the goals of the organization, Cobb said.

The third issue he said was eliminating the present judicial nomination board, which does not have any public input.

He said a way to improve the judicial selection process would be to have the nominees confirmed by the state Senate, similar to how judges are approved at the federal level.

Cobb said the school finance question is an example of Supreme Court decisions which appeared to be beyond the intent of the state Constitution.

"The state has a complicated school finance formula," he said. "The Supreme Court overstepped their bounds in this case, and that is a slippery slope. What is next, determining school curriculum?" Morrison said the court would

not directly close the schools, but may have the power to embargo state money, effectively shutting down the schools.

Roberta Bretz of Goodland, the local contact for the group, helped arrange the dinner meeting.

## corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair

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