

# Man charged with murder held on \$1 million bond

By TOM BETZ

The Goodland Star-News

Murder charges were filed in Sherman County District Court late last Monday against Lanny Bevington, 33, in the shooting death of his wife Kerrie early last Sunday.

Sherman County Sheriff Doug Whitson said Mr. Bevington was charged with first-degree murder after an investigation by the KBI and sheriff deputies which included an autopsy in Topeka last Monday.

Mr. Bevington is being held on \$1 million bond, and his first appearance in district court was Wednesday, when an attorney was appointed to represent him and the judge continued the bond.

Calvin Williams, a Colby lawyer, was appointed. A preliminary hearing was scheduled for 9 a.m. on Thursday.

Mr. Bevington was brought over to the courthouse by sheriff's deputies and a jailer at 9:30 a.m. He kept his head down on the way in and covered his face with papers on the way back to the Sherman County Bastille to avoid being photographed.

When he entered the courtroom, he was given paperwork to fill out about his financial situation to determine eligibility for a court-appointed attorney.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby represented the people. Once Judge Tom Carroll from Atwood arrived, it took about eight minutes for the charges to be read and for Mr.

Bevington to be read his rights.

Mr. Bevington could enter a plea at the hearing on Thursday, but the hearing can be waived.

The judge said Mr. Bevington is being charged with first-degree murder, which can result in a sentence of life in prison without parole, and a \$500,000 fine.

The judge told Mr. Bevington he was appointing Williams based on the information he had provided, but that the defendant could later be charged for costs based on the financial affidavit.

Mr. Bevington said he was working for Bowman Farming, run by David Bowman of Brewster.

The judge advised Mr. Bevington that if he plead no contest or guilty to the charges, he would only be able to appeal the sentence imposed by the court.

Kerrie Bevington, who has worked for the Kit Carson County clerk's office for the past five years, was found sitting in a pickup at the Bevington home about 7 a.m. Sunday by her father, Tom Aschenbrenner, the Brewster fire chief.

The couple had attended a wedding dance in Colby Saturday night and left the party about 2:30 a.m., friends said.

In Lanny Bevington's initial statement to the sheriff's office on Sunday, he said he accidentally shot his wife while trying to remove a gun from the pickup she was sitting in.

Whitson said the KBI was called

in when answers to some of the questions asked of Lanny Bevington did not match the accidental shooting he first described.

Aschenbrenner went to the Bevington home after talking to Lanny on the phone, and when he arrived, he asked where Kerrie was.

He was told she was in the pickup. He walked to the pickup and found her with an apparent shotgun wound to the head. He then called county dispatch to report the shooting.

Sherman County Sheriff's Deputy Burton Pinalto was the first officer to arrive at the scene.

A search warrant was issued on Sunday afternoon for the KBI to examine the scene. The time of death was estimated to be between 3 and 4 a.m. on Sunday after the autopsy in Topeka.

The couple's home is 3 1/2 miles south of Brewster on County Road 37 in Sherman County.

Previously Kerrie Bevington had been married to Mike Peterson of Burlington, Colo., and has two children, daughter Taylor Paige Peterson, 6, and son Michael Austin Peterson, 2, lived with their mother, but were with their father at the time. She was born July 25, 1976, in Goodland, and graduated from Brewster High School in 1994.

She had lived north of Burlington until August, when she married Mr. Bevington and moved to the Brewster area.

Funeral services were held Monday.

# VanGogh pins to go on sale

By TOM BETZ

The 80-foot easel with the 24x32 foot reproduction of a Van Gogh sunflower painting was erected in Goodland in April 2001, but that is where the project seemed to stop.

Now, the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau has developed the first promotional item — a special color lapel pin — that will be available for sale in the next week or two.

The Van Gogh sunflower replica was painted by Canadian artist Cameron Cross as part of a project to highlight the importance of sunflowers in Sherman County and around the world.

Sunflowers USA, a local non-profit group, raised money for the painting and the 80-foot easel that stands facing I-70 on east of Cherry Ave, and north of Business U.S. 24.

Donna Price, executive director of the bureau, and Dale Neill, president of its board, displayed the first of the new pins in their office last Monday. They said they were working out details to be able to begin selling them this month.

The pins have a replica of the Van Gogh painting on the easel with the words Goodland, Kansas, on the bottom. There is a blue sky background and the pin is edged in gold. The outline seems to resemble a large cloud.

Ms. Price and Mr. Neill said they have been working with both the Sunflowers USA people and the art-

ist to get permission to sell the pin and other Van Gogh products in the future.

"We felt like this needed to be done," Mrs. Neill said. "We discussed it at the last board meeting and we made an executive decision to go ahead with the pins."

He said he hopes businesses will want to sell the pins to help promote the painting and Goodland.

"As soon as we get a signed contract either with the Sunflowers USA group or Cross," he said, "we will be looking to sell these at a wholesale price to any local business who wants to sell them."

"The painting is here and we need to take advantage of it, especially with the recent appearance on tele-

vision."

Pete Whalen, president of Sunflowers USA, said Monday his group is working on a contract and hoped to have it completed today.

Artist Cross said the filming is done for a British Broadcasting Co. production, "The Private Life of a Masterpiece — Van Gogh."

"The producers told me it will take four months to edit," he said, "and it will debut internationally in April or May. I am currently the art consultant for a major school district in Winnipeg, so I divide my time between both jobs (Van Gogh Easel and consulting)."

"Things are progressing well with the easels, and I should be hearing back from other sites soon."

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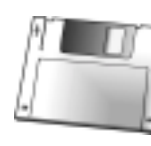
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