

Defendant gets 15 years in murder

By RAMELL TAYLOR
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Dylan Coryell, found guilty of second-degree, non-premeditated murder and aggravated battery on March 27, was sentenced Monday morning to a minimum of 15 years in prison during a hearing in Decatur County District Court.

Mr. Coryell was convicted of murder for shooting Airman Cory Cook, 22, of Oberlin, in the head with a .410 shotgun and of aggravated assault for injuring Sarah Campbell the morning of Oct. 16, 2011.

Testimony at the trial showed that both men

had relationships with Ms. Campbell, Mr. Cook before and after his Air Force training, and Mr. Coryell while the airman was gone.

The court room Monday was packed with family and friends. Judge Preston Pratt thanked the family and lawyers for both sides of Mr. Coryell for showing restraint during the trial and the sentencing.

Judge Pratt granted the state's request for an "upward departure" from sentencing guidelines set by law, increasing the prison term. Nicole Romine, an assistant attorney general stationed in Goodland, who tried the case for the state, said

evidence supporting the request included:

- Mr. Coryell shot and killed Mr. Cook while he was sleeping, so the homicide was committed when Mr. Cook was in a vulnerable state.

- Mr. Coryell created a knowing threat of death to more than one person, since Ms. Campbell and Mr. Cook were sleeping beside one another.

- The prosecution presented evidence that Mr. Coryell had a criminal background, having been convicted in Colorado of driving under the influence and another crime linked to alcohol. Mr. Coryell also was drinking the night of the shooting, she noted.

- The fact that Mr. Coryell drove 15 minutes to where Mr. Cook was, then murdered Mr. Cook after discovering he was asleep.

Defense attorney Justin Barrett had requested a downward departure, arguing that:

- Although Mr. Cook was vulnerable, sleep didn't facilitate commission of the crime.

- According to the text messages documented during the trial, Mr. Coryell and Mr. Cook only exchanged two text messages. Mr. Barrett said that behavior did not show Mr. Coryell instigated the incident.

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Dylan Coryell



Ridin' the range



EMBRACING INDIAN CULTURE were Daisy Hawkins (from left, above), Kaitlyn Wolters, Riely Marz, Josie Ginther and Sophia Ginther inside one of the teepees. Riders (top picture) brought their horses to travel the trails

at the Ginther Ranch. Thomas Smittle (below) led a group in Indian songs and chants, beating a drum made from elk's hide as his students beat along with him.

— Herald staff photos by Ramell Taylor

Event celebrates native, Western ways

By RAMELL TAYLOR
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After missing last year, Ginther Stables, near Achilles in Rawlins County, went back to its tradition Saturday, sponsoring what is called "Tipis on the Sappa," a day dedicated to paying tribute to Native American culture.

Organized by stable owners J.R. and Carrol Ginther and Yellow Bird, an expert on Indian culture from Cambridge, Neb., the event featured sacred teepees, replicas of Plains Indian dwellings, that spectators were free to explore.

Mrs. Ginther said people came from as far as Virginia and camped out in their tents and recreational vehicles the night before.

Those who camped out or showed up that morning got bacon, sausage and eggs cooked on a charcoal grill.

After breakfast, they got the chance to ride a wagon down the St. Jude Trail on the Ginther



Ranch. Mrs. Ginther said, with all proceeds donated going to the St. Jude Cancer Research Center.

After the wagon rides, the sun started to heat up, so the people returned to the teepee area for lunch of barbecued buffalo.

The meal was followed by a drum lesson from Thomas Smittle. Mrs. Ginther said he was tribe leader for 13 Grandmother Horses and a peace movement, where he led his tribe on a quest from Oklahoma to Montana.

Mr. Smittle taught everyone Native American songs and chants while guests beat their drums in unison. Vendors from Nebraska sold Indian crafts, including dream catchers, necklaces, bracelets and even war clubs.

Hamburgers were served for dinner, and the night concluded with a country concert from the family of Harlan Palmer, Dave Pasley and Shantel Leitner. The family donated \$250, all the proceeds from concert, to St. Jude.

Rick Mowry, a volunteer, helps with various things for the event, and he said he enjoys watching others learn about the native American culture.

"As a people, we need to appreciate other cultures," Mr. Mowry said. "We are all relatives."

The Gintners said they would like to thank everyone who attended and contributed to making this year's ceremony a success.

Groups plan big celebration for the Fourth

By RAMELL TAYLOR
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Oberlin can celebrate Independence Day by coming out to the first Decatur County Fourth of July Festival, with events all day Thursday, July 4, starting at 9 a.m.

The festival will start in downtown Oberlin with an Independence Day parade, sponsored by the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce.

Teresa Diederich, event coordinator, said any businesses or organizations that would like to be in the parade can pick up forms at the Chamber office.

Mrs. Diederich said people with many of the entries will be throwing "goodies" in the crowd, including the Bargain Box Plus. Employees will be throwing golden coins from their float that can be used to redeem a free item of clothing.

Anyone looking to grab something to eat prior to the parade can stop by the LandMark Inn, which will be having a breakfast buffet at 7 a.m., she said.

Children can color the downtown streets red, white and blue in the Sidewalk Chalk Art segment and participate in bike races put to

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K-State experts look at burned area

By RAMELL TAYLOR
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Decatur County commissioners met with Kansas State University experts about the fields that caught fire last summer after neighbors complained about the dirt blowing on their crops and killing them.

Keith Harmony and Augustine Obour, agricultural scientists from the Hays Research Center, went out with commissioners to take a look at the field where the fire started.

The research team examined several hundred acres that suffered loss of vegetation during the fire. Areas

included the fields of Ralph and Norma Unger, who lived west of the fire; Gerald Olson on the east; and Kent Euhus, whose crops have been suffering from the dirt problem.

"I heard about this meeting," Mr. Euhus said. "I have my equipment ready to do or not to do depending on what the expert says."

Skeptical of the research team, Mr. and Mrs. Unger said the idea seemed like a waste to them.

"It's ridiculous," Mrs. Unger said. "All we need is a substantial amount of rain (to grow cover on

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County will allow guns in courthouse

People with a permit to carry firearms can now take them into the Decatur County courthouse and other county buildings, commissioners decided at their meeting last Tuesday.

They approved a motion to allow people with state permits to carry concealed weapons into county buildings.

The Legislature passed a law authorizing carriers to go inside state and municipal buildings with guns as of July 1 unless the city or agency

exempts itself.

Under provisions of the new bill, another option the commissioners discussed involved putting metal detectors at the entrances of the courthouse and having officers secure the doors.

They agreed the cost of metal detectors and salary to pay security would be too expensive.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Heard Vicki Hubin, program

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Firemen's wives gather clothing for fire victims

The Decatur County Firemen's Wives will be taking up donations for victims of the Black Forest fire near Colorado Springs, which as of Monday had destroyed nearly 500 homes and killed at least two people.

Andrea Burmaster said the drive will gather nonperishable items such as clothing, children's items and household items.

"Something like that could have happened here in Kansas," she said. "We would want help just the

same."

Items can be brought to one of the donation sites, the Decatur County Good Samaritan Center or the United Northwest Federal Credit Union in Oberlin and Raynor Doors in Colby.

Donations will be collected until the end of June. Mrs. Burmaster said the group will deliver everything to a designated drop site by the end of the month.

For questions, call (785) 470-1119.

Donations help Food Pantry provide more for hungry area families

The Decatur County Food Pantry is helping area residents through tough economic times by teaming up with Raye's Grocery and area donors to provide fresh food, along with pantry staples.

Melanie Anderson, who manages the pantry for the Decatur County Ministerial Association, said the association provides food vouchers to Raye's for the program.

The agency has received a good amount in cash donations from several donors, she said.

Vouchers are paid for by the association, and Ms. Anderson said the staff at Raye's has been good about helping customers who bring them in.

Ms. Anderson said the pantry served 329 adults with 127 children last year. So far

this year, she said the pantry has helped 156 adults with 80 children.

"Majority of the people served have used the services once," said Ms. Anderson. "A smaller amount have used it twice, and only a handful have used it three times."

She added that three times is the most a household can use the pantry in a year.

She said they really could use more food

donations.

"We can really use items like pudding mixes, canned goods and fruit juices," Ms. Anderson said. "Whatever you would like to eat, someone else would like also."

The pantry is open Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. People should bring an identification card and proof of residency, Ms. Anderson said, something

like a voter card, driver's license or a utility bill or receipt with their address on it.

People can bring food or cash donations to the church Monday through Friday between 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

