

Local

CAR HITS HOUSE

One 21-year-old Lincoln man was sent to the hospital Friday evening after his vehicle collided with another vehicle and a house at 12th Street and Burlington Avenue. Jordan M. Stovall was treated and released at Mary Lanning Memorial Hospital. According to the police report, Stovall was driving a westbound green 1999 Pontiac Bonneville on 12th Street. Stovall reportedly ran a stop light and a northbound black 2010 Nissan Titan pickup driven by Kevin Gufford of Bennington struck the driver's side door of the vehicle driven by Stovall. The vehicle Stovall was driving then continued northwest and struck a house and yard owned by Robert J. Finnigsmier of 1205 N. Burlington Ave., causing an estimated \$2,000 in damage. Police cited Stovall in the incident. Alcohol was not considered to be a factor in the accident.

State

CRUSHED BY LIFT NORTH PLATTE

Authorities have released the name of a handicapped woman who was crushed by a wheelchair lift in North Platte. Police told television station KNOP that she's 59-year-old Dorris Reed of North Platte. Police say Reed was arriving Friday afternoon at political event at a private building when the lift came down on top of her. She was transported to an unidentified Denver hospital in serious. Her condition Sunday was not known.

EXCAVATION BEGINS MCCOOK

Excavation work has begun at the Red Willow Reservoir near McCook to determine whether the area holds information about Native American life in the Great Plains. Crews began the work last month at five sites at the reservoir. It's expected to continue seasonally through 2015. The excavation work is part of the University of Nebraska State Museum's Nebraska Archaeological Survey. Survey director Alan Osborn says test excavations will show whether the land should be studied and protected.

The Associated Press

Calendar HASTINGS

- ◆ **Alcoholics Anonymous**, noon, 5:15, and 8 p.m., 521 S. St. Joseph Ave.; and 7 p.m. (Women's group), 907 S. Kansas Ave. Tuesday.
- ◆ **Circle of Strength Widow/Widower Support Group**, 7 p.m. Tuesday, Blue Moon Coffee Co., 635 W. Second St.
- ◆ **Crohn's and Ulcerative Colitis Support Group**, 7-8:30 p.m. Tuesday. For location, call Faye at 402-463-8847.
- ◆ **Crystal Meth Anonymous**, 7:45-9 p.m. Tuesday, 521 S. St. Joseph Ave.
- ◆ **Hastings Lap Band Support Group**, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Mary Lanning Memorial Hospital Medical Services Building, lower level. For more information, call Michelle at 402-463-5666.
- ◆ **Living with Loss**, 2 p.m. Tuesday, Hastings Public Library auditorium, 517 W. Fourth St.
- ◆ **TOPS**, 4:45-6 p.m. Tuesday, St. Mark's Episcopal Pro-Cathedral basement, 422 N. Burlington Ave.
- ◆ **Eat and Peek**, "Negative Campaigning" by Dr. Robert Amyot, 12:15 p.m. Tuesday, Hastings Museum, 1330 N. Burlington Ave.
- ◆ **Hastings College guest recital, Scottish bagpipes performance** by Edwin Mukusha, 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, HC Fuhr Hall of Music, Perkins Auditorium.
- ◆ **Storyteller**, John D'Arcy, 7 p.m. Tuesday, Hastings Public Library, 517 W. Fourth St.

Lotteries

WINNING NUMBERS

Sunday
Kansas Pick 3 **2-9-1**
2by2 **Red 15-18, White 12-15**
Saturday
Powerball **2-6-32-42-49-PB-35**
Power play 3 jackpot \$20 million
Nebraska Pick 5 **2-6-22-28-37**
Jackpot: \$82,000
2by2 **Red 17-24, White 13-19**
Kansas Pick 3 **0-9-7**
Nebraska Pick 3 **1-1-6**
MyDay **12-28-07**
Super Kansas Cash **6-7-8-9-28**
Super Cashball 13
Hot Lotto **1-4-13-17-38**
Hot Ball 7

Family continues to search for missing woman

TONY HERRMAN
therman@hastingstribune.com
Friends and family of Jennifer Andersen, the rural Edgar native who went missing in Omaha seven months ago, conducted another organized search Saturday without finding clues. "Nothing was found," Andersen's mother Karen Andersen said this morning. "They were looking mainly for keys that had a gecko — that was the flashlight on her key chain. (We were also looking for) Her clothes and ring and stuff like that that possibly could have come up on the shore."

Jennifer Andersen, 33, disappeared March 9 from her Omaha apartment near 120th and Blondo streets. Her car, a maroon 2001 Chevrolet Lumina with the license plate RJK303, was found a few days later near Rick's Boatyard Café at 345 Riverfront Drive in Omaha, which was a favorite spot of hers. Karen said more than 60 people volunteered in the search Saturday, which began



Andersen

at 10 a.m. and lasted till around 3 p.m. The search area stretched from Rick's Boatyard Café south to the Platte River. Those volunteers included everyone from family and family friends to students from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Metropolitan Community College forensic classes and Nebraska Wesleyan University. Jennifer graduated from Sutton High School in 1995. She then attended Doane College and then the Creighton University nursing program. She worked at Methodist Hospital in Omaha, where her

parents said she earned nurse-of-the-year honors a few years ago. After Jennifer went missing, a couple Edgar-area businesses helped create fliers that have been spread across the United States. College friends of Jennifer came from as far away as Colorado to help with the search. Jennifer has a sister who now lives in Minnesota who also came to the search. Even though no clues were found, Karen said just being able to search the area where Jennifer went missing helped everyone who is hurt by her disappearance.

"We're yearning to have some answers," Karen said. "I'm not disappointed that they didn't find anything." Team Waters, a husband-and-wife search and rescue team from Illinois, helped with the search, as did Kristal Baker, an Omaha-based private detective that the Andersen family has worked with since Jennifer disappeared. People from the Edgar area, Hastings, Lincoln, Omaha and those who have followed her case on Facebook all aided in the search. "It's wonderful to have people care enough to want to

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CHRIS BRISTOL/Fremont Tribune

Kenny and Kim Tomka read with their daughter Jessica in Fremont in September. For the last six years, life has hit Kim and Kenny Tomka with a series of challenges. Illnesses, hospitalizations and other medical expenses have drained the Fremont family's finances. Deaths of loved ones have added to their hardships. Now, the Tomkas may lose their home.

'Have faith' in face of challenges

SERIES OF HARDSHIPS HAVE SET FAMILY BACK

TAMMY REAL-MCKEIGHAN

Fremont Tribune

FREMONT — For the last six years, life has hit Kim and Kenny Tomka with a series of challenges. Illnesses, hospitalizations and other medical expenses have drained the Fremont family's finances. Deaths of loved ones have added to their hardships. Now, the Tomkas may lose their home. A fund to help the Tomkas has been set up at First State Bank in Fremont. The Tomkas are grateful for help from local residents and their Omaha church. Kim even notes that without these difficulties the family never would have met so many wonderful people — those who've helped provide hope for a family whose struggles began after they moved to Fremont in 2004. Back then, Ken had odd jobs with construction work and planned to be a truck driver with his dad, Larry. Kim intended to home school their oldest daughter, Megan. Their second daughter, Heather was a baby. Then the troubles began. Kim said she

became ill with a kidney stone and Heather had problems with bones that overlapped in her skull. Larry had a stroke. Kim had pre-eclampsia and gestational diabetes while pregnant with the couple's third child, Jessica, born 6 1/2 weeks premature. More difficulties followed. "I was having terrible neck pain," said Kim, who sought help from a chiropractor. But, Kim said, the chiropractor turned her head wrong while trying to adjust her neck and she had a pinched nerve — something she dealt with for weeks. That was in 2005. In 2006, Kim and her sisters tried to help care for their mom, Kay Lukkes, and grandma, Gertrude Myers, who struggled with illness. Within the next three years, Kim would lose her mother, grandmother and best friend. Ken's grandmother died in 2009. His brother, Lawrence, died in a swimming accident on July 10. The family has enjoyed good times, however. The couple's daughter, Regina, was born in 2008 and daughter, Kaylee, on Dec. 28. But complications arose after Kaylee's birth. Kim, who'd been seeing a Lincoln specialist, had a C-section. Afterward, she

couldn't stand up straight and could barely walk, even after swelling in her abdominal area had gone down. Medicine didn't help and tests in March revealed her bowels had become looped through a double hernia and that part of her abdomen was gone. A surgeon put in a mesh to replace the abdominal wall, but that created a cavity that filled with fluid. Drains to remove the fluid would be placed during three subsequent surgeries. By then, she had been dealing with infection. Kim would be hospitalized six times in the first three months of this year. In March, Kim went home with a device that incorporates sponges and a vacuum pump to remove drainage and promote healing. Home health care nurses came to her home three times a week from mid March to early May, when she went for another surgery to close the wound. However, during that procedure, a surgeon found part of a sponge that her body had healed over. When it was removed, the surgical site became infected. The incision and mesh was infected, too, which prompted more surgery. "There for a while, I was so sick that I really thought I wasn't going to make it," Kim said.

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Downtown living spaces on display Thursday

SHAY BURK

sburk@hastingstribune.com

Ever wanted to know what hides behind the windows of the upper level spaces in downtown Hastings? For the fourth year in a row, the Business Improvement District is giving curious residents the chance to check out those spaces as part of the Upper Level Living tour event. The event is 5-8 p.m. Thursday. This year's tour features ten properties including residential spaces in addition to several unique retail and office locations. BID executive director Randy Chick said the tours started four years ago as a way to show people all the things that are going on in the downtown area. "Obviously, we're trying to expose the citizens of the Hastings area to what's taking place and give them ideas of some of the housing options out there that may be a little different," he said. Chick said the goal of this event is to also inspire some people to maybe buy and develop a building of their own in the downtown. "We're just trying to generate excitement to people who maybe don't know about some of the things we've got going on," he said. This year's tour features eight units in various stages of construction including several with fresh drywall and others that are already occupied. Carmichael's Limited LLC will be showing off two gutted spaces at 813 and 817 W. Second St. just to show the public how these spaces start out, Chick said. In addition to the traditional upper living spaces, tour guests will also have a chance to peak inside the old Clarke Hotel which has served as The Kensington, a senior citizen living facility, for more than 20 years. There are also several unique business spaces on the tour including Infuze Creative

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Christmas trees bring scent of home to soldiers overseas

TREES-4-BRANCHES IS RAISING FUNDS TO SHIP 120 TREES TO TROOPS

JOHN HUTHMACHER

johnh@hastingstribune.com

If Dave Koehler of Hastings has his way, 120 Christmas trees will be heading overseas to Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait in time to brighten up the Christmas holiday season for U.S. soldiers stationed there. Koehler, 60, is now in his third year of sending specially-grown table-top Christmas trees to troops. Aided by his wife, Deanna, and Gulf War veteran Jeff Hankins, he works

year-round to raise funds and awareness for "Trees-4-Branches," a local non-profit endeavor. "We started out wanting just do something to help soldiers," Koehler said. "I was doing a crossword puzzle one night at the kitchen table and 'Christmas tree' was in there. And I said, 'It would be pretty cool if we could send trees to the troops.'" And so, with the help of Jeff, Deanna and their son's father-in-law, Oregon tree grower Bill Hitchcock, the idea took root in 2008. In its debut year, the volunteer organization raised enough money to send out 44

trees to soldiers. Last year, that number nearly doubled to 79. The up-to-40-inch trees are sent out with stands and Christmas tree lights. In most instances, they are delivered to troops by chaplains contacted by Dave via e-mail. These contacts are made possible through another charitable organization in Washington to ensure the confidentiality and security of the recipients. The group also sends out care packages a few times each year containing toiletries, treats and other items in short supply overseas. Last year, 150 care packages accompanied the donated trees.

To Dave, who labored in Saudi Arabia for seven years in the private sector, the Christmas trees are a way to bring soldiers home for the holidays, if only in their dreams. In lands covered by sand, the bright green branches carry a welcoming pine scent most wonderfully familiar during the holiday season. "Imagine yourself thousands of miles from home feeling kind of down, and all you smell around you is dust," he said. "Along comes a Christmas tree, and all of a sudden you open it up and smell the fresh green, a smell from home.

"It's just a good thing. It's got to be one of the greatest things in the world for these guys to experience, to be back home again for a little bit." Many of the troops who have received trees have communicated that very sentiment through e-mails, Dave said. "Some guys send pictures of the trees back and they're pretty grateful about it," he said. "When we send a tree for 20 soldiers to enjoy, think of what that does for the morale of the whole unit. It really helps." Similarly, there's a satisfaction found in the giving as well, Dave said.

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State

TEXT SCAMMERS

SCOTTSBLUFF — Officials say credit-card scammers have targeted customers of another western Nebraska financial institution.

Platte Valley Bank marketing director Mindy Burbach told the Scottsbluff Star-Herald that some customers have been getting text messages telling them that their credit cards have been deactivated. They are being told to call an 877 number and provide financial information so the cards will be reactivated.

Burbach says the bank doesn't send e-mails or texts about card deactivation.

The bank's main office is in Scottsbluff.

Some customers of Western Heritage Credit Union, which has offices in Alliance, Gering and Scottsbluff, have reported getting similar messages. The credit union also advised customers not to respond to the scam.

ROLLOVER CRASH

BANCROFT — Authorities in northeast Nebraska say a 44-year-old woman died in a rollover accident on a rural road in Cuming County.

A news release from the office of Cuming County Sheriff Bradley Boyum says the accident was reported a little after 4:10 a.m. Sunday.

Michelle Gatzemeyer, of rural Bancroft, was pronounced dead at the scene. The accident occurred on a county road about 1 1/2 miles north of Bancroft.

The release says Gatzemeyer lost control of her pickup. It ran off the roadway, rolled and came to rest on its top in a roadside ditch.

8 BUSINESSES

ROBBED

OMAHA — Police have arrested a suspect in robberies at eight Omaha businesses in an 13-hour span.

Omaha police say 26-year-old John Passarelli was arrested Sunday morning near one of the businesses that had just been hit. He's being held in the Douglas County jail on suspicion of seven counts of robbery and two counts of attempted robbery.

Police say eight businesses — most gas stations and convenience stores — were robbed from about 8:30 p.m. Saturday to 9:30 a.m. Sunday. One business was hit twice.

Police say the stores reported that the robber indicated he had a weapon but didn't show one.

The money taken during the robberies has not been recovered.

No number was listed for Passarelli.

MAN KILLED

FREMONT — A man attempting to cross railroad tracks in Fremont was killed when a stopped train took off with him underneath.

A Saturday release from Fremont police says 72-year-old Melvin Groene approached the stopped train about 6 p.m. Friday and decided to get across the tracks by working his way under the train. Police say railroad workers didn't know Groene was under the train and took off at about 4 mph. Groene was killed instantly.

ARSON SUSPECT

OMAHA — An Omaha teen has been arrested on suspicion of burning down the home he was being evicted from.

Omaha fire officials told KETV that 18-year-old Cameron Bradshaw was arrested on suspicion of first-degree arson in Thursday morning's fire. He was being held Saturday in the Douglas County jail.

Fire officials are releasing few details of the investigation. Firefighters have said the blazed burned so hot that it was hard to get within 30 feet of the flames without a hose.

Property manager Mark Kellogg says he rented to Bradshaw's family several months ago and was in the process of evicting them.

No number was listed for Bradshaw.

The Associated Press

Woman burned in surgery sues hospital

TIMBERLY ROSS

The Associated Press

OMAHA — A Swedish woman suffered disfiguring burns and must have cosmetic surgery after a surgical fire during a 2009 procedure at the Nebraska Medical Center, according to a federal lawsuit filed Friday.

The lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Nebraska claims the Omaha hospital was negligent in treating the woman for thoracic outlet syndrome, a condition that compresses the blood vessels near the collarbone.

Malgorzata Jakobsson, of Transgund, Sweden, claims she went to the hospital in February 2009 for a special procedure that

uses a high-frequency current to destroy tissue. She says in the lawsuit that she awoke in pain and with burns.

"There are those who say that the United States has the best health care in the world, but Mrs. Jakobsson wasn't engulfed in flames in a Swedish operating room. She had to come to Omaha for that experience," her attorney Maren Chaloupka said.

Chaloupka said the procedure, which was repeated a few days later, didn't alleviate Jakobsson's condition and left her with burns on her face, neck, ear, back, shoulder and chest. Jakobsson will need cosmetic surgery to make the scars less visible, she said.

The lawsuit claims hospital workers performing the procedure knew the surgical equipment could reach several hundred degrees and produce sparks, but they didn't take reasonable measures to prevent a fire.

Nebraska Medical Center spokesman Paul Baltes said Saturday that the hospital was quick to investigate the fire and took steps to improve the procedure and prevent future fires.

"We wish this had never happened, but we've taken some steps in the operating room to, hopefully, ensure this never happens again," he said.

Jakobsson is seeking more than \$75,000 in damages. She's requested a jury trial.

HC royalty



Courtesy

Hastings College celebrated homecoming this weekend. Homecoming candidates were: (First row, left to right) Sophia McDermott, Jenny Sharrick, Chelsi Pinegar, Rachel Lee, Jennifer Gold, (second row) Callie Arnold, Cammie Koopman, Mallory Suhr, Danielle Wright, Rebecca Smith, (third row) Brandon Ray, Decker Brown, Mario Powell, Chad Pinkerman (fourth row) Brock Sindt, Indiana Jones, Adam Kaiser, Anthony Pingel, Jacob Wardyn and Adam Bassett. Not pictured are Jensyn Rudolph and Doyle Hanshaw.

Missing: Family continues to search for daughter

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keep trying to find Jenny," Karen said.

The U.S. ATV Search and Rescue Team in Omaha has been searching the water and the banks of the Missouri River off and on since Jennifer disappeared, but Saturday was just the second organized search.

Cadaver dogs and boats with sonar equipment also helped in the search.

"The river had gone down some, but it was plenty high," Karen said. "They were able to search some areas that they weren't able to search before."

Volunteers mostly walked along the banks looking for Andersen's keys and clothes.

"There were a couple of sets of keys that were found, but they weren't Jenny's," Karen said. "We're hoping to

go out again later, primarily with the boats, once the water goes down quite a bit more."

Karen said a lot of people really miss her daughter. Many stories were shared about Jennifer during the search.

"I guess there will be a point when we don't know what else to do, but we won't give up hope that she might come home or we might find her,"

Karen said.

According to the fliers about Jennifer's disappearance, she is 5 feet, 7 inches tall, weighs 110 pounds and was last seen wearing a charcoal gray jacket with blue front, dark navy blue jean leggings and a gray sweater.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Douglas County Sheriff's Office at 402-444-6000.

Spaces: Downtown going on display

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at 625 W. Second St., a mainstay on the tour, which this year features a new office in its upper level.

For the first few years, proceeds from the tour went toward the development of Central Park in the down-

town.

Last year though Chick said, with the park completed, the BID decided to use the funds to create a downtown concert series, which concluded for the season just a few weeks ago.

Chick said he hopes the

funds from this year's tour can again go to support the Live! Downtown concert series.

Tickets can be purchased at Graham Gallery and Framing 617 W. Second St. or the Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce 301 S. Burlington Ave.

Faith: Family faces challenges

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More surgeries, which may include skin grafting, lie ahead.

In the meantime, Kim cannot lift her baby nor clean her house. Her husband helps with those duties. He had worked in construction for three years, but in 2009 the company he worked for went bankrupt, Kim said. He works part time as a cook at Wooden Windmill restaurant.

Kim said she and her spouse worked hard not to have late bills or fees.

"We worked so hard and scrimped and saved and went without," she said.

Then, she said, they sought help from a company that said it would help modify the terms of their home mortgage loan, but instead wouldn't respond to their inquiries after payment. Now, they may lose their home. They were nominated, but didn't get enough votes, for a vehicle in a Woodhouse Ford giveaway. Their washing machine and

dryer are having problems as well.

Despite these difficulties, family members are thankful for help they have received. They are grateful to Fremont Barb Gaskin who has brought them coolers of food. Gaskin and other staff at the home health care agency collected money for a gift card to Gordman's to purchase school clothes for the children. The staff also gathered school supplies for the girls.

"We've really met some beautiful people who have helped us," Kim said.

She appreciates women at the Platteville PTA who brought the family dinners for a week after Jessica was born and for their fellow parishioners at Mary Immaculate Church in Omaha. She recalls the time a priest drove from Omaha to take her to a doctor's appointment.

"These things that people think are so small are really a

great big deal for us," she said. Sometimes Kim wonders why so many troubles have occurred to her family.

"What is the message we're supposed to learn? I think a lot of it is to have faith. God has a plan," she said.

She also counts her blessings and maintains a positive attitude.

"The most important thing is we've got our family," she said, adding, "We find that humor really, truly is the best medicine."

Our Sandwiches are what dreams are made of!

Big Dally's Deli
Downtown & Elm & South St.
463-7666

Home: Man wants to send trees to troops

Continued from page A5

"This is pretty important to us," he said. "It's something we really enjoy doing. We have a great time with it and are really glad we can help some of the soldiers and their families out. It's just a patriotic thing to do."

As part of its fundraising effort, Trees-4-Branches now offers custom T-shirts which serve to help raise awareness of its mission. The shirts are sold from a stand located in front of Allen's Grocery Store most Saturdays through the holidays, weather permitting.

More than 500 T-shirts have been sold to date, Dave said. Groups and individuals

may sponsor a tree to be sent in the name of a loved one, family, church or school group. The tree will include a card giving recognition to the party of choice.

Trees will be shipped beginning the weekend of Thanksgiving and continue through Dec. 15 to ensure delivery by Christmas.

For information on sponsoring a tree, obtaining a T-shirt, or to make a donation, call Dave at 402-462-4718. He can also be reached via e-mail at koehler1@mainstaycomm.net.

Additional information on the organization is available online at www.trees-4-branches.org.

Do any of these symptoms describe you?

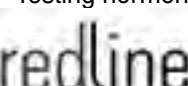
- Weight Gain
- Low Libido
- Mood Swings
- Hot Flashes
- Fatigue
- Foggy Thinking

Bioidentical Hormone Seminar

Thursday, October 14th • 6 p.m.

Presented by: Jen Ramaekers, PharmD

- We will cover the following topics at this program:
- The difference between synthetic and bioidentical hormones
- The Importance of balancing your hormones properly
- Testing hormones to measure your hormonal balance



401 West 33rd, Suite 100 Hastings, NE

Registration \$10.00 (Pre-Registration is required by October 13). Register online at www.redlinepharmacy.com or by calling 462-2929.