

# Kline trial under way

By Brad Nygaard

A judge ruled Monday against a mistrial for Jordan Kline, but decreed inadmissible any mention of a possible second victim.

Kline, 21, is charged with one count of gross sexual imposition stemming from events that occurred in Noonan on Aug. 10, 2014. He's accused of "knowingly, or willfully touching, fondling or having sexual contact with a person under 15."

In this case, the alleged victim was 8 years old. Now 10, she gave testimony Tuesday.

The motion for a mistrial came from Kline's counsel following opening arguments. Attorney Kevin Chapman said any mention of a second victim was unfair to his client.

"Those charges were investigated and proven unfounded," Chapman said.

Though Judge Daniel El-Dweek denied Chapman's motion, on Monday he cautioned Divide County State's Attorney Seymour Jordan to tread carefully. On Tuesday, El-Dweek ruled inadmissible any evidence relating to a second victim.

"Bringing up non-charged conduct is potentially highly inflammatory and possibly not relevant," the judge said.

The attorney's arguments concerning a mistrial were made outside the presence of the jury.

Testimony began Monday af-

ternoon. Divide County Deputy Brandon Domonoske recounted his initial response to a Noonan home where the incident is alleged to have occurred.

The 12-person jury and one alternate also watched several videos Monday afternoon with interviews relating to the events.

However, a Bureau of Criminal Investigation interview with the accused could not be used because it contained inadmissible information.

"At first he denies any contact occurred," Jordan said, while describing the video to the jury. "Later he admits it did, but said it was unintentional."

Chapman, in his opening statement, placed emphasis on the word "unintentional."

"Accidental touching is not a crime," Chapman said.

Chapman also pointed at two recorded interviews the victim gave to authorities in Minot.

"There's a discrepancy in those interviews about where she was touched," he said.

Though Chapman had indicated his client would testify in his own defense, Kline later changed his mind and the defense rested at 11 a.m. Tuesday without calling any witnesses.

Closing arguments were to begin after lunch, with the jury expected to retire for deliberation later in the afternoon.

# Farm Rescue helps local farmers with seeding

By Cecile Wehrman

Volunteers and staff from Farm Rescue are in the area helping a couple of local families get their crop in the ground.

Jerry and Doris Stromstad and the Graupe family have both had machines and helpers on their ground in recent days from Farm Rescue, along with help from friends and neighbors.

"They came in Thursday afternoon and they were done Saturday afternoon," said Doris. "It was amazing."

The crew of helpers from three different states worked around the clock to put in about 1,000 acres of durum, said Doris.

A couple of neighbor ladies organized meals for the workers.

Jerry Stromstad has been in Fargo all winter awaiting a liver transplant. On the same day Doris was welcoming Farm Rescue, Jerry learned he was bumped from first on the list for a transplant.

The silver lining, he said, is that he will get to come home soon.

"I feel good," he added, and he's remaining optimistic, as is Doris.

The Stromstads farm south of Fortuna.



Doris Stromstad stands last weekend with Farm Rescue helpers from Iowa, Indiana and Kentucky.

Once the Farm Rescue crew finished at the Stromstad's place - they farm south of Fortuna - a staff member welcomed another set of volunteers to put some crop in for Doug Graupe and his son, Jeff, who is dealing with a post-

surgical infection that will keep him sidelined throughout the harvest season.

Like the Stromstads, Doug said a number of neighbors and friends have been helping out, too, with neighbor women fixing meals for the crew.

"It's been really wonderful," said Doug.

Farm Rescue is a North Dakota-based non-profit organization that helps farmers dealing with health issues so they can get crops seeded and harvested.

# Concert group plans new season of shows

By Jody Michael

The Meadowlark Concert Association is now selling memberships for its next season of three concerts it is bringing to Divide County in 2017 and 2018.

Scarborough Fair is a Simon and Garfunkel tribute group. Brothers Jeb and Jock Guthrie pay homage to the music of Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel through songs, stories, trivia and humor. Scarborough Fair will be performing Sept. 18.

Hot Club of Cowtown is a western swing group from Texas. The group also performs country, cowboy ballads and Gypsy jazz. They will be performing Feb. 22, 2018.

Apollo 5 is a five-piece vocal ensemble from London, containing two sopranos, a tenor, a baritone and a bass bringing an a capella mixture of classical, folk and pop. Apollo 5 will be performing March 18, 2018.

All concerts will be at 7 p.m. at Divide County High School's Kirchhofer Auditorium. All

shows are family-friendly.

Season-ticket holders also receive complimentary admission to Williston's concert series. Williston's concerts are: New Christy Minstrels, Sept. 28; Roy and Rosemary, Nov. 7; Hot Club of Cowtown, Feb. 20, 2018; WindSync, March 10, 2018; and the Derik Nelson Family, April 5, 2018.

Tickets for the season are \$50 for adults. Meadowlark also has special rates for students and families, and for patrons interested in a sponsorship.

More information is available by contacting Kathy Fagerland at 925-5614 or Desiree Prochaska at 570-1454.

Members for the current season have one more upcoming concert available to attend in Crosby: New Odyssey's "three guys, 30 instruments" show, originally scheduled for last December but postponed due to inclement weather, is now set at Kirchhofer Auditorium on May 22 at 7 p.m.

# SCHOOL: More work planned

(Continued from Page 1)

Boyer said FCI plans to have the transformer at the high school moved to the east of the band room, with bollards placed around it to prevent damage from vehicles, at a price of about \$30,000.

"That transformer's been hit several times during snow removal," Boyer said. "You saw how the snow drifted last winter; you lose track of where things are."

The board is also committing to \$45,000 to renovate the high school entrance.

"It's a lot of money, like everything is, but those doors are worn out," Hirning said. "They are the original doors, and you can't get parts to fix them."

A planned replacement of lights at the high school will cost \$155,830, rather than \$183,322, after the board decid-

ed not to purchase automatic motion-sensor controls for the lights.

"I think it's cool, but I don't know if it's necessary," board member Stephanie Reistad said.

Boyer said workers are getting ready to pour the floor inside the high school fitness annex.

### In other business

Business manager Barb King said she is still seeking additional election officials for the Crosby polling location for the June 6 school board election.

Four teachers have submitted resignations: Ruthann Nielsen, first grade; Kate Waechter, fifth grade; Terry Wilkins, sixth grade; and Jeffrey Williams, high school vocational agriculture. Hirning said he has already begun a search to fill the positions.

# State oil bids picking up

The latest state sale of mineral leases, conducted earlier this month showed some increased interest.

Mountrail County had the high bid at \$7,002 an acre during the sale, conducted online, with bids in Mountrail netting \$592,728 overall.

Burke County took in a total of \$42,560 in bonuses for 120 acres, with the high bid coming from Liberty Resources, LLC of Denver paying \$982/acre for 40

acres. Divide County bids averaged \$186 an acre, bringing a total of \$569,075 for leases. A total of 3,049 acres were nominated in the sale. NP Resources was among the highest bidders in Divide.

In Williams County bids averaged \$116 an acre with bonuses totaling \$346,337. Williams had 2,967 up for bid and the high bidder was Lynx Oil, paying \$809 an acre for 4 acres.

## Farm safety



Jody Michael -- The Journal

Divide County Agent Brandon Biver talks with some youngsters on the lawn at St. Luke's Medical Center during Hospital Week, which this year focused on farm safety. In addition to Biver's information on cattle, children were invited to try different hands-on activities including planting seeds. They also got to try their hands at aiming a hose from a fire truck.

# Two projects okayed for JDA loan program

By Cecile Wehrman

Operators of two Crosby businesses will access funds through the Divide County Jobs Development Authority (JDA) revolving loan fund program.

The owners of the former Golden Hub, now Crosby Lodge, got the okay for a \$20,000 loan at 3 percent interest over five years and Nikita Swanson, owners of Henny's Coffee, got the okay for the same amount and terms contingent on bank financing being approved.

Crosby Lodge - known as B Our Guest, LLC, is a joint venture between Lucas and Becki Schumacher and Amber Haugland (see related story).

Becki Schumacher, who sits on the JDA board, abstained from voting on the loan application. She said they have already nearly completely booked for the week-ends of the threshing show and the 2017 celebration.

The Henny's application, said Community Developer KayCee Lindsey, is to help finance the expansion of the business at a new location - the former BNC National Bank building.

Lindsey said work is already ongoing to remodel that space for use by the coffee shop and some limited food items may be worked in over time. Stubbs Builders owns the space.

Bryan Haugenoe, Swanson's father, is another JDA member. He abstained from the vote on the application.

Lindsey explained to board members at their meeting last week that the JDA takes a second or third position behind banks when these loans are made. Personal guarantees and security on furniture and fixtures are also required. She said the Small Business Development Center has worked on cash flow projections on both businesses and they will support the debt.

Lindsey said there remains about \$60,000 in revolving loan funds available after these loans are granted.

### Budget

Lindsey asked board members about their thinking on next year's budget. Her job transitioned last year to four days a week for the JDA and one day a week with the tax equalization director. The change was partly due to diminishing funds for the JDA and partly due to a need in the county for more help in the tax office.

Lindsey said it's been beneficial learning more about the property valuation end of business, but there could be times when it presents a conflict.

If she is working with an entrepreneur on the economic development end, she said, and there's a problem with valuation or taxation of property, any goodwill could be destroyed.

Board members were quick to say they understand that could be a problem, but County Commissioners Doug Graupe and Gerald Brady, both of whom sit on the JDA board, said it mostly comes down to

finances.

JDA President Denise Johnson, a member of the Crosby City Council, said she'd like to meet with the commissioners, along with Mayor Bert Anderson and fellow JDA member and councilman Bryan Haugenoe, to come to terms on what the county and city will support.

Lindsey said economic development work has picked up significantly in recent months, and she'd like to devote full time to those projects.

Members directed Lindsey to start developing her budget for 2018 now, so there's plenty of time to hash out how a return to full time work would be funded.

Reporting on other topics, Lindsey said she attend a workforce meeting in Williston where several oil companies indicated they are hiring.

As Graupe puts it, "Both the city and the county are going to have to ante up," if the position is going to return to full time.

As well, said Brady, a solution for the help needed in the tax equalization office must also be found and he is opposed to hiring another part time worker at the county.

Schumacher spoke in support of Lindsey's position, having just worked with her on the motel project.

"I think it is a vital position for new businesses," she said, because of the help that is available in planning and navigating a business start up.