

Lohmiller sentencing June 14 Guilty as charged

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

After deliberating less than three hours May 15, the jury in the Rebecca Lohmiller criminal case in Carroll Circuit Court found the defendant guilty on six C-felony counts of forgery and 21 B-misdemeanor counts of practicing nursing without a license.

A C-felony carries the penalty of between two to eight years and each B-misdemeanor carries a sentence up to six months.

The drama was enhanced when defense attorney Anne Briggs filed a last-minute motion for a mistrial while the jury was deliberating. Special Judge Linley Pearson denied the motion after the jury re-entered the courtroom and prior to reading the verdict.

Juror Darrin Brown said jurors took the time in deliberation to ensure there was no doubt in anyone's mind about the verdict before giving the results to the judge.

"We all thought we needed to talk about it to make sure there was no doubt in our minds," he concluded.

It has been almost two years since charges were filed against Lohmiller, the former county employee who held the position of county health nurse, both part-time and full-time, from November 1999 until Oct. 1, 2004. On Aug. 3, 2005, then county prosecutor Rob Ives charged the defendant. The county has a new prosecutor with Tricia Thompson, but the facts of the case remained the same.

Trial began Monday,

presided over by Pearson. Judge Donald Currie was unable to hear the case due to a conflict involving his former position as deputy prosecutor for the county.

After the 12-member jury selection in the morning, testimony was heard in the afternoon and again on Tuesday for much of the day.

Witnesses for the state on Monday included health department secretary Mary Jones and current health nurse Brenda Coble. Also called to testify were commissioner Bill Brown, attorney Barry Emerson, Dr. T. Neal Petry, who was Lohmiller's supervisor, auditor Beth Myers, then Sheriff's Dept. Sgt. Tony Burns and county deputy John Chapman.

Lohmiller took the stand Tuesday. According to Thompson in her closing arguments, Lohmiller admitted on the stand that she never possessed a nursing license in Indiana. Thompson said the defendant said she told supervisor Petry that she was not qualified for the nursing position when she was hired.

"This is a simple case," Thompson said. "It boils down to, did she have the authority to use RN after her name?" she asked the jury. "She made herself look like something she was not by putting RN after her name."

"She made a choice not to get a license here," Thompson concluded.

But Briggs presented a different take on the situation during closing arguments.

"You have the right to determine the law and the facts ac-

ording to the Indiana Constitution," she told jury members. "You don't have to find her guilty regardless of what the (court's) instructions say."

"We're not saying she didn't write her name with RN because she did - that's her identity," Briggs continued. "Maybe it was wrong for her to do it (sign her name with RN after it), but she wasn't concealing anything."

Briggs stated that Lohmiller had a nursing license in Georgia, but because of her participation in a witness protection program and the fear of her identity being discovered, she did not apply for an Indiana license.

"This is an important statement by the jury as representatives of the community that the community took the defendant's actions seriously," Thompson said after the verdict and the courtroom cleared. "I know there are a lot of people in the county who have been waiting to see this resolved and I hope this brings some closure for the county."

However, there are others in the county who said the verdict should serve as a learning experience.

"We need to be more cautious about whom we hire," commissioners' president Loren Hylton told the *Comet* Wednesday morning. "We need to overall assess what we've been doing."

Hylton said it was the responsibility of the department head to check credentials of new hires.

"I don't believe all county employees have job descriptions," he added. "And if they do, they may not be current ones."

Hylton said he would lead fellow commissioners to review the hiring policy to provide leadership in personnel matters. He also indicated a request for restitution from Lohmiller would be under consideration by the commissioners.

Juror Brown agreed with Hylton about the need for the county to improve its personnel management.

"It would be best for the county to look at this experience as a learning tool to make things better in county personnel matters," he concluded.

Flags, services to honor veterans



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What's Happening Elsewhere

Comet staff report

Carroll County veterans organizations will pay tribute to deceased county veterans by placing a flag on each of the more than 2,000 graves.

If family members or friends notice that a veteran's grave was missed, they can contact Bob Morrow, veterans' service officer, and he will see that a flag is placed at the grave site.

Flags placed at each cemetery and markers for new graves are purchased with funds from the county memorial appropriation.

Harry Bohannon Post 75 and VFW Post 9383 will honor veterans on Memorial Day, May 28, with wreaths, a 21-gun salute by a firing squad and taps, at local cemeteries.

The group will meet at the VFW and American Legion at 8 a.m. Services will begin at 8:30 a.m. at St. Joseph's Cemetery and then a service will be held approximately every 15 minutes at the following cemeteries: Masonic, Morning Heights (east of Delphi), Odd Fellows (north of Delphi), Hickory Grove, Yeoman, Pleasant Run and Pittsburg.

Before going to Hickory Grove, the group will stop at the Carrollton Bridge and throw a wreath into the river to honor Navy veterans.

The morning will end at 11 a.m. with a ceremony at the Carroll County Courthouse. Following the ceremony, refreshments and hot-dogs will be furnished by the City of Delphi and Carroll County Commissioners.

Camden Legion Post 413 will leave the post at 7:30 a.m. Monday to conduct services at Wisler, Bostetter, Parks, Mullendore, Brown, Burrows, and Woodville cemeteries.

The Legionnaires will return to the post around 9 a.m. for breakfast. Following breakfast, members will conduct services at Paint Creek, Deer Creek, UB, Musselman, Knettle, Wise and Nebo cemeteries. The legion and IOOF Lodge will have a joint service at IOOF Cemetery in Rockfield at 1 p.m., followed by a Legion service at 1:30 p.m. at the Camden Cemetery.

At 2 p.m. there will be a carry-in lunch at the post for members of the Legion Auxiliary and their families.

Flora American Legion Post 222 oversees the placement of flags at six sites: the memorial at Flora Community Park, and at Zion, Ball Hill, Beech Grove, Moss, and Maple Lawn cemeteries.

Beech Grove Cemetery Memo-

rial Day program will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday at the Sharon Baptist Church. The public is welcome.

The special service will honor the American veteran as well as family members and friends who are buried in the Beech Grove Cemetery. The program will include singing, hearing from veterans, the Gettysburg Address, and reminiscing.

Burlington American Legion will hold Memorial Day services on Monday. The services will begin at Burlington Cemetery at 11 a.m., followed by Asbury Cemetery at 12 noon, and Mounds Cemetery at 1 p.m.

Service News

Home from Iraq

PFC Eric Breece will return home from Iraq for two weeks. He has been serving there as a combat medic.

He graduated BCT at Fort Sill, Okla., and AIT from Fort Sam Houston, where he received combat medic training.

He is the son of Brad Breece of Lafayette and Darla Houser of Camden.



Breece

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**SECOND MEETING
"PITCH IN" FOR DELPHI**
Thursday, MAY 31, 6 - 9 PM
Wabash & Erie Canal Center

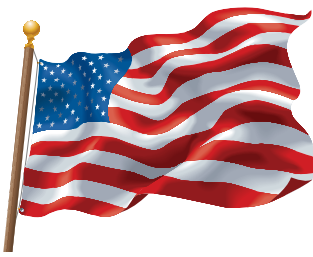
Light Meal at 6:00 PM
Sandwiches and drinks provided...
Bring something to "pitch-in"!
Meeting begins at 6:30 PM
Facilitated by Janet Ayres

YOU should attend if you...
Are Concerned about Delphi's Future!
Want to Work on Its Critical Issues!
Want to Pitch In to Make a Difference!

Did you miss the first meeting?
COME ANYWAY!!

Worn flags can receive proper retirement

Residents are reminded they may dispose of worn and damaged U.S. flags in honorable fashion by placing them in the flag drop box outside



ing a ceremony on Flag Day, June 14.

"The drop box provides an easy way for members of the public to dispose of flags," Wilson

said. "People can show honor to the flag and American veterans by letting the legion destroy them properly."

Hoard attains private detective license

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

Delphi Mayor Lee Hoard was issued a Private Detectives License by the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency on May 17.

"It's something I've always wanted to do," he said Tuesday afternoon.

Hoard said he owns and intends to operate Hoard's Investigations at 122 East North St. in Delphi.

"I'm only going to do it part-time," he said. "Don't read anything more into this."

Hoard said he sees no conflict with being mayor and running the new business.

"I don't plan on not being a full-time mayor," he explained. "And I will run as hard as I can this fall to get re-elected."

In addition to being the mayor and now private detective, Hoard is a major with the Delphi Police Department and maintains an Indiana Law Enforcement Certification.

deputy has over 35 years of law enforcement experience, 10 of which he served as Carroll County sheriff.

Hoard said he will pick and choose the cases he wants to work. He said he will not do arson or divorce investigations, but will focus primarily on criminal background and financial history requests. He expects referrals from local attorneys and schools.

Hoard explained that there is a network of retired law enforcement officials who are private detectives and those individuals provided support for him during the two-and-a-half month application process.

Licensing requirements include an extensive background check, with a criminal history review through the Indiana State Police and local law enforcement and a thorough credit history. An applicant must possess law enforcement experience or training in the field and be bonded and insured.

"This is just one more step toward my professionalism," Hoard concluded.

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