

Man found guilty of a lesser charge **Guilty**

by RICHARD HARROLD
City Editor

Monday morning, Ty Myers is facing four felonies accusing him of causing an accident which two women were killed. If convicted, he could end 15 years in prison.

By 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, an Isabella County jury had found Myers guilty, but of misde-

meanors rather than felonies — of reckless driving rather than manslaughter.

And now he faces at most 90 days in jail.

Sentencing is scheduled for March 9.

"I think that the jury believed that anyone can accidentally run a stop sign," Dan O'Neil, Myers' attorney, said Thursday.

Myers, a 20-year-old from Shepherd, was charged in 1999 after a traffic accident on Oct. 29 that year on the Midland and Isabella county line.

While westbound on Redstone Road in Midland County (which turns into Coe Road in Isabella County), Myers drove past a stop sign where the road intersects with

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East County Line Road in Coe Township and collided with a car driven by Courtney Prestage, 23, of St. Louis.

Riding in Prestage's car were Sandra Lenhart, 22 of Clare, and Marcia Baker, 41 of Harrison. Both died from injuries sustained in the accident. Prestage survived the crash.

Myers was charged with two counts each of manslaughter with a motor vehicle, a felony which carries a 15-year prison sentence, and negligent homicide, a high court misdemeanor that carries a two-year jail sentence.

O'Neil said he believes the nine women and three men that sat on the jury not only recognized that such an accident could happen to anyone, they were also aware through testimony that the intersection where the wreck occurred had a dangerous reputation and is the site of many accidents, including a fatal one in 1995.

"They heard a lot of testimony that this was a dangerous intersection," he said.

Plus, testimony revealed that Prestage was driving 74 mph at the time of the crash, O'Neil said.

Police initially thought that Myers must have been under the influence of some substance to have so carelessly driven through an intersection marked with rumble strips, and a blood sample was obtained that revealed that he had at some time smoked marijuana.

Prosecutors brought in an expert before trial who said he could determine that Myers had smoked the marijuana within four hours of the accident.

But there was a problem with this assertion, said the expert: his theory on how to determine that was new and not generally accepted by the