



Cause of death remains unknown

By Russ Pankonin
The Imperial Republican

The Imperial community was rocked this week with the loss of 26-year-old Amanda (Poppe) Johnson.

Perhaps the toughest question for family, friends and the community continues to be just what happened to cause her to become unresponsive Sunday morning and lose brain functions by that night.

According to family members, Johnson began vomiting nearly constantly during the day Saturday. Her husband, Curtis, took her to the Chase County Community Hospital where she received IV therapy for suspected dehydration.

She remained in the hospital overnight and was conscious Sunday morning around 5:30 a.m. However, by around 7 a.m., she had become unresponsive.

She was life-flighted to Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney. She later underwent surgery to relieve pressure on her brain but unfortunately that surgery proved unsuccessful.

By Sunday evening, Johnson had lost all brain functions. Family members sought to carry out her wish to be an organ donor.

With the cause of death unknown, the organ donation process was put on hold for further testing. Johnson remained on life support in Kearney as of Wednesday.

Her father, Craig Poppe of Imperial, said the family hoped to have some direction later Wednesday morning on whether the organ donation process could be completed.

"We still want to carry out her wishes," he said Wednesday morning.

If organ donation was not going to be possible, he said the time had come to move forward one way or another.



Community grieving with family

News of the loss of one of its bright young people has shaken the Imperial community.

Amanda and Curtis, her husband of three and half years, were among the many young people who have moved back to make Imperial their home.

Family ties with the community run deep on Amanda's side with the Poppe and Schilke families and on Curtis' side with the Johnson and Likens families. These ties touch many people through family, as well as friends.

The young couple, married Dec. 10, 2009, made their home in rural Enders, just south of the lake.

They celebrated the birth of their child, daughter Keller Rae, Aug. 30, 2012.

They were actively involved in their family farming operations.

On Curtis' Facebook page, he shared the following Wednesday morning:

"When Keller gets older she needs to know what a smart, caring, funny, sweet, fun and loving person her beautiful mom was.

"I would like to put together a book of stories about Amanda 'Poppe' Johnson that I can read to her and give to her when she gets older. If you have a funny or sweet or any kind of story, or if you even have a quote or saying that she did, I would like them all.

"You can message me, but I prefer if you hand write it and mail it to 73091 337 Ave., Enders, NE 69027. Thank you."

Funeral services for Amanda will likely be next week, her father said Wednesday. Liewer Funeral Home of Imperial will be in charge of arrangements.

An obituary will appear in a later edition.

Editor's note: Below are two more recent Facebooks posts that are relevant to this story, one from

Curtis Johnson and one from Amanda's uncle, Kevin Poppe.

Kevin Poppe said, "The transplant process was done and the family is back home. During this process, we ask that Curtis and Keller have privacy at their home. Friends can visit the family at Craig and Evonne's. The family appreciates all the thoughts and prayers. 5 people and their families have been given life and hope because of Amanda's organ donation."

Curtis Johnson posted, "I would just like to thank you so much to everybody that has been there for me, Keller, Jennifer, Craig and Evonne and all the poppe and johnson families. Your thoughts and prayers mean more than you would ever know. Great news was found out today that Amanda will be saving four lives today. Her lungs, kidneys, liver, pancreas and intestines have all found matches for organ donation. It is amazing this beautiful woman does not quit giving. You are truly something special. I love you forever and for always."