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### Family 'numb' after W. Liberty murder

*Dave Gosch*

Gazette staff writer (1 of 2 stories) (Color map with story) (Color pic with story) WEST LIBERTY - Loretta Kokonen was holding down the fort at Wink's Tap on Wednesday while family members dealt with the murder of Corey Wieneke. "They're numb. It's hard to believe," said Kokonen, a friend of the Wieneke family. "The grandmother is in really bad shape, and she's a strong woman."

The grandmother, Betty Wieneke, owns Wink's Tap and employed Corey as a bartender for several years prior to his death Tuesday.

Authorities believe the 22-year-old rural West Liberty man was murdered, possibly with a softball bat.

Kokonen also was having trouble believing that anyone would want to murder Wieneke.

"He was a happy-go-lucky guy," she said, describing him as a strapping young man about 6 feet tall and weighing around 200 pounds.

But there may have been another Turn to page 8A: Wieneke pu,jh Wieneke:'Pretty nice guy,' but sometimes made people angry 1A side to Wieneke's personality.

Another family friend, who did not want to give his name, said Wieneke sometimes would rub people the wrong way.

"He had a foul mouth and a lot of people didn't like him around town on that account," said the man, who added that Wieneke was generally a "good kid."

Rodney Paul, 29, grew up in the same neighborhood Wieneke did and knew him a long time. Although he agreed that Wieneke sometimes would say things that made people angry, it was never the type of thing to cause someone to kill a person.

"He was a pretty nice guy. He had problems once in a while, but everyone does," said Paul. "He wouldn't hurt a flea."

Paul said people in West Liberty were stunned by the news of Wieneke's death.

"This town's devastated," he said. "I'm still not thinking straight."

Wieneke was a 1988 graduate of West Liberty High School, where he played center on the football team that made it to the Class AA semifinals.

His parents are James and Susan Wieneke, and Corey was engaged to Jody Hotz of West Liberty. A funeral Mass will be said at 10:30 a.m. Friday at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in West Liberty.

