

News Letter Journal

Weston County

March 9, 2023

Newcastle, Wyoming

Year 137 Week 10

Court accepts lawsuit over texts, secret ballot

Judge: Hearing will happen in Weston County

Alexis Barker
NLJ News Editor

Judge Stuart S. Healy III, for the District Court in the Sixth Judicial District, has accepted the News Letter

Journal's lawsuit challenging the legality of a secret ballot, and also ruled that the hearing on the lawsuit will take place in Weston County in June. Healy ruled during a hearing on Feb. 21 in the case, which has also

been brought by a trio of Weston County citizens who signed onto the lawsuit with the NLJ.

The group originally sued the commissioners over the secret-ballot vote used to appoint a person to fill the

unexpired term of former Wyoming Rep. Hans Hunt in October 2021 after he resigned to take a job in Washington, D.C. Bruce Moats, the

— See **Lawsuit**, Page 2

Celebrating 9 decades!



A large gathering of 100-plus family and friends came out on Sunday, March 5, to wish JoAnn Fassbender a happy 90th birthday at the First United Methodist Church in Newcastle, and made quick work of two full sheet cakes. Fassbender remains active in her church and community. At left, Fassbender sports a smile next to Mike Collamer who traveled from Laramie with his wife Lori, Fassbender's niece, to attend the celebration. Below, among the gifts and photos on display was a list of prices for the year Fassbender was born, in 1933. Bottom left, Connie Reimer appears to be seeking the secret to longevity with the birthday girl. Bottom right, Peggy Jording signs in at the guest book.

1933	
~The Price of Things~	
First Class Stamp	\$0.03
Loaf of Bread	\$0.07
Dozen Eggs	\$0.21
Gallon of Milk	\$0.24
Coffee	\$0.17/lb
5lb Sugar	\$0.25
Cereal	\$.007/box
Dozen Oranges	\$0.21
Cheese	\$0.23/lb
Chicken	\$0.12/lb
Prime Rib	\$0.17/lb
Woman's Dress	\$1.98
Men's Suit	\$25.00
Shoes	\$3.00
Movie Ticket	\$0.35
Banana Split	\$0.15
Hamburger	\$0.11
Baseball Game	\$0.15
Gallon of Gas	\$0.18
New Car	\$460.00
10 Piece Walnut Dining Room Set	\$100.00
New House	\$5,750.00
Annual Average Income	\$1,550.00



Photos by Kim Dean/NLJ

SLIB denies park funding

Gray Addition will get lift station

Alexis Barker
NLJ News Editor

The Heritage Park Steering Committee and the city of Newcastle are exploring other funding avenues for Heritage Park after the State Loan and Investment Board denied the city's funding request due to ineligibility. The city had earmarked the park as a No. 1 priority when requesting funds available through coronavirus relief funds available in the American Rescue Plan.

As previously reported, several groups have been

— See **Funding**, Page 7

It's a wrap

Alexis Barker
NLJ News Editor



The general session of the 67th Wyoming Legislature came to an end on Friday, March 3, and majority floor leader Rep. Chip Neiman, R-Hulett, said he is encouraged by the good work done for constituents in Wyoming.

At the start of the session, according to a Wyoming Legislative Service Office press release, a total of 497 bills and resolutions were numbered for introduction. By the sound of the gavel ending the session, a total of 196 bills were passed.

"Of the 197 pieces of legislation that were introduced in the Senate, 101 of those bills passed both the House and the Senate," the release says. "The House introduced 300 bills and 95 of those garnered the approval of both bodies. Sixty-one percent of committee bills passed both chambers compared to 30 percent of those bills individually sponsored."

The release notes that legislation passed by both houses has either been acted on or is awaiting action

— See **Legislature**, Page 6

Campus will be coming to town

Alexis Barker
NLJ News Editor

Weston County will be getting a taste of University of Wyoming life, and a reminder of the school's presence in the county, next week when UW President Ed Seidel, Department of Economics faculty member Anne Alexander and two students visit Upton and Newcastle to speak with members of those communities. According to a Feb. 28 press release, the visit is a "UW in Your Community" event to be held at the Newcastle Lodge and Convention Center on March 14.

Headlining the event will be Seidel, who plans to speak during a brief program at the Lodge. He will also be speaking to students at both Newcastle High School and Upton High School earlier in the day.

According to the release, Seidel will be highlighting

— See **UW**, Page 7

Recent snowfall less than it seemed

Alexis Barker
NLJ News Editor

It sure seemed like a load of snow fell on Newcastle last month, but that wasn't really the case.

Despite what appeared to be heavy snowfall in recent weeks, Susan Sanders, a warning coordination meteorologist with the National Weather Service, reported that Newcastle's official snowfall for February was 4.1 inches, well below the normal of 7.7 inches.

At the same time, snow totals

increased at both Little Bear Run and Mallo Camp, according to the Black Hills Snow Course Reading completed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in

— See **Snow**, Page 8

Photo by Amy Menerey/NLJ

Despite heavy snowfall in the Black Hills in February, the area is still lacking moisture. The snow has all but melted in and around Newcastle, although surrounding areas still have an accumulation.



WEATHER FORECAST

Thursday
AM Snow
Hi 27, Lo 14



Friday
Cloudy
Hi 39, Lo 34



Saturday
Mostly Sunny
Hi 41, Lo 24



Sunday
Mostly Sunny
Hi 35 Lo 18



Monday
Partly Cloudy
Hi 41, Lo 28



Tuesday
Partly Cloudy
Hi 51, Lo 35



Wednesday
Partly Cloudy
Hi 49, Lo 28



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Lawsuit

from Page 1.....

attorney representing the News Letter Journal, Kari Drost, Patricia Bauman and Raymond Norris, had filed a motion to amend the complaint against the Board of Weston County Commissioners to include text messages in which county business was conducted, a direct violation of Wyoming law.

The County Commission had originally rejected the amended lawsuit, leading to the need for the hearing. Tucker Ruby, the Johnson County Attorney who is representing the Weston County Commissioners in the case, argued in court that the amended lawsuit should not be accepted because there is no additional remedy that could be requested by the plaintiffs.

Following statements by both Ruby and Moats, however, Healy accepted the amended lawsuit. In ruling that the yet-to-be-scheduled June hearing would be heard in Weston County, he noted that Weston County residents had the right to hear the case in person during the anticipated half-day hearing.

"This was a significant victory for transparency and sure felt like it spoke well to our future prospects with this action," said Bob Bonnar, the News Letter Journal publisher, in an email to the other plaintiffs.

Moats first learned of the illegal text messages after Commissioner Don Taylor revealed the messages to Drost, one of the plaintiffs, during an exchange on Sept. 11, 2022. Taylor told Drost at that time that the five commissioners — current commissioners Taylor, Ed Wagoner and Nathan Todd and former commissioners Marty Ertman and Tony Barton — and County Clerk Becky Hadlock had used text messages to communicate as a group since he first joined the commission after the 2020 election.

According to Moats, Wyoming Statute 16-4-403(d) addresses the use of text messaging as a form of communication for boards. It states that "no meeting shall be conducted by electronic means or any other form of communication that does not permit the public to hear, read or otherwise discern meeting discussions contemporaneously. Communications outside a meeting, including, but not limited to, sequential communications among members of an agency, shall not be used to circumvent the purposes of this act."

"First, text messages are certainly sequential communications, so the commissioners were using the messages to conduct business hidden from the public, which circumvents the purpose of the Act," Moats said.

After receiving knowledge of the messages, Moats asked the court for permission to depose Taylor in a letter dated Sept. 20, 2022, but Ruby responded that Taylor was not available. Ruby also asked at that time whether the defendants could develop a settlement proposal, but one was never presented to Moats, according to documents requesting the ability to file the amended complaint.

"When no settlement proposal was forthcoming, plaintiffs requested the text messages in an email to defendant's counsel on Nov. 30, 2022," the document states. "Counsel for defendant agreed to obtain the text messages. The group text messages held by Commissioner Taylor were provided via an electronic file on Jan. 13, 2023, but technological issues meant the plaintiffs were not able to access the provided file until Jan. 17, 2023."

Bonnar said it is frustrating that the only messages received were from Taylor's phone.

"He is the one commissioner who has been transparent and forthcoming from the start, and he is the one who actually revealed the existence of these text messages in the first place," he said.

When reviewing the messages, Moats said, it became evident that the commission was conducting county business via group messages, a direct violation of the Wyoming Public Meetings Act. The document notes that the group chats included discussion of public business and even voting on the expenditure of public funds.

Expenditures approved via text included permission to pay various bills, a variety of prepaids and the rental of a storage unit. The group also authorized a Best Coyote Hunt Calcutta, approval of minutes, an adjustment to a budget

hearing and an email to the city. The group also discussed the scheduling of the meeting to replace Hunt and the chairman's signature on various documents, including a letter to the Wyoming Legislature and a document for Ruby.

When discussing the letter to the Legislature on redistricting, the group not only approved Ertman's signature on the letter but Barton also suggested that the Weston County commissioners include Crook County in their requests to legislators, and ask that both counties be allowed to "stay whole."

Before this discussion, Barton had relocated to Crook County but refused to relinquish his seat on the Weston County Commission, even after current Commissioner Garrett Borton sought his removal from the board in a lawsuit.

"I think these text messages also demonstrate very clearly that Weston County residents were right to be upset about Commissioner Tony Barton's insistence on staying on the Weston County Commission long after he moved to Crook County. His effort to convince other Weston County commissioners to lobby local legislators on behalf of Crook County's interests is pretty convincing proof that he did, in fact, have a conflict of interest. In this instance, at least, he was certainly serving the interests of Crook County while being paid by the taxpayers of Weston County," Bonnar said of the redistricting text messages.

The publisher said that the text messages are further indication of a pattern of willful violation of Wyoming's open meetings and public records laws by the county commission and that he thinks they also raise additional questions about the motives of some commissioners in relation to the secret ballot itself.

"There is a clear violation of Wyoming law in the text messages that represented votes of the commission and approval of spending and signatures — all of which should have been done in public meetings," Bonnar said after reviewing the messages. "I also think it is interesting that the commissioners discussed legislative redistricting through the texts, given the fact that the redistricting issue was given as the rationale by Commissioner Marty Ertman for choosing J.D. Williams for the House District 2 seat — when she did finally reveal her choice almost a full year after she used a secret ballot to do it."

In addition to providing proof of actions taken and approved by commissioners, the texts provided by Taylor also included messages from Hadlock to inform the board of several emails she had sent to the commissioners, in which she also requested a response to those emails. The board also discussed the Wyoming County Commissioners Association and voting positions they would take on issues brought before that organization.

"Are any of you on the WCCA vill (bill) review zoom meeting? Asking in case we have a one vote per county situation. Texting would be the easiest way to communicate for one vote," Ertman said in one of the text messages.

Moats also said that the group will make a discovery request for the county emails mentioned in the text messages, and any others about county business over the past two years. He noted that because Ertman and Barton are no longer on the board, a subpoena will be required to receive theirs.

Bonnar said that there is also reason to believe that there may be additional text-message conversations that did not include Taylor.

"The fact that none of the other commissioners involved were willing to share their text messages makes me believe there may be text messages between county officials that didn't include Taylor that they are trying to keep from the public. We will be asking the court to provide access to those records as well," he said, indicating that he hopes for a successful conclusion to the legal action soon and anticipates that it will ultimately result in more information being made available to the public.

"The finish line is near, and I expect a successful outcome even more than I did before," Bonnar said. "I am also excited to find out what we can learn through additional discovery."

“First, text messages are certainly sequential communications, so the commissioners were using the messages to conduct business hidden from the public, which circumvents the purpose of the Act.”

— Bruce Moats, Attorney

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nlj IDEAS

Winter body count is high

If you made a movie about this year's Wyoming winter, it would have to be a survival story.

There have been so many great rescue stories, but also some awful accident stories. The worst was the deaths of five Missouri high school kids on Interstate 80 east of Rawlins. Another horrible Rawlins death was when a semi-truck collided with an ambulance killing a young man who left behind his wife and three kids.

The body count has been extraordinary with at least four wrecks each killing a pair of siblings. I just cannot imagine the devastating level of grief these events have caused.

Also, that multiple-vehicle accident on Interstate 80 in early winter killed one but caused countless numbers of injuries and a staggering amount of damage.

One of the feel-good stories this winter was how the Wyoming Department of Transportation lined up convoys of buses full of high school athletes and had them trail behind snowplows to sites where state basketball and wrestling tournaments were being held. These kids and their parents and coaches will never forget this winter!

Another one was the plow driver who, after his 12-hour shift, provided tacos and donuts to stranded truckers.

WYDOT has been criticized on some sites for seemingly being a little quick on the trigger to close major roads. I support WYDOT totally.

One of the great new innovations is electronic signboards that stretch all the way along the interstate highways. This way, a truck driver coming across Utah can find out that Wyoming is closed and it gives him or her time to veer south and take Interstate 70 and even way

south (away from the snow) to Interstate 40.

That long detour is still better than spending a week in a truckers' lounge in Evanston, Rock Springs, or Cheyenne.

WYDOT may have set a record recently when four snowplows and a wrecker were all stranded in Carbon County in the 48 inches of fresh snow.

On South Pass this past week, more than \$9,000 in fines were

levied on drivers who chose to drive around the highway closed signs. That might be a record, too.

The ice-cold barren slopes of Siberia in the movie "Dr. Zhivago" do not have anything up on the high plains of Wyoming this winter.

My wife's and my favorite all-time movie is the 1965 David Lean

masterpiece about the Russian revolution 106 years ago. As you look out across the vast winter expanses of our wonderful state, well, it is a sea of white with blizzards of snow blowing across it just like Siberia.

Perhaps the greatest jade finder in Wyoming has lately been having trouble just getting out of his driveway. He lives near Red Canyon along South Pass. This is a notorious stretch in winter.

Dave Freitag wrote: "Some 24 years ago I bought this land up here in Red Canyon. In all this time I have never witnessed blowing snow covering Wyoatah and Sage Roads to the depth that I seen yesterday as I went to town to get gas for my snowplow. The drifts were as tall as my new snow tires with some places up to waist deep in valley dips."

Up in Buffalo, Jim Hicks writes: "Last week was just one more chapter in the growing stories about the winter of 2022-23. Interstate highway closures are

setting records on one particular day when someone in the Highway Department announced, 'you can't get to Wyoming today ... all roads are closed.'

"At times it appeared Buffalo has become the parking lot for most of the long-haul semi-trucks in the western part of the country. Sometimes the weather has been 'decent' here while Interstate 25 south to Casper has remained closed."

You could assume the word "blizzard" has always been around to describe the kind of winter weather we have been enduring and the wind-swept roads that we travel along with trepidation this winter.

Not so. The use of the word blizzard to describe a winter storm was first used by a reporter in the Estherville, Iowa, newspaper called "The Northern Vindicator" in 1870. Prior to that it was used as a military term meaning to "blaze away" at the enemy. Some of this information comes from a column written by my very first editor Dick Gilbert of Iowa.

We used to live in western Iowa and, although tame by Wyoming's Interstate 80 standards, their snowstorms could be fierce.

The good news is that the days are getting longer and the official first day of spring is just a few weeks away. The bad news, though, as we all know, is that winter does not like to give up its grip on Wyoming. In this wind, hold onto your hats. You can bet there is a lot more wintry weather to come.

Bill Sniffin is a retired newspaper publisher who has penned a number of books about Wyoming. Check out additional columns written by Bill at www.billsniffin.com, and find volumes from his coffee table book series, which have sold over 30,000 copies, for sale at the News Letter Journal.



Bill Sniffin My Wyoming

POLL of the WEEK

QUESTION: Grade the Wyoming Legislature...

- A B C D F

Go to newslj.com to vote! Look for results in next week's News Letter Journal.

RESULTS: Should Governor Mark Gordon sign legislation to prevent crossover voting?

- No 59% (13 votes) Yes 41% (9 votes)

Deadline for Letters to the Editor is noon on Friday

We love hearing your opinion! Send you letters to the editor to editor@newslj.com. Please note, all letters must include name and contact information for verification. Sometimes we receive great letters, but we need to verify your identity. For more information, call (307) 746-2777.

News Letter Journal: WPA and NNA Award Winner

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Stephanie Bonnar Owner



Bob Bonnar Publisher



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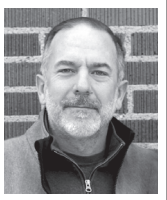
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WHAT

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WHEN

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WHY

To provide news and entertainment for, and to serve the best interests of, the people of Weston County

Hope and trepidation for Wyoming's future from the Leg

The 2023 Wyoming State legislative session has been difficult to categorize. Some of the legislation passed appears far-sighted and will almost certainly benefit our state for a long time. At the same time, some of the conduct we have seen in the session does not reflect well on those we have elected. As the roughly two months of activity in Cheyenne draw to a close, it is time to assess where our legislative body triumphed, and where it fell short.



Khale D. Lenhart Attorney Guest Column

The most encouraging piece of legislation from the 2023 session was the supplemental budget. The legislature had approximately two billion dollars of surplus funds to work with in the legislative session. When presented with significantly more resources than originally intended, the legislature did what we so often wish it would: it exercised restraint. Rather than spend all the additional

funds, the legislature put some toward needed expenditures and put the rest aside. Of the nearly two billion dollars, the legislature only spent about four hundred million, and tended to do so wisely. The remaining \$1.4 billion was split between permanent

funds — which are permanently set aside to generate future income for the state — and reserve accounts that the legislature can access in the future if necessary.

The reason this budget was such an encouraging development was that it was a step toward addressing

some of our state's systematic budget issues. With mineral revenues generally declining, our state is faced with questions about how we will fund our government in the future. Many of the options are undesirable, such as increasing sales or property taxes or implementing some sort of income tax. If, however, the legislature can save enough in the permanent funds, we

may have an opportunity to increase our state investment income to the point where it can fill the gap caused by declining mineral revenues. This may be an optimistic outlook, but, if nothing else, increased funding from state permanent funds could at least reduce future tax increases.

The legislature deserves credit for voting to set money aside in a way that is likely to benefit Wyoming in the long term.

Another positive from this legislative session is that most of the really bad bills either died or were amended to such an extent that their worst parts were no longer included. With nearly 500 bills filed this year, there are too many to individually point out each bill that was deserving of rejection. Instead, we should remember that some of the legislature's most important work is in preventing bad policy from being enacted. Just like physicians, legislators should endeavor to "first, do no harm." This year, it appears that they tended to abide by this maxim.

Not everything the legisla-

ture did is deserving of praise, however. The 2023 legislative session saw a continuation of the division and tribalism that has been on the rise in recent years. Even though the decorum of the legislature improved over last year, that does not mean that the body was entirely focused on problem solving. Rather, this year saw open development of competing camps and block voting. Rather than debate and consideration, much of this legislative session featured entrenched camps unwilling to listen to the points of those they disagree with. If our legislators are unwilling to consider input and opposing viewpoints, they are unlikely to be responsive to the public or the issues facing the state. This is a foreboding development that worries me for the future.

Ironically, despite the reluctance to listen to opposing viewpoints, one problem with this legislative session was a lack of appreciation of the process required for good lawmaking. This often resulted in too much debate rather

than too little. Nearly a third of the legislature had not held legislative office before they took their oaths in January. As a result, the legislative process was unfamiliar to many, and the nuance of when to talk and when the point has already been made was not readily apparent. The House in particular struggled with too many legislators feeling compelled to comment on every bill, which resulted in an inefficient process and slow work. Had there been a better understanding of legislative process and norms, there likely would have been more time to consider the truly meaningful bills.

As with every legislative session, this one was a bit of a mixed bag. Some very thoughtful and meaningful legislation passed. A few duds did as well. I come out of it with hope, and some trepidation, about the future. If those that focus on Wyoming's long-term wellbeing maintain their position, I have faith that things will continue to turn out well for Wyoming. Whether or not that happens is up to us.

NEED TO TALK TO A PUBLIC SERVANT?

Weston County Commission Members' contacts:

Ed Wagoner (Chairman) 746-2351
Garrett Borton 746-8618
Don Taylor 746-8582
Vera Huber 746-9122
Nathan Todd 468-2381
Becky Hadlock (County Clerk) 746-4744

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Contact information for Wyoming State Legislators:

Sen. Ogden Driskill
Ogden.Driskill@wyoleg.gov or (307) 680-5555
Sen. Cheri Steinmetz
Cheri.Steinmetz@wyoleg.gov or (307) 534-5342
Rep. Allen Slagle
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Rep. Chip Neiman
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Obituaries

LARRY DUANE BUTTS
Jan. 27, 1956–Feb. 12, 2023

Larry Duane Butts was born Jan. 27, 1956, in Newcastle, Wyoming, to Leslie and JoAnne (Brown) Butts. He was the younger brother of Leslie and Patty (McCoy). He had very fond memories of his childhood, such as camping trips, hunting, and fishing with his family. He also very much enjoyed running track in middle and high school, and won numerous ribbons that he was always proud of.

In high school, Larry became known as "Smokey," a nickname by which his coworkers and friends knew him best.

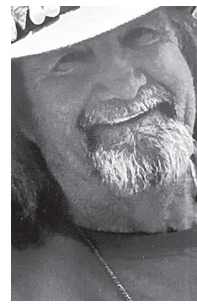
Larry married LeAnn Morgan Jan. 3, 1976, in Newcastle and together they had two daughters, Eliza and Leilani. He was a very steady and hard worker his entire life, yet he always made time to play and spend time with his girls. Larry made all of the time spent with family memorable since he had to spend so much time away at work. There were picnics with extended family for holidays and family reunions that he loved. He always seemed to win the horse shoe tournaments at his family reunions and had many trophies to show for it! He continued to enjoy hunting and fishing throughout his life and shared that with his kids and grandkids as much as he could.

His three grandchildren, Tristin, Ashlyn and Holly, were the light of his life. He always made an effort to see their sporting events, concerts, and birthdays. A fond memory of him they share is from when they were little, sitting on his lap when he got home from work. The grandkids also always loved the amazing food he cooked at picnics and cookouts, and they especially will always remember and miss his big bear hugs.

Larry worked many jobs in his life, such as at the sawmill and oil field, but work on the railroad was his career. He worked for Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad for 30 years, and during that time he developed countless lifelong friendships and was immensely respected by every coworker he had. Over the years, the railroad went from a job to pay bills and raise his family, to something that he loved and had a passion for.

After his retirement in 2017, he was able to spend more time on all of the things he loved to do like traveling, camping, hunting, golfing, hiking, and spending time with friends and family. Right after retiring he adopted his dog, Chase, and they had many adventures together. He even continued to work occasionally, helping his friends on their ranches or with odd jobs.

He married his kindred spirit, Vicki Crinklaw, on Nov. 27, 2020. He became like a father to her two sons. They had far too little time together, but they lived every day they had to the fullest. He knew how to live and he taught her how to live, as well as everyone in his life. Larry had the biggest heart and never knew a stranger. There wasn't anything that he wouldn't do to help others. He was spontaneous and full of life and love, and wanted to share that with everyone around him. He had so much affection to give and was never shy about telling his family how much he loved them or how much his friends meant to him. He always wanted to share the happy memories of his younger years with his kids and grandchildren, and wanted them to become their happy memories, too. He was very sentimental and always just wanted the people he cared about to be together and be happy. His most memorable quality were his huge bear hugs, where he would squeeze you so hard that you could feel the love that radiated from him.



Larry Butts

He was preceded in death by his parents, Leslie and JoAnne; his brother-in-law, Glen "Rusty" McCoy; sister-in-law, Martha (Stubbart) Butts; and step-grandson, Tristan Weeden.

He is survived by his wife, Vicki; brother, Leslie Butts; sister, Patty McCoy; daughters, Eliza Dollison (Doug), and Leilani Williams (Jason); step-sons, Jason and Jered Weeden; grandchildren, Tristin Dollison, Ashlyn Dahl (Chase), Holly Dollison; step-grandchildren Kiah

and Angel Weeden; as well as numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and a lifetime full of close friends. And of course, his beloved dog Chase.

A memorial service will be held at Weston County Senior Center on Sunday, March 26, at 2 p.m.

BERT SUTHERLAND
June 5, 1942–March 6, 2023

Bert Sutherland, age 80, passed away on March 6, 2023, in Newcastle, Wyoming.

Bert was born in Gillette, Wyoming, to Claude and Elizabeth Sutherland.

Bert married Barbara Sutherland of Osage, Wyoming on July 22, 1967.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Claude and Betty Sutherland; son, Bert Sutherland Jr.; and his sister, Bess Halligen.

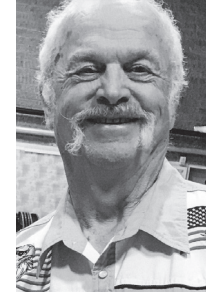
He is survived in death by two sons, Robert (Shelley) Sutherland of Upton, Wyoming, and Byron (April) Sutherland of Belle Fourche, S.D.; brothers, Robert (Neoma) Sutherland of Osage, and Denis Sutherland of High Springs, Texas;

sister, Inez Eutsler of Osage; grandchildren, Trey Sutherland, Summer (Tim) Siebert, Kas (Isaac) Bishop, Jer (Jess) Talbot, Zack Talbot, Breck Sutherland, Preston McQueen, Zoey McQueen, Irie McQueen, Aspen Sutherland, Nathan (Kendra) Sutherland, and Brandon (Dev) Talbot; and numerous great-grandchildren.

Funeral services for Bert Sutherland will be held on Thursday, March 9, at 2 p.m. at Meridian Mortuary, with Rev Norm Brotzman and Pastor Savage officiating. Burial will follow at Greenwood Cemetery in Newcastle.

Memorials may be made in Bert's name to Kitty Moats.

Condolences may be sent to the family in care of Meridian Mortuary, 111 S. Railway Ave., Newcastle, WY, 82701 or expressions of sympathy may also be made online at meridianmortuary.com.



Bert Sutherland

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Weston County Republican Party 2023 Meeting Schedule

MEETINGS ARE EVERY 4TH MONDAY, 6 P.M.

March 13: Weston County Senior Center (Officer Elections)
April 24: Upton Community Center
May 22: Weston County Senior Center
June 26: Upton Community Center
July 24: Weston County Senior Center
August 28: Weston County Senior Center
September 25: Upton Community Center
October 23: Weston County Senior Center
November 27: Weston County Senior Center

Visit our website WestonCountyWY.gov for up-to-date information.

For information, contact Kari Drost, Weston County Republican Party Chair, at Karidrost72@yahoo.com, or 307-312-0768; or call Ann or Allen Slagle at 307-746-2804; or Jamie Farnsworth at 307-746-8111.

Everyone welcome!

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Here is a photo from the News Letter Journal's archives. Subjects unknown. Email staff@newsli.com to share any information about this photo or event.

faith & values

Daily Devotional Reading

March 10 Joshua 18-20	March 14 Judges 4-5
March 11 Joshua 21-22	March 15 Judges 6-8
March 12 Joshua 23-24	March 16 Judges 9-10
March 13 Judges 1-3	Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society

- ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH:** Rev. Norm Brotzman, 216 S. Seneca, 746-2249. Call to Worship 9:30 am; Children's Church during Call to Worship; Faith Rally Sunday 6 pm
- BAHA'I FAITH:** Firesides (open to all) 1st & 3rd Fridays 7:30 pm at 15 Skyview Dr, 746-3626
- CAMBRIA COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH:** 19 Stampede St. 746-2321. Sunday School 9:15 am; Worship 10:30 am; Youth (6-12 grades) and Adult Bible Study Sunday Evening 6-7 pm; Wednesday Night Youth and Adult Bible Study 6 pm; Life Recovery Bible Study Sunday Night 7 pm
- CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH:** Rev. Kenti Barling, S. Summit & Winthrop Streets. 746-9684. christchurchnewcastle@gmail.com. Service times: Sunday 4 pm
- CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH:** Pastor Rob Carr, 224 West Road, West of Dow Park. 746-2415. Sunday Worship 9 am
- CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS:** Bishop Ty Checketts, 120 Ash. 746-4131. Sunday Sacrament Mtg 9 am; Sunday School 10:20 am; Relief Society & Priesthood Mtg 11:15 am
- CHURCH ON THE HILL:** Pastor Wayne Wilson, 301 Delaware, 746-9663. Adult Sunday School 9:30 am; Prayer 10:15 am; Worship 10:45 am; Prayer Service Tuesday 6 pm; Undeafated Youth/children's ministry (3 years old-12th Grade) Wednesday 6 pm
- CORPUS CHRISTI CATHOLIC CHURCH:** Father Brian Hess, 19 W. Winthrop, 746-4219. Saturday Mass 5 pm; Sunday Mass 8 am; Weekday Mass 7 am
- COUNTRY CHURCH:** Four Corners, Pastor Bill Haley and Micah Popma, 746-9712. Worship 10 am
- FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH:** Pastor Ben Roberts, 903 S. Summit, 746-2188. Sunday School 9:15 am; Worship Service 10:30 am; Evening Service 6 pm; AWANA Clubs Wednesday 6:30 pm
- FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:** Rev. Ron Sample, 23 N. Seneca, 746-4119. Adult Bible Study 8:45 am; Traditional Church Services 10 am; 10:15 am Children's Church; Youth Group Sunday evenings 5:30-7 pm
- GATEWAY FELLOWSHIP:** Pastor Jon Anderson, 12 Old Hwy. 85, Evangelical Free Church, Bible Study 9:15 am, Worship 10:30 am. Call 746-8091
- KINGDOM HALL OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES:** 5018 US Hwy 16, 746-2319 or 746-4517. Tuesday 7 pm. Congregation Bible Study, Theocratic Ministry School and Service Meeting. Sunday Public Talk 10 am; Watchtower 11 am
- NEWCASTLE FOURSQUARE CHURCH:** Pastor Mick Bohn, 1525 S. Summit, 746-3618. Sun. Worship 10 am; Wed. Night Prayer
- OSAGE COMMUNITY CHURCH:** 348 Sheridan St. in Osage, 465-2341. Sunday School 10 am; Worship 11 am
- SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST:** Pastor Lester Bently 612-240-7536, 78 Old Hwy 85. Saturday Sabbath School 9:30 am; Worship 11 am
- ST. ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH:** Father Brian Hess, Upton. Sunday Mass 5 pm
- UPTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:** Pastor Donnie Holt, 834 Pine, Upton, 468-9302. Worship 9 am; Fellowship 10 am
- VICTORY NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH:** Rev. Theodore L. Halls, 414 Pine, 746-4366

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. ~ James 1:19

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25 Years Ago
March 12, 1998

The motel at Mallo Camp may soon become property of Weston County. The building is currently owned by the federal government. The Army Corps of Engineers put up the building in the early 1980s to house visiting Russian seismologists. Weston County owns the land that the building sits on, and leases it to the feds. If the government were to remove the building they would have to reclaim the land to its original condition, and pay Weston County for the sewage treatment plant connected for the facility.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department is working with landowners to develop programs to enhance wildlife habitat and encourage public access to private lands.

Increased production of kitty litter at the American Colloid plant in Upton boosted the company from Weston County's number five taxpayer in 1996 to number three in 1997, according to Tom Fuller, plant manager. The bentonite mined to make the litter is found here in Weston County. Fuller could not divulge just how much Weston County has in bentonite reserves, saying that the number is a "trade secret."

Weston County School District No. 1 watches enrollment figures these days almost as closely as it keeps an eye on state education funding issues. Regardless of how the figures finally work out, the bottom line is that school funding is now tied to enrollment. Small school districts experiencing declining enrollments, like Weston County, will likely see funding shrink with each student who graduates or moves out of the district.

More than 340 participants from nearly 50 Wyoming Schools competed in the 1998 Wyoming State Science Fair Sunday-Tuesday, March 8-10, at the University of Wyoming. Jenny Kohlbrand was one of four Newcastle Middle School students who placed at the District Science Fair. Jenny's project earned a third place.

50 Years Ago
March 8, 1973

You can't transfer ownership of savings bonds by making them a gift. So ruled U.S. Court District Judge Ewing T. Kerr in dismissing a suit against the International Revenue Service for an estate tax refund of



\$15,390 worth of U.S. Savings bonds.

There will be Music, Music, Music at the Newcastle high school gymnasium, Tuesday, March 13, when the vocal groups of the school present their first annual SING OUT program. An evening of pop music has been planned and Pat Patton, vocal music director says that he, "would just love to have the whole town turn out" for the show.

Snow interrupted Newcastle's mild winter this past week as one inch of snow was recorded Monday.

Weston County has received \$19,148.36 as the county's share of the receipts from National Grasslands, which are managed by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service. The funds are used for the school or road purposes, or both.

Mayor Lloyd Avery has proclaimed the week of March 11-17 as Girl Scout week in

Newcastle and is urging the citizens to give the Girl Scouts their continued interest, cooperation and support.

Mrs. Betty Shurley's English Literature classes have been studying "American Heritage-in Literature" in recent weeks. Last week with George Washington's birthday and the celebration of both Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays, was a patriotic week. The walls were covered with "words that have endured" (quotations by famous Americans), patriotic film strips, folk music and folk dancing and on Thursday, Red, White and Blue Day, students were treated to homemade cherry pie.

100 Years Ago
March 8, 1923

The most memorable church supper and social that has occurred in years in a certain town in the middle west took place last winter. The curious

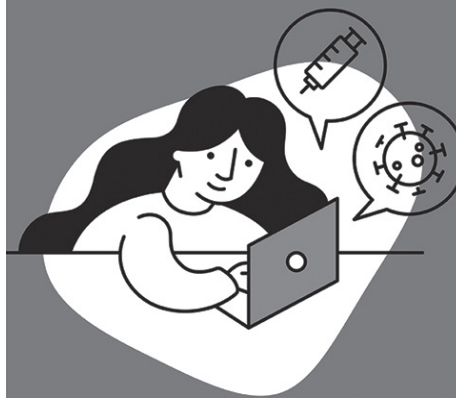
farm folk soon discovered the "system" — a self-contained farm electric light and power plant, consisting of a gasoline engine, an electric generator and the necessary wiring and the Mazda lamps. The whole church was filled with the brightness of the lights, and the social atmosphere was greatly increased thereby.

Val Kuska, the wide awake immigration agent of the Burlington railroad has been putting in some time in the northeast part of Wyoming, shaping up the comprehensive lien of literature showing the opportunities and possibilities of this part of the state. The railroad people evidently think the time is near when the cheap and productive lands of this part of the state will appeal to the land seekers of the corn belt section.

The children in many homes are finding amusement through the various electrical inventions. There is, of course, the miniature electric train and the miniature electric range, appealing respectively to boys and girls. Recently there has also appeared a simple but fascinating little toy consisting of a little balloon with a tiny trapeze suspended from it, to which is attached a dainty acrobatic girl.

Old fashion drudgery without any social compensation is decreasing among the farms of America. This can be positively stated after examining a survey of farms made by electrical interests. The chief revelation of the survey was that one-tenth of all the farms of the United States are equipped for electrical operations. It sounds significant to say that 300,000 farms are now "doing it electrically."

Learn how you can get the COVID-19 vaccine.



The COVID-19 vaccine is another important tool to help stop the pandemic.

www.cdc.gov

Call Weston County Public Health at 746-4775, or your local pharmacy today to get your COVID vaccination or booster.

The weekend of March 11 & 12 Weston County Health Services will have a scheduled **phone maintenance.**

It may take several hours to reach Weston County Pharmacy, Hospital, Manor and Home Health.

Please be patient and keep calling. *We apologize for the inconvenience.*

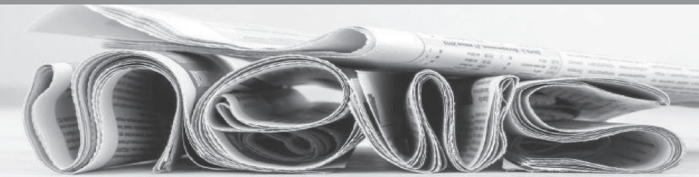


1124 Washington Blvd., Newcastle WY 82701 | wchs-wy.org
Hospital 746-4491 | Manor 746-2793 | Therapy Services 746-3720
Home Health 746-3553 | Pharmacy 746-2425
Upton Clinic 468-2302 | Newcastle Clinic 746-6720

From the vault ...



Photo Courtesy of WC Historical Society/Early Christensen Collection
This is a photo of the aftermath of the January 1949 blizzard at the East Christensen Ranch.



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WESTON COUNTY MEETINGS & EVENTS CALENDAR
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LET US KNOW WHAT'S UP!

Is your group or organization hosting an event? Send your event listings to design@newsj.com for inclusion in the News Letter Journal's weekly What's Up Calendar, sponsored by Pinnacle Bank.

Thurs. March 9	7AM 1PM 5:30PM 5:30PM 6PM 7PM	T.O.P.S. #218 Crafts/Bridge WC Hospital District Friends of WC Fair VFW Auxiliary Mtg Alcoholics Anonymous	WC Senior Center WC Senior Center WCHS Boardroom Fairgrounds, WC Event Center VFW Hall WC Senior Center
Fri. March 10	9AM 9-11AM 1PM 5:30PM	Caramel Rolls Belton Hearing Aid Clinic Bridge BINGO	WC Senior Center WC Senior Center WC Senior Center VFW Hall
Mon. March 13	9AM 1PM 6PM 6:30PM 7PM	Exercise Class Computer Clinic WC Republican Party WC Fair Board Mtg Alcoholics Anonymous	WC Senior Center WC Senior Center WC Senior Center WC Events Center WC Senior Center
Tues. March 14	8AM 10:30AM 11AM 1PM 1:30PM 3PM 5-7PM 6PM 6PM	VA Breakfast Alzheimer/Dementia Support Story Time Bridge/Dominos Dirt Daubers Mtg. WC Natural Resource District Mtg. UW Program American Legion Meeting WC Humane Society	WC Senior Center Zoom & WCHS WC Library WC Senior Center WC Library WCNRD Office Newcastle Lodge Newcastle Lodge Shelter
Wed. March 15	6:30-8:30AM 7-9AM 9AM 9AM 9AM	Wellness Wednesday Wellness Wednesday WC Senior Services Board Mtg Exercise Class Toe Nail Clinic	WC Health Services Upton Medical Clinic WC Senior Center WC Senior Center WC Senior Center

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The good 'ol days

On Sunday, March 5, the Weston County Museum District continued the Oral History of Weston County with a presentation at the meeting room of the Weston County Library in Newcastle. Rhonda Stearns, far left behind podium, spoke to a crowd of 46 people and answered questions after her talk. The whole presentation lasted for about an hour and a half, with Stearns using plenty of humor and interacting with the audience to give her view of what the Newcastle area was like in earlier days. Among the things she remembers, that she would like to see come back to the area, are neighbors having get-togethers, handshake contracts, Fourth of July picnics, and other simple activities that harken back to what she described as a “nicer and more innocent time.”

Photos by Walter Sprague/NLJ

Legislature

from Page 1.....

Bills passed during this legislative session

- House Bill 0152: The “Life is a Human Right Act” was designed to address the ongoing litigation that suspended last year’s abortion trigger ban. According to Rep. Chip Neiman, R-Hulett, this bill gets in front of potential lawsuits.
- Senate File 0133: This bill prohibits biological males from participating in female sports. Neiman said that, as a father with a daughter and granddaughters, he wants all girls in Wyoming to be able to compete “on a level playing field” and he was

therefore glad to see this bill passed.

- Senate File 0174: The bill creates a board of qualified education individuals to authorize new charter schools in the state. Previously, school district boards did not have to agree on the creation of a charter school, the decision was with the State Loan and Investment Board. This bill was sponsored by Senate President Sen. Ogden Driskill, R-Devils Tower.
- Senate File 0098: Students with disabilities in the state who complete their

coursework will now receive a certificate of completion at graduation after this bill passed the Wyoming Legislature.

- House Bill 0004: The only Medicaid bill to pass the Wyoming Legislature this year will provide post-partum coverage to Wyoming mothers for up to a year instead of the original two months. This bill appropriates \$3.8 million in state and federal funds to the Wyoming Department of Health for temporary medical assistance until 2024.

from Gov. Mark Gordon.

“Both the House and Senate have addressed a broad range of issues affecting Wyoming residents and while some of these laws will take effect immediately, many will not go into effect until July 1 of this year,” the release states.

One major bill of particular importance, according to Neiman, is the crossover voting bill. The passage of this bill will stop residents from changing party affiliation or canceling their voter registration after the nomination period opens.

Gordon let this bill become law last Thursday without his signature.

“There were no constitutional concerns raised with this bill, and it had near super-majority

of support in the Legislature,” a March 2 release from the governor’s office says. “Still, the Governor notes the crossover voting legislation may create confusion for voters. But, the flaws were not sufficient to issue a veto.”

It notes that Gordon secured a commitment from the bill’s sponsor to clarify the ambiguity before the next primary election.

Another notable achievement of this year’s session, according to an op-ed from Senate President Ogden Driskill, R-Devils Tower, and Speaker of the House Albert Sommers, R-Pinedale, is the work aimed at reducing tax burdens hurting the people of Wyoming.

“Wyoming is on the cusp of a property tax crisis. Rates have

more than doubled in some parts of the state over recent years,” the op-ed says. “Families are facing the unimaginable decision of having to sell their home just to pay the tax bill. Skyrocketing rates are making it difficult for young families to own a home, forcing others to delay retirement, and driving up costs for renters.”

Neiman also noted the achievement in addressing this issue in his press release, stating that HB0099 will provide immediate property tax relief by opening up the eligibility process of an existing property tax program to more residents.

“The bill counters rising home values due to inflation by broadening eligibility for tax refunds to more qualifying



Photo courtesy of Michael Smith

Sen. Ogden Driskill, R-Devils Tower, reads during the morning session Jan. 31 in the Senate Chamber.

refunds,” he said in the release. “The bill bumps up eligibility to 125 percent of median income and allows for refund of up to 75 percent of residential property owner’s tax bill.”

In addition to the house bill, Neiman, Driskill and Sommers reported on the passage of Joint Resolution 3, which will go before voters in the general election of 2024.

“The resolution authorizes the Legislature to create a subclass of owner-occupied resi-

dences. Creating this subclass is critical for the Legislature’s capability to bring bills in the future that could result in more meaningful property tax relief for Wyoming citizens,” Driskill and Sommers said in the op-ed. “Governor Gordon signed this resolution into law on Friday, March 3.”

Neiman noted that another bill aimed at addressing Wyoming’s residential property tax system is HB0100. This bill directs the Department

of Revenue to enlist an outside consultant to conduct a study of the statutory, regulatory and procedural changes necessary to convert Wyoming’s residential property tax system based on the acquisition value of the property.”

“This bill was signed by the Governor and I look forward to an in-depth analysis on how best to further provide meaningful property tax relief to the people of Wyoming,” Neiman said in the release.

GUN SHOW

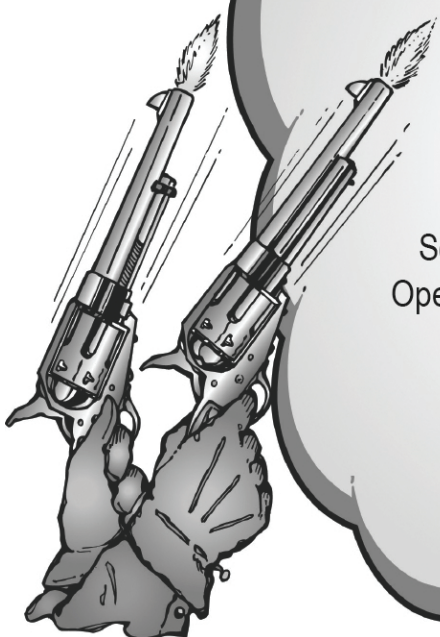
**March 18 & 19
Newcastle, WY
WC Senior Center**

This gun show is a fundraiser for
Weston County Sportsman’s Club

Food will be available!

Set up for vendors: Friday, March 17, 3–8pm
Open to public: Saturday, March 18, 9am–5pm
Sunday, March 19, 9am–3pm

Admission: \$5.00
Children under 12 free if
accompanied by parent
or guardian



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The odds of winning a bracket are not very likely

Today I am going to make a spin from the diamond to the hardwood. One of the country's favorite tournaments is coming up. The NCAA Men's basketball tournament, better known as March Madness, has had 358 teams vying for 68 spots in the bracket. From basketball blue bloods to small-school Cinderella stories, the tournament sees them all, and sports fans flock to fill out brackets, be it for office pools or big-time betting — and everything in between.

The year 1939 saw the first NCAA men's tournament, where the University of Oregon defeated The Ohio State University. At the time, and for the first 12 years, only eight teams were invited to participate. In 1943, our own University of Wyoming Cowboys, led by Ken Sailors (the inventor of the jump shot who shares a birthday with yours truly), defeated the Georgetown Hoyas, 46-34.

In 1951, the field was doubled to 16 teams, again in 1975 to 32, and in 1985, it reached 64. In 2001, a play-in game was added, bringing the total to 65 teams, and in 2011, three more play-ins were



Dustin Bergstrom
Dusty Mind

added, bringing the total to the current 68.

Bracketology has become a huge pastime, whether you study and use metrics to fill out your bracket, throw darts, pick by mascot, or whatever voodoo method, your odds of filling out a perfect bracket are a staggering 9.2 quintillion to one. I have read statistics that say if you study the metrics of the game and understand the ebb and flow, that number is reduced to 120 billion to one — still astronomically daunting.

According to my research, in any formally organized contest, there has never been a perfect bracket submitted.

According to Fortune magazine, Berkshire-Hathaway has an employee bracket contest.

Any employee who fills out a perfect bracket will get \$1 million per year for life. The prize is doubled if any team from Nebraska wins the title. That is a heck of a perk, if you could only get it right.

A quick search revealed that last year Americans wagered \$3.1 billion on the tournament. Those wagers were placed by approximately 45 million people. Some of you may have heard of Mattress Mack from his outrageous bets. He wagered \$5.5 million on the Kansas Jayhawks to win it all last year. I don't know about you, but as much as I enjoy sports and the occasional bet, I could find a much better use for \$5.5 million. I would probably invest in two dozen eggs and

five gallons of gas.

No matter how you look at sports, if you are a casual fan, a die-hard fanatic, or someone who just follows box scores, March Madness seems to pull people from all groups together. I know people who do not watch a single regular season game, unless it is in passing, who will take time off from work just to spend the day watching every opening round game they can. They then watch the next rounds as much as possible. For me, I only check scores out of curiosity. Basketball isn't a huge draw for me, but there is an excitement that draws a person in when that plucky team from small-school USA starts slaying giants. Contests like that will bring me to stream a

game or two.

So, no matter what type of fan you are, no matter how much research you put into that bracket, just remember to have fun with it. Fill out a couple on the different websites that offer prizes. Can't hurt, right? Who knows, maybe you will be that 1 in 9.2 quintillion.

Good luck net heads.

Dustin would like to hear what you're thinking about these days. If you have any thoughts, concerns or observations about our community or the world as a whole, please share them with him at dustinb@midco.net. You can also drop him a line to let him know what you thought about his column, or just to say "Hi!"

UW

from Page 1

the state's collaborative efforts with the community colleges across Wyoming to prepare students for the modern economy and to boost entrepreneurship and the state's economy, among other topics.

During his visit to NHS, Seidel will present a lesson on black holes in the science class taught by 2022 Wyoming Teacher of the Year Zach Beam. Two local graduates, NHS graduate Dylan Drost and UHS graduate Ethan Mills, will join Seidel as he visits both schools and speaks with the public.

"UW Department of Economics faculty member Anne Alexander will discuss UW's work with the city of Newcastle to perform an economic impact analysis of the community's planned Heritage Park," the release also noted.

The university's associate vice president for marketing and communications, Chad Baldwin, later reported that both Mayor Pam Gualtieri and Heritage Park Steering Committee member Dave Ehlers will also be present to update the community on the project.

"This will be a great opportunity for community members to interact with President Seidel and others from UW, learn about exciting initiatives for students and the state, and see some of the collaborative work UW is doing with local partners," Baldwin said in the release. "UW alumni and everyone across Weston County are invited for what will be a fun evening."

The event begins at 5 p.m. at the convention



Photo courtesy of University of Wyoming

Ed Seidel, University of Wyoming president, will be coming to Newcastle on March 14. He will be giving a presentation at the Newcastle Lodge and Convention Center at 5 p.m.

center and continues until 7. Free appetizers will be provided, and a cash bar will be available.

This gathering is the fifth in the series of "UW in Your Community" events planned across the state.

Accomplishments

CSC announces Dean's List

Chadron State College has announced the names of 341 students who qualified for the institution's Fall 2022 Dean's List by earning at least a 3.5 grade point average. To qualify, students must be enrolled in 12 credit hours of coursework, be seeking their first bachelor's degree, and have no incomplete grades during the semester. Cities and states listed are the addresses provided by students in the CSC Student Information System.

Kathryn Lambert of Upton was among this earning Dean's List status, as well as Autumn Mills, Kayley Munoz, and Asia Graham, all of Newcastle.

Chadron State College, which was founded in 1911, is the only four-year, regionally-accredited college in the western half of Nebraska. As a public institution with its roots in teacher education, Chadron State takes pride in its accessibility and affordability. More than 2,000 undergraduate, graduate and online students currently attend Chadron State.

UW lists Provost's Honor Roll

The University of Wyoming lists three students from Weston County on the 2022 fall semester Provost's Honor Roll. They are Elizabeth Johnson Colgrove of Newcastle, and Dillon L. Barritt and Ty A. Beck of Upton.

The Provost's Honor Roll consists of undergraduates who have completed at least six but fewer than 12 hours with a minimum 3.5 grade-point average for the semester.

For more information about the University of Wyoming, view the webpage at uwyo.edu.



Carter, Purviance and Beck graduate

The University of Wyoming accorded degrees upon the following students from Weston County at the completion of the 2022 fall semester: Loleen Dee Carter, Certificate, and Peyton R. Purviance, Bachelor of Science in Business, both of Newcastle, as well as Ty A. Beck, Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, of Upton.

Funding

from Page 1

developing the idea for a park that will include a veterans memorial, festival/market area, restrooms and splash pad. (A splash pad, also known as a spray pool, is a recreation area, usually in a public space, with little to no standing water.)

According to Dave Ehlers, a member of the Heritage Park Steering Committee, he was blind-sided by the denial of the funding request after receiving positive feedback from the state prior to receiving the letter of ineligibility before the SLIB meeting. He noted that the project was deemed ineligible because the project did not meet the COVID threshold.

"It is frustrating because capital projects were held to a different standard with it being COVID money," Ehlers told the News Letter Journal. "Capital projects were held to,

"How does this project recover from what happened during COVID?"... Whereas, other projects did not have that threshold."

Due to the denial of funding, he reported that the committee is now engaged in a reevaluation process to examine the project and explore potential funding sources.

The estimated cost for Heritage Park is \$3,412,785, and the city had requested \$2,837,785 in coronavirus relief funds to pay for the project. Ehlers said that the project now may require completion in phases depending on funding options.

"The grant was denied," Gualtieri announced on March 6 during the City Council's regular meeting. "I was asked by Dave if it was okay to locate other funds and grant opportunities."

The council agreed, expressing support for Ehlers and Heritage Park.

Lift station approved

The SLIB did provide some good news to Newcastle, however, as the board did approve funding for the city's No. 2 priority, the Duff Avenue project. It had initially been listed as the city's No. 1 priority, but was bumped to No. 2 at the urging of the Heritage Park committee.

The \$1.2 million Duff Avenue project is for replacing the city's sewer main and lift station. The grant for that project, according to interim city engineer Chuck Barlett, would be for 84% of the project's cost, leaving the other 16% as a match paid by the city.

According to information provided by public works supervisor Greg

Stumpff, the Duff Avenue grant would cover \$1,008,858 of the total, with the city responsible for \$192,164.

Ehlers had provided the council on Feb. 6 with a letter from the committee asking the council to reconsider the priority list that had originally placed Heritage Park as its No. 3 priority on Jan. 17.

"It is our position that based on the category and the identification for this round of ARPA funding that the Heritage Park application is best suited and should rank higher than the other two applications," Ehlers said.

At the time, he noted that this latest round of coronavirus relief funding was designated for capital improvements and not water and sewer projects.

"The grant application submitted

by the Heritage Park committee will be the strongest of the applications in this particular category," Ehlers predicted.

Barlett supported Ehlers' position, indicating the belief that water and sewer project requests for this round of funding would be a lower priority than capital projects such as Heritage Park.

Stumpff, however, stressed the need for the Duff Avenue and Seventh Avenue projects.

"The only problem is, we have been looking at this lift station since 2017. It is costing us more money all the time, and if something does happen catastrophic with it, you are looking at \$200 a day just in pump rental," he said. "It is a critical piece of infrastructure for 125 homes in Gray Addition."

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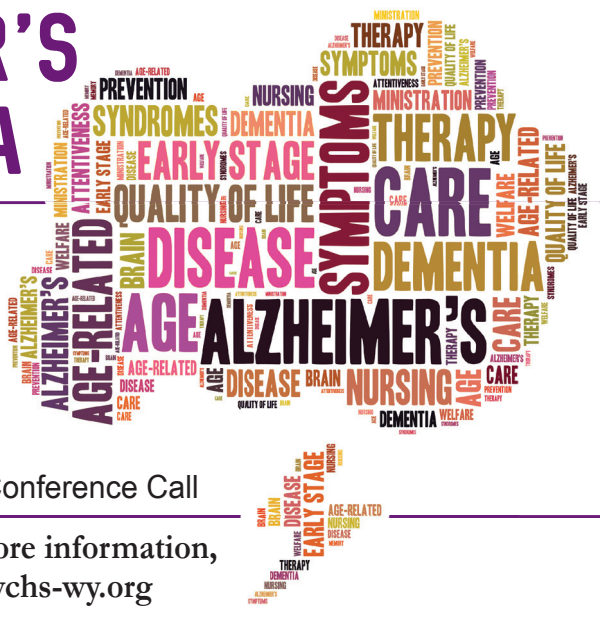
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History lesson



Submitted photos

On Feb. 28, Jason Vican of the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center gave a presentation at the Weston County Library on local historic trails. Presented by the Weston County Museum District, the event featured a free chili luncheon, slide show, and brochures Vican brought to describe the trails. Above, Vican shows a map of area trails, which includes monuments, historic buildings/ruins, interpretive sites, and points of interest. Below, Richard Kaan from Hot Springs asks a question as Dr. Mike Jording — who is also a member of the Weston County Historical Society — listens in.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

WYOMING PROPERTY TAX REFUND PROGRAM

The Weston County Treasurer's Office has received the applications for the 2022 property tax year.

The first date the Wyoming Property Tax Refund will accept applications is April 1, 2023 **and the deadline for filing is Monday June 5, 2023.**

Applications may be picked up at the Town Hall in Upton Wyoming or at The Weston County Treasurer's Office in Newcastle Wyoming.

Any Questions please call 746-2852.

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Snow from Page 1

Sundance. These two areas are the closest areas to Newcastle included in the report.

As of March 1, Little Bear Run had 21.6 inches of snow and Mallo had 33.4 inches. As far as snow water equivalent is concerned, Little Bear Run has 4 inches of moisture in the snowpack and Mallo has 6.1 inches.

Snow water equivalent, or SWE, is a common snowpack measurement for the amount of water contained in the snowpack.

Despite the increase in snow, both areas dropped in SWE when comparing the 30-year median. According to the report, Mallo's SWE is 94% of the 30-year median of 6.5 inches while Little Bear Run is at 111% of the 3.6 inch median.

The report shows, however, that both areas have significantly more SWE than last year's totals for March 1. Last year, Little Bear Run was at 2.1 inches of SWE while Mallo was at 3.3 inches.

Snow depth at Little Bear Run was reported to be 17.5 inches on Feb. 1, while Mallo had 26.9 inches. The SWEs are 3.3 inches and 5.9 inches, respectively.

Sanders also reported that Newcastle received above-average snowfall at 9.1 inches in January. She noted that the normal snow accumulation in January is 6.8 inches.

"As far as moisture content, you've had 0.94 inches this year; the normal is 1.18 inches," Sander said.

The lack of moisture content

shows, as all of Weston County remains in a drought and conditions have worsened across the county, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

The Drought Monitor reports that on Nov. 15, 24.96% of Weston County was experiencing D2 drought. In the past three months, that number has risen to 63.19%.

D2 drought is described as severe drought and has possible impacts of crop or pasture losses, water shortages and imposed water restrictions.

At the same time, 98.59% of the county is listed as being in D1 drought. D1 is described as moderate drought with possible impacts of some crop damage, some water shortages and potential voluntary water use restrictions.



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Newcastle Lodge and Convention Center



The public is invited to interact with University of Wyoming President Ed Seidel and learn more about UW's collaborations in Weston County.

➤ A brief program will feature President Seidel, who will discuss UW's efforts to prepare students for the modern economy and boost entrepreneurship and the state's economy.

- Department of Economics faculty member Anne Alexander will talk about UW's collaborative work on the City of Newcastle's Heritage Park project.
- Also, hear from UW students from Weston County: Newcastle High School graduate Dylan Drost and Upton High School graduate Ethan Mills.

Free appetizers will be served, and a cash bar will be available!

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RANGE

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March 9, 2023 — 9

Sports

News Letter Journal

SPORTS SCHEDULE

NEWCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

Ladies' Basketball
3/9-11/23 V 3A State Championships @Casper A NOON

Track
3/17/23 Rapid City Central HS A TBA
3/23/23 Laura Chord H TBA
3/31/23 Wheatland HS A TBA
4/1/23 Buffalo HS (Jerry Campbell Meet) A TBA

Ladies' Soccer
3/17-18 Jamboree @ Gillette A TBA
3/24-25/23 Jamboree @Worland A TBA
4/1/23 Worland HS A NOON

Men's Soccer
3/17-18/23 Jamboree @ Gillette A TBA
3/24-25/23 Jamboree @Pinedale A NOON
4/1/23 Worland HS A NOON

Enough is enough

Of course I spent my weekend watching the 3A East Regional Tournament, which took place in Torrington from Thursday through Saturday.

What else would I spend my long weekend doing?

I had printed off the brackets and was keeping up with results and scores from the games as the tourney progressed, and I'll admit to making predictions (in pencil) of how the games would play out.



Sonja Karp
Karpe Dogie

When it came to the semi-final match-up between the Lady Dogies and the Lady Bearcats on Friday, I didn't predict an outcome because, first, I know our girls can beat the Converse County team, and second, because I am a bit biased and I also feel a certain way about how Douglas plays the game.

I want to make it clear that I acknowledge that the Douglas team is filled with athletes who are good basketball players and that the school has cultivated a winning mentality and a strong basketball program over the years.

However, after playing that team three times in three weeks, and watching what the Lady Bearcats are allowed to get away with on defense, I've had enough.

We have a wonderful photographer for the News Letter Journal

— See Karpe, Page 16

Ladies head to state

Sonja Karp
NLJ Sports Editor

Head Coach Chad Ostenson's Lady Dogies came home a little battered and bruised following the 3A Regional Tournament last weekend, but they earned another week of play after punching their ticket to the state tournament with their third-place finish.

On their way to third place, Newcastle bested Torrington 38-25 in the opening round, fell to Douglas in a close 53-60 semi-final match-up, and defeated Moorcroft 60-19 in the consolation semis.

"It was a pretty good weekend," said a smiling Ostenson. "Our defense looked very good and the kids did what they needed to do."

Newcastle tipped off the tournament with the first game of the weekend where they were tasked with taking on the Lady Trailblazers on their home court. Playing to a gym packed full of Torrington supporters, the Lady Dogies struggled to get things going offensively, and ended the first quarter down 4-8 to the 'Blazers.

— See Ladies, Page 16

Photo by Nicole McFarland/NLJ
Hunter McFarland goes up against two Lady Trailblazer defenders in the Lady Dogies' opening contest at the 3A East Regional Tournament Thursday.



Newcastle's men end their season

Sonja Karp
NLJ Sports Editor

The Dogies ended what they knew from the beginning would be a challenging season last Friday at the 3A East Regional Tournament in Torrington with losses to the number one ranked Douglas Bearcats in the quarterfinals on Thursday, and to Glenrock

in the consolation quarterfinals on Friday.

Douglas, who went on to be the Regional Champs, was a tough draw for the Dogies right out of the gate, and the pressure the Bearcats applied combined with Newcastle struggling to get anything going offensively resulted in the Dogies being unable to get a shot off for the first several

minutes of the game.

"Even though we weren't scoring points, we were still playing pretty decent defense. We were limiting them and forcing some perimeter shots," head coach Allen Von Eye insisted. "We didn't necessarily rebound like we should have, but we were forcing them to take the shots that we wanted them to take."

Eventually, Newcastle was able to get a couple of buckets to get things going, however Douglas had an answer for every point the Dogies scored.

The first quarter ended with the Bearcats leading the Dogies 18-6, but then in the second quarter, Douglas turned up the offensive heat and outscored Newcastle 20-1 to go into the locker room with

a 38-7 lead.

"They are a tough team, but like I told the guys at halftime, it doesn't matter how tough they are, you've got to continue playing," Von Eye stated. "We've seen our guys really play hard all season long, regardless of the score which is just what we wanted, but in

— See Men, Page 10

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Photo by Nicole McFarland/NLJ

Senior Quint Perino played his last game as a Dogie Friday at the 3A East Regional Tournament in Torrington. Although the Dogies lost to the Herders, ending their season, the senior had a good year and led his team in their growth throughout.

Men from Page 9

this opening round, I didn't see that happen consistently through the whole game."

The third quarter saw the Dogies continue to struggle offensively as the Bearcats held them scoreless, allowing Douglas to expand their lead to 53-7 which instituted the mercy rule and a running clock for the remainder of the contest.

Newcastle was able to double their points in the fourth quarter, despite a running clock, to end the game with the 14-64 loss.

Zander White led his team with six points, Quint Perino and Pate Tavegie each scored three, and Thatcher Troftgruben added two to round out the scoring.

"I know that it can get hard to go out there and keep fighting, but we really had wanted to play them hard for four quarters, but that didn't happen," Von Eye admitted. "Ending the game that way can make it difficult for kids to reengage for the next game, so we were a little concerned for how things would go the next day."

Fortunately, the Dogies had no trouble putting the Douglas game behind them as they prepared for their do-or-die contest against Glenrock on Friday.

"We knew that we were going to have to play for 32 minutes if we wanted a chance to continue our season," Von Eye nodded. "I thought we did a good job of being aggressive and being in attack mode right from the start."

The Herders established a 12-5 lead by the end of the first quarter, however the Dogies outscored them 14-10 in the second to cut that lead to just three points by the end of the

first half.

"They had the advantage to start out, but then we came firing back," Von Eye nodded. "We changed some things up defensively, and they struggled a little bit because of it."

Perino - the team's leader on the court - found himself in foul trouble early so had to sit for quite a bit of the first half, but other players were ready to step up to take his place.

"I thought Wyatt [Cole] played well and was aggressive on offense, and I thought Teddy [Troftgruben] did a great job of penetrating and finding the gaps," Von Eye stated. "JJ [Lipp] kept some balls alive on the offensive end and got some rebounds on the defensive end, so I thought we did some really good things in the first half."

Having kept the contest easily within reach in the first half, the Dogies got off to a slow start in the third quarter, which is rather uncharacteristic for the team this season. Meanwhile, the Herders were able to capitalize on a couple of their possessions to extend their lead by 11 points before the Dogies began to go blow-for-blow.

Though both teams were dead even, scoring 12 points each in the fourth quarter, Newcastle was unable to make up ground so lost the contest 39-50.

Cole led his team with 18 points, White had five, Lipp and Teddy Troftgruben scored four points each, Tavegie and Thatcher Troftgruben each had three and Perino chipped in two points to his team's final tally.

"They outplayed us down the stretch, but I was so proud of how our guys came back from the Douglas game and battled hard until the end," Von Eye

NHS Men's Basketball

Newcastle @ 3A East Regional Tournament in Torrington 3/2-4/23

Newcastle v. Douglas 3/2/23: 14-64

Quint Perino: 3 points, 7 rebounds

Zander White: 6 points, 3 rebounds, 1 steal

Wyatt Cole: 1 rebound, 1 assist

Will Beastron: 1 charge taken

Thatcher Troftgruben: 2 points, 1 rebound, 1 steal

Teddy Troftgruben: rebounds, 2 assists

Pate Tavegie: 3 points, 2 rebounds, 1 steal

Newcastle v. Glenrock 3/3/23: 39-50

Quint Perino: 2 points, 3 rebounds, 2 steals

Zander White: 5 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 steal

Wyatt Cole: 18 points, 7 rebounds, 1 assist

JJ Lipp: 4 points, 7 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 steal

Will Beastron: 1 rebound

Thatcher Troftgruben: 3 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 steal, 1 charge taken

Teddy Troftgruben: 4 points, 6 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 steal

Pate Tavegie: 3 points, 4 rebounds, 2 assists, 3 steals

declared. "It has been a fun group and it has been great to see how far they have grown from that first week back in December."

With the loss, the Dogies ended their season. They will lose Perino, White and Yestin Davis from their roster next year due to graduation, but Von Eye is already looking to the off season to prepare his team for a better 2023-24 season.

"The reality is we didn't do what we needed to do in order to be successful this year in the off season. You can't have million dollar dreams with a minimum wage work ethic," Von Eye sighed. "But, this group of kids fought so hard for us, for themselves, and for each other. They practiced hard and got better and they stayed positive despite the adversity. They worked their tails off, so hopefully we see a little more buy-in in the off season so we can get closer to where we want to be next year."



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Photo by Emily Hartinger/Skull Creek Photography

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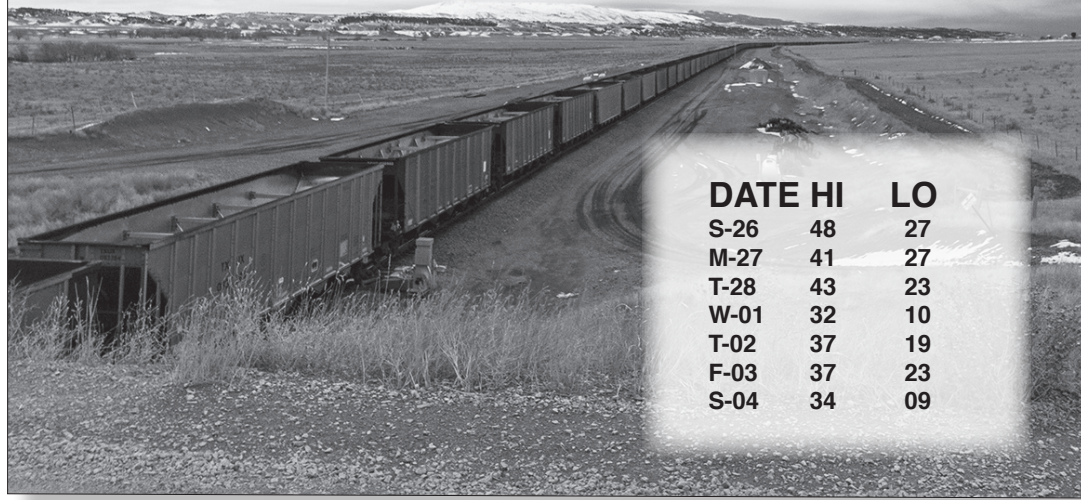
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M-27	41	27
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T-02	37	19
F-03	37	23
S-04	34	09

Legal Notice

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Newcastle, Wyoming will hold a public hearing on March 20, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers located on the second floor of the City Administration Office, 10 W. Warwick, Newcastle, Wyoming to consider the petition for annexation, filed by Jessie W. Canaday, to annex the following described real property into the City of Newcastle:

A tract of land lying in the SE ¼ SE ¼ of Section 19, Township 45 North, Range 61 West of the Sixth Principal Meridian, Weston County, Wyoming, and more particularly described as follows:

- Beginning at a 1 ½" aluminum cap marking the intersection of the east right-of-way line of Christensen Drive and the north line of the City Limits of the City of Newcastle, which lies S 88°33'36" W, along the said north city limits line, 208.7 feet from an axle hub, the basis of bearing for this description;
- Thence N 01°15'06" W, 389.09 feet to a 1 ½" aluminum cap;
- Thence N 88°37'34" E, 774.46 feet to a 1 ½" aluminum cap;
- Thence N 88°33'19" E, 143.10 feet to a "Cap";
- Thence S 01°26'41" E, 137.15 feet to a "Cap";
- Thence S 88°33'19" W, 143.10 feet to a "Cap";

Thence S 01°26'41" E, 284.90 feet to a 1" pipe on said City Limits Line;
 Thence S 89°15'32" W, along said City Limits Line, 417.76 feet to a "Cap";
 Thence S 88°44'06" W along said City Limits Line, 149.43 feet to a "Cap";
 Thence N 01°16'27" W along said City Limits Line, 28.30 feet to an axle hub;
 Thence S 88°33'36" W along said North City Limits Line, 208.70 feet to the point of beginning. Said tract of land encompasses 7.76 acres.
 There are no anticipated infrastructure improvements to be required of either the landowner or the City of Newcastle related to the proposed annexation. All City of Newcastle services can be immediately available to the area proposed to be annexed upon annexation, and all applicable service costs and fees are as provided in the Newcastle City Code. The current and projected property tax mill levies imposed by the City of Newcastle is 8 mills. A location map of the area proposed to be annexed can be seen at the Newcastle City Hall.

Dated this 24th day of February, 2023
 CITY OF NEWCASTLE
 Stacy Haggerty
 Clerk/Treasurer

(Publish March 2 and 9, 2023)

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(Publish March 9 and 16, 2023)

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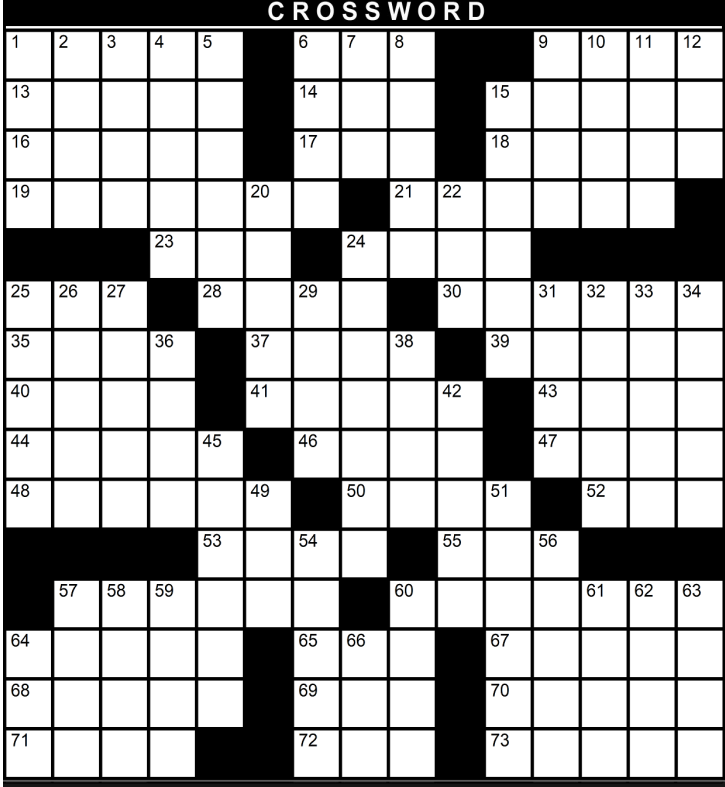
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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

Last week's answers

A	B	E	L		S	E	C		A	R	M							
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COLLEGE BASKETBALL

ACROSS

1. Matt Damon/Ben Affleck 1999 movie
6. *Top seed
9. *Player's target
13. Earth Day month
14. State V.I.P.
15. ____ firma
16. Rationalistic theology
17. Former name of Tokyo
18. Formed a curve
19. *One-____ rule
21. *Last year's NCAA men's tournament winner
23. Lenon's wife
24. E-mail command
25. Bug spray brand
28. "By ____ of" or "by means of"
30. Like certain floss
35. Life stories, for short
37. Gulf War missile
39. Dough
40. Tiny purse or case
41. Mandarin's headquarters
43. Like an omelette
44. Jaunty rhythms
46. Derived from capable
47. Party in Maui
48. Trouser measurement
50. L in SNL
52. *Encouragement from coach

DOWN

1. Bit of baby talk
2. Precedes sesame
3. Power system
4. Botch
5. Marcona nut
6. Curved molding
7. Endorsement
8. Call forth
9. Not his
10. Aquarium show star
11. Mine deposits
12. Water lily leaf
15. One behind the other
20. *Like crowd of fans?
22. "____ the crowd goes wild!"
24. Misstep

25. Obelus, pl.
26. Oddball's attempt? (2 words)
27. *Each player gets 5 before disqualification
29. *Org.
31. Witty Coward
32. Dress up or deck out (2 words)
33. Blue-Green scum
34. *Easiest shot?
36. Location
38. Hero shop
42. Never say what?
45. Abduction of the ____ Women, Roman myth
49. Farm call
51. Bewitch
54. One step to success?
56. Close call
57. Elliot Page's 2007 role
58. Home of Jazz
59. Unacceptable, to a baby
60. Gravy holder
61. ACL location
62. Short for "and elsewhere"
63. Small amounts
64. Selfie, e.g.
66. *Qualifying ____, eligibility criterion

FIND THE SOLUTIONS IN NEXT WEEK'S PAPER

Gwamma

by JaNel M. Farnsworth



WCSD#1 Warrants

WESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #1 FEDERAL FUND WARRANTS OVER \$500 FEBRUARY 2023		WCSD#1 General Fund	\$30,643.81
Amazon Capital Services	\$2,397.70	WCSD#1 General Fund	\$1,047.97
Institute for Multi-Sensory	\$6,000.00	DBA Educational Solutions	\$10,500.00
Little Bit of Guidance	\$1,387.00	Mastercard	\$2,878.47
Pine Cove Consulting, LLC	\$101,789.58	Mastercard	\$3,483.56
Pingora Consulting LLC	\$4,250.00	Mastercard	\$2,596.78
WCSD#1 General Fund	\$9,882.88	Mastercard	\$1,559.40
WCSD#1 General Fund	\$2,806.74	Mastercard	\$507.64
WCSD#1 General Fund	\$764.40	Pine Cove Consulting, LLC	\$21,109.00
WCSD#1 General Fund	\$3,153.47	WCSD#1 Activity Funds	\$5,765.25
WCSD#1 General Fund	\$631.76	Checking Account Total:	\$237,570.92
WCSD#1 General Fund	\$12,008.09	Grand Total:	\$237,570.92
WCSD#1 General Fund	\$12,407.42		

(Publish March 9, 2023)

Cowboy State Look-In

Courtesy of the Wyoming News Exchange



Offering Project Lifesaver

SUNDANCE (WNE) — Keeping someone prone to wandering safe can be a challenge, but the Crook County Sheriff’s Office can help.

The office sponsors Project Lifesaver, a nationwide program designed to help people protect loved ones who are cognitively impaired.

Project Lifesaver is supported by donations and grants and completely free to its participants. Members of the community are invited to reach out to the office for more information if a loved one has been diagnosed with a condition such as dementia or autism that makes him or her likely to wander.

A person enrolled in the program is paired with a person-

alized transmitter about the size of a wristwatch, which can be worn on the wrist or ankle and is attached via a single-use band. If the person then goes missing, the Sheriff’s Office will send a search team to respond to the area to begin searching.

The transmitter emits a signal that can be detected with a directional antenna. The individualized signal from the person’s transmitter allows the search team to home in on the signal, locate the person and bring him or her home safely.

Because the program is nationwide, it is also possible that a local partner program can initiate a search if a loved one happens to wander away while traveling.

Project Lifesaver was the first organization to apply locating techniques of this kind to the search and rescue of individuals and is now the most widely used and proven program designed for the protection of “at risk” populations in the United States.

According to Project Lifesaver, certified agencies have been able to use the technology to reduce search times from hours or days down to minutes. Recovery times average 30 minutes, which Project Lifesaver says is 95% less time than for standard operations.

This story was published on March 2, 2023.

State is Hidden Heroes state

SHERIDAN (WNE) — Gov. Mark Gordon signed a proclamation declaring Wyoming a Hidden Heroes State, which recognizes the caregivers of veterans across Wyoming, while highlighting some of the available resources for military caregivers.

The Hidden Heroes campaign is a collaboration between AARP and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to bring attention to the untold stories of military caregivers and seeks solutions for the challenges and long term needs they face.

The Hidden Heroes effort also attempts to inspire individuals, businesses and others to take action on supporting military caregivers in their communities and establish a national registry, encouraging military caregivers to register at hiddenheroes.org to better connect with helpful resources and support.

AARP has more than 3 million veterans in its membership and has made issues facing veterans, military members, and their families a priority. To that end, the organization has produced a free military caregiving handbook that offers helpful resources and caregiving checklists, facts about veteran and military caregivers, and five key issues to address in caregiving.

AARP also offers the free Watchdog Alert Veterans Addition guide, which is available online. The guide states that one out of every three current or former military members has been targeted by disability or benefit scams and advises how veterans and military families can avoid being scammed.

For more resources for veterans, see aarp.org/home-family/voices/veterans.

This story was published on March 6, 2023.

Mandatory microchip bill fails

POWELL (WNE) — As lawmakers debated a bill that would bar employers from forcing their workers to be microchipped, a certain skepticism hung over the idea. And those doubts — about whether a ban was premature, unnecessary or just a bit out there — prompted the House to narrowly reject the legislation last week.

Senate File 72 sponsored by Sen. Dan Laursen (R-Powell) failed on a 32-28 vote, despite some at-times dire warnings from proponents.

As the bill made its way through the Senate — where it passed 19-12 — and into the House, Laursen said he repeatedly heard the objection that

“it’s not here in Wyoming yet. Why do we worry?”

But the senator argued it was better to be proactive against microchips, which have been growing in popularity and in use cases.

“We went through some mandates with Covid and we all said at that time, ‘You’re not going to have to have a mask; you’re not going to have to be injected,’” Laursen said at a House labor committee meeting last month. “So let’s get out in front of it [microchipping].”

However, a majority of the House members were unconvinced of the need to act.

Rep. Dave Zwonitzer (R-Cheyenne) said he agreed

with blocking businesses from mandatory implantations of always present, data-collecting chips. However, given that such a situation has yet to arise in the United States, the lawmaker said there are too many “what ifs.”

“... There isn’t [mandatory] implementation of microchips; that doesn’t happen anywhere in the country,” Rep. Mike Yin (D-Jackson) said. “So I’m not sure why we would solve the problem that doesn’t exist instead of solving the problem that does exist — which is, there is mandatory tracking by both government and employers.”

This story was published on March 7, 2023.

Bill creates charter school board

GILLETTE (WNE)— The state will now have a board made up of qualified education individuals to authorize new charter schools. Previously, if a school district board did not agree on the creation of a charter school, the decision went on to the state loan and investment board.

Senate File 174, sponsored by Sen. Ogden Driskill, R-Devils Tower, passed through the Legislature and awaits the governor’s signature.

Rep. Ken Clouston, R-Gillette, was part of the House Education Committee that debated the bill for more than a few hours during the session. Clouston said heavy amendments to the bill made it “more reasonable, regulated, and palatable.”

Eight individuals will make up the board: three members appointed by the superintendent of public instruction who have a minimum of five years experience in Wyoming education; the chairman of the state board of education or the chairman’s designee; three members appointed

by the governor and confirmed by the Senate; and the dean of the University of Wyoming’s College of Education, or his designee.

Within the supplemental budget, \$280,000 was earmarked to pay the salary and benefits of one full-time department of education employee and cover the costs associated with approving new charter schools.

The Legislature asked that the same amount be included in the department’s standard budget in the next budget cycle.

Along with the creation of the board, Clouston said the bill limits the number of charter schools created in Wyoming to a maximum of four new schools within the next four years. Currently, there are eight charter schools in the state.

The bill also was amended to make charter schools follow the same standards as public schools including the certification of teachers.

This story was published on Mar. 7, 2023.

Public Notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Wyoming Administrative Procedure Act and the Wyoming Public Service Commission’s (Commission) Rules, the Commission hereby gives notice of the Application of Black Hills Wyoming Gas, LLC d/b/a Black Hills Energy (BHWG or the Company), for authority to revise the Fuel, Lost and Unaccounted for Gas Percentages (FL&U) in all of its Divisions, as more fully described below.

1. BHWG is a natural gas public utility subject to the Commission’s jurisdiction. Wyo. Stat. §§ 37-1-101(a)(vi)(D) and 37-2-112.

2. On March 1, 2023, BHWG filed its annual Application requesting approval to revise its FL&U gas percentages for the Casper, Cheyenne, Cody, Gillette and Torrington divisions, effective June 1, 2023. The Company requests the following:

Casper Division
(i) A decrease in the Transmission FL&U percentage from 1.587% to .197%;
(ii) A decrease in the Storage Injection FL&U percentage from 3.325% to 2.573%;

Cheyenne Division
An increase in the Distribution and Gas Cost Adjustment FL&U for gas percentage from 0.439% to 1.279%;

Cody Division
An increase in the Transmission and Gas Cost Adjustment FL&U for gas percentage from 2.114% to 2.318%;

Gillette Division
(i) A decrease in the Choice Gas Distribution FL&U for Gas Reconciliation percentage from

0.118% to 0.000%;
(ii) An increase in the Distribution and Gas Cost Adjustment FL&U for Gas percentage from 0.433% to 0.834%;

Torrington Division
(i) An increase in the Choice Gas Distribution FL&U for Gas Reconciliation percentage from 2.726% to 2.739%; and
(ii) An increase in the Distribution and Gas Cost Adjustment FL&U for Gas percentage from 1.535% to 2.291%.

3. This is not a complete description of the Application. You may review the Application at the Commission’s office in Cheyenne, Wyoming during regular business hours or online at: <http://dms.wyo.gov/external/publicusers.aspx> (enter Record No. 17250).

4. Anyone wishing to file a statement, intervention petition, protest or request for a public hearing in this matter must do so in writing filed with the Commission on or before March 31, 2023. Any intervention request filed with the Commission shall set forth the grounds of the proposed intervention or request for hearing as well as the position and the interest of the petitioner in this proceeding. Please be sure to mention Docket No. 30026-72-GA-23 in all correspondence with the Commission.


5. If you wish to participate in this matter and you require reasonable accommodation for a disability, call the Commission at (307) 777-7427 or write to the Commission, 2515 Warren Avenue, Suite 300, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002. Communications-impaired persons may contact the Commission through Wyoming Relay at 711.

Dated: March 3, 2023.

(Publish March 9 and 16, 2023)


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Alcoholics Anonymous

AA meets at WC Senior Center family room, 627 Pine St., Mondays and Thursdays, 7-8pm. Contact Stan 746-9199.

TOPS

TOPS meets at three Newcastle locations each week: Tuesday at 4pm at First United Methodist Church, call Joyce Brown at 307-629-1033; Thursday at 8am at WC Senior Center, call JoAnn Dunn at 746-2654; and at 9 am Thursdays at First Baptist Church, call Ellen Butts at 746-4251. All are welcome!

Hope Dealers

NA meets at Church on the Hill, 6:30-7:30pm, every Tuesday. Call Shawn at 307-575-6641.

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Employment Applications can be found on our website or picked up at the hospital front desk.

Fax completed applications/resume packets to 307-746-3726, or email CTurner@wchs-wy.org.

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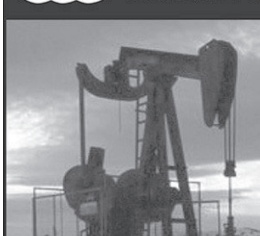
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The position is for a full-time teacher at Newcastle Elementary School. You must hold or be able to obtain current certification with the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board. Position opened until filled.

Applications are available at the Administration Building, or on the school website at wcsd1.org (Bottom of this page), or call 307-746-4451. WCSD # 1 is an EOE.



Weston County Job Opening

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Please submit a cover letter and resumé to the Clerk's Office at 1 West Main, Newcastle, WY 82701.

Position will be open until filled. For questions, please call (307) 746-4744

BLAST FROM THE PAST



Here is a photo from the News Letter Journal's archives. Subjects unknown. Email staff@newsnj.com to share any information about this photo or event.

Ladies from Page 9

“I was kind of worried about that first game all week,” Ostenson admitted. “It’s their home court, it’s the 9 o’clock game, and I knew they’d have every kid in the district there — and I think they did. We came out a little tight, but then we got going.”

After their admittedly slow start, Newcastle turned up the heat in the second quarter to out-score Torrington 12-5 to take a 16-13 lead into the locker room.

Once the Lady Dogies took the lead, they never relinquished it, and built their lead to 9 points at the end of three, and 13 points at the end of the contest.

“I was never worried through the game, it just took us a minute to get going,” Ostenson chuckled. “It doesn’t matter how you do it, you just need to keep moving on, and Torrington was a good game to get out of the way on the way to the semi-finals.”

Jaylen Ostenson led the team with 17 points, MacKenzie Conzelman and Jayde Harrington scored 6 points each, Shelby Tidyman had 5 and Hunter McFarland added 4 points to round out the scoring.

The semi-final match-up

NHS Ladies’ Basketball		
Newcastle @ 3A East Regional Tournament in Torrington 3/2-4/23	Newcastle v. Douglas 3/3/23: 53-60	8 rebounds, 5 assists, 4 steals, 1 block
Newcastle v. Torrington 3/2/23: 38-25	Jaylen Ostenson: 15 points, 10 rebounds, 3 assists, 1 steal, 1 block	Shelby Tidyman: 12 points, 1 rebound, 2 assists
Jaylen Ostenson: 17 points, 5 rebounds, 4 assists, 1 steal, 5 blocks	Shelby Tidyman: 17 points, 3 rebounds, 4 assists, 1 steal	Hunter McFarland: 8 points, 5 rebounds, 1 assist
Shelby Tidyman: 5 points, 7 rebounds, 1 assist, 2 steals	Hunter McFarland: 2 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assist	MacKenzie Conzelman: 3 points, 4 rebounds, 4 steals
Hunter McFarland: 4 points, 8 rebounds, 1 steal	MacKenzie Conzelman: 12 points, 3 rebounds, 1 steal	Oakley Checketts: 3 points, 1 rebound, 1 assist
MacKenzie Conzelman: 6 points, 5 rebounds, 1 steal	Oakley Checketts: 1 rebound, 3 assists	Jayde Harrington: 8 points, 13 rebounds, 1 assist
Oakley Checketts: 2 rebounds, 1 assist	Jayde Harrington: 4 points, 6 rebounds, 2 assists, 1 steal	Sydney Pederson: 3 points, 4 rebounds
Jayde Harrington: 6 points, 7 rebounds, 2 steals	Sydney Pederson: 3 points	Hailey Beaström: 2 points, 1 rebound, 1 block
Sydney Pederson: 2 rebounds, 2 steals, 1 block		Julie Morris: 3 points
		Brooklyn Benschopf: 1 rebound
		Emi Lichtenberger: 1 rebound
	Newcastle v. Moorcroft 3/4/23: 60-19	
	Jaylen Ostenson: 18 points,	

against the Douglas Lady Bearcats on Friday was a big one for the Lady Dogies. The Lady ‘Cats have enjoyed the No. 1 ranking in the state for the entirety of the season, and they had defeated Newcastle twice in the two weeks leading up to the regional tournament.

It was also a brutal game that took a toll on both teams. McFarland ended up having to get her cheek taped up after going face first into a handrail early in the second quarter. Harrington suffered some back problems after getting bounced around pretty good, and the

Lady Bearcats’ starting point guard went out in the second half with a shoulder injury that sidelined her for the rest of the tournament.

On the scoreboard, Douglas jumped out to a 20-8 lead by the end of the first quarter, but then the Lady Dogies came fighting back and had pulled to within 6 as the second quarter came to a close, but then Douglas threw up a three-quarter court shot at the end of the first half that banked in to give them a 9-point lead heading into the locker room.

“There were just some



Photo by Nicole McFarland/NLJ

Jayde Harrington wasn’t about to give up the rebound against a Moorcroft player in the Lady Dogies’ loser-out game on Saturday morning. With the win, Newcastle punched their ticket to the state tournament this weekend.

things that didn’t bounce quite the way we wanted to, but we battled our way back into the game,” Ostenson said. “We kept chipping away at their lead to keep it close, which is what you have to do against a team like that.”

Douglas came out of the locker room on a mission, and, at one point, had pulled out to a 17-point lead in the third quarter, before Newcastle poured it on to close the gap.

The score was 44-53 with 59 seconds to play, but in those remaining seconds, Ostenson and Tidyman hit three back-to-back threes to out-score Douglas 9-3. Unfortunately, the Lady Dogies ran out of time to make up the other 8 points needed to win.

“I thought we did some good things again, and we kept the game close, responding to their runs every time,” Ostenson said. “It was a closer game than the score showed throughout the contest, and I never thought we were out of it until about the last 30 seconds. I’m hoping we get to play them again, and if we do, it’ll probably be in the championship game at state.”

Tidyman took the reins and led the team with 17 points, Ostenson put up a double-double scoring 15 points and pulling down 10 rebounds, Conzelman scored 12 points off of four made three-pointers, Harrington had 4 points, Sydney Pederson had 3 and McFarland chipped in 2 points.

The loss sent Newcastle into the 9 a.m., do-or-die contest against Moorcroft on Saturday where the winner goes to state and the loser ends their season.

The Lady Dogies jumped out to a 5-0 lead before Moorcroft fought back to pull within 2 by the end of the first quarter. From there, Newcastle let off the brakes and out-scored the Lady Wolves 41-12 to finish with a 60-19 victory and a ticket to the state tournament.

“They were hanging around at around a 20-point deficit and then, all of a sudden, it turned into a 40-point game,” Ostenson reminisced. “Our kids played hard and I was proud of the kids coming in off the bench, because they did a nice job of not letting them score. Moorcroft didn’t score from about two to three minutes left to play in the third quarter.”

Nearly every player on the roster scored for the Lady Dogies in this final contest. Ostenson led with 18 points, Tidyman had 12, McFarland and Harrington scored 8, Oakley Checketts, Conzelman, Pederson and Julie Morris all scored 3 points apiece while Hailey Beaström added 2 to the team’s final tally.

Since 2021, the third- and fourth-place games are scheduled on an “if necessary” basis. If the two teams in that game have already played in the tournament, the winner of the first game will be awarded the No. 3 seed while

the loser will get the No. 4 seed automatically.

As it turned out, Newcastle was facing Torrington in that contest, so since they won against them in the quarter-final game, the Lady Dogies were awarded third place.

“It was okay that we didn’t have to play that last game,” Ostenson chuckled. “We were pretty beat up by then, and I don’t think any of us were sad to be able to call it a day.”

As the No. 3 seed from the East, the Dogies will tip off the 3A State Tournament against Pinedale at 4:30 on Thursday at the Ford Wyoming Center in Casper.

“Pinedale has a very good sophomore guard who is a good shooter and handles the ball well. They have another shooter and a big that rebounds the ball and runs the floor well,” Ostenson explained. “If we play defense like we are capable of, especially being in the Ford Center, we should be okay.”

Their contest on Friday will pit Newcastle against Buffalo or Mt. View, depending on how each team does in the quarter-final.

“I like our side of the bracket. Buffalo is pretty solid, but it will come down to whoever shows up. It’ll be interesting to see how it will shake out, and none of the games will be easy,” Ostenson said. “The top eight teams are there for a reason and every possession matters now.”



Photo by Nicole McFarland/NLJ

Jaylen Ostenson executed her signature up-and-under move to get by her Lady Bearcat defenders and score in the Lady Dogies’ semi-final loss to Douglas Friday at the 3A East Regional Tournament.

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who has captured evidence of just how physical the Douglas team is on defense.

Basketball is not supposed to be a full contact sport, which is why, unlike football, no protective gear is worn.

However, after watching the games — and looking at the photographic evidence — Douglas is allowed to get about as close as is humanly possible when playing defense.

That is not right, especially when bodying players outside of the paint. I say that, because there is going to be some pushing and shoving and jockeying for position when you’re under the basket, however, once you are outside that space, you should not be able to practically lie on your opponent. Defense is supposed to give offense a step, which means you can’t be all up in their grill.

In that semi-final game at regionals, three girls had to be seen by the trainer — two were from Newcastle. One of ours ended up slamming her face into the handrail of the stands and had to have her cheek taped back together, while the game was stalled for an extended period of time to clean up her blood. One of theirs ended up in a shoulder sling after physical contact caused her to fall on it wrong, causing her to be sidelined for the remainder of the tournament.

I will say that our girls tried to give as good as they got. They fought back, but the difference is that when we knocked someone to the floor, our players were there to help them back to their feet. That did not happen when roles were reversed.

Admittedly, Douglas is not the only team who has gotten more aggressive, and as the

physicality gets more intense on one team, other teams also ramp up their physicality. Unfortunately, the mind-set spreads as other teams try to compete — and the end result is too much contact for the sport of basketball.

The Wyoming High School Activities Association and the Wyoming Officials Association need to start to crack down on the amount of physical contact made in games.

There was a big push a while back about hand checks, or touching with hands, so that has diminished. However, you are allowed to body people so hard they fall over and as long as your hands are showing, there is no foul? That needs to stop.

Kids get hurt that way, and we saw just that in Torrington on Friday.

I will say that on Saturday in our girls’ morning game against Moorcroft, the officials did a much better job of trying to put a stop to the physicality by calling about 11 fouls between the two teams in the first quarter.

That set the tone for the game, because players knew what they would be allowed to do and what they wouldn’t. Granted, there were still some pretty obvious fouls that occurred in the remaining three quarters, but the difference was that they were called, where on Friday, they weren’t.

Keeping kids injury free should be a priority when it comes to officiating a basketball game. I’d like to see teams win simply based on talent rather than on pushing people around.

I’ve seen a lot of players hurt over the years, and if full contact is continued to be ignored, more will be hurt in the years to come.

Enough is enough!

NLJ ad deadline is Friday at noon.