

Firefighters Respond To Apartment Blaze

From P&D Staff Reports

Occupants of apartments at 235 Broadway Avenue in Yankton were evacuated Sunday morning as the result of a stove fire. Yankton firefighters were called to the scene at 5:45 a.m. Deputy Fire Chief Larry Nickles said the blaze was not serious. The Yankton Police Department helped evacuate the residents from the second-floor apartments. Once firefighters had evacuated the smoke, the tenants were allowed to return. The Yankton County EMS examined the occupant of the apartment where the fire occurred but did not transport the individual to the hospital. Crews were on scene for approximately 30 minutes, according to Nickles.

Howey To Speak At Hartington Senior Center

HARTINGTON, Neb. — The Hartington Senior Center will be hosting a special event on Thursday, April 4, featuring Gary Howey as speaker. The event will be an evening lunch served from 5:30-6:45 p.m. of taverns and fixings. Howey will speak at 7 p.m. Everyone is invited. Howey is the producer host of Outdoorsmen Adventures television series and co-host of Outdoor Adventures Radio. He is a syndicated "Of the Outdoors" columnist in Nebraska, South Dakota and Iowa. All proceeds from this event will go to the Hartington Senior Center, a non-profit Center for the community of Hartington. The Center provides services and information for persons in the Hartington area. For more information, contact Elaine Bruening at 402-254-6698 or hartsenctr@hartel.net.

Spirit Mound Hike Slated For April 6

VERMILLION — Enjoy a leisurely spring hike up Spirit Mound led by Mark Sweeney of the USD Earth Sciences Department at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 6. Learn about the local geology and how the mound was formed — and about the geological processes influencing it today. Cody Miller, a former USD student, and Dr. Sweeney surveyed the mound in 2010 and compared their measurements with Lewis and Clark's measurements in 1804. Learn how much erosion of the mound has occurred since Lewis and Clark's time and how much have land-use changes influenced erosion in the area within the last century or so. Esther Balla and Ryan Munes, USD graduate students, will help attendees identify birds at a distance with a spotting scope. This hike is sponsored by the Living River Group of the Sierra Club, the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, and the Spirit Mound Trust. Bring your binoculars and pack a lunch if you like. Participants meet 5 miles north of Vermillion on Highway 19.

Free Breastfeeding Class To Be Offered

The Yankton County Community Health Nurses are offering a free breastfeeding class on Wednesday, April 24, running from 5-7 p.m., at the Community Health Office, Yankton County Government Center, 321 W Third St. The class will be offered quarterly and should be attended in the last 6-8 weeks of your pregnancy. Call the Community Health Nurses office at 260-4400 #1 for more information or to register for the class. Class size is limited to 6-8 women and their support person.

Ferdig

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ing the water rates in a way that would ease the burden on lower income families and senior citizens that use little water.

3. The city purchased 35 acres of Human Services Center ground last May at a cost of approximately \$1.95 million. Do you think enough is being done to market the property and find a good use for it?

Not knowing what is going on behind closed doors I can only speculate what is currently being done. As far as the HSC ground goes there is not much to do. Yankton Youth Soccer Association currently has their fields located on this property. It takes three years to develop new soccer fields before they can be played on and currently there are no plans for that development which severely affects the marketability of that property. I do not feel that this city commission would displace soccer (and probably shouldn't) if a qualifying offer was made. Besides, we can't even get a lot sold in front of a major national box store — Menards — not to mention our struggling downtown.

4. The Joint Vermillion/Yankton Solid Waste System is examining its recycling program. A majority of city commissioners have indicated they would like the organization to adopt a single-stream recycling program. Do you agree with this, and is it important enough to contemplate raising the cost of service?

I do believe that single-stream recycling is the best option and yes I would support a minimal rate increase. The city is exploring different ways to carry out the changeover to single-stream. The

first involves the city taking on the whole responsibility as far as collecting, sorting, transporting, and selling the recyclables. This would require numerous pieces of equipment, facility expansions, and more employees. Then there is privatizing one or more portions of the process. This would still require the same just in less quantity. The final option is to completely privatize the whole service. I would definitely favor the least expensive option for the tax payer.

5. The city commission is working on a partnership with other organizations to conduct a housing study for Yankton. Do you think this is a good idea? Why or why not?

I have mixed feelings on this issue. While I feel that housing availability and price is a problem and it is good that they are trying to address it by working with other local organizations I also feel they, at times, are too quick in deciding that they need to pay outside consultants to come in and finish the job. Who knows our city better than the people that live and work here? Builders are building \$200,000 and up homes because that is where they make the most profit and that is what people are buying. Create an incentive for them to build median priced homes/apartments and I feel they will.

Any closing thoughts?

On April 9, you will have the opportunity to elect 3 people to the city commission. On, April 9, you will have the opportunity to vote for the top 1, 2, or 3 candidates that best represent you. Those candidates who you feel will make the best decisions for you on what your city needs and does not need, what your city wants and does not want and how your city spends your tax dollars. On April 9, you will have the opportunity to make a difference.

All you have to do is vote.

OBITUARIES

Donald Walters

Donald John (Bucky) Walters was 89 when he died on March 28, 2013 at the Veterans Administration Health Care Center in Fort Meade, SD.

Don was born in Avon, SD on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1924. His parents, William Sr. and Lillian (Dettelsen) Walters, lived at the family farm south of Wagner, SD. Don attended a one-room elementary school in Ree Township and then Wagner High School. He was active in all sports and especially excelled at baseball, which he considered pursuing professionally.

With World War II raging, Don enlisted with the Marine Corps in 1943 where he was stationed at Camp Pendleton near San Diego, CA. He saw combat in the Pacific theater beginning in 1944. On June 27, 1945, two months before the war was to end, Don and a fellow Marine were on patrol in Okinawa when they were ambushed and shot by a Japanese marksman. Don carried his buddy to safety. It was only then that Don realized that he also had sustained severe leg wounds. For his injuries, Don was awarded the Purple Heart.

He was to spend a year in a military hospital and was honorably discharged as a US Marine Corps corporal and although he regained partial use of his leg, his dreams of professional baseball or becoming an athletic coach were not to be. In California after the war, he was a welder in the shipyards. In 1951, he married South Dakotan Eileen Barta in San Diego. Their first child, M. Louise, was born there. Then they moved to Wagner, SD, where Don ran the family farm. Their second child, Barbara, was born in Wagner.



Walters

Five years later, the family moved to Pierre, where Don worked as a welder during construction of the Oahe Dam. He moved his family to New Mexico for his construction job, then returned to Pierre. He went to work for the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department, where he was to work for many years managing parks. He retired and he and Eileen relocated to the Black Hills in 1987, living in a beautiful location on Blake Road west of Rapid City. DJ (as he became known in his later years) had many interests, including hunting, fishing, archery and woodworking. He was an active volunteer with the Canyon Lake Senior Center, Boys' Club, State Fish Hatchery, and other organizations. He was a member of St. Therese Catholic Church, Knights of Columbus, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Marine Corps League, and Disabled American Veterans.

He contracted Alzheimer's disease. He spent his final five years at the VA Hospital at Fort Meade, where he received excellent care from many dedicated professionals. Don was a good friend of Father Bill Zandri, who visited him at Fort Meade.

Survivors include his wife, Eileen Walters, of Rapid City, daughter M. Louise Walters (wife of William Grif-fin) of Savannah, GA, daughter Barbara Walters Wong (wife of David Wong) of Rapid City, two grandchildren, six great grandchildren, sister-in-law, Leota Sidel (Rapid City), brothers-in-law Don Barta (Rapid City) and Dick (and Marjean) Barta (Vermillion) and many nieces and nephews.

Visitation will be 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. (mountain time) and rosary and wake at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 1 at Osheim & Schmidt Funeral Home in Rapid City.

Mass will be at 10:00 a.m. (mountain time) on Tuesday, April 2 at St. Therese Church – The Little Flower

in Rapid City with Rev. William Zandri officiating.

On April 3, friends and family will meet at 9:30 a.m. (central time) at Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home, 124 E. Highway 50, Wagner. Burial will be at 10:00 a.m. (central time) on Wednesday, April 3 at St. John's Catholic Cemetery in Wagner with Father Richard officiating. Full military honors will be provided by Wagner Legion Post #11 and Rollie Bucholz of VFW Post #7319.

Arrangements are by Osheim & Schmidt Funeral Home of Rapid City and Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home of Wagner.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Back Pack (feed the children) Program of the United Way.

An online guestbook for Don may be signed at www.osheimschmidt.com.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
April 2, 2013

Cheryl Wolfburg

Cheryl I. Wolfburg, 67, of Gayville died Monday, April 1, 2013, at her home.

Arrangements are pending under the care of the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home and Crematory, Yankton.

Mildred Cimpl

Mildred A. Cimpl, 81, of Tabor died Easter Sunday, March 31, 2013 at the Avera Sister James Care Center, Yankton.

Mass of Christian Burial is at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, April 4, at the St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church, Tabor, with her son, the Rev. Chuck Cimpl, officiating. Con-celebrates will be Bishop Paul Swain, the Rev. Joe Forcelle and a host of Sioux Falls Diocese clergy. Burial will be in the parish cemetery. Visitations begin at 5 p.m.

Ruling

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Furthermore, the regulations apply to an agency no matter its geographical location inside or outside of an urban area.

In regard to providing an exclusive school bus service, the FTA found that a reasonable person would conclude Yankton Transit was doing just that for the following reasons:

- Although Yankton Transit does not have scheduled and published routes, other riders will not be scheduled on routes with school children.
- Photos (taken by the NSTA as part of its complaint) illustrate buses waiting outside of and letting children off at school.
- By Yankton Transit's own admission, no non-student passengers will be allowed to utilize these routes.
- Yankton Transit currently chooses to not mix school children with the general public for scheduling and routing reasons.

In response to these findings, the FTA ordered in February of this year that Yankton Transit cease and desist from operating exclusive school bus routes. Within 60 days, Yankton Transit was told to provide a transition plan to accommodate the service through the end of the school year.

NSTA PLEASED WITH FTA RULING

Yankton Transit came to the attention of the NSTA as the result of some Internet sleuthing, according to Jim Seal, a transportation consultant based in Santa Monica, Calif., who works with the organization.

The NSTA is a membership and advocacy group for private school bus contractors, manufacturers and suppliers.

"What we periodically do in the rural areas is go to the websites of the transit agencies," Seal said. "Yankton caught my eye for one simple reason: It had a student fare rate. That tells me something right there. It lays the basis for providing a school bus service."

It soon became clear that Yankton Transit was providing an exclusive school bus service, he stated.

"What Congress intended (by the FTA rules) is that federally funded transit agencies should not put private yellow bus operators out of business," Seal said. "They can potentially go in and offer an arrangement with a school district that is far below what the cost actually is."

The key to Yankton Transit being able to provide transportation solely for school children, while still being capable of providing services to the general public, was the accumulation of "excess" buses, Seal stated. The agency has a dozen vehicles in its fleet.

"With those excess buses, Yankton Transit could do all kinds of things," he said. "What's the point of having a yellow bus service if you're going to go around and provide yellow bus service without all the federal regulations that are attached to a yellow bus service?"

The FTA noted the number of Yankton Transit vehicles in its February decision.

"FTA is concerned with Yankton Transit's excess accumulation of buses and drivers, which has allowed it to perform this exclusive school bus service, and encourages Yankton Transit to work with FTA's Regional Office to ensure the transit agency is in compliance with all applicable federal regulations," it wrote.

In its Feb. 19 response to the FTA, Yankton Transit said that the new operating rules may reduce its ridership and result in the need for fewer buses.

"We will evaluate our needs on an ongoing basis and release or transfer any federal assets not needed to provide service," Bentson wrote.

Seal said most FTA-funded agencies follow the rules, but the NSTA has filed similar complaints to the one against Yankton Transit in cases throughout the United States.

"However, this is the first time I've seen where there were no disagreements between the parties on the facts of the case," he added.

"I think the Yankton response was a very fair one after they read the FTA decision," Seal continued. "They did not contest the arguments the FTA made in its decision, and they implemented a fair resolution to the situation they found themselves in."

Now, Yankton is in the same situation as many communities

around the nation, according to Seal. Parents in those places have found solutions to the challenges they face in transporting their children to school.

"For example, parents can get together and hire an extra yellow bus or two from operators to provide that service so they know it is exclusive service," Seal said. "There are ways to provide that service and fulfill the intent of the federal law."

AGENCY ADJUSTS TO RULING

Bentson said that Yankton Transit will begin operating under new guidelines today (Tuesday).

"We did dummy runs Friday and (Monday) to see how our routing system is going to go (today)," she stated. "I think it's going to work just fine. It's just going to be different."

In the past, Bentson said Yankton Transit utilized routing rules that took precedence over normal scheduling software preferences that would route rides in the most efficient manner. These routing rules were used to assign students to particular buses going to a single destination.

Now, a child going to a school, daycare or any other destination will be routed just as any other member of the general public. Also, any bus picking students up from school will be open to any other rider.

Bentson, as well as parents, believed the routing rules were a safety measure to protect children.

"I didn't want anyone else on that bus," she said. "I would select the bus and the driver so it was an exclusive service for those kids. We did that with every school in town. We would take all the high school kids. We would take all the Lincoln Elementary kids and so on. We had the same driver, so the kids knew their driver very well. The driver knew every child well, too. That was a big safety thing. The driver would watch out for those kids."

"We would not let any other individuals on those buses, but the buses were full so we didn't have room for anybody else," Bentson added.

Parents have been asking Bentson whether Yankton Transit can guarantee that their children will be seated next to other children or whether it can assure that buses will arrive at the schools by

Gilfred Cogan

A memorial service for Gilfred G. Cogan, 90, of Tyndall will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 4 at the Goglin Funeral Chapel in Tyndall. Inurnment will follow in the Tyndall Cemetery, with military honors.

Gilfred died on Sunday, March 31, 2013 at the Avera Sister James Care Center in Yankton.

Online condolences may be sent at www.goglinfh.com.

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Wednesday evening at the church with a Wake service at 7 p.m. Visitation will resume one hour prior to the service at the church.

The Opsahl-Kostel Memorial Chapel, Tabor, is in charge of arrangements.

Lawrence (Larry)

Noecker

Lawrence (Larry) Noecker, 72 of Yankton died Monday, April 1, 2013, at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, Yankton.

Arrangements are pending under the care of the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home and Crematory, Yankton.

a certain time. The answer in both cases is no.

"The age group we're really losing is pre-school students," Bentson said. "I don't blame the parents."

Of the 80 pre-school students Yankton Transit was previously contracted to transport, parents of 14 of those students have terminated their agreements so far. Bentson said more may follow suit.

The issue recently caught the attention of District 18 Rep. Bernie Hunhoff after parents expressed concerns to him.

"It may not seem like a big deal to those of us with flexibility at the workplace and plenty of family support near at hand, but a lot of people work in factories or hospitals or schools where they can't easily get away to transport their youngsters," he said. "It's ironic that the issue comes up at a time when we're focused on student safety both on the state and national level. We're talking about locking the school doors, arming teachers, installing bullet-proof glass and keeping voters out of the schools — yet at the same time, the government tells us a local transit service must let anybody and everybody on their buses with school children. This is a classic case of the left hand of government not knowing what the right hand is doing."

Hunhoff said he understands the desire to protect private enterprise, but added that Yankton Transit was running a program that met the needs of working families. He has written letters to South Dakota's federal delegation asking for any assistance they can provide in this matter.

"It's a sad reminder that when we run a program with funding from afar, the strings attached don't always make a lot of sense locally," Hunhoff stated. "Hopefully, with some help from our Washington delegation, we can get the Federal Transit Administration to rethink its February ruling."

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnnInland-Voyage

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