



Sunny

9 a.m.: 38 | 3 p.m.: 48 | DETAILS: PAGE 2A

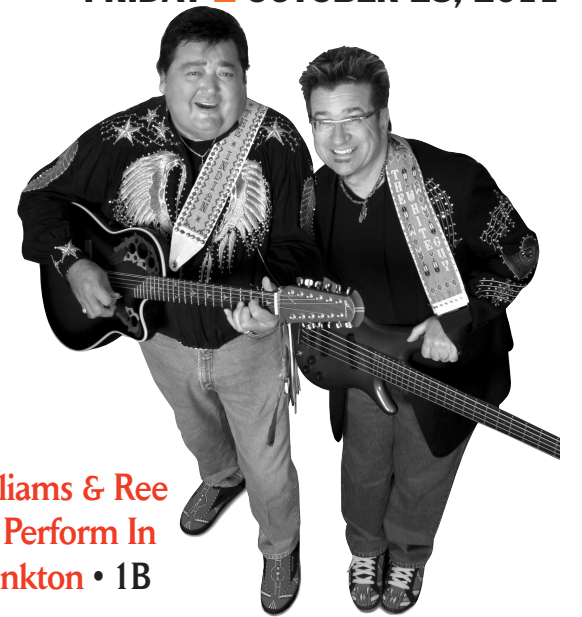


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INSIDE TODAY

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PLAYOFF PUSH!

Thursday was Nebraska's turn to commence high school football playoffs, with several teams in the area qualifying for postseason play. RIGHT: Crofton running back Tom Peitz, left, tries to break through a tackle by Hershey's Josh Margritz in the first quarter of their Nebraska Class C-2 first round playoff game Thursday afternoon in Crofton, Neb. (Jeremy Hoeck/P&D) LEFT: Hartington Cedar Catholic fan Rhonda Becker puts team pride at face value during the Trojans' first-round opener against Stanton in C-2 play. (Kelly Hertz/P&D). For details, see page 8A.



Inmate Who Killed Guard Sentenced To Death

Judge Says Rehabilitation For Robert Was Unlikely

BY KRISTI EATON
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — A South Dakota inmate was sentenced to death Thursday for killing a prison guard by bashing him with a pipe, covering his mouth with plastic wrap and then wearing the dead man's uniform during an attempt to escape.

Eric Robert, 49, had pleaded guilty in September to killing Ronald "R.J." Johnson on April 12 — Johnson's birthday — as he tried to sneak past other security. Robert waived his right to a jury trial and had asked the judge to sentence him to death, saying his one regret was that he did not kill another officer and that he will kill again.

Second Circuit Judge Bradley Zell, in ordering him to die by lethal injection, said Robert's attack on Johnson went beyond trying to incapacitate him and Robert showed "extreme anger to the point of hatred."

Robert nodded when the judge said he was not likely to be rehabilitated, and that his need for control would lead him to kill again. He had told Zell during his pre-sentencing hearing that he was so full of anger and hungry for freedom the day of the escape attempt that he would have killed anyone who stood in his way.

"Brad Zell, if you stood between me and the door of freedom, I would kill you," Robert said.

Robert said he was sorry he did

not bring the pipe with him to the gate to kill the officer who stopped him. Once he realized his plan was going to fail, Robert said he began climbing up the wall of the prison — not to escape but to try to reach for the rifle of an officer on the lookout.

"I would have shot that weapon until it was empty," he said.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley had said during pre-sentencing that the state was seeking the death penalty based on five aggravating factors. They were: the death of a correctional officer, the manner of death, where and why it occurred, and the defendants' criminal background.

Zell had to find at least one was present during the killing to sentence Robert to death.

Jackley, standing in front of Johnson's family while speaking to reporters, said the case shows that the death penalty is reserved for the most heinous crimes.

"It is my position justice has been served in this case," Jackley said.

Mark Kadi, Robert's attorney, said Robert will not take any additional steps to delay the execution, but the state Supreme Court will look over the sentence as part of a mandatory process.

"It's a situation where you see everyone gets what they want, but everyone is still miserable," Kadi said.

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The Sounds Of Silence

Organist To Liven Up Silent Film With Music

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of the Press & Dakotan's monthly series spotlighting occupations, tasks and duties in our coverage area.

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
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A timeless story of unrequited love gone wrong will offer a spooky experience for Yankton's Halloween this Sunday, when the United Church of Christ-Congregational presents the classic 1925 silent film "The Phantom Of The Opera," accompanied by church organist Ted Powell.



Powell, who is improvising the music performed with the silent film, said he got the idea from a newsletter his daughter showed him.

"I read about an organist who had done this where my daughter lives, and I thought, 'What a cool thing to do in Yankton around Halloween,'" he said. "I investigated a little bit. The whole idea of the silent movies was that the organist or pianist in the local theaters were the sound. I have always been very into improvisation, or playing without scripted music. So I thought this would be a very fun thing to do."

By today's standards, the movie is not filled with special effects.

"The movie — which has no connection to the Broadway film; in fact you won't hear any music from the Broadway show at all — features the great actor Lon Chaney who haunts the Paris Opera house as the phantom, and (tells of) his love for Christine Daae, the beautiful singer of the opera," Powell said. "The love between them will never happen, much to the phantom's regret, and the story revolves around all the things that happen to them and the people around them."

Powell noted that the lighting and acting in the movie was cutting edge for the time it was done.

"The thing I was surprised about was how there are lots of effects in this," he said. "We don't realize how cutting edge the lighting they used was. We are so used to computer-generated effects. ... The acting has to show the emotion. Once in a while, there are words that come up. It is like they held a placard up, which maybe they did. But everything else was done with the lighting."

The film, directed by Rupert Julian and based on Gaston Leroux's novel, was a sensation in 1925, with Chaney at the height of his box office power. His



SHAUNA MARLETTE/P&D
The United Church Of Christ-Congregational will be the site of a viewing of the silent film "The Phantom Of The Opera" (1925) accompanied by Ted Powell, pictured, on the 48 rank Yankton College organ.

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The iconic 1925 silent film "The Phantom of the Opera" starring Lon Chaney (left) will be shown at Yankton's United Church of Christ Sunday night, with Ted Powell supplying musical accompaniment. (Courtesy photo)

Work Under Way At USPS Fox Run Annex

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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Renovation of the U.S. Postal Service's (USPS) Fox Run Annex has begun, according to a spokesman for the agency.

Work at the facility in the 500 block of West 25th Street got under way a couple of weeks ago, said Peter Nowacki. The project includes construction of retail space, the addition of post office box

units and an expansion of the parking lot.

"We do not have a move date (from the downtown post office location) but are hoping for mid-December," he continued. "We will notify the public when we set a move date. Post office box customers will receive letters instructing them on how to exchange keys before the move."

Nowacki stated that only two free-standing box units in the lobby of the post office along Walnut Street will be

moved to the Fox Run Annex. Otherwise, new post office boxes will be installed.

Once the renovations are complete at Fox Run, the downtown post office will be closed. It has been on the market for months.

The USPS has also awarded a contract to Boller Printing at 308 Douglas Avenue to operate a contract postal unit (CPU) like the one at Yankton's Hy-Vee. A CPU provides a wide range of USPS services.

Kathy Church, who co-owns Boller Printing with her sister, Kristy Wyland, said they decided in June to put a bid in for the CPU. The were notified that they had been awarded the CPU last week and hope to have it operational by mid-November.

"We're very excited about it. I think it's a great thing to keep it (downtown)," Church said. "There has been a lot of positive feedback. We hope people will use downtown Yankton's CPU."

Old Mill Gets Spooky Makeover

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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It's one of the oldest structures in Yankton, so it's perhaps only natural that the Excelsior Flour Mill's time has come to serve as the backdrop to a Halloween party this Saturday.

And though the building located in the 100 block of Capitol Street across from the Ice House will be decorated to inspire chills and thrills, the real focus of the night will be to raise money for the Boys' and Girls' Club of Yankton.

A portion of the age 21 and over event's sales and all tips will go to the organization. "The Boys' and Girls' Club is a great organization in the community," said Aaron Hatle,

manager of the Landing Bar. "It's nice that we have the space that we have to do something to support them."

No cover will be charged to enter the "Old Mill Halloween Party," which will also encompass the Landing Bar next door. Attendees will be free to split their time between both facilities.

Hatle said he has been planning to hold an event at the mill since early September. He and members of the Gurney Redevelopment Group, which owns the buildings, didn't know then that it would be a Halloween party. It soon dawned on them that the holiday would be the



KELLY HERTZ/P&D
Paul Remmes, left, and Paul Lowrie, members of the Gurney Redevelopment Group, are seen here with Paul Thomasian, middle, who has been a consultant for the Landing Bar, in between decorating the Excelsior Mill for a Saturday Halloween party.

MILL | PAGE 12A



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TOMORROW: Sierra Club Proposes Changes To Missouri River Management

