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Thermopolis  
Hot Springs

# Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

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## Bart Voigt recalls storied career

by Cindy Glasson

Thermopolis native and former Wyoming Supreme Court Chief Justice Barton Voigt ended 2013 by retiring to sunny Florida after practicing law in Wyoming for more than 30 years.

Voigt didn't start out to be an attorney, but rather taught history at Riverton High School after receiving both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in American History at the University of Wyoming. He also received his Juris Doctorate from the university.

His days teaching were short lived after finding 90 percent of the students wished they were somewhere else.

A job opening at the state Archives and Historical Department in Cheyenne followed, and two years later he moved to the South Dakota Historical Department in Pierre.



Barton Voigt

It was there he learned that persistent symptoms of a head cold he'd been experiencing were actually due to an allergy to dust and mold, something he was in constant contact with while exploring the dusty boxes for historical artifacts.

That led him to pursue his law degree at the University of Wyoming, graduating in 1979.

He returned home to Thermopolis, opening his practice with Louis Walrath, whom he worked with for the next 10 years.

At one point during that time, Walrath took a break from practicing law to try his hand in the banking business.

Voigt called a friend to come up from Rawlins and help him in the public defender's office, saying "nothing ever happens here."

"No sooner did he get here than we started having, I swear,

a murder a week in Hot Springs or Washakie county," Voigt said.

During that time there was the Robert Clegg case, the Carmen Pepper case and the death of a local man who was severely beaten, lingering in the hospital for a month before he finally succumbed.

"That case had a lot of interesting legal issues," Voigt said. "Things around Thermopolis were a lot more active than people would have imagined."

It was also during this time that a life-long friendship was begun between Voigt and John Lumley, Jr.

Lumley was an investigator with the sheriff's office and many times the two were on opposite sides of the table in a case.

"We really taught each other," Voigt said. "And we became good friends in the end."

Voigt also served as Hot Springs County and Prosecuting Attorney for two terms.

See Voigt on page 7

## Hitting the Warren Hill slope



Shannon Shaffer and her granddaughter Taetum Fuller ride a sled down Warren Hill around noon Christmas Day. Several families have taken part in using the sled area, which is closed off by the Town of Thermopolis. — J.D. Stetson photo

## Vehicle larceny case dismissed

A felony case against Ryan R. Webster in Hot Springs County District Court was dismissed in December by Fifth Judicial District Court Judge Robert E. Skar because it violated interstate detainer laws, which require the defendant be brought to trial within 180 days after requesting final disposition in the case.

The case charged Webster, who was 34 at the time of being bound over in August, with one count of larceny of property valued at \$1,000 or more.

Prosecutors alleged that Webster stole a Cadillac Escalade Jan. 25, 2012, from outside of an Arapahoe Street residence in Thermopolis.

Webster was apprehended near the Colorado border south of Cheyenne after an alleged high-

speed chase involving Wyoming Highway Patrol and Colorado State Troopers.

Skar granted a motion to dismiss the case because Webster was not brought to trial on the charge within 180 days after Webster requested final disposition in the case.

County Attorney Jerry Williams said his office has filed a motion for the judge to reconsider the dismissal based on several issues involving the timeline in the case that Williams believes should have affected the deadline for interstate detainer.

Williams said he wanted to wait for the judge's ruling on the motion before commenting further on the case.

# Hospital district initiative top local story of 2013

Hot Springs County voters rejected a ballot initiative to form a hospital district on Nov. 5 and that was the top local story of 2013 as determined by the Independent Record's editorial staff. The initiative received 877 votes against and 666 for the creation of a district. The voter turnout was 1,546, or 58.56 percent of total voters. The results broke down to 56.73 percent against the issue and 43.08 percent in favor.

Ranked second among the top local stories of 2013 was the appointment of Isabelle Willson to replace Mickey Jean Ford after Ford's retirement as Hot Springs County treasurer in mid-January. There has been something of a controversy over Ford's replacement. Most residents of the county figured the job would automatically go to Ford's second-in-command at the treasurer's office, Julie Mortimore. However, by statute, as Ford was a registered Republican, it was up to the Hot Springs County Republican Central Committee to seek out qualified candidates, narrow the prospective applicant pool and present three names for consideration to the county commissioners.

Hot Springs County celebrated its centennial in 2013 and that ranked as the No. 3 story. A day of celebration of the county's 100th birthday was held June 22.

The No. 4 story of 2013 revolved around the Hot Springs County Commissioners filing an appeal to the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs Division, regarding land south of Thermopolis that has been placed in trust for the Northern Arapaho Tribe. The Tribe has suggested the land could be used for farming or ranching (its current use) or "might include gaming and other such uses which will promote the economic interests of the Northern Arapaho Tribe and

its members."

Rounding out the top five stories of the year was the issue of the deteriorating condition of the Rainbow Terraces in Hot Springs State Park. In July, the county commissioners penned a letter to Gov. Matt Mead, asking his input on what steps the state intends to take to resolve the issue of the Rainbow Terraces' lack of water. In his response, Mead indicated he had asked the director of State Parks and Cultural Resources, Milward Simpson, to provide him with background on the issue. Simpson suggested a meeting with the commissioners, which was then held Dec. 10. It was determined the state



The official Hot Springs County Centennial Tree, a bur oak, was planted Saturday, June 8 north of the library in Thermopolis. Pictured, from left, are State Rep. Nathan Winters and county officials Mike Baker, Chuck Carver, Ray Shaffer, Brad Basse and Shelley Deromedi. A dedication ceremony was held after the planting. — Joe Sova file photo

would work with the county and Hot Springs State Park on possible solutions to the Rainbow Terraces issue.

See the graphic with this story for the top 10 local stories of 2013.

Here are the top stories from May through August in 2013 (a recap of stories from September-December 2013 will appear in the Jan. 9 issue of the Independent Record):

ternative school is now inside the vo-tech building, just south of the administration building, which houses the school auditorium.

The relocation project was completed after some shuffling in the vo-tech building. The Learning Center is in the large room formerly used by Britton Van Heule as the agriculture classroom. Van Heule said he is pleased with his classroom being

relocated in the same building, closer to the high school building, and it means more convenience for his students.

After the new LC classroom was spruced up, desks and computer equipment were moved from the former alternative school in the RE/MAX building on South Sixth Street last week. District Technology Director Rick Engelbrecht and Technology Specialists Steve Radabaugh and Curtis Hamer handled the computer transition process.

**May 16** — Wyoming's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Cindy Hill, has been hitting the road of late, answering questions

"I went into this with a certain focus, certain goals," Hill said Saturday.

Shewas surprised, however, when she arrived in Cheyenne only to be met with what could be termed a "cold shoulder" by those who were to be her colleagues during her term in office. "Employees wouldn't make eye contact with me," she said. "They were told not to engage with me."

**May 23** — Innovation is the name of the game in the high-tech society in which we live and the honor students who were in the spotlight during the commencement exercises for the Hot Springs County High School Class of 2013 exhibited their own version of innovation when they addressed those attending the graduation ceremony Sunday in the high school gymnasium. Tri-valentorians Tanner Abbott, Jennifer Cramer and Brianna Hill, and salutatorian Laurel Leonhardt took turns speaking about their "1001 tips for high school graduates, or things we learned in high school."

**May 30** — After six years of waiting, the Red Rock Commercial Center is finally getting its first business, Riverbend Sheet Metal.

Fred Carey, owner of the company, has been in Thermopolis for four years and has plans to not only expand his business, but increase his workforce once building is completed.

Carey said he has spent about six months negotiating with the Thermopolis-Hot Springs County Economic Development Com-

### Top Stories of 2013

- 1 - Hospital district initiative
- 2 - Treasurer appointment issue
- 3 - Hot Springs County Centennial
- 4 - N. Arapahoe land into trust/casino
- 5 - HSSP Rainbow Terraces status
- 6 - October snowstorms/tree damage
- 7 - H.O.G. Rally comes to Thermopolis
- 8 - Drama Club/Speech Team state titles
- 9 - Fire training facility on horizon
- 10 - Elks Lodge in Thermopolis reinstated

pany (EDC) for the space in the business park.

### JUNE

**June 6** — It will ultimately be up to the voters of Hot Springs County whether they feel the need to form a hospital district and to eventually build a replacement Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital.

This week residents can expect to receive an information packet in the mail explaining the history, need and preliminary plans for a new hospital.

Hospital CEO Robin Roling explained the intention of the packets is to provide a broad overview of the issue at hand and explain the information gathered so far regarding districting and building a new hospital.

**June 13** — After two years above ground, the remains of three Hot Springs County pioneers will be reinterred at Riverside Cemetery in time for the county's Centennial Celebration.

According to Dorothy Milek with the Pioneer Association, the Hot Springs County Cemetery District has donated a plot for the pioneers to be placed in and three boxes have been hand hewn for the remains by John Ready.

Found during excavation of a gravel pit north of Thermopolis,

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# Year in Review

the 76 bones came from an area near the old townsite of Thermopolis and have been identified as best they can without DNA testing by local archaeologist Greg Willson.

**June 20** — The relationship dynamic between the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce and the Hot Springs County Lodging Tax Board was fundamentally changed during a chamber board meeting Thursday, June 13.

The chamber discussed the status of its proposed fiscal year 2013-14 budget. Executive Director Amanda Moeller informed the board the Lodging Tax Board has decided not to fund \$14,000 in administrative reimbursement this year and that adjustments had been made to keep the budget "in the black."

**June 27** — As the saying goes, "Everybody loves a parade." And Saturday's Thermopolis Cowboy Rendezvous PRCA Rodeo/Centennial Celebration parade was certainly no exception.

With the Cowboy Rendezvous and Centennial sharing the spotlight, there were 42 parade entries, according to Cowboy Rendezvous committee chairwoman Gayla Mead. The parade, which finished as Mother Nature provided a little rain, quickly drew

the attention of spectators as 51 bucking horses from the Triple V Rodeo Co. led the way down Sixth Street and onto Broadway.

"This was one of the biggest parades I've seen in Hot Springs County for a long time," Mead said. "There were some of the most quality entries as well... We had quite a few last-minute entries."

## JULY

**July 4** — It won't actually be thunder, but the sound of Harley-Davidsons rolling into town next weekend for the 2013 Wyoming State Harley Owners Group (H.O.G.) Rally will certainly sound like it.

According to local organizer Jenni Dorman, there are 288 riders preregistered for the three-day rally and they are expecting up to 100 more registrations during the event.

**July 11** — The Town of Thermopolis recently responded to a request from the Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments (OSLI) and the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regarding the potential cost to close the current town landfill and build a transfer station for town sanitation services.

In May, the town received a letter from the directors of both state agencies explaining the re-

cent enactment of House Bill 66/Enrolled Act 114, which established an account for grants and loans for communities planning to close municipal solid waste landfills and construct transfer facilities. Both agencies are in the process of making rules to implement the legislation.

The letter explains that before funds can be expended, the Wyoming Legislature must approve a prioritized list of projects. Both the OSLI and DEQ plan to determine the number of applicants for the grants and loans as well as the projected costs and timeline for when funding will be needed.

The agencies set a July 1 deadline in order to prepare a report for the legislature.

**July 18** — Rafter C Ranch unseated two-time defending champion High Mountain Ranch to capture the Thermopolis Lions Club Ranch Rodeo crown after competition Friday and Saturday evenings at the Hot Springs County Fairgrounds arena. Rafter C Ranch's top event was branding, where the five-person squad took top honors. The team scored well in several events to total 20 points.

Team members for Rafter C were TC Cuprak, Cayde Cuprak, Forrest Whiteman, Beau Jackson and businessperson Jeff Myers of Myers Chiropractic of Worland.

Hoodoo Ranch finished second overall with 17 points, edging High Mountain Ranch by a single point.

**July 25** — Trustees of Hot Springs County School District No. 1 finalized the mill levies for the 2013-14 fiscal year during a special meeting Tuesday.

The issue at hand was whether to increase the Central Wyoming College Board of Cooperative Higher Educational Services (BOCHES) from .25 mills to .45 mills or to leave it unchanged. By vote of the board, CWC BOCHES will remain at .25 mills.

## AUGUST

**August 1** — Three people were injured Tuesday at about 9:30 a.m. in the Murphy Dome Oil Field as a result of a flash fire, according to emergency services radio traffic.

Fire Chief Dale Andreen said the department responded to the scene, which is located along Kirby Creek Road and accessed through Black Mountain Road, with two structure engines and a water tanker.

**August 8** — An interview with Thermopolis-Hot Springs County Economic Development Company (EDC) President Mark Mortimore reveals some changes within the company.

In May, the first lot in the Red Rock Commercial Center was sold to Fred Carey, owner of Riverbend Sheet Metal.

Unfortunately, according to Mortimore, after numerous conversations with Carey it was decided the business park would not be a good fit for the business and the EDC is in the process of purchasing the lot back from Carey.

Two recent resignations have put some strain on the EDC board.



A butterfly perches on one of the last flowers of summer in a community flower pot in front of the Independent Record. — Cindy Glasson file photo

# Voigt

from page 1

**August 15** — The Hot Springs County Commissioners have voted to file an appeal to the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs Division, regarding land south of Thermopolis that has been placed in trust for the Northern Arapaho Tribe.

After a lengthy executive session, the commissioners came back into session and voted to retain the law firm of Holland and Hart to file the appeal. No more than \$3,000 is to be spent on the appeal.

The Northern Arapaho Tribe has suggested the land could be used for farming or ranching (its current use) or "might include gaming and other such uses which will promote the economic interests of the Northern Arapaho Tribe and its members."

**August 22** — It was a Thermopolis driver who broke Rob Laing's supremacy in the Thermopolis Demolition Derby on Saturday evening at the Hot Springs County Fairgrounds arena.

Laing had won three consecutive derby crowns, but Aaron Munger unseated the Casper driver—claiming top honors with the win in the 10-car championship heat in front of an overflow crowd. Munger took home a \$2,000 first-place check.

**August 29** — The Hot Springs County Commissioners approved a bid for the purchase of a new plow truck for the Road and Bridge Department as well as a tractor purchase and heard a plea from a citizen regarding the Thermopolis-Hot Springs County Economic Development Company (EDC) at its meeting Aug. 20.

"He was the consummate prosecutor," Lumley said last Friday, adding that Voigt did not have a deputy until he hired Jerry Williams, now the county attorney, out of law school. "He was inundated with work for this county."

"He was probably the most organized man I ever met. He didn't insult people in or out of the courtroom. I can only recall him losing one case...I was totally impressed. I loved to have him here."

Voigt spent two years as a county judge in Gillette, serving Campbell County, and eight years as a district judge in Douglas.

His time as an attorney and service on the bench led to his being appointed to the Wyoming Supreme Court by then Gov. Jim Geringer in 2001. Four years were spent as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, from 2006 through 2010.

When Voigt became a Wyoming Supreme Court justice, the state system was behind handling cases.

"Bart worked nights and weekends. He was a good sparkplug for that court," Lumley said. "Lawyers rate judges and they rated him extremely high."

Were there ever times Voigt thought cases should have gone differently?

Voigt said he never disagreed with the jury in criminal cases, but he often disagreed as to the amount of money awarded during civil cases.

During his time in the Supreme Court, he said he found the civil cases most interesting.

One case he started out with in Cheyenne that he is most interested in seeing the outcome of is the ongoing issues with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

## Enjoying life in Florida

For now, Voigt and his wife, Sandy, are content to just relax and take things easy in Florida.

"We're not going to do any traveling," he said. "We're just worn out."

Voigt had back surgery a year ago and said it pains him all the time, making it uncomfortable to sit for very long, so there aren't any plans to do anything.

Gov. Matt Mead has appointed Kate Fox as the newest member of the Wyoming Supreme Court. She has extensive experience in litigation, employment law and natural resource law.

Fox will be only the second female to hold such a position in Wyoming, but Voigt thinks she's going to do just fine.

"She's tough-minded and smart," he said. "She will have no trouble at all with the job."

And, Voigt said, there are a lot of women graduating from law school these days, so her appointment to the Supreme Court won't be unusual for very long.

— Joe Sova contributed to this article.

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Mon.-Fri. Daily	Walk-in Flu Shot Clinics, Public Health, 3-5 p.m.
Thur., Jan. 2	Kiwanis Club meeting, Days Inn, 6:45 a.m. Cemetery Board meeting, Riverside Cemetery, 2 p.m. Big Horn Bowhunters practice, fair building, 6:30 p.m. Grief Share, Wyoming Pioneer Home Chapel, 7 p.m. Thermopolis Gun Club meeting, armory, 7 p.m.
Fri., Jan. 3	Toastmasters, HSC Museum, noon Acoustic Jam Session, Exxon Southside, 6 p.m. Open gym, armory, 7-9 p.m.
Sat., Jan. 4	Adult Scrabble, county library, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Open gym, armory, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Sun., Jan. 5	Big Horn Bowhunters New Year's Shoot, fairgrounds, 8:30 a.m.
Tues., Jan. 7	County Commissioners' meeting, annex, 9 a.m. CWC registration help, county library, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Red Lane Watershed Imp. District Board, Big Horn Federal, 6 Thermopolis Town Council meeting, town hall, 7 p.m. East Thermopolis Town Council meeting, town hall, 7 p.m.
Wed., Jan. 8	Farm Service Agency, 601 Broadway, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Storytime, county library, 10:30 a.m. Book discussion, county library, 2 p.m. Natural Resource Planning Committee meeting, annex, 6 p.m. Booster Club meeting, HS Commons, 6:30 p.m. Fair Board meeting, fair building, 7 p.m. Open gym, armory, 7-9 p.m.
Thur., Jan. 9	Kiwanis Club meeting, Days Inn, 6:45 a.m. Storytime, county library, 10:30 a.m. Chamber Board meeting, HSCMH board room, 5:30 p.m. Big Horn Bowhunters practice, fair building, 6:30 p.m. South Thermop Water & Sewer District, town hall, 6:30 p.m. Grief Share, Wyoming Pioneer Home Chapel, 7 p.m.

Call 864-2328 to have your community event listed.

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A young dancer struts his stuff in traditional dress during the Gift of the Waters Pageant the first week of August at Hot Springs State Park. — Cindy Glasson file photo

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