



Dumas found guilty of strangulation, battery

by Mark Dykes

After about three hours of deliberation Wednesday afternoon, a jury returned a verdict of guilty on charges of strangulation of a household member and domestic battery, in a case against Darren Dumas. The charges state he beat Christy Dumas from Sept. 23-26, and impeded her breathing on Sept. 26.

According to court documents, the couple had been arguing beginning Sept. 23, and Darren smashed Christy's cell phone against the wall and her tablet against her head. Among the injuries Christy received during the incident were to her left upper arm, back, right arm, chest stomach and behind her left ear.

During the opening arguments, prosecuting attorney Jerry Williams told the jury of the Dumas' relationship, how it went somewhat quickly from their first meeting to their marriage and how Darren did not agree with some of Christy's choices regarding her lifestyle so he became violent, which led to the September incident and the resultant charges.

Defense attorney Hope Mead painted a different picture, one in which Christy, after being approached by Darren regarding divorce, became adamant and even threatening about keeping their relationship together. Mead also pointed out there were inconsistencies in Christy's recollection of the events.

During the closing arguments on Wednesday, prosecuting attorney Marcia Bean spoke to Darren's leaving for work for a long period of time, while Christy stayed in Thermopolis and "kept the home fires burning." After Darren returned, Bean said, he decided he didn't want to be married to Christy anymore, and his beating of her was an effort to end their relationship.

Reviewing the evidence presented in the case, Bean said Christy testified she and Dumas met in 2012 and developed a friendship which later turned romantic. Darren invited

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Breaking ground on environmentally friendly WDC

by Mark Dykes

Saturday was a big day, for human and dinosaur alike, at the Red Rock Business Park south of town for the official groundbreaking at the Wyoming Dinosaur Center's new planned location. Following the ceremony, Thermopolis Middle School was the site for a casual luncheon followed by a workshop led by project architects to seek community input.

Center Executive Director Angie Guyon said the project is still six months out from developing a plan and determining what kind of contractors, subcontractors and consultants will be needed, and it will be another year before any hiring is done.

As the center will be a Leadership in Energy an Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum building, meaning it is more energy-efficient, the process can take some time, and contractors and others hired should be familiar with LEED specifications.

Guyon and Paleontologist Jack Turnbull said during Saturday's workshop there were some common concerns. Those at the top included where financing would come from, the building not being finished and a possible lack of support from the community.

Turnbull said many people expressed they didn't want a building with a "shock" value, and would rather see something which reflects and incorporates the surrounding landscape. He noted the architectural representatives are very unpretentious and down-to-earth, and one of the preliminary pictures showed a center which mimics the look of the canyon. Materials used also evoke a feeling of the outdoors.

Another factor taken into consideration is ensuring there is no negative ripple effect on the community. Turnbull said the new center is not being developed as it's own entity to be in competition with the rest of the town, but rather one that can help other businesses. He further added they are not building it simply to get some commercial money, and there are no plans to turn it into an over commercialized center.

Depending on what funding can be secured, through donation and grants, Turnbull said the new center might not be built all at once, but instead be done in phases. The staff of the center are committed to it, and he hopes to see a strong "grass roots" response to help the project be realized. He also added they hope to meet the highest level of standard when it comes to having a LEED building, as that will provide access to more funding.

Another concern raised is whether the building will impact the hot springs. Turnbull said the aquifer runs deep and the recharge area is at Owl Creek and the Bridger Mountains. However, if any study shows the building plans will impact the springs, they will be deemed unsatisfactory and a different plan will be sought.

This was the first meeting for public input on this undertaking by the Wyoming Dinosaur Center. Future informational meetings are planned, to provide plenty of opportunities to be informed and provide input as the project moves forward.



photo by Mark Dykes

A (pre)historic event

Dave Koerwitz, Travel and Tourism Director Amanda Moeller and Wyoming Dinosaur Center Education Director Jessica Lippincott can't help but smile alongside a visitor to the groundbreaking for the dinosaur center's new location. Koerwitz read a letter from Senator Mike Enzi, expressing his appreciation of the facility and well wishes on the endeavor.

Spence trial underway

by Mark Dykes

Monday afternoon, trial again got underway in a case against Justin Spence. The trial has already seen a few delays, the most recent of which happened in December due to a procedural issue. Spence is on trial for incest, a felony which alleges on July 4 or 5, 2014, he molested a juvenile female.

During opening arguments, prosecuting attorney Marcia Bean said the case began with the alleged victim's birth and her growing up. At that time, Spence came to live with her family, and she came to develop a close relationship with him. Spence would eventually move to Thermopolis, and the juveniles and her mom would later follow suit. Bean said the juvenile would come to think of Spence as her confidant, someone she would go to for advice.

Bean said the jury would hear of how the juvenile's family were lighting off fireworks for a couple hours on July 4, 2014, and the offer was made to her to spend the night at Spence's. The juvenile's mother agreed.

Later that evening, Bean said, Spence and his girlfriend, along with the juvenile, were listening to music and drinking alcohol when Spence got up and went to the bathroom. At this point, Bean said, the juvenile begins receiving inappropriate texts which she is assured are for her.

As the night goes on, Bean said, the juvenile would find herself alone with Spence, as his girlfriend had gone to bed. Bean said the jury would hear of Spence's advances and the juvenile's attempts to get away from him.

Defense attorney Travis Smith, in his opening arguments, said the jury would hear a lot about the dates of the alleged incident. However, he asked them to look at Aug. 22, 2014, the date of Spence's interview into the matter. In that interview, Smith said, Spence stated during the night of the incident the juvenile snuck out of his home and went to an-

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Would you know what to do?

ALICE training prepares for an active shooter situation

by Cindy Glasson

Living in small-town America, we often say, "It can't happen here," but the truth is, an active shooter situation can happen anywhere at any time.

Dozens of people in Thermopolis are now better prepared after taking Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate (ALICE) training, a Homeland Security training program.

The training was created after the Columbine shooting by Greg Crain, who shows the traditional passive response is inadequate – do nothing, you die.

Instructors for the classes were Russell Clark, a retired Army veteran who is also an instructor in weapons of mass destruction, and Marty Roark, an 18-year veteran with the fire service and a five-year member of the police force, both in Alabama.

Initially, your thoughts go to our little home town, wondering why in the world you would need, much less use, this type of training.

However, do you take vacations? Do you visit highly populated areas? ALICE training can be used anywhere you go, not just in your business, home or school.

Getting out of the situation is always the first choice, but barring that, ALICE can help you make the safest choice for yourself and loved ones.

So how many mass shootings are really going on?

Mass shootings are classified as any shooting incident that involves four or more fatalities. With that in mind, statistics show there



Deb Gerharter and Stacia Linton take down a "suspect" during ALICE training at the Hot Springs County Museum.

are 20 mass shootings per year, with one occurring every 2.9 months.

Most are over within 10-15 minutes, making ALICE training imperative if you want to make it to minute 16.

These situations happen most often in businesses, 40 percent, where

a disgruntled employee snaps. Schools follow with 29 percent of mass shootings, outdoors the rate is 19 percent and just 12 percent happen

in other areas such as homes, hospitals and government facilities.

Many will remember the initial lockdown procedures taught for years where the response to an intruder was to crawl under a desk. This response was started in California schools during the height of drive-by shootings.

Those involved in the ALICE training were told to do the traditional lockdown protocol – hiding under the tables – while one of the trainers walked into the room, shooting everyone under the tables with a Nerf gun.

After the scenario was over, 13 of the trainees were dead. One had been wounded. Powerless, helpless, vulnerable and angry were the words they used to describe how they felt being trapped under the table with no way to escape.

So what do we do?

After years of studying alternate techniques based on mass shooting incidents, ALICE was born.

The steps with ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) do not need to be done in any particular order, and each incident is going to be different.

Alert – the purpose is to inform as many people as possible within the danger zone that

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