

Spence sentenced to three to five years

by Mark Dykes

Monday afternoon in District Court, Justin Spence was sentenced to a term of three to five years at the Wyoming State Penitentiary, on a charge of incest. The charge, one which he was found guilty following a three-day trial in April, states he molested a juvenile on July 4 or 5, 2014.

Prosecuting attorney Marcia Bean read a statement from the victim's mother, which stated Aug. 12, 2014 was one of the worst days of her life as it was the day her daughter came forward and said she was sexually violated by someone she trusted. The mother further stated she felt like she failed as a

parent and only wanted to wash it away and heal her daughter's spirit.

Spence, she stated, tore their family apart but it didn't destroy her daughter because she is a resilient fighter and will go on to perhaps be a light of hope for those with similar experiences. Spence, she stated, will have to live with this, and she hopes he will stop being a coward and own up to his actions.

The victim did not speak at the sentencing, noting her mother's letter was sufficient.

Bean noted during the trial there was a big deal made that the accusation against Spence was likely a cover up for a relationship the juvenile was having with another

subject. However, she pointed out the timelines and evidence do not match up to support that idea. What does match up, she said, is Spence texted the juvenile over 100 times during the dates listed in the charge.

Spence, Bean said, has continued to deny the charges against him. She pointed out the victim has nothing to gain from this and lost someone she felt close to because of what he did. The facts have remained the same, Bean said, noting there were substantial differences in time between interviews done with the victim, but nothing substantial changed

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The great pumpkin photo by Mark Dykes

Ralph Witters Elementary students Cian Kines, Alix Sorenson and Ellie Arcand check out one of two massive pumpkins brought to the school last week for the students to explore.

Thermopolis women reflect on emotional Vegas shooting

by Cindy Glasson

These days you can't turn on the evening news, read a newspaper, magazine or surf the internet without witnessing some kind of tragedy, from earthquakes and hurricanes to mass shootings.

Here, in Thermopolis, we are insulated from a lot of the outside world, safe and secure in our small town where we know our neighbors. But that doesn't mean we are immune to tragedy.

Four local women, along with two of their friends, found that out first hand on Sunday, Oct. 1 as a gunman opened fire on the Route 91 Harvest Fest in Las Vegas, leaving 58 dead and 546 injured.

Heather Herring, Nancy Hetland, Chanda Wells and Sarah Cox were in Las Vegas for the three-day festival along with Wells' sister Lia, from Denver and another friend from California, Erica Rodas.

What started out as a girls' weekend away ended with 47 hours of fear and confusion.

The group attended the country music festival on Saturday, standing together in the center, just 10 rows back from the stage, a place they were very glad they were not in on Sunday.

Herring and the Wells sisters were in the crowd on Sunday night, still center of the stage, but further back from where they had been the previous night, something they are very thankful for today.

Hetland and Rodas had decided not to go to the concert right away, but instead had taken a taxi across town to get tattoos, a decision that kept them out of the line of fire.

Cox was actually at the airport, sitting on the runway awaiting take off when the gunman opened fire.

According to Herring, she was taking a video with her cell phone of Jason Aldean on stage when she heard what she thought was fireworks.

"It was that pop-pop-pop sound," she said. "It really didn't sound like gunshots. It was more like someone had lit a whole string of firecrackers and they were going off."

In the video Herring has on her phone, you can hear the shots and even see Aldean look to his left before you hear someone in the crowd next to Herring say, "That doesn't sound right."

That was the end of the video.

Herring said she heard the sound a second time, ducked and took off running.

There was nowhere to run, really, with the crowd in chaos, heading every direction. That is when she became separated from the Wells sisters.

Herring ran toward the 10-12-foot fence surrounding the venue where some men were pushing against it, trying to get one section open to escape.

"They finally got the fence down and I fell," she said. "I didn't realize

until later that I was all scraped up and had a huge bruise. I just needed to get out of there."

When they got through the fence, they found 15-20 people hiding behind a police car on the street.

Continuing to run, Herring said they had to climb another fence, this one a wrought-iron one that surrounded an apartment complex. Once inside, they found themselves in a cul-de-sac.

"This whole time the shots sounded like they were right behind you," she said. "It was probably reverberation off the buildings, but it sounded so much closer."

There was nowhere to hide.

The people in the apartment complex had no idea what was going on and weren't letting anyone into their apartments out of harm's way.

Some of the crowd headed toward the Hooter's Casino and Herring found herself running through the back door into the kitchen and through to the casino floor.

"There were people hiding everywhere," she said. "They were hiding under the tables and the slot machines."

Herring ended up being pushed into an elevator with a few other people and landed on the fourth floor. A couple preparing to vacate their room at the hotel let Herring and the others into their room and they immediately pulled the beds

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Multipurpose building roof damage discussed

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners have a big decision ahead of them in regards to what to do about the roof on the Hot Springs County Fairground's multipurpose building.

Thane Magelky with Malone Belton Abel, P.C. provided a draft report on the condition of the roof and presented a few options to the commissioners for repair or replacement.

Magelky has done a thorough inspection of the entire building, along with the metal roof, specifically looking at the source and cause of moisture damage to the inside insulation.

His conclusion is the damage has been caused by condensation from the interior of the building due to a lack of continuous vapor retardant across the entire surface of the roof. In addition, a secondary source of the moisture is the unsealed ridge cap.

Magelky said the building itself is sound, however, once the insulation is removed, he suggested inspecting it again to look for possible rust damage and remediate any found immediately.

His feeling is the roof was originally poorly installed as the ridge cap, being unsealed, has allowed water and debris to infiltrate into the insulation. This, combined with the huge amount of moisture in the insulation is the basis of his recommendation to remove all the insulation.

Looking deeper into the situation, Magelky indicated the insulation and scrim were not consistently sized correctly at installation, due either to the purlin spacing of the ceiling or inconsistent sizing of the insulation itself.

His inspection took place in August, a full three months after any condensation (rain) should have occurred, and the insulation panels were still saturated with water. Literally gallons of water poured from several places when the insulation was removed.

Magelky also had concerns about how the metal roof itself was installed, noting the finishing was not typical with several places showing the seamer had apparently jumped and pinched the top panel together above the seam or where teeth marks from the machine were left on the seams.

They also found bends in the standing seams that could indicate forces may be impacting the structural integrity of the roof panels. Rusting around the fasteners was found as well, showing rubber gaskets were not used during installation.

Now the question is which direction should the commissioners go.

One suggestion Magelky made is to completely remove the roof and insulation and do a reinstall of a similar roof. That would come in at a cost of \$525,000 to \$768,750.

Another option is to demolish the existing insulation and replace it with new insulation and a vinyl scrim and vapor retarder. This would amount to \$225,000.

A third option is again, demolishing the existing insulation and replacing it with a spray foam insulation with a thermal barrier at a cost of \$206,250.

The second and third options would also require the replacement of the ridge cap.

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