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Thermopolis
Hot Springs

Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

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Gift of the Waters Pageant this weekend at state park

by Joe Sovo

Hot Springs State Park will be the site of the 64th annual Gift of the Waters Historic Indian Pageant and related events this weekend. The pageant features plays at 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at the Big Spring on the north side of the park.

Other events during pageant weekend include a Saturday parade, dancing at the flagpole downtown, Thermopolis Kiwanis Arts & Crafts Fair and buffalo burger and bratwurst sale, 5K/10K run/walk and fire department open house.

"The Great Outdoors" is the theme of this year's Gift of the Waters parade. The parade, sponsored by the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce, begins at 10 a.m. Check-in and lineup for the parade begins at 9:30 a.m. at the Hot Springs County Senior Citizens Center on Senior Avenue. According to the chamber, the kiddies' parade will be combined with the main parade this year.

At stake will be \$50 in Chamber Bucks for first place in three presentation categories – Business, Automobile/Float and Kids. All entries will be judged on theme, appearance and originality. Contact the chamber at 864-3192 for entry information; entries are due by 3 p.m. Friday.

Dancing in Native American dress at the flagpole in downtown Thermopolis – including the public – follows the parade as well as an open house hosted by the Thermopolis Volunteer Fire Department at the 14th Street facility.

The multiscene pageant play features verse and music showing how Chief Washakie deeded the waters to his white brothers.

Elder Shoshone Chief Starr Weed, who will celebrate his 96th birthday during the pageant weekend, is expected to participate in the pageant play.

Script for pageant play

Marie Montabé is depicted in history as the author of the play script for the first pageant, held in 1925. The first pageant was held in October. After a 25-year hiatus, the pageant resumed in 1950 and has been held the first weekend of August each year.

The Gift of the Waters spotlight event commemorates the 1896 deeding of a 10-mile square of Indian land by Shoshone Chief Washakie, spokes-

man for the Shoshone and Arapahoe Indians, to the U.S. government. In the agreement, a one-mile tract of land embracing the hot springs was given to the State of Wyoming, and it was made into what is now Hot Springs State Park.

The Big Spring has been known by Indian performers as Bah-gue-wana, or Smoking Waters.

Cindy Glasson will be the pageant play narrator again this year. Clark Mortimore was the play's original narrator – coached personally by Montabé.

Pageant Schedule

Saturday

• 7:30 a.m. – Pageant Days 5K Run/Walk and 10K Run, Hot Springs State Park. Registration 6:45-7:15 a.m. Starting time 7:30 a.m. Preregister at chamber office.

• 10 a.m. – Pageant parade. Theme: "The Great Outdoors." Parade entry forms available at chamber office. Entry deadline: 3 p.m. Friday.

• After the parade – Dancing at flagpole at intersection of Broadway & Fifth streets.

• After the parade – Open house at fire department. Rides for children on fire truck.

• 10 a.m.-6 p.m. – Kiwanis Arts & Crafts Fair, state park, near pavilion.

• 11 a.m.-2 p.m. – Kiwanis buffalo burger and brat sale, Kiwanis Washakie Shelter, state park.

• 6 p.m. – Gift of the Waters Pageant, Big Spring, state park.

Sunday

• 10 a.m.-4 p.m. – Kiwanis Arts & Crafts Fair, state park, near pavilion.

• 6 p.m. – Gift of the Waters Pageant, Big Spring, state park.

Run/Walk, Arts & Crafts Fair, women's chorus

Pageant weekend events begin with the Pageant Days 5K Run/Walk and 10K Run at 7:30 a.m. Saturday (see story on page 6 for more information).

The Kiwanis Arts & Crafts Fair in the state park near the pavilion runs from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. The fair will include arts, crafts and food vendors.

"We have a lot of new ones (booths)," Arts & Crafts Fair booth coordinator Gwenda Urbigkit said. "The diversity is really good."

The Kiwanis burger and brat sale is set for 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at the Kiwanis Washakie Shelter.

A women's chorus, organized and directed by Gift of the Waters committee secretary JoAnn Myers, will sing during the pageant play Saturday and Sunday evenings. Scheduled choir members include committee treasurer Barb Vietti, Melene Mierzereski, Tori Anderson, Karen Hitchens, Amber Galovich, KinDale Andreen, Shelley Butler, Laura Vietti, Ciley Andreen, Catherine Howerton and Tamara

Nemethy. Barb Vietti will be a soloist.

In addition to committee chair Shafer, Vietti and Myers, the committee members are chairwoman Shasta Shafer, Nancy Darland, Hitchens, Anderson, Marilyn Strausborger, Donna Lossner, Nancy Madrigal, Glasson, Kevin Skates, Vivian Swallow, and Starr, Elaine and Kaylei Weed.

The Gift of the Waters Committee is a nonprofit entity and donations are welcome and appreciated. Send donations to Gift of the Waters Committee, P.O. Box 936, Thermopolis, WY 82443.

Hog Heaven



Thirty-nine teams were in hog heaven during Pig Wrestling at the Hot Springs County Fair on Tuesday night, sponsored by the Thermopolis FFA Alumni. Division winners were: youth, Little Smokies; junior, Hog Hunters; men, TAK Electric; and women, 4-H Mamas. A total of \$4,656 was paid out in the Calcuttas and there were \$1,560 in team payouts. Sady Mounts was the top Calcutta winner. She paid \$50 for the Hog Hunter junior team and won \$848. More photos from Pig Wrestling will be posted this week on the Independent Record's Facebook page.

– Joe Sovo photo

Meet the Candidate forum Aug. 7

Members of the public are invited to attend a Meet the Candidates Forum on Thursday, Aug. 7 in the Thermopolis Middle School commons. The forum begins at 6:30 p.m.

The format for the evening will include a two-minute period in which candidates introduce themselves and summarize their platforms. House rules and questions will not be available until that evening.

If you have questions to be

asked during the forum, submit them to the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce via email at thermopolischamber@rtconnect.net no later than 5 p.m. Monday, Aug. 4.

The goal is to provide information to the public through this forum, thus giving voters the opportunity to make educated decisions at the ballot box.

Hot Springs County Farm Bureau, in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, will be

hosting the candidate forum.

Republican Meet & Greet

Republican Party candidates running for election in Hot Springs County will be featured during a Meet and Greet in conjunction with the Second Friday ArtStroll the evening of Aug. 8.

Voters are invited to meet the candidates at Storyteller, 528 Broadway St., from 5 to 8 p.m. and ask questions about their campaigns.

Rep. Winters opposes report on Hill's conduct in office

by Joe Sovo

Rep. Nathan Winters (R-HD28, Thermopolis) was one of 16 legislators who were part of a special committee to investigate Wyoming State Superintendent of Public Instruction Cindy Hill's handling of the state Department of Education (WDE). Last Wednesday, the committee released a final report sharply criticizing her performance, but not proposing impeachment or any other action.

According to the report, Hill failed to follow legislative budget directives and intentionally violated the law by requiring permanent WDE employees to certify she could fire them at any time.

Hill, who's seeking the Republican nomination for governor in next month's GOP

primary, sees the report as a type of vindication – saying that the fact the Legislature is merely rebuking and not trying to impeach her means lawmakers can't prove she did anything wrong.

"I call this 'the \$1.3 million smear campaign'...done using state resources for political ends. The current governor's staff was involved in trying to gin up allegations," Hill said in a press release after the final report was released. She characterized the investigation as politically motivated and a witch hunt.

Lawmakers passed a law last year stripping Hill of many of her powers, including serving as head of WDE, but the Wyoming



Cindy Hill

Supreme Court earlier this year declared that law unconstitutional and returned the agency to her control.

"Allegations regarding the passing of Senate File 104 couldn't go unanswered," Winters said. "I believe in a straightforward process that would stick to specific criteria."

The committee convened with 13 members of the management committee, all of whom voted in favor of SF104. Three legislators

who voted against the measure – Winters, Kathy Davison (R, Kemmerer) and Mark

See Hill on page 10

Dietrich sentenced to prison for three to eight years

by Gary Begin

Heidi Dietrich, of Worland, was sentenced by District Court Judge Robert E. Skar Monday to three to eight years in prison to be served at the Wyoming Women's Center in Lusk with credit for 21 months already served. She pleaded no contest to DUI causing serious bodily injury in an accident that occurred in Thermopolis in October 2012, which took the life of her 6-month-old nephew and caused her sister, Rikki, traumatic head injuries.

Dietrich was also sentenced to seven to 10 years in prison for aggravated homicide, which

was suspended. She will also serve 10 years supervised probation upon completion of her time in prison. Charges of reckless endangerment and driving with a suspended license were dismissed by Skar as part of a plea bargain agreement.

"I can't take what happened back," Dietrich said in her statement to the court. "I can only say how sorry I am. I can't give my sister her son back."

The court also ordered Dietrich to pay \$3,506 in restitution to the driver of the vehicle she hit head-on, Jessica Slagle. Slagle suffered various injuries and still requires

therapy, according to Slagle, who appeared in court. The impact of the crash caused Slagle to be cut out of her Ford F250 dually by the local fire and rescue squad, according to one of the rescuers on the scene, who was also present in the courtroom.

"I was in the wrong place at the wrong time, and the people who are responsible for helping victims...turned away, leaving me feeling invisible from the beginning," Slagle said after the verdict was handed down. "Sometimes bad things happen to good people and sometimes bad people don't have to take

responsibility for themselves (as the plea was "no contest").... Sometimes, they don't even have to say 'sorry' to all parties involved."

Skar advised Dietrich to take advantage of the drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs offered at the correctional facility while she is there. Dietrich could have received up to 10 years in prison for the DUI causing serious bodily injury charge and up to 20 years for the aggravated homicide charge, according to County Attorney Jerry Williams.

Dietrich will also have to pay \$865 in fines and fees.



A fancy dancer performs during an earlier Gift of the Waters Historic Indian Pageant play in Hot Springs State Park.

Gun Club Bowling Pin Shoot



Jerry Fields knocks over a pin during the Thermopolis Gun Club's Bowling Pin Shoot held Sunday afternoon at the gun range northwest of town. There were 14 shooters and 10 rounds of competition. Dave Weber led the

way with three rounds won. Bengie Brown, Frank Bein and Rob Cook (Cody) each had two wins, and Rick Tudor had one.

— Cindy Glasson photo

Mead Meet & Greet Monday

Gov. Matt Mead and First Lady Carol Mead will host a Meet & Greet on Monday, Aug. 4 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Hot Springs County Museum and Cultural Center.

Refreshments will be served.

The public is invited to attend the Meet & Greet.

For more information, contact Belenda and Howard Willson at 864-5624 or Cindy and Jim Collins at 864-3929.

August is National Immunization Awareness Month

Immunization gives parents the safe, proven power to protect their children from 14 serious and sometimes deadly diseases before they turn 2 years old.

To celebrate the importance of immunizations for a healthy start and throughout our lives — and to make sure children are protected with all the vaccines they need — Hot Springs County Public Health is joining with partners nationwide in recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness Month. The week of Aug. 3-9 will focus specifically on babies from birth through age 2.

The focus for the rest of the month: Aug. 10-16: Children, preteens and teens to age 18. Aug. 17-23: Young Adults age 19-26. Aug. 24-30: Adults age 26+.

“Children who don't receive recommended vaccines are at risk of getting the disease or illness, and of having a severe case,” said Marie McDougall, Hot Springs County Public Health Nurse Manager. “Every dose of every vaccine is important to protect your child and others in the community from infectious diseases. Talk to your doctor or other health care professional to make sure your child is up to date on all the vaccines he or she needs.”

Today's childhood vaccines protect against serious and potentially life-threatening diseases, including polio, measles, whooping cough and chickenpox.

There are many important reasons to make sure your child

is vaccinated:

Immunizations can protect your child from 14 serious diseases.

Vaccination is very safe and effective.

Immunizations can protect others you care about.

Immunization can save your family time and money.

Immunization protects future generations.

When children are not vaccinated, they are at increased risk and can spread diseases to others in their family and community — including babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated, and people with weakened immune systems due to cancer and other health conditions.

An important note to remember is that vaccines are very safe and effective. Vaccines are only given to children after a long and careful review by scientists, doctors and health care professionals. Vaccines will involve some discomfort and may cause pain, redness or tenderness at the site of injection, but this is minimal compared to the pain, discomfort, and trauma of the disease these vaccines prevent. Serious side effects following vaccination, such as allergic reaction, are very rare. The disease-prevention benefits of getting vaccines are much greater than the possible side effects for almost all children.

Parents can find out more about the recommended immunization schedule at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/index.html or call Hot Springs County Public Health Nursing at 864-3311.

Hot Springs County unemployment rate improves

The Research and Planning section of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (WDWS) reported last week that the state unemployment rate has risen 0.2 percent to an average of 4 percent for the month of June.

The slight increase is considered statistically insignificant, according to the WDWS news release. Hot Springs County's unemployment rate was slightly higher than the state average at 4.2 percent, which was an improvement over June 2013's 4.5 percent.

Our neighbor to the south, Fremont County, posted the highest unemployment rate at 5.5 percent while Teton County was the lowest in the state at 3.3 percent. Seventeen counties saw a drop in rates from June 2013, three counties were unchanged and three counties had increased rates, according to the monthly statistical summary.

Hot Springs County, with a total workforce of 2,676, had 112 persons unemployed in June, a rise of 15 persons over the May

total. This county has the second lowest labor force in the state with the smallest workforce of 1,511 belonging to Niobrara County in the easternmost part of the state — bordering on both Nebraska and South Dakota.

Wyoming's unemployment rate is “significantly lower than the U.S. unemployment rate of 6.1 percent” states the informational mailer. Eight hundred and twenty-two fewer persons statewide were employed in June than in May, according to state figures.

Hill

from page 1

Baker (R, Rock Springs) — were added to the subcommittee.

Winters explained that the committee was divided into four groups to study different aspects of the questions that had been raised about the issue. Winters was part of the Fremont County School District 38 subcommittee.

When the final report composed by the Legislative Service Office (LSO) was completed, the committee voted on approving it. “I voted ‘no’ on the final report. It came down to ‘he said, she said’ testimony,” Winters said. Davison and Baker also cast opposing votes. “It was related to more of OPINIONS of her (Hill's) conduct. That's one of the things I had a concern with. The decision should be made on principles, not personality.”

Reporting violations of state law

After the investigation of Hill, legislators say protections need to be created to give state em-

ployees a confidential way to report violations of state law. The new process would give employees a way to report outside of their department or agency. And the plan would offer employees clear information on the details of state and federal law and the reporting process, according to the Investigative Committee's report. Legislation providing for the changes has been drafted.

“The atmosphere of fear, intimidation and retribution, coupled with a large number of the employees who were afraid to lose their jobs, resulted in a situation in which employees knew that laws and constitutional provisions were violated, but did not report them publicly,” according to the report.

“The committee finds Superintendent Hill's actions amounted to misconduct in office, and for that misconduct the committee formally rebukes Superintendent Hill,” the report stated.

“A ‘rebuke’ means that they

are conceding that I did nothing wrong. It's that simple,” Hill said in her press release.

Prior to the committee's review, Hill had been removed from her post as WDE head by SF104. That bill transferred many of the superintendent's duties and responsibilities to an appointed director of the department.

“The current governor and certain legislators have wanted, and still want, to turn our educational system over to the federal government,” Hill said. “I am very proud to say that I blocked those efforts. Had they been successful in pushing me out of the way, we would have a federally run educational system by now. As long as I am here, that is not going to happen.”

Currently, the option to move forward with articles of impeachment is given to members of the Wyoming House of Representatives, according to the report.

“It gets to be a matter of practicality over philosophy,” com-

mittee member Mike Madden, R-Buffero, said. “The impracticality of that would be, when we meet again, she won't be superintendent anymore, and that would be impeaching someone not in office.”

The entire special legislative committee's final report can be viewed online at <http://legisweb>.





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