

UW freshman earns way to CNFR with solid spring season / C1



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LARAMIE BOOMERANG

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COMMUNITY

LOST AND FOUND



Former Laramie High School teacher Dave Tyndale checks out his bird collection Tuesday afternoon at the University of Wyoming Museum of Vertebrates. While teaching in the 1960s, Tyndale created a large collection of bird specimens that were found before the old LHS was torn down. SHANNON BRODERICK/Boomerang photographer

Mystery bird collection finds permanent home at vertebrate museum

By EVE NEWMAN
even@laramieboomerang.com

A couple years ago, in preparation for moving to the new Laramie High School, science teacher Erin Klauk began cleaning out old storage rooms in the science wing. "There was tons of storage, and it was filled with really old, kind of disgusting things," she said. She found boxes of old teaching materials and odds and ends gathered and discarded by past teachers — detritus that hadn't been touched in decades. "I got really into seeing what was in all of these storage areas, because nobody had looked for 20 years or longer," she said. In one room, she found stacks of cardboard boxes, and when she looked inside, she found dozens and dozens of preserved bird specimens. They were affixed to pieces of plywood, legs and heads extended, wings tucked. She pulled the boxes into the hallway and set the pieces out. "When I laid them out, there was one of every bird I had heard or seen that lived in the local area," she said. "It was this super-complete collection of really well-preserved birds." Some of her colleagues encouraged her to throw the collection out — indeed, the entire building was slated for demolition in coming months — but Klauk demurred.



Specimens preserved by Dave Tyndale lay on a table Tuesday afternoon at the University of Wyoming Museum of Vertebrates. SHANNON BRODERICK/Boomerang photographer

Instead, she contacted Brian Barber, director of science programs at the University of Wyoming Biodiversity Institute. Barber came by expecting to find a few random specimens that he would probably take off her hands to throw away himself. Specimens without a date or location don't have much value for teaching or research. What he found, instead, was a meticulously gathered collection of local bird species gathered in the 1960s, each labeled with details about when and where it was found, plus measurements. Someone named "D. Tyndale" was named on the label as the collector. "It was like Christmas for a biology geek," Barber said. Like strands of DNA broken apart, people come and go, boxes gather dust, memories fade and knowledge is lost. But a chance discovery in a back room of the 60-year-old high school reconnected a thread by

which we pass along knowledge. A second chance encounter happened soon after. Barber and Klauk transported all the boxes to the Berry Center, which is home to the UW Museum of Vertebrates. The museum houses a research collection of vertebrate fauna mainly from Wyoming, the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains. The museum accepts reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals, which it preserves either by saving the skeleton or by skinning and stuffing the animal. Elizabeth Wommack, staff curator and collections manager of vertebrates, said the ideal research collection contains multiple representatives of a species from different locations and time periods. Specimens from 50 years ago with meticulous records, then, are a priceless addition.

See Bird collection, A8

ALBANY COUNTY

FROM PLANNING STAGES TO GRAND OPENINGS

WYDOT updates commission on new bridge, other projects

By JARON JENKINS
jaronj@laramieboomerang.com

The July opening of a new four-lane bridge was just one highlight during the Wyoming Department of Transportation's annual presentation at the Albany County Commission meeting. The new Snowy Range Road Bridge — which starts at Third and Harney streets and provides access to West Laramie and the West Side — is set to be open mid to late July, WYDOT engineers said Tuesday morning. "We are planning a grand opening ceremony ... and we'll open the structure to traffic that same day," WYDOT District 1 Construction Engineer Tim Morton said. "Then immediately after that, the contractor will move to Clark Street (Viaduct) and start demolition." The bridge is the culmination of a \$23.5 million project, Morton said. As part of the new bridge project, the construction widened Snowy Range road to four lanes. The bridge will replace the aging Clark Street Viaduct.

See WYDOT projects, A9

LEGISLATURE

Could mail ballots work in Wyoming?

County clerks drafting bill for lawmakers' consideration

By JOEL FUNK
jfunk@wyomingnews.com

CHEYENNE — Wyoming lawmakers are exploring the possibility of allowing counties to administer mail-in ballot systems, but one of the legislators in the committee that could move it forward said it's unlikely it will go anywhere. For the last several years, county clerks from around Wyoming have been discussing the possibility of elections by mail. Several factors led to the notion, such as aging voting equipment that will be expensive to replace, difficulty finding suitable polling places and a shortage of election judges, said Debra Lee, Laramie County clerk. The expense of it all, she said, is becoming hard for clerks. And with Wyoming in an ongoing fiscal crunch, there's little money available on the state or local levels to address the problems. "It's increasingly difficult," she said. "Even in Laramie County, where we went to vote centers and considerably reduced the number of polling places and, consequently, the number of election judges, it's still challenging." Clerks have approached the Legislature calling for funding for a study, but so far haven't been successful. "That was disconcerting to us election officials," Fremont County Clerk Julie Freese said. Freese said the clerks went ahead and hosted meetings around the state where voters were invited to learn about the issues. A survey was then conducted where just more than 1,000 Wyoming voters participated, giving their feedback on what they heard.

See Ballots, A7