



The Imperial Republican

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2021 VOL. 135, NO. 36

IMPERIAL, CHASE COUNTY, NEBRASKA

OFFICIAL COUNTY NEWSPAPER SINGLE COPY: \$1.00



BECKY KUNTZELMAN | THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN

Little Haven Warner had time to sit on Santa's lap during the Imperial Christmas Festival events on Saturday sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.

Imperial Christmas Festival a success on busy Saturday

Editor's note: See pictures of the Christmas lighting contest winners and other Festival events in this issue and next week.

By JAN SCHULTZ
THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN

With all the events going on last Saturday, the coordinator for Imperial's Christmas Festival wasn't sure what kind of turnout there would be.

But Chris Krausnick, who organized most of the events for the chamber, was pleasantly surprised and thrilled.

After all, festival events had to contend with CCS home basketball games and the televised national volleyball championship match that involved the Huskers.

Let alone it being the week before Christmas with family celebrations already underway.

"I am so happy with the numbers who showed up to the gym" where many of the activities were centered, she said.

She was also thrilled with the parade turnout and numbers at the soup and pie supper.

Lighting contest, parade winners

Parade—1st Imperial Credit Union, 2nd Doug and Becky Carman, 3rd Silver Spurs 4-H Club.
Residential—1st Matt and Carrie Terryberry 558 Kramer, 2nd Dennis and Larue Krutinger 226 West 14th St., 3rd Jeremy and Amanda Vlasin 938 Grant St.
Businesses—1st City of Imperial, 2nd Balcony House Bed & Breakfast.
Light poles—1st Joyce Malleck (in front of FVC station), 2nd Pinnacle Bank, 3rd Veterinary Services (by gazebo)
Trees—1st City of Imperial. No other entries.

In the gym, children and adults alike decorated cookies, took part in a Christmas cake walk, played bingo and the youngest ones wrote letters to Santa.

Santa and Mrs. Claus were also on hand to hear personally from the youths, with a fire pit set up outside for s'mores along with a live nativity scene.

"Thank goodness for volunteers," she said.

Prior to the activities at the gym and City Square, 35 youths and adults attended the free movie provided by the Lions Club.

The Imperial Country Club and Back 9 served an estimated 130 at a soup and pie supper from 5 to 8:30 p.m.

Capping off the evening was the Christmas Parade of Lights which drew 15 entries. Starting at the Imperial Manor, it traveled east on 10th Street then south on Broadway, which was crowded with spectators.

As part of the festivities, the Chamber coordinated four different lighting contests for homes, businesses, light poles and City Square trees. All the winners received Chamber Bucks.

Wind-aided fire threatens home; 469 acres burned

By JAN SCHULTZ
THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN

One thing firefighters battling a Dec. 15 cornstalk and wheat stubble fire northwest of Imperial can confirm is that it was windy and dirty.

"The guys and girls out there ate a lot of smoke and dirt," said Doug Mitchell, Imperial Volunteer Fire Department chief.

A sustained wind speed of 43 mph, with gusts to 74 mph, were measured by the National Weather Service in North Platte between 1 and 2 p.m. That dealt firefighters, not only from Imperial but from seven other fire departments, a challenging six hours on the scene.

The fire, starting about 1:15 p.m., burned from the Avenue 317/Road 742 intersection and

moved southeast, threatening the Stan and Janelle Cross rural farmstead along its path.

How the fire started on ground owned by Black Lamar III, LLC of San Francisco is still unknown, said Mitchell.

While the Crosses were evacuated from their residence, the home was saved but the couple did lose a cattle barn on the property.

Mitchell said the fire burned within 100 to 200 feet of their property.

From its start, the fire burned through a Mike Stanley circle, Tomky ground, a Roger Moline-owned circle and into a circle on Cross ground, north of their home and out buildings.

Mitchell said the fire was finally stopped between Roads 741 and 740, a little over a mile north of Highway 6.

"If it had jumped the highway, it would have burned toward and possibly threatened Champion," he said.

"That was in the back of my mind."

Mitchell said the Cross home was the only one threatened along the fire's path, although neighboring landowners were alerted of the conditions.

When Imperial firefighters arrived on the scene, Mitchell said it appeared much bigger than it was.

They believed it was burning much wider, too, than the half-mile it was. Mitchell said his command unit was forced to break out of one smoky area and drive to the west to finally be able to see the fire.

The wind was a major handicap.

Please see FIRE, Page 2

WP board looking at new school policy on library books, media

Parent's concerns on library books prompted an address to board

By JAN SCHULTZ
THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN

A Wauneta-Palisade school district parent was concerned when her kindergarten child came home from school in Palisade with a book that had content with which she and her husband did not agree.

That prompted Vanessa Fanning to further examine books on the WP library shelves. That eventually led her to speak about it at the Dec. 13 WP school board meeting.

At last week's meeting, Fanning presented 37 library book reconsideration forms on books she believes have "questionable" material.

Citing several titles from books available to K-12 students, Fanning read from several of the books that contained profanity, homosexual situations, graphic sex acts, anti-police themes, racism and the denouncing of gender stereotypes, she said.

Her address to the board resulted in a special WP school board meeting Monday this week, when board members approved first reading of a new policy on acquisition of books/materials for the

Statement from WP School administration:

"The board was addressed by a patron at the regular December board meeting regarding the appropriateness of certain books in the library.

"The administration had previously supplied the same patron with the district's library book reconsideration protocol and a copy of the form for a citizen to request reconsideration for library media materials.

"The patron returned multiple requests for reconsideration forms at the board meeting. The district is conducting its media materials review process.

"The books that have been requested for reconsideration have been removed from the library while the process is completed."

library and how reconsideration forms are handled.

WP Supt. Randy Geier said the new policy proposed would provide a "more extensive review" of library materials.

According to the proposal, a reconsideration request will first go to a new committee, and "the administrative member of the committee shall inform the individual seeking reconsideration of the committee's recommendation."

If not satisfied, the individual can then address it with the superintendent.

Members of the new committee would include one school board member, an

administrator (not the superintendent), two teachers and the school counselor.

The WP board's next meeting will be Jan. 11 when second reading and possible adoption of the policy will be on the agenda, according to Board President Allison Sandman.

The school worked with Perry Law Firm in development of the policy.

Fanning: this is porn

Regarding a book titled, "Brave Face: A Memoir" by Shaun David Hutchinson,

Please see WP BOARD, Page 2

Imperial native shares family ties in children's books

By BECKY KUNTZELMAN
THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN

Christmas time is a time of celebration, family, sharing gifts and a delicious meal.

It is also a time of reflection and taking summary of the last year.

"Christmas is a good time to remember influential people in our lives especially while growing up," said author Kathy Curtis Harward.

Harward's values and disciplines were inspired by her grandmother, Edna Curtis, and it has proven to be a wonderful life.

Harward grew up in Imperial as Kathy Curtis and graduated from Chase County High School in 1978.

Her parents are Guy and Ruth Curtis, Guy being a retired Chase County Attorney who also wrote a regular column in the Imperial Republican for a number of years called "One Guy's Opinion," she said.

"I guess it was a fact that my dad's writing probably influenced me because he was a 'word' person, so I grew up around words," said Harward.

"But our writing styles are much different," she continued.

She recently published a children's book called "The Lost Recipe" that's set in Imperial.

Over the years, she said she has become more and more aware of how world events have changed the general ideology of the populace, especially in children and young people.

"World events have more re-

cently influenced me, too. I have observed that there's a trend to blame others for one's problems—tearing others down for their differences," Harward said.

She feels that children today need to focus more on everyday heroes who are creators, makers and builders instead of destroyers.

Her view of destructive behavior can be exhibited, in one example, she said when humans put other humans into "buckets" labeled with color, race, beliefs, etc. and react to those differences negatively.

Harward felt there was a need for dramatic stories for children highlighting everyday heroes in their lives—heroes they could relate to—parents, teachers, other adults, she said.

"I've always felt young children prefer to play with pots and pans out of the cabinet rather than toys," said Harward, "so I wanted to write 'pots and pans' stories about people in their lives who create and do things for themselves and the world. I think Imperial is like that."

Children can see and understand what is important.

"Books are my way as a humble antidote against a not-so-good part of current culture to direct blame away from ourselves instead of learning about people, their accomplishments and recognizing goodness we can share in," she said.

More about Harward

A fun fact Harward related while she was in high school at



COURTESY PHOTO

"The Lost Recipe" is a children's book recently released by author Kathy Curtis Harward. The story takes place in Imperial.

CCS was there wasn't girls' basketball offered until she was in her sophomore year.

When girls' basketball began, there were three other girls with the same first name who played on the team, which made it confusing for statisticians and reporters.

She said she shared the roster with Kathy Donjon, Kathy Howell and Cathy Weir, and enjoyed being a part of the early days of girls getting a shot at competing at basketball in school.

After high school, she became a lawyer and married Ken Harward.

The couple are parents to twin girls, Callie and Ellie, now 26 years old, and Anna, age 23.

"We moved to Fort Collins, Colorado in 1988 where we still live," she said.

Harward worked as a lawyer

for 35 years with the last 14 years employed as a campus lawyer for students attending Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

"I've been dabbling in writing for about 25 years after joining a writers group. I mostly just wrote short stories for adults," Harward said.

While working with college students, she said she was influenced by their ideas and opinions which eventually motivated her to start writing for children, she added.

"During the months after the pandemic began, I had to work exclusively from home. I began to see a silver lining even though it was tough during the shut-downs," she said.

She started reading dozens of children's books from the public library, and found she was disappointed in some of the content.



COURTESY PHOTO

Children's book author, Kathy Curtis Harward, is a 1978 Chase County High School graduate and now lives in Colorado. She likes to call her writing style for children "pots and pans" stories because they are about simple values and joy.

After retiring as a lawyer in 2020, she began thinking about sharing her own thoughts in book form by writing her own stories for children using the wisdom gleaned from her grandmother who influenced her thought processes, allowing her to pass down positive influences to her own children.

"Growing up with my grand-

mother, she inspired me with how she lived her life," said Harward.

Edna made incredible homemade bread every week, she added.

"She made bread and lived a generous and joyful life by always making extra bread to give away,"

Please see HARWARD, Page 2



BECKY KUNTZELMAN | THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN



Christmas Light Pole winners announced

Christmas Light Pole winners have been announced for the decorating contest, but unfortunately, not all light poles still had their decorations up due to high winds last Wednesday, just a day before the judging. Of the decorated poles still exhibiting their displays, first place went to Joyce Malleck, top, located in front of the Frenchman Valley Coop station. Second place winner was Pinnacle Bank, left, in front of the bank, and Imperial Veterinary Services won third place with their snowman entry near the gazebo. Pole winners won Chamber Bucks in the amounts of \$250, \$150 and \$100, respectively.

BRIEFS

Community Christmas dinner back to sit-down format

After last year's drive-through Christmas Day dinner, this year's will return to a sit-down meal at St. Patrick Parish Hall at 740 Broadway this Saturday. Open to all, but especially those alone for Christmas or unable to provide a meal, the Chase County Ministerial Association is coordinating the meal from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. A traditional Christmas dinner with turkey and ham will be served with all the fixings, said Fr. Lothar Gilde, dinner chairman. Free will donations will be taken for the association's service work. People still able to volunteer an hour or two can call Fr. Gilde, 402-432-6544.

Rain, but no snowfall as Christmas nears

With Christmas this weekend, it appears the Chase County area will celebrate without snow. Snow would be welcome not only because of the nostalgia of a white Christmas, but because of the moisture it would also bring. Local fire department officers and National Weather Service officials all are issuing warnings of dry conditions and the fire danger that comes with them. Last week, the area received .10 of an inch of rain as temperatures hit the high 60s. Sunday also saw a high of 65 degrees, while the first official day of winter Tuesday recorded 53 degrees. Daily high and low temperatures: Dec. 15—67 and 19 with .10 inch moisture; Dec. 16—45 and 14; Dec. 17—49 and 8; Dec. 18—38 and 15; Dec. 19—65 and 18; Dec. 20—37 and 17; Dec. 21—53 and 19.

HARWARD

From Page 1

Harward said. She made daily visits to the nursing home and was always involved in the community. How Edna lovingly made her bread is how she lived her life—with joy, generosity and kindness to others. In this book, "The Lost Recipe," no one can find the treasured recipe. The book is a mystery leading the reader as the characters search for the recipe. "I bake bread as well but I use a sourdough starter. I make bread every week just like grandma, and I always make extra to give away just like she did," said Harward. Harward's mom is German, she said, and still bakes quite a lot, too. "Mom is slowing down, though,

and my daughters are too busy to cook all the time, but the tradition is instilled in them all the same," she said. This time of year avails many opportunities to see the good that exists. Holidays are a wonderful time to slow down enough to reflect and give oneself a chance to create and reach out to others, she said. Harward's connections with her illustrators for her books are through upwork.com. "It's a good site for any kind of freelancer who would like to co-create with someone else," she added. Her three main illustrators are from Venezuela, Poland and Siberia. "I love this wonderful small town (Imperial), and I encourage anyone that they can do anything they want, and co-create with anyone in the world," said Harward.

"The Lost Recipe" is the second book Harward has published at Brandy Pie Books. The first book is titled "The Shared Dog," and she has two more books at the printers now to be released soon. The next two books are "The Paddleboard Dog" and "Who Likes Green Pancakes?" which is about children who have to be in the hospital during Christmas and other holidays. Harward's books can be purchased by going to her website at <https://www.brandypiebooks.com/>. "I always say my books are written for anyone from age three to 100 because the stories engage adults, too, while reading to children," she said.

Second press box on visitor side considered for CCS football field

By JAN SCHULTZ
THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN

While no action was taken at last week's meeting, CCS board members looked at options for a second press box on the football field's visitor side. Supt. Adam Lambert tossed out the idea at the board's Dec. 14 meeting, asking board members if it's something they might want to look into.

Construction of the second press box would be done by students in the CCS industrial arts/construction classes under the supervision of teacher Jeff Gleisberg.

While it's still in the discussion stages, material estimates looked at last week were around \$25,000.

A less expensive option considered was in the \$16,000 price range.

Concrete was not included in those estimates from Adams Lumber Co.

Lambert said it gets congested in the current press box on the home side with a local radio announcer, assistant coaches from both teams, broadcasting crews from the visiting school at times, as well as other radio coverage at some games.

"This would be a nice project for our industrial tech students to pursue," he said this week.

However, when asking rhetorically if it was a necessity, he said there's a yes and no on both sides.

Board member Jeff Olsen suggested the project be put off for awhile. Lambert noted if it's to be done in the coming year, Gleisberg likes to plan for those projects beginning in January.

The construction project will return to next month's agenda.

Other business

The board approved a proposal from the TeamMates board of directors on the CCS coordinator's position.

The coordinator duties for TeamMates had been shared by the two school counselors, Cathy Hanna and Trent Herbert, but both wished to lessen those duties and concentrate more on their counselor positions.

The proposal also had a suggested salary of \$6,000 for the position for an estimated 10 hours each week during the school year. The salary will be paid by the school.

The TeamMates board will pay for the coordinator's travel/lodging expenses. As in the past, the board also pays the program fees and costs for background checks on prospective mentors.

Action was tabled on purchase of a newer maintenance truck to replace the 1996 Ford pickup now being used. Board President Karl Meeske referred it to the board's transportation committee. They will bring a recommendation to the full board.

Approval was given to the

annual audit conducted by Dana F. Cole and Company. A tentative board retreat date was set for Feb. 10.

The board was in closed session for an hour and a half on salary/benefit negotiations and evaluation of the superintendent. No action resulted.

Supt. Lambert noted in his report that he hopes to have some school playground plans to review at the February meeting.

He also said grade 5-8 science teachers have narrowed down potential curriculum updates, but are still looking at additional options.

A.D. Troy Hauxwell's report noted Chase County is at the top of the other 35 Class C2 schools in football classifications for the next two seasons.

CCS has 81 students as does Wilber-Clatonia.

"It was very close but exciting news that we will remain in the C2-11 football classification," Hauxwell wrote.

7-12 Principal Mike Sorensen relayed a letter he received from a business owner in Sidney who wrote he was impressed with the girls' basketball team after their close loss to Sidney Dec. 10.

He wrote their display of compassion and humility after the loss was impressive and also praised the gathering at center court for prayer which the Lady Longhorns encourage after each game.

WP BOARD

From Page 1

available to grade 6-12 students, Fanning said it is not a self-help book.

"This is porn," she told board members Dec. 13.

The book is listed under the self-help section of books on Amazon.com.

"If you can't show a porno in school, they shouldn't be able to read one," she said.

Fanning referred to four books that are available to WP K-4 readers.

One titled "Drama" she said appeals to young readers because it has mostly pictures.

"It seems like a typical children's book until you get halfway through and see two boys kissing on stage, one in a dress," she told board members.

Fanning doesn't believe the 37 books cited in the reconsideration forms she submitted at last week's meeting "reflect our communities' values. This is polluting our children's minds," she said.

Fanning said she was able to read through all the titles of books purchased at WP from 2018-21 from invoices she requested and received on Nov. 3 from the school.

She said if a title seemed questionable to her, she ordered it on Amazon and posted

notes on pages of concern. She said she ordered about 15 books, and checked out others during four visits to the school library between Nov. 8 and Dec. 10.

On Dec. 10, Fanning said she was told by a para at the school that would be the last time she could check out school library books.

She said some of the books she had initial concerns with, based on their titles, ended up being okay.

In the end, she filled out the reconsideration forms on 37 books.

"I know that some of these books can be in the library, but just because you can do something doesn't mean that you should," she said.

According to her statement to the board, Fanning said she's checked with a few other schools in the area and they do not have the books she mentioned, and she has not found them in area public libraries.

In closing, Fanning asked that there be a change in policy on how WP book material is chosen, how it's vetted and that it be done with a committee.

She asked that all current books in the school library be vetted.

Because of the WP board's three-minute time limit for public comment, she said her mother-in-law Patti Fanning read the last part of her

penned statement at the meeting.

Book review process underway at WP

Supt. Geier and Principal Joseph Frecks both said the review process is underway on the books cited by Fanning.

All of the books of concern to Fanning have been removed and are in Geier's office, he told board members Monday.

The current school policy allows any community person, Frecks said, to submit a form like Fanning did if they have concerns with material or books at the school.

Currently, a committee then reviews the forms and makes a recommendation to the superintendent, who decides what action to take.

"We want to resolve this issue and move forward. That is our ultimate goal," Supt. Geier said.

"We want to do the right thing for our students," he added.

Both administrators want parents to monitor what's happening and be involved with their children at school.

"We love involved parents," Frecks said.

When asked if they felt Fanning's concerns were valid, both preferred not to comment, referring to the written statement they released.



RUSS PANKONIN | THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN

Firefighters and tankers carrying water were stationed around the Stan and Janelle Cross farmstead that was in the path of a Dec. 15

fire, northwest of Imperial. While the Crosses were evacuated, the home was safe. The fire burned within 100-200 feet of the property.

FIRE

From Page 1

"It would pick up debris, causing little fires around. It was moving fast," he said.

In the end, IVFD mapping shows the fire burned across 469 acres, and also destroyed two separate stacks of bales.

Kyle Odens lost an estimated 600 cornstalk bales he had stacked on Kandace Bremer Trust ground, Mitchell said.

Just to the south of his, David Schramm lost 260 bales of alfalfa that was stacked on Kee-Nan Farms land.

Mitchell said both piles of

bales were a total loss. Also lost along the fire's path were several pivot tires, the fire chief said.

Several Highline Electric lines were down, causing power outages in areas near Lamar. The Crosses were able to return to their home later Wednesday night when power was restored.

Highway 6 was shut down from the Sand Draw west to the Colorado state line, said County Sheriff Kevin Mueller.

He said they had four units and four officers on scene, along with two State Department of Transportation units.

Mitchell said it was vital having all the help from area fire

departments, the county's five road graders and at least eight farmers who brought tractors and discs to create fire lines.

"Kudos to all," he said.

Also on scene to assist was Emergency Manager Duane Dreiling, and several area business rigs that brought water to the scene.

Imperial EMS was on standby. Mitchell said no one was injured and none of the fire equipment from any of the departments was damaged.

"I think it opened up the eyes of some of our newer members on why we teach safety so much," he said.

It also provides him the chance

to remind residents the Chase County area continues to be dry and fire danger is very high. He doesn't see the dryness improving during the holidays, either.

Imperial fire units were back in the barn at 7 p.m. Lamar firefighters returned later that night to deal with some flare-ups, and also returned after more flare-up reports Thursday and Friday.

Other departments fighting the fire after the mutual aid call was issued were from Wauneta, Grant and Venango in Nebraska, and Holyoke, Amherst and Wau-neta in Colorado.

In all, the eight departments brought 67 firefighters to the scene.

The Imperial
Republican

www.imperialrepublican.com
E-mail: imperialnews@jipapers.com

622 Broadway, P.O. Box 727, Imperial, NE 69033
308-882-4453 Fax 308-882-5167 USPS 259-980
Published every Wednesday by High Plains News North LLC

Periodical Postage Paid at Imperial, NE
Lloyd and Jesse Mullen, Co-Publishers
Ad deadlines: 10 a.m. Tuesdays.

Jan Schultz, Managing Editor
Alan Carman, Pressman and Production
Diane Stamm, Reporter, Ad Design, Production
Becky Kuntzelman, Reporter
Kimberly Large, Ad Design and Production
Sherri Burke, Office and Circulation
Hours: 8:00-5:00 M-W, 8:00 to noon T F

Subscription Rates—\$34 per year and \$64.50 for two years in Chase County (Imperial, Enders, Wauneta, Champion/Lamar); Elsewhere in Nebraska and Phillips County, Colo. \$40.00 per year; Out-of-state \$49.00 per year.
E-Subscription Rate—\$30 per year. Add to print subscription—\$10 per year.

2014
NNA Better
Newspaper
Editorial Contest
Award-winning Newspaper

PRIZE WINNING
NEWSPAPER
2020
Nebraska Press Association