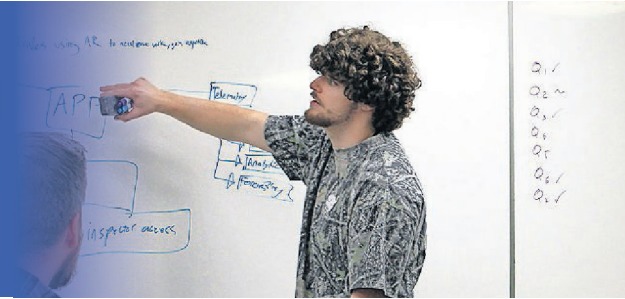


Hands-on learning gets collaborative at inaugural AI Hackathon
See Education, Page A6



Vandals upend No. 2 seed Montana State
See Sports, Page A4

BONNER COUNTY DAILY BEE

GOOD MORNING!

Today is **Tuesday**



Highs/lows
30-40s/20-30s/A7

MARCH 10, 2026

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1 DOLLAR NEWSSTAND

Explosive incident leads to arrest

COEUR D'ALENE — A man was arrested following a report that a backpack exploded during a gold-mining event at the Kootenai County Fairgrounds on Sunday.

John P. Marsh, 21, of Midpines, Calif., was arrested on suspicion of arson, aggravated assault, and obstructing a peace officer, according to a press release from the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office. Detectives continue to investigate and additional charges are possible.

The release said KCSO deputies learned that two vendors appeared to be in a dispute Saturday. On Sunday about 1:15 p.m., the son of one of the vendors approached the other vendor and threw a backpack under the vendor's table, the release said.

"The backpack caught fire and was quickly picked up and thrown outside the building, where it continued to burn," according to the release.

KCSO deputies and Coeur d'Alene police officers detained the suspect without further incident. No injuries were reported and the 27th annual Northwest Gold Prospectors Association's Gold Prospecting and Treasure Show continued.

The Spokane County Sheriff's Office Bomb Squad and Kootenai County Fire and Rescue responded and rendered the backpack safe. Investigators located additional accelerants inside the bag that did not appear to ignite, the release said.

Because the vendors are staying at a hotel in Coeur d'Alene, the Coeur d'Alene Police Department is assisting with the investigation.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has been contacted and will also assist with the investigation.

Groups seek clarity on Panida access

Board: No policy changes are planned

By CAROLINE LOBSINGER
Staff Writer

SANDPOINT — Concerns over possible changes to access at the Panida Theater drew dozens of residents and arts groups to last week's board meeting.

Representatives from several groups said they were troubled by comments suggesting all community arts organizations could

be limited to a combined one weekend a month at the historic theater.

"I think that you just need to maybe remember why we're here and what we're here for," former board member Tari Pardini said. "Because calling the Panida Sandpoint's living room, that really means something. It means that people are comfortable coming here always, and I don't want to lose that."

Panida board president Sean Behm told attendees there is no

policy — nor plans to create one — that would restrict groups' access to the downtown venue.

"The main message we would like to get out is that we want community involvement in a proactive way. The Panida is a gem and a cherished institution of Sandpoint, and it is going to take all of us to prepare it for the next 100 years," he told the Daily Bee after the meeting.

Behm said the board is exploring revenue options as the theater approaches its centennial. Built in 1927 and rescued from

demolition in 1985, the Panida needs an estimated \$500,000 to \$600,000 in deferred maintenance.

"Ever since then, the Panida has limped along," he said. "The building is suffering from a significant amount of deferred maintenance. Every dollar that we get that comes in extra is going back into that building."

Board members repeated that no access-restricting policy exists or is planned and that any such proposal would

See ACCESS, A2

A 'perfect calling'

Terry Gurno launches 'Unyielding Hope' nonprofit to encourage others

By BILL BULEY
Hagadone News Network

Terry Gurno is a two-time Ironman finisher.

That was easy compared to what he has faced in recent years: Open-heart surgery. Multiple cancer diagnoses. Stage 4 colon cancer.

"What I was going through, I just needed strength," he said.

The former pastor found in it his faith in God, which gave him hope. And that hope translated into the drive and determination to overcome life's challenges, to never surrender, to never give up.

It is what led him to launch a nonprofit, "Unyielding Hope," through which he wants to inspire, coach and mentor others trying to overcome their own obstacles.

"We just want to offer hope to people," the Hayden man said.

Gurno is inviting the public to learn about the nonprofit and its goals during "The Night of Hope" at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at Prairie Falls Golf Club.

Organizers say they want to offer encouragement. Attendees will hear stories of resilience and learn about the mission, vision, and services Unyielding Hope can provide for those walking through difficult seasons.

"We just want people to know

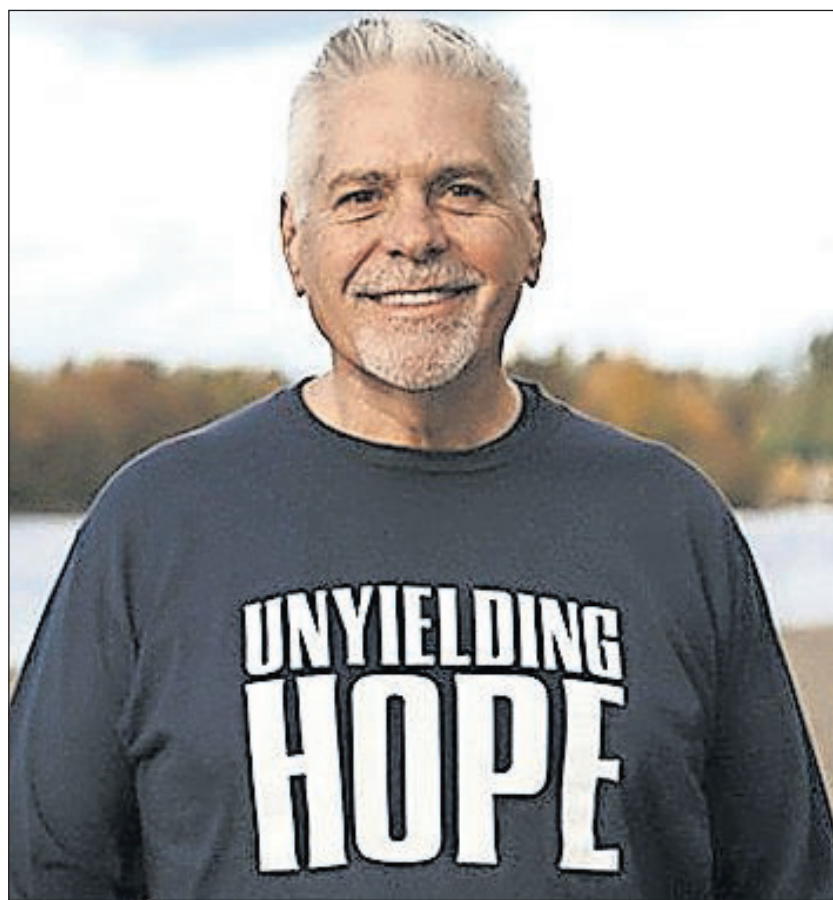


Photo courtesy Terry Gurno

Terry Gurno has launched a new nonprofit, "Unyielding Hope," to coach, mentor and help those with life's challenges.

whatever you are going through, you're not alone," he said.

The 65-year-old knows about adversity.

He grew up in an alcoholic and abusive home, wrestling with self-doubt and learning challenges that left him feeling inadequate.

A mentor helped him discover possibility where he once saw only limitation.

He said his early experiences planted the seeds of his lifelong belief that hope is both powerful and necessary.

It helped him twice to push through the pain to complete an Ironman, which involved a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and 26.2-mile run.

Greater challenges, however, awaited.

He underwent quintuple bypass surgery in 2022 after developing a serious heart condition. Complications followed — blood clots, issues with his right lung, and repeated hospitalizations. There

See GURNO, A2

\$5M bail for man charged with child sexual abuse

By KAYE THORNBRUGH
Hagadone News Network

COEUR D'ALENE — A man accused of sexually abusing two children is in jail on \$5 million bail.

In early February, a grand jury indicted David E. Wilder, 53, on two counts of lewd conduct with a minor under the age of 16, two counts of sexual abuse of a minor under the age of 16 and a single count of sexual exploitation of a child by possessing sexually explicit material, all felonies.

The charges stem from conduct that allegedly occurred between August 2015 through April 2016 in Bonner and Kootenai Counties, according to court records.

Prosecutors allege that Wilder sexually abused two children who were between the ages of 13 and 15 years old at the time, according to court records, and committed other acts "not amounting to lewd conduct."

In April 2025, Wilder allegedly possessed a video of an adult sexually abusing a teen.

See \$5M BAIL, A2

Race is on to restore history through lost apples

By CHLOE COCHRAN
Staff Writer

On Saturday, March 7, many community members gathered at the East Bonner County Library to learn how they could help the Lost Apple Project in its quest to find already gone or now going extinct apples.

In a packed conference room, David Bencoter shared his journey to identify and preserve heritage apples brought

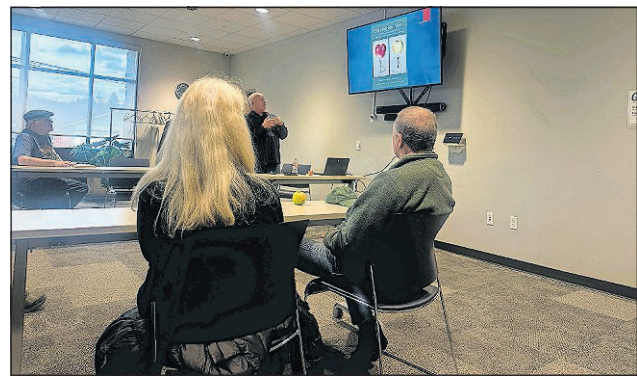
to the West by early settlers in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Bencoter told those gathered that of the 17,000 named apple varieties in North America, only 5,000 are known to exist today — sparking his personal search for lost apples and his creation of the Lost Apple Project.

"It's part of our history, and we just believe it's very important that we do find these lost

apples," said Bencoter. "All these apple trees are forgotten about. Nobody knows what they are and nobody knows what they taste like."

Throughout the hour-and-a-half presentation, Bencoter took his audience on a journey through the origin of apples in North America, all the way to his discovery of his first "lost apple" find.



Courtesy of CHLOE COCHRAN

David Bencoter presenting at a Lost Apple Project talk on Saturday.

See APPLES, A2

INDEX

CALENDAR	A7
EDUCATION	A6
LEGAL NOTICES	A4
LEISURE	A8
OBITUARY	A2
OPINION	A3
RECORDS	A7
SPORTS	A4
TELEVISION	A6
WEATHER	A7



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