



Ladysmith News

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Bruce battles Cameron Page A12

Discipline concerns Ladysmith parents City police, schools in talks to return resource officer

By Luke Klink
Two months after Ladysmith parents complained publicly about student bullying, school and law enforcement officials are in talks to assign a part-time officer in schools. This staffing is projected to cost the school district \$24,000 as part of a contract for hours of service.

School District Administrator Laura Stunkel told the Ladysmith School Board last Wednesday, Jan. 26, the officer would be a professional resource to school staff and students. The officer would build relationships within the schools and make people feel safe, she said.

"We are looking at this for the fall," Stunkel said. "It would really be about building relationships with kids, making connections with kids and having a positive police presence in the buildings."

The school board will take up this matter for consideration in the spring

or summer, about when it is planning staffing for the 2022-23 school year budget.

Stunkel told the board she has had talks with Ladysmith Police Chief Kevin Julien about the proposal.

"His resources are stretched thin. Our resources are stretched thin," Stunkel said.

The contract with police would need school board approval, according to Stunkel.

Last November, parents appeared at a school board meeting and expressed concerns about student safety. Several commented about an incident when a student returned from a bathroom "battered and bloodied," complaining the attacker was not immediately removed from the building.

Board members at the November meeting also sounded alarms about

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Council pledges rebuild of Flambeau Avenue

By Luke Klink
As Ladysmith officials plan this year's slate of street reconstruction projects and apply for funding, which roads will be completed depends on if and when funding becomes available.

The city council recently approved advertising for bids for E. 10th Street from Menasha to Park avenues, Lindoo Avenue from E. Fourth to E. Sixth streets and the Summit Avenue cul-de-sac. No other streets were let for bid at the meeting.

City resident Lois Goode appeared at the Ladysmith Common Council meeting, Monday, to ask when Flambeau Avenue will be improved. She noted at the council's Jan. 24 meeting the number of homes along that road.

"Flambeau Avenue is a highly trafficked street with 58 homes and one business on it," Goode said.

Improving Flambeau Avenue will be a joint project between the city and town of Flambeau. Each municipality is applying for project funding.

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FLAMBEAU AVENUE — The Ladysmith city council is expressing confidence Flambeau Avenue will be improved in 2022 as it seeks joint grant funding with the town of Flambeau. The roadway straddles the boundary between the city and town. A \$352,000 total projected cost would be funded with grant money and a 50 percent local match between the city and town. — File photo



RENEWING A RIVALRY — The Bruce Red Raiders and Cameron Comets line up for the singing of the National Anthem, Friday night, as fans from both schools fill the bleachers for the return of the Abbott's Dairy Trophy rivalry. Between 1936 and 2007, the Bruce and Cameron high school boys basketball teams competed on the court. To the victor went not only bragging rights but also the coveted "Cream Can" trophy. Last week's match-up was the first "Cream Can" game in the last 15 years as area school and community leaders sought to renew the rivalry. Story on page A12.

— News photo by Luke Klink

Ryan Korver: 'It was time to take my family and go.'

Hostages slip past guards; with God their guide

By Luke Klink
Part 3 of 3 parts. One month has passed since an Ohio Christian mission agency announced its members, including a Rusk County family of four, successfully escaped from armed captors in Haiti.

Ryan and Melodi Korver and their children, Andre, 3, and Laura, 10 months were among the hostages taken on Oct. 16 as part of a missionary group from Christian Aid Ministries of Ohio. The family, who was in Haiti for the first time and 6-1/2 months total, attends Shiloh Mennonite Church southwest of Conrath.

Part 3 of 3 parts, captivity to freedom



IN HAITI — Members of Christian Aid Ministries are photographed along a roadside in Haiti as they are picked up after escaping captivity. A group of 17 was taken hostage by armed Haitian gang members while returning to the CAM base last October. The last 12 in captivity escaped their captors several days before Christmas. Many of the group are now speaking publicly in their hometowns, offering first-hand accounts of events. Among them are Ryan and Melodi Korver, who attend Shiloh Mennonite Church southwest of Conrath.

The captive families were from Amish, Mennonite and other Anabaptist communities in Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Oregon and Ontario, Canada. Two were released last November and three more were set free on Dec. 5, but most of the hostages spent almost two months in captivity before being flown out of the country on Dec. 16.

Since, then Ryan is speaking publicly about their captivity, enduring faith and deliverance.

Ryan recently addressed the Shiloh Mennonite Church congregation, speaking for 2-1/2 hours. A recording of his account was obtained by the Ladysmith News. Part 1 appeared in the Jan. 20 issue. Part 2 appeared last week.

Escape plans

The missionaries were taken hostage by the 400 Mawozo Gang. From Creole, the gang's name loosely translates to "400 simpletons," or "400 inexperienced men." Haitian police issued a wanted poster for the Mawozo's alleged leader, Wilson Joseph, nearly a year ago, according to the Associated Press. He faces a string of charges that include murder, attempted murder, auto theft, hijacking of goods and kidnapping. Joseph goes by the Creole nickname "Lanmò Sanjou," roughly meaning: "Death doesn't know which day it's coming."

The conditions for the missionaries to escape weren't perfect. The

generator, which hadn't worked for days, probably wouldn't be running to offer cover noise for the escape. The moon probably would be close to full so it wouldn't be completely dark. The guards would probably be somewhat awake.

"I felt strongly we needed to go

at the soonest opportunity," Ryan said.

Despite the concerns, they were ready to leave.

At 1 p.m., the time they normally prayed for deliverance, Ryan told the group about the message he believed he received from the Lord.

"We are going to go when we see an opportunity," Ryan said. "We are going to go. We are going to step out on faith."

The Korvers welcomed the other hostages to join them. The others did.

"It was time to take my family and go," Ryan said. "All of a sudden, we were unified. That was such a beautiful thing. I think that was the biggest miracle we saw. I am telling you, there is power in unity. God can bless that. We saw Him do it."

They were ready to go.

"We were all on the same page. We had a goal to work toward. That was all new territory. We had never been able to work that way before, so we started making plans," Ryan said.

He called it exciting to plan what to take, what to leave and how to escape all the way down to what shoes to wear — the women had flip-flops and Crocs — and how to keep fussing children quiet.

The sunset was beautiful. There was a light shower to settle the dust. The rain forced the guards to move their couches from the yard to a porch on the opposite side of the house.

A final signal

For the first time in days, guards delivered oil and the generator was cranked up. A working generator would offer the cover noise hostages sought to help conceal their escape.

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