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Wyoming Tribune Eagle

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2021

CHEYENNE, WYOMING



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Jury: Moyte not guilty of murder

By Hannah Black
Wyoming Tribune Eagle

CHEYENNE – Jurors found a local woman charged in the shooting death of her fiancé not guilty of second-degree murder in Laramie County District Court.

The all-male jury reached the verdict Wednesday evening after deliberating for about three hours.

Danelle Ashley Moyte, 35, had been accused of shooting and killing Christopher Garcia, 39, after an argument in the early hours of May 16, 2020. Three children, all 13 and younger at the time, were present

during the incident.

More than two dozen supporters



Moyte

Garcia's family and friends, and several began to weep.

sat on each side of the courtroom behind the prosecutor and defense tables. At the moment the verdict was read, Garcia's younger brother stood up and quickly left the room. Gasps and sobs could be heard among

While leaving the courtroom, one man shouted at Moyte "You murdered my cousin," and "You'll burn in hell." Others yelled insults and expletives after leaving the courtroom, and a man said loudly: "The system is f---ed up – no justice at all."

The defense rested its case Wednesday morning after questioning witnesses for less than an hour. Shortly before, Moyte told Laramie County District Judge Thomas Campbell she would not testify.

The prosecutor, Laramie County District Attorney Leigh Anne

Manlove, did not call any rebuttal witnesses nor present any additional evidence.

On Tuesday, Campbell dismissed four of the five counts brought against Moyte: three counts of child abuse with mental injury and one count of aggravated assault and battery with serious bodily injury.

Devon Petersen, an attorney for Moyte, argued Manlove provided little to no evidence to support these charges, and Campbell agreed.

As a result of the dismissals, the jury only considered the second-degree murder charge, which carried a penalty of 20 years to life

in prison.

Closing arguments

For Moyte to be convicted of second-degree murder, jurors needed to be convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that Moyte "did purposefully and maliciously, but without premeditation, kill" Garcia.

In her closing arguments Wednesday afternoon, Manlove broke down the words "purposely" and "maliciously" in an attempt to convince the jury to bring back a guilty verdict.

See Moyte trial, page A2



Photo by Engin Yapici on Unsplash.

SNOWPACK FORECAST INDICATES

LITTLE TO NO DROUGHT RELIEF

By Dustin Bleizeffer
WyoFile.com

Forecasters say Wyoming is likely in store for "normal to below normal" snowpack this winter and early spring, bringing little drought relief.

The state enters winter with all four major basin regions below median snowpack for this time of year, while soil moisture also remains below average for much of the state, according to the November Wyoming Hydraulic Update and Outlook published by Natural Resources Conservation Services. Although October was wetter than normal, those gains were diminished by a

Geographically, Wyoming's highest elevations – where snowpack matters most because it drives spring runoff – have seen greater warming impacts than the rest of the state in recent decades despite year-to-year variances in weather.

mostly dry and unusually warm November and first week of December which saw high temperatures smash 100-year records.

"We have a lot of conditions to overcome," Casper-based Natural Resources Conservation Services hydrologist Jim Fahey said. "Going back to the low soil moisture that we've seen, and low base flows in the rivers and a two-year drought, as well, we could definitely use an above-average winter."

The trends underscore long-term challenges in the state brought by human-caused climate change, which pose major impacts for agriculture, river flows and other factors.

The current La Nina event will continue through the winter months, and could usher in above-average amounts of precipitation for the northwestern portion of the state. Overall, Wyoming has about equal chances for slightly above or slightly

below normal temperatures and precipitation this winter, according to Jackson-based Mountain Weather meteorologist Jim Woodmencey.

"If we come out of this close to normal precipitation and near-normal temperatures, I'd be happy with that," Woodmencey said.

Just three Wyoming ski resorts had opened as of Monday: Jackson Hole, Grand Targhee and Snowy Range, according to the On The Snow ski report. At least five others plan to open within two weeks. Wyoming ski resorts historically aim to open on or before the Thanksgiving holiday.

See Snowpack, page A5

Lawmakers discuss 'I-80 compromise' redistricting

By Carrie Haderlie
For the Wyoming Tribune Eagle

Legislators from across the state spent time this week discussing whether Laramie County should join with Goshen County to the north or Albany County to the west for equal



Sen. Brian Boner

representation, as lawmakers continue the state's redistricting process following the 2020 census.

In a plan he called the "I-80 compromise," Sen. Brian Boner, R-Douglas, proposed that Albany and Laramie counties band together to create 10 self-contained districts in Laramie County, one shared district between the two counties and three self-contained districts in Albany County. Boner proposed his idea at a Joint Corporations, Elections and Political Subdivisions Interim Committee meeting Tuesday after weeks of ongoing discussion about redistricting in Wyoming.

Boner's plan would move Laramie County closer to having 11 House members, and would also shift boundaries across the I-80 corridor similar to population changes tracked in the 2020 census. Boner's plan would include 10 House districts completely positioned within Laramie County, with an average size of 9,419 residents. One legislative district would be shared between Laramie and Albany County, and would be made up of 6,314 Laramie County residents and 3,300 Albany County residents. That would mean that the remaining three seats in Albany County would include on average 9,652 residents, he said.

"That 9,200 is skimming right at the bottom of the end of the range, and then you have an even House district split between Carbon and Albany County," Boner said.

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