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Wednesday

December 4, 2013
Vol. 140, No. 286
Fergus Falls, Minn.

Kids were home at time of break-in

Cassman, Stewart and Wark face felony burglary charges

By Heather Rule
Daily Journal

The three men arrested following a home invasion Thanksgiving Day in Fergus Falls were charged Monday in Otter Tail County District Court.

Daniel Cassman, 32, of Elbow Lake; Terry Stewart, 35, of Fergus Falls, and Jeremy Wark, 33, of Fergus Falls were each

charged with one felony count of first-degree burglary of an occupied dwelling.

The victim had received a phone call on the afternoon of Nov. 27, with Cassman in the background demanding his final paycheck and his tools, which the victim said would be ready by Friday, the report says.

Fergus Falls police responded to a burglary report at 4:30 a.m. Nov. 28 in the 3900 block of Pebble Shores Circle, according to the criminal complaint.

The male resident heard a knock at the door at about 4

For more news from the crime beat, see page 8.

a.m.; Cassman, an employee of the resident, was standing on the front porch without a shirt on, the report says.

As the resident reportedly opened the door to ask Cassman what he was doing, the three men allegedly rushed inside and pushed the resident back into the house as he tried to slam the door.

Stewart, who reportedly wore a ski mask, allegedly put the victim up against the wall with his hands around the man's throat.

The other two men went through the house, and the situation became loud and violent, the victim reportedly told authorities.

A woman in the residence reportedly started screaming, which woke three children in the home.

As they came into the hallway, a surprised Stewart reportedly said, "There's kids here?"

Cassman reportedly said, "It wasn't supposed to go down like this," when he saw the children.

Stewart and Wark took the victim outside and then all three ran. They were later arrested.

Cassman later told authorities that he, Wark and Stewart were out driving when he pointed out the victim's truck in front of the residence.

Stewart allegedly pulled in front of the residence, grabbed a mask and got out of the truck.

The next court appearances for Stewart and Wark are Dec. 16.



Chris Reinos/Daily Journal

Third-grader Peyton Marquette is one of about 40 students who have stuck with the Cleveland Coding Club led by Jesse Thorstad. Thorstad began the club earlier this year as a way to help younger students get acquainted with computer coding.

Crackin' the code

After-school computer program at Cleveland helps young students

By Chris Reinos
Daily Journal

When Jesse Thorstad started the Cleveland Coding Club a few months ago, he had no idea how many students would show up. Thorstad, a technology specialist at Fergus Falls High School, had

found an interesting coding program called Tynker that he thought could benefit younger students and give them some early work with computer coding. He sent out a blanket invitation to Cleveland School students, urging them to show up to one of the school's computer lab after school one Monday. The turnout was not what he expected.

"Sixty kids showed up," Thorstad said. "Every computer was used and there were kids sitting on the

floor that first day, just waiting." Since that hectic first day, the program has reached a steadier place. Those initial 60 students eventually became about 40 regular attendees. This week, Thorstad cut the program from three days a week down to two, with about 20 students on each day. The Cleveland Coding Club works with Tynker, a program in which young students drag and drop

See **Coding** — Page 3

Unrelenting snowstorm buries NE MN

Associated Press

DULUTH — It's the snowstorm that just keeps on giving.

The unrelenting storm has spread about 2 feet of snow in northeastern Minnesota and continued for a third day Wednesday.

The heavy snow has contributed to dozens of traffic accidents around Duluth, closed the University of Minnesota Duluth and most other schools in the area and even shut down the Bentleyville holiday lights display.

A National Weather Service observer reported 26 inches of snow north of Two Harbors late Tuesday night.

Duluth was buried under at least 16 inches. Forecasters say much of the region will see another 8 to 12 inches Wednesday.

By the time the winter storm warning ends Thursday morning, snowfall totals could approach 3 feet in some areas.

In Fergus Falls, about 1.5 inches of snow fell Tuesday night.

Another one to two inches of snow is expected to fall today in Fergus Falls, and then temperature's are expected to drop below zero for the next week.

The storm was a factor in one North Dakota crash. Ronald Waters, 59, of Watford City, died when the semitrailer he was driving rolled in a ditch south of the city.

In the Dakotas, cattle ranchers who lost thousands of animals in an October blizzard were bracing for the latest wintry weather, with wind chills of 40 degrees below zero expected by week's end.



Boys win 3rd game

The Otter boys win third straight game at home Tuesday over Sauk Rapids-Rice, 78-47. See **Page 10**.

M State choir prepares for winter concert

By Heather Rule
Daily Journal

Not only will concert-goers have the chance to hear holiday selections during the M State-Fergus Falls Winter Choir Concert Friday, but they will also get a preview of a piece the singers will perform this February at Carnegie Hall in New York.

They will join others to form a choir of about 200 Feb. 16 to perform "Mass in G" by Franz Schubert at the National Two-Year college Choir Festival. M

State has been there before, most recently in 2005.

"We were invited," said Teresa Ashworth, director of choral music at M State. "We have a good track record. There was an incentive because of our proven record. We get to go at a reduced cost. The (choir) officers wanted to travel this year. When this invitation came in August, they were all over it."

About 40 from the concert choir and chamber chorale will make the trip. When they're not rehearsing or performing, they'll

have free time over five days and four nights to explore New York and are hoping to see some shows, Ashworth said.

Both Lexi Wedll and Kristen Johnson, co-presidents of the choir, are excited to go and sing in Carnegie Hall.

"That's a great opportunity for a choir student," Johnson said. "For any student."

The "Mass in G" piece, featuring the Fergus Falls High School orchestra, is also a good classical piece to have, Ashworth said.

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Heather Rule/Daily Journal

The M State-Fergus Falls concert choir, under the direction of Teresa Ashworth, rehearses Tuesday in advance of its Winter Choir Concert on Friday.

MAILING LABEL

TOMORROW:

HIGH: 2 LOW: -11
SUNRISE TOMORROW: 7:52 a.m.
SUNSET TOMORROW: 4:38 p.m.
YESTERDAY:
HIGH: 30 LOW: 27
PRECIPITATION: .0

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