

## Kansas newspaper story illustrates challenges striking a balance at community newspapers

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One of my favorite newspaper mottos is "the only newspaper in the world that cares about (insert community name)." Over the years, I have seen various newspapers print it on their front-page nameplate. In many respects, the motto captures what a good newspaper is all about — publishing news and information about the community that informs and engages its citizens.

Sometimes that job is far from easy. Especially for newspapers intent on taking their journalistic responsibilities seriously.

Last week, you may have seen the news that spread like a prairie fire about the weekly newspaper in Marion, Kansas, that was the subject of search warrant by local police. The police seized the newspaper's computers, cell phones and documents. They also took computers from the editor's home. All stemming from a convoluted small-town drama involving a businesswoman who doesn't like the newspaper. Plus, police accusations that

a newspaper reporter broke the law.

By week's end, police had rescinded the search warrant and returned seized equipment to the newspaper. It appeared the story was winding down, but not before nationwide outrage came from those who advocate for the First Amendment and a free press — including myself — about how this incident represented an attack on journalism and a threat to democracy itself.

Now, we are learning more about the story.

On Saturday, The Washington Post reported that the local police chief sought the search warrant because he believed a Marion County Record reporter may have broken the law by impersonating someone else to obtain information from an online state government database. The newspaper's editor and lawyer said no law was violated and that the reporter accessed the government record only for research purposes allowed under the law. In short, journalism is not a crime.

On Sunday, The New York Times published a broader story about tension between some Marion res-

idents and the Marion County Record because of what they perceive to be unnecessary and overly aggressive news coverage by the hometown newspaper. A quote from the Times story: "The role should of course be positive about everything that is going on in Marion and not stir things up and look at the negative side of things," said Mitch Carlson, who co-owns the local grocery store."

Marion County Record editor Eric Meyer responded that he believes the newspaper's watchdog reporting ultimately makes the community better. As the Times reported, not everyone in Marion agrees with Meyer.

Besides First Amendment and free press debates, the Kansas story raises another important question. How does a community newspaper strike a proper balance in the way it covers the community and what it publishes on the printed pages and online? What is the happy medium? There is a distinction between

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Emma Nichols, Sara Thonvold, Haylee Tormanen and Shelby Anderson are the seniors on the Clark-Willow Lake volleyball team this year.

Submitted photo

## Clark-Willow Lake Volleyball Preview - Teamwork is Key

After opening preseason workouts more than a week ago, Clark-Willow Lake will be seeking improvement from an 8-15 campaign from one year ago. According to head coach Bobbi Bohnet, "The first week of practice has been very good. We are coming off a busy summer with league, camps and open gyms that went smoothly and we have jumped right into skill building and working as a team."

It is a new year and the Cyclones have some battle-tested experience under their belt. Coach Bohnet's squad is ready to meet the challenge in 2023 with nine returning letterwinners, including a duo of 2022 All-Conference selections in Shay Michalski and Haylee Tormanen. Other returners letterwinners include seniors Sara Thonvold and Emma Nichols, juniors Samantha Brenden, Avery Lee, Tehya Vig and Hannah Heiman and sophomore Zoey Helkenn. Senior Shelby Anderson and sophomore Zoe Nichols rounds out the varsity roster.

Some new faces to the program come in the form of leadership as the Cyclones add two new coaches to the ranks in Lukas Anderson and Dan Duenwald. According to Bohnet, "New to the junior high staff is Dan Duenwald. He brings a lot of experience as a former head coach here in Clark. We have also added Lukas Anderson as our assistant coach and he brings a set of fresh eyes to the program," added Bohnet.

With a full roster and knowledgeable assistants, coach Bohnet looks forward to 2023 with fresh goals and expectations. "Our team's goals this year are to improve on last year and work as a whole team," explained Bohnet. "This year we are focusing more on communication and working as a team."

As part of a team-focused strategy, Bohnet will rely on the athleticism and versatility on her roster. "There are so many girls that can play so many spots, it makes for a good problem to have, even though it makes

my job harder finding just the right lineup. I would expect to see changes to our lineups depending who we are playing," added Coach Bohnet.

A key strength for the Cyclones will be a deep roster. "A definite strength is having such versatile girls that I can put them anywhere and they can all play well in those positions" stated Bohnet. In a breakdown of the positions, Coach Bohnet answered the call of who she anticipates that her heavy hitters for CWL will be this season and who will lead the charge. "I am looking for great things from Shay Michalski, Hannah Heiman, Sara Thonvold," stated Bohnet "and some upcoming girls that I will be placing in new positions."

Setting up the offense for the Cyclones will be returning letter winner Sami Brenden with back up from Zoe Nichols and protecting the backcourt

**CWL Volleyball**  
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This year, there are four seniors on the Clark-Willow Lake Cyclones cross country team. Pictured above, from left to right, are seniors Emma Peterson, Macy Bochek and Taylor Merkel. Danielle Batchelor is also a senior cross country athlete, but is not pictured.

Photo by Tammie Paulson

## CWL Cross Country Preview – Deep and Dangerous

At the beginning of every season for every head coach, an assessment period is among the first tasks that is undertaken. Who graduated? Who is coming back? Who is ready to take the next step? These are the questions that every head coach must wrestle with during the preseason in anticipation of their first race of the year.

At times, those unanswered questions are a bit more cut and dried and sometimes it takes a little more time to unknot. For the Clark-Willow Lake Cyclones, cross country head coach Tammie Paulson has the enviable task of finding out the answers to those questions with the added luxury of coming off one of the best seasons in program history in 2022.

Clark-Willow Lake swept the Northeast Conference and Region 1A girls' team titles one year ago in a historic run to the state meet where the Cyclones placed 13th in the team race and then seventh grader Kamryn Nesheim earned All-State honors placing in the top 15 in Class A.

Paulson returns a strong nucleus from that squad losing only Kayla Jordan and Alicia Vig to graduation and reloads with a now experienced group of underclassmen and some new, fresh faces as well. "We return a ton of letterwinners from 2022," explained Coach Paulson.

Her 2023 roster includes runners Taylor Merkel, Alex Reil, Waylan Olson, Oliver Reitz, Logan Seefeldt, Cooper Pommer, Damian Severson and Askel Gjerde for the boys' team and Emma Peter-

son, Macy Bochek, Danielle Batchelor, Aleisha Naze, Lexie Schmidt, Cadence Bochek, Emma Bochek, Hadley Gjerde, Kamryn Nesheim, Katelynn Merkel, Nevaeh Reitz and Rylee Pickrel.

New runners include Nevaeh Reitz (7th grade). "Nevaeh will add depth to our girls' team with her speed. Her older brother Oliver is back running with us adding to our guys' team," added Paulson. Askel Gjerde (7th grade) has joined the ranks of the boys' team and looks to make an impact as well. "Askel will add to our boys' team and in a few years, he will be a runner to watch," explained Paulson. "Damian Severson (10th grade) is sophomore and his speed came out in track last spring. He has great potential in helping the CWL boys team return to the state meet," stated coach Paulson.

Another new face added to Team CWL is assistant coach Alicia Turnquist. "She is young and very excited to join us this season," added Paulson. "She ran in high school and has a sister who ran cross country in college. Alicia brings fresh ideas and enthusiasm to our team."

The Cyclones have been working hard so far in the preseason "Our goals are to stay strong as a girls' team and we want to see if we can improve on the boys' side," added Coach Paulson. "Our ultimate goal is to take Regions."

As we enter the 2023 season, the question remains: Will anyone be able to challenge CWL for the top spot in Region 1A? There is much confidence building around the Cy-

clones centering around speed and depth. "Our girls' team has depth," added Paulson. "We also have many young, fast runners balanced with a core of veteran runners that bring stability to our team."

On the boys' side, the boys return a gritty bunch of runners who value teamwork. "Our boys' team has a group of runners that will work together and hopefully add a few plaques to our trophy case," stated coach Paulson.

Not afraid of hard work Paulson's crew has been focused and driven in preparation for Fall 2023. "We have started the year working on building endurance," explained Paulson. "Once that is accomplished, we will focus on improving our speed."

No season comes without a challenge or two and Cyclone XC is not exempt. "We have a couple of boy runners that are tying the dual sports route this year," added Paulson. "It will be a challenge to see how that pans out."

There is no shortage of enthusiasm surround the cross country teams this year and Coach Paulson shares one last nugget of wisdom about 2023 stating, "Seeing what the girls can accomplish and seeing what my boys are able to do are what I am most excited about this season. Kamryn Nesheim will be fun to watch, along with our other young girls."

Clark-Willow Lake begins their season at the Don Ray Invitational held in White, SD on August 26th.

**CWL Cross Country**  
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### WEATHER

Robert Cole - Official  
Weather Observer

	HI	LO	PR
Aug. 15	74	57	0
Aug. 16	81	64	0
Aug. 17	86	54	0
Aug. 18	73	54	0
Aug. 19	84	61	0
Aug. 20	90	60	0
Aug. 21	74	61	0
2023 precipitation to date	15.53"		
2022 precipitation to date	16.52"		

**The Clark County Courier office will be closed the week of September 4 for a week-long vacation. The 9-6-23 newspaper will still be printed and mailed out, but will need to be prepared a week ahead of time.**

If you have news stories, advertising or legal notices for the 9-6-23 edition of the Clark County Courier, please email us at [clarkcountycourier@gmail.com](mailto:clarkcountycourier@gmail.com) or call us at (605) 532-3654 before August 31.

**Thank you**



## Class of 2036 starts Kindergarten

Hooray for kindergarten! Classes at Clark School began Wednesday, August 16. Kindergarten student Rowan Tarbox is pictured above with her teacher, Aleigha Hallberg. Stephanie Hagstrom is the other kindergarten teacher at Clark Elementary School. Rowan is the daughter of Tyler and Jamie Tarbox of Bradley.

Photo by Karli Paulson