

## Teacher bailed out of jail



Darin J. Debolt is escorted into the Benewah County courtroom by Cindy Schultz for his arraignment Feb. 2 with Judge Patrick McFadden. He faces one charge of sexual battery of a minor child age 16 or 17. After his bail was set at \$50,000, Mr. Debolt posted bond. He is scheduled to be back in court Feb. 22.

- Chris D'Angelo

**By Chris D'Angelo**

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A preliminary hearing has been set for the Lakeside High School gym teacher accused of having sexual contact with a 16-year-old female.

Darin J. Debolt, 26, was arrested early Feb. 2 at the school and charged with sexual battery of a minor child age 16 or 17, a felony. The crime, which occurred in Benewah County on or about Jan. 15, did not involve a Lakeside student.

Mr. Debolt is expected to appear in court Feb. 22 at 2 p.m. before Judge Patrick McFadden.

"Many cases settle at prelim," said Prosecuting Attorney Doug Payne. "That day I expect to see some movement one way or another."

At his arraignment Feb. 2, Judge McFadden set Mr. Debolt's bail at \$50,000 and ordered him to stay away from his accuser. He posted bond the following day.

If found guilty, Mr. Debolt could face up to life in prison for "willfully and lewdly" committing "lewd and lascivious acts upon the body of a minor child," as stated in the criminal complaint against him.

Although Mr. Payne could not discuss specific details of the investigation at this point, he did say that this "is not a he said she said case."

And while the minor was not a student at Lakeside High School, Mr. Payne confirmed that part of the crime Mr. Debolt is accused of took place at the school.

Mr. Debolt, a Spokane resident, has been teaching gym and health classes at Lakeside High School since 2006. He has been placed on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation, according to Superintendent Judi Sharrett.

"Please know that we are concerned about this disturbing situation and are taking it very seriously," Ms. Sharrett wrote in her Feb. 3 letter to parents. "I assure you appropriate actions are being taken as the investigation unfolds, and the district is fully cooperating with the police."

In addition to help from district counselors, Lakeside students were given the opportunity to speak with a counselor from Benewah Medical Center following Mr. Debolt's arrest.