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Your Source Of News In The Sandhills

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Thomas participates in 23rd Annual Masonic All-Star marching band

Savannah Thomas, from Thedford High School, is one of 273 high school students from across Nebraska who participated in the 23rd Annual Masonic All-Star Marching Band, which performed Saturday, June 3 during the Shrine Bowl festivities in Kearney.

Thomas is the daughter of John and Terri Thomas of Seneca.

The band members devoted four days of intense practice starting May 30, to learn the music, marching steps and field formations. The band gave their first public performance with a public concert at Harmon Park on Friday evening, June 2. The band led the Shrine Bowl Parade down Kearney's Central and 1st Avenue on Saturday morning, June 3, and it also performed the pre-game National Anthem and during half-time of the 59th Annual Shrine Bowl football game at Ron and Carol Cope Stadium, on Foster Field, at the University of Nebraska-Kearney.

The band members were hosted by the Masons of Nebraska, and were directed by Brad Weber, retired Band Director from Wayne High School, currently Instructor of Percussion at Wayne State College; Dan Sodomka, Band Director at Aurora High School; and Dr. Dave Bohnert, Director of Bands at Wayne State College. Thomas received a scholarship from Seneca Lodge. The scholarship covered the costs of the camp.

"We demanded a lot of the students during the past week," Weber said. "They responded professionally and worked very hard. That was evident by the high quality shows they performed Friday and Saturday. There's no doubt these young musicians are among the best in the state."

Coupled with hard work, the members also participated in a pool party, bowling, and a dance. Many are looking forward to the opportunity to use the instruction provided by the band directors when they return to their respective high school bands.

"The band members worked hard during the week preparing for the Shrine Bowl performances," said Rick Myers, Grand Master of Nebraska Masons. "They also had a lot of fun meeting new people and enjoyed the activities, but they also understand the main reason for the long hours and hard work. Patients at the Shriners Hospitals for Children will benefit the most from the band's efforts this past week. We sincerely appreciate their contribution to raise awareness and funds to enable the Shriners to help even more children."

"Masonic lodges across Nebraska support local youth and community projects, humanitarian efforts including a child identification program, academic scholarships, and efforts to support our military," Myers said. "At the statewide level, the Grand Lodge helps to maintain two homes: The Nebraska Masonic Home at Plattsmouth for Masons and their female relatives, and the Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children in Fremont. The combined philanthropic efforts of Masonic-related organizations amount to more than \$2 million a day."

Freemasonry is the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world and is based on the lessons of living a life of brotherhood and high moral standards as portrayed symbolically in the work of stone masons who built the cathedrals, abbeys and castles of Europe.



COURTESY PHOTO

Bradley makes bid for NHSRA top cowboy spot

Editor's Note: The following story is being reprinted with permission from Rodeo News

By Ruth Nicolaus

J.T. Bradley is a humble, hardworking kind of guy. The seventeen year old cowboy lives in Brewster, Neb., and cowboys on the family ranch six miles outside of town.

He is a member of the Nebraska High School Rodeo Association, where he competes in the tie-down roping, steer wrestling, team roping and cutting. He says tie-down and bulldogging are his favorite events, but cutting is his best event. That is because he is around cattle every day, so he has a good sense of cows, good horsemanship, a good cutting horse, and "cutting comes natural to me."

For the cutting he rides a twelve year old dun named Arnold. For the team roping (he's a header), he rides a thirteen year old bay named Kate, and his tie-down horse is a ten year old sorrel named Cindy. For the steer wrestling, he rides a borrowed horse, Jiggs, who belongs to good friends Gordon and Amy Simonson. Gordon started J.T. in the steer wrestling.

J.T. is good help on the family ranch. The Bradleys run a cow/calf operation, so J.T. does a lot of riding, checking cows and moving them to pasture. He helps fix fence and puts out salt and mineral. Every day's activities are different, which he enjoys.

Each year, he and his dad go to Texas to buy roping calves. They use them, and they also sell them to others who need them for roping practice. When they are done with the calves, they buy them back and sell them as feedlot cattle.

Part of the fun times he has had this summer included competing at the Nebraska High School Finals Rodeo. He is the 2016 reserve boys cutting camp, all-around champ, and V-Bar Sales Men's



JJJ PHOTO

Bradley and his calf roping horse, Kate, doing what he does best, roping calves in the rodeo arena.

Timed Event Trailer champ. He gets the use of a Titan trailer for a year, and he's pretty pumped about it. Winning the trailer was a surprise for him. "I forgot about the trailer as an award," he said. "I was more worried about the all-around and trying to get it wrapped up. It surprised me when they announced it at the awards ceremony."

Last fall, J.T. was a senior at Sandhills High School in Dunning. He enjoyed being stage help for the One-Act plays, where he works alongside his favorite teacher, Mrs. Christy, who teaches English. "We get along pretty good," he said. "She's just fun to be around. She has a positive attitude for everything, and she's really funny." He wrestles, and qualified for state wrestling two years ago. He also participates in FFA.

After high school graduation, J.T. will attend college, possibly Northeastern in Sterling, Colo. He may study agribusiness or get a welding degree, but he's not sure. He plans on rodeoing collegiately.

J.T. is great help around the ranch, his dad Justin says. "We appreciate his

help, and his determination. He works really hard in practice, and he's really diligent." He's also very respectful. "He's polite, and he doesn't argue with grown-ups. He's very humble."

J.T. has qualified for the National High School Finals Rodeo for each of the past three years.

He is the son of Justin and Tracy Bradley; he has two brothers, Blayne, who is 21, and Zack, who is twelve.

Bradley goes into the Nebraska State High School Rodeo finals June 14 through the 17 sitting in the top spot to repeat as the All-Around Cowboy. Bradley is setting second in cutting, fifth in steer wrestling, third in tie down roping and along with partner, Quentin Anderson, qualified for team roping.

Other area rodeo athletes who qualified for the State Finals are: Jaylee Simonson, Mason Ward, Quade Potter, Cauby Pokorny, Evan Hewett, Gage Haake, Ty Bass, Britney Brosius, Andrea Meyer, Raesha Warren, Brooklyn Leach, Taelor Evenson, Caity Hesseltine, Clancy Hesseltine and Arika Starr.

ULNRD receives funding for year three of groundwater discharge project

The Upper Loup Natural Resources District is very pleased to announce that they will receive \$110,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for "investigating the spatial and temporal characteristics of groundwater discharge in the Loup River Basin," a carry-over project.

The funds are being used to facilitate the collection of airborne thermal infrared data, purchase of additional instrumentation to measure and record groundwater-levels and temperature, and to oversee a study to enhance the understanding of spatial and temporal characteristics of groundwater/surface-water interaction in the Loup River basin. Additional information is needed for the management and development of water resources to sustain supplies needed for agriculture, fish and wildlife, recreation, and domestic uses.

Streams in the Loup River basin are sensitive to consumptive groundwater use because of the close hydrologic connection between groundwater and surface water. Four stream reaches, totaling approximately 320 river miles, have been identified as priority streams where additional groundwater/surface water interaction information is needed. Over these reaches, airborne thermal imagery will be collected and used to map stream surface temperature, to identify thermal anomalies which may be indicative of focused groundwater discharge. Airborne thermal data will be verified with continuous water-temperature logging at existing streamgaging stations and with self-logging thermistors.

Mapped thermal anomalies will be investigated with a variety of techniques including water temperatures, potentiometer, and seepage meter measurements. Within the four stream reaches four coupled groundwater/surface-water gages will be instrumented at existing streamgaging stations. Coupled groundwater surface-water gages consist of a streamgage coupled with an observation well that has been completed below the elevation of the streambed and instrumented with a water-level recorder. The information provided by a network of coupled gaging stations will allow scientists and managers to analyze streamflow and groundwater discharge patterns, both temporally and spatially. Future groundwater management actions must be tied to studies such as this in order to conserve, maintain and protect our water supplies, natural environments, and economic vitality for future generations.

Local FFA members awarded scholarships

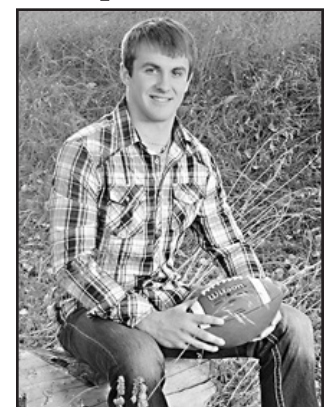
Thedford High School FFA chapter members brought their second year to a close April 28, with an award ceremony, installation of new officers, and their primary fundraising labor auction. Bridger Chytka is the Thedford FFA Chapter advisor.

Members of the Nebraska Cattlemen Sandhills Affiliate were invited to attend the ceremony and enjoy a potluck supper that included pulled beef brisket.

Serving as officers for the 2016-17 year were Jentri Sherman, president; Kalee Jepsen, vice president; and Morgan Rines-tine, reporter. Other members were Chase Haake, Shaylee Scranton, Ile Wilde, Savannah Thomas, Kaylin Parker, Caity Hesseltine, Lex Wilder, Cade Pokorny, Andrew Gordon and Tuck Ballenger. Eighth graders who will become members next year and who were present were Anthony Benscoter, Ariel



Jentri Sherman



Cade Pokorny

Bryant, Rhiann Painter, and Tyson Stengel. Awards and scholarships were present to the following FFA members: Green Hand Degrees: Tucker Ballenger and Andrew Gordon. Chapter Degree: Jentri Sherman.

The Thedford FFA Chapter also received Chapter Growth recognition.

Hoffman Ranch of Thedford awarded an ongoing scholarship to a member for involvement effort,

leadership and commitment to the FFA program. Members could attend 19 events throughout the year. Morgan Rines-tine participated in 17 events, including the National and State FFA conventions. Rines-tine will be a junior next year and will receive her scholarship at the high school graduation. The scholarship could increase if she wins the award again.

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