

Freedom Ride bound  
for town Fourth  
of July weekend **3**

Track teams second at  
conference meet;  
golfers runner-up **6**

High school seniors  
receive \$80,000  
in scholarships **8**

State Parks' Simpson  
hosts lunch,  
public meeting **14**

Thermopolis  
Hot Springs

# Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

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## Class of 2014 honored during commencement

### Paris, Blakesley, Rush deliver honor speeches

by Joe Sovo

Early in the commencement exercises to honor the Hot Springs County High School Class of 2014 on Sunday afternoon, class president Will Denney said it best – about graduation being a right of passage. "...The point in our lives when we become an adult is the day when we start acting like an individual. We start forming our own opinions, learning things on our own....I have seen every single person sitting before me prove their individualism."

Sunday's ceremony began with 43 members of the Class of 2014 marching into the gym while the high school band played the traditional "Pomp and Circumstance," under the direction of Dustin Olsen.

Six of the seven members of the Hot Springs County School District No. 1 Board of Trustees were present. They were board chairman Clay Van Antwerp along with vice chair Liz Mahoney, clerk Melissa Johnson, Travis Bomengen, Danny Pebles and Tobi Johansen. Board treasurer Hub Whitt was unable to attend. High school principal Travis Anderson and superintendent Dustin Hunt were also on the stage as well as the 2014-15 student body president, Logan Kay.

The high school choir sang the National Anthem.

Denney introduced the three honor students, who gave their speeches – salutatorian Austin

Rush, and co-valedictorians Julia Blakesley and Ivy Paris. They each shared memories of attending high school with classmate Delanie Price, who was unable to attend the ceremony due to injuries suffered in a car crash four days before graduation, and they expressed their blessings and prayers.

Denney then introduced guest speaker Kara Janes.

The high school choir sang "For Good." Following was a brief period when the graduates presented the class flower – the tiger lily – to family members and special friends attending the commencement exercise.

Mahoney presented diplomas to the graduates, assisted by Anderson, as announced by Kay. Graduates Jamie Materi and Dylan Shaffer accepted Price's diploma on her behalf.

To close the ceremony, the Class of 2014 exited the gym to the recessional played by the band.

#### Honor student addresses

During his address, Rush referred to a quote from Juliette Binoche. "You must be able to let go of the past, whatever success you have seen, whatever your comfort, whatever your habits. To me, that's the key to loving life: Enabling yourself to step bravely into the unknown. Only there will you find yourself again."

Rush spoke about how success will come for him and his class-



Graduate Leesa Jensen, who is of Polynesian and African-American descent, wears huge leis while receiving her diploma from principal Travis Anderson. Wearing dozens of leis is a Polynesian custom upon graduation, according to her father, Paul Jensen. — Joe Sovo photo

mates. "I know every one of us will succeed in whatever we put our minds to, and just remember that when you give your all, you will always be rewarded. You might not be rewarded with money, or a medal, but you will be rewarded with self gratification....Thank you for being my friends and my lifelong family."

An emotional Blakesley was also upbeat in her address, saying, "We, Class of 2014, are graduating. All I can say is, 'It's about time!' We wouldn't have made it this far if it wasn't for our support system. So thank you family and friends."

Blakesley gave heartfelt

thanks to her mom and dad, and thanked her classmates for showing her what an adventurous life can be. "Thank you for teaching me how amazing people are, and how to laugh and love, and cherish every moment we've had together...for showing me a family away from home, and knowing we'll always have each other's backs."

Paris spoke about support for this year's HSCHS seniors, including their teachers.

"Sure, we got frustrated with them, but these amazing individuals have taught us so much, and not even just in their school subject," she said. "From ele-

mentary school on up, our teachers have cared for us in ways we don't even know. They have taught us valuable life lessons beyond the academics they are required to teach, and they have a deep love for each of us that I don't think we can begin to understand."

Paris offered a quote from Robert Fulghum: "The grass is not, in fact, always greener on the other side of the fence. Fences have nothing to do with it. The grass is greenest where it is watered. When crossing over fences, carry water with you and tend the grass wherever you may be."

#### Janes' guest address

Janes has taught all but a few of this year's graduating seniors in her Spanish and/or psychology classes during her first five years at the high school. After college and student teaching, she began her job search in the northwest states.

"I knew Thermopolis was the place for me because I am a small town girl that realizes the many benefits of educating in a place that rallies behind their kids and community, and I wanted to be part of that," Janes said.

She joked about her many experiences with her students, then went to a more serious tone. "You...only...live...once. This new term is not something that should be interpreted as a license of self-indulgence," Janes said, "but rather living the life that you have to the best of your ability. Like accolades ought to be, the fulfilled life is a consequence, a gratifying byproduct. It's what happens when you're thinking about more important things.

"Climb the mountain. Climb it so you can see the world, not so the world can see you....Exercise free will and creative, independent thought not for the satisfactions they will bring you, but for the good they will do others, the rest of the 6.8 billion – and those who will follow them."

Janes referred to the school motto: "Each of us have different talents, different dreams, different destinations, but we all have the same power to make a new tomorrow." She closed her address by saying, "The choices that you make determine a new tomorrow for everyone. Choose them with care....Thank you, from the bottom of my heart. Love you all."

## Racist vandalism, tire slashings pepper Thermopolis

by Drew Foster

Thermopolis police have identified three suspects in connection with vulgar and racist vandalism, property damage and tire slashing that occurred late last week.

Police received more than two dozen calls reporting suspected vandalism between early morning Friday and Saturday afternoon. The vandalism included slurs toward blacks and gays, though

property belonging to either group did not appear to be targeted.

Sgt. Pat Cornwell said police are investigating one adult male and two juvenile males in connection with the vandalism. He said Tuesday that arrests could be made this week.

"I'm concerned these are white kids writing this kind of stuff," Cornwell said. "The language is horrible."

Much of the vandalism was con-

centrated between First and Second streets and Clark and Warren Streets in East Thermopolis – though some of it reached beyond that area.

The police department last Friday received 18 consecutive calls of vandalism between 4 and 8:30 a.m.

"You get vandalism once in a while, but it's not this great," Cornwell said. He estimated that between \$2,000 and \$5,000 worth of property damage

took place. Much of that, Cornwell said, was due to slashed tires.

Other reported vandalism included broken yard lights, busted mailboxes and spray painted picnic tables and playground equipment.

Cornwell thanked his coworkers and fellow police officers in helping to identify the suspects.

"If it wasn't for their pictures and their time, I couldn't do my job," he said.

This is not the first rash of vandalism the town has experienced this year. In mid-February, a gazebo at Candy Jack Park suffered damage to its fence, roof and electrical sockets. In early April, mailboxes, garden lights and car mirrors were vandalized in an area of southeast Thermopolis. On April 22, police responded to what appeared to be a swastika burned into the grass at the ball fields.

## Memorial Day services set

The Hot Springs County Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 2281 has planned a series of services to commemorate service men and women – past and present – for the Memorial Day holiday on Monday, May 26.

The day's activities will begin at 11 a.m. with a service at Monument Hill Cemetery. At 11:30 a.m., a service will be held at Riverside Cemetery, followed by an additional observance at the Park Street Bridge at noon.

## Early IR deadline

The Independent Record office will be closed on Monday, May 26 in recognition of Memorial Day. The deadline for classified, display and legal advertising in the May 29 issue is noon Friday, May 23. The IR office will be open until 5 p.m. on that day.

The deadline for editorial/news content for the May 29 issue is noon Tuesday, May 27.



Todd Fike, working as the header, ropes a steer during the WYO Quarter Horse Ranch Sale performance preview Saturday morning at the fairgrounds. — Joe Sovo photo

## Crash claims life of young woman

Twenty-one-year-old Madisen Price of Thermopolis was killed and three others were injured around 9:50 p.m. Wednesday, May 14 when the vehicle in which they were all occupants left Wyoming 172 about 15 miles north of Thermopolis and rolled two times. Wyoming 172 is also known as Black Mountain Road.

None of the occupants – who were all from Thermopolis – were wearing seatbelts at the time of the crash and two were totally ejected from the vehicle during the rollover. Injured

were Delanie Price, 18, Dylan Balstad, 21, and Cody Shinost, 20. Price and Balstad were transported by helicopter to Wyoming Medical Center in Casper. Shinost was taken by ambulance to Hot Springs County Memorial hospital for treatment of injuries.

Wyoming Highway Patrol officers continue to investigate the crash and believe alcohol usage and speed were contributing factors. Charges against the driver, who was not identified by WHP, are pending.

## Local man killed in semi crash

Gary P. Linton, 31, of Thermopolis died as the result of collision involving two tractor-trailer combinations about 12:45 p.m. Friday, May 16 on U.S. 287 near Lamont.

According to the Wyoming Highway Patrol, three vehicles – a flatbed pickup, followed by a flatbed combination unit and another combination unit driven by 48-year-old John Francks

of Rock Springs – were traveling southbound at approximately milepost 28.5. The pickup slowed down and pulled off the roadway onto a county road. The flatbed combination unit following the pickup swerved around and passed the pickup.

Francks locked the brakes on his vehicle – causing the truck to jackknife with the cab in the northbound lane of travel, per-

pendicular to the highway. A northbound combination unit driven by Linton crashed into the jackknifed vehicle.

Both Linton and Francks were declared dead at the scene.

Inattentive driving and following too close are contributing factors leading to the cause of the crash, according to the Wyoming Highway Patrol.

## Top quarter horse draws \$31,500 at weekend sale

Power Spark 8711 was the high seller at the 31st annual WYO Quarter Horse Ranch Sale, held Saturday at the Hot Springs County Fairgrounds, drawing a top bid of \$31,500.

The event drew hundreds of

spectators to the fairgrounds and buyers from 24 states and two nations.

"We had a beautiful day and a good crowd," said Carole Smith of WYO Ranch. "We had an excellent sales crew. We have to

give credit to them."

Fifty-four geldings sold for an average of \$10,572. The top-10 horses sold for an average of \$22,850, and the top-20 averaged \$17,500, Smith said. High sellers included FB Dakotas Suga, a

2008 palomino, and Cashes Quervo Gold, a 2005 palomino, for \$31,000. Oakies Copper Boy, a 2007 buckskin, sold for \$30,000.

"It was a little bit down from years past, or last year, but that was a record year," Smith said

of overall sales.

Nineteen horses were sold to phone-buyers, which Smith thought was "the highest phone bidding we've had."

This year's top volume buyer was Patricia Hart from Ten-

nessee. Nine 2-year-olds sold for an average of \$2,833 and 15 yearlings sold for an average of \$1,783.

The 2014 fall WYO Quarter Horse Ranch Sale is planned for Sept. 13.