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SUNDAY

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Harvest of Harmony once more



For The Independent/Lauri Shultz

Northwest High School band members dance before marching in the annual Harvest of Harmony Parade Saturday in Grand Island. See page 1B for photos.

Grand Island celebrates fall with the sound of high school band music

By Robert Pore robert.pore@theindependent.com

Planning for the annual Harvest of Harmony Parade goes on all year. But on the morning of the parade, everything builds to a crescendo. High school bands from throughout Nebraska begin warming up before sunrise near Howard Elementary School. Parade float participants begin to gather along Cedar Street in preparation for the fall celebration.

After a day of overcast skies and showers Friday, the rain had left the area. It was cool and breezy, but there was blue skies as the sun began to spread its light. The parade started a little after 8 a.m. with the temperature in the mid- to upper 50s.

Michael Porter, chairman of the Harvest of Harmony Parade Committee, was out with the hundreds of volunteers who were directing and organizing the parade participants.

Harvest of Harmony is a

Grand Island tradition that began 78 years ago. Along with the bands, floats and parade volunteers, parade goers also started gathering along Third Street well before parade time to get their favorite spot along the route. Along with the nearly 100 bands participating in the parade, including the band from the University of Nebraska-Omaha and a high school band from Wyoming, there were also 75 floats representing a diverse cross-section of the Grand Island community, from businesses to nonprofits to youth organizations.

"We are pretty excited about this year's parade," Porter said.

The beauty of the parade is that bands from throughout the state travel here for the event, from high school bands with a little more than a dozen members to bands with nearly 200 musicians. It's a cross-section of the strength of music education in Nebraska.

Another strong tradition of the Harvest of Harmony Parade is the hundreds of community volun-

teers who help to organize and make the parade possible. The Grand Island Chamber of Commerce sponsors the celebration.

Porter said he had been part of the Harvest of Harmony Parade Committee for five years.

"You get to see the impact this parade has on the community," he said. "It is nice to help out on a big event like this and have everybody come together to put on an awesome parade every year."

Longtime volunteer Tom Graves was out early in the morning, helping to get the huge parade organized.

He has been both driving classic cars in and organizing the parade for 40 years.

"It is the camaraderie of all the people who come every year to participate or volunteer for the parade," Graves said. "Many of our volunteers have been doing this as long as I have."

He said the parade is an excellent spectacle of young musicians, their instruments and the joyful sounds they make.

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Harvest of Harmony Parade float awards

Grand Marshal's award: Amur Spirit award: Girls Scouts Troops 30 and 36

Business: 1. Amur 2. CPI

Civic: 1. Building Blocks 2. CHI Health 3. Primrose

School: 1. Northwest FFA

Children: 1. Girl Scouts Troops 30 and 36 2. G.I./ Cairo Area Bowling Association 3. Cub Scout Pack 107



For The Independent/Lauri Shultz

The Aurora High School drumline marches down the Eddy Street underpass (at left), and 2019 Harvest of Harmony Madison Gerken from McCool Junction waves during the 78th annual Harvest of Harmony Parade.

Supreme Court begins new term

Abortion, immigrants, LGBT rights top agenda

By Mark Sherman

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Abortion rights as well as protections for young immigrants and LGBT people top an election-year agenda for the Supreme Court. Its conservative majority will have ample opportunity to flex its muscle, testing Chief Justice John Roberts' attempts to keep the court clear of Washington partisan politics.

Guns could be part of a term with plenty of high-profile cases and at least the prospect of the court's involvement in issues revolving around the possible impeachment of President Donald Trump and related disputes between the White House and congressional Democrats.

The court also could be front and center in the presidential campaign itself, especially with health concerns surrounding 86-year-old Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Its biggest decisions are likely to be handed down in late June, four months before the election.

If last year was a time for the court to maintain a collective low profile following Justice Brett Kavanaugh's stormy confirmation, the new term marks a return to the spotlight.

"The court seemed to do everything it could to rise above the partisan rancor," said David Cole, the national legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union. "This term, it's going to be harder for the court."

How far the court is willing to go in any case that is likely to divide the liberal and conservative justices probably will come down to Roberts. He is essentially the court's new swing justice, a conservative who is closest to the court's center. He also has spoken repeatedly against the perception that the court is a political branch of government, much like Congress and the White House.

Last term, on the same day in late June, Roberts joined the conservatives in ending federal court challenges to partisan electoral maps and sided with the liberals to block the administration from adding a citizenship question to the 2020 census.

The new term might pose the sternest test yet of Roberts' stewardship of the court. Roberts also would preside over any Senate trial of Trump, if the House impeaches the president.

The justices return to the bench Monday with cases about whether states can abolish an insanity defense for criminal defendants and allow non-unanimous juries to convict defendants of some crimes.

The next day, they will take up two cases about whether federal civil rights law protects LGBT people from workplace discrimination. They are the first rights cases since the retirement of Justice Anthony Kennedy, who provided the fifth vote for and wrote the court's major gay rights decisions.

With Kavanaugh in Kennedy's place and Trump's other appointee, Justice Neil Gorsuch, also on the bench, the outcome is far from certain. The Trump administration also has reversed the Obama administration's view that LGBT people are covered by the Title 7 provision of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that prohibits workplace discrimination on the basis of sex.

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