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Pray for America



Grable 14th at state cross country

Ella Grable and Hailey Groff both competed for the Lady Trojans Cross Country team as individuals at the state meet. They qualified for state the week prior, with Grable placing 3rd at regionals while Groff took 6th. Regionals were held at the Cheney Lake Reservoir. State Cross Country was held at the Wamego Country Club with nearly 100 runners in the 1A girls race.

Ella finished the race in 14th, earning an all-state runner honor.

Hailey was able to finish the race in 39th place, putting her in the top half of the field.



Hailey Groff and Ella Grable

Snowflake Festival Friday

The Snowflake Festival in Highland on Friday, Nov. 27, begins at 6:00 p.m. There is no cost to attend. Highland PRIDE is sponsoring the Snowflake Festival. It will be a fun, family event, according to organizers. Santa Claus will ride a fire truck into town and will arrive at Degginger Park at 6:00 p.m. Parents are invited to take photos of their children with Santa Claus as they visit with him about their Christmas wish lists. The Dozen and a Half Club will provide crafts for children that evening at the Senior Center. Highland Library will have activities and refreshments for the kids.Kirkwood & Co. at 410 W. Main St. will serve s'mores and hot chocolate for the children, and adults will be able to order a Snowflake Special.



Santa's Mailbox at Troy Park

Calling all kids! A special mailbox for letters to Santa will soon be installed at the Troy Community Park. Children are invited to write their letters to Santa and then drop the letters off in the mailbox, which will be located along the roadway at the north entrance to the park. The mailbox for letters to Santa will be at the park from November 27 through December 20.

Please include your return address on the letters, so Santa can write back.

"We are excited to have an easy way for kids to send their letters to Santa," says Selena Smith, a member of the Troy Community Park Committee and one of the organizers of the Santa's mailbox project. The Park Committee is hoping to spread a little Christmas joy and magic with this project. There is no charge to mail a letter to Santa in this mailbox–no postage is required. The Troy Community Park is located near the intersection of Myrtle St. and Park St. in Troy.

Notice to property owners

The Doniphan County Appraiser would like to remind county property owners of the neighborhood revitalization program. The program is designed to issue tax refunds for up to ten years on qualifying real property improvements. The 2026 deadline for returning an application to the appraiser's office is fast approaching. If you have begun or are about to begin new construction, rehabilitation, additions, etc. please return your applications before the project is deemed ineligible. You can contact the appraiser's office for more information, 785-985-3977.

The Healing Power of Art for Troy Vet



Emporia State University engraving instructor Lee Griffiths, left, is shown with Bryson Wiedmer of rural Troy at Wiedmer's Senior Art Show at the university. Wiedmer's art helped him to heal from experiences he had while in the military.

Photo by Amber Wiedmer.



Bryson Wiedmer is pictured with the memorial for Kansas National Guardsmen Clinton Wisdom and Don Allen Clary on the Doniphan County courtyard. Wiedmer was in the Army and deployed to Iraq when Wisdom and Clary were killed in that country during the line of duty on Nov. 8, 2004. Their deaths affected him deeply.

Photo by Mary Winder.

By Mary Winder
Chief reporter

For Bryson Wiedmer of rural Troy, the process of creating art has played a vital role as he moves forward on his journey to heal emotionally since his retirement from the Army in November of 2022.

Wiedmer's need to heal stems from personal loss and from his overall experiences during his 21 years of service in the military. When Kansas National Guardsmen Don Allen Clary of Troy and Clinton Wisdom of Atchison were killed in Baghdad on Nov. 8, 2004 during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Wiedmer lost his longtime best friend in Clary and a mentor in Wisdom.

Clary and Wiedmer had been close friends since the second grade.

"When Don died, I was numb. It didn't seem real," explains Wiedmer, who was deployed to Iraq and was serving in that country at the same time Clary and Wisdom were killed. "We thought we were invincible."

Wiedmer was chosen to escort the two fallen soldiers back home to the United States, a task he is glad he was allowed to perform. He and Clary were both 21 years old when Clary was killed.

At the age of 19, Wiedmer had joined the Army. A Troy native, Wiedmer graduated from Troy High School in 2001.

"I joined right out of high school, originally to pay for school," he says. "Then it turned into a career because I didn't know what I wanted to do."

His rank when he retired was staff sergeant E-6, and through the years he worked at jobs such as supply NCO, recruiter, and retention NCO. He was deployed to Iraq from 2004 to 2005.

"I've worn a lot of hats," he notes. "I'm glad I was in the Army. It was good experience. I would do it again, but would pursue different fields."

While in the service, Wiedmer earned an Associate's Degree from Sonoran Desert Institute in Scottsdale, AZ in 2017 in firearms technology. It was at this time that he had the idea of learning about engraving to add to his firearms work repertoire.

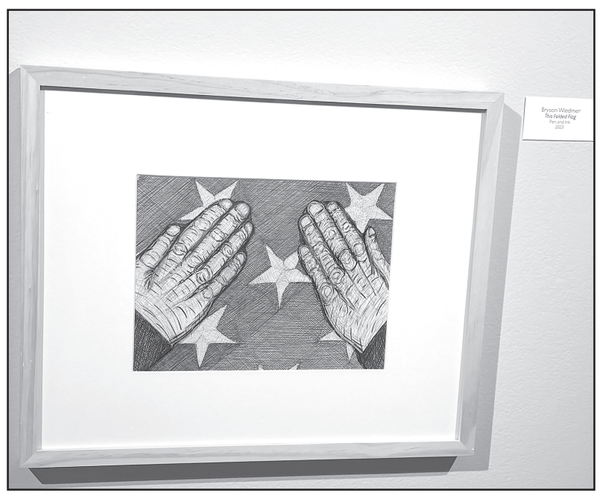
After his retirement from the service, Wiedmer was not exactly certain about what his next step should be. He chose to enroll at Highland Community College.

"I always wanted to go to school, so upon my retirement, I decided to give school a try," he recalls. "My first day at Highland, I was terrified. I was so much older than the other students and I didn't know how I would be perceived or accepted."

"But I've felt welcome the whole time by both students and faculty," he continues, adding that he has been able to serve as a mentor to some of the younger students. "It's nice to be able to relate to both."

Wiedmer found himself being drawn to art classes in college, and he realized that to get to the engraving instruction he was interested in pursuing, he first had to learn other art forms.

"I've always liked art and have collected art," he says. "In high school, I enjoyed art classes and had a passion for art. Then, I joined the Army and that's where my time went."



Pictured above is a pen and ink artwork created by Bryson Wiedmer, entitled "This Folded Flag." It was recently displayed at an art show of Wiedmer's work at Emporia State University where Wiedmer is a student.

Photo by Amber Wiedmer

"The college classes reignited my interest in all forms of art," he adds, noting that he thinks for him to attend college as a more mature student has been more valuable than it would have been if he had attended college immediately following high school.

Brigitte Bruna, drawing and painting instructor at Highland Community College told Wiedmer's sister, Amber Wiedmer, that "Bryson brings his own life experience to his work and creates it with an intense passion." Bruna believes Wiedmer's "curiosity in creating is exploratory and unique."

Sam Perkins, design and ceramics instructor at Highland Community College, told Amber, "Bryson has been a great addition to the Highland Community College Art Department. I really enjoy his approach and work ethic. His diverse background has made him a leader in the classroom and his fellow students look to him for inspiration and guidance. I'm sure he will excel in his future endeavors."

In 2023, Wiedmer earned an Associate's Degree from Highland Community College in General Studies.

He then enrolled in Emporia State University to further his education in art, particularly in the field of engraving. He is currently a senior there and he will graduate on December 12, 2026 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree, with an emphasis in engraving.

Wiedmer believes the skills he is developing in the area of engraving will add another dimension to his firearms restoration business, Wiedmer's Custom Shop, where he works when he has time. He is currently taking classes at both Emporia State University and Highland Community College.

Lee Griffiths, a master engraver, is Wiedmer's engraving instructor at Emporia. Wiedmer feels grateful to have Griffiths as an instructor.

"I feel very fortunate that God has put me in his path to learn from him," says Wiedmer, who describes Griffiths as one of the best engravers in the U.S. and as a phenomenal painter. "Every day I get to work with him, I'm more amazed."

As part of his education about metal engraving, Wiedmer has learned to use various metal engraving tools. Much of the fine engraving work is done under a microscope.

During his time at both Highland Community College and at Emporia State University, Wiedmer has been involved in creating various types of art, using different media.

"I don't really have a favorite," he notes. "I enjoy them all and have done a lot of experimenting with different kinds of art."

Wiedmer has discovered that creating the art has been very therapeutic for him. He had tried traditional counseling and therapy in the past, but they did not provide stellar results for

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HCC Board of Trustees vacancy

The Highland Community College Board of Trustees is accepting applications from Doniphan County residents to serve an unexpired term from January 2027 through December 2027. Such vacancy exists because a Board Member is unable to fulfill the term.

To be considered, submit a cover letter and resume by December 7, 2026, to:

humanresources@highlandcc.edu
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