

Brookings Native Trains For Spot On 'American Ninja Warrior'

BY ERIC SANDBULTE
Brookings Register

BROOKINGS (AP) — Ninjas are renowned masters of assassination and stealth from feudal Japan. So it might come as a surprise to hear that the longhaired 28-year-old rock climber and skateboarder Jake Murray has been training to become one.

But not just any ninja: he's working to become the American Ninja Warrior on the hit NBC show that bears the same name, the *Brookings Register* reported.

"American Ninja Warrior" is described on its website as an "action-packed series that follows competitors as they tackle a series of challenging obstacle courses in both city qualifying and city finals rounds across the country." Those who find success at their regional tryouts move on to the national finals in Las Vegas. There, a four-stage challenge awaits competitors vying for the \$1 million prize, which no one has won in the show's six previous seasons.

Now in its seventh season, Murray earned his first chance to face the grueling obstacle courses in a bid for that prize.

Murray grew up in Brookings, but has lived in Denver since 2010. Like many "American Ninja Warrior" competitors, he works part time, in his case, at a restaurant. This allows him to work for about two days a week to pay the bills and dedicate four days to training.

As much as 95 percent of his training consists of rock climbing.

"It's a biased opinion because I'm a climber, but I feel like rock climbing training is the best training for this. There is no better way to get the grip strength, the upper body endurance. There is no other activity that I know of that'll get you as prepared for finals," he said.

Another appeal of part time work for Murray and many others vying for a shot on the show is that part time work gives them more flexible hours, letting them leave for longer periods of time.

"If I need to, I can get the time off. I can say, 'Hey, man, I need 20 days off to go do the walk-on,'" he laughed. "It'd have to be a pretty supportive boss for a full-time job to get that off." His introduction to American Ninja Warrior came from the Japanese show it's based off, called "Sasuke." A skateboarder during his teens, he saw "Sasuke" at a friend's house.

"It looked extremely appealing being the squirrely kid that I was. I love climbing things and was a hyper kid, so it looked right up my alley," he said.

Getting his start when he was 13, he's been skateboarding for 15 years, and he credits it with lending him his agility and balance. Since then, he's added rock climbing, which he's been doing for six years now. He picked that up at the South Dakota State University

Wellness Center.

He largely forgot about the show until it arrived in Denver. Murray had been rock climbing for three years by then and thought he might have a shot at it.

But the biggest obstacle of the show, he came to discover, was getting on in the first place.

"It's a kind of joke among all the ninjas that the hardest obstacle is getting on the show because there are only two ways to go about doing that," he said.

The first way (and best, in his opinion) to do it is to submit a video application featuring your personality and skills. It's a time for would-be competitors to showcase themselves and hopefully stand out from the thousands of other applicants.

It's still challenging to do, Murray said. "This last year they had over 40,000 - I heard 50,000 - submission videos. I tried that for the past two years."

His first video submission was past deadline, however, so he then tried the second route competitors have to get on the show: walk-ons.

"The walk-on lines are heinous. Three years ago for season five, I waited for just over 24 hours in line, and I was 65th in line when I signed up," Murray said.

The first 10 or so in line stand the best chance, but it's still more or less dumb luck as to how many they pick from the line.

And as more people catch on to that each season, the lines and waits increase. Last year he lucked out and began as the 12th one in line.

This year, he began with a video submission again, this time parodying the 1984 film "Footloose."

"I'm a big fan of the movie. I did the angry dance scene and poked fun at the year before and how I didn't get to run and had some fun with it," he said.

A well-meaning friend submitted it to Reddit, where it took off; unfortunately, publicly posting submission videos is a no-no with "American Ninja Warrior."

But by then, the video had done its job. It took off online, making onto Yahoo!, People Magazine's website, Climbing Magazine's home page and a few blogs.

"Footloose" star Kevin Bacon even saw it and posted "Nice job Jake" on his Twitter feed.

After people from the show reminded Murray of the rule, the video was taken down, but it accomplished the most difficult task: getting the show's attention, and ultimately, an invitation to compete.

Qualifiers took place in mid-April. He competed in Kansas City, where he finished with the fifth fastest time: 1 minute and 22.37 seconds.

Man To Spend 8 Years In Prison

CHAMBERLAIN (AP) — A Chamberlain man who has admitted to threatening police officers will spend eight years in prison.

Gregory Weir was handed a 25-years sentence with 17 years suspended on Tuesday. He pleaded guilty in July to aggravated assault against a law enforcement officer.

The charge stems from a May 1 incident, when authorities say a Chamberlain woman called police because Weir had entered her mobile home, was drunk and had a gun. Records show he told the woman he would shoot police officers if they showed up.

When officers arrived, Weir fired a shot in an unknown direction. Police later searched the home and found a discharged firearm near the front door.

Weir's attorney Theresa Maule Rossow tells KELO-TV she believes the sentence gives her client "hope" while recognizing the "hard job" of law enforcement officers.

Driver In Crash Acknowledges Guilt

MITCHELL (AP) — The driver in the crash that killed a 14-year-old boy in Mitchell in June has acknowledged her guilt after reaching a plea agreement with prosecutors.

KORN-AM reports Karla Martinez, of Mitchell, admitted in court Tuesday that on June 25 she drove a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol and got into a wreck.

Martinez says she drank numerous mixed drinks before her sports utility vehicle rolled in the ditch off a gravel road west of Mitchell. Records show her blood alcohol level was 0.148 when the crash happened.

The fatal victim was a front-seat passenger. Three other boys sitting in the backseat suffered minor injuries.

Prosecutors agreed to dismiss various charges as part of the deal. Martinez now faces up to 15 years in prison for a vehicular homicide charge.

Man Indicted In Fatal Motorcycle Crash

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A grand jury in southeast South Dakota has indicted a 25-year-old man on charges of vehicular homicide and second-degree manslaughter in connection with a fatal motorcycle crash.

The *Argus Leader* reports that if convicted, Sioux Falls resident Trevor Blankartz, faces up to 15 years in prison for each count.

Authorities say Blankartz was driving a car that collided with a motorcycle at Sioux Falls intersection around 4 p.m. Aug. 23. The driver of the motorcycle, 56-year-old Dale Schoffelman, of Sioux Falls, died at the scene.

Police say Blankartz told officers he was distracted by a bicycle and didn't see the motorcycle.

Blankartz' attorney Victoria Reker did not immediately return a call seeking comment on the case.

Blankartz was also indicted on several misdemeanor charges including driving under the influence.

9-Year-Old Girl Paints To Save The Animals

BY JILL CALLISON
Argus Leader

TEA (AP) — Ask Bria Shay Neff why it is important to protect the Earth's endangered animals, and she gives a succinct reply.

"Because without animals, there would be no us," the 9-year-old explains.

To do her part, Bria Shay has embarked on an ambitious project. She wants to spend the next 10 years creating 3,000 acrylic paintings of animals in need of protection. She started in May, when she was still 8 years old, and within a few days she plans to send her first donation to the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

She expects to take \$500 from her recently created checking account and contribute it to the nonprofit, which rescues individual animals, protects entire populations and preserves habitat.

Bria Shay has raised the money from early sales of her paintings, which range in size and price from \$5 for a 3-by-5-inch work of art to 16-by-20-inch canvas pieces that start at \$300.

Three-hundred dollars for a 9-year-old's artwork? Raise an eyebrow if you will, but this isn't finger-painting, the *Argus Leader* reported.

"I would proudly hang any of (her) pieces in my office," said Kelly Johnston, a program officer with IFAW who works in Washington, D.C. "They would be remarkable for an adult to do, but the idea of a second-grader..."

Bria Shay's portrait of a lion was one of more than 700 entries received in IFAW's annual U.S. Art Contest. It was one of only 18 pictures that won the contest;

Bria Shay was the sole second-grader to win, Johnston said.

Bria Shay, the daughter of Brian and Amity Neff of Tea, became inspired both by the art contest and IFAW's work. That's when she decided to do her part.

She draws the animals first, and then paints them, applying thick layers of acrylic to mimic fur, feathers or hide. She refers to photographs for accuracy but does not trace the outlines.

Bria Shay pays particular attention to her animal's eyes. A dot of white in a peacock's pupil gives it a startling realism, while a Rothschild's giraffe's eyes gleam a liquid-y black.

Bria Shay has taken classes at the Washington Pavilion, Amity Neff said, but no other formal training. The Pavilion, in fact, serves as a mecca for the Neff family, which includes Abby, 13, Riley, 10, and 5-year-old North. They are moving to Sioux Falls soon to be closer.

Their new home will have a small room that can be converted into a painting studio for Bria Shay. Despite the best efforts of a canvas drop cloth, the Neffs' current home has splashes of acrylic color on the kitchen table, chairs, floors, walls — even a wayward spot on Bria Shay's neck during a recent visit.

Bria Shay has established a Facebook page to showcase her art, and a volunteer is creating a Web page. In Facebook posts, she sometimes includes the research she has uncovered about the animals she is preparing to paint.

"They live in Kenya and are endangered because of habitat loss," Bria Shay wrote about the Rothschild's giraffe. On another portrait she noted, "The Black-footed ferret is endangered due to habitat loss and disease."

Her favorite animal to paint? Lions, such as the one that won the IFAW contest. A portrait painted this summer shows two lions and is titled "Cecil's Sadness," a reference to the animal killed in an apparently illegal big-game hunt in Zimbabwe.

IFAW often hears from children who take part in its art and essay contests or make donations from bake sales, Johnston said. Bria Shay's use of social media is the first Johnston has seen used to help the nonprofit generate funds.

Bria Shay, now a home-schooled third-grader, established her Facebook page in May. Her first sale came earlier this month, and she has made several more since then. The Neffs have created a checking account for Bria Shay's art and will make the first IFAW donation when her debit card arrives.

Neff has videotaped her daughter painting, knowing that not everyone will believe a 9-year-old has that much talent. IFAW isn't her only winning work, however. Bria Shay also took first in her division in the 2015 South Dakota Junior Duck Stamp competition.

The only rule the Neffs set is that Bria Shay's art has to be self-sustaining, paying for the paper, canvas and paint she uses. The remainder — 75 percent — goes to the animals.

Sometimes her daughter becomes obsessed with what she is trying to create.

"It's not easy being an artist, even at 8 or 9," Neff said. "Sometimes it haunts you. If it's not right, she doesn't always finish it and sometimes she gets mad at it and sometimes she has to walk away and come back a few days later or have a snack and come back."

OBITUARIES

David Ostergaard

David A. Ostergaard, son of Arne and Elsie (Regner) Ostergaard, was born December 6, 1945, in Swea City, Iowa in a house which had the doctor's office on the main floor and 'birthing rooms' upstairs. This house is now the site of the Historical Museum. He passed away Thursday, September 3, 2015, at Avera Holy Family Hospital in Estherville, Iowa, at the age of 69, after a two year battle with prostate cancer.

He received his education in the Swea City Schools, graduating from Swea City High School in 1964. After high school, he attended Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, where he graduated with a Mechanical Design Engineering Degree. Throughout his professional career, David was employed as a Mechanical Design Engineer in the Aggregate Equipment Manufacturing Industry—40 years in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Eugene, Oregon and Yankton, South Dakota. He was a holder of 14 US Registered Patents in the design of heavy rock crushing machinery. He was a Registered Professional Engineer in Iowa and Oregon. In his leisure time he enjoyed trapshooting, hunting, fishing and bicycling. He would often be seen riding his bike all over Armstrong. David was a true lifelong learner and in his later life undertook the study of the German

language. He often would throw out German words and phrases during conversation, trying to engage others in his interest. He was also intrigued with computer technology and was determined to stay current in all things electronic. He made a list of every item he wanted to update, from his smart phone, to his smart tv, to his smart camera. He enjoyed having all those things communicate. He also enjoyed keeping up with family and friends online, researching everything that was of interest and shopping. It really made his day to find free shipping! David's immediate family was small, but he expanded his distant family through the research of his genealogy and learned of faraway cousins in this country and from Austria. He enjoyed corresponding with them very much. He enjoyed being with family and after his retirement, he moved to Armstrong where he quickly integrated himself into the lives of his young cousins, teaching them to shoot guns, (while teaching them gun safety), building erector set projects, and playing games. He enjoyed attending their sports and school events, and many family get togethers, big or small. He was a gentle soul and he will be missed.

He was a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the National Rifle Association, and sporting clay shooting

clubs in every location he has lived throughout his career. He also taught gun safety to youth in Cedar Rapids for 25 years.

Left to cherish David's memory are his cousin, Lori Walders-Bensley, her husband, Evan and family of Lake Park, Iowa, distant cousins from across the globe, and a host of friends.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
September 9, 2015

Judy Warnock

Judy Kay (Koster) Warnock, 72, of Portland, OR passed away Sunday, August 23, 2015 at her home.



Warnock

She was born Oct. 5, 1942 in Yankton, SD the daughter of Orville W. and Lillian M. Koster.

She lived in Mount Vernon, WA before remarrying and moving to Portland, OR in 2003.

Judy graduated from Yankton Senior High, Yankton, SD in 1960 and shortly after married and had two kids. She also attended beauty school in Bellingham, WA.

Judy worked at Druman's Restaurant in Mount Vernon as a hostess before opening the Lions Mane in downtown Mount Vernon cutting mens hair, after

closing the shop she went to work for an insurance company then moved on to working at a local beauty supply store.

Judy was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Portland, OR.

She enjoyed crocheting, knitting and doing crafts as well as spending time and working at the Temple. Judy loved visiting with people as well as life itself.

Judy is survived by her husband: James Warnock; Son: Rick L. Heckenlaible; Daughter: Kim K. Weynands (Rick); Grandson: Kyle N. Heckenlaible; Best friend (Dog) PugsLee

She is preceded in death by her parents; Orville W. and Lillian M. Koster; brother; Lester M. Koster. A Memorial Service will be held Friday, September 18, 2015, 10:00 a.m. at the Columbia River Ward, 3233 NE 162nd St., Portland, OR 97230.

Please share your thoughts of Judy and sign the online guest register at www.hawthornefun.com.

Arrangements are under the care of Hawthorne Funeral Home, 1825 E College Way, Mount Vernon.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
September 9, 2015

Harlan Hanson

Harlan E. Hanson, 82, of Volin passed away Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2015, at the Sunset Manor Nursing Home in

Irene. Funeral services will be 2 p.m. Monday, Sept. 14, at Trondhjem Lutheran Church, rural Volin. Burial will follow in the Trondhjem Cemetery.

Visitation will be from 5-7 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 13, with a prayer service beginning at 7 p.m. at the Hansen Funeral Home in Irene.

For obituary and online condolences, visit hansenfuneralhome.com.

Bruce Brazelton

Bruce H. Brazelton, 75, of Yankton died unexpectedly Monday, Sept. 7, 2015, at his home.

Funeral services are 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, at Discovery Church in Yankton with the Rev. Jon Cooke officiating. Burial will be in the Garden of Memories Cemetery in Yankton.

Visitation is from 5-8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 11, at the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home in Yankton with a prayer service at 7 p.m. Visitation continues one hour prior to the funeral

at the church on Saturday.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to the Bruce H. Brazelton Memorial Fund at 2508 Capital Street in Yankton.

To send an online message to the family, visit www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com.

Edna Fargo

Edna Fargo, 96, of Yankton died Sunday, Sept. 6, 2015, at Avera Yankton Care Center.

Funeral services are 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, at Gayville-Volin United Methodist Church in Gayville with the Rev. Rick Pittenger officiating. Burial will be in the Yankton Cemetery.

Visitation is from 6-8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 11, at the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home in Yankton with a prayer service at 7 p.m. Visitation continues one hour prior to the funeral at the church on Saturday.

To send an online message to the family, visit www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Edna Fargo
10:30 AM, Saturday
Gayville-Volin United
Methodist Church
Gayville

Bruce H. Brazelton
10:30 AM, Saturday
Discovery Church
Yankton

WINTZ & RAY FUNERAL HOME and CREMATION SERVICE
Yankton
605-665-3644 www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com 402-254-6547