

Mission

Your Hometown

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2013

Get in the game this spring

Twisted Sisters co-owner Sandi Russell shares some of her favorite appetizer recipes

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For Taylor Billings, both have been just part of high school experience

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KU, K-State, MU, OU — which one is your Final Four favorite? As a child, my sport was riding my bicycle from morning 'til night. As I matured, I discovered that boys were involved in basketball and football. So I joined the Wyandotte High School Pep Club and proudly watched the basketball team take first in numerous playoffs. Then, by marrying an athlete and raising two boys, I quickly learned about Little League, T-ball, football, baseball, basketball and expensive athletic shoes.

Fast forward to today. My sons both enjoy their vocations — each earning their living in sports (working at Oklahoma and Kentucky universities) as I enjoy the amenities of going to college sports events, NCAA Final Fours and football bowl games. It has been my privilege to watch our grandchildren as they participate in soccer, baseball, golf, volleyball and basketball. Whatever your pleasure, sports is a great tool for learning the basics of life.

We are proud to have Kansas Sampler as one of our Mission businesses. Founder Peg Liebert has done an outstanding job supplying us — the fans — with everything from clothes to drinking cups, infant attire and BBQ sauce as we root for our favorite team during the next few weeks.

Are you looking for an hors d'oeuvre to take to your Final Four party? In preparing for the photo shoot of this issue, I was fortunate to be among the tasters of Sandi Russell's recipes. You will love them. Baked stuffed olives in a cheese coating — to die for!

Bishop Miege High School senior Taylor Billings works with Special Olympics children and adults; what a great way to help others in the sports arena. Last but certainly not least, the Mission Convention and Visitors Bureau turns 10 years old this year. We bring you a look into how this group has evolved and hope you would like to help us showcase Mission.

I hope your team wins. If Kentucky and Oklahoma don't make it to the Final Four this year, I hope I will be cheering for a Big 12 team. Enjoy!

Suzie Gibbs

*Mission Convention and Visitors Bureau Chair
Councilmember, Ward IV*



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ON THE COVER:

Twisted Sisters Coffee Shop co-owner Sandi Russell. PHOTO BY KEVIN BLAYNEY

Mission

Your Hometown

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2013

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4210 Shawnee Mission Parkway
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Local business owner brings people together with her coffee & party appetizers

BY HEATHER SWAN • PHOTOS BY KEVIN BLAYNEY

Sandi Russell is a people person, so it probably comes as no surprise to those who know her that Russell and her sister bought a coffee shop in Mission last year. Now she is focused on giving people a “happy” place to hang out where she can serve them their cup of joe and maybe a little breakfast.

What those early-morning customers at Twisted Sisters Coffee Shop may not know is that Russell makes some pretty mean appetizers that have become legendary among her loved ones. (Russell was kind enough to make some of them for Mission

Magazine and is sharing her recipes with readers in this issue. Feel free to try them out at your upcoming NCAA men’s basketball tournament party or other special occasion this spring. More on her appetizers later...)

But first, how does a former museum operations manager come to co-own a coffee shop with her sister anyway?

‘EVERYTHING WAS PERFECT TIMING’

Russell was a MOM (museum operations manager) at the Toy & Miniature Museum of Kansas City for 28 years and planned to retire at the end of 2012. As a MOM, Russell’s job included working in the museum’s store, serving as the store’s buyer and being responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the museum.

Always in the back of her mind was the notion of owning her own business someday, while her sister and brother-in-law, Nancy and Marcus Hansen, also toyed with the idea of opening a coffee shop.

Then, last spring, an announcement was made at a Mission Convention and Visitors Bureau meeting that the owners of Morning Glory Espresso at 5606B Johnson Drive planned to sell the business. Russell serves on the committee and the news piqued her interest.

Kathi and Joe Loper had owned Morning Glory for seven years and wanted to retire, while Russell wanted to be in a position where she could interact and socialize with people and be in a customer service role.

“I felt it was a fun place with a lot of really neat people, and I thought it was doable,” she said.

Russell and her sister Nancy Hansen — known in their family as the Blond Tornado — opened the former Morning Glory Espresso as Twisted Sisters Coffee

Besides being co-owner of Twisted Sisters Coffee Shop, Sandi Russell is also known for making tasty hors d’oeuvres for the parties she hosts.



Shop (in keeping with the tornado theme) on Aug. 8. Now, besides living three blocks apart in Mission, the sisters own a Mission business together.

They made some changes to the décor. The walls and accessories (even the Fiesta coffee cups) are in fun colors like Chrysanthemum Orange, Sassy Green, Lupine Blue and Exuberant Pink.

“We want it to be a comfortable, friendly place that people can come in, sit down, and enjoy a cup of coffee and a pastry.”

‘FRESH-GROUND HEAVEN’

Long before owning a coffee shop, Sandi Russell was known for her Christmas tree-trimming parties. She strung the lights and told guests they could eat if they hung one ornament. That party tradition continued for 21 years, and her guests always looked forward to her Dried Beef Cheese Ball and Mango Chutney Spread (from Carole James), both which can be found on Page 8.

On the day she sent the invitations to her final Christmas party in 2003, her husband, Jimmie Russell, passed away. She still held her party that year, but the tradition has since transitioned to a Halloween tree-trimming party (same concept and same food only with a black tree and Halloween-themed decorations.)

Coincidentally, Jimmie always described coffee as “fresh-ground heaven.”

WHAT’S IN STORE AT TWISTED SISTERS?

The comfortable atmosphere at Twisted Sisters makes it a place where groups come in to have meetings, friends gather to play cards and dominoes, and strangers strike up conversations.

There are no immediate plans to add Wi-Fi. Russell wants to keep the coffee shop as a place where people can socialize, like a “local Cheers.”

The MOM-turned-coffee-shop-owner said she has enjoyed every customer she’s met and described it as being a “happy place.”

“I feel good when I walk through the door and whatever happens throughout the day doesn’t ruffle me,” Russell said.

Twisted Sisters Coffee Shop features Roasterie coffee for its daily brew and espressos; specialty drinks like lattes and chai lattes; and fruit smoothies. The pastries, which change daily, are made fresh each morning at Clock Tower Bakery and Café in Downtown Overland Park. Other breakfast fare at Twisted Sisters includes steel-cut Irish oatmeal, biscuits and gravy, breakfast burritos with turkey sausage, and breakfast sandwiches.

In the near future, Russell plans to expand Twisted Sisters’ hours Mondays through Fridays and offer light lunch items like soups, sandwiches, quiche and salad.

Russell said her new venture doesn’t feel like a job.

“It’s just fun,” she said. “It’s not work. I left work.”

For more information about Twisted Sisters Coffee Shop, call 913-671-8290.

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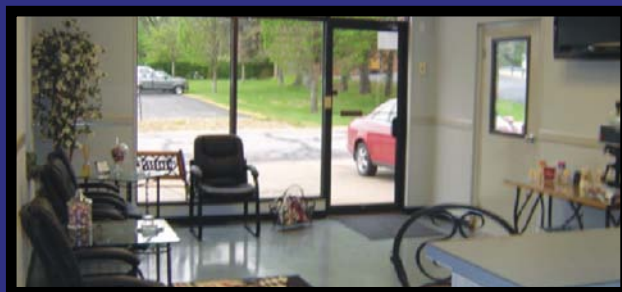
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Sandi Russell's go-to appetizers

Carole James' Mango Chutney Spread

NOTE: Carole's Mango Chutney will be available for purchase at Twisted Sisters Coffee Shop. In a pinch, you can also use Major Grey's Mango Chutney (available at grocery stores).

- 11 ounces cream cheese
- 3 tablespoons sour cream
- ½ pound bacon, cooked and crumbled
- ½ box golden raisins
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 2-3 teaspoons curry powder
- 1 can cocktail peanuts
- 1 jar Carole's Mango Chutney or Major Grey's Mango Chutney
- Box of Bremner Wafers or Carr's Table Water Crackers

Soften cream cheese with sour cream. Blend cheese mixture with bacon, raisins, onions, curry powder, half can of peanuts and half jar of Carole's Mango Chutney. Don't use a food processor! Form in a ball and top with remaining chutney. Surround with cocktail peanuts and serve with Bremner Wafers or Carr's Table Water Crackers.



Dried Beef Cheese Ball



- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 1 package dried beef
- ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 bunch green onions (use green tops only)
- Wheat Thins and Triscuits

Get cream cheese to room temperature. Cut dried beef into small squares. Chop the tops of the green onions and only use the green parts. Mix half of the dried beef, half of the green onions and the Worcestershire sauce into the cream cheese. Form into a ball. Roll the ball into the remaining green onions and beef. Serve with Wheat Thins and Triscuits.

Pumpkin Dip



- 1 can pumpkin (NOT the pie filling, which has spices in it)
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ginger
- Your choice of gingersnap cookies, graham cracker sticks and/or apple slices

Mix powdered sugar with soft cream cheese with mixer until smooth; add pumpkin. Stir in seasonings and mix well. Serve with gingersnaps, graham cracker sticks and/or apple slices. The dip will keep in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.



Cheese-Crusted Olives

- 18 ½ ounces shredded sharp or extra sharp cheddar cheese
- ½ cup butter, softened
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- Jar of green olives (45-60 of any variety; Sandi Russell uses green olives stuffed with pimientos)

Allow the cheese to set out to room temperature. In a large bowl, mix cheese, butter and paprika using a pastry blender. Gradually mix in flour, first using a pastry blender and then using your hands. Mix until the dough pulls together and then form a solid ball. The dough should be a smooth but crumbly texture when pulled apart. Pinch a small piece of dough and cover all of one olive. Roll gently between your palms to smooth and seal the olive inside the ball. Repeat for all the olives. Place in the refrigerator for about 10 minutes to firm up. Bake in a preheated 375 F oven for 20 to 25 minutes until brown.

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Mission Bulletin Board

10-year anniversary:
City of Countryside merges with Mission

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CITY HALL



Do you remember what you were doing on Jan. 15, 2003?
That was the day that the City of Countryside officially consolidated
with the City of Mission. Pictured here are former Countryside Mayor
Ken Davis, right, and current Mission Mayor Laura McConwell.

MEETING NOTICE

Mission City Council Meetings:
7 p.m. at City Hall

March 20, 2013
April 17, 2013

BUNNY EGGSTRAVAGANZA

Broadmoor Park,
5701 Broadmoor
Saturday, March 30
10 a.m. to noon
FREE ADMISSION



Bring your family, your camera and your Easter
basket for Mission's annual Bunny Eggstravaganza!
This exciting holiday event features egg hunts for all
ages, clowns, balloon artists and a visit from two very
special bunnies. New this year is a nature-themed
scavenger hunt for children ages 10 and older. The
egg hunt times are:

- 10 and older: 10:15 a.m.
- 8 months to 1 ½ years (with parent): 10:30 a.m.
- 1 ½ to 3 years: 10:50 a.m.
- 4 to 6 years: 11:10 a.m.
- 7 to 9 years: 11:30 a.m.

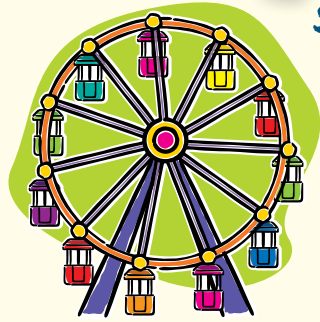
CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations, Mayor McConwell!

Mission Mayor Laura McConwell will be
honored on March 13 during the
seventh-annual Influential Women Recognition
Reception, sponsored by KC Business
magazine. McConwell was one of 30 female
leaders to be selected from the Kansas City
area's creative, corporate, nonprofit and
entrepreneurial communities. These women
were chosen based on their professional
accomplishments, philanthropic endeavors and
commitment to mentoring.

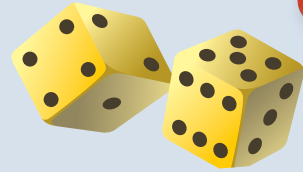
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Mission Bulletin Board



SAVE THE DATE FOR THE MISSION FAMILY FESTIVAL

The Mission Family Festival will kick off with the carnival on Thursday, May 9, and run through Sunday, May 12. The Mayor's Parade and family activities will be held on Saturday, May 11 — so mark your calendar and come join the fun. More information will be available in the next issue of Mission Magazine.



First Friday at Countryside Christian Church

The community is invited to a Family Fun Night featuring Bunco at 6 p.m. on Friday, March 1 and April 5, at Countryside Christian Church, 6101 Nall Ave. Dinner is just \$2 each (no more than \$10 per family). These evenings feature great prizes plus lots of fun. Everyone is welcome.



'Mardi Gras Masquerade' Saturday, March 2 Sylvester Powell, Jr. Community Center

Rushton Elementary School is hosting its 15th annual silent and live auction on March 2.

Donations are currently being accepted. Advance tickets may be purchased up until Feb. 25 for \$15 or at the door for \$20. The \$15 ticket price includes bidding privileges, dinner and non-alcoholic beverages. Beer and wine will be available for purchase.

VIP tables are available for \$250. The tables seat eight and include dinner and unlimited wine and beer.

Please contact Jolie Carrillo-Allen or Shannon Plueger at rushtonauction@live.com for any ticket sales or donations.



Salvation Army bell ringer David Perryman collected more than \$3,600 on David Perryman Day (Nov. 21, 2012) at the Mission Hy-Vee. Perryman, left, also collected money for the Salvation Army on another day with U.S. Rep. Kevin Yoder, center.

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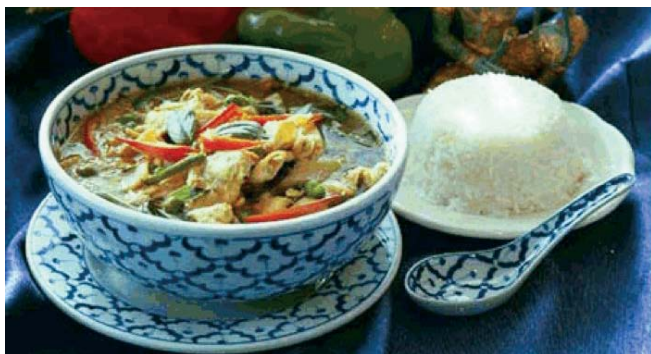
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CITY OF MISSION

Newsletter

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2013
VOLUME 9, ISSUE 1
WWW.MISSIONKS.ORG

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

2013 is off to a great start! On January 16th, City Council approved the final Redevelopment Agreement and financial partnership with The Gateway Developers, moving this long-awaited project forward. We anticipate that the \$165 million Gateway Development will be under construction by June 1st. To help protect our interests in the development construction, Council engaged independent contractors and Johnson County to provide oversight of the construction and site development. Over the next several months, Council will finalize a few of the details remaining in the Redevelopment Agreement.

This has truly been a community journey and so many people have diligently worked to make this development a reality. Thank you to all of you whether your role is as a board or commission member, a resident or business owner or all of the above. Your willingness to participate in the process is what makes city government such a special place. The City Council, staff and our development team will continue to work closely with the developer as construction begins on this exciting project in our City.

Once completed, the Gateway is expected to add about 450 residents to Mission and increase our city's assessed value by about 10 percent. Confirmed tenants include Walmart, Sprouts Farmer's Market, and Toby Keith's I Love this Bar & Grill. The Gateway will also feature more than 300 upscale residential apartment units, several pedestrian amenities and community spaces. As additional tenants are announced, we will update our website with this new information. Look for construction on the project to begin this spring with an anticipated completion date of 2015 for the entire project. Some of the tenants are currently targeted to open in the fall/win-



ter of 2014. Updated information on The Gateway Project is available on our website at www.wedigmision.com.

With the approval of the Parks & Recreation Retail Sales Tax by voters last November, we are moving forward to select a "Design/Build" team to construct a new Outdoor Municipal Pool. In January, a review committee consisting of staff and residents reviewed the seven submissions we received in response to a Request for Qualifications. The review committee conducted interviews and recommended the team of Prosser Wilbert Construction, Inc. to Council for consideration and approval. Once a team is confirmed by Council, we will start design for our new facility. The goal is to begin construction in August to ensure that the new pool will be open for the 2014 swim season. We will have opportunities for public input into the final plans for our new pool. These sessions will be posted on our website, or you can call City Hall at 913-676-8350 for meeting times and updates on the project. This new facility will be a wonderful amenity for our City and I will keep you updated on our progress throughout the coming year.

As you may have noticed, the Martway Street Rehabilitation Project between Woodson and Broadmoor is now underway. The work began at the intersection of Martway and Woodson to replace the concrete box bridge carrying Rock Creek under the street. This intersection will be closed for several weeks and is anticipated to reopen in late March. The portion between Woodson and Lamar

will be completely reconstructed; the portion between Lamar and Broadmoor will be milled and overlaid culminating (drum roll, please) with the signalization of the Broadmoor and Martway intersection. We will work hard to keep everyone informed of the construction progress and keep the inconvenience at a minimum. If you have questions or concerns about the Martway project, please contact Justin Pregont (jpregont@missionks.org) or John Belger (jbelger@missionks.org) or call our Public Works Department at 913-676-8675.

Sincerely,

Laura L. McConwell

Laura L. McConwell
Mayor



Mayor McConwell presented City Attorney David Martin with a plaque honoring his 35 years of service to the City of Mission during the January 16th City Council Meeting.

Prevent Identity Theft

Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in the United States. It is important to take time to prevent this from happening, instead of spending valuable time and money trying to restore your good name. The Mission Police Department offers some simple tips to help you protect yourself against identity theft:

- Shred financial documents with a cross cut or confetti shredder before you put them in the trash. This includes all of the credit card offers you receive in the mail as well. Better yet, call 888-567-8688 and opt out of receiving these types of offers through the mail.
- Avoid carrying your Social Security card with you. Your Social Security number identifies you nearly everywhere you go. Most importantly, your Social Security number is what's used to locate your credit score. This means that if an identity thief accesses your Social Security number they may be able to apply for and receive a wide variety of credit instruments. These may include credit cards, car loans and home mortgages, but can also include any existing accounts you have established.
- Don't give your personal information over the phone or Internet. More and

more, the telephone and Internet are used by identity thieves to obtain your personal information.

- "Phishing" and "Pharming" are the terms used to describe the e-mails and websites that try to trick you into giving out your personal information. These e-mails often have the logo of a bank included and ask that you follow a link to "update" or "verify" your records for security purposes. Never follow a link to provide any information about yourself.
- Check your credit report. Federal law requires the three credit reporting agencies to provide you with a copy of your credit report once a year. Check it thoroughly for accuracy. Look for address changes or accounts you don't recognize. You can order your free credit report by mail, phone, or Internet.

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Atlanta, GA 30348-5281

By Phone:

1-877-322-8228

By Internet:

www.AnnualCreditReport.com

Mission Receives Smart Growth America's 2013 Leadership Award

Mayor Laura McConwell and the City of Mission were awarded the Smart Growth America 2013 Leadership Award on February 8th at the New Partners for Smart Growth Conference held in Kansas City. The award recognizes communities for their focus on walkability, community development, and a comprehensive examination of transportation, housing and environmental issues. The cities of Mission and Lee's Summit were the only two communities in the Kansas City metropolitan area recognized for these efforts.

"These leaders are stellar examples of how better development strategies can improve communities and economies. It takes



thoughtful, proactive planning, and both towns are laying the groundwork for future success," stated Geoffrey Anderson, President and CEO of Smart Growth America.

Smart Growth America recognized Mayor McConwell and the City Mission for the use of form-based codes in our West Gateway area, including the replacement of parking minimums with parking maximums, as well as Mission's focus on public transit, green infrastructure, existing neighborhoods, streetscaping along Johnson Drive, and the redevelopment of the former Mission Mall site into the Gateway Project.

Help Keep Mission Beautiful

In winter, the chilly air and dreary days can prevent us from picking up trash scattered in our yards and surrounding areas like we might during the warmer months. Please keep these tips in mind when placing your trash and recycling carts at the curb each week:

- Place all solid waste trash in plastic bags, then place the bags into your cart. Loose items can blow out when the trash trucks empty them.
- Solid waste trash is defined as "household garbage, rubbish, and refuse," and excludes hazardous wastes and oversized, bulky items.
- If you have trash bags that won't fit in your cart, you can purchase stickers at City Hall for \$1.25 each.
- Bulky item pick-up occurs with your first trash pick-up each month. Items allowed include small furniture, small appliances, tree trimmings, and brush. Construction or demolition materials, automobile parts, tires, and/or hazardous waste are not acceptable. Contact Defenbaugh at 913-631-3300 for information on how to dispose of these items.
- Portable storage containers and roll-off dumpsters require permits. These are available at City Hall from Neighborhood Services Officer Rosalind Johnson, 913-676-8390 or rjohnson@missionks.org.

Remembering these simple tips helps to keep our neighborhoods free from debris.



What Can Neighborhood Services Offer You?

Spring is fast approaching and the Neighborhood Services Department has a variety of programs and services to assist Mission residents. The **Community Rebate Program** allows income-eligible residents to apply for a full rebate of city telephone, electricity, and/or gas franchise fees, as well as a partial rebate of city property taxes and solid waste utility fees. Our **Mission Possible** program assists homeowners with removal of physical barriers or dilapidated structures, minor exterior repairs, house painting, and tree trimming. In addition, our partnership with Habitat for Humanity continues to help residents with a variety of household repairs through **A Brush with Kindness**. The **Neighborhood Grant Program** provides up to \$500 annually to eligible neighborhood-based groups to assist them in building and preserving community.

The Neighborhood Services Department also works to match volunteers to community needs through programs such as: **Leaf Busters** (on-call volunteers to rake leaves), **Color Crashers** (on-call volunteers to paint houses) and **Snow Angels** (on-call volunteers to shovel snow). Volunteers may sign up online through the Neighborhood Services page at www.missionks.org.

Neighborhood Services will offer a



variety of other services throughout the year. Our Community Garden still has a few plots available (free of charge). The garden opens in March so please call soon for more details or to reserve your plot. We will also be offering several educational/informational seminars in 2013 and are excited about the recycling event in April (see magazine back cover for more details).

If you think you could benefit from any of our programs or services, please contact Neighborhood Services for more information or assistance in submitting an application. You can reach Neighborhood Services Officer Rosalind Johnson at 913-676-8390 or via e-mail at rjohnson@missionks.org. You may also find more information on our City website at www.missionks.org.

Consumer Protection Unit

DID YOU KNOW?

Police officers often respond to questions or calls for service regarding issues that are considered civil matters. Some of these complaints include charitable solicitations, door to door sales, and contractor fraud. The citizens of Johnson County are very fortunate to have a unit at the Johnson County District Attorney's Office that investigates these types of complaints. The Consumer Protection Unit of the District Attorney's Office reviews many different types of scams and other consumer-related issues, and can often bring relief to victims of the scammers. Sometimes criminal complaints are brought against the violators as well. If you have questions or feel like you have been the victim of a consumer-related scam, you can contact the Consumer Protection Hotline at 913-715-3003. For more information, please visit <http://da.jocogov.org> and select the menu option "Consumer-Protection."



EMERALD ASH BORER ALERT

Your Mission Tree Board encourages you to keep close watch on your ash trees as the landscape buds this spring. Ash is the third most abundant tree species in Kansas forests and woodlands by volume, and reports of the devastating Emerald Ash Borer are on the rise. The I-Tree Eco project 2010 documented 6.2 million ash trees in the Kansas City Metro area, with 3 million of those trees in residential areas. The killer Emerald Ash Borer has been found not far from Mission, both in Missouri and more recently in Kansas at Wyandotte County Lake. Kansas is the 18th state to have a confirmed

infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer. The ½ inch long metallic green beetle tunnels under the bark and has destroyed millions of ash trees in at least 15 states during the past decade.

You can help stop the spread of this devastating insect:

- **Buy Local/Burn Local.** Avoid transporting firewood into or out of our local area. Know your sources for firewood. A federal quarantine is in place to prevent movement of potentially contaminated wood products and nursery stock out of Wyandotte County.
- Consult a certified arborist to remove

dead or damaged ash trees from your property.

To learn more about ash tree awareness and the Emerald Ash Borer, visit the City of Mission's website at www.missionks.org. Additional information and tips to save you money and help you avoid hiring the wrong tree removal company are also available at <http://kansasarborist.com> and <http://www.isa-arbor.com>.

Martway Street Rehabilitation Project is Underway

The City of Mission is pleased to announce that the Martway Rehabilitation Project is now under construction. This major street rehabilitation, from Broadmoor to Woodson, includes:

- Replacement of the box bridge under the Martway/Woodson intersection
- Full depth street replacement (Woodson to Lamar)
- Surface asphalt replacement (mill & overlay) between Lamar and Broadmoor
- Installation of a new traffic signal at the Martway/Broadmoor intersection
- Removal of the traffic signal at the Martway/Woodson intersection
- Installation of new LED

street lights from Broadmoor to Woodson

Following a competitive bidding process, Amino Brothers Construction was selected as the contractor, and construction began in February. The project will be finished this fall. Watch carefully for street and intersection closures throughout construction.

Project-related expenses are expected to total \$3.55 million, with the City leveraging funds from the federal government (\$1.2 million) and the Johnson County CARS Program (\$850,000). Visit www.wedig-mission.com or follow the City of Mission on Facebook to stay informed of the project's progress.



Parks & Recreation Department Wins BlueCHIP Award

On Tuesday, January 29th, the Mission Parks and Recreation Department received the BlueCHIP Award from Blue-Cross BlueShield of Kansas and the Kansas Recreation and Park Association. BlueCHIP is a community health improvement program that recognizes and rewards Kansas communities who encourage and support healthy lifestyles through programs, initiatives, policies and/or community-wide events.

Mission's Parks and Recreation Department was recognized for the Biggest Weight Loss Challenge program that has been offered since 2010. Currently in its 5th season, 281 individuals have participated in the challenge, losing a combined total of 3,683 pounds.

Mission Parks and Recreation Commission Chair Mark Raduziner and several members of the department staff received the award on behalf of the City.



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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1st Wednesday every month, 6:30 p.m.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETINGS

2nd Wednesday every month, 6:30 p.m.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

3rd Wednesday every month, 7:00 p.m.

COUNCIL WORK SESSIONS

4th Wednesday every month, 7:00 p.m.

All meetings are open to the public. For meeting locations please check the website at www.missionks.org.

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Laura L. McConwell913-722-2670
City Hall Office913-676-8355

COUNCILMEMBERS WARD I

Lawrence Andre913-638-9000
Pat Quinn913-927-8511

COUNCILMEMBERS WARD II

Amy Miller913-677-0169
Will Vandenberg913-424-4357

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Giving back is a way of life for Mission teenager

Bishop Miege senior Taylor Billings has assisted a wide variety of organizations and people through his community service

Taylor Billings, a senior at Bishop Miege High School and a Mission resident, has tallied a large sum of community service hours during his high school career, including an Eagle Project, two mission trips and coaching for Special Olympics.



BY HEATHER SWAN • PHOTO BY KEVIN BLAYNEY

Taylor Billings has a good habit. If someone needs help, he pitches in. If there's a mission trip in the works, he's packing his bags. That's just the way it is for this Bishop Miege High School senior and Mission resident who has given back to his community by accumulating a hefty amount of volunteer service hours in the past four years.

All Miege students are required to complete 80 hours of community service to graduate. When his academic career at Miege is all said and done this spring, Billings estimates his community service total will be in the range of 250 to 300 hours.

This may seem like a lot of time, but lending a helping hand is just a way of life for this 18-year-old.

"I feel like you should give back to where you come from," Billings said of his community service. "I feel like it's your obligation, and I personally like it. I don't feel like it's something I'm pushed into doing."

Billings' volunteer efforts have taken him outside the Kansas City area on a couple occasions. As they have done many times in the past, the National Relief Network called Miege to organize a spur-of-the-moment trip to Joplin, Mo., after the tornado in 2011. Billings went along and ended up helping a woman repair her home; the team of volunteers he worked with gave the home a new roof, deck, windows, sliding door and railing for the front porch. He also took the Miege-sponsored mission trip to West Virginia over spring break in 2012 and helped to build a more stable foundation for a family's trailer home so it wouldn't have to sit on cinder blocks.

"They are fun, and we get to help someone out," Billings said, of the mission trips.

These two construction experiences also came in handy when Billings embarked on community service here at home: his Eagle Project. He had discovered that Benilde Hall, a Kansas City, Mo., organization that provides transitional housing and substance abuse treatment to indigent homeless men, needed additional shed space

to house their lawnmowers. Billings led the effort to get donations and volunteers to build the shed from scratch, a process that took about eight months in 2012.

Roy Riffe, director of development for Benilde Hall, said Billings did a “fantastic job” in getting the 10-foot-by-6-foot shed built. Benilde Services sponsors a transitional jobs program that allows the organization’s men (about 60 percent of whom are veterans) to work and earn money. The shed allowed Benilde Hall to move lawnmowers out of their garage, which then freed up space so a couple jobs could be created for men in the program to work on small engines.

“The shed is valuable to us and valuable to the men who get to work in the garage,” Riffe said. “...We needed it badly. We are a nonprofit organization, and money is always an issue. Getting the money to build this was going to be a struggle. For that young man to do that, it was really a blessing for us.”

Riffe thanked Billings for his service to Benilde Hall by presenting him a plaque at a Boy Scout Troop 998 meeting.

“Taylor is a good representation of our students who take the initiative, see what needs to be done and do it,” said Susan Tremonti, vice president of development at Bishop Miege High School.

Tremonti also pointed out that Billings has completed a wide variety of volunteer work during his high school career — not just for one organization.

Besides the mission trips and Eagle project, Billings has participated in One Homeless Night at Miege (spending the night outside to raise funds and awareness for youth homelessness); helped out at St. Ann Catholic School (his alma mater); and coached basketball, softball and floor hockey for Special Olympics for the past 1 ½ years.

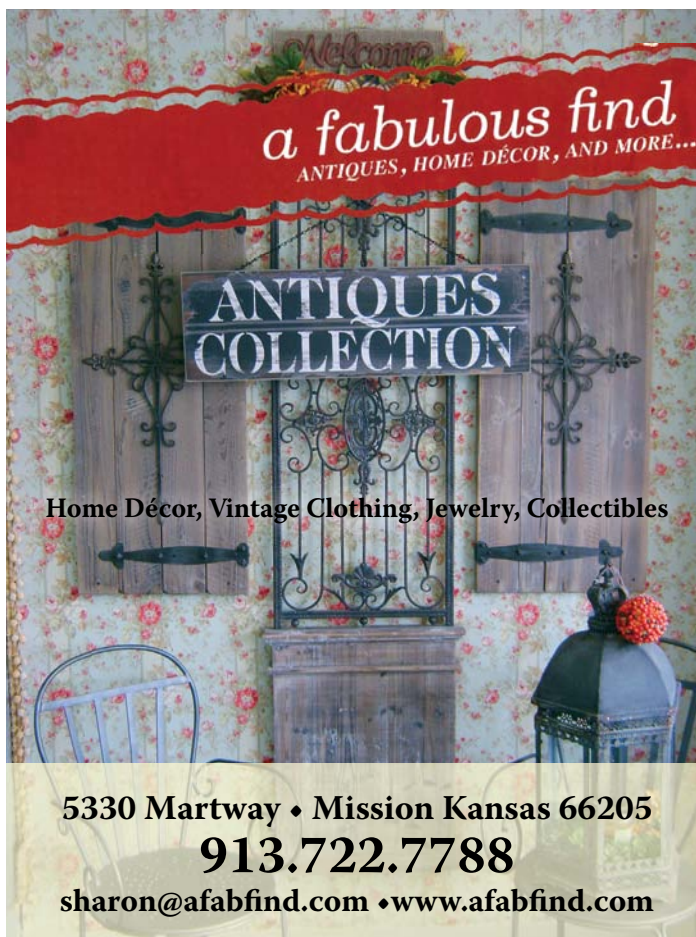
His work with the Special Olympics kids and adults allows him to incorporate his own love for sports and work with the Special Olympians, who are “kind-hearted in every way,” he said.

Billings’ sports participation includes being in a Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) basketball league, playing football for Miege for three years before becoming a manager his senior year, running cross country this year, and being a middle distance runner for the Miege track team for three years (and will probably do so again this spring). He has lettered in track and gone to state in the 4 x 800 meter relay during his previous three years in high school and has earned a 3.87 GPA in the classroom.

In his “spare time,” Billings like to shoot hoops on his Mission driveway and eat at Chipotle.

“He’s a great kid,” said his mom, Holly Taylor. “His room is messy, but he gets good grades. He talks back a little, but he always ends up doing what I say. I feel like I’m blessed.”

Billings currently plans to attend the University of Kansas in the fall and major in physical therapy with a minor in sports psychology.



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Mission Convention and Visitors Bureau committee members include, front row from left, Karen Laughton, Arrica Acree, Leslie Herring, Cathy York and Rebecca Simkins; second row, Ann Grace, Jose Ramirez, Sharon Miller, Cale Herring and Deborah Rushing; third row, Kathy Lockard, Celia Dalton, Sandi Russell, Cathy Casey and Suzie Gibbs; and fourth row, Christy Humerickhouse, Bill McCrea, Lynn Kring, Carl Casey and Dale Warman. Not pictured are Chad Owens, Capt. Ben Hadley, Jo Mitchell and Lt. Kirk Lane.
PHOTO BY BEN MCCALL

A decade of showcasing what Mission has to offer

Mission Convention and Visitors Bureau celebrating its
10th anniversary this year

By Heather Swan

The Mission Convention and Visitors Bureau has always been a work in progress, growing and evolving over time. But its goal has remained the same: to bring more people into the city in order to showcase what Mission has to offer.

In 2013, the organization is reaching a milestone — its 10th anniversary. What started out as the Mission Business Development Committee in 2003 (with eight members and one event) is now the Mission Convention and Visitors Bureau (MCVB). This is a working committee of 20-plus members that plans and sponsors the Mission Family Festival, the Arts & Eats Festival/Battle of the Brisket State Championship, Evening with the Arts (the Mission Arts Council falls under the umbrella of the MCVB) and Holiday Lights and Festive Sights. In addition, the MCVB adopts families at Thanksgiving and Christmas, giving them food and gifts.

The organization got its start when Target was looking to build in Mission in 2001. At that

time, the City Council committed to using the tax revenue generated by the store in its first year to pay for structural improvements to existing businesses in Mission. Also, during a public forum, business owners indicated they wanted more events that would bring people to the city. In 2009, after almost six years of hosting events and helping in the revitalization and redevelopment of the Mission business district, the Mission Business Development Committee changed its name to the Mission Convention and Visitors Bureau.

“It (the MCVB) fosters good relationships with businesses,” said Suzie Gibbs, chairperson of the Mission Convention and Visitors Bureau. “It brings people to Mission who may not ordinarily shop here.”

One example is the two-day Battle of the Brisket State Championship, which is held every September. This barbecue contest started with eight teams its first year and has grown into a competition that featured 65 teams in 2012. That translates into a lot of out-of-town faces, which include the members of those 65 teams in addition to the friends, family members and sponsors they invite to the Friday night party most competitors host in their booth.

For example, Gibbs said, Mission business AnswerPro Limited has moved its annual company party to the Battle of the Brisket State

Championship and sends about 1,000 invitations to customers, employees, vendors, city employees and the Northeast Johnson County Chamber of Commerce each year. This booth alone draws hundreds of people to Mission on the day before the competition.

While the Arts & Eats Festival/Battle of the Brisket State Championship is the MCVB's signature event, the Mission Family Festival is its longest running one. That event began as a cattle drive up Johnson Drive before growing into Spirit of Mission Days and now the Mission Family Festival. (See the bulletin board on Page 11 for the dates of this year's festival.)

One of the highlights of the Mission Family Festival is the parade, which once again draws people into the city (both those who are participating in the parade and others who are just watching) while giving exposure to local businesses.

"I think we've done a great job," said Gibbs, of the events. "We have an awesome, hard-working committee comprised of a wide variety of people, including Mission business owners and merchants, parents, residents, a representative from the Northeast Johnson County Chamber of Commerce, a Shawnee Mission North High School senior, Mission police officers and city staff."

Bill McCrea, a Mission resident and one of the original members of the committee, remembers the early days when committee members had to do everything themselves on the day of the events, like setting up stages, tents and tables, and then taking them all down again after the event was over.

"We've had some really good events, and I think it's been good for Mission," he said.

Carl Casey, owner of Casey's Auto Repair, said his involvement in the MCVB is a way for his small business to get involved and give back to the people who support his business.

"This community has been very good to us," he said.

Carl's wife, Cathy, also a member of the committee, said it's fun to "watch people have a great time and know you were a part of it."

Jose Ramirez, owner of Moss Printing, said he enjoys the marketing aspects of serving on the MCVB committee and hopes the events draw people into the community, including those who are considering opening a business in Mission.

"I like this little city," he said. "I like the people in it."

Dale Warman, who represents the Northeast Johnson County Chamber of Commerce on the MCVB, describes the committee's events as "first-class."

"Everyone does their job and there's no hidden agenda," he said. "It's all to promote and ensure the residents have quality events."

The Mission Convention and Visitors Bureau is always looking for more volunteers, and ideas and suggestions on how its events can be improved. Email Suzie Gibbs at sgibbs@missionks.org or call 913-671-8564.



The Mission Convention and Visitors Bureau honored committee member Deborah Rushing, center, with its 2012 "Distinguished Service Award." Rushing was selected by her fellow MCVB members for her dedication and volunteer efforts on behalf of the bureau. Rushing is pictured with Mission Mayor Laura McConwell, left, and Suzie Gibbs, MCVB chairperson, right.

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Do you want to root, root, root for the home team? **Kansas Sampler can help**

Spring brings NCAA basketball tournament, baseball opening day and shoppers to this Mission store

BY HEATHER SWAN • PHOTO BY KEVIN BLAYNEY

If you think bringing Kansas, Kansas State and Missouri fans together would require the work of a mediator or the United Nations, think again. You only need to go to Kansas Sampler in Mission to see Jayhawks, Wildcats and Tigers — and their fans — existing harmoniously.

And, speaking of the United Nations, the Mission Kansas Sampler store regularly draws visitors from outside the United States. For example, during a recent week, the Mission store had shoppers from Japan and France who wanted to stock up on local team apparel.

“We get a lot of regulars and a lot of out-of-towners,” said Rachel Williams, manager of the Mission Kansas Sampler at 6858 Johnson Drive.

Kansas Sampler has earned its reputation for being the go-to spot when fans are looking for clothing and other items to show their allegiance to local college teams in addition to the Royals, Chiefs and Sporting Kansas City. (Spring is especially busy, with shoppers looking to outfit themselves before the NCAA basketball tournament and the beginning of the professional baseball and soccer seasons along with buying gifts for upcoming high school and college graduations.)

But the company didn’t start out like this. It began in the kitchen of founder Peg Liebert as a mail-order catalog business. Liebert’s early merchandise included products from Kansas and Kansas-related souvenirs.

Liebert opened her first Kansas Sampler store in 1989, and one of the first five locations was in the former Mission Center Mall before moving to its current spot on Johnson Drive.

“We had built up a great customer base in the mall location and wanted to stay close by,” she said. “We also needed a little bit bigger location. Since we moved to our current Mission location, we’ve actually expanded the store twice.

“...We like our location in Mission and plan on staying there. The Mission store is a good fit for us because it’s well-located and the city has always been very supportive of us.”

This family-owned company now has 18 stores in Kansas, Missouri and the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, area. Outside of Kansas, the store is called Rally House.

Peg and her husband, Tim, are still involved in a consultative role; their son, Aaron Liebert, has taken over as president and CEO.

Over the years, Kansas Sampler has maintained its identity as a gift shop, but its focus on sports apparel has grown over time. When the University of Kansas reached the men’s basketball Final Four in 1991, many customers thought of Kansas Sampler and were calling for KU clothing and accessories.

“The successful seasons of all our regional schools, especially KU, has allowed us to continue to grow as a company,” Peg Liebert said. “Our Mission location has been very critical to our success. The Kansas Sampler in Mission gives our customers another location to find their unique gifts, merchandise and apparel for their favorite team.”

If you would like more information about Kansas Sampler, call the Mission store at 913-432-3355.



The Mission Kansas Sampler store attracts local shoppers and people from around the world who want to buy area team merchandise and other Kansas-related gifts. Pictured are Rachel Williams, left, manager of the store, and Kelly Ashwill, assistant manager.

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