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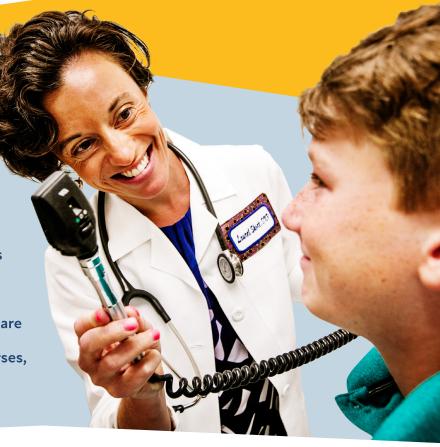
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# TIMES WORTH CELEBRATING

As we spoke with the volunteers, small business owners and historians featured in our last issue of the Mission Magazine for 2021, we were reminded that there is no shortage of things worth celebrating — and not all of them revolve around the holiday season.

As you take time to enjoy this issue, I'm confident you will be caught up in all the warmth, fun, nostalgia, and energy highlighted throughout the magazine.

Our cover story features the successes of Scout Troop 199 who have sold Christmas trees on the front lawn of St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church for the last 60 years.

Each November, around this time, the scouts are busy unloading trees and preparing to help generations of families and newcomers alike find the perfect tree for their holiday gatherings. Not only does this annual fundraiser support a large portion of the troop's annual expenses, but the Scouts work hard to create a memorable holiday experience for families across Northeast Johnson County.

The partnership between the Scouts and St. Michael and All Angels is deeply rooted, just like the church's history here in Mission. Celebrating their 75th anniversary this year, the congregation first put down roots in 1946 in the then Mission township inside a second-floor space above the Velvet Freeze Ice Cream Store at the corner of Outlook and Johnson Drive.

The story of their expansion to the current site at 67th and Nall Avenue illustrates their commitment to investing in the congregation and the community for the long term.

You'll see the desire to invest in the



COVET: Members of Scout Troop 199 in front of St. Michael and All Angels

On the

Photo by Denise Elam.

Episcopal Church in Mission.



community is alive in well with Indigo Rose Salon's owner Kellie Overocker, who made Mission "home" for her full-service salon just east of Nall Avenue on Johnson Drive. Kellie's eclectic style has transformed the space into something both luxurious and comfortable. She and the other stylists at Indigo Rose take pride in celebrating the uniqueness of each of their clients, seeking to make everyone feel better about themselves after a trip to the salon.

The issue wraps up with a look at two celebrations of another kind. First, the return of Shawnee Mission North's Marching Band Invitational which was forced to take a break in 2020 due to the pandemic. The largest band event hosted by the school each year, the staff and students work hard to create a positive sense of community.

A sense of community is bound to be grown by two new principals at our area high schools — SMN and Horizons High School. Students, parents, and teachers alike are relearning and re-engaging while still balancing the effects of the pandemic. Their spirit and dedication are worthy of celebrating.

Coretta Scott King once said, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

As I reflect not only on the stories in the magazine, but on the privilege I've had for the last four years to serve as Mission's Mayor, I couldn't agree more. It is the people of our City — those who have challenged, motivated, and supported the work that we do — that I have enjoyed most.

So as we bid farewell to another year, I hope you will take the time to reflect on all of the things you have to celebrate and find joy and peace in each one.

Ron

-Ron Appletoft, Mayor

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Due to nationwide paper shortages at the presses, this issue of the Mission Magazine was printed using matte paper instead of its usual gloss. We appreciate your continued readership.



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# Getting in the Holiday Spirit

### Scout Troop 199 celebrates 60 years of tree sales

By Denise Elam

Take a turn down 67th Street in Mission this November and you might just find yourself walking in a winter wonderland.

A forest full of holiday trees including scotch pines, white pines, fraser, douglas and balsam firs line the lot at the St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church. The tree sales are a part of a rich holiday tradition dating back more than 60 years.

"It began in 1962," said Scout Troop 199 Scoutmaster Jeff Perkins. "The men's club in the church started (the sales) in 1962 and the next year they asked the Scouts to help them."

The men's group at St. Michael's soon turned the sales over completely to Scout Troop 199 to help directly fund a large portion of the troop's yearly expenses, such as summer camps and campouts. The partnership made sense, considering the



Scout Troop 199 kicks off its holiday tree sales the Friday following Thanksgiving Day each year.

troop was established by the congregation at St. Michael's. This winter marks the organization's 60th year of sales.

"This will be my 22nd tree sale," Jeff said. "It's a real joyous time for us. We've had generations of people coming — we've had people come and tell us stories of when they came as a kid; now they're bringing their own kids and grandkids."

The entire process begins at the start of the winter holiday season. Two weeks before Thanksgiving Day each year, the troop meets to set up and arrange the lot at St. Michael's. A week later, the troop receives two semi-truckloads of trees from Wisconsin and works together to arrange and sort a total of 1,500 trees on the lot.

Aside from seven different varieties of trees, the troop also sells holiday wreaths and garland as well as miscellaneous tree supplies. Trees range in size from tabletop-height to 10-11 feet tall. Prices start at \$30.





#### Continued from page 6

"We start selling the Friday after Thanksgiving," Jeff said, noting that tree sales last for a full three weeks. "Scouts do the selling and the adults help out, overseeing them with loading trees into cars and tying the trees."

Around 40 Scouts ranging from 11-17 years old will be on the lot to assist in the sales this year. Jeff said the fundraiser teaches them public speaking skills and how to handle money.

"I think it really teaches the Scouts not only to work together, but to learn salesmanship and how to talk to strangers in a safe environment," he said.

The troop is looking forward to another busy year of sales this winter. In 2020, they sold almost twice as many trees as they usually do within the first three days of the fundraiser, citing an influx of people staying at home for the holidays due to the pandemic.

"We had a very hectic first three days," Jeff said. "We actually closed a week and a half early because we sold out early. The people who came out a week or two after Thanksgiving thought, 'Oh, we're late.' I told them, 'Well, not normally, but this year you are.'"

One shopper left this comment on the troop's Facebook page last season: "I've been buying my tree from this troop for around 20 years and plan to buy for many more years. So happy to have something normal this year (during the pandemic)."

For many, purchasing a tree from Scout Troop 199 is a beloved holiday tradition.

"A lot of people have their traditions on what day of the tree sale they come on and the certain type of tree they're after — they make it a family affair," he said. "It gets you in the holiday spirit. Hard not to be when you're surrounded by trees."

Jeff has seen it all throughout his time helping the Scouts with the tree sales, from ice storms to winter wonderland snow. His favorite memories are those snowy days, watching families enjoy their time on the lot and making the occasion a true family outing.

For more information, search "Boy Scout Troop 199 Christmas Tree Lot" on Facebook or visit the troop on opening day this winter at the corner of 67th and Nall Avenue.



Working together, the Scouts are tasked with selling trees and helping load them into customers' vehicles.



Aside from seven different varieties of trees, Scout Troop 199 also sells holiday wreaths and garland as well as miscellaneous tree supplies.



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# A MISSION" IN MISSION

### LOOKING BACK ON 75 YEARS OF HISTORY AT ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

By Denise Elam

In 1946, as much of the world was still recovering from World War II, a reverend named Howard Laurence Spencer made his way to Johnson County, Kansas, in search of Mission.

Mission, Kansas, at that time was merely a township — but a thriving one, at that. According to St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church member Nancy Stankiewicz, Mission merchants and school officials graciously fostered the "mission" of the Episcopal Church at that time, which was to build a church where none existed.

"Since this was post-war, lots of families were moving into Johnson County," Nancy said, noting that Mission was the prime spot for a church due to its central location.

Seeing the opportunity to establish a mission in the community, Bishop Goodrich Fenner, the fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Kansas, tasked Rev. Spencer with investigating the area.

Within two months, Rev. Spencer rallied a group to support the church's vision. On Dec. 18, 1946, 27 people gathered to petition the Bishop for "mission status," meeting in the Fine Arts School of Dance, on the second floor (above the Velvet Freeze ice cream store) at the northwest corner of Outlook and Johnson Drive.

The mission held its first services Dec. 22, 1946, and less than a month later, Jan. 3, 1947, the congregation selected a name, christening their newly-formed church as the St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church.

"There was an explosion of members and attendees — by late January 1947, the church school boasted an enrollment of 47 children and it was apparent more space was required," Nancy explained, noting that worship services were taking place in a gymnasium at Hickory Grove School.

The church, recognizing the need for a larger space, purchased land at the corner of 67th and Nall Avenue from brothers Percy and Emie Miller in 1947.

That same year, the United States Army announced post-war surplus sales,



Originally located at Camp Crowder, Missouri, Army Chapel T-1501 was disassembled and shipped to Mission, where it was built and used as the church's place of worship until 1961.

including many temporary barracks and chapels used as places of worship during WWII. Nancy said Rev. Spencer made a special trip to the Pentagon to acquire Army Chapel T-1501. Originally located at Camp Crowder, Missouri, the army chapel was disassembled and shipped to Mission, where it was built and used as the church's place of worship until 1961.

By Oct. 8, 1961, the church had completed construction on both a parish/fellowship hall and a permanent church structure.

"The design and the architecture was English Country Gothic," Nancy said. "It stands today as a beacon of faith to all that pass by and a warm welcome awaits any and all who enter in; no exceptions."

Nancy, who has been a member of St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church since 1961, has been witness to a lot of "I look at our clergy that have been there, their spirituality and dedication, our fellowship, our outreach, and I just claim the whole place as home."

-Nancy Stankiewicz

change throughout the years.

"I'm very connected emotionally to the church," she said. "We have had family marriages there, a memorial service, baptisms, and confirmations and those were all wonderful celebrations of life ... I am grateful for that. I look at our clergy that have been there, their spirituality and dedication, our fellowship, our outreach, and I just claim the whole place as home."

To celebrate its upcoming 75th anniversary on Dec. 18, Nancy authored a commemorative book in the fall of 2021 titled "The History and Sacred Symbols of St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church."

The book includes photos and stories of each clergy's tenure throughout the last 75 years. The church also plans to celebrate with a lineup of activities, including a social evening for parishioners and guests featuring the Episcopal Bishop of Kansas.

"Our rector is the Rev. Dr. S. David Cox, who bids you welcome," Nancy said. "Come and see — the church is here for those who seek to belong, long to believe, and search for benefits of abiding fellowship. Thank you Mission, Kansas for the impetus!"

For more information, visit www.stmaa.com.



From left: Hannah Steinbrink, hairstylist and lash extensions expert; Becky Rojas, esthetician; Holly Winn, stylist/ Reiki healer; Kellie Overocker, stylist/ owner; Jessica French, stylist; Jessica Alcorn, stylist/actress; Elyse Blum, stylist and dreadlock extensions expert.

### 'Feels Like Home'

### Entrepreneur Kellie Overocker sets sights on Mission

By Denise Elam

A warm, inviting place that feels like home —from the start, that's the vision entrepreneur and cosmetologist Kellie Overocker had in mind when she opened Indigo Rose Salon in Mission.

"My biggest compliment from clients is that they love being here; it feels homey and they enjoy spending time here," she said.

Kellie opened Indigo Rose Salon in 2014 after nearly two decades of turning her love of hairdressing and style into a career. She lived in Mission at that time, just a short walk from downtown.

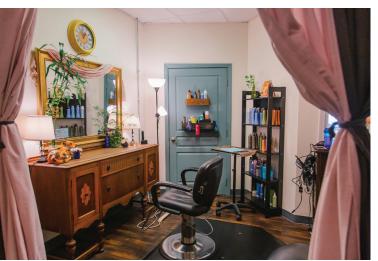
"I was always renting (a booth) from other salons and I just had a concept and idea in my head for what I wanted a salon to feel like," she said. "Mission just felt really good. It's gotten better and better."

So, when Kellie had only two months to find a new location for her business in 2018, she fought hard to stay in the area. She came across a vacant building at 5420 Johnson Drive (just a few blocks from her previous location) and toured it with only the light from her iPhone flashlight to guide

her way.

"I wanted to stay in Mission; we have so many clients that live here ... I love the small business owners here," she said.
"I just felt like this was home for us and I definitely want to always stay in this area."
She signed the contract on the new space and worked to completely renovate it to

fit her stylistic, eclectic feel, gathering together colorful pieces of furniture and art to make it feel more like a home than a place of business. Portraits of fashionable women soon lined the walls inside the salon, along with plants. In the corner of the room, Kellie created a waiting space with regal, violet wingback chairs and a

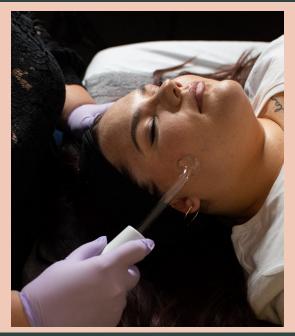


Kellie's six stylists each rent a booth in the space to coordinate their own individual schedules and services.

Photo by Chelsea Donoho.



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Fourth Wednesday every month, 7 p.m.

All meetings are open to the public.

### **GOVERNING BODY**

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On Dec. 15, Mayor Ron Appletoft will step down at the end of his fouryear term as Mission's Mayor. Elected in 2017, Ron was no stranger to public service having previously served as a Councilmember for the City of Countryside, and a Ward IV Councilmember for Mission. In addition, he spent 37 years on staff at WaterOne where he recently returned as a board member.

Mayor Appletoft had two primary goals when he entered office: First, to address the City's aging infrastructure challenges, and second, to make Johnson Drive more pedestrian friendly.

"I'm proud the City was able to create an Asset Management Plan which provides a guide for the future, making sure our infrastructure gets the attention it needs," said Mayor Appletoft. He also noted, "I'm also pleased that after considering many options, the Governing Body voted to reconfigure Johnson Drive in 2022 to make a change which aligns with residents' vision of a walkable downtown."

Mayor Appletoft has greatly appreciated his time as mayor.

"I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet so many residents that are positive, passionate and supportive of Mission."

Thank you, Mayor Appletoft, for all your contributions, and best wishes for the future!









Photo credit: @wendyfranco\_photo

### **Seen Around Town...**

Demolition of the former Mission Bowl (left) began in October, making way for a new apartment building scheduled for completion in November 2023. The multi-family project will be certified to a LEED Silver standard and 20% of the units will be maintained as affordable/workforce housing. Mission's new wayfinding signage (center) assists both residents and visitors in finding important public buildings, recreation facilities and outdoor parks. In September, Wingstand by Jefferson's (right) opened its Mission location at the corner of Nall Avenue and Johnson Drive, incorporating several colorful and eye-catching murals as a part of the redevelopment of this corner.





### Mission Voters Renew Dedicated Street Sales Tax

In a September mail ballot election, Mission voters approved the renewal of a dedicated street sales tax which helps to fund essential street maintenance and infrastructure projects city wide. The sales tax was renewed at an increased rate of 3/8% for 10 years.

In the 2021 DirectionFinder survey, 89% of residents expressed support for increased City investment in the maintenance of neighborhood streets, and 79% indicated support for increased investment in Mission's major thoroughfares and the election results supported the survey findings.

The special-purpose sales tax passed with 77.15% voter approval, with voter turnout for the mail ballot election at 23.97%. The renewed sales tax will take effect on April 1, 2022 and will be combined with property tax revenues and gas tax revenues to fund Mission's comprehensive street maintenance program.

For more information on the sales tax, the projects proposed for the next 10 years, and Mission's street maintenance program, please visit the City's website at www.missionks.org/pavingtheway.



### The "Seasons" of Mission's Public Works Department - Winter

The work of Mission's Public Works crews changes with each season. As winter approaches, the Department turns its attention from street patching and repair to snow plowing operations. Mission operates two 12-hour shifts with 4-5 crew members each to ensure Mission's roadways are safe for travel.

Plows run two routes focused on main thoroughfare streets and two focused on residential streets. Streets are prioritized by terrain, visibility, and amount of traffic. A street with hills and corners takes priority over a street that is flat and straight. Crews also remove snow from parking areas along Johnson Drive in the Downtown District, along sidewalks near schools, and along trails once streets have been cleared. All vehicles parked on streets must be removed when snow has accumulated to a depth of four inches or more, or any other time a



Snow Emergency is declared, and kept off until snow has been removed.

For additional information on Mission's Snow Plan, visit www.missionks.org or contact Mission Public Works at 913.676.8375. Watch for more information on the crew's priorities by season in upcoming issues of the Mission Magazine.

### Sidewalk Snow Removal - What You Need to Know

Walkability and access for pedestrians year-round is an important value in Mission. There are many in our community who rely on being able to travel the City's sidewalks, and it's important that we all do our part to help keep everyone safe in snow conditions. Each winter season, the City receives a number of complaints from residents and visitors to local businesses regarding uncleared sidewalks which detract from the walkability of our community.

In 2020, the City's codes were revised requiring property owners to clear sidewalks within 48 hours of a snow event. The changes were designed to promote snow removal to ensure the safety and convenience of those needing or wanting to get to work, school or errands during the winter months.

The ordinance includes provisions for a courtesy notice to be sent to owners, occupants or agents in charge of the sidewalks if they are not cleared, and



there will be no fee or assessment with the courtesy notice. One courtesy notice will be allowed each winter season. The ordinance gives the City the ability to remove (abate) the snow if a property owner doesn't comply within the notice period and for the costs to be assessed back. For questions on Mission's snow removal ordinance, contact the Neighborhood Services Department at 913.676.8390.



### Longtime Parks + Recreation Employee to Retire

On Jan. 1, 2022, the Mission Parks + Recreation Department will bid farewell to 23-plus year staff member Kathy Lockard. If you've been at the outdoor pool, the Powell Community Center or any Mission special event in the past two decades, you have witnessed her hard at work, delivering exceptional customer service with a smile.

"I'll miss all the people, both staff and patrons," Kathy said. "I have made so many friends over the years, but I am looking forward to spending more time with my best friend and beloved husband and my family, especially my grandchildren." Thank you, Kathy for your service to the City and to the community. You will be missed!

Mission's Police Department would like to share some important tips to help discourage package theft and ensure you don't become a victim of "porch pirates" this holiday season.

- ★ Set up notifications so you know when packages arrive.
- If you can't be home, have neighbors or a trusted friend retrieve your packages, or have packages delivered to your work.
- ★ Install a security camera or video doorbell.

If you do have a package stolen, you can call 911 to have an officer respond. Please be ready to share the following information with the Police Department to aid in recovery of your items:

- \*\*Confirm your package was delivered. If you have a surveillance system, check for footage and offer to the Police Department.
- $\Re$  Know exactly what is missing.
- If you witness a theft, from your house or a neighbors, try to obtain as much information as possible including vehicle description, license plate number, and a description of the person involved (build, clothing or any other distinguishing features).

Stay safe and happy holidays!



### **Pearl Harbor Virtual Remembrance Event**

Plan to join the City of Mission for our annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance Event as we recognize and honor the history and significance of the 80th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 that led to U.S. involvement in World War II. The 2021 ceremony will be held virtually, beginning at 11:45 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021. It will be available via a link on the City's website at www.missionks.org.







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# Mayor's Tree Lighting

The Mayor's annual tree lighting ceremony is returning to Johnson Drive in 2021. Mark you calendars for Friday, Dec. 3 from 5-8 p.m. at the Mission Market site for the official tree lighting, holiday music, s'mores, a luminary walk along the Rock Creek Trail, and much more! Can't wait to see you there!

# HOLIDAY LIGHT RECYCLING

The Mission Sustainability Commission encourages you to recycle broken or unwanted holiday lights rather than throwing them away. Once again they have partnered with Midwest Recycling Center to help keep broken or unwanted lights out of our landfills. Collection boxes will be at the Powell Community Center (6200 Martway) and Mack True Value (6004 Johnson Drive) through Jan. 14.



### We Did It!

Earlier this year we challenged the Mission community to help us plant "70 Trees in our 70th Year," and you didn't disappoint. With your help, we exceeded our tree-planting goals by adding 83 new trees to Mission's urban canopy. Improving a city's urban tree canopy can have numerous benefits, including reducing summer peak temperatures and air pollution, enhancing property values, providing wildlife habitat, providing aesthetic benefits, and improving social ties among neighbors. Thanks to all who stepped up to this important challenge!



# MISSION COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY



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You can contact Suzie Gibbs at 913.671.8564 or suziegibbs1@gmail.com for more information.

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In 2022, Mission voters will have the opportunity to participate in federal, state, countywide and local elections.

Make sure you are registered to ensure your vote is counted in every election.

Visit jocoelection.org/registration for details and to check your registration status. If you've moved, take a few minutes to update your address, and remember to encourage anyone 18 and older in your household to get registered.



# Looking for a way to make a difference this holiday season?

Consider joining with the City of Mission to brighten the holidays for local families. Our partnership with area schools – and with our awesome sponsors and volunteers – allows us to serve many families with food and gifts each year. Every dollar makes a difference. Please visit the City's website at www.missionks.org for information on how you can be a part of sharing holiday cheer for so many in our community!



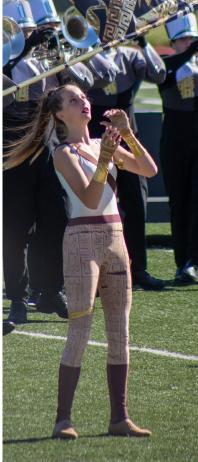


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The Bellevue East Chieftain Marching Band (pictured above) from Bellevue, Nebraska performed an original composition by Michael J. Miller titled "HeiroGraphic."

The Valley Center Hornet Marching Band (pictured above) consists of 123 students. They were chosen to represent the state of Kansas at the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington D.C. in 2020 but were unable to perform due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

# The Show Goes On

### SMN Marching Invitational Returns Following Pandemic Cancellations

Photos and story by Denise Elam

Eight bands from across Kansas and Nebraska made the trek to Shawnee Mission North (SMN) this October for the school's long-awaited Eighth Annual Marching Invitational.

The invitational is a yearly fundraising event organized by the marching band at SMN. According to band director Chad Reed, students were especially excited to host colleagues from across the state this year since festivities were cancelled in 2020.

"There are a number of bands this year that are not competing; they're just taking the year to rebuild since no one had a marching festival last year," he "It's just a wonderful day of celebrating our community."

-Chad Reed, SMN Band Director

said. "Our North kids are just so happy to be here and have a regular season (again)."

Band students in grades 9 through 12 were invited to compete and be judged by six adjudicators from Kansas and Missouri.

"Almost all of them are retired band directors," he said. "They've been through this process and lived it for decades so they know what to look for."

Judges paid close attention to overall music, visual content and general effect. Chad said the competing bands varied in size with anywhere between 80 and 150 students performing on the field at once, each playing songs according to a set theme.

"Every band has their own theme one band had a show based on baseball music, one was West Side Story, another James Bond," he said.

SMN's own marching band closed out the night with a marching exhibition titled, "Family Values," with Mafiathemed music.

### Continued from page 27

"Ours was kind of a play on words; we had music from The Godfather, Casino and The Departed," he said, noting that since SMN's band was hosting the event, they did not compete but instead ended the night with a performance.

The invitational is the largest band event hosted at SMN throughout the year — with more than 120 adult and student volunteers helping with concessions and ticket sales.

"It's just a wonderful day of celebrating our community," Chad said. "One thing we tell all of our adult and student workers is whenever they see someone on campus, the first thing we tell them to say is, 'Welcome to Shawnee Mission North' —We really try to create a positive sense of community. It's a hard day — a long day — but a feel-good day, too, with so many working together."



Buhler High School Marching Band from Buhler, Kansas made its fourth appearance at the SMN Invitational Competition. Their performance included a three movement show featuring original music written by Ian Grom from Box 6 Productions.



## THE NEW KIDS IN SCHOOL

### MEET TWO NEW LEADERS AT MISSION-AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by Denise Elam

### Principal David Ewers, Shawnee Mission North High School



Despite his nearly 20 years in education, David Ewers couldn't wait to get back to school this year — to serve in his new role as principal, that is.

No stranger to the Shawnee Mission School District, David was working as associate principal at Shawnee Mission North (SMN) when Principal Higgins announced his departure in early 2021.

Ewers was thrilled to fill the role — and already had several goals in mind for his time at the helm.

"I want to increase the achievement and engagement of our students while building an inclusive culture," he emphasized. "I live in the North attendance area and am committed to our school and community."

David began his educational career teaching social studies and coaching football and track and field for 10 years (one year at Monticello Trails Middle School and nine at Olathe Northwest high School). He spent his first three years in administration at Mill Valley High School as an assistant principal/athletic director. In 2015, he accepted a role at SMN as the athletic director before moving on to associate principal in 2016.

He was most excited to see students inperson again in 2021 following a school year complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic. "Seeing the students back in the building has been great," he said. "Also, I am looking forward to, and have been enjoying, a return of some of the activities in our school that took place before COVID-19 — having students at events, having a homecoming dance. We all became educators because we enjoy interacting with and getting to know our students. These activities bring us joy in our profession."

In his spare time, David enjoys running (describing himself as an "avid" runner) and spending time with his family. He looks forward to continuing a tradition of excellence at SMN.

"Students can accomplish anything they want at North," he said. "And I will do my best every day to help them reach their goals."

### Principal Michael Isaacsen, Horizons High School



When students feel connected to their school, Michael Isaacsen believes they are on track to ultimately have higher attendance rates and perform better academically. That's why his main goal as principal at Horizons High School in Mission is to give every student who enters the door the "best experience possible for learning."

"I want them to feel like this is a very safe place where they really matter as a student," he emphasized. Michael began teaching in 2002 when he was 27 years old, beginning his career in alternative education in Leavenworth, Kansas.

"I really enjoyed working with students in that setting," he said.

For five years, he worked as an assistant principal at a middle school in Kansas City, Kansas before dedicating another five years as principal of a middle school in Louisburg, Kansas. He enjoyed those opportunities, but his passion for alternative education never waned.

"I really wanted to get back to where I started with alternative high school because I missed the opportunities you have to build those lasting relationships with students in the larger schools," he said.

Like most educators, Michael was thrilled to get back to in-person learning in the 2021-2022 school year following distanced learning protocols in 2020.

"It was so difficult last year to start and not have the opportunity to make those lasting connections and build relationships like you do when they are in-person learning," he explained. "I have really enjoyed getting to know our students and learning more about them."

When he's not working, Michael enjoys traveling with his wife and visiting family. With five children between the two of them, and four of those children living in different states, he said it's important to get quality time in whenever possible.

"I am also from Wisconsin originally, so I am an avid Packers fan," he said, noting that he does cheer for the Chiefs but only "if they aren't playing the Packers."

Ultimately, Michael wants parents and students to know that his door is always open to them.

"I like to help in the community, and really want to be engaged with them and others to bring about positive change not only in our school but our community," he said. "It's really important for students and I to have a relationship where they feel they can talk to me about anything and I will try to help them resolve the issue or challenges they are facing."



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# Keeping the holidays merry and bright

Mission Holiday Family Adoption Program accepting donations, volunteers during busy winter season

By Denise Elam

Last winter, dozens of volunteers with the City of Mission's Holiday Family Adoption Program gathered inside the Powell Community Center to help make the holidays brighter for more than 100 families and children in Northeast Johnson County.

One of those volunteers was Kathy Lockard, a 23-year Mission employee and member of the Holiday Family Adoption Program Committee. Kathy has been involved since the program's inception in 2006.

"It is an incredible program that assists families in our community through the schools," she said. "I have seen it grow from six to eight families to 75-100 families. I feel like people think that if you live in NE Johnson County, you do not need assistance — but the need is here."

Through donations of time, money, canned goods and gifts from the local community, the Holiday Family Adoption Program has served hundreds of families during the holidays for the past 15



Many firefighters with the Johnson County Consolidated Fire District No.2 (CFD2) volunteer their time arranging holiday baskets each year.

years. Kathy said the program brings the community together in so many ways.

"Families and businesses come together as they work with each other to adopt entire families, choose gifts from the Angel Trees and have fun shopping together," she said.

"We handed out 104 Thanksgiving baskets and 107 families received food and gifts for Christmas in 2020," said Penn Almoney, Director of the Mission Parks + Recreation Department. "We are always overwhelmed by the community's generosity.

"There are several needs each year — food donations, gift certificates, gifts and cash donations are always accepted," Penn said, noting that all checks should be made payable to the City of Mission Charitable Fund.

To learn how you might get involved, please see the information detailed in the box below.



- Gift tags will be available at the Powell Community Center beginning Nov. 5. Gifts should be returned (wrapped if possible) no later than Dec. 15.
- Thanksgiving Food Basket Assembly — Monday, Nov. 22, 8:30-10:00 a.m.
- Gift wrapping volunteers needed beginning Dec. 1.
- Holiday Food Basket Assembly and Gifts — Tuesday, Dec. 21, 8:30-10:00 a.m.
- All activities for the holiday adoption program are held at the Powell Community Center, 6200 Martway St., Mission, KS 66202.

For more information, or to signup to volunteer, please contact Kathy Lockard at 913.722.8206.





Gift wrapping volunteers for Mission's Holiday Family Adoption Program are needed as early as Dec. 1st.

### Warm up this winter with holiday favorites from City of Mission employees

Whether it's chestnuts roasting on an open fire, or a warm pumpkin pie baking in the oven on Thanksgiving Day, the holidays provide many opportunities to gather together and enjoy delicious food.

This season, we invite you in on some of our City employees' favorite and most beloved recipes, straight from their dog-eared recipe books.

From all of us at the Mission Magazine, happy holidays and a Happy New Year!

### **Dad's Christmas Pecans**

Submitted by Emily Randel, Mission Assistant City Administrator

#### Ingredients:

1 egg white 1 cup white sugar 1 teaspoon cinnamon 1 tablespoon water 1 teaspoon salt 1 pound pecan halves

#### **Directions:**

- 1. Preheat oven to 250 degrees Fahrenheit.
- 2. Mix sugar, cinnamon and salt together in a bowl.
- 3. Whisk egg white and water together in a separate bowl until frothy. Toss pecans in the egg white mixture. Mix sugar mixture into pecan mixture until pecans are evenly coated. Spread coated pecans onto a baking sheet.
- 4. Bake for 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes until pecans are evenly browned.
- 5. Serve warm, or let cool and then package to give as holiday treats or as road snacks for holiday travel.
- \*Originally from allrecipes.com

"The smell of roasted pecans is the first thing you smell when you walk through the doors at my family's house during the holidays. My dad's always cooking them before people get there, so the house smells amazing. You have to turn the pecans every 15 minutes, so you're tastetesting them every 15 minutes. He'll give me them; I never turn them down. There's always extra pecans. I bag them up and take them with me when I travel to my husband's family home in the Wichita area."



Cinnamon and sugar roasted pecans, a family favorite prepared by Emily's father each winter.



A Crock-Pot dressing recipe that has been handed down for generations in Jenny Smith's family.

### **Grandma's Crock - Pot Dressing**

Submitted by Jenny Smith, Recreation Supervisor, Mission Parks + Recreation

### Ingredients:

3 chicken breasts

1 stick of butter

1/2 cup diced onions

1/2 cup diced celery

1 can condensed cream of chicken soup

1 can condensed cream of celery soup

1 box chicken flavored stuffing

1 bag Pepperidge Farms, Herb Seasoned cubed stuffing

2-3 tablespoons ground sage

(more to taste if needed/wanted)

#### Directions:

- 1. Place chicken breasts in a saucepan and cover with water. Boil chicken until cooked. Remove chicken, let cool and shred. Save the chicken broth! Set shredded chicken and broth aside
- 2. In large Crock-pot, melt a stick of butter. Add diced onions and celery and let sauté for 15 minutes until translucent.
- 3. Add both cans of condensed soups. Mix well.
- 4. Add box of stuffing and mix.
- 5. Add cubed breadcrumbs and softly fold ingredients together. It will be dry, but try to get everything mixed up.
- 6. Add some of the chicken broth and continue to fold until it comes together and starts to soften up.
- 7. Add the shredded chicken and gently stir again.
- 8. Set Crock-pot to low and cook for 4 hours. Check every 30-60 minutes, stir and add additional chicken broth as needed to keep it moist. Serves 10 people unless the taste-testers test too much!

"It came from my mom's side of the family. A dish my grandma made for long as I can remember on Thanksgiving Day. We've always had it. When my mom began hosting Thanksgiving dinner, she made it. I usually host Thanksgiving now, so it's something I make every year, too. Everybody loves it. It's been in the family for a really long time."

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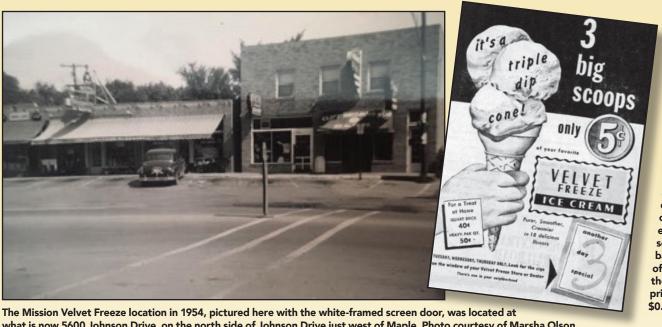
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A 1949 advertisement entices customers to enjoy three scoops for the bargain price of just \$0.05. By the 1960s, the price had risen to

what is now 5600 Johnson Drive, on the north side of Johnson Drive just west of Maple. Photo courtesy of Marsha Olson.

### by Kate Deacon

To take a sweet trip down memory lane, look no further than the long-gone but not forgotten Mission favorite Velvet Freeze Ice Cream. From as early as the 1950s, Velvet Freeze Ice Cream sweetened the lives of many a Mission resident from a storefront on the north side of Johnson Drive just west of Maple Avenue.

Founded in the St. Louis area in the 1930s, Velvet Freeze Ice Cream eventually grew throughout the Midwest region and established a loyal following of fans who loved the seasonal flavors of ice cream named for its velvety-smooth texture.

With 20 locations in Kansas City alone, it seemed every neighborhood had a Velvet Freeze to call its own.

From soda fountain favorites like malts, milkshakes, "real-deal" limeades and phosphates to its iconic Gold Coast Chocolate flavor and the ever-popular Black Walnut, there was something for everyone at Velvet Freeze, but a hallmark was its seasonal specialties.

At Christmastime, the Snowball (a scoop of vanilla ice cream rolled in coconut flakes, topped with a festive sprig of holly and a candle) was a fan favorite.

Halloween welcomed a ghoulish licorice flavor and summertime meant the perfect weather for a Lime Freeze (lime sherbet with 7 Up and a lime squeezed in).

For fans of the Mission location, longtime manager Geraldine "Gerry" Martin added her own personal flavor as a fixture of the store in the 1950s and 60s.

"It was a treat having a grandma that worked at an ice cream store," recalled family members Charley Kilgore, Patti Kochman and Karen Meinert. "Our grandmother managed that store with an iron fist."

### 2021 marks Mission's 70th Anniversary and we're celebrating with Mission memories all year long.

Have your own to share? Please fill us in on your own historic highlights! Email pictures, stories and memories to: erandel@missionks.org.



Patti recalled Gerry as a small woman but "Irish strong." "She never needed help carrying the 6-gallon ice cream containers from the back of the store," Patti said.

And as popular as the Velvet Freeze Ice Cream store was, one can only imagine just how many gallons she carried over those floorboards throughout the years.

Loyal customer Bob Cunningham remembers that Mission once boasted not only the Velvet Freeze, but a Dairy Queen and a Baskin Robbins as well.

"Along with the three ice cream stores, we also had a soda fountain at Crown Drug and at Parkview Drug," he said. "We were rich in ice cream!"

Of more than 100 Velvet Freeze locations once operating throughout the Midwest, only one Velvet Freeze remains — a location in St. Louis that still sells ice cream made from the original recipes.



In the photo above, the Velvet Freeze sign sits above the second storefront from the right on the northside of Johnson Drive, circa 1950s.

Sources: I Grew Up In Mission facebook group request; Frank Bruce, Suzie Gibbs, Betty Benson. LostTables.com (http://losttables.com/vfreeze/vfreeze.htmA)

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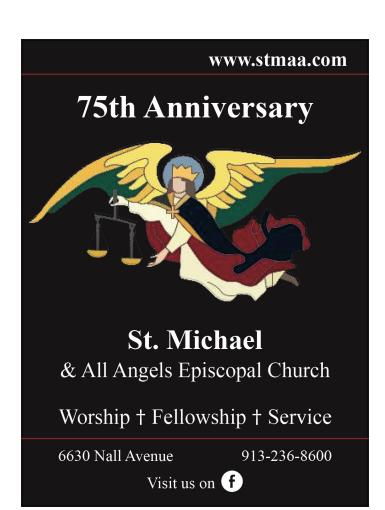
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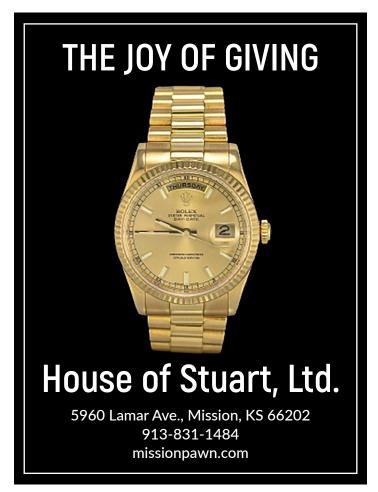
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