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**Highlights from three of Mission's
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WELCOME TO 2022!

By the time you receive your first issue of the Mission Magazine, two months of the new year will be behind us and we'll have our sights set on the coming arrival of spring and summer in Mission.

As Mayor, I look forward to supporting the magazine and its efforts to promote and highlight the residents, businesses and City activities that make Mission so great. This year marks the 14th year of production for the magazine, and I'm so glad we continue to have this resource to share and celebrate our community spirit.

One of the things that motivates and inspires me both in my career as an attorney and in my role as a public servant is the idea that each of us can make a difference by working to leave the world a little better place than we've found it. I think you will see, as you turn the pages of this issue, that the people featured within share that same motivation. It's part of what makes Mission so great.

In the cover story, Jim and Janette Sloss of Sign Pro of Kansas City show that it's not always the biggest team that delivers the best results for clients. Rather, it's a true dedication to relationship building and a willingness to step up and solve problems. There's a reason that clients like the Royals or the Kansas City Chiefs trust Sign Pro with time-sensitive projects. Sometimes being small allows you to be nimble and focused in your responses, a good reminder for our City as well!

This issue also features a story about Special Olympics Kansas, which has been headquartered in Mission for more than 50 years. The organization,



whose mission is to provide sports training and athletic competition in Olympic-type sports for both children and adults with intellectual disabilities,

aligns strongly with our desire to be a welcoming and inclusive community for all. We're so proud of our Mission athletes and all of the rest of the Special Olympics Kansas team!

The final feature story highlights the delicious Asian cuisine offered by three well-known Mission restaurants: New China Town, Sushi Karma and Thai Orchid. While the food is unique at each establishment, the sense of community and the appeal of Mission as a place to call home is a common theme. If you aren't already a regular at one (or all three), I would encourage you to stop in and try out some of the customer favorites. My personal favorite at New China Town is the General Tso's tofu, at Sushi Karma it's the tofu spring rolls, and at Thai Orchid it's the basil fried rice!

With hopes of winter wrapping up soon, this issue concludes with a look back at two of the most significant snow and ice storms to impact the Kansas City region. The "October Surprise" of 1996 and the ice storms of 2002 impacted Mission residents dramatically, but still managed to bring out the best of our community spirit as the City and neighbors joined forces to support residents displaced by the storm. It's an important reminder that we can accomplish great things together, even in the face of adversity.

Fortunately, our new year is off to a positive start, and I look forward to building on that energy throughout the remainder of the year ahead!

-Solie Flora, Mayor

On the cover:

Jim Sloss, co-owner of Sign Pro in Mission, next to a custom-made sign currently in use at the Powell Community Center.

Photo by Denise Elam.



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MARCH/APRIL 2022

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Custom signage created by Sign Pro for the Mission Family Aquatic Center.

BIG ENOUGH TO GET THE JOB DONE, SMALL ENOUGH TO CARE

SIGN PRO OFFERS CUSTOM-MADE SIGNAGE AND PHOTO-QUALITY PRINTS

By Denise Elam

If you're in need of dimensional exterior signage, custom vehicle graphics, banners, window decals, or even photo-quality prints, consider this your sign.

Sign Pro of Kansas City has been serving customers since 1997. Owners Jim and Janette Sloss purchased the company from Entercom Communications on Halloween Day some 25 years ago.

Before purchasing Sign Pro, Jim worked there as a manager. During his time at the helm, the company went on to acquire high-profile clients like the Royals and Kansas City Chiefs.

"We were really small. That was a turning point," he said. "And we do a lot of signage for them now."

Back then, Jim even got his feet wet in the radio industry by recording commercials for Sign Pro that Entercom would play during dead air time.

"We had a top of mind awareness and it really helped out a lot," he said.

After purchasing the business, Jim and Janette both became more involved with the company, splitting the responsibilities in half — Jim taking on the communications side of the business and Janette honing in on the details and project management side. The company continued to grow, so Janette left her full-time job at a video production facility to give Sign Pro her full focus.

"One thing that we're asked often is, 'What's it like working with your spouse?'" Jim said. "Janette and I don't know anything different; we've been working together for 25 years and raised two sons. We have such entirely different skillsets that we stay out of each others' lanes. If you get to know us, as people we're total opposites."

Janette said their skillsets complement each other well.

"He's the personality, he's the talker, he's



The Kansas City Chiefs are one of Sign Pro's most notable clients.

the one who everyone knows his name," she said. "And I'm the detail person, the project manager, the troubleshooter, a graphic designer and the person who figures out how to keep the inventory straight."

While Jim says he couldn't manage the numbers aspect of the business alone, Janette agrees that she couldn't walk into a room and know as many people as Jim does.

"It really works well," he said. "Basically, I enjoy people; I want to make people happy, and both Janette and I enjoy solving problems. We're not scientists, we're sign makers. We really enjoy doing it."

Their team of five includes production and installations expert Dennis Clark, who does anything from backing up big rigs to perfect vinyl application; Megan Ballay, who works as a graphic designer; and Alex Reitz, who also helps with production and installations. The team has proudly produced menus, concession stand makeovers and dimensional lettering at Kauffman Stadium. Sporting KC

and the Monarchs are a few of their many notable clients.

Throughout the years, they've completed many large undertakings together, including turning over a project for the Royals at the 2014 World Series Championships with less than 24-hours' notice.

"The Royals had added a bunch of places for the media to shoot and record from for the game; they added bleachers in the outfield," Janette said. "But they were told at the last minute, one o'clock in the afternoon the day before the first game, that they needed a number of large spaces for international media as well."

The construction workers on the field rushed to create large wooden boxes for the international media crews to use to support their cameras and equipment. But they couldn't just have raw plywood out on the field, and there was no time to paint the wooden boxes before the game.

The graphic designer for the Royals came to Sign Pro with her predicament. The Sign Pro team was already on-site at the

"When it comes down to it, there's a whole bunch of people that do what we do. But the fact is that Janette and I, as small business owners, will bend over backwards to help clients."

— Jim Sloss, co-owner, Sign Pro

stadium, installing other custom signage. Jim suggested printing banner material as wallpaper for the boxes, which were 10 feet long, 8 feet wide and 5 foot tall.

"We did layouts, printed overnight, cut everything out, and got them delivered in the morning," Janette said. "It worked

well enough that the next year when they went to the World Series, we did it again."

Jim said Sign Pro is a relationship-based business.

"When it comes down to it, there's a whole bunch of people that do what we do. But the fact is that Janette and I, as small business owners, will bend over backwards to help clients," he said. "Like, we get calls from the Chiefs on Saturday for signs they need for a game on Sunday; we come in, get them done and hand deliver the signs the same day."

The business is small enough to be nimble and flexible to problem-solve for clients.

"We get it done in a way that they are not only pleased but want us to continue doing it and give our names to others," Janette said.

Sign Pro has proudly called Mission home for the last 13 years. They are currently located at 6180 Barkley St.

"The community-minded spirit (here) is fantastic," Jim said. "The building itself is

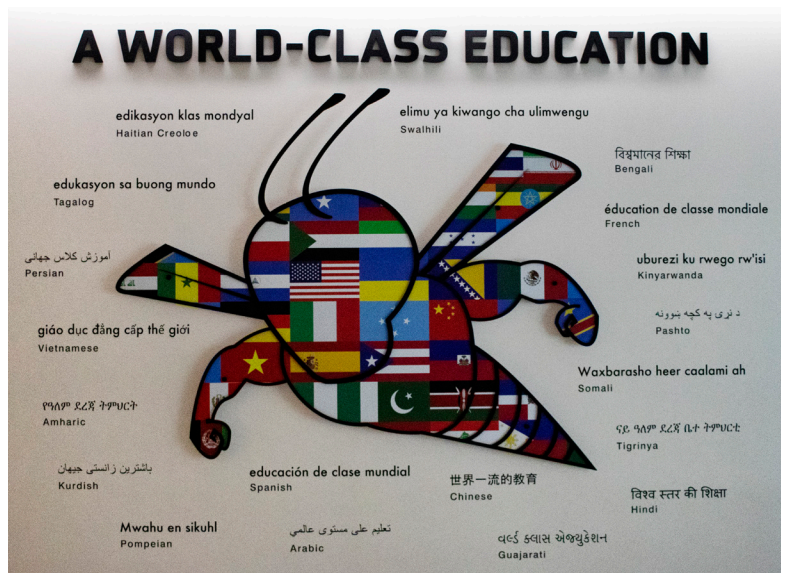
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Sign Pro staff, from left: Alex Reitz, Dennis Clark, Megan Ballay, Janette Sloss and Jim Sloss.





Dennis and Alex installing a sign at North Kansas City High School.



The final version of a custom sign in place at North Kansas City High School.

Continued from page 7

wonderful; we do a lot of vehicle lettering and the building has a large garage and back-end. We do business-to-business work, so we don't need a strip mall or that sort of thing. It really fit our needs."

The Sloss', who lives in the Northland, said they have formed lasting relationships with the community of Mission. Jim, in particular, has volunteered his time as a member of the Mission Parks, Recreation + Tree Commission, became involved on the board of directors for the Northeast Johnson County Chamber of Commerce and has even volunteered his time as emcee at Mission events like the Mission Bunny Eggstravaganza, Summer Family Picnic and the Sunflower Festival.

"We've made really great inroads with the City," he said, noting that Sign Pro completed work on signage at the Powell Community Center, the Mission Family Aquatic Center and at local businesses, like Urban Prairie Coffee and Thai Orchid.

In his free time, Jim enjoys working as a P.A. announcer for several high schools and donating his services to local organizations when possible.

"I donate signs to charity golf tournaments, my time announcing for the City of Mission is all donated, and we do signage for Catholic Charities occasionally," he explained. "For Crime Stoppers, we recently donated a banner to go into use at area high schools."

Giving back to Mission is especially important to Sign Pro, Jim said, because "the community has given us so much."

Sign Pro is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit kcsignpro.com.



Alex in the workshop at Sign Pro.

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'TOGETHER, WE WILL ACHIEVE'



The Choose to Include 5k and 1-mile walk, pictured here, raises funds for Special Olympics Kansas Unified Champion Schools and Unified Champion City Schools project.

A LOOK BACK ON SPECIAL OLYMPICS KANSAS

The Mission Magazine highlighted Special Olympics Kansas in its first year of publication back in 2010. Since then, the organization has seen numerous changes — including the COVID-19 pandemic that rocked the world in 2020 and continues to alter daily life for its athletes. In this article, we look back on our previous highlight, see how the organization has pushed forward through the COVID-19 chaos and check in on a former athlete featured in the 2010 issue.

By Denise Elam

In every corner of the earth, Special Olympics is working to actively change the lives of those living with intellectual disabilities.

Its mission is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for both children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendships with their families, other athletes and their community.

Special Olympics Kansas has been headquartered in Mission for the last 50 years, celebrating its golden anniversary in 2021. President John Lair said the organization has seen a lot of change throughout the last few decades, but its

mission and desire to impact lives in the community has never wavered — even despite the COVID-19 pandemic that completely altered the ways in which the organization provides outreach.

"I didn't know what Zoom was until March of 2020," John said. "And now it's something we use every day. Our athletes have learned to really accept Zoom; we love the fact that we can provide that platform for our athletes to come in and ask questions and be educated through our virtual training and activities."

John said Special Olympics has been focusing on creating healthy athletes and using its platform to educate and inspire participants.

"We have a huge push in our world to basically make our athletes healthier," he said, noting that on average, people with

disabilities tend to live 16 years less than a person without disabilities. "We are truly trying to change that number and really trying to make healthy lifestyles for our athletes something that's an everyday occurrence."

Special Olympics Kansas has a Healthy Athletes program which provides virtual training sessions. Prior to COVID-19, the organization would host healthy athlete screenings, promotions and education sessions at major state events. Many of those events have been cancelled within the past two years, but John said there are some positive aspects to virtual versus in-person sessions.

"We can reach a bigger audience virtually and have people from all over the state attend our virtual settings," he

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said. "We've taken over the virtual world and we have athletes from all over the Midwest that attend our education and training on healthy athletes. We do virtual workouts, food preparation training, and healthy eating (courses)."

John said around 25 in-person events have been cancelled since 2020.

"We've had a lot of great attendance on our virtual activities and just want to make sure our athletes aren't lost in everything that's going on with COVID-19," he said. "I think we'll have virtual sessions going on even when the world is 'back to normal' per se."

Despite the ever-changing event calendar, John said Special Olympics still sees active participation in its Law Enforcement Torch Run, which started in Kansas in 1981 and continues to grow each year.

The run is the largest public awareness event and grass-roots fundraiser for the Special Olympics. Law enforcement members and Special Olympics athletes carry the Flame of Hope into the Opening Ceremony of local competitions and into Special Olympics state, provincial, national, regional and World Games.

"It's one of our biggest funders for our program; last year they raised about \$478,000 which, during a pandemic, is pretty unbelievable," John said. "Our law enforcement officers around the state of

Kansas are truly unbelievable for our Special Olympics Kansas program and we couldn't do half the stuff we do without them."

Other changes in the organization's 50 years include a compete remodel of their office building at 5280 Foxridge Dr. in Mission in 2021.

"We put about \$600,000 into the building. With new paint, carpeting, all brand-new technology, office furniture — we basically gutted the whole building and started fresh," John said. "We are very, very proud of that."

The remodel was 100% grant-funded.

"We redid everything from the roof to the carpet. We redid our bathrooms to make them ADA compliant, put a wheelchair ramp out front and redid the parking lot," he said.

John is also proud of the organization's history within the City of Mission — which began with an office space to the east of downtown in the early 1970s before moving to their current location in 1991.

"Mission's always been a good fit because of its location," he said. "We have a lot of athletes in the Kansas City Metro Area and it has easy access to Topeka and the rest of the state as well. Mission's been great for us and always been very open and very good for our program."

Special Olympics Kansas has around eight or nine athletes in the Mission community that regularly participate in the

program. In 2010, the Mission Magazine featured Mission native Adam Chaffin. Named one of the Big 12 Conference 2009-10 Special Olympics Athletes of the Year, Adam traveled to Arlington, Texas for the Dr. Pepper Big 12 Football Championship at Cowboys Stadium to receive a commemorative ring in an on-field presentation during the contest.

John said Adam is still an active athlete with Special Olympics Kansas.

"He participates in three or four different sports," John said. "That's one of the great things about our organization — our athletes can compete as long as they want to; we have sports and activities for all levels and all age groups."

John said that in Kansas, the organization's oldest athlete is 84 years old.

"We start with our Young Athletes program from ages 3-7, so we have a wide variety of ages across the state," he said. "Adam's still involved with the program and does really well."

Special Olympics Kansas has around 5,000 athletes state-wide and continues to grow each year. Looking ahead, a top

"We've taken over the virtual world and we have athletes from all over the Midwest that attend our education and training on healthy athletes. We do virtual workouts, food preparation training, and healthy eating (courses)."

**--John Lair, president,
Special Olympics Kansas**



A top priority for the organization is an emphasis on unified sports in the school system.

Special Olympics Kansas focuses on creating healthy athletes and uses its platform to educate and inspire its participants.

Continued from page 12

priority for the organization is an emphasis on unified sports in the school system.

"Unified sports is when an athlete with a disability competes alongside an athlete without a disability," he said, noting that all high schools in Kansas have adopted this practice. "This year, we had the first-ever unified bowling state championships here in Kansas. It was just awesome to see."

Sixty Kansas schools participated in the bowling state championships in 2021. John expects that number to double in 2022.

"I think it will continue to grow throughout the state. It's just an amazing activity and sport for our athletes to do and creates so many bonds with people without disabilities — so it's inclusion at its finest," he said.

Working with the athletes each year is a true passion for John. He began as a volunteer coach with Special Olympics 30 years ago when he was still in college.

"I went to a track meet to get some extra credit and I fell in love with it," he said. "It's just an awesome program. Our athletes are so inspiring to me and so motivating. I could be having the worst of days and our athletes are so amazing that if you're around them for two minutes, you'll completely change your attitude ... they're just so great to be around."

John said the athletes have taught him to not sweat the small stuff — to truly enjoy life and live in the moment.

"I feel lucky everyday. I'm so incredibly blessed," he said. "I have great relationships with most of the athletes across the state and I couldn't see myself doing anything different."

For more information or to get involved in volunteering with the program's 90-plus events throughout the year, either virtually or in-person, visit ksso.org.





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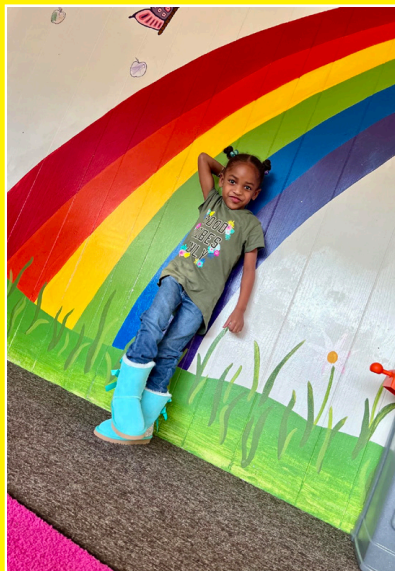
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Congratulations to Mission's new Mayor, Sollie Flora and Council members (from left to right) Hillary Thomas (Ward I), Lea Loudon (Ward II), Debbie Kring (Ward III), and Ben Chocej (Ward IV) for winning election/re-election on Nov. 2, 2021.



The new Mayor and Council were sworn into office at the Dec. 15, 2021 meeting.

We are also pleased to welcome Mary Ryherd (Ward II) to the Council. She was appointed in January 2022 to fill the balance of the term resulting from Nick Schlossmacher's resignation.

Mary was selected through an interview process on Jan. 19, 2022.

Phone numbers for the Mayor and Council members may be found in the information box to the left. To learn more about the members of Mission's Governing Body, including full bios, email addresses and phone numbers, please visit the website at www.missionks.org/governing-body.



Mayor Flora and all the members of the City Council look forward to serving Mission's residents and businesses. Please feel free to attend a quarterly ward meeting or a City Council meeting to learn more about what's happening in our community.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Community Development,
Finance and Administration

First Wednesday every month 6:30 p.m.
(overflow business considered on the second Wednesday of the month as necessary).

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Third Wednesday every month 7 p.m.

COUNCIL WORK SESSIONS

Fourth Wednesday every month 7 p.m.

All meetings are open to the public.

GOVERNING BODY

MAYOR

Sollie Flora 913.676.8351

WARD I COUNCIL MEMBERS

Hillary Thomas 913.961.4520
Trent Boultinghouse 620.238.0394

WARD II COUNCIL MEMBERS

Lea Loudon 913.242.4284
Mary Ryherd 913.221.2630

WARD III COUNCIL MEMBERS

Debbie Kring 913.722.6901
Kristin Inman 816.510.7698

WARD IV COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ken Davis 913.669.7095
Ben Chocej 913.298.2873

"If I Were Mayor I Would..." Student Poster Contest

Have you ever thought about what you would do if you were elected to the top leadership position in the City of Mission? As Mayor what would you change? What would you do to make our City a better place? What are your "big ideas?"

In 2021, we introduced the "If I Were Mayor I Would..." student poster contest for elementary students in grades K-6. Mission students (public, private or homeschooled) are invited to submit an entry for the 2022 contest by Friday, March 25, 2022. Poster submissions must be:

- A minimum of 17 inches and a maximum of 28 inches in height or width.
- Students are encouraged to be creative and may use any art medium (e.g., poster paints, felt pens, colored pencils, pastels, crayons, 3D art, etc.). The poster may be in color or black and white.

The student's name and a daytime phone number or email address for their parent or guardian must be included with the submission. Entries will be judged by the Mayor and other city officials, and the winner in each grade level will be eligible to receive a \$100 prize. For full contest rules and deadlines, please visit the City's website at www.missionks.org.



Members of Mission's Sustainability Commission join County staff in auditing recycling bins in Mission as a part of the "Recycle Right" campaign.

Reducing contamination in our curbside recycling keeps the downstream market for those materials viable. Mission residents do a great job of recycling, but there is still contamination, mostly due to recycling items being thrown out in bags, or from items that don't belong at the curb such as plastic bags, product wrap or Amazon pouches, paper towels and tissues.

Johnson County Department of Health and Environment is partnering with the City and GFL Environmental to provide recycling education with the "Recycle Right" campaign.

JCDHE's recycling specialists will be in select Mission neighborhoods assessing the contents of recycle bins. If items that shouldn't be included in curbside recycling are found, a notice offering tips on ways to improve will be left on the bin. Residents can learn more about the program at missionks.org. #DitchTheBag



Meet Your Mayor...

What was your first job?

Other than babysitting, my first job was working as a hostess at Rainforest Café at the Oak Park Mall.

What is your favorite thing about your current job?

I currently work as an in-house attorney on a small legal team for an international company. One of my business colleagues recently referenced our legal team as being "business enablers" — I really like helping my business colleagues (sales team, procurement, etc.) formulate solutions that properly account for risk but also help advance our company's goals. The company I work for also prioritizes sustainability and a positive work environment, both of which I really appreciate.

What causes are you passionate about?

I'm very passionate about animal rescue. We "foster failed" our dog Wags from Melissa's Second Chances in Shawnee at the start of the pandemic. Our previous dog Max was an amazing foster dog brother and Wags is now learning to be a foster sibling too. Together with my fiancé Dave I've fostered 30-plus dogs since 2013. I'm also passionate about environmental sustainability and have been actively involved with Climate Action KC since its founding.

What are you looking forward to most as Mayor?

I'm excited for all of us to work together to keep moving Mission forward. We're fortunate to have an amazing City staff, dedicated Council members, and enthusiastic residents. I'm confident we will be successful in making progress on improvements to our streets and parks as well as furthering our sustainability objectives.

What are you currently reading (or a recommended read)?

I'm currently reading "The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business" by Erin Meyer. My favorite books that I read in 2021 were "The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America" by Richard Rothstein (nonfiction) and "Finlay Donovan is



Photo credit Max Thomas Photography

Name:
Sollie Flora

Hometown:
Overland Park,
Kansas

Occupation:
Attorney

**Years in
Mission:**
6

Killing It" a mystery by Elle Cosimano (fiction).

What are you most likely to be caught listening to on repeat?

I'm usually more of a folk/alternative rock listener, but I've got a soft spot for Taylor Swift. I've recently been listening to a lot of "Red (Taylor's Version)."

What's your favorite way to spend a day off from work?

I really enjoy getting out and exploring parks in neighboring communities and looking for new hiking spots. My fiancé Dave, our dog Wags, and I recently checked out Lexington Lake Park (a Johnson County Parks & Recreation District park located in De Soto) with a friend; that was a lot of fun. We also like trying out new restaurants.

Who or what inspires you in your career?

In both my work and my public service, my motivation and inspiration is the idea that each of us can make a difference by working to leave the world a little better place than we've found it.

Favorite thing to do in Mission?

It's too hard to choose just one favorite thing to do in Mission! My top three favorites are: (1) visiting the Mission Market; (2) checking out our Johnson Drive businesses, in particular one of our brewery patios on a nice day; and (3) walking our neighborhoods.

You can reach Mayor Flora at
sflora@missionks.org or 913.676.8351

Mission Police Department Cautions Against Credit Card Scams

There is no shortage of local and national news about scams occurring where someone attempts to get you to buy gift cards from a local retailer to pay for something, fix something (usually pretend to be technical support), or help someone (bail someone out of jail). A lot of the time these scammers pretend to be a government agency such as the IRS or Social Security Administration. Other times they pretend to be a utility company and threaten to disconnect your utility services unless you go to a store, buy gift cards, and then provide the gift card numbers to them.

Unfortunately, Mission is not immune to these scams. We have had residents suffer thousands of dollars worth of losses. Scamming people out of their hard-earned money is nothing new.

What is new is the technology these criminals are using to make themselves appear credible. Scammers use special programs that can make your caller ID appear that they are calling from a legitimate government agency, charity or utility company.

Today's scammers also make things more personal by knowing your name, the names of spouses, grandchildren, children and other loved ones. Much of this information is obtained using public data stored on the internet. For example, if you have a grandson named James, the scammer may call you and say that James is in jail and needs to be bonded out. They will

tell you to go to a store and purchase \$500 worth of gift cards. Since you don't want James to sit in jail one second longer, you rush to the store to buy the cards. Sometimes they will want you to stay on the phone with them while you are purchasing the gift cards. Once you purchase the gift cards, they will tell you to read the gift card numbers to them. As soon as you provide the gift card numbers to them, the balance on the gift card will disappear and you won't be able to get your money back.

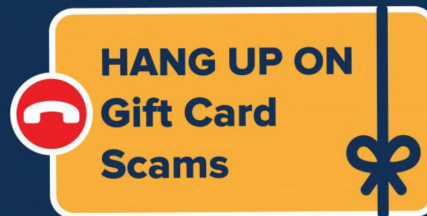
This is just one example, but they go to great lengths to legitimize these scams. If anyone asks you to pay for something using a gift card, hang up! It's a scam! Legitimate government agencies, charities, bail bondsman, or technical support persons will never ask you to pay using gift cards. If you are ever in doubt or questioning the legitimacy of something like this, give the police department a call at 913.676.8300. We'd be glad to help! If you feel like you've been victimized by a scammer, please report this to the police department, as well as at www.reportfraud.ftc.gov.

If you, or someone you know could benefit from having additional details about these scams, the police department has some literature available in City Hall. You can also learn about how to identify a scam by visiting www.consumer.ftc.gov.

**Buying a gift card to
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For more information, visit:

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and enduring hearts that we may strengthen one another,
until these difficult days are ended, and you again give peace
in our time, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”*

– from the Book of Common Prayer



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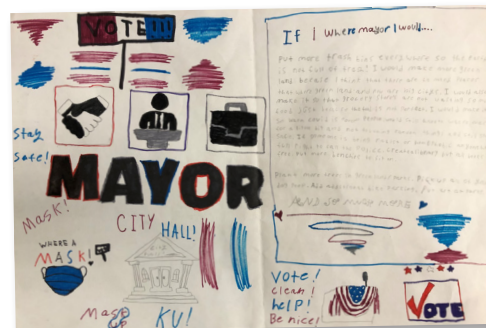
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missions.org

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 • New Year's Day
 • Independence Day
 • Thanksgiving Day
 • Christmas Day
 * Check website for how holidays impact collection dates.

IF I WERE MAYOR CONTEST

We'd love to hear from our Mission elementary students! What would you do if you were the Mayor of our City? For complete details on how to enter the "If I Were Mayor" poster contest, please see page 18 of this magazine.



Thank You!

Your generosity and kindness helped us serve 109 families through Mission's Holiday Family Adoption program. Please visit the City's website for complete details on the success of the 2021 program!

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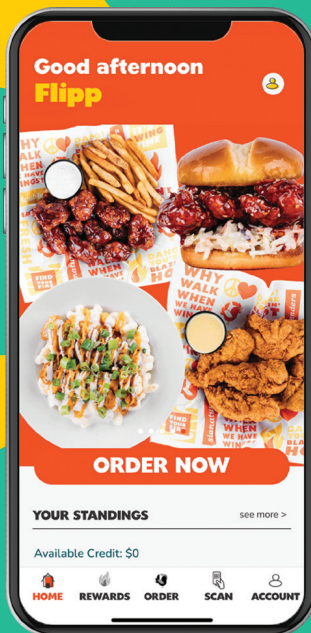
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A U T H E N T I C ASIAN CUISINE

HIGHLIGHTING THREE OF MISSION'S BEST-KNOWN ASIAN RESTAURANTS

by Denise Elam

Whether you've got a hankering for some fresh sushi, crave the best Thai street food or just want a classic order of chicken fried rice, Mission has you covered. In the next few pages, we highlight some of our community's best Asian restaurants — with dishes so mouthwatering you may have to stop reading to order takeout.

New China Town

For many, a savory roll of shredded cabbage with chopped pork, fried up in a thickly-wrapped wheat flour skin and dipped in duck or soy sauce is a ubiquitous feature of American Chinese cuisine. So it makes sense that the roll, known as an egg roll, is taken very seriously at New China Town in Mission.

"It's homemade, our egg roll," said Owner Wei Tian. "I think in Kansas City, only one other restaurant makes their egg rolls homemade. A lot of people order them."

Wei said the restaurant has kept its tradition of cooking fresh food daily since the business opened in 1999. She chose Mission because she wanted to fill a need for good, authentic Chinese food in the area. The storefront boasts

a guaranteed timely and friendly service, with many traditional Chinese decorations lining the walls.

Some of Wei's best sellers include the General Tso's chicken, served with a choice of fried or white rice, and beef broccoli — both of which are available for a reduced price on the lunch menu,

lasting daily until 3 p.m.

Other fan favorites include the sesame chicken, orange chicken, crispy honey walnut shrimp and an item known as the "Dragon and Phoenix," with breaded squid meat topped with Szechuan sauce and General Tso's chicken and broccoli.

Continued on page 28



General Tso's chicken with a made-from-scratch egg roll and steamed rice.



The interior of New China Town features traditional Chinese decorations.

Continued from page 27

The restaurant also has a \$6 lunch special for high school students — with a free drink.

The COVID-19 pandemic was one of the biggest obstacles the business had seen since it opened nearly 30 years ago. Wei said it was hard to not see as many people coming into the restaurant each day.

"These last two years have been a little bit hard for me and for the customers,"

she said. "I like serving people, and making people happy to come and eat here."

New China Town is located at 6854 Johnson Dr. in Mission and open from 10:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday. On Fridays and Saturdays, the restaurant has extended hours from 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday hours are 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. The restaurant is closed on Mondays.

For more information, or to order online, visit newchinatownks.com.



New China Town's menu features many classics like sesame and sweet and sour chicken.



Sushi Karma offers authentic Laotian Cuisine.

Sushi Karma

Mission's tight-knit community and thriving downtown drew entrepreneur Cyrus Riahi to an exciting business venture in 2019. Cyrus found a building at 5820 Johnson Dr. and quickly put the wheels in motion to open Sushi Karma, a Southeast Asian bistro and bar.

"The building remodel started in June 2019; we finally opened in February of 2020," Cyrus said. "We are a local family business and named our restaurant after

Continued on page 29

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Sushi Karma opened February 2020 in Downtown Mission.

Continued from page 28

our daughter, Carma. I was going to call the restaurant Sushi Carma — however, I knew everyone would just be typing in ‘Karma’ when they looked for us, anyway.”

Sushi Karma specializes in authentic Laotian Cuisine, boasting some of the most experienced sushi chefs in the Kansas City area who regularly dish out a wide range of choices, like tonkatsu ramen (pork broth, chashu, and boiled egg), pho (classic noodles, beef broth and herbs with meatball or beef or combination), poke and its trademark sushi.

“You haven’t had crab rangoons until you’ve had ours,” Cyrus said. “Our traditional Laos food on the back of the menu is Kansas City’s best kept secret.”

Opening a business in general is never easy, but Cyrus said the COVID-19 pandemic made the prospect even tougher.

“Never having run a restaurant before was our first big obstacle,” he explained. “COVID-19 hit only a couple months after opening, then the food cost increases and labor shortages (were other obstacles).”

Despite the challenges, Cyrus is looking forward to continuing to come up with interesting cuisines for the



Specialty sushi rolls line the menu, including the caterpillar roll with cucumber, kanikama topped with avocado and eel sauce and the dragon roll, featuring cucumber, avocado, cream cheese, eel and eel sauce.

Mission community to try and love. In the nearly two years since Sushi Karma first opened, Cyrus has enjoyed meeting “really interesting people” and sharing his favorite food with the public.

“Really, we could not have done this without the support of the Mission community,” he said. “So I want to thank them for their love and support.”

Sushi Karma is open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Mondays and Tuesdays, with extended hours of 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays. On Fridays and Saturdays, the restaurant and bistro is open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday hours are noon to 9 p.m.

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Continued on page 31

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Continued from page 28

Thai Orchid

As the second Thai restaurant to ever open its doors in the Kansas City area, Thai Orchid has been a staple in the Mission community since 1991.

Jonathan Rojjanasrirat's family purchased Thai Orchid from its original owners in 1998.

Jonathan took over the restaurant in 2018 and has been running it since.

The restaurant specializes in Thai classics such as pad Thai (stir-fried rice and noodles with eggs, beansprouts, scallions and a choice of protein topped with ground peanuts) and massaman curry (famous Southern Thai style red curry, semi-sweet spicy coconut milk accompanied with potatoes, onions, bell pepper and peanuts).

"Pad Thai is a Thai street food staple and the most popular dish at Thai restaurants outside of Thailand," he explained. "Massaman curry is gluten-free and served with rice. Great on a cold winter day."

Jonathan has enjoyed building a strong team "made up of amazing people that love each other."

"We enjoy getting to tell our stories and knowing the customers on a first-name and a favorite-order basis," he said.

Jonathan strongly believes he would never want to move from the city Thai Orchid calls home.

"I think Mission is a very small and tight community. It has its own unique draw,"



Mango sticky rice — sweet, sticky rice marinated with coconut milk to go with sweet and tangy mango. This is a very popular Thai dessert only available seasonally.

he said. "It's not too crowded and has a good mixture of old staples and new, innovative businesses. It contains a perfect blend between businesses and art."

Looking to the future, Jonathan hopes to expand the kitchen and increase production capabilities to serve more people.

"We want to add more items in the menu such as papaya salad, tiger cried beef, and any other regional Thai dishes without putting strain on the cooks," he explained.

He looks forward to a long future ahead for the business.

"We have patrons that have been coming here for 30 years and now we have become like family," he said. "We served them on their first date, and now are serving their kids on their own dates ... If you would like to try comfort Thai food with a friendly and cozy setting, give us a try."

Thai Orchid is open for lunch from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Saturdays.

Dinner hours are 5-8:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 5-9 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

For more information, or to order online, visit www.thaiorchidkc.com. Visit in person at 6504 Martway St.



Popular menu items include Pad Thai, massaman curry and a refreshing Thai iced tea.



REMEMBER WHEN: RECORD-BREAKING SNOW AND ICE STORMS OF '96 & '02

HOW THE MISSION COMMUNITY JOINED TOGETHER IN THE FACE OF UNCERTAINTY

by Kate Deacon

Mission has had its fair share of wild weather events, but many long-time residents remember the “October Surprise” snowstorm of 1996 and the ice storm in January of 2002 among the most significant on record.

October Surprise

Over 25 years ago, a rainy fall day quickly turned into one of the region’s worst snowstorms on record. Temperatures dropped steadily throughout the day as heavy rain changed to heavy snow on Oct. 22, 1996. The clumps of heavy, wet snow accumulated quickly on trees full of fall leaves, weighing them down to their breaking point and accumulating between 5-8 inches before tapering off.

Although the next afternoon brought a return to mild temperatures, the damage had been done. The heavy snow and ice wreaked havoc on thousands of trees, downed power lines and left many without power for weeks, creating a state of emergency throughout the metroplex.

The Kansas City region’s recovery efforts

“According to a report from the Kansas City Star from Feb. 1, 2002, in the days after the storm hit, nearly 150 people had gathered at the Powell Community Center in search of shelter. At the time, there were only 125 cots, “but with plenty of floor space, the Center’s message was clear: ‘We’re not turning anyone away tonight.’”

would eventually cost a total of \$5.8 million. In Mission alone, the storm debris would take over a month to clean up.

Jan. 30, 2002

This year marks 20 years since one of the worst ice storms in Kansas history struck Mission. With sleet and freezing rain pelting the City, 1-4 inches of ice accumulated across the region, causing catastrophic damage to trees and power lines.

At the height of the storm, up to a million people across the KC region were reportedly without power in frigid conditions. In Mission, some households lost power for up to two weeks but were able to take emergency shelter provided by local churches, schools and the Powell Community Center.

According to a report from the Kansas City Star from Feb. 1, 2002, in the days after the storm hit, nearly 150 people had gathered

Continued on page 34

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Continued from page 32

at the Powell Community Center in search of shelter. At the time, there were only 125 cots, "but with plenty of floor space, the Center's message was clear: 'We're not turning anyone away tonight.'"

Up to 180 people would eventually take shelter at the Powell, including all 80 of the residents at nearby Mission Springs assisted living center, sleeping on donated cots while waiting for the power to be restored to their homes.

While the Salvation Army provided food to many shelters, Mission Hy-Vee and Price Chopper also donated a significant amount of food to the Powell, and Mission neighbors who had electricity could be found bringing "sliced ham, cookies and anything they could spare" to help those in need.

Steve Corry, former recreation director for Mission's Parks + Recreation Department, pledged that the Powell would keep its doors open until residents' electricity was restored.

In a special report to City Council that February, former City Administrator Ron Brohammer recapped the dramatic events of Jan. 30, 2002, noting that "the recent ice storm brought out the very best in (Mission's) City staff."

Brohammer remarked that as it became apparent that the storm was becoming a major crisis, a shelter was established in City Hall, but "it rapidly became evident a much greater need was developing."

To accommodate the growing need, the Powell Community Center was "transformed from recreation to reception and shelter from the elements." Staff pulled together to ready the Center, and additional staff volunteered time to help make shelter users as comfortable as possible.

While power was restored and residents returned home within the week, the storm damage would take much longer to clear. Crews established 12-hour work shifts even before the storm hit and continued responding to threats in increasingly dangerous situations as the snow and ice took its toll. In the wake of the storm, Mission Public Works crews would haul over 750 loads (211,200 cubic yards) of debris and expend nearly 500 hours of overtime.

A) A birch tree snaps under the weight of the ice, January 2002.

B) Ice encases every inch of a dogwood tree, up to half an inch through.

C) Ice-covered trees ensnare power lines and near the breaking point over a Mission home in 2002.

D) Winter elements caused severe damage, but left a winter wonderland effect of glistening beauty.

Photos copyright 2002 Dick Hodgman.





Mission residents woke up to a landscape encrusted in ice in January, 2002. Photo courtesy of Mark Raduziner.

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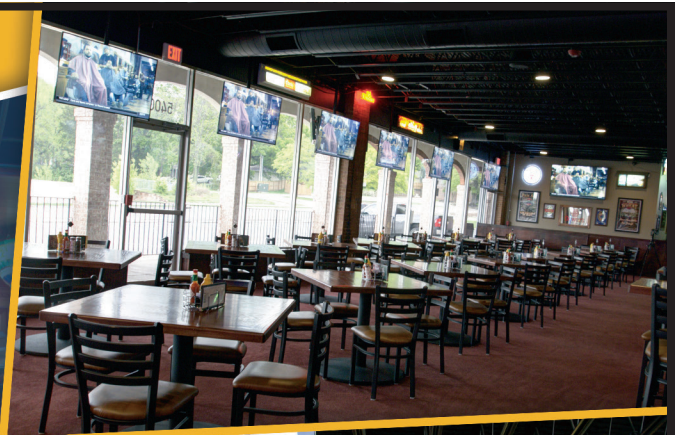
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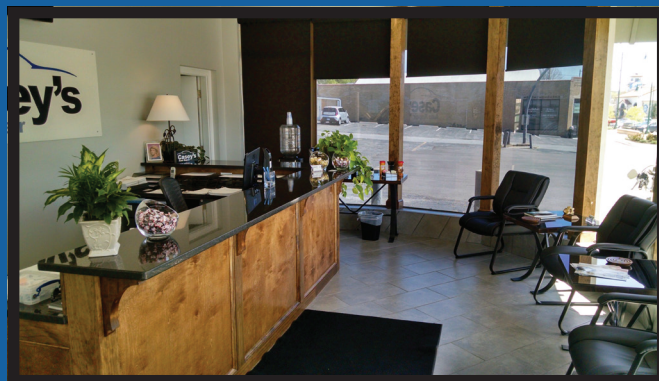
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