

# HARVEY COUNTY **N→W**

WINTER 2016

**FREE** – Take One



## **Art**

Susan Bartel at  
gnome with a  
paint brush

## **Travel**

Lindsborg offers  
photography, art, pickled  
herring, Dala horses

## **Sports**

Rupp Tournament  
honors long-standing  
tradition

**EDITOR**

Wendy Nugent

**FEATURES,  
PHOTOGRAPHY**Adam Strunk  
Mike Mendez  
Wendy Nugent  
Ethan Birdwell**SALES**

Bruce Behmyer

**CREATIVE**Shelley Plett  
Elizabeth Hingst**PUBLISHED BY**Kansas Publishing Ventures LLC  
Joey Young, Publisher  
706 N. Main • Newton, KS 67114  
316-281-7899

@HarveyCoNOW

facebook.com/HarveyCoNow

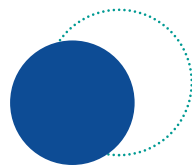
www.harveycountynow.com

**Advertising  
Information**

Contact:

**Bruce Behmyer**bruce@harveycountynow.com  
316-617-1095

HarveyCountyNOW.com does not knowingly publish or accept advertisements that are misleading or fraudulent. Publisher reserves the right to cancel or reject any advertisements. Kansas Publishing Ventures LLC does not assume any financial responsibility for typos in ads. If at fault, however, Kansas Publishing will reprint any portion of the advertisement where there is an error. Location of ads, size of type and style are left to the discretion of the publisher. Opinions in this publication are not necessarily those of the publisher. ©2014 Kansas Publishing Ventures LLC.



# From the Editor



Wendy Nugent, Editor

**T**his is quite the festive time of year with all the holidays and anticipation of snow (I'm writing this on the first cold day in November, so I'm not sure there will be any snow this year again). Hadn't seen any as of Friday, Nov. 18.

I remember a few years ago, there was snow coming down around Oct. 11. I think it's pretty watching the big, wet flakes feather to the ground. My mind likes the snow in its most romantic form, like in the last scene of the movie *A Christmas Story*. However, when we get a lot of snow and freezing rain, causing people to have car accidents, I'm not so happy about snow and ice.

It's a fact of life around these parts with the jet stream bringing frigid arctic air to the Plains.

One of the stories in the magazine you're holding has to do with this chillier time of year. It's about local artist Susan Bartel, who makes gnome Christmas cards. They're sold at The Carriage Factory Gallery in Newton and Mojo's Coffee Bar in North Newton, as well as on Etsy.

We have articles from various towns in the county, including the Adolph Rupp Invitational Tournament in Halstead, Yoder's Ornamental Concrete in Burrton, Susan Bartel, who resides in North Newton, and Goerz House in North Newton, as well as stories from Newton, including profiles on the new sheriff, Chad Gay, and Newton Medical Center President and CEO Vallerie Gleason. There's even a travel article written by Newton Now managing editor Adam Strunk, who went to Lindsborg and tried pickled herring.

We do hope you enjoy reading this issue, as we've put our hearts and souls into it. Happy holidays!

*Wendy Nugent, editor*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**8****A people person**

New sheriff hopes to build relationships

**16****Full of life**

Goerz house is a historical residence

**24****Cuppa Joe**

Lincoln Perk serves the community

**29****The family mold**

Yoders pour concrete art

**ON THE COVER:** Susan Bartel of North Newton holds some of her Christmas card gnome art while surrounded by other pieces of her art. Photo by Wendy Nugent



509 N Main Street  
Newton, KS 67114  
(316)283-5870

[www.danheinzeinsurance.com](http://www.danheinzeinsurance.com)



Asbury Park's  
Peppernut Recipe

- 1 cup shortening
- 4 cups brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 6-7 cups all purpose flour, or as needed
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. ground ginger
- 1 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1 tsp anise extract

1. Cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Mix in eggs, one at a time, beating well after each has been added. Mix in remaining ingredients well.
2. Roll in logs, roughly the width of your finger, and freeze.
3. Preheat oven to 350° F. Cut 1/4" thick slices and place on baking sheets. Bake in preheated oven until bottom of cookies are light tan, about 8 minutes.

**ASBURY PARK**  
**IS MORE THAN JUST A**  
**RETIREMENT COMMUNITY...**  
SKILLED NURSING CARE  
MEMORY SUPPORT  
REHABILITATION  
ASSISTED LIVING  
INDEPENDENT LIVING COTTAGES  
PATIO HOMES  
CHILDCARE CENTER

For more  
information:

Call Laura at  
**316-283-4770**  
Visit us today at:  
[www.Asbury-Park.org](http://www.Asbury-Park.org)  
200 SW 14th,  
Newton, Kansas

Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer





Susan Bartel of North Newton holds some of her pear painting work. FACING PAGE: Here is a sampling of Susan Bartel's work, including replicas of her flower paintings turned into pillows and flower art on the wall.



# Gnome on the range

## Local artist makes Christmas cards

**S**usan Bartel feels at gnome with her art. Her creations involve paintings of small, wee men with pointy hats, and her card line is called Gnome Wits.

A few years ago, the North Newton resident started painting original Christmas cards.

"I started doing them a couple of Christmases ago," she said. "I like to paint original cards. It's my way of experimenting."

She also saw gnome cards on Pinterest, and many had a Christmas feel to them.

Then, as she painted, her mind went to plays on words with the word "gnome," and

she doesn't give folks her original work anymore unless they want to pay big bucks, she said. Bartel's family started to come up with humorous things she could put on the cards.

"So now, I have a two-page list," Bartel said about how many plays on words she has. "Not saying they'll all lead themselves to illustration, but I keep them all just in case."

This year, she has a new card.

"I have a new one," she said. "Frosty the Gnome Man. He's very festive."

One holiday play on words she credits to son Nathan, who also helped with her logo.

It's "The First Gnome Well." Others include "In the Meadow, We Will Build a Gnome Man," "Gnome, Gnome on the Range" and "Gnome Man Is An Island."

The "Gnome, Gnome on the Range" features two gnomes on a miniature horse, but Bartel said she also thought she could illustrate that with a couple of gnomes on a stovetop range.

Her first design was "I'll Be Gnome for Christmas."

Bartel uses watercolors to create her cards.

"I've developed my own formula," she said, adding she uses three colors to paint. "I



.....  
Susan Bartel works on a painting in her home studio area. INSET: This is one of Susan Bartel's pieces of gnome art.



just stick to those three colors, and it makes for some very vibrant art, I think."

Bartel's cards, some originals, some prints of originals, are for sale at The Carriage Factory Gallery, 128 E. Sixth St. in Newton.

"I do try to do a lot of Christmas ones at Christmastime," she said, adding she also sells cards at events, such as the bazaar at Trinity Heights United Methodist Church. "The first time I saw the cards come out, I did a happy dance."

In addition to the gnome paintings, Bartel paints other subjects, such as flowers and people.

"I have very little inventory right now, which is good because it means I'm selling a lot," she said.

Her favorite medium is watercolor, although she's tried others.

"When I started painting for myself, I explored other mediums," she said. "I like the transparency of [watercolor]. You're in control but a little out of

control always. Sometimes you get really surprising results."

She advised other watercolor painters to not work with inferior paper, since it will buckle.

"You have to have good paper," she said.

Lately, Bartel also has explored functional uses of art, where she takes the images of her flower paintings and makes them into pillows.

"I thought maybe people would want a little color on their couch," she said.

She sells her pillows in the Carriage Factory Gallery gift shop, and she's made around 10. Some have sold. She said more will be coming out, too.

Bartel's interest in art came out at a young age.

"I've always had an interest in art," she said. "I liked drawing a lot when I was a kid."

She didn't take art in school growing up and graduated from Bethel College in North Newton with a degree in sociology.

Later, she went back to school, at Pike's Peak Community College, where she earned an associate of arts degree in commercial art. Armed with her degree, she became a freelance illustrator, and most of her work was with biological sciences curriculum studies.

"I did a lot of illustrating," she said. "It was all kinds of illustrating."


Illustrating also included fire safety, anatomy of a cell and weather climate cycles, to name a few.

She did that for quite a few years, she said. However, when things started to go digital, Bartel went back into library science. Now, she's employed at Newton Public Library. When Bartel attended Bethel College, she had a job in the library and also worked at a library in Colorado.

Bartel likes art.

"It makes the world better," she said. "It makes the environment that it's in a better place to be. Creating it is, for me, a happy place. I like doing it. It makes me feel like I'm adding a little something to my world. I like doing it."

She believes art changes the world.

"I read somewhere that if you've created something, the world is no longer the same place, and I think that's true," Bartel said. 



Unlock a **world** of possibilities.

From one convenient website, our **ONLINE CASH MANAGEMENT TOOLS** offer the flexibility to:

- Setup online payments for customers
- Check balances
- View detailed transaction reports & check images
- Make transfers
- Send ACH transactions
- Send wire requests
- Request stop payments
- Send federal tax payments
- Receive balance alerts
- And so much more!

Contact us today and let us show you how we can help!

The *Citizens* State Bank  
thecsb.com  
NMLS # 791580



Goessel 620.367.2264    Newton North 316.283.3035    Newton South 316.283.7478

Hesston 620.327.4941    Newton Walmart 316.283.7350



Amy Budde  
316-283-7478



Ken Knepper  
316-283-7478

**WE FIX DUMB COMPUTERS**

**COMPUTER / NETWORKS**

**HOUSE CALLS / GRAPHICS**

**PICS • VId / WEDDINGS**

**316•283•5533**

**620•951•5075**

Like Us on **FACEBOOK**

2200 North Main St. NEWTON | HESSTON 709 E LINCOLN S. 500

Monday - Friday  
9:00 am - 7:00 pm

Saturday  
9:00 - 5:00 pm

Quality  
Affordable  
Gently-Used  
Merchandise

**Et Cetera Shop**

Serving the Newton area since 1976

**40th ANNIVERSARY**

1976-2016

**NEWTON ET CETERA SHOP**  
515 North Main Street • a community thrift store

Donations accepted at the back alley door.

**316.283.9461**

**Banquet seating up to 450**

**Full catering and bar service**

**State-of-the-art audio/visual equipment**

**Conveniently located at the crossroads of I-135 and US Hwy 50 in Newton, KS**

**Numerous lodging options nearby**

**1420 E. BROADWAY CT., NEWTON, KS**

**316.284.3100**

**MERIDIANEVENTCENTER.COM**

**CONNECT WITH YOUR CITY**

**Download our app today!**

Scan the QR code below or search for **Newton Connect** in your app store. From reporting a pothole, to paying your bills, we put the City at your fingertips.

Download on the **App Store**

GET IT ON **Google Play**

**Get it now!**

Articles and photos by Adam Strunk

# A PEOPLE

It's 3:01 p.m. and Chad Gay, Harvey County's newly elected sheriff, enters his soon-to-be former office at Newton High School. He apologizes for being one minute late. He was talking to some students in the hallway.

He makes a few more apologies throughout the next half hour—once as he's interrupted because the office needs help with a student. Another time it's because a student stops by, asking if he will attend an after school event. He explains he's supposed to be at an event in Hesston at that time, but he'll try to attend both. The student smiles and leaves Gay's office.

He later explains how treating the kids at the school with respect and working to earn their trust has helped make him an effective school resource officer during his career.

"Relationships with people are really important," he says. "The important thing to have is the ability to relate to the kids and people."

Chad Gay, friendly, approachable, says he is a people person.

Gay's phone buzzes; texts come. There are a lot of people trying to get in touch with him nowadays. And that only will increase when the longtime Newton police officer replaces retiring Sheriff T. Walton.

Gay, friendly, approachable, says he's a people person.

His people skills helped elect him sheriff, and now he will take over managing the sheriff's office, the county jail and the budgeting that comes along with both.

"It's done such a great job," he says. "How much better can I make it?"

Gay adds he hopes to at least maintain the high standards put in place before him—that and make the sheriff's department a friendly and well-known face in the county.

"A year from now, more people will know who I am and who we are as a sheriff's office," he says. "For me in law enforcement, if I get to know people and people know me and the deputies, it's hard to have a lot of animosity between us."

At least in Newton, Gay himself is a fairly well-known face.

Gay grew up in town after moving in from Oklahoma at 2 years old. He graduated from Newton High School. He attended mechanical classes there, and that training propelled him into the Marines where he worked as a tank mechanic and served in the first Gulf War.

"They teach us the whole job is to fight enemies and kill them," Gay said. "I worked on tanks, so they can go out and shoot at people. But I was able to keep my ability to relate to people even through all of that."

After marrying his high school sweetheart Robin, Gay took a job at Denny's Heating and Cooling. He eventually applied for a spot with the police department after the urging of his friend Curtis Nightengale, who already worked for the department.

Gay said he wanted to work as a police officer partially to help people and partially because he has always enjoyed excitement.

He thought it would be an exciting job, and so far, he said it has, from working accidents, to car chases, to foot chases. Gay always has been sort of an adrenaline junky.

"I like fast cars, fast motorcycles. I do kick boxing and jiu jitsu on the side."

With cars and motorcycles, his enjoyment of adrenaline and mechanics fit together in one. He has a 1999 Corvette he likes to drive, which he calls his bucket-list vehicle, as well a Kawasaki and a Yamaha Street Bike. In the past, he's restored a

# PERSON

New sheriff  
hopes to  
build  
relationships

Chad Gay stands with his Kawasaki on Nov. 16 in Centennial Park. Wendy Nugent/Harvey County Now



1966 Chevrolet Nova. He's also drag raced vehicles and motorcycles at the Kansas International Dragway near Maize.

"Still ride as much as I can," he says. "We did the toy run. During the campaign, we'd just ride around the county."

He also rides them with his son, Steve, who is a senior in high school.

Gay has two other kids, Reagan and Morgan. One is a seventh grader and one followed in her father's footsteps and became a police officer in Newton.

Outside of martial arts and mechanics, Gay also said he really enjoys music and plays the bass. For a while, he would play in a band made up of other law enforcement officers called "Hard 40."

The group performed in orange jumpsuits.

"I love playing," he said. "I love music. I love making music; it's great. We played Metallica and God Smack. At the time, it was newer, heavy stuff," he said, adding he also enjoyed rock bands like Foreigner.

The music tastes have perhaps changed at Newton High School since he attended or since he started working as a resource officer

there, but he said he still finds ways to relate.

He had a dad growing up who was in and out of his life. He credited his wife's family for keeping him from becoming "a butthead."

Still, Gay said growing up with a single mother helps him relate and understand some students but also tell them that they must take responsibility for their own actions.

"Some kid will give me some sob story," he said. "At some point, that won't be an excuse anymore. At some point in your life, you have to know right from wrong."

He said he's worked to be a father figure to some kids. He took another student into his home for a number of months as they were going through a rough time.

Gay said he will bring all of these people skills to the job as the county's new sheriff. He hopes to continue being transparent with the citizens and the press and to help make sure the people he's looking out for get everything they can to do their job.

Gay admits he might be good dealing with people, but he's a bit short on administrative experience. Gay said the staff with the sheriff's department is top notch, and he's not going to be afraid to rely on the opinion

of other experienced people until he gets acclimated.


"I'll be leaning on those folks to figure out what's going on," he said. "I'll never profess to know everything."

While in office, Gay hopes to implement a drug task force to give Harvey County towns more resources in combating local drug issues. That will mean filling an open position with the sheriff's office with another officer experienced in detective work.

"My goal would be to get on it really heavy and see if we keep those people from coming here," he says. "My concern is Harvey County. Combine that with drug treatment and counseling. You can combine those things and try to help people through those situations."

Outside of that, he hopes to serve as a good manager and face of law enforcement in the county.

"What a sheriff does is make sure those people have everything they need to make their jobs possible," Gay says.

And that's what he plans to do, one conversation and relationship at a time. 

---

**Chad Gay hugs his wife, Robin, after they learned he'd become the new county sheriff.** Wendy Nugent/Harvey County Now



## WE ARE First Bank...

We believe that banking isn't about money. It's about people, and making a difference whenever we can for our customers and our community.

- Harvey County's Leading Mortgage Lender
- Free Online and Mobile Banking
- Apple Pay, Samsung Pay, Android Pay
- 4 Branch Locations and 11 ATMs



**FIRST BANK**  
Member FDIC



www.firstbankks.com 316-283-2600



**Great Rates. Great Service. Real Solutions.**

## LLAMAS LAW, LLC

Michael X. Llamas, Attorney

*Practicing in Harvey, Marion & McPherson Counties*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Criminal Defense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Felony Crimes • Misdemeanor Crimes</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ DUI and Traffic Defense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speeding Tickets • DUI</li> <li>• Driving while Suspended, No Insurance</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Juvenile Law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minors charged with crimes</li> <li>• CINC Cases • Adoptions</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Family Law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divorces (Contested &amp; Uncontested)</li> <li>• Child Custody • Support / Paternity Cases</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|--|---|

**Former Prosecutor**

111 E. Seventh Street ♦ P.O. Box 176 ♦ Newton, KS ♦ 316-804-4990



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## Harvey County Health Department

215 S. Pine Street, 2nd Floor • Newton  
316-283-1637 • 800-414-4244

www.harveycounty.com

**The place to get vaccinated to prevent:**

### SHINGLES

*Recommended for those  
age 60+*



### PERTUSSIS

**(Whooping Cough)**  
*For babies & pregnant women*



For more information on these or other diseases, go to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

**Walk in, Mail in, Call in, Click in®**



**State Farm®**  
Providing Insurance and Financial Services  
Home Office, Bloomington, Illinois 61710

**Rich Huffman, Agent**

Bus 316-283-5143 Toll Free 800-613-0023  
www.richhuffman.com



**109 E. 6th Street, Newton, Kansas**

## EASY LIVING SURFACES IDEAL FOR SENIOR LIVING IN STYLE

**Transitioning to a Retirement House or Independent Living Community?**

We specialize in designing safe, ADA certified, stunning homes for that next stage in life. Zero entry showers, remote control blinds, and easy to reach cabinet designs, just to name a few!

*Make downsizing easy, let us do the shopping and styling.*

*Call for a  
Consultation  
TODAY*

124 W 6TH ST | NEWTON, KS | (316) 283-0041 | M-TH 9:30AM-5:00PM | [WWW.LIVINGROOMSBYGAYLE.COM](http://WWW.LIVINGROOMSBYGAYLE.COM)

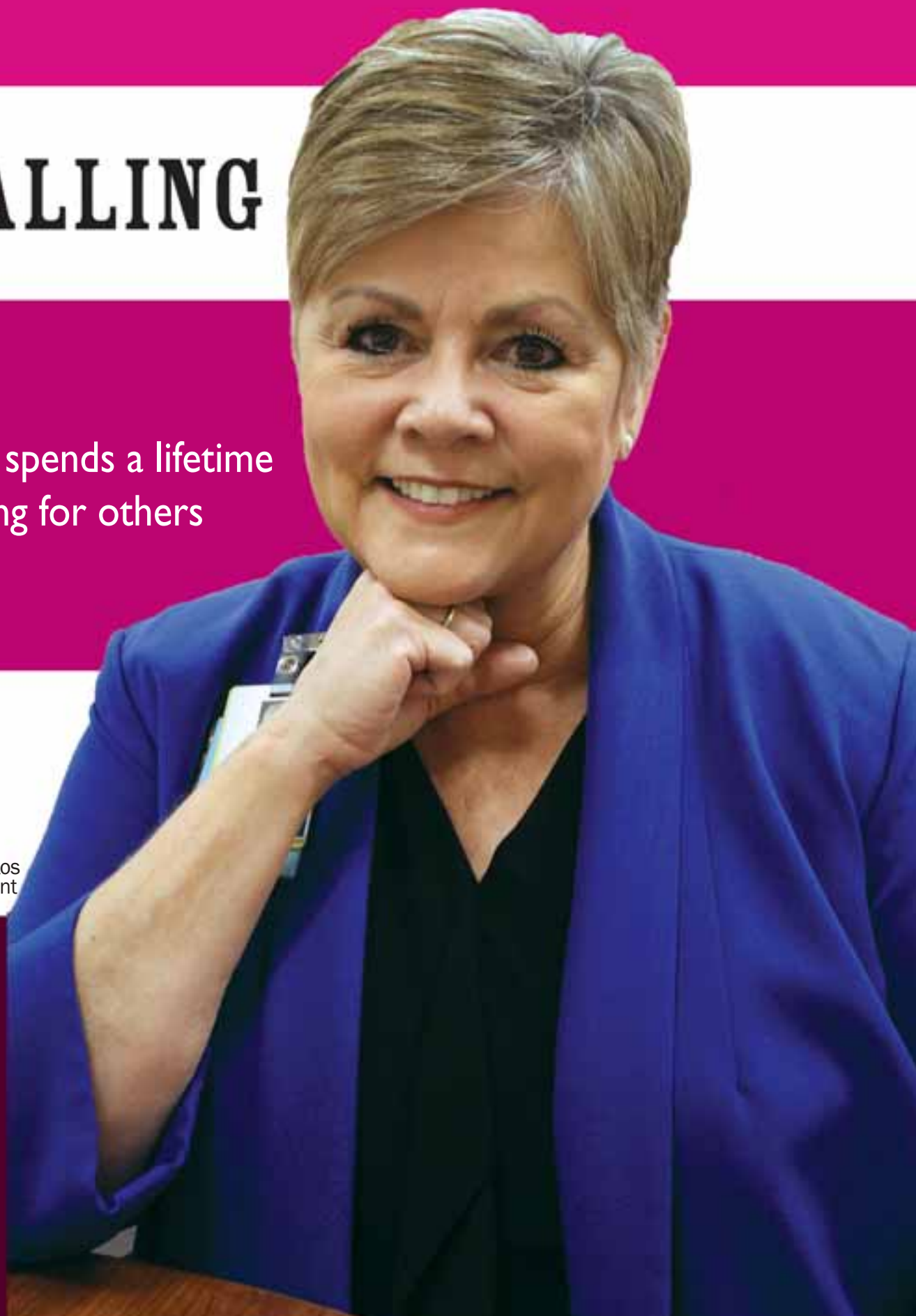
HarveyCountyNOW.com | 11

profile

# A CALLING

Gleason spends a lifetime  
caring for others

Article and photos  
by Wendy Nugent



ABOVE: "In order for a hospital to remain relevant, we have to engage and convene with our partners who aren't in these four walls," says Vallerie Gleason. RIGHT: Newton Medical Center President and CEO Vallerie Gleason, left, talks to NMC employees Tina Vicars, center, and Stacey Wilkerson.



**T**hroughout her life, Vallerie Gleason has helped people stay alive, whether it was on the farm assisting with feeding the family, through nursing by helping to save lives or through hospital administration by taking care of employees so they can keep people alive.

Her life began in Akron, Ohio.

"When I was 7, my parents moved me and my five little brothers and sisters to a little farm," said Gleason, who is president and CEO of Newton Medical Center.

The whole family took care of the 45-acre farm. Her father's day job was running a Shell gas station with four service bays, and her mom stayed at home.

"So my dad would work all day, and he'd come home at night and work the fields," Gleason said.

The kids had a variety of duties, such as churning butter, gardening and milking the cows. Gleason said her parents wanted

their children to learn to live off the land, and both of her parents hunted.

"Whatever mom shot or caught, that's what we ate that night for supper," she said. "We worked hard, and we played hard."

Gleason graduated from a nursing school affiliated with the University of Akron and went to work in the Akron City Hospital at the time. This was her first job as a registered nurse, and there, she had to rotate month to month between the surgical intensive care unit, which included a burn center and transplant center, and the coronary care unit. For a short time, she worked in Warrensville Heights, Ohio, coming to Wichita in 1978 because of her husband's employment. She found a job at St. Joseph Medical Center intensive care units.

While there, Gleason later took a job in internal auditing and then moved into quality and utilization management. From there, she did a two-and-a-half-year stint at a managed care insurance



**CHARLSEN  
INSURANCE  
AGENCY INC.**  
SINCE 1986



**Family Owned, Locally Operated, Customer Valued**

Patrick Charlsen  
800-279-8207 / 316-804-4946  
www.charlseninsurance.com

1021 Washington Rd  
Ste. 200, Newton  
316-804-4945

*40th Year Anniversary!*

*Custom Silks  
& Flowers*

FOR ALL OCCASIONS!

**Designs by John**

Flowers, Tuxedos and Home Decor  
115 W 5th • Newton, KS 67114  
1-800-852-8625 • 316-284-2757



company.  
“I missed the hospital, so I went back,” Gleason said.

Gleason said there was nothing in her childhood that influenced her to become a nurse.

“For me, there wasn’t anything else to do,” she said. “I always wanted to be a nurse. It’s something I always knew. I can’t explain.”

However, in 1984, the government’s strategy to hospital reimbursement changed, and a lot of hospitals panicked, Gleason said. Their reaction was to lay off people, and Gleason was laid off as a nurse. That afternoon, she went to Wichita State University and changed her major to business administration because she thought maybe she wouldn’t always be able to make a living as a nurse. Now, she has a master’s degree in business administration, a regular nursing license and several decades of clinical work.

“It’s been a good combination,” she said.

When Gleason left St. Jo, she worked at then-Riverside Hospital in management and then administration. She was there for 13 years. While there, she was promoted to vice president, and eventually, Via Christi purchased that hospital. She stayed on for three more years.

“An opportunity presented itself at Newton Medical Center as vice president,” she said. “It was a stroke of fortune to be offered a job here, to work with Steve Kelly and the other executives and the physicians and the board and all the staff. A very lucky person.”

As president and CEO, Gleason reports to the board of directors, who have charged her with administering hospital operations and working closely with the board to uphold the hospital’s mission to the community.

She said now hospitals are becoming institutions beyond four walls. An example includes NMC working with entities such as Health Ministries, Prairie View, Harvey County Health Department and Newton Fire/EMS Department.

“In order for a hospital to remain relevant, we have to engage and convene with our partners who aren’t in these four walls,” she said.

Gleason believes in all the workers at NMC.

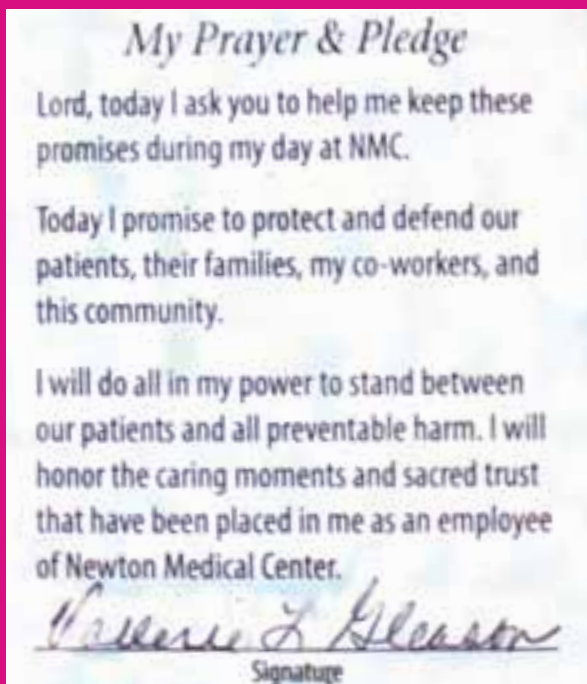
“The people who are here are intensely dedicated to the patients, to this hospital and

to the community,” she said. “All the employees want to make a positive difference.”

The hospital has a motto, which helps the patients they serve and each other.

“Our mantra here is ‘protect and defend,’” Gleason said. “We talk about that a lot. Protect and defend the patients, each other, the hospital, the community. It matters that Newton has a hospital, and so the work of the employees and the staff and the board matters.”

From the first day of employee orientation, Gleason said they’re consistently interested in why people want to work there.



“Staff wants to make a difference,” she said. “It’s something that’s important to me to honor that with our staff.”

Gleason said she’s a practicing Christian, and that influences how she sees employees.

“The thing that I realize about our employees [is they] know deep in their hearts they’re called to do this work,” Gleason said.

She also believes she, too, was made for this type of work.

“I personally was created to do this,” she said. “It’s in my soul to do this work. To have anything less than respect for staff may be disrespecting the one that called the person to be here.”

A few years ago, Gleason said she offered employees “My Prayer and Pledge” cards, and most took one. They can wear these with

their ID badges. The cards state, in part, “Lord, today I ask you to help me keep these promises during my day at NMC. I will do all in my power to stand between our patients and all preventable harm. I will honor the caring moments and sacred trust that have been placed in me as an employee of Newton Medical Center.”

Gleason has her own card, on the back of which she’s written the name of her nephew who passed away and names of other relatives as an inspiration.

The reason for giving employees the cards was simple.

“Because there are days this is very hard work,” emotionally and physically, Gleason said. “It’s hard to see the suffering. It’s just difficult.”

Other employees have other things listed, Gleason said.

“They know why they came to work,” she said. “It’s really interesting to hear their stories.”

Believing in others who work with Gleason is part of her personal motto, which is several sentences taken from the book “Laws of Success” written by an unnamed woman.

It begins: “I believe in myself. I believe in those who work with me. I believe in my employer. I believe in my friends. I believe in my family. I believe that God will lend me everything I need with which to succeed if I do my best to earn it through faithful and honest service.”

That faithful service has paid off in her advancing career and in relationships she’s made with people, including patients.

As an example, Gleason said there was an intensive-care older gentleman patient who was quite special to her. The first time she met him, Gleason took care of his wife, and she also got to know their grown children. About a year after the man’s major surgery, she was invited to a celebratory dinner at the couple’s home.

“Little did I know that the dinner was not only to celebrate them,” Gleason said. “This whole event was partially to thank me. It was very moving and touching and tender.”

They were so impressed with Gleason’s care they even had two dozen long-stem red roses, and there was a toast. Now, both have passed on.

“It was a humbling moment,” Gleason said. “I was just doing my job, but what I got from these two individuals was so much more. You never know how you will touch someone. It was a moment I’ll never forget.”

ABOVE: This is the “My Prayer & Pledge” card Vallerie Gleason wears with her Newton Medical Center ID badge.

# Work Hard. Pay Easy.



2201 S. Kansas • Newton, KS  
800.428.8472 • hcu.coop



**Rich Parsons**  
CWS®, CLTC, LUTCF

1023 Washington Road, Suite 100 • Newton, KS 67114  
316.283.8190 • 800.827.8190 • www.parsonswellmanagement.com

Advisory services are provided through Creative Financial Designs Inc., a Registered Investment Advisor, and securities are offered through cfd Investments, Inc., a registered Broker/Dealer. Member FINRA & SIPC. Parsons Wealth Management is not owned or controlled by the CFD companies.

FOR DREAMS THAT GO BEYOND THE CAR ITSELF.



*Your child is driven to be the best on the field. But they need you to be the driver off the field.*

AT AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE, WE BELIEVE YOUR DREAMS ARE THE MOST VALUABLE THINGS YOU WILL EVER OWN. AND WE'LL HELP YOU FIND JUST THE RIGHT INSURANCE TO PROTECT THEM.



**Ken Hall**  
Agent  
Kenneth Hall Agency  
(316) 284-0884  
ken.hall@amfam.com



**Tricia Wells**  
Sales Specialist  
Kenneth Hall Agency  
(316) 284-0884  
twells3@amfam.com



**KENNETH HALL AGENCY-NEWTON, KANSAS**

American Family Mutual Insurance Company, American Family Insurance Company, American Standard Insurance Company of Ohio, American Standard Insurance Company of Wisconsin, 6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI 53783 02016 011780 - 4/16

## PrairieHarvest

Market & Deli

IN-STORE

SPRING IS FINALLY HERE!

ONLINE

**++ LOOK FOR ++  
NEW PRODUCTS WEEKLY!**

**Full Grocery,  
Scratch-Made Deli & Bakery,  
Fresh Local Produce,  
Bulk Spices,  
Kansas Products,  
Health Supplements,  
Essential Oils**

Don't forget we're open later...

Mon.-Fri. 10-7; Thurs. 10-8; Sat. 9-5

601 N Main St

Newton, Kansas

**PrairieHarvestKS.com 316-283-6623**

lifestyle



# Bethel's Stories



Article by Ethan Birdwell  
Photos by Wendy Nugent

## GOERZ HOUSE FULL OF LIFE, HISTORY

Standing three stories tall at the entrance to Bethel College is a beautiful, white, Queen Anne Revival-style house with an expansive wrap-around porch. Known as the Goerz House and originally constructed in 1893 by co-founder and business manager for Bethel College, David Goerz, the Goerz House has been an infirmary, classrooms, residence hall, inspiration for the play and movie “Arsenic and Old Lace,” offices, and finally, the president’s house.

Honoring memories of the past and making their own, President Perry White and wife Dalene reside here.

“This house has been so many things through Bethel’s history, and many people have a very strong attachment to this house,” Dalene said. “It is fun to share their memories and their stories.”

Dalene cherishes the privilege that comes with living in Goerz House.

“It is certainly quite an honor,” she said. “There is a certain degree of expectation that you maintain its historic integrity, welcome visitors, and allow people to see it and share in it.”

President White recalls their first run in with sharing the history of the house.

# ried Residence



“Our very first Fall Fest, on Saturday morning, we left to go see events on campus, and when we came back, there were people walking through the house like a museum,” he said. “It belongs to the college, by all means, but it was a little shocking.”

Perry laughed it off.

“But we enjoyed it; we enjoy sharing the history of this house with any who would like to,” he said.

One of the more well-known histories of Goerz House is the use of its likeness in the play and movie “Arsenic and Old Lace” written by Joseph O. Kesselring. Kesselring lived in the house from 1922 to 1924, and when his play appeared on Broadway in 1930, the set duplicated the living room of

Goerz House with its elongated window seat and the staircase.

From 1921 to 1963, Goerz House also was used as a residence hall for students on campus. In 1935, dormer windows were added to the third floor to provide additional room and light in order to make the building better for student housing, as well as a kitchen on the second floor and a metal fire escape, which has been long since removed.

From 1963 to 1988, Goerz House became office spaces for Mennonite Church USA Western District Conference. Split into smaller cubicles and offices, the look of the inside changed dramatically from its original historic splendor. In 1993, Bethel College decided to renovate the

home back to its historic state. Careful attention was paid to period detail, both inside and outside the home, bringing back much of the original furniture and style, making Goerz House a spitting image of what it used to be.

Goerz House is relatively new to being the presidential home, having had only two other couples before President Perry White and Dalene. Before them was Barry Bartel, president from 2006 to 2009, and before him, LaVerne Epp, president from 2002 to 2005.

President White has enjoyed his time in Goerz House and the special feeling that comes with sharing memories of those who have also lived here and grown up around campus.

---

**ABOVE:** Bethel College President Perry White, right, and his wife Dalene sit on the window seat in Goerz House. It is said the seat was an inspiration for the play and movie “Arsenic and Old Lace.”



“This house has been so many things through Bethel’s history, and many people have a very strong attachment to this house.”  
- Dalene White -

“There are a number of older alums in the community that call themselves campus kids,” he said. “They have grown up here, have family that worked here, and to these people, this was really a playhouse to them. Many of them tell stories of playing around the outside.”

While many of the bigger stories of Goerz House come from Kesselring and his play, President White enjoys the smaller stories.

“The porch has been many things,” he said. “A pirate ship, a battleship, a spaceship. It’s nice to hear these stories from the alumni like that. The individual stories are what make this place so special.”

Dalene agreed.

“Maybe they lived here in the residence

halls,” she said. “Maybe they had a birthday party on the porch.”

When asked about their favorite place in Goerz House, President White smiled and motioned to the seats they were sitting in.

“I love the living room and these seats,” he said. “It is a great place, and it is where we sit at the end of the day to debrief and unwind before going to dinner or some other engagement we have planned. It is also where we sit with new freshmen to introduce them to Bethel.”

Dalene motioned to a smaller room near the back of the house, saying, “My favorite place is the little room I call the library. It is just cozy and the perfect place to relax.”

She thought back seven years to when they were interviewing for the job and the

impact Goerz House initially had on them.

“When we interviewed for this job, we got to stay in this house,” she said. “I remember talking to Perry and imagining actually having the opportunity to live in this house and how unbelievable that would be. But here we are.”

President White and Dalene have enjoyed their time there and have been greatly honored to be added to the long list of the Goerz House’s legacy.

“This is such a storied house on a storied campus,” President White said. “It is a house that belongs to Bethel and the community. We have been very pleased and honored to have lived here.”

ABOVE CENTER: The grand entrance to Goerz House welcomes visitors. MIDDLE: This living area of Goerz House also includes a fireplace.

Article and photos  
by Adam Strunk

# More than the Dala

Lindsborg comes together as unique Kansas town



There's a saying in Lindsborg that every resident used to have three things in their home: a Bible, an organ and a painting or print by Birger Sandzén.

Sandezén, the prolific artist who lived in the town, often used bright colors in his paintings, with thick brush strokes of paint. Standing up close to his work in his memorial museum on the Bethany College campus, his paintings don't seem special or organized but instead just loud, strange and perhaps eclectic.

Walking backward changes them. The broad strokes combine and the bright colors soften a bit to form landscapes, often beautiful scenes of Kansas.

Lindsborg is a bit like a Sandzén painting.

The town is perhaps known it for the loud, bright Dala horses that polarize viewers and, depending on your viewpoint, either spruce up or litter the region.

Buildings in the proudly Swedish town have been painted similarly bright colors. Tourists make the pilgrimage there to Kansas' little Sweden, and in some of the shops, there's kitch aplenty.

Yet, stepping back from all of that, leaving the beaten path slightly and taking in the whole town, it too blends and softens to form a picture that's both unique and uniquely Kansas.

\*\*\*

A pastor named Olaf Olsson founded Lindsborg in 1869, and the city and area were settled afterward by Swedish immigrants and pioneers.

That Swedish heritage still runs thick in the town today, from the "Valkommen" on city signs to the town's biennial Swedish

Lindsborg has an old mill, which operates as one of the town's museums.



festival, the Svensk Hyllningsfest, at restaurants like the Swedish Crown, bars like the Ol Stuga, the Swedish pavilion on Mill Street, etc.

But the most prominent Swedish symbol, by far, hanging on doorways on the sidewalks outside of houses and basically on anywhere it can be put is the Dala Horse.

The horse is usually a piece of cut wood, painted an reddish orange and with other curved and floral flourishes signifying traditional Swedish folk art.

It's even featured on the city seal. So to understand Lindsborg, we thought we must first understand the Dala Horse. And that meant visiting Shirley Malm, the matriarch of Dala.

Malm has been creating the horses for more than four decades. She believes she's painted at least 20,000. She can be found working in a shop at Hemslojd Swedish Gifts, where people can watch her create the horses, which are sold in the shop.

Malm is responsible for the majority of the horses seen in the region. She took over from a previous Dala painter, whom she said painted around 30,000 of them. She's training an apprentice to take over the work when she's finished.

"Each horse is individually done," she said. "I have my own style."

Malm said the horses keep alive the traditional Swedish folk art style, which is hard to describe without looking at it. They feature many curving lines, paintings

of flowers and bright colors.

Perhaps the tradition arose from a people used to living in the long, cold and dark winters of their homeland.

She keeps the tradition alive with the help of two retired men who cut the horses out of wood in the shop behind her.

"I get the easy part; they get the hard part," Malm said. In all, she said it takes her about 15 minutes to paint each horse. Custom jobs take longer. Some people want Dala Dogs. Some people want KU or K-State Dala Horses. Malm seems happy to keep painting them in her shop and churning them out.

---

**Shirley Malm paints a Dala in her workshop in Lindsborg. Malm believes she has painted around 20,000 Dala horses during her four plus decades of work.**



.....Top: Lindsborg hosts a school for chess and has been visited by various chess masters throughout the years

Middle: The Ol Stuga represents a Lindsborg staple with its local atmosphere and well-known food such as the Brent Nelson Sandwich.

Bottom: Jim Richardson poses for a photo at his Small World Gallery with some of his work. Richardson, a photographer for National Geographic Magazine, operates the

\*\*\*

A bit farther down on Main Street, there are a variety of shops and art galleries. The area sports a bevy of local photographers and artists. Perhaps the best known of the photographers is Jim Richardson, whose regular job involves shooting photos for National Geographic Magazine.

He and his wife run Small World Gallery on Main Street, where she sells her jewelry, and he sells and displays his prints from around the world.

His pictures come from countries around the world, but he's got a focus in the shop on the Midwest. Large prints of small-town life in Cuba, Kan., cover the walls as do dramatic wide scenes of the Flint Hills.

Richardson is sometimes in his shop, as he was when we visited Lindsborg, and he was happy to talk about his work.

He said the key to a good picture is being "doggone persistent."

While he's been around the world shooting locations from the Silk Road in China to the Scottish Moors, he said he was glad to be living in Lindsborg and back on the Plains.

"Lindsborg was a good place," he said, explaining the town possessed backing and support for arts and culture.

He then launched into a discussion of the various galleries around town and the other locations that would be good to visit.

One he recommended was the gallery next door with the work of another local photographer, Jim Turner, on display showing the landscapes of Kansas and in the Flint Hills.

In a far corner of the gallery was a picture that looked out of place. It was a shot of the Ol Stuga, the local bar, with a signature of Mikhail Gorbachev, the Russian leader who peacefully dissolved the Soviet Union.

The picture had a story behind it.

Gorbachev visited Lindsborg as part of a world campaign promoting peace through chess.

Lindsborg, despite its size, has a large presence in the chess community, hosting the Karpov Chess School, named for the seven-time world champion Anatoly Karpov. It hosts camps as well as chess tournaments still.

Apparently, Gorbachev took a shine to the town and stopped into the Ol Stuga for a nightcap. He shook hands with the locals and ordered cranberry vodkas.

Longtime owner Mark Lysell was quoted in an article picked up by the Associated Press saying, "He was drinking Swedish vodka. He didn't need to know that. We didn't tell him."

Lindsborg sports plenty of nice coffee shops, retail and a newly opened location to buy local wine from the Smoky Hills Winery. There's also history aplenty from the Swedish Pavilion, to Coronado Heights outside of town to the Old Mill Museum.

But it was the picture of Gorbachev that made us want to check out the Ol Stuga. Simply put, when bars put a bunch of memorabilia on their walls and try to make the locations look old and well loved, they are only hoping for the atmosphere the Old Stuga has.

It's been operated by Lysell for 39 years, been in business for longer than that, and seems like part bar, part museum to all of the good times anyone's ever had in the building. Old signs from ancient Lindsborg businesses line the wall mingled with photos of patrons, staff and beer promotional items. Dollar bills are pinned to the ceiling.

It was a nice place to have a dark beer and grab a bite to eat. The bar is famous for its Brent Nelson Sandwich, which we ordered up along with a "Swedish Delicacy Platter."

The Brent Nelson sandwich was polish sausage with onions and spicy cheese served on a hoagie, and it was delicious. The Swedish delicacy platter came with cheese, crackers and pickled herring. We'd recommend it, if you know, you woke up one day and craved pickled herring. Still as they say, when in Sweden...

Following the trip to the Ol Stuga, we swung by the Birger Sandzén Memorial Museum on the Bethany campus to finish up the trip.

The prolific painter put out more than 3,000 oils as well as thousands of sketches in his career. Many depict Kansas scenery, while others depict Colorado mountains. His work is hard to do justice with words. It's worth a stop for anyone with even a passing interest in art.

Perhaps it was all the friendly people who liked their town. Perhaps it was just the beer. But standing in the gallery looking at Sandzén's paintings come together from a distance, Lindsborg seemed to pull together, too. The eclecticism, the Swedishness, the kitch, the art, the history all blended together as different brush strokes to paint a town worth a visit just for the experience. 🍷

I asked what coffee items were the favorites, and they recommended the Lark and the Thresher. Both are named for the local mascots at the schools. But I had heard Brad mention cold press coffee, and as I am partial to it and it wasn't very common once upon a time, I ordered a cup, and it was good.

I did order a campfire scone, which they said was one of the favorite scones people purchase. I don't really care for scones as they are usually dry. But they warmed it up slightly, and it was tender, buttery and filled with chocolate. I'll order it again when I stop through on my travels. It sported white frosting and graham cracker crumbs to complete the s'more theme. It went well with the cold-brew coffee.

**C**hristine and Brad Schweitzer didn't have plans to buy a coffee shop in Hesston.

Sure, they drank coffee, but it's not like they knew anything about running a shop. Both worked as teachers. Christine's background is in nursing. Brad's is in contracting and computers.

Yet following time spent in Arizona and almost a year traveling the country in an RV, the couple found themselves back in the Harvey County town where

Christine had roots and they met in college 20 years prior.

"It wasn't that the coffee shop was the end goal, but we wanted to be part of the community," Brad said.

So when the coffee shop came up for sale, the two bought the location from previous owner Holly Nickel, attended an intensive coffee school in Texas and started serving coffee up in June.

"We were just being free and open to opportunity,"

# Cuppa Joe

Article and photos  
by Adam Strunk

Lincoln Perk an adventure and  
community service for new owners



Christine said. "We wanted to make sure our next venture was something we both would enjoy. We wanted Hesston to keep having a coffee shop, and we wanted there to be a place where people could hang out and have a great conversation."

So the location features espresso drinks with freshly ground beans and cold brew, as well as a variety of pastries and breakfast and lunch items, all homemade by Randy Toews. Staff members also add their artistic talents, decorating some of the cookies and other items.

Local favorites on the food menu include bierocks, scones, and ham and cheese quiche.

On a Saturday afternoon, when the interview for this story was conducted, the location, cozy with plush chairs, began to fill up. A gaggle of college girls from Hesston College began a study session. An elderly man sat reading. Others filled the tables, deep in conversation. People came to the counter to order and chat with Christine or Brad. It perhaps didn't look strikingly different from any other nice coffee shop a person goes to. But Christine said their shop being able to exist in Hesston is important.

"I think it's unique that a small town can support a coffee shop like this," she said.

The small town life of Hesston, in part, was what drew the couple back.

They met at Hesston College. They were friends. They both sang in the choir.

"My dad had picked Brad out of the choir. He said to my mom 'Look at that tall bass. Wouldn't he be good for Christine?'" she said.

But the two were only friends at the time and went separate ways before Eastern Mennonite University reunited them in Virginia.

Eventually the couple married. They also had one daughter, Rianna. They both returned and taught at Hesston before moving to Arizona and eventually selling everything to buy an RV and travel the country. But Christine said she wanted to be close to her family, and the school system would be good for Rianna.

So they returned to begin what the two call their next adventure.


The job does have its ups and downs. The said they've had good staff, but the operation is time consuming.

"There's a lot of work involved," Christine said. "We've had like two days off since opening."

But she said that finding out challenges as you go is the way things are supposed to work.

"If you knew everything about an adventure beforehand, you wouldn't do it," she said.

And both are happy for the chance to make the coffee spot run in Hesston.

"It's not just a job. It's not about the coffee. It's about the community," Christine said. 

---

Brad and Christine Schweitzer run the Lincoln Perk as a couple. The two originally met in Hesston before finding each other and marrying afterward and returning to the community and buying the coffee shop.



# Rupp Tournament

## Event honors Halstead basketball heritage

Article and photos  
by Mike Mendez

There are just some places where the sport of basketball has a special home. In states like Kansas, Kentucky, North Carolina and Indiana, it is a way of life in the winter. And with a ton of University of Kentucky basketball success coming from legendary coach Adolph Rupp and his 876 career wins, you might say Halstead, Kan., gave Kentucky the gift of basketball.

Rupp was born Sept. 2, 1901, in Halstead and grew up in the community, learning a love of the sport before he went on to coach Kentucky for 42 seasons, winning 82 percent of the time in those four decades.

In February 1970, Rupp was able to give something back to his hometown, granting then Halstead High School principal Eugene L. Busse permission to use his name for the Adolph Rupp Invitational.

Since 1970, the Rupp Invitational has become a staple of the Kansas high school mid-season basketball tournament week. The tournament has played host to many teams in the area and around the state, with a number of Most Valuable Player award winners going on to play at Division I colleges and even the Olympics.

"I look forward to watching great players and great teams all week," Halstead athletic director James O'Brien said. "I enjoy seeing how the communities come out to support their teams. It is a great atmosphere for the

players to be a part of, and we are proud to host such a prestigious tournament."

When hosting a tournament, there is a ton of work that goes into making sure things run smoothly, as well as making the town a welcoming destination for teams around the state. But in Halstead, a place where basketball just means something different, the work is a labor of love.

"I get calls asking what we need for the tournament," O'Brien said. "There is a lot of moving parts and a lot of community members chippin' in to make the Rupp one of the premier tournaments in the state. It's a long list for those that help that week, and the support we get is amazing. We couldn't do it without them."

In small towns like Halstead, the opportunities to open the doors and show off the community are a big deal. They provide civic pride that makes the preparation fun. And in Halstead, like many other places, the high school is a hub of community involvement and activity. There is a strong investment in the children who grow up in the town as nearly everyone has some hand in part of their development. As the school puts on student activities, everyone gets a chance to brag about student accomplishment.

With sports, there is the added bonus of having competition against other towns to get the blood of rivalry flowing. In Halstead,

basketball carries a sense of pride and history the community doesn't care to lose. In 2009, the team celebrated its 1909 championship. The trophy from that championship was restored and put in a case. It may as well be a museum exhibit, as the oldest trophy ever presented to a Kansas high school team.

In fact, Halstead was the first team to ever win a state championship, and with seven state titles in the school's history, the Dragons have won more than any other 3A team in the state. It is a tradition that makes Halstead one of the most historic basketball places in one of the most historic basketball states in the country.

Rupp got caught up in the sport at the age of 6 watching those first two championship teams in 1908 and 1909. Inspired by those teams, Rupp went on to become a star player at Halstead and earned a spot as a reserve player on The University of Kansas basketball teams under Phog Allen from 1919 to 1923. The Jayhawks won the Helms National Championship in back-to-back years during his junior and senior seasons.

Since the inception of the tournament, the feedback on its success has been spoken loud and clear through coming back year after year. Cheney, Haven and Garden Plain have been playing at the tournament since the 1970s, and Andale and Rose Hill have been coming back since the 1990s.



“Our tournament represents the best of small-town basketball, and small-town basketball is very special to our state,” O’Brien said. Along with Rupp, the state has produced basketball legends like Ralph Miller, Dean Smith, Bill Guthridge and Gene Keady. There is a basketball fire aflame in the small towns all over the state. And it is clear what the game means to communities by the turnout the tournament has every year, packing the stands with Dragon supporters as well as big turnouts for traveling teams. They are there to win a tournament championship. But they also come back to honor and celebrate the small-town place in the history of the state, and the game that has grown into a world-wide phenomenon.

“If this school was located in Kentucky, we would likely be named Adolph Rupp High School,” O’Brien said. “Our community is very proud of this legacy, and it is certainly rooted very deeply.”

**Top:** Halstead’s championship banners hang in the high school gym. The Dragons won the first two state championships ever held in Kansas in 1908 and 1909, inspiring future University of Kentucky coaching legend Adolph Rupp as a six-year-old growing up in Halstead. Mike Mendez/Harvey County Now

**Above:** Halstead’s trophy from the 1909 state basketball championship sits in the middle of the high school gym. The Dragons won the first ever state tournament in 1908, and the trophy for winning in 1909 is recognized as the first ever Kansas high school trophy ever awarded. Mike Mendez/Harvey County Now



# Wound Care

*Expanded appointment hours*

Newton Medical Center now has expanded appointment availability at its Wound Healing & Hyperbaric Center. Our dedicated physicians provide the highest level of care using state-of-the-art technology, including hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

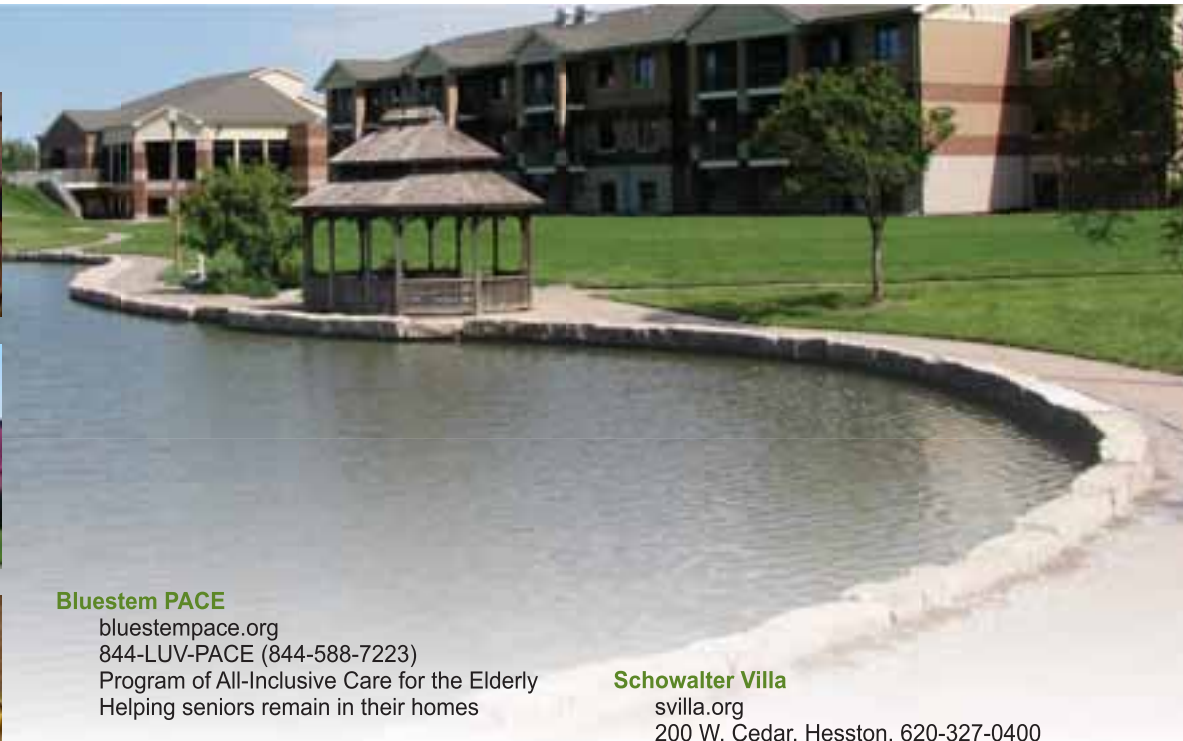
Our specialists offer individualized treatment plans to help heal wounds:

- Arterial and diabetic ulcers
- Necrotizing soft tissue infections
- Post-operative wounds
- Pressure ulcers (bed sores)
- Spider bites
- Traumatic wounds
- Venous stasis ulcers (weeping lower legs)

If you or someone you care about is dealing with acute or chronic wounds, ask your doctor about the Newton Wound Healing & Hyperbaric Center or call us at **(316) 573-4944**.



NEWTONMED.COM | 800 MEDICAL CENTER DR.



#### **Bluestem PACE**

bluestempace.org  
844-LUV-PACE (844-588-7223)  
Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly  
Helping seniors remain in their homes

#### **Hesston Wellness Center**

hesstonwellness.com  
701 S. Main, Hesston, 620-327-3480  
Exercise pool, fitness equipment,  
classes, personal training, arts studio

#### **Hickory Homes**

175 W. Hickory, Hesston, 620-327-3790  
Income-based housing for ages 62+  
and for the mobility impaired

#### **Kidron Bethel Village**

kidronbethel.org  
3001 Ivy Drive, North Newton, 316-836-4832  
Harvest Grounds Coffee Shop,  
Independent and Assisted Living,  
Health Care, integrated memory care,  
rehabilitation therapies

#### **Kidron Inc.**

500 W. Bluestem, North Newton, 316-836-4832  
Income-based housing for ages 62+ and  
for adults with severe mobility impairment

#### **Lakeside Inclusive**

701 S. Main, Hesston, 620-327-3491  
Concierge Independent Living  
with enhanced services

#### **MyMaid Housekeeping Services**

701 S. Main, Hesston, 620-327-3474  
Residential and commercial  
housekeeping service

#### **North Newton Wellness Center**

northnewtonwellness.com  
3001 Ivy Drive, North Newton, 316-836-4843  
Salt water exercise pool, fitness equipment,  
classes, personal training

#### **Progressive Recovery Academy**

progressiverecoveryacademy.com  
404 S. Hess, Hesston, 620-951-0104  
Short-term rehabilitation following hospital stays

#### **Schowalter Villa**

svilla.org  
200 W. Cedar, Hesston, 620-327-0400  
Independent Living, Assisted Living, Health Care,  
Progressive Recovery Academy short-term rehab,  
integrated memory care, rehabilitation therapies

#### **Water's Edge Restaurant**

watersedgehesston.com  
701 S. Main, Hesston, 620-327-4099  
Full-service restaurant, catering

*Choose  
inspiring,  
award-  
winning  
care*

*in Harvey County*



[bluestemks.org](http://bluestemks.org)

# THE FAMILY MOLD

YODERS HAVE  
BEEN POURING  
CONCRETE ART  
SINCE 1983



Article and photos  
by Mike Mendez

**T**aking a trip toward Hutchinson on U.S. Highway 50, there isn't a lot out there to keep a traveler occupied.

But in the small town of Burrton, there is one landmark that's impossible to miss. On a lot along the highway, there is a sprawling collection of deer, angels, gnomes, birdbaths, benches and all sizes of various creatures, including a sasquatch.

It is Yoder Ornamental Concrete, and owner Don Yoder, along with his wife Doris and brother Carl, have been pouring eye-catching works of art since the winter of 1983.

"The town of Burrton is kind of known now as, 'Oh, where the concrete place is,'" Don said. "If you are trying to describe where Burrton is, you tell them the concrete place, and then they might know about it."

The business started as a necessity as the technological world started passing the Yoder

family business by. Don's parents owned a TV repair shop in Hutchinson and started to see the writing on the wall with the cost of repairing TVs becoming more expensive than just buying new ones. Don's uncle was dabbling with concrete in southeast Kansas at the time, and after observing his operation, the Yoders decided to take a leap.

"They decided they were going to go for it," Don said. "So they sold their business over in Hutch and came over. We bought this property over here. We cleared everything and built the shell of the building we are in right now."

Running the operation as a mom-and-pop business, Yoder Ornamental Concrete took off. In 1989, Don came on full time. But as the business was gaining notoriety and taking off, disaster struck on Sept. 12, 1997.

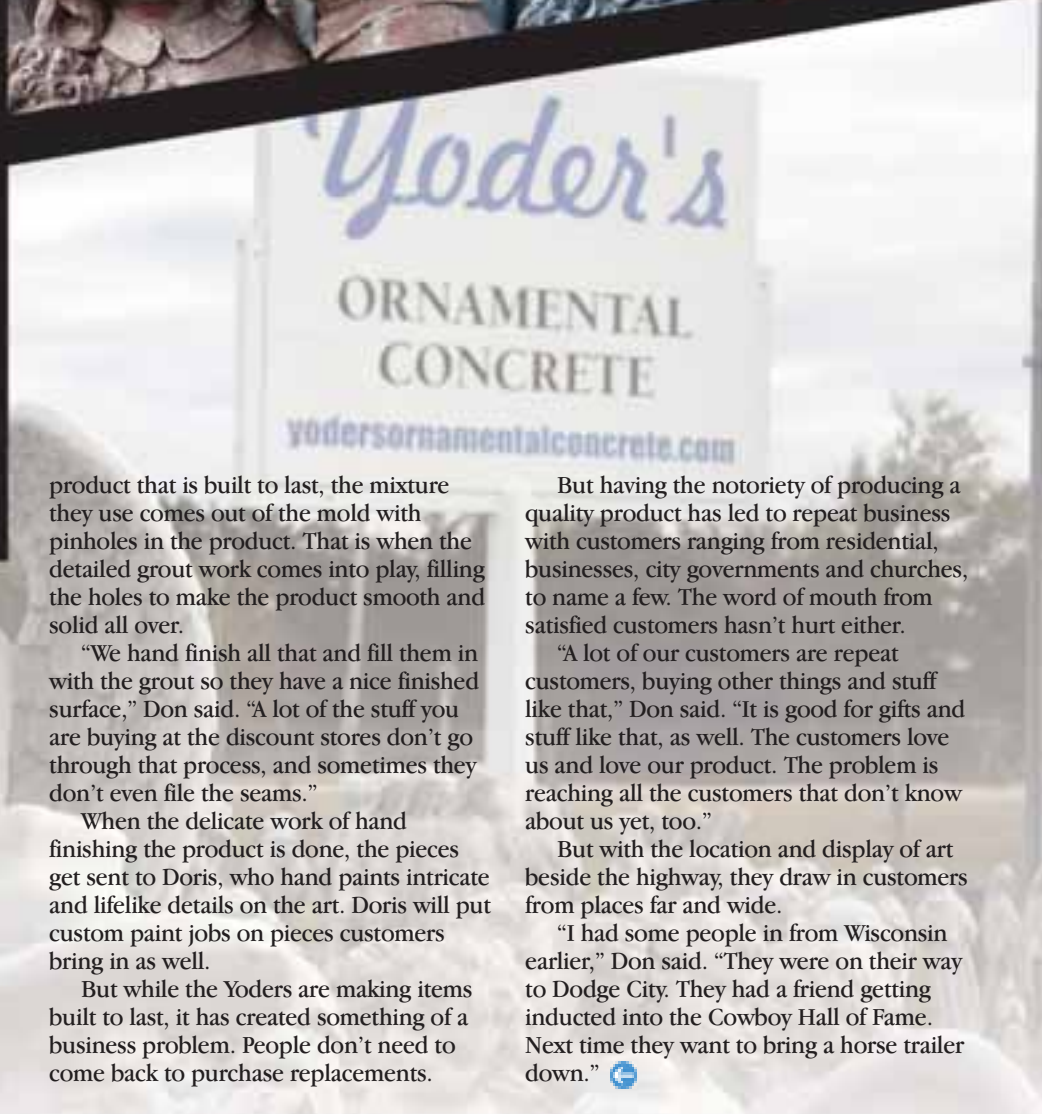
After a day of manning the booth at the state fair in Hutchinson, Don and his mother

headed back to Burrton. On the horizon, they could see an orange glow. Don made a joke to his mother about it looking like the plant was on fire. When they got back to the plant, it was no joking matter. The business was ablaze after a fan overheated in the paint room that started a fire that was hard for the firefighters to deal with in a building filled with chemicals, creating an unknown explosion danger.

"When we got here, there were fire trucks all over the place from all different towns, and what a mess," Don said. "It was just a gut-drop type of thing. I am sure there are other experiences people have had, but it is just..."

But with the economy booming in the late '90s, the Yoders decided to rebuild and keep going. With his parents at retirement age anyway, it became an opportunity to pass the torch to the younger generation, as well.

ABOVE: A sasquatch statue patrols the lot in front of Yoder's Ornamental Concrete in Burrton.



intricate machine. In the winter, the Yoders are busy getting ready for the business boom in the landscaping months of spring and summer. While there is a ton of work to be done, they do not cut corners with the statues, birdbaths, lights and other pieces of decorative and functional works of art.

Having been in the business since 1983, they have learned some things about the process and put extra attention into the details.

After pouring the concrete into molds, letting it set and taking the product out, the work is far from over. The Yoders know that a concrete mixture with a lot of water makes the product look better straight out of the mold, but makes the piece less structurally sound.

In the interest of putting out a quality

product that is built to last, the mixture they use comes out of the mold with pinholes in the product. That is when the detailed grout work comes into play, filling the holes to make the product smooth and solid all over.

"We hand finish all that and fill them in with the grout so they have a nice finished surface," Don said. "A lot of the stuff you are buying at the discount stores don't go through that process, and sometimes they don't even file the seams."

When the delicate work of hand finishing the product is done, the pieces get sent to Doris, who hand paints intricate and lifelike details on the art. Doris will put custom paint jobs on pieces customers bring in as well.

But while the Yoders are making items built to last, it has created something of a business problem. People don't need to come back to purchase replacements.

But having the notoriety of producing a quality product has led to repeat business with customers ranging from residential, businesses, city governments and churches, to name a few. The word of mouth from satisfied customers hasn't hurt either.

"A lot of our customers are repeat customers, buying other things and stuff like that," Don said. "It is good for gifts and stuff like that, as well. The customers love us and love our product. The problem is reaching all the customers that don't know about us yet, too."

But with the location and display of art beside the highway, they draw in customers from places far and wide.

"I had some people in from Wisconsin earlier," Don said. "They were on their way to Dodge City. They had a friend getting inducted into the Cowboy Hall of Fame. Next time they want to bring a horse trailer down." 📍

TOP LEFT: Don and wife Doris Yoder stand in front of a giant elk statue in front of Yoder's Ornamental Concrete in Burrton. TOP RIGHT: Painted statues cover the lot in front of Yoder's Ornamental Concrete in Burrton. BOTTOM LEFT: Doris Yoder paints the twinkle in a schnauzer's eye at Yoder's Ornamental Concrete in Burrton. Doris handles the paint side of the business that makes concrete works of art.

## Early End-Of-Year Clearance Sale 20%-70% Off



Introducing **Luke Italian Leather**



100%  
Italian Leather -  
Made in Italy



200 W. Broadway, Newton  
316-283-1818 • 800-964-1812  
M-F 10-6 • Sat 10-5

# NEWTON **NOW**

NEWSPAPER



**QUALITY COMMUNITY JOURNALISM  
STANDS OUT FROM THE REST.**

**LOCAL NEWS • SPORTS • HUMAN INTEREST • EDITORIALS • AND MORE**

**706 N MAIN • PO BOX 825 • NEWTON, KS • (316)281-7899  
[www.harveycountynow.com](http://www.harveycountynow.com)**



Get everything you  
**REALLY WANT**  
this Christmas.



- ✓ Maintenance-free living
- ✓ Delicious dining
- ✓ A community that feels like family

- ✓ A datebook full of activities
- ✓ Freedom from the snow shovel
- ✓ Five-star health care rating for total peace of mind

When you live at Presbyterian Manor,  
you'll check all these off your list.

**Call Noelle Dickinson at 316-283-5400**  
**and start your season off right with**  
**a cup of coffee and a community tour.**



**Presbyterian Manors™**  
of Mid-America  
**The way you want to live<sup>SM</sup>**

**Newton**

1200 East Seventh | Newton, KS 67114  
[NewtonPresbyterianManor.org](http://NewtonPresbyterianManor.org)



**Together, we'll find the answers.**

