

SPRING 2017

FREE – Take One



Where there's smoke, there's **Jamie Mott**

Hoofing around

Sedgwick resident
enjoys showing miniature
and quarter horses

Travel

Salina's Cozy Inn serves up
delicious greasy
hamburgers

Sports

Hesston High School
planning to add
baseball

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Wendy Nugent

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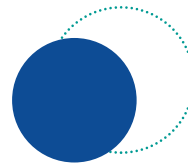
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From the Editor



Wendy Nugent, Editor

I love this time of year. It's a time when the world feels like it's coming back to life. Birds flit about, and buds appear on trees. Folks seem to have a little more pep in their step as they come out of hibernation, whether that's mentally or physically, or both.

For the spring issue of Newton Now this year, we focused on something that has to do with spring—Hesston High School getting a baseball program, and then there's an article on Kim Coslett opening a spa in her Halstead home. Spring can be a time of renewal, and the spa article fits right in.

Also in this edition, Adam Strunk wrote a travel article about Salina, Ethan Birdwell penned a story about Sondra and Phil Koontz's historic home on the east side of Newton, and I had the opportunity to write about Jamie Mott, the only female firefighter

on the Newton Fire/EMS Department.

There's also a story about Delbert Reser, a Hesston man who's been inducted into a bluegrass hall of fame, which Mike Mendez wrote, and a Sedgwick woman who enjoys time with her horses, which I wrote. I did the interview on a freezing cold January day, with a strong north wind blowing. At least we had a barn to go into to get away from the brisk air.

Also, I just want to let you readers know we appreciate you, and I always welcome story ideas for the magazine that have to do with Harvey County. We like to do articles in every town in the county, focusing on the positive things, events and people here. If you have any ideas, please call me at 316-281-7899 or email wendy@harveycountynow.com.

Wendy Nugent, editor

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ON THE COVER: Jamie Mott of Newton has been on the Newton Fire/EMS Department since April 2012. Photo by Wendy Nugent/Harvey County Now



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

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| cover story |

Putting out fires

Newton's only female firefighter always had an interest in firefighting

Article and photos
Wendy Nugent

When Jamie Mott was a young girl, she started a fire on her family's concrete porch. However, even then, she kept safety in mind since she had a can of water close by in case the flames decided to spread.

"I probably started to get intrigued with it when I was a kid," Mott said about becoming a firefighter. "I started a little bitty fire on my front porch."

Her mom, however, was watching the whole time, and Mott didn't know that until later.

Mott is the only female firefighter/EMT on the Newton Fire/EMS Department, and she's worked there since April 2012.

During that time, she's been on a variety of calls, some of which were memorable.

She said on one medical call, a guy who was on drugs started hitting on her.

"He was like, 'Hi,'" Mott said, imitating the man, using a flirty tone. "I got a chuckle out of that. Medical calls, some of them can be humorous because, under the influence of something [they] act completely—just the reactions to certain things can just be totally off the wall."

She said people saying, "Oh, it's a girl," make her chuckle, too.

"I've had that happen during Fire Prevention Week," she said. "I think that was one of the first presentations I did at the school."

Yes, it appears sometimes she being a female firefighter catches people by surprise. However, being the only female on a force of many men can have its challenges, since she grew up with only sisters.

"I grew up with three sisters in a predominantly female household," she said. "It's just one of those dynamics where you learn to get comfortable. You don't want to take things necessarily personal, but you need to be direct. Guys speak their own language that women don't understand. For the most part, it is me getting used to working with a bunch of guys."

She said if you're flexible, it can be a learning experience, since she has to learn to live with them.

As a female, she needs separate quarters and facilities. Stations 2 and 3 have completely separate facilities for the sexes, and Station 1's bathroom has a lock on it, and the beds have curtains that go around them.

"Which I'm sure were only used when I was there," Mott said. "Otherwise, guys don't care."



OPPOSITE: Jamie Mott, left, talks to Phil Beebe, division chief of training, at the Newton Fire/EMS Department in downtown Newton. ABOVE: Jamie Mott, right, is hard at work. *Courtesy photo*



ABOVE: Jamie Mott's reflection appears in one of the Newton Fire/EMS Department's firetruck headlights. ABOVE RIGHT: Jamie Mott is the only female firefighter with the Newton Fire/EMS Department.

You always want to help
people on their worst
day. We want to be able
to help them on that day.

Mott's firefighter training started in college at the College of the Ozarks, where she received a bachelor's degree, majoring in psychology and minoring in human biology. While there, she was on the student-run fire department.

"You had a dean that was the supervisor, but students ran it," Mott said. "I got my fire science through Hutch Community College and the rest [of my fire training] has been on-the-job training and through other sources."

When she got to the College of the Ozarks, she didn't know they had a fire department and had no idea it was run by students. After she learned about it, she asked for an application to be in the rookie program, so she had one semester in that program and then had a probie semester. Then, a probie had to be voted in.

"I was there two and a half years altogether during my four-year time there," Mott said,

adding she learned things there and also when she was a volunteer.

Before coming to Newton, she was a volunteer firefighter in Derby, her hometown.

After finishing her basic requirements, Mott put feelers out to a number of departments in the area for a job, and Newton was the first department that put their offer out.

Mott enjoys her job for several reasons.

"For me, a lot of it has to do with the versatility," she said. "I'm not one to sit around," adding it's also a way to get to know her community. "You always want to help people on their worst day. We want to be able to help them on that day."



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Article by
Mike Mendez

PICKIN' and grinnin'

Reser's contribution to
bluegrass lands him in
hall of fame

As a young member of the Kansas Bluegrass Association (KBA), Hesston resident Delbert Reser had no idea what he was getting into when the organization passed out papers for people who wanted to step up. A 40-year-old Reser wanted to help and simply wrote down that he would be willing to do anything. It was a decision that changed the course of history for both Reser and the KBA.

"We needed some leadership," the Hesston resident said. "We passed out pieces of paper, and if you would be willing to serve in some capacity, write what you would like to be. If you would like to be secretary or in charge of the newsletter or whatever—what would you like to do? I, dumb as I was, I just wrote down, 'Anything.' I wasn't elected. I was just proclaimed president."

The organization Reser unknowingly

volunteered to be president of was on shaky ground. The current leadership had paid its dues and needed a new wave of people to breathe life into the organization if it was going to continue. The KBA's treasury consisted of \$600.

What Reser did for the KBA in his short time as president was give the group a shot of life that eventually landed him in the Kansas Bluegrass Hall of Fame.

Delbert Reser of Hesston plays the dobro. Photo by Mike Mendez/Harvey County Now

"I told the lady who was acting as treasurer, I called her up, and I said, 'How much money have we got?'" Reser said. "\$600 or something. So I said let's either do something with it or let's break the whole bank."

What they did with it was start a bluegrass festival at Harvey County West Park. After asking the park director if he could rent the park to hold the festival, he was told he couldn't. If the park rented it to him, they would have to rent it out to everyone who came along. The county didn't want to be put in that position. However, they liked the idea and wanted to go in on a co-sponsorship of the event.

The festival was born with a flatbed trailer for a stage, a couple of outlets and a couple of outhouses. Most of the furnishings were donated, with the KBA on financially unstable grounds. But from the modest beginning, the festival took off. The KBA took off with it, and Harvey County West Park benefited as well.

"We had that festival out there for 20-some years," Reser said. "We developed that area, built a stage and put in electrical outlets for campers. We even built a bathhouse with a sewer system and showers and everything. We run it every year for about 20 years. That was around 1980. We kept our prices down very low, maybe \$5 or \$7 for a weekend pass. We would try to get enough at the gate to where if we had four bands, we would split it up five ways. A piece for the club and a piece for the bands would go five ways. Then I had the sound system, so I was the sound man for several years there. Pretty much, that was the KBA out there."

From those festivals and pickin' weekends, the KBA grew into a group that has a feature event at the Marriott in Wichita and features nationally recognized acts. It serves a community builder with pickers of all skill levels, from the most professional to amateurs playing together. Reser said they have a saying that they will laugh with you and not at you. It is a philosophy that has built a bluegrass family.

"That is kind of the bluegrass philosophy," Reser said. "All-in-all, they are an approachable group. And down at the Marriott, there will be pickers of all descriptions down there. There will be some absolute professionals in every sense of the word. There will be ones that just barely know how to hold a guitar down there and trying to play and all together. There is no class system. There is no color system. This guy that you are jamming with that you don't really know, he may be an orthopedic surgeon, or he may be a nighttime taxi driver. You don't question who or what he is. Can he pick and does he want to pick? That is it. It is more of a bluegrass family."

Reser's love of music started as a young boy growing up back in the hills of Missouri. When he was 7 years old, a man with a guitar came to his house and started playing. Reser was fascinated by the sound and knew he had to learn. A few years later, his parents got the money together to buy him a guitar from Sears and Roebuck for about \$3. He took his guitar and walked barefoot over to a woman's house who taught him a few chords.

Then it was all country or hillbilly music. He wasn't interested in bluegrass.

Reser moved to Newton in 1962 and met up with a guitar player. They started playing in his basement, with more and more people starting to show up for Saturday night hootenannies for about a solid year.

In the early '70s, one of the pickers from the basement suggested going to Haysville to see Jack and Mike Theobald play bluegrass. At that concert, bluegrass sunk its hooks into Reser for good.

"That was my first exposure to bluegrass, in about '71 or '72," Reser said. "I went down, and I couldn't believe what I was hearing. They were good. When I heard it, I had to learn how to do it. It is not some simplistic stuff. I mean some of the best musicians in this country, and probably worldwide, are bluegrass musicians. And most of them are uneducated, musically uneducated."

Reser played mandolin in a band that had a dobro player. He wasn't interested in the dobro. But after



Delbert Reser plays the dobro with the Newton Acoustic Jam, which meets at East Side Methodist Church in Newton.

Photo by Wendy Nugent/Harvey County Now

coming down with arthritis, the dobro's slide style became easier for his left hand to handle. And so in order to keep playing music, he picked up the dobro and began the long road to learning how to play a new instrument.

"I had this dobro that I had bought," Reser said. "I am kind of an instrument collector nut. I never saw an instrument that I didn't like that had strings on it. So I figured, with the dobro you use the bar, so if I am going to play anything, I got my dobro and started trying to learn that. Strickly self-taught and hours of terrible attempts of music learning it."

At the age of 86, music is something Reser can't imagine a life without. And after his wife passed away four years ago, it is something he can still do to keep himself occupied.

"I am here alone, and I have some health problems," Reser said. "I am getting up in age where I can't be as active. But playing music, it is the best thing I can do without a lot of physical activity. And at least for me and some of the guys I pick with, whenever we get together picking, time stops. You can pick together for five hours and not realize you should have went to the bathroom three hours ago. You get carried away. And it is a whole lot cheaper than playing golf. It is a big part of my life, and I don't know what to do without it."

The future of bluegrass music is coming into its own. There is now a higher-octane version of the genre that has big roots in Kansas with the likes of bands like Split Lip Rayfield. The evolution of music is coming back around, which has given rise to a big spike in popularity for bluegrass.

"It grew slowly, and there wasn't a lot of acceptance," Reser said. "When I started back in my early days, I didn't like bluegrass, not until I went down to Haysville. Country has evolved over the years. What we call country music today is nothing like what it was back in 1950. And the bluegrass is doing the same thing. It is evolving. The old-timers like me, we decry, 'It ain't like it used to be,' but it has evolved enough. Bluegrass kind of evolved to more or less what country was in 1950. Bluegrass is taking the place of it. I see country music coming back around. Country today is what rock and roll was in 1970 or '80. Today's country, I don't like it. But I see country, I think it is about to evolve back around. You see more of these country artists now; well, they have a bluegrass album." 🇺🇸



Delbert Reser takes a brief break playing with the Newton Acoustic Jam, which meets at East Side Methodist Church in Newton. Photo by Wendy Nugent/Harvey County Now



Hooves aplenty

Article and photos
by Wendy Nugent



**Sedgwick woman
enjoys showing,
time with miniature,
quarter horses**

Kathy Chavez made herself a 1700s Regency dress, and she and her miniature horse, Lil Bit O Country Sky High, entered a parade in Sedgwick together. That was in 2015.

"The theme that year for the parade was your favorite book," Chavez said, standing in a barn-like structure in rural Newton on a chilly January day.

Chavez said her favorite book was, "Pride and Prejudice." She and Sky, as she calls him for short, also were in the 2016 Parade of Lights in Newton.

"He was dressed up as a reindeer," she said.

Along the parade route, kids hugged Sky, Chavez said.

"He just loves kids," she added. "He loves attention."

They've also been in the Parade of Lights other years in Newton, as well as Fall Festival parades in Halstead, Sedgwick and Valley Center.

The Sedgwick resident said she got Sky when he was 4, and he'll be 11 in April. He's double registered with the American Miniature Horse Association (AMHA) and the American Miniature Horse Registry (AMHR).

"So he's able to show in both," Chavez said, adding he's 33-1/2 inches tall.

If he was taller than 34 inches, she would only be able to show in the AMHR shows.

The last time Chavez showed Sky at the Kansas State Fair, she received two grand champion awards from both judges for driving horse.

Chavez has a show cart.

"I take him to Sedgwick and just drive around a lot," Chavez said, adding it's an easy-entry cart, and although she lives in Sedgwick, Sky is boarded in rural Newton.

"I haven't shown in a while," she said.

This is because Chavez has been working a lot. During the week, she drives for Sedgwick USD 439 and does food demonstrations for Costco on weekends. She's also busy with eight grandchildren.

Chavez said she has taught Sky how to do driving obstacles, and they do trail obstacle classes and showmanship in shows.

Chavez demonstrated how she's been teaching Sky to do a Spanish walk, which is a slow, showy saunter, wherein the horse lifts high each front leg, one at a time, as he goes forward.

"We've been working on it, but

My husband bought me a horse
for our anniversary years ago.
One day, my husband surprised me.

we haven't perfected it yet," Chavez said.

In addition to the state fair awards, the duo has earned other honors, as is evident by a variety of awards Chavez has on display.

Even though he's received many honors, it doesn't seem Sky let that fame go to his head. He's happy pulling Chavez's grandchildren, and in the summer, Chavez brings her two horses—she also has a full-sized horse—to

her home, where they graze in the yard. Sky also was in the spotlight this past Christmas season, since he was in the living nativity at Salem United Methodist Church in Newton.

"He is a gentleman," Chavez said.

In addition to showing Sky, Chavez has wanted to use him as a therapy horse, although she said she hasn't had the time.

"He'd be perfect," she said. "He's just so calm and gentle. His dad was like that, and there's so many people who would love to have him. He's not going anywhere."

Chavez's interest in horses started when she was young, although she never had one of her own at the time.

"I've always been interested in horses," she said. "My husband bought me a horse for our anniversary years ago. One day, my



OPPOSITE: Kathy Chavez of Sedgwick enjoys spending time with her miniature horse, Sky. OPPOSITE INSET: Sky and Chavez at the Parade of Lights in Newton. ABOVE: Kathy Chavez has some time with her quarter horse Quincy.



husband surprised me.”

That was her first horse, who she named Dakota. Before that, Chavez rode friends’ horses all her life. However, her husband didn’t buy her the horse—he gave her the money, and she got to pick her own. She was 34 at the time.

At one time, she and Dakota were in a vehicle accident. The trailer he was in became unhitched, and it rolled two and a half times. Dakota’s neck broke, but he was alive and lived a long time after that.

“The vets didn’t even know how he was

standing,” Chavez said.

She no longer has Dakota, as he has died, but now has Quincy, a double-registered Palomino quarter horse. The duo has won at Kansas Saddle Horse Association shows, and Chavez showed Quincy in western pleasure, pleasure, English pleasure, western and English equitation, and trail.

Sky is Chavez’s first and only miniature horse.

“I got so lucky with him,” she said, adding she got him from a couple in the Topeka area who were retiring from breeding and

showing. They only had one left who was trained to drive.

Sky has a cream-colored mane, and his body is covered in amber-colored hair. During the winter, his hair is fuzzy, but it gets cut in the spring through the fall.

“He’s just beautiful when he’s sheared down,” Chavez said, noting that Sky has won color class.

The Sedgwick resident said when she trained Sky, she used food as an incentive.

“When I was training him, when he would take one step, I’d give him a treat,” she said. ➡

Kathy Chavez walks Sky.

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HAPPY IN A

Article by Ethan Birdwell
Photos by Wendy Nugent



Four Square



Koontzes enjoy historical home on east side of Newton

At the corner of Seventh and Logan Streets sits a unique piece of Newton's history. Seemingly out of place—boasting three stories, a basement and a wrap-around porch—is the home of Sondra and Phil Koontz.

In the summer of 1990, when Phil and Sondra moved into this 1903 home built by Edward and Virginia Hudson, they immediately set to work at restoring it to its original style.

"When we first moved in, we had to remove shag carpet, a huge draft furnace and then all of the popcorn ceiling," Sondra said.

With five bedrooms, three bathrooms and 3,738 square feet of open and inviting originality, even the light fixtures on the ground floor are original. The styling of the home has its own category.

"It is called a Prairie Four Square," Sondra said. "Its layout is unique in that there are four large rooms on the ground floor. This allows for very large and comfortable hallways with a very forgiving staircase. This made it easy for the movers to move many of our furnishings in and then upstairs which we already had as family heirlooms or things we picked up from antique shops."

Phil and Sondra had a very specific vision for how they wanted to furnish their house.

"We wanted to have furnishings in the house that were usable. We wanted something that was very modern and true to the style but nothing that anyone would be afraid to sit on," joked Sondra.

While some of the furnishings may not be from 1903, the house itself most definitely is at its core.

"It is a brick veneer house, but the frame is balloon construction. The floors aren't reinforced with steel plates. The entire bottom floor is made of oak and cherry while upstairs is white pine," Phil said.

What Phil and Sondra didn't know was the deep and tied history of the house.

"We had been told that an elderly lady at Kidron Bethel Village who kept telling us various stories about what seemed to be our house," Sondra said. "We brought her here, and she made her way through the ground floor, pointing to things and saying what had been original. As it turns out, she had been a live-in maid to Edward and Virginia Hudson while they had lived at the house."

Sondra tells of another story, "The second owners, Rodney and Georgia Stone, who were well-known attorneys in town, had three

OPPOSITE: Sondra and Phil Koontz enjoy the stairway landing between the first and second floors. ABOVE: One of the bedrooms in Phil and Sondra Koontz's house features a quilt on the bed. The bedrooms open up onto a second-floor landing.



children, and one of their daughters got married in the living room. Well, one day we got a letter from a man who said that he would be coming through from Colorado and would like to see the house one last time. He had gotten married in the living room also!"

One special thing about this visit, though, was the addition of a wedding album brought by the man, which had photos of what the house looked like when he was married there.

Almost every person who lived in the house has come back to see it

or to say hello.

"Even the third owners who we could not find any information about had someone stop by who said they were the child of whomever had owned the house after the Stones. He did not ask to see the inside of the house but shared a few memories and went on his way," Sondra said.

Even the most recent family to own the house before Sondra and Phil had a grandchild stop by.

Phil and Sondra Koontz's house makes a grand statement on East Seventh Street.



"We got home one day, and there was a man in our driveway," Sondra said. "We asked him who he was, and it turns out, he was the grandson of Art and Pauline Allen. He had basically grown up in this house with his grandparents, and he had asked to see the house."

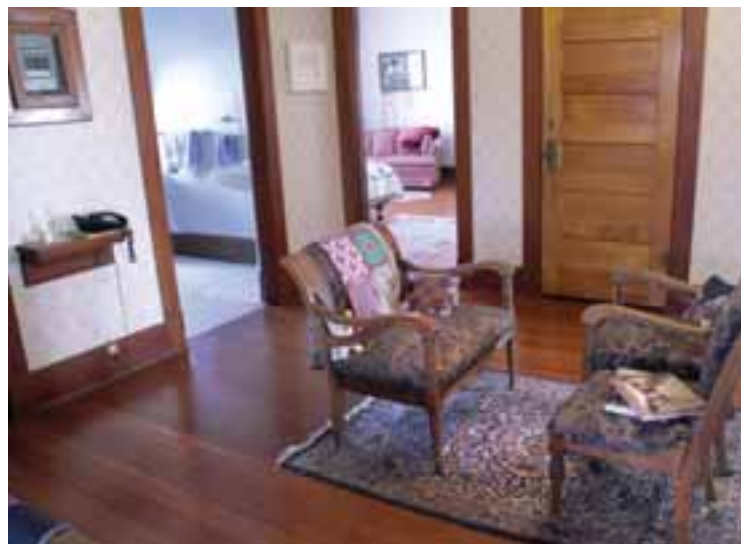
When asked what it felt like to be part of such a connected history, Phil smiled, "I know it was always something we had wanted to do. We always had a dream of living in a large old house. We came from College Hill in Wichita with some connections in Newton. One day, we drove by this place for the first time and saw that it was a big house that just happened to have a for-sale sign out front. We just took it from there."



This hand-quilted bed covering rests on a bed on the second floor.



The living room is decorated nicely.



The landing on the second floor leads to a bathroom and bedrooms.

Sondra continued, "I have just loved old houses my whole life, even as a child. I would just want to look at the houses, and I would say how one day I would live in one. Well, we got it!"

How such a unique house ended up in Newton is quite the story itself.

"As we have been told," Phil said "Virginia Hudson had a very similar house in Pennsylvania, and to get her to move to Newton, Edward Hudson had to build it to be very similar."

Given the history of the house, Phil and Sondra have been asked numerous times to apply it to be a registered historical house, but they are unsure.

"We have to look at the pros and cons of doing that. It could be done, but I am unsure of if we would have the time to do so," Phil said.

Phil also described some issues with having a mostly original house from 1903.

"A lot of the things needed for repairs, they just don't make anymore," he said. "The finish materials are hard to find, the doors are heavier and wider than standard, and the hallways are generous. It is different enough from a Victorian-style home that those things won't work."


When work has to be done, it is often expensive due to the extra precautions that must be taken.

"We put a new roof on it this year, and without saying much, it cost us about the same price as our first home," Phil said.

Despite the repair costs, Phil noted it has been relatively easy to keep up.

"Aside from a little bit of jacking we had to place on the house 15 years ago, there hasn't been much hassle," he said.

Sondra sees it as her dream fulfilled.

"It is the house I always dreamed of, and I got it," she said. 



Phil and Sondra Koontz stand on their grand staircase, which is off the entranceway of their home in east Newton.

Attractions abound in Salina

Salina not a bad place
to chow down

Industry on the N

It must change what's just one of the
to study more. Salina's influence only
valued at times. Manufacturing came
diversifying and producing a variety of
don't making a strong connection that
Salina's manufacturing base specialized
companies of products, such as, 1100
refined, and domestic. These goods to
used the as major consumers as well as
were the world. The availability of iron
allowed the first waterfalls to be built
new home industries. Salina's strong
economy of local and regional trading
continue to bring business to the economy.





It's about a half mile away, and you can smell it. Half grease, half onions, and your mouth starts watering. It takes a while to see the red-and-white sign of the tiny shop: Cozy Inn.

Just up the road about an hour in Salina, the Cozy Inn has been serving palm-sized, onion-filled sliders for nearly a century.

Salina might not be at the top of the list for destinations and day tripping, but it's a good place to grab a bite and learn a bit about Kansas history.

Salina got its start in 1858, survived raids by American Indians and Bushwhackers and, following the Civil War, grew into a prominent trade center along with being a milling location.

The industry grew to the place that at one point in the 1900s, Salina was the sixth largest milling location in the United States.

In the '50s with Schilling Air Force Base, Salina's population increased by two-thirds, and it eventually formed into the city it is today. It has a population of 47,000 people.

Today, Salina has a full downtown and is Kansas' 10th largest city, ahead of Hutchinson and behind Lenexa.

Getting into town, we thought it best to try Blue Skye Brewery, 116 N Santa Fe. The

location has become a local standby of sorts with burgers, wood-fired pizzas and home brews. We stopped there on a Saturday and found it full of people either talking or watching college basketball on one of the six-plus TVs the location sports.

After inquiring on what the favorite things on the menu were, we ordered a peanut butter burger and a cheeseburger pizza.

The burger had sriracha on it, was spicy and had enough char to cut through the strong flavors. The pink center balanced it out.

The pizza was a little bit like what you'd find at Back Alley in Newton. There's a brick wood-fire oven in the brewery you can watch the pizzas cook in. It had plenty of bacon on it and plenty of beef.

One pizza would probably be an easy split between two people.

The two more popular beers there are a Firehouse Red and a B-17 Blonde, named after the bombers that called Salina home.

The Red is not overly heavy or bold for a darker beer. The brewery advertises it as a entry-level dark beer, and it's a fair statement. Fairly mild but balanced. It wasn't the first time I ordered the beer at the brewery, and it won't be the last.

After getting full of pub food, we went to try Ad Astra books and coffee house for a bit of a pep in our step to counteract the heavy

food and beer.

The place at 141 N. Santa Fe has been around for a number of years after being retrofitted from an old bar. It serves coffee, some coming from local Lindsborg-roasted beans. It also provides books. Walls and walls of books. The coffee shop has plenty of tables and nooks to read the volumes, which line shelves throughout the store.

An employee of the shop said the books are donated. Fliers for events dot the walls. From the crowd and the environment, it feels like what NPR would be if someone turned it into a coffee shop.

I ordered an Americano, as I do everywhere, and found it up to snuff.

Caffeinated, we went to the main museum in Salina at 211 W. Iron. The museum dates back to the 1850s and the founding members of Salina. Originally to be in the local historical society, you had to donate historical items, and from these items, the museum's collection grew. It sports a large amount of Kansas pioneer artifacts, including a hands-on prairie dugout, along with a World War I exhibit and plenty of information on Salina's Schilling Air Force Base. Admission is free.

The museum also is within walking distance to Cozy Inn at 108 N. Seventh.

ABOVE: A barista serves fresh locally ground coffee at Ad Astra coffee shop at 141 N. Santa Fe. The coffee shop is known for its beans but also for the wide selection of books, which are mostly donated by patrons. PREVIOUS PAGE: A museum employee makes butter at the Smokey Hills Museum in Salina. The museum has a large amount of Kansas historical artifacts, a dugout cabin, as well as World War I and II memorabilia.

The Cozy Inn was named one of the eight culinary wonders of Kansas by the Kansas Sampler, and it's easy to see why.

Modeled after the White Castle of Wichita and founded a year after, the restaurant, about the size of your living room, puts out palm-sized burgers that are about half onion and half meat. They come with a pickle, ketchup and mustard and run 85 cents a piece.

Before we went in, there was a recommendation to leave your coat at home or it would smell like the Cozy Inn for all eternity.

That recommendation held true for the most part. After entering the revered restaurant, the entire car smelled like burgers and onions all the way back to Newton.

Manning the grill at the place was Steve Howard, who's been running it since 2007.

Basically, he puts ground meat and onions on a small griddle. He puts those patties onto small buns and serves them to customers sitting on one of the six stools that have graced the restaurant since 1922.

The time it took to get a burger and pay at the location was less than a minute.

Howard said he goes through 30 tons combined of burgers and onions annually. He seems to have a good time at it, too, bantering with the regulars.

"What do you want to drink?" he asked

amid the clank of his spatula and the smoke and sizzle of the grill.

Some bourbon, the patron said, to the laughter of the crowd.

The little greasy slider he served was delicious, even on an empty stomach. You can buy 24 of them in a bag for \$18 dollars. It was good enough to make you wonder why anyone drives to St. Louis for White Castle when Salina is close by.

Salina might not be on the top of the tourism lists, but whether it's for food, for history, or to just break up the travel monotony, it's definitely worth a stop. Just be sure to bring some Tic Tacs. 🇺🇸



Steve Howard serves up a famous Cozy Inn slider. He goes through 30 tons of beef and onions a year at the nearly century-old Salina institution.

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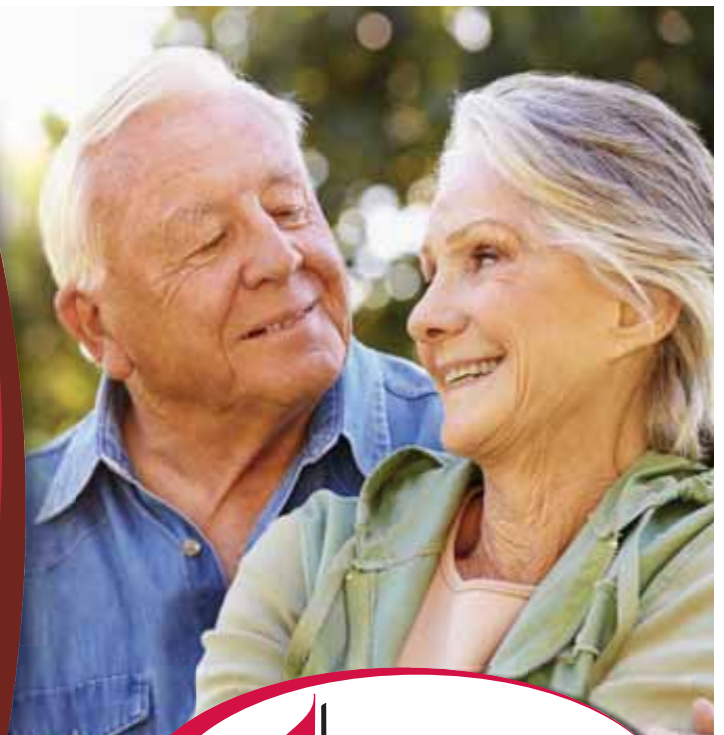
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Article and photos
by Adam Strunk

It's called Reiki. It involves using hands to put pressure points on the body to unblock meridians to better allow energy to flow through the body and relieve stress and other issues that might ail a person.

Kim Coslett explains the process in the large kitchen of her craftsman home in Halstead. Down the hallway is the spa she's created.

Her eyes peer through large tortoiseshell glasses as she quickly follows with a remark about sounding too "new-agey" and laughs.

Coslett laughs a lot. She smiles a lot. She's the kind of person to whom one ends up telling stories of one's own childhood when one should be conducting an interview.

It's an easy-going reliability, a skill well adapted for spending hours close to strangers massaging their faces, waxing their bodies, adding eyelash extensions or unblocking said meridians.

Simply put, Coslett makes a person feel

comfortable.

She's a people person.

"I like helping people, and that's part of what I feel that I do," she said.

She's had a long life of helping.

"When I do something, I do it the best I can do it," Coslett said. "I take time in my massage, take time in my clients. They're going to get all this pampering. They're going to be there an hour in this process. Why not give them extra services?"

Coslett has experience being around people. She got it as a nurse at the Halstead Hospital, which can be seen from her window. She also got it at the restaurant and bar she operated in Halstead until four years ago.

And she says she gets more of that experience now as an esthetician.

Coslett recently opened Metamorphosis Spa in her home at 302 Locust St.

The bedroom of her son, who is at college, has been turned into the room she works in

with massage table, chairs and products, as well as calming music and aromas.

The room opens out onto the backyard through a door they installed through the closet to the relaxing area where spa-goers can sit in the yard, enjoy the day and watch the flock of chickens the Cosletts keep peck about.

At the spa, she offers Reiki treatments, facials, waxing and eyelash extensions.

It's not something you expect to find in a town of 2,000.

Coslett says these are services she hopes to provide for the Halstead area so they don't have to drive all the way to Wichita.

She also says her services are affordable. A facial, which is tailored to the person and involves exfoliation as well as a massage, runs about \$60 for an hour.

She says she doesn't want people to have to drive to Wichita to be pampered and receive treatment.

Coslett is an interesting mix. She's a

Kim Coslett stands in the spa she's converted part of her house in. Coslett practiced as a nurse in Halstead before eventually pursuing a more holistic approach to helping people.

PERSONABLE SERVICE

~ Coslett opens spa in Halstead ~

registered nurse, she's spent a lot of time providing traditional medicine, yet now she's providing more of an Eastern treatment.

"I'm all about doctors, too, but there's a point that we have to take responsibility for our health," she said. "When I went through nurses training and started working, I didn't have a lot of thought about Eastern-type medicine. I started reading about it, and I spent a few years growing up in Colorado. We were all around the hippie generations. That's all they did. It was huge in the '70s. I see the way people live and the habits they have, and I see over time how people can really be well and healthy if they change the way they think, the way they eat, the way they just live—it's a daily living thing."

With her business, she hopes to promote and teach people to look at their habits and do what they can to stay healthy. To her, that means watching their diets, exercising and taking care of their skin.

"Doctors are good," she said. "They have their place. But we also have to take care of ourselves."

She also says self-care is important from a holistic approach.

Sometimes Western medicine can work, but other times people might want to try a different approach to lessen their stress, which can cause all sorts of problems.

She says sometimes it just takes an open mind, such as using treatments like Reiki.


"Until they actually try it, they should be open-minded," she said. "Healing doesn't just come from a doctor."

She said she got interested in the field after watching, through her professional experience, where traditional medicine failed.

"I've seen people on their deathbed from medications. I guess I got interested in this after seeing the adverse effects of medical treatment," she said.

When she's not providing facials and treatments, she's also active playing music, both the guitar and the piano. She worked as a performer at the Prairie Rose for seven years.

In whatever she does, Coslett said she's dedicated to doing it right.

"When I do something, I do it the best I can do it," she said. "I take time in my massage, take time in my clients. They're not going to get all this pampering. They're going to be there an hour in this process. Why not give them extra services?" 



TOP: This relaxing chair sits in Kim Coslett's spa in Halstead. *Courtesy photo.* INSET: People getting spa treatments can sit in Kim Coslett's yard and watch the chickens.



RUNNING WILD

Bergquist earns Champions of Character Award on the track

After finishing a morning run in the summer, the day seems to be a lot more manageable for Newton native Elyse Bergquist. There is a workout of body and mind with the discipline it takes to go get out and pound the pavement every day.

"It really does make me feel better throughout the day if I run in the morning," Bergquist said. "It wakes me up. It gets me going and then I don't just sleep the day away. When I get up in the morning and run especially, it makes me feel accomplished, like I got this done now what else can I do today."

With all she is accomplishing as a sophomore at Bethany College and the goals she has set for the future, it is clear she has seized enough days to have started them with an unfathomable amount of miles. Bergquist is going into the outdoor track season coming off a fifth place finish in the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference (KCAC) Indoor Track and Field Championships in the 4X800-meter race and dropped 20 seconds off her previous time in the mile.

Off the track, Bergquist is pounding the books studying biology with the goal of getting into a nursing program in the near

future. The combination of excellence as both a student and an athlete earned her a Champions of Character Award from the KCAC with her coaches nominating her to be the recipient for the Swedes.

Champions of Character must be a full-time student in good standing, participating in a varsity sport and have a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 or higher.

Bergquist's coaches at Bethany knew she was the perfect candidate. But she was shocked to get the honor.

"It is very nice," Bergquist said. "I wasn't expecting it. I know someone gets it all the time each season, but I wasn't expecting it. She told me that I would probably get it before we left for the meet, and I was like, 'Oh. Ok. Thanks.'"

Running is something Bergquist was kind of born into. Her mother Michelle is an assistant cross country coach at Newton High School and she started in club track when she was little. Though there is a certain amount of pain threshold and a world of internal conflict to get through in order to run, the rewards for getting through it hooked Bergquist from the beginning.

"It is very much a mental thing," Bergquist

said. "Like you have to stay positive even when you are not feeling positive because negative thoughts can bring you down, whether you think so or not. They do. You have to stay positive."

On top of being able to stay in shape, getting the chance to compete, and being able to be a part of a team, the mental strength Bergquist has gotten from running has spilled over into all aspects of her life, including the discipline to chase lofty goals in the classroom as a biology major. Just like in running, the focus must be on the finish line no matter how far away it seems or how tough things are in the moment.

"You have to keep a clear mind when you are running," Bergquist said. "You can't let little things get in your way. Even in school, you can't let little things get in your way. You have to think long term and think ahead to get where you are going."

The passion to get into nursing started back home. While doing a job shadow at Newton Medical Center as a part of a class at Newton High, she got the bug. Following the nurses around she was never bored. The science involved kept her thirsting for more knowledge. There was never a moment



OPPOSITE: Elyse Bergquist is given the KCAC Champions of Character Award at the meet. **ABOVE:** Elyse Bergquist, back center, stands with her fifth-place 4X800-meter relay team as they take the podium at the KCAC Indoor Track and Field Championships at Pittsburg State University.

causing her interest to wander.

While studying biology at Bethany, Bergquist did an internship at the hospital in Lindsborg. Getting a chance to work with patients provided another level of satisfaction.

“We got to see a couple of patients go home after they got better,” Bergquist said. “The patients for the most part are very grateful for you helping them and it is a very satisfying, happy feeling.”

As things come together in an academic season, the calendar year of running is a pyramid that builds to a sharp peak. Running cross country in the fall builds endurance. When the indoor season comes in the winter they start to throw in some weights and add some power into the mix. The outdoor season puts the two together in a honed edge of athletic excellence.

Coming off a mile in which Bergquist shaved 20 seconds off her time to close out the indoor season, she can’t wait to see where the outdoor season will take her in the spring.

“I am pretty excited,” Bergquist said. “The more I run during the indoor meets, the more excited that I am for outdoor. It is very motivational. I can not wait until we go to our first outdoor meet so that I can see where I am, even from a week or two more of practicing.”

In between studying and fine tuning her running, there isn’t a lot of down time to relax. What time she does have is spent with her teammates. But as busy as she is, as a runner, she knows it is the reality she has to deal with and the finish line is just ahead.

“Some nights I have to stay up late, but that is just how it is in college,” Bergquist said. 🏃‍♀️

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Article and photo
by Mike Mendez

Diamond in the rough

Hesston High School adding baseball

When the spring season comes to life this year, there will be a familiar silence in the town of Hesston. For another season, there will be no leather popping, no dugout chatter, no bat metal ringing out with solid contact and no high school baseball. But as another season without America's pastime passes, it will be the last time Hesston will be left out on the diamond.

After a plan to renovate the sports facilities at the high school, including a new softball diamond and converting the current softball diamond into a new baseball diamond that meets Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) standards, the decision to approve baseball for the 2018 season was

made easier for the district.

"Really, from our end, it came down to facilities," Hesston High School Athletic Director Clint Stoppel said. "Once the facility was kind of put in place, it was pretty much an easier decision for us to move forward with it."

The project to upgrade the facilities to include new baseball and softball diamonds began with community outreach. People got together, and the Hesston Recreation Commission formed an ad-hoc committee with those interested. The committee working together with the school district came up with a plan to make the project happen.

Funding for the costs of the first three

years of baseball has been raised almost entirely from donations.

The fight over whether to add baseball wasn't something that started up recently. For decades, there have been outspoken people trying to find a way to make it feasible. But the propositions always ran up against a brick wall.

For the high school kids in Hesston, playing baseball meant playing Babe Ruth during the summer. For the people involved in Babe Ruth, like Don Kluver, Mark Brungardt, Ted Krehbiel and Dave Armstrong, summer baseball in Hesston was kind of bittersweet. They had to see the potential in the kids on a baseball diamond and know it wasn't going anywhere. It made putting up

The Hesston High School softball diamond will be converted into a baseball diamond for the Swathers to add the sport in 2018. A new softball diamond will be built in the same complex by the back parking lot of the school.

the fight worth the effort that so often went nowhere.

It was always rewarding to see kids get the opportunity on the diamond. But with success, and successful players, there also is a certain amount of wondering what might have been.

"To see those kids and how happy they were and to go to district and then get to take some kids to state," Armstrong said. "People may not think it, but all of us coaches are just volunteers. We are not professional coaches. But I think we all busted our butts just to have some chance to play. There is nothing else you can say. I started coaching because Kluver told me back in the day when we had a lot of kids, we had enough for two 14-year-old teams, and if we didn't find another coach, they were just going to drop some kids."

While summer league Babe Ruth ball in a town

actually feast in the spring. And in a 3A school, there is only so much talent to go around.

"We knew that if you add an additional sport, right now our count number this year was 258," Stoppel said. "So we were just looking at around 125 or 130 boys 9 through 12, so you start looking at how many kids there really are to split between four sports. And that was a tough decision there with that. But we are hopeful that with adding baseball, we may find some additional student population that may move into Hesston because of it."

Adding baseball also adds a door of opportunity for students who aren't connected to any other sports but want a chance to play. Instead of doing nothing with their free time, there will be kids who will get a chance to be a part of something on the diamond. The ability

When a kid is involved in activities outside of the classroom, usually you have a transition...to success in the classroom as well.

without varsity baseball was about giving everybody the opportunity to have a fun activity where everyone can participate, Armstrong got to coach some outstanding players as well. Lee Voth-Gaeddert was able to stay home, and not only did he find a roster spot with Hesston College in spite of not playing high school ball, but he launched a full-scale assault on the record books.

Voth-Gaeddert is the Larks' career leader in batting average (.444), runs scored (88), hits (107), and is second in doubles (21) and triples (8) at the two-year school. He managed to do all of it while spending his falls attending college and playing football.

Cory Rychener also continued his baseball career at Hesston College and came back to coach in the Babe Ruth program in Hesston that helped him learn the game.

"We had a lot of kids that I think would have really excelled, better at baseball than basketball," Armstrong said. "I think it was just tough to get a full 15 players on a team, and seven were fully dedicated to baseball. The rest were, 'It's a summer thing. I don't get to do this in high school; I just want to come play baseball.' Not that they weren't good and they weren't trying hard, but the Rycheners, the Lees, the JDs [Huntley], they wanted to play ball. I know my son would have given up track to play baseball. There was good and bad with it. Nobody came to play here knowing—they knew the circumstance."


Part of the concern about starting a baseball program in Hesston was that while there isn't baseball in the spring, the Swathers aren't without spring sports. In fact, with a wildly successful tennis team, successful golfers and track athletes, the Swathers

to play ball will only lead to higher success for the athlete.

"The good thing about it will be that we have some kids walking down the hallways who don't do spring sports that will go out," Stoppel said. "That is just what will happen. I am hopeful that the impact on our other sports won't be a big factor. But I think you are going to see some kids who haven't participated in a spring sport that will go out and do that. We are big on kids being involved, because we just know when a kid is involved in activities outside the classroom, usually you have a transition from the field to success in the classroom as well. Grades go up, behaviors improve. All-around participation is good for kids. Opportunity-wise, hopefully we open up an avenue for some kids to get some money when they head to college with another sport. It does have really good significant benefits with our kids."

Having a brand new facility won't hurt the Swathers' chances applying with KSHSAA to host regional tournaments, which brings money into the town as well.

Though there are generations of ball players from Hesston who didn't get the chance to play high school baseball, the day some of them never thought would come will be a reality in 2018. It will be the first time the people of Hesston will get the chance to hear an umpire say "Play ball" on a high school field. And for the people who have fought to bring kids the opportunity, it will be music to their ears.

"We're excited to get it rolling," Stoppel said. "I know the community is excited to get it rolling, so we will be up and running one way or the other in 2018 one way for sure." 



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