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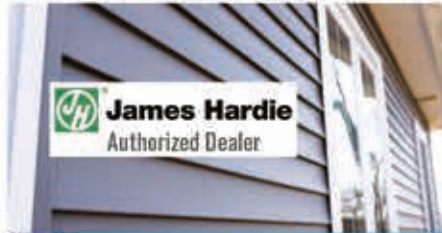
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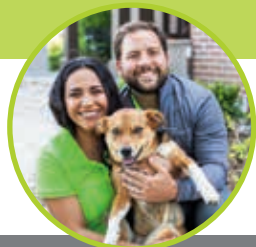
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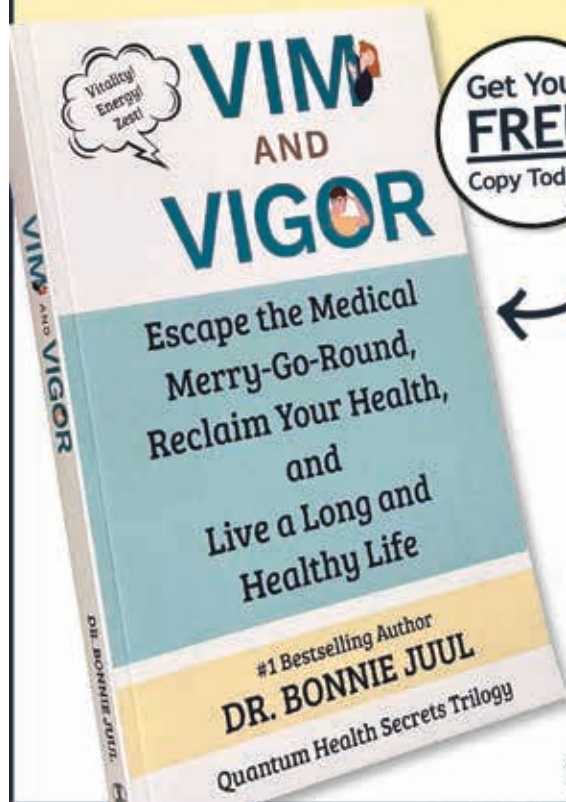


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Phillip Wight lives with his family in Wildwood. Actively involved in the community through veteran affairs, charities and car shows. His youngest son, Charlie is an Eagle Scout and his oldest son, Anthony picked up his CFP and works with his Father, Phil at Synergy Wealth Solutions in Chesterfield. As an Airborne Infantry veteran, Phil is still on point with his dog Gunner taking care of families and the things they are passionate about! Call Phil today to discuss your financial needs!

Phil Wight is a registered representative of and offers securities and investment advisory services through MML Investors Services, LLC. Member SIPC. Synergy Wealth Solutions 16150 Main Circle Drive, Suite 400, Chesterfield, MO 63017. 636-728-2400. CRN202701-5648619.

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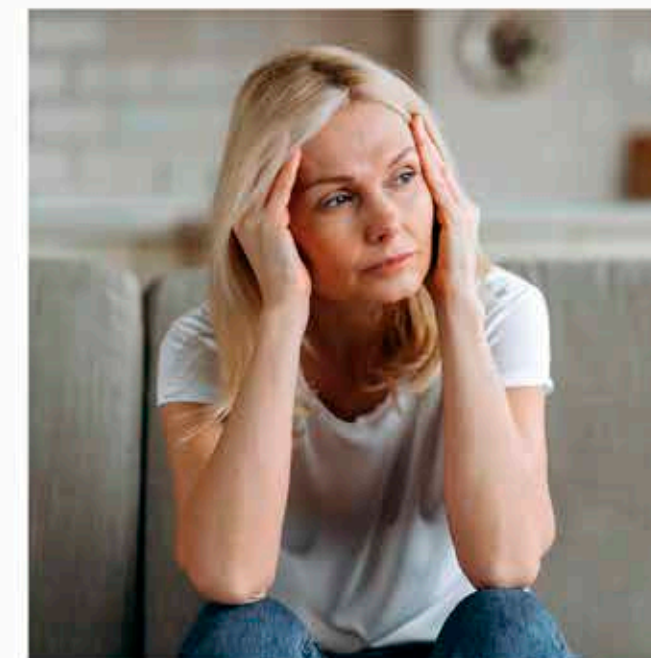
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2. Blood sugar spikes: Did you know that tests for diabetes tend to pick up problems nearly 10 years after your body starts to show signs of problems with how you metabolize sugars? Nearly 80% of people spike up, then drop low, with the common foods we eat. Our clinic utilizes continuous glucose monitors to see how your body responds to the food you're eating. After establishing a baseline, we then have lifestyle, supplements, medications, injectables, and advanced therapies to smooth out your glucose metabolism.

3. Poor sleep: Restless nights can impact your attention, focus, mood, and even the way your body processes sugar (see #2). There are many ways we can help you get a refreshing night's sleep so you can be your best.

4. Nutrient deficiencies: Our food is not packed with nutrients like it used to be, and or stressful lives increase the need for nutrients-bad combination! We can test for your vitamin levels directly and love our IV vitamin infusions which tend to improve the energy of our patients from days to weeks after! Just 45 minutes in our office can make a big difference.



THE JAMES CLINIC



Mollie James
 DO, MPH, IFMCP

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Meet your *Stroll Clarkson Valley* team! We'd like to thank all of our writers for their valuable contributions to the magazine.



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WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Our goal is to build community in the neighborhood by helping everyone get to know each other a little better and make *Stroll Clarkson Valley* the best it can be! Please let us know how we are doing.

Do you have any article ideas? How about ideas on neighborhood events? This is your publication!

WANT TO WRITE FOR STROLL CLARKSON VALLEY?

We are always looking for community members who would like to take an active role in writing stories for *Stroll Clarkson Valley*. We currently have openings for resident article contributors and junior writers — kids who want to get involved, gain valuable experience, and/or build their resumes and portfolios! If you or someone you know might be interested, please email Bill. Tuttle@n2co.com.

NEW TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

Are you and your family new to the neighborhood? If so, welcome! Please send your contact information to Bill. Tuttle@n2co.com to be added to our event invitations and contact list.



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CLARKSON VALLEY
Living

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THERE'S A NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN

BY CLARKSON VALLEY MAYOR SUE MCNAMARA, RESIDENT OF KEHRS MILL ESTATES
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Changes. They come and they go. Last April our City elected the second mayor in Clarkson Valley's history and we're now part of another change. There's a new Sheriff in town with the promotion of the second Police Chief in Chesterfield's history. Her name is Chief Cheryl Funkhouser.

Clarkson Valley has long enjoyed a close relationship with the City of Chesterfield. When asked for my zip code, 63005, the response is frequently "Oh, Chesterfield." Well, not really but we partner with Chesterfield in many ways, including the contractual arrangement for our law enforcement with the Chesterfield Police Department. Clarkson Valley has 6 fully dedicated officers who wear our City's identification, as well as 2 SROs (School Resource Officers). As of the end of January, they all answer to a new boss, Chief Cheryl Funkhouser.

Chief Funkhouser is a classic "hire from within" promotion. She has 30 years of Law enforcement experience, and her resume is impressive. She is a graduate of St Louis CC (AA, Applied Science, Criminal Justice), Lindenwood University (BA, Human Resource, HR Mgmt (MCL)), University of VA (MA, Public Safety), as well as a graduate of the FBI National Academy.

She began her career with the University City Police Department in 1993 as a Patrol Officer and joined the Chesterfield Department in 1995

as a Lead Field Training Instructor. Her various assignments include Community Affairs Specialist, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Captain, and she has now taken command as Chief of Chesterfield Police Department.

She has big shoes to fill.

Chesterfield knew what they were getting when the City was first incorporated in 1988 and asked Chief Raymond Johnson (Retired) to create and develop Chesterfield's first Police Department, which currently includes 99 commissioned and 12 civilian personnel. A graduate of St Louis Police Academy (first in his class), his extensive background in law enforcement dates from the mid-70s. He served as Associate Dir. and Chief of Police for the City of Des Peres and Chief of Police for Cape Girardeau before accepting the challenge to join the City of Chesterfield. He also served with the City of St Louis Fire Dept and was the owner and part-time manager of Midwest Fire Protection, Inc. He holds academic degrees from Meramec CC (AA, Criminal Justice Mgmt), Tarkio College, STL Ext (BS, Criminal Justice), Webster University (MA, Public Admin), and numerous training and professional commendations as well as many other accolades. He is a guest lecturer and the author of numerous professional articles.

His retirement is well-earned.

We have been and will be truly fortunate to have Chief Johnson and Chief Funkhouser and their officers on our streets and in our city. I'm sure you join me in wishing both Chiefs the best in their new roles.

Godspeed,
Sue McNamara,
Mayor
Clarkson Valley



Sue is a 36-year resident of Clarkson Valley. Her children, Steve and Leah are Marquette graduates. A proud member of a military family, Sue's previous career as a Senior Account Executive at Anheuser Busch spanned 20 years. She previously served on the Board of Kehrs Mill Estates Residents Association as well as the past five years on the Clarkson Valley Board of Aldermen. Sue is also a Certified Sommelier!



Clarkson Valley
Recycling Results
Most Recent Monthly
Recycling Tonnage
Report: 24.37 Tons

CURRENT MARKET TRENDS FOR CLARKSON VALLEY

FROM TRACEY DE SIMON, PROFESSIONAL REALTOR
COLDWELL BANKER REALTY - GUNDAKER



Today, I will be diving into some key real estate metrics that can provide valuable insights into the current market conditions. By analyzing these metrics, you will be better equipped to make informed decisions about buying or selling properties.

Fannie Mae 1004 MC Statistics

INVENTORY ANALYSIS	PRIOR 7 - 12 MONTHS (1/3/2023-7/6/2-23)	PRIOR 4 - 6 MONTHS (7/7/2023-10/4/2-23)	CURRENT - 3 MONTHS (7/7/2023-10/4/2-23)
Total # of Comparable Sales (Settled)	0	4	6
Absorption Rate (Total Sales/Months)	0.00	1.33	2.00
Total # of Comparable Active Listings	2	2	0
Months of Housing Supply (Lst/Ab. Rate)	0.00	1.5	0.00

Median Sales & List Price DOM	PRIOR 7 - 12 MONTHS	PRIOR 4 - 6 MONTHS	CURRENT - 3 MONTHS
Median Comparable Sale Price	\$0	\$850,000	\$735,000
Median Comparable Sales DOM	0	5	23
Median Comparable List Price (Listings Only)	\$1,974,500	\$512,500	\$0
Median Comparable Listings DOM (Listings Only)	201	60	0
Median Sale Price?Median List Price %	0.00%	97.43%	99.80%

The total number of Comparable Active Listings is based on listings that were On Market on the end date of the specified time periods above.

Residential Closed Properties

Address	High School	List Price	Sold Price	Sold Date	DOM	Beds	Baths	SqFt	Age	SP%LP
2131 Park Forest Dr	Marquette	\$400,000	\$370,000	11/17/23	27	4	3 (2/1)	2,773	48	92.50
2266 Ridgley Woods Dr	Lafayette	\$625,000	\$610,000	10/13/23	92	4	3 (2/1)	2,967	41	87.16
17794 Westhampton Woods Dr	Lafayette	\$673,000	\$660,000	10/27/23	18	4	5 (3/2)	3,535	26	98.07
12 Crownhill Lane	Marquette	\$849,900	\$775,000	9/19/23	4	3	4 (2/2)	2,688	55	91.19
2007 Kehrsdale Ct	Marquette	\$809,999	\$800,000	10/02/23	5	4	7 (5/2)	3,626	30	98.77
15895 Kettington Rd	Marquette	\$800,000	\$810,000	10/25/23	4	4	4 (3/1)	2,453	50	101.25
290 Herworth Dr	Marquette	\$950,000	\$900,000	10/2/23	314	4	4 (2/2)	3,587	44	83.72
2341 Sterling Pointe Dr	Marquette	\$895,000	\$925,000	9/25/23	2	5	5 (4/1)	3,970	30	103.35
15978 Kettington Rd	Marquette	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	12/27/23	0	6	5 (4/1)	4,284	53	100.00
129 Chippenham Lane	Marquette	\$2,999,000	\$2,800,000	10/12/23	88	7	8 (5/3)	7,029	6	84.85

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In the heart of Clarkson Valley, the Stewart family, Jeramey, Carolyn, and Wade sum up the warmth and camaraderie that defines our close-knit community. With their love for each other, passion for various activities, and commitment to our Forest Hills neighborhood involvement, this family has become an integral part of our community.



A SLICE
of FOREST HILLS LIFE

with the *Stewarts*

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY MINI MOMENTS BY ALLISON WILLIAMS

- The family cherishes the
- sense of community in
- Clarkson Valley



Originally from O'Fallon, MO, Jeramey found his way to Clarkson Valley, while Carolyn's roots are firmly planted in the nearby town of Ballwin. Since the spring of 2019, they have called Forest Hills home, finding comfort in the green surroundings and the welcoming of neighbors.

Jeramey, a Hospitalist Physician, and Carolyn, the Chief of Staff for a local company, bring a blend of medical expertise and organizational flair to the community. Beyond their professional lives, their shared interests create a vibrant foundation for their family.

An avid golfer, Jeramey can often be found honing his skills on the local golf courses. His love for construction and building projects around the house is shown in the porch swing he meticulously crafted for their home. Meanwhile, Carolyn unwinds with pinochle and needlepoint, creating a balance of relaxation and creativity. Together, they enjoy family adventures – walking, hiking, and golf cart rides with their fur baby Chloe.

Their newest addition, Wade, at seven months, already expresses an interest in people-watching, adding a delightful dynamic to their family outings. The Stewarts relish the coziness of home, frequenting the Forest Hills Club with friends, and exploring St. Louis gems such as the Zoo, Botanical Gardens, and the Art Museum – a particular favorite of Wade's!

When it comes to dining, they indulge in the culinary delights of Veritas, Mulligans, Rosalita's, Imo's Pizza, and Signature India. Family dinners are often a feast from the smoker – salmon, brisket, and chicken thighs. A homemade butter chicken dish is another favorite!

As for traditions, the Stewarts are eager to start new ones now that Wade is a part of the picture. Wade's fascination with football aligns perfectly with Jeramey's love for the game. Carolyn actively contributes to the community by serving on the board of the Gateway Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, exemplifying their commitment to making a positive impact.

The family's favorite holiday is the 4th of July, celebrated with our uniquely Forest Hills flair! They decorate their golf cart and along with Chloe, join the neighborhood parade, followed by a barbecue and fireworks show.

The family cherishes the sense of community in Clarkson Valley, highlighted by the joy of cruising around the neighborhood in their golf cart. Summer, with its poolside relaxation and leisurely Strolls, is their favorite time of year.

In the spirit of a good laugh, the family recalls Jeramey's diverse living experiences – from an underground earth home to the Caribbean. On the flip side, Carolyn's adventures have kept her closer to home!

Sharing the joy of the birth of Wade in 2023, the Stewarts invite their neighbors to join them on this exciting journey through parenthood. As they continue to build memories and weave their story into the fabric of Forest Hills, their warmth and enthusiasm enrich the spirit of our community.



Get to know your neighbors better by having your family featured in the next available issue and receive a free mini-photoshoot from our Photographer or nominate a family and we'll contact them! Email Bill.Turtle@r2co.com

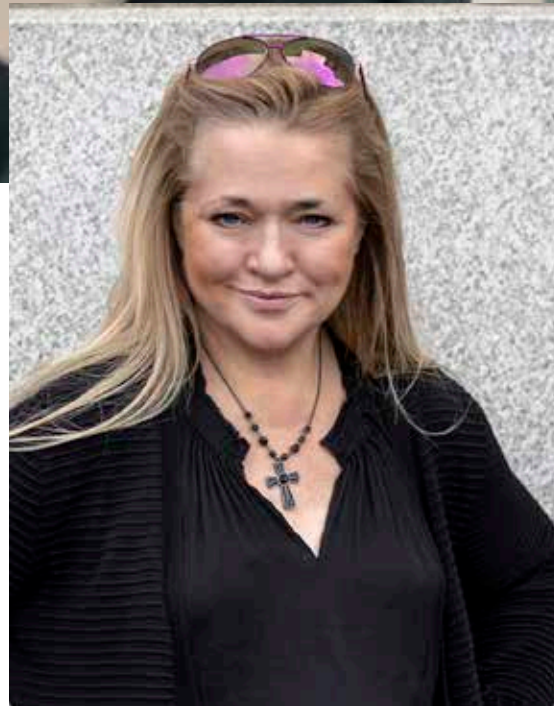
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Attorney & Mediator Julia L. Gray

MEET JULIA L. GRAY OF PARAMOUNT LEGAL

Safeguarding legacies, nurturing families and more!

In West St. Louis County, Attorney and Mediator Julia L. Gray has served thousands of clients as a trusted partner over the last 35 years, helping clients write their life stories through their wills, trusts, prenuptial agreements, powers of attorney and other estate planning tools. As a natural progression from creating trust plans, Julia also handles trust administration, helping families unravel and distribute their loved ones' property. Not only has she provided clients with a sense of security, but she

distinguishes herself as an attorney by listening to what the client needs and wants, reminding all involved that this is the *client's* story we are writing. Every family is different, and every family has a different story. The Team at Paramount Legal truly finds joy in providing "extraordinary legal services to ordinary people."

Julia's journey into estate planning started early in her career. After leaving the large downtown law firm to open her own practice, Julia realized how much she enjoyed listening to clients' life stories, their concerns regarding their children and grandchildren, and then working to craft a unique estate plan for each family. In her words, "At the core of every legal concern, there is a unique family wanting peace of mind. We don't do 'cookie cutter' estate plans because there are no 'cookie cutter' families."

Licensed in Missouri and Illinois, raised in Kansas and Colorado, and graduated from Rockhurst University in Kansas City and University of Minnesota Law School, Julia is rooted in the Midwest. She and her husband have lived in St. Louis since 1988, raising their three boys through a combination of private and public schools. Julia often says that "There's no better place in the world to raise children than St. Louis."

Mediation came naturally to Julia as part of her law practice, and she began formal mediation training in 2018 at the Chicago Center for Conflict Resolution, continuing her formal education there annually. Because estate planning and trust administration often involve sensitive, emotional, and/or heated issues, Julia's mediation skills are most often used simply helping families find a peaceful way forward, with as little lasting conflict as possible. Once the client leaves her office, that client will still need to live with the people involved. Too often attorneys don't consider "what will this be like for this family five years from now?" At Paramount Legal, the Team discusses these issues outright when relevant and appropriate.

One of Julia's key areas of expertise lies in shielding families from the often-daunting probate process. With attention to detail, she crafts legal strategies that avoid the pitfalls of probate, ensuring a smooth transition of assets to children, grandchildren, friends, and charities. Families who entrust their estate planning to Julia and Paramount Legal can rest easy, knowing that their wishes will be carried out, and their legacies preserved with the utmost care.

Beyond the legal intricacies, Julia emphasizes the importance of open communication within families. She facilitates conversations that transcend legal jargon, fostering an environment where loved ones can openly discuss their desires and concerns. For Julia, the essence of her work lies in listening to clients and working together with those clients to create legal documents that protect their families.

In an ever-changing world, Julia L. Gray stands as a pillar of stability, offering families in both Missouri and Illinois the assurance they need to face the future with confidence. Her commitment to the well-being of her clients goes beyond the courtroom, making her a true advocate for the preservation of family legacies. Through Paramount Legal, Julia brings not just legal expertise but a compassionate touch to estate planning, proving that with her by your side, you're not just a client—your family, and your legacy is in capable hands.

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What is the Value of Your Business?

Sponsored by Phil Wight, Wealth Management Advisor at Synergy Wealth Solutions

In the second quarter of 2023, more than 2,300 small businesses were sold. The median sale price was roughly \$300,000, down 14% from the same time last year.¹

As a business owner, ascertaining the value of your business is important for a variety of reasons, including business succession, estate tax estimates, or qualifying for a loan.

There are a number of valuation techniques, ranging from the simple to the very complex. Outlined below are three different approaches to valuing a business.

1. ASSET BASED: Calculates the value of all tangible and intangible assets held by the business. This approach ignores the future earning potential of the company. Thus, a pure asset-based valuation model is often used for companies that are bankrupt or looking to liquidate.

2. EARNINGS BASED: Seeks to arrive at a business' value by applying a multiple to normalized earnings, i.e., earnings

adjusted to subtract owner's compensation and related expenses. The multiplier can vary substantially, depending upon the industry and the outlook for the business.

3. MARKET BASED: Compares the business to recent sales of similar companies.

Business valuation is not just a formulaic exercise. For instance, there is a value to the business of being a "going concern" as opposed to the start-up alternative. Ownership percentage will also matter; purchasing a minority share that has limited control may result in a discount to the actual value. The prospects for the business can impact its value. A greater premium will likely apply to a company engaged in a leading-edge technology than it would to one involved in a mature market.

Valuing a small business is not an exact science. Some aspects of the valuation may be debatable (e.g., the

remaining life expectancy of a machine), while other aspects may be positively subjective (e.g., the value of the company's reputation).

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The true value of anything can only be determined when a willing seller and a willing buyer agree on a price of exchange. As a consequence, any valuation exercise may yield only a rough estimate.

Before moving forward with a business valuation, consider working with legal and tax professionals who are familiar with the process. Also, a qualified business appraiser may be able to offer some valuable insight.

¹ BizBuySell.com, 2023

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SCENES FROM THE HOLIDAY SEASON!

Special thanks to the Clarkson Valley families for sharing these wonderful images!

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- 1. The Patel Family of West Hampton!
- 2. Natalie, Christina, Josie & John Benoist of Clarkson Farm pose for a holiday photo.
- 3. The Brown family dogs of Kehrs Mill Trails enjoy a Yuletide fire.
- 4. Hannah, Christian & Gabby Macari of Forest Hills!
- 5. Jessica, Reese, Riley & Darrick Griggs of Kehrs Mill Estates!
- 6. The Butchko family photo with Santa at Forest Hills!
- 7. Laura, Abby & Brian Gunter of Clarkson Farm!
- 8. Reese & Riley Griggs with Charlie!




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Dazzling Clarkson Valley Gymnastic Stars Soar to Success!

As they come bouncing into Olympia Gymnastics Training Centers to train, gymnasts from Clarkson Valley are gearing up for competition. Here young gymnasts share their best, most challenging and most rewarding aspects of being a competitive gymnast.

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Emma Coffey performing on the balance beam!



Emma & Lulu Coffey with their awards!

EMMA COFFEY, 6 years old, attends Ellisville Elementary and has been involved with gymnastics for three years. She competes at Level 3 and in four events: vault, beam, bars, and floor. She won 1st place on vault at Regionals in 2023 and 1st place in all events, including All-Around.

Emma loves to compete and master new skills. Her proudest moment: When she got her first “KIP” at practice. “Ring the bell and showing my teammates that I finally got a skill I had been working on for so long!” In her spare time, Emma likes to read and draw comics, and watch movies with her family. **Her motto: “Work hard and don’t give up when things get tough. Push through the tough times and you can achieve anything you want!”**



Sloane Pagan strikes a winning pose!



Sloane Pagan bringing home the spoils!

SLOANE PAGAN, 8 years old, attends Kehrs Mill Elementary and started gymnastics when she was 2 years old. She competes at Level 2 in four events: floor, beam, bars, and vault. Sloane won 2nd place in All-Around at her most recent competition.

Sloane loves making new friends and cheering for them. Her proudest moment: “Achieving a new skill that I’ve been working on for months.” She also likes doing crafts, playing softball (Go Mayhem!), Girl Scouting and riding bikes with friends. **Her motto: “Stick with it! There are days I don’t want to go to practice. But I always have fun once I get there.”**



Hannah McDonald strikes a pose!



Hannah McDonald with hardware and her Dad Brock!

HANNAH MACDONALD, 8 years old and has been involved in gymnastics for three years. She competes at Level 3 and her favorite events are balance beam and uneven bars. She has won medals in every event including All-Around.

Hannah likes working hard with her team three days a week and learning new skills. Her proudest moment: “Scoring my first career overall 36+ at the 2023 Missouri State Championships where I finished 3rd overall!” The most challenging part is not getting deductions and “remembering my full routine.”

Outside of gymnastics, Hannah enjoys swimming, art, playing outside, and spending time with her family. **Her motto: “You may not do everything right, but the most important thing is enjoying what you’re doing and being a good team-mate and eat well and get a lot of sleep.”**



Parker Kennedy with her awards!



Parker Kennedy on the stand!

PARKER KENNEDY, 9 years old, attends Ellisville Elementary and started gymnastics when she was a year old! She has been competitive for two years. She competes at Level 4 on beam and floor. Parker won 2nd place on floor at State and 1st place on beam at the “10 years old and under” division in 2023.

Parker likes learning new skills. Her proudest moment: “Getting my first 9 on beam last year.” For Parker, the most challenging part about being a competitive gymnast is, “Getting bad scores and doubting myself.”

Parker spends time reading and hanging out with her friends. **Her motto: “I think younger girls would love to try it!”**



Lulu Coffey all smiles!

LULU COFFEY, 10, attends Ellisville Elementary and has been competitive for three years. She competes at Level 4 in four events: bars, beam, vault, and floor. She won xcel bronze last year and took 1st place in All-Around when she was only five years old.

What Lulu likes most about competitive gymnastics is that she can earn medals. “I just love everything about it! It’s so much fun.” Her proudest moment: “When I got my front hip circle, roundoff back handspring and my aerial on the trampoline.”

Lulu likes to craft, spend time swimming and playing with her cousins. **Her motto: “Try gymnastics, you will love it!”**

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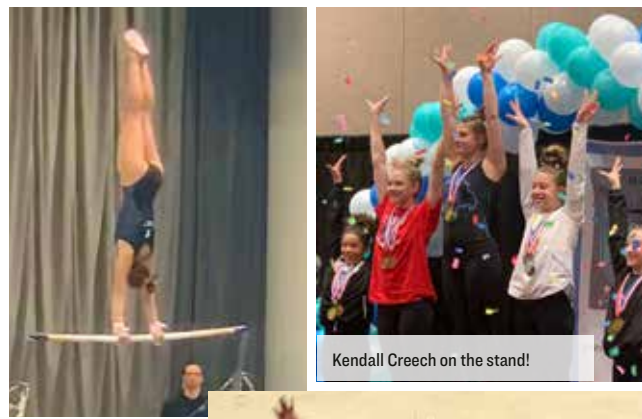
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Kendall Creech on the high bar!



Kendall Creech on the stand!



Kendall Creech performing on the balance beam!

KENDALL CREECH, 17, attends Marquette High School and has been competitive since she was six years old. Kendall competes for Gym Quarters (www.gymquarters.com) at Level 10 in All-Around: vault, bars, beam, and floor. Her proudest moment: "In 2022 when I qualified and took 1st AA for Region IV. And being a two-time Region IV Vault Champion for 2022 and 2023".

Kendall likes the challenge and difficulty of gymnastics. "There is always something I can get better at, and it is always fun to try new skills. I love my teammates and have made best friends." The most challenging aspect is feeling she can be "overly competitive."

Kendall loves to read and hang out with friends on weekends. She is a hostess at Mulligans and plays the piano. She is in the gym at least 20 hours a week. **Her motto:** "Gymnastics is about practice and perseverance so don't give up if you can't get a skill for the first time."



The Coaching Staff at Olympia!

Parents are an integral part of an athlete's experience. Brock MacDonald, a gymnastic parent shares this insight: "Parents need to understand that the true point of competitive gymnastics is to build your child up in multiple ways: increase their confidence, provide them with an environment where they'll be happy, and afford them all the health benefits of being an active youngster."

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Winston

The adorable Scottish Terrier!

Hey there, I'm Winston, the four-year-old Scottish terrier, ready to share my story of tail-wagging adventures and heartwarming moments with my beloved family—Kian, Gina, Kiki the cat, and Donatello the turtle.

I joined this fantastic family after a long search led them to South Dakota to rescue me from a Scottie haven. They wanted a companion to fill the paw-sized hole left by their previous Scottie, and voila, here I am! As a wedding present to themselves, they brought me home after tying the knot. Lucky me, right?

Now, let's talk names. I'm Winston, named after a character from one of their favorite shows. Can you guess which one? Well, it suits me, doesn't it? I've got a knack for making friends with all kinds of critters. There was this time I found a baby squirrel, gave it a smooch, and snuggled up with it in the yard. I'm a social guy who checks on Donatello, my turtle brother, with a quick sniff here and there during his Strolls around the house.

I take pride in my intelligence—I can sit, stay, shake, and even clap. Impressive, right? But what my family loves most about me is my sweet nature. I've never done anything wrong, and I'm



a friend to everyone, whether they're family or strangers. I'm also an expert nap buddy, ready for cuddles at any time.

Now, let me spill the beans on a funny puppy tale. Back in the day, I was a fence escape artist. I'd slip through, run to the front door, and scratch until they let me in. Why? Because I couldn't wait to shower them with love and

snuggles. Even today, wherever they go in the house, I follow. Car rides, walks, you name it—I'm their loyal companion.

As for being spoiled, I admit it—I'm living the good life. Toy boxes, fruits, veggies, multiple beds, and the cherry on top: sleeping in their bed with my best buddy, Kiki our cat. I'm their main man, and they say I've enriched their

lives. When they leave the house, I always look forward to their return, and they even check in on me with the camera when they're away. It's a dog's life, and I'm loving every moment!

Do you have a family pet we could feature? We want to meet them! Email Bill.Tuttle@n2co.com.

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Face Painting at Brunch with Santa was a hit!

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What can you say about Yellowstone National Park?

BY RICK HUEMOELLER, RESIDENT OF KEHRSWOOD

It's huge, over two million acres. I believe you could spend two weeks, 12 hours a day, exploring Yellowstone and never see the same site twice. Yellowstone is at the intersection of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. Though Wyoming contains 96% of the park. It has an incredible amount of wildlife. An estimated 4000 buffalo (American Bison), 30,000 elk, thousands of pronghorns (a beautiful small antelope-like animal), numerous Black bears and Grizzly bears, just to name a few.

The area was created millions of years ago by a super volcanic event. Yellowstone is located in a gigantic caldera. A caldera is a large cauldron-like hollow that forms shortly after the emptying of a magma chamber in a volcano eruption. Yellowstone is our first National Park, established on March 1, 1872. When it was first founded there were 50 buffalo, as stated before, now there are 4,000. Buffalo were almost hunted to extinction. There were many reasons for this, buffalo tongue was considered a gourmet delicacy in 19th century America, and a buffalo robe was highly prized.

The main reason for their near extinction was the United States Government. After the Civil War ended, the US



government took a huge interest in its wars against the Western Indian tribes. The plains Indians relied heavily on the buffalo for their existence. The buffalo's meat provided food, their hides provided lodging, and their bones provided tools for the Indians. The federal government's reasoning was, wipe out the buffalo, and you will wipe out the Indians. It almost succeeded.

Buffalo in Yellowstone reigns supreme. Buffalo can go everywhere they wish, and no one will interfere. I saw a buffalo park itself by the steps of a huge tourist building, containing numerous restaurants, souvenir shops, and lodging. No one tried to make the animal move, instead, three park rangers formed a perimeter around it so that visitors couldn't get too close and in harm's way.

I saw thousands of Elk, in several herds, and pronghorns by the hundreds. My wife, Sharon, and I have even seen several black bears, though numerous, they are extremely sly and try to stay out of sight. We felt very fortunate to see them.

Geysers, the most famous being Old Faithful, hot springs and other natural wonders are abundant. If you go to see Old Faithful, at the stated time of an eruption, be prepared to be with hundreds of your closest friends. It's an event you have to see if you're in the park.

The beauty of the park would match or surpass any natural wonder found anywhere in this great big world of ours. The mountains, plains, thermal wonders, wildflowers, and so much more vegetation will take your breath away. Truly, I have just touched on the wonders of Yellowstone. It should be a must on everyone's bucket list. If you have time, visit Jackson Hole, and hobnob with all the billionaires that hang out there.

The next travel article will be on the surprising wonderful country of Cambodia.

Happy and Safe Travels to everyone!

Rick and Sharon Huemoeller

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