Residents bring Granny Basketball to Louisburg

Basketball with no running or jumping. Is that even possible?

It is if you are playing Granny Basketball.

A Granny Basketball team is coming to Miami County and organizers Jean Carder and Becky Berg, Louisburg, are looking for women to join the fun. What exactly is Granny Basketball?

It’s basketball for ladies over 50 years of age who are interested in a little fun and fellowship on the basketball court. The Granny Basketball League started in Iowa in 2005 as a fun, yet competitive, exercise for women over 50 and as an avenue for charitable giving; wholesome, nostalgic and sometimes humorous entertainment, a recognition for mature women and a method of preserving the history of six-on-six basketball, according to league materials.

“It’s just plain fun,” says Carder. She got the idea to start a local granny basketball team after reading a story in the Kansas City Star about a Border Showdown game between teams from Lawrence and Missouri.

Carder, who can be heard on the sidelines of Louisburg High School activities, had been looking for something to get involved in after becoming an empty-nester. Granny basketball seemed to fit the bill so she contacted some “mature” girlfriends to see if anyone wanted to join the fun.

Berg, a cancer survivor, jumped at the chance to add a different type of exercise to her health program and one that also involved some laughs and fellowship. Carder and Berg went to Lawrence to watch the Kansas Grayhawkers and Gray Tornados practice. After one practice, the duo were hooked.

“We had a blast,” Carder said. “I have a slight competitive spirit so it’s fun to get out on the court and have some laughs with the other ladies. But Becky and I don’t think those Lawrence ladies know the correct height for the goals. They seemed awfully tall.”

The rules of the game follow Iowa high school girls rules from the 1920s. The court is divided into three sections and players stay in their designated section. There are 2 guards who are defenders. There are 1 to 2 centers who play in the center third of the court and are the passers. The two forwards are the scorers.

The twist to all this? Uniforms reflect those worn in the ’20s so players were bloomers, long-sleeved shirts and a middy collar with the number on it.

An interest meeting with light practice/shoot-around is planned for 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday at the West Gym in Louisburg. While RSVPs aren’t necessary, Carder said she would love to know how many to expect. She can be reached at 837-5719.

If you can’t attend the meeting but are interested, contact her for more information. Wear your workout clothes, tennis shoes and bring a bottle of water.

“We’d love to have gals from the other communities in the county to come on over and check it out,” Carder said. “It would be great fun if we could get a couple Miami County teams formed.” “We’d like anyone with a passing interest to come out and learn more about granny basketball.”

The season won’t actually kick off until next spring but some summer and fall practices are in the works. More information on Granny Basketball can be found at www.grannybasketball.com or look on Facebook at KansasGBB.

All-Frontier League Softball Team

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE SOFTBALL

First Team

Catcher: Sierra Sanderson, Spring Hill, junior

Infield: Kayla Kurtz, Baldwin, freshman; Jordan Flakus, Eudora, junior; Shea Mesik, Ottawa, senior; Dani Townley, Spring Hill, senior

Outfield: **Miranda White, Louisburg, senior**; Bayleigh Nelson, Ottawa, senior; Morgan Laudan, Paola, senior

Pitcher: Jordan Johnson, Paola, sophomore; Sarah Brown, Spring Hill, junior

Utility: Kylee Bremer, Baldwin, senior

Second Team

Catcher: Courtney Earring, Paola, junior

Infield: Kellee Wiggins, Baldwin, sophomore; Kamryn Shaffer, Ottawa, sophomore; Allison Daggett, Paola, junior; Matti Morgan, Paola, junior

Outfield: Sieana Hall, Baldwin, sophomore; Kylie Corneliusen, De Soto, senior; Elizabeth Hays, Spring Hill, sophomore

Pitcher: Kyla Etter, Eudora, freshman; **Allyssa Griggs, Louisburg, junior**

Utility: Carly Bodenhausen, De Soto, sophomore

Honorable Mention

Catcher: **Emalee Overbay, Louisburg, junior**; Jocelyn Woods, Ottawa, sophomore

Infield: Mackenzie Smith, De Soto, junior; Payton Faddis, De Soto, sophomore; Brooklynn Beerbower, Eudora, junior; **Molly Rison, Louisburg, freshman**; Courtney Clayton, Ottawa, senior

Outfield: Audrey Flowers, Baldwin, freshman; McKinley Markley, Baldwin, sophomore; Devin Purcell, Eudora, sophomore; Jasmine Thevarajoo, Eudora, junior; Meghan Smith, Paola, senior; Regan Smith, Spring Hill, sophomore

Pitcher: Lauren Dandreo, Ottawa, freshman

Utility: Alaina Howe, Eudora, sophomore; Ashaya Blevins, Ottawa, junior

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LHS seniors surprise Dennis with special gift



Damon Dennis, owner of Louisburg Chiropractic, shows off his new mini bass guitar with a Wildcat logo on it. The guitar was given to him as a gift from several Louisburg High School seniors and their families for his years of service to the LHS athletic programs.

Damon Dennis is a busy man.

If owning and running your own business isn't taxing enough, Dennis has spent the last 24 years running back and forth to Louisburg High School serving as the school's athletic trainer – something he does at no charge.

"I do it because I enjoy being around the kids," Dennis said. "I just want to help in any way that I can."

Lauren Dunn, and some of the other seniors at LHS, thought he deserved a little bit more.

Dunn, who has paid numerous visits to Dennis' Louisburg Chiropractic office and has had several ankles taped by the good doctor, wanted to get him something special.

So with the help of her parents Janie and Donnie, and twin brother Alex, Lauren started collecting donations since the beginning of the year and they found the perfect gift – a mini bass guitar.

It wasn't just any guitar as the group had it custom made to have the Wildcat logo put on it.

"This community is blessed with some of the best people and

Doc D is a selfless person and always puts the kids before him, even if some of them might get on his nerves," Lauren said. "But he means the world to me and I am going to be sad next year without Doc D by my side while I am playing volleyball at Pittsburg State."

So, what would a chiropractor and team doctor need with a bass guitar? Well, music is also a big part of Dennis' life.

In his down time, he is a member of the local band 68 Overpass and they play several gigs throughout the year.

To complete the surprise, the group of LHS seniors paid a visit to his gig at Timbercreek earlier this month. It was there that several seniors got up to speak and thank him for his service.



Louisburg senior Lauren Dunn presents Dr. Damon Dennis with a plaque earlier this month at Timbercreek. A group of LHS

seniors surprised Dennis and thanked him for his years of service.

Lauren, Alex, Anders Vance and Jarod Woodward all made little speeches before they, and seniors Sierra Reinhart, Tristan Shrock and Cassidy Hink presented him with the guitar.

“I didn’t know or think anything about it because a lot of the people that were there usually come to the shows anyway,” Dennis said. “Then Donnie (Dunn) got up and said something and then I knew something was going on.”

Lauren also presented Dennis with a commemorative plaque along with some gift cards for all his help over the years.

The present took a little work to get to put together. The Dunn family corresponded with Damon’s wife, Karla, to keep it a secret.

Other senior families quickly became involved in different ways, whether it was with donations or helping pick out the perfect gift.

“We started collecting money during football season and wanted to present it to him at graduation but Doc wasn’t going to be in town,” Janie Dunn said. “Donnie mentioned to do it when 68 overpass was playing at Timbercreek and so that worked. I’m surprised we kept it quiet this long. We had a lot of donors and I tried to spread the word to all sports and keep it a secret. I think he was surprised.”

Needless to say he was a little shocked.

“Apparently it was the quite the undertaking,” Dennis said. “For them to do it and for me to not hear about it is pretty significant because I usually hear about everything that is going on. But for them to go to that much trouble for me…it is just really nice. I just love the kids and being around them.”

The effort to put the surprise together was well worth it to everyone involved as it was their way to say “Thank you” to the man who was always there for them when they needed it.

“Doc is a huge part of this community and he takes the time every day after school to come tape us or help us with injuries, for free,” Alex said. “He has a big impact on the athletic programs here.

“For me personally, it was a heartfelt moment because Doc and I have a great friendship and he deserved this.”

LMS cheer shines at competition



Members of the Louisburg Middle School cheerleading team are (front row, from left) Sidney Wilson, Cecila Bindi, Olivia Chase, Ashlyn McManigal, Lexi Pena, Olivia Barber, Jenna Terry, Andrea Gaza; (middle row) Kira Payton, Brooke Lancaster, Patches Oxford, Aly Traffis, Eleanor Willming, Madison Burgess, Sydney Thornton; (back row) Elizabeth Kratochvil, Shelby Grandon, Gabby Tappan, Kami Geiman, Lauren Vincent, Brooklyn Mitchell, Alyse Moore, Emma Christy, Jadyn Amren and Avery Graham.

BALDWIN CITY – The Louisburg Middle School cheerleading team traveled to Baldwin High School on Saturday in hopes of putting on its best performance of the season.



Members of the one the LMS cheer stunt groups to earn a '1' rating are (clockwise, in front) Sydney Thornton, Lexi Pena, Gabby Tappan, Alyse Moore; (standing) Ashlyn McManigal.

The group of seventh and eighth graders did just that.

In front of the judges and other programs, the LMS team received a '1' rating for their performance during the Baldwin Cheer and Dance Festival. The awards kept coming after that.

Louisburg was one of the top four teams chosen by the

judges and earned the overall top choreography honors.

Members of the Louisburg team are Kira Payton, Brooke Lancaster, Aly Traffis, Eleanor Willming, Madison Burgess, Sydney Thornton, Sidney Wilson, Patches Oxford, Cecila Bindi, Olivia Chase, Ashlyn McManigal, Lexi Pena, Olivia Barber, Jenna Terry, Andrea Gaza, Elizabeth Kratochvil, Shelby Grandon, Gabby Tappan, Kami Geiman, Lauren Vincent, Brooklyn Mitchell, Alyse Moore, Emma Christy, Jadyn Amren, Avery Graham and manager Morgan Messer.

“The girls were awesome,” Louisburg coach Suzanne Reedy said. “I just want to thank our district and community who support, not only cheer but all of our extra-curricular activities. We had the best showing of support and it was incredible.”

Louisburg also entered two groups into the stunt competition and both fared well.



Members of the second LMS cheer stunt group to earn a ‘1’ rating are (clockwise, in front) Jenna Terry, Aly

Traffis, Kami Geiman, Patches Oxford; (standing) Cecilia Bindi.

One team that featured Geiman, Bindi, Traffis, Terry and Oxford earned a ‘1’ rating as did the group of Tappan, McManigal, Pena, Moore and Thornton.

Cheerleaders thrive at FCCJC competition



The Louisburg second grade cheerleading squad brought home a first and third place trophy on Nov. 22 following the FCCJC Cheer and Dance Competition at Shawnee Mission West. Members of the team are (front row, from left) Reese Anderson, Jessica Felder, McKinley Harmon, Kimmie Powls; (back row) Shyloh Waite, Kaylee Crooks, Joslyn Burke, Madeline Hughes and Ally Bell.

During the fall football season, a group of second- and fourth-grade Louisburg cheerleaders spent their weekends cheering on Louisburg football teams playing for the Football

and Cheerleading Club of Johnson County (FCCJC).

Recently, those same cheerleaders had a chance to move from the sidelines and into the spotlight.

On Nov. 22, the two cheerleading groups made their way to Shawnee Mission West High School for the FCCJC Cheer and Dance Competition and both teams came home with a lot of hardware to show for their efforts.

The second-grade group finished first overall in the cheer competition out of nine teams and came in third in the dance portion of the contest.

Cheering for the Louisburg second-grade team were Reese Anderson, Jessica Felder, McKinley Harmon, Kimmie Powls, Shyloh Waite, Kaylee Crooks, Joslyn Burke, Madeline Hughes and Ally Bell. Mindy Bell served as team's head coach as was assisted by Gracie Waite and Becky Harmon.

"I really couldn't have been prouder of these girls," coach Bell said. "They have all worked really hard and I was very happy for them when they got first. For all but one of the girls, this was their first year in cheerleading so they really accomplished a lot and had a great year."



Members of the Louisburg fourth-grade cheerleading team are (front row, from left) Ashley Bell, Jenna Cauthon, Riley Haas, Taylor Curry, Darci Stone, Brooklyn Harmon, Maggie Madison; (middle row) Madison O'Keefe, Sienna Blancarte, Brinley White, Rylee Hickey, Ali Marie Dubinick; (back row) Anna Poe, Isabel Bond, Isabella Moreland, Ashleigh Moore, Sophie Katzer and Bronwynn Williams.

The fourth-grade team also fared very well. Louisburg finished third in both the cheer and dance competitions out of eight teams.

Cheering for the fourth-grade team were Ashley Bell, Jenna Cauthon, Riley Haas, Taylor Curry, Darci Stone, Brooklyn Harmon, Maggie Madison, Madison O'Keefe, Sienna Blancarte, Brinley White, Rylee Hickey, Ali Marie Dubinick, Anna Poe, Isabel Bond, Isabella Moreland, Ashleigh Moore, Sophie Katzer and Bronwynn Williams. The team was coached by Jackie Bond and was assisted by Nicole Brunner and Becki Madison.

“They performed their hearts out and did the best performance we have seen them do,” coach Bond said. “Coach Becki, Nicole and I are so proud of them.”

Certified Life Safety title sponsor for Blazin’ the Burg

For the last eight years, Chris and Gail Brown have spent their time and energy helping make sure people and companies around the area stay safe – hence the name of their business.

Chris and Gail started Certified Life Safety out of their small Louisburg office in 2007, and since then it has grown by leaps and bounds. Safety and wellness have always been important to the Louisburg couple, which made their company a perfect fit to team up with one of the area’s best 5K races – Blazin’ the Burg.

Certified Life Safety is the title sponsor of the event and both are excited to be a part of the Louisburg annual race day.

“We have been a part of the Louisburg and Miami County community for over 20 years,” Gail said. “This community has given so much to our family that we feel it an honor and a blessing to be able to give back.



“We didn’t really think about the connection when we spoke with the chamber about being the title sponsor. However, we feel life safety and wellness are related; being prepared in safety and health promotes well-being in people’s lives.”

Chris has spent the last 30 years in the fire protection industry, while Gail has 15 years of experience in business administration. Starting their own business seemed like a perfect fit.

Certified Life Safety is a full service fire protection and life safety company providing design, consulting, installation, inspection, testing and maintenance of fire alarm, fire sprinkler, fire extinguisher, emergency lighting, access control and nurse call systems.

The Browns started out with small projects in the Louisburg and Paola areas and very soon saw their business grow. They secured several large clients in Kansas and Oklahoma and eventually they would open two more offices in Greenfield, Mo., and Bartlesville, Okla.

“We feel very fortunate that we have been able to expand and grow into these areas,” Gail said.

As for the race itself, Blazin the Burg is in its fifth year

and once again planning for another big crowd to invade downtown Louisburg on Sept. 19.

Registrations for the race are still underway at www.blazintheburg.com and go up until race day. From now until Sept. 17, registration is $35 and it becomes $40 on race day. There is also a kids fun run, which is $15.

Portions of each registration fee will go to benefit the Louisburg Area Recreation Association.

Registered runners and walkers will receive a race T-shirt, chip timing, mile markers, group awards and complimentary refreshments. Festivities on Broadway begin at 4 p.m. and will include live music and local vendors.

On race day, packet pick-up and registration will begin at 4 p.m., and the kids fun run will follow at 5 p.m. The 5K run/walk starts at 6 p.m., with an awards ceremony to follow.

Cunningham, Wright qualify for American Royal



Louisburg Middle School seventh-grader Lakin Cunningham (above) has already had quite the rodeo career and that continued as she, and fellow LMS student Delaney Wright, were recently selected to participate in the American Royal

Invitational Youth Rodeo.

The American Royal is one of the oldest and largest professional rodeos in the Midwest.

Every fall, people flock to Kansas City, Mo., to compete against some of the best the nation has to offer. As it turns out, two Louisburg Middle School students will be right in the thick of it.

LMS seventh-grader Lakin Cunningham and sixth-grader Delaney Wright qualified for the American Royal Invitational Youth Rodeo in Hale Arena. Both girls will compete in barrel racing and goat-tying.

This is the fifth time Cunningham has qualified for the American Royal Invitational and this is Wright's first. The girls will take to the arena on Sept. 25 for the competition.

"I am super excited that I get to compete again this year in barrel racing and goat-tying," Cunningham said. "It's been one of the highlights of my year each year since I've been 8. I'm striving for a top three finish in my events this year."

Wright and Cunningham each submitted applications of their achievements to the American Royal and both received good news.

"I'm so excited about having a chance to compete at the American Royal Youth Rodeo," Wright said. "I know I have been to a lot of rodeos but this is a step up in my career of rodeoing because I was selected by application to compete against some very tough competition."



LMS sixth-grader Delaney Wright earned a spot in her first American Royal Invitational Youth Rodeo.

Cunningham is no stranger to the rodeo as she has a lengthy list of accomplishments on her resume. Most recently, she was named as the 2016 National Little Britches Rodeo Association Princess.

Not only will she be competing in her two events, she will be helping with school agriculture tours before the rodeos begin. Cunningham will also carry in the American Flag during the Grand Entry portions of the rodeo each day and will be signing autographs as part of her duties of being the NLBRA Princess.

Cunningham was the Kansas Junior High School Rodeo Association Reserve Champion Goat Tier in 2015 and also earned her NLBRA buckle in Barrel Racing. She is a four-time Christian Youth Rodeo Association Barrel Racing Champion, three-time Goat Tying Champion and two-time All-Around Cowgirl and Pole Bending Champion.

She is also a two-time National Barrel Horse Association Kansas Pee Wee 1D Barrel Racing Champion.

Cunningham has competed in barrel races since she was 3 years old and been in youth rodeos since she was 6. Lakin is the daughter of Kara Cunningham and is the granddaughter of Jim and Sandy Lowe of Louisburg.

“I’m also excited that this year I’ll be representing the National Little Britches Rodeo Association as its Princess at the American Royal,” Lakin said. “I am so glad that I get to carry the American flag and greet the kids as they come in for the tours from all different schools in the area. I look forward to seeing everyone and would like to wish everyone that is competing good luck.”

Wright is also racking up accomplishments of her own. In 2013 and 2014, she was an All-Around Reserve champion during her competition in the Midwest Barrel Riders Association (MBRA).

She is also a two-time reserve champion in poles and barrels and was a champion goat-tier in 2013 and 2014 as well. Currently, Wright is in the middle of her third season rodeoing and is currently in the running for All-Around Champion Cowgirl in the Eastern Kansas Timed Event Circuit.

Delaney is the daughter of Andy and Amy Wright of Louisburg.

“I love doing rodeos because it is a sport where you have to rely on a 1,000 pound teammate that doesn’t speak the same language in order to win,” Wright said. “I’m so lucky to have awesome horses and have so many people support me and helping me reach my dreams in this tough sport.”

Opinion: Volunteers make Louisburg a great place



Just as a warning before going forward, this article is full of bias and might be one of the most homerish (if that is a word) pieces I have written.

So, now that I have gotten that out of the way, here it goes. Before starting Louisburg Sports Zone last February, I already knew Louisburg was a great place to live and raise a family.

It became more evident when I lost my job and started out on my own that Louisburg was truly the place for me. Why would I want to go anywhere else?

The support I have received, which I have written about before, has been a blessing and it is something I simply cannot repay. Business is great and I am very excited for what the next school year has in store.

However, this summer also provided me a different perspective on why small towns are the best places to live. It is pretty simple – volunteers.

Those are people who sacrifice their time with their families so that programs can be made available for their children to participate. It is a thankless job and one that usually is filled with countless complaints from people who – let's be honest – haven't volunteered their time and talents much in their life.

This summer gave me the opportunity to cover many different events from high school camps, Louisburg Area Recreation Association (LARA) activities and the Louisburg Barracudas swim team – among others. What makes most of these things work is the support of volunteers.

LARA is a non-profit organization completely made up of volunteers. Whether it is flag football, basketball, baseball or softball, they do their best to provide the best possible experience for your child.

Living in Louisburg as long as I have, I also know LARA doesn’t have the best reputation in the community for one reason or another. For that reason, it has been an uphill climb for this group to earn back the community’s trust.

The people with LARA, Heather Burch, Cindy Apple, Shava Vohs, Kalee Smith, Lori Driskell, Molly Strubbe, Ashley Buset, Steve Mungle and Tony Page, actually care about this community and these kids. If they didn’t, there is no way they would be donating all their time and energy to the cause.

Listen, I know at times things didn’t always go perfectly with one event or another, but nothing can ever be perfect and these volunteers are doing the best they can with what they have. In a perfect world, LARA would be a city-run organization that doesn’t rely strictly on volunteers.

For now, residents should be happy that people with big hearts are doing everything they can with your child’s best interest in mind.

Then you have the Louisburg Barracudas swim team, which to me, is really a hidden jewel within the community. I guess it can’t really be a hidden jewel when so many people know about it, but I don’t think it is talked about a lot because swimming isn’t as big of a sport here as others.

What the Barracudas offer are second-to-none in the area. Louisburg residents Kyle and Aimee Farrington are fantastic coaches who give great instructions from toddlers on up through high school. Along with having a competitive environment, it is also gives children a chance to get used to the water and learn how to swim, which is a great tool for them to have.

Just like LARA, it couldn’t happen without the help of a countless number of volunteers. Whether it’s the numerous people who serve on the board, or the parents who help run the meets, it couldn’t be accomplished without their help.

Then you see the amazing accomplishment of the Louisburg Soccer Club and parents from around the community who raised $39,000 in about 10 months to help form the Louisburg High School girls soccer team that will begin play this coming spring.

No one on that committee got paid for doing this, but people like Karin Olson, Diana Moore and others helped make this possible. All of these people have full-time jobs, and a lot of the committee members used up whatever free time they had left in their lives to make this a possibility for girls young and old in Louisburg.

Year in, and year out, the Louisburg Soccer Club and its volunteers do a fantastic job of putting together their fall and spring seasons and the club has grown a great deal in the last few years.

The same goes for the Louisburg Kids Wrestling Club as coach Matt Blancarte and high school coach Bobby Bovaird also spend a great deal of time trying to get the program to grow and provide a positive outlook for the wrestlers.

These are only a few of the organizations that give up their time to make our kids’ lives better. There are many other organizations that are non-sports related that do the exact same thing and their efforts shouldn’t go without our thanks

THANK YOU to everyone who help make these programs possible for our children, because without you our town would be a little less livable.

Flea market aids local students



Terry and Susan Tinich have a fondness for unearthing vintage relics and putting them on display with a more modern look.

They also have a love for helping children in need.

As it turns out, the Tiniches have found a way for those two passions to co-exist and benefit everyone involved, including the Louisburg community.

On June 20, the Louisburg couple organized the Louisburg Flea Market at the West Gym parking lot. They sold approximately 45 spots for venders to come in and sell their items, and despite some rainy weather, had a big turnout.

It meant a good opening weekend for the Tiniches and the rest of the vendors, but an even better one when it comes to Louisburg students.

You see, the Tiniches sell each parking space to venders for $10, not to make money for themselves, but help children and their families who might need a little assistance. All the proceeds from parking space sales go to help create pay to participate scholarships for students at Louisburg Middle and Louisburg High Schools.

“It really seems like parents just get nickled and dimed to death when it comes to fees for school,” Terry Tinich said. “It is not the district’s fault at all and it is something they have to do, but it is getting to the point where parents can’t afford all this stuff and hopefully this will help a

little bit.”

USD 416 charge middle and high school students a pay to participate fee each year. Parents must pay a $60 fee for each activity they take part in, with a maximum charge of three activities.

Terry, a teacher at Louisburg High School, and Susan, an administrator in the Cass-Midway school district, have seen how the trend is turning and how it has become more difficult for parents to afford everything.

As for the Louisburg district, Terry says it hasn’t gotten to the point where a student hasn’t been able to participate because of the fee, but he and Susan both know it is coming soon.

“If you look at the free and reduced lunch numbers for the Louisburg district, the number has gotten higher every year,” Susan said. “It is only a matter of time when parents are going to have a hard time paying that fee if their kids want to do sports or something like band.”

The Tiniches scheduled three dates over the summer to have the city flea market. The next one is set for 7 a.m. on July 18 and the third will be on Aug. 8.

Terry said he is looking for venders for each date and both are also looking for food venders to participate as well.

“We are looking for something unique, something like a walking taco booth you would see at the fair or someone selling homemade peach cobbler or something like that,” Terry said. “We wouldn’t charge them a fee to set up, but we do ask that they donate 10 percent of their profits to the scholarship fund.”

The hope for the flea market, according to the Tiniches, is to be able to expand and make it a weekend-type event that would

draw others from outside of Louisburg.

As for now, their focus is making it work this summer and helping out the kids. Their goal is to raise enough money for 10 scholarships.

“The community has really responded well so far,” Susan said. “People have been really supportive. Some didn’t come look, but they wanted to donate to the cause, so they just drove up and donated some money which is great as well.”

To reserve a space for one or two of the flea markets, email Terry at kansashuskerfan@hotmail.com for vendor information.

King crowned gymnastics champion



Broadmoor Elementary School fifth-grader Olivia King recently captured an all-around gymnastics state championship. King, a level 7 gymnast, has qualified for the USA Gymnastics Junior Olympic regional meet in May.

Photos courtesy of Pixel Perfect-Photography

By day, Olivia King is just a normal fifth-grader at Broadmoor Elementary School, but by night, she is something different.

Olivia spends her evenings, not at home like a lot of other kids her age, but at Diamond Academy, where she practices with her gymnastics teammates. It is there the 11-year-old spends 19 hours a week working hard on her craft.

Whether it be the bars, balance beam, floor exercise or the vault, Olivia seems to do it all and she does it well.

“I wouldn’t be able to function without gymnastics,” Olivia said. “It does get tiring especially when I have homework to do when I get home, but my teachers have always been very supportive of my schedule. I wouldn’t change a thing, I look forward to going to practice every day.”

All the practice seemed to pay off in late March when she competed in the Kansas State Championships in Overland Park.

It was there where Olivia was crowned an all-around state champion as a USA Gymnastics Junior Olympic level 7 gymnast. Her score of 37.9 earned top marks and she was also strong in the individual events.

She won the floor exercise with a score of 9.675 and then finished runner up on the balance beam (9.65), bars (9.3) and vault (9.275).



Louisburg’s Olivia King goes through her routine on the bars during the March 27 state championship in Overland Park.

“I was really excited that I won,” Olivia said. “I knew I had some really tough competition. I was watching the scores of my top competitor and on my last event, I knew what score I needed to win. It was a goal of mine to win state.”

Olivia will now compete in the Region 3 meet that consists of qualifiers from Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arkansas and Wyoming. The meet will be held May 1 to 3 in Estes Park, Colo.

The meet in May will just be another step in what has been a successful season as a level 7 gymnast.

In her first meet of the year, Olivia competed in the Kansas Judges Cup and won the all-around competition with a 37.75. The top six all-around scores from all age groups in level 7 were selected to represent Team Kansas at the National Judges Cup in Montgomery, Ala., and Olivia was the top qualifier for nationals.

She traveled to the Buckeye Classic in Columbus, Ohio, and was second in the all-around competition and also took first place on the balance beam. Olivia and her family also made trips to San Diego for the California Classic and the SuperStar Meet in Oklahoma, where she finished third in the all-around competitions. She also won the floor exercise at SuperStar with a 9.8.

Olivia would then go on to become an all-around champion at the Diamond Jewels Invitational and the Pink Ribbon Classic.

All those meets have prepared her for what is to come in May at the regional competition.

“My goal is to win,” she said. “It is a great accomplishment to qualify for regionals and I’m very excited to compete. I know it will be tough with the best of Texas and Oklahoma being there as those states are like the powerhouse of gymnastics, but I figure if I’m going to go, I might as well

try to win it.”