

welcomehome

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*Local resident creates all natural product
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- Fuzzy Wuzzy was a willow
- Utilize rainwater with barrels







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Chapel Ridge

at Lakewood



HOW MUCH FUN CAN YOU HAVE ON 7800 ACRES?






Fleming Park is Jackson County's largest park covering more than 7,800 acres with 1,690 acres of lakes and it surrounds Park Ridge, Lee's Summit's fastest-growing community. Park Ridge offers three different neighborhoods and features 434 new home sites. With swimming, boating, camping, hiking, fishing, picnicking and wildlife so close to home, it's hard to measure how much fun you can have because the fun never ends at Park Ridge.

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Take A Stroll in the Park



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THANKS FOR STOPPING BY

BY SANDY TURNER | SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR

I have always encouraged readers, to contact me about story ideas or invite me over to do a public tour of their unique and interesting home. I'm happy to report that an email from a not-so-happy reader turned into a fantastic story.

Copy for WelcomeHome is generated in several different ways. First and foremost are the stories from my interviews with folks and of course that's my favorite. Several of our columnists come from Scripps Howard as they are syndicated and then a handful of copy is used from a website that offers free copy to publications. The copy is called advertorial because although the content is good and full of great information, it is also a promotion for a product.

Several weeks ago I ran an advertorial about a product that cleans and preserves wood. That's when I received the email from a concerned reader who questioned the quality of the product that was discussed in the article. Long story, short I ended up meeting two of the nicest people - John Kramer and Marian Blades -

who make an all natural product to clean and preserve wood. I have used it on my kitchen cabinets and wood trim and you'd have to see it to believe it. I guess that's why John is called Missouri's wood wizard. Check out their story on pages four and five.

Last week you may have wondered what happened to a couple of stories that were supposed to be on pages 11 and 13 about using gravel in your garden and controlling weeds in your yard. As they say in the newspaper business - "we messed up." Please excuse our error and read the column from Maureen Gilmer on the various ways to use gravel on page 13 and methods of controlling weeds from syndicated columnist Joe Lamp'l on page 10.

I have always had a fetish about curtain rods - not real ones - but those I drag in from outside. For many years I have used good looking sticks to hang curtains over the windows but the boyfriend isn't as crazy about it as I am. After checking out different options for unique rods I found

that they have come along way as far as being decorative. Check out window treatment ideas on page eight.

I'm still trying to recuperate from daylight savings time because anytime I get gyped out of an hour's sleep I'm going to get cranky. Along with setting our clocks ahead an hour I hope that you also did a thorough check on your home's smoke alarms. Besides changing the batteries every year there are also things to check to make sure that your family is protected from the hazards of fire. Please read more on page 16.

In an effort to bring news about the real estate industry WelcomeHome is soliciting Realtors and Brokers for information that we can run in our Realtor News section. This week is a brief on several Realtors who attended an educational conference. If you have news to share please email me your info.

Thanks for stopping by...

Sandy Turner

If you have questions or comments or if there is something that you would like to see covered in WelcomeHome, e-mail Sandy Turner at sandy.turner@examiner.net or call her at 816-350-6384.

Sandy looks forward to hearing from you.

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Preserving the Past

A local resident discovers the secret to preserving wood

BY SANDY TURNER

WelcomeHome

There is a home in northwest Independence that holds the history of the Kramer family. A house John Kramer grew up in and, with the passing of his grandparents and parents, to which he has come full circle, back to his beginnings to live in the only place he had truly called home.

Not only did Independence represent his roots but it is also where John began a mission.

"I've always been interested in our history," John said, "and while in the West I spent several years in antiques restoration and preservation in Salt Lake City."

He also spent a year in the mountains, living off the land, using only tools used in the 1800's. His interest and passion for the ways of our ancestors is still active with his continued participation in historical organizations.

When John's father, Ben Kramer (former pastor of Mt. Washington RLDS Church and long-time local Boy Scout leader) passed away, it came time to return home to help his mother, though the simple ways of life would never leave him.

Continuing his fascination with the treasures of the past, and years working in antiques restoration, John began a search for a method to restore and preserve wood so that the natural beauty would not be diminished.

"From my studies of old methods and recipes of our ancestors," John said, "I developed a product using only those proven natural ingredients — things natural to wood and the old finishes."

It was 21 years ago when his first two batches of Kramer's Best Antique Improver were sold to merchants on the Independence Square.

"I had just enough money to buy that many bottles and ingredients," John remembers, "and from that meager start of two dealers agreeing to carry the product, we have now grown to over 600 dealers in 44 states."

In the product's early years, John was referred to as "Missouri's Wizard of Wood" while doing seminars on the old ways of working with wood and introducing his concoction — a simple wipe-on/wipe-off solution — that reconditions and

maintains old finishes, reverses damage, and can also be used as the only finish on stripped or new wood.

"In addition, the product has found its way into the hands of many who have also used it on old painted surfaces of wood and metal, on tools and guns, as well as rusty iron. It cleans, reconditions, maintains, and stops rust from reoccurring," John said of his Kramer's Best Antique Improver.

According to John, wood care products lining the shelves in stores today are mainly petroleum based. They soon evaporate, actually drawing out natural oils.

"That's when the cycle begins," he said. "The more those products are used, the more the piece becomes dry, and left with a residue that makes the wood appear lifeless and dull."

The product John formulated, based on those recipes of our ancestors — made up mainly of ingredients extracted from plants and trees, things natural to wood — is made by hand in small quantities, locally, with help from his cousin, David, along with business and life partner Marian Blades.

"It continues to amaze me to hear from customers all over the country who use the product and are thrilled with the results — from a cabin owner in Colorado to a woman in New Orleans restoring Katrina flood-damaged family antiques," Marian said.

In January of 2006, John received word that turpentine, one of the main ingredients in the product, would no longer be available in this country.

"We were afraid we were out of business," John said, "but we were finally able to start bringing it in from Brazil. Although it's more costly, we now have a stable supply."

Marian and John share with their customers a story of not only how to restore and clean with this all natural product, but also of a time in life when things were simpler.

"Natural products are the result of simple processes offering little hazard to the Earth — those not requiring use and depletion of non-renewable resources," John said. "We are concerned, we do what we can."

Along with Kramer's Best Antique Improver, John has developed Kramer's Best Blemish Clarifier, a natural deep pre-cleaner for heavy cleaning projects, and Kramer's Best Wood Food Oyl, to be used on wood that will be in contact with food — made from the purest, safest ingredients.

Kramer's Best products can be found in local stores such as Sentimental Journey Antiques and Metro Hardwoods in Independence, Changing Seasons Gift Gallery in Englewood and the Brass Armadillo Antique Mall in Grain Valley.

If you would like additional information, please visit their website at www.kramerize.com or call 252-9512.



This footstool and child's chair on the opposite page have been partially restored to show what Kramer's Best Antique Improver can do to restore the beauty of antique wood furniture.



(Above) In their home office, John and Marian display the Kramer products (top shelf) and the 14 ingredients (bottled on second shelf) used to make the antique improver. Half of the wooden chair has been restored with the product and the table, which had been sitting in his mother's shed for years, have reaped the benefits of Kramer's Best Antique Improver.



(Above right) A sewing machine and butter churn set in the living room of the Kramers, both of which are family heirlooms and have been restored with the product.



(Right) Many of the items in the Kramer home are treasures that have been passed down through the generations and restored to their natural beauty with Kramer's products.