

Beard lives family dream



BY ABBEY SNYDER
Staff Reporter

Burt Beard is a man with a viewpoint when it comes to rooms with a view.

A father, scoutmaster and interior designer, Beard is the youngest member of the oldest family-owned business in Kirksville, Beards Decorating Center — still operating after 92 years.

"I have two brothers that are in business with us, and my sister and her husband are all in business, and we represent the fourth generation," Beard said.

He said that although following in his ancestors' footsteps was always an option, his parents never pressured him to join the family business.

"Gradually throughout high school, I thought about the business and thought it was a very fun type of job," Beard said. "Little by little, I decided that's what I wanted to do. I wasn't forced into the business, and I would never force my children into [it]. Life's too short not to do a vocation which you really love."

When Beard realized he was interested in working at the Decorating Center, he searched for a school close to Kirksville where he could develop his creative skills.

"When it came to college, I looked for an interior design program, and the University of

Missouri in Columbia is where I went to school and got my degree," he said. "Technically, my job is an interior designer, but it encompasses everything from mixing paint to wallpaper to installing window treatments to overseeing the installation of floor coverings. ... [I'm a] very busy person."

Beard said that throughout the years, the Decorating Center has seen a lot of competition, but it maintains its status by offering great customer service.

"In the 92 years we've been in business, we've seen a lot of competition come and go," he said. "A lot of stores have tried to duplicate what we do, and we've weathered the test of time, so we surely are doing something right. It's tough to compete with larger corporate stores, but we do that competition simply by offering service and knowledge that the larger stores simply cannot do."

Beard said that when it comes to working as an interior designer, his favorite part about the job is helping people in the community solve their problems.

"I like taking the challenge of helping people," he said. "A lot of times people don't know which way to turn or what to do with their home or business, so it's meeting the challenge head-on."

Beard, who has been married to his wife Tracy for 22 years

and has two children aged 19 and 17, said he thinks Kirksville is the perfect place for a family man like himself.

"A lot of times Truman students come to Kirksville, and they see a small town atmosphere, and they're like, 'I don't know,' because they're coming from larger cities and there's nothing to do in Kirksville," Beard said. "But Kirksville is a good place to raise a family, and it's a safe community."

When he's not working or spending time with his family, Beard serves the community as a scoutmaster in the Boy Scouts.

This summer, he traveled with his son and their troop to Philmont Scout Ranch, where they participated in a two-week hike through New Mexico.

"I first went [to Philmont] in 1972, ... and so now I've gotten to go back with my son, and it was a wonderful experience," Beard said.

An Eagle Scout himself, Beard said he has learned a lot of life lessons from the organization.

"Boy Scouts teach moral character and to be prepared," he said. "When you go out on a job in this business, you have to be prepared for anything because it's not always just as it is in the textbooks."

Beard said part of his job



Phil Jarrett/Index
Burt Beard stands outside Beards Gallery on Washington Street on Monday afternoon. Beard manages the store with his brothers Brad and Ben and his sister Betsy.

involves working hand-in-hand with Truman on design and construction projects on campus.

"You can look around campus and see our work all around," he said. "Most recently, we've been working in the Student Union and the renovations down there. ... It's the commercial glass divi-

sion that we have been putting in new windows and doors [in the Down Under]. We do a lot of work with the University."

As a community member and businessman, he always has appreciated Truman's support of his locally owned business, Beard said.

"Beards Decorating and Truman State University have had a wonderful working relationship for a lot of years," he said. "We appreciate Truman State University because I'm not sure that Beards [Decorating Center] would be here if Truman was not here."

Visit from Text Message Boy pushes panic buttons



Lauren Miller sex and the 'ville

I am so insanely nervous right now. Text Message Boy, the one and only, just called to see about coming up here during the weekend to hang out with me ... and, well, his brother. His roommate — my friend from high school — will be tagging along. It's going to be a grand ol' time.

Oh, snap. I would place a stronger word here if I could.

Oh, whoa. I am nervous. Even though Text Message Boy and I have had some pretty hilarious phone calls, I still worry. Even though Text Message Boy met my friends when we all went to a haunted house in Columbia, I still stress.

Here's the truth: I am not good at dating. The entire process makes my tummy do little flip-flops just thinking about the potentially awkward situations which we, especially I, tend to create.

To top it off, he will be entering

my territory.

There is plenty to do. We can go to a movie, to Thousand Hills, to Java Co., to the bars, to dinner.

By the way, if you see us out, please do not mention this column. And, pretty please, do not call him Text Message Boy.

There are just so many questions running through my head. One has to wonder why we even bother to date at all. In this case, I feel like I am not dating so much as teetering around precarious happen-stance situations that involve never-ending questions and ponderings. All of which are insanely difficult because they all involve emotions and egos, both of which are fragile.

So now, does this visit equal an extended date? Are we going to do dinner alone? What about my friend? Will Text Message Boy be alright with doing some serious homework? Lame, I know. What do I wear? I mean, I spend my Saturday in sweat pants. Are we going out? If so, and he spends the night in Kirksville, there could be some interesting sleeping arrangements. Will he sleep at his brother's? What about our friend? If he does stay the night, isn't it strange to share a bed with our friend on the couch?

Whoa. That is just a weird thought.

I could pawn my friend off on another mutual high school friend so Text Message Boy could stay the night. That seems a bit underhanded and dirty, which is not really the first impression I want to make. And who says spending the night is even in the cards?

At this point, I don't know him well enough to make shacking a regular thing, especially since he

lives in Columbia. Plus, I want to date him, perhaps form an actual relationship.

I know him too well to make this a completely random, one-night, "let's just get drunk and whatever" type of shack.

What if I just want to cuddle? Sheesh, this is already so freaking complicated. I am not sure the situation would be any less complicated if I went to Columbia, but at least it would be his territory.

I mean, I want him to come up here. I am excited to see him. I am thrilled he called! Of course he can come! The potential for awkwardness does not justify telling him, "No, don't come."

I mean, cleaning my house and wearing jeans on a Saturday are small sacrifices, especially because I do like him.

It just seems like actually making that trip, for no other reason than to see someone, adds a touch of seriousness to the relationship dynamic.

As I said, I am not really looking for Text Message Boy to be some fling as much as I am hoping for some actual relationship potential.

There is no better way to determine that potential than to hang out. So, this is really the best idea out there for us.

But it just makes me nervous, honestly, to think it won't work. That, for some reason or another, we can mesh in Columbia but not in Kirksville. That he will make this trip and be grossly disappointed in me, or even worse, that I will be disappointed in him. That some kind of awkward situation, probably one I cause, will make this hope die.

Oh, snap. Oh, s---.

"Here's the truth: I am not good at dating. The entire process makes my tummy do little flip-flops just thinking about the potentially awkward situations which we, especially I, tend to create."

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Health Talk
with Scott Anderson, D.O.
Northeast Regional Medical Center
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Resistant bacteria is cause for caution

Recent headlines in communities across the country have struck fear into the hearts of parents and teachers. Outbreaks of methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), previously thought to occur primarily among ill patients in hospitals, have occurred in high schools, colleges and athletic centers. As of early October, school districts in at least six states have reported cases of this infection among otherwise healthy students, and some cases have resulted in death. Many more schools temporarily closed their doors as a precautionary measure.

MRSA is a dangerous form of staph infection that does not respond to common antibiotics like penicillin. MRSA might be responsible for more deaths each year than HIV/AIDS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC study, recently published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, estimates that more than 94,000 people developed serious MRSA cases in 2005 and nearly 19,000 resulted in death. Although many of these cases were among the seriously ill and elderly, a significant number occurred in otherwise-healthy people through "community-acquired" infection. In recent years, so-called "super-bug" staph infections have spread through schools, prisons, dormitories, health clubs and recreation centers.

MRSA can live on surfaces such as handrails, tabletops and skin. It can spread by skin contact or by sharing items such as pencils and sports equipment with an infected person. For these reasons, one good way to prevent infection is by practicing good personal hygiene. Washing hands with soap and water throughout the day or using an

alcohol-based hand rub is a top priority, especially after times of physical contact and before meals. It also is advisable to keep skin abrasions and wounds covered and to avoid contact with open wounds on others. Maintaining a clean environment also can help prevent infections. This includes cleaning surfaces with anti-bacterial products. Sharing personal items such as clothes, towels or razors is not recommended because infectious bacteria can spread on these surfaces.

MRSA generally is treatable if caught early, so it is important to know how to recognize an infection and respond. An infection on the skin's surface looks like a pimple or boil that can be red, painful and full of pus that must be drained. These can progress into deep, painful abscesses. Seek medical attention immediately if skin symptoms last longer or are more painful than common bug bites. Internal MRSA infections can result in pneumonia, bloodstream infections or wound infections. Common symptoms include shortness of breath, fever and chills. Seek medical attention any time you experience a fever of more than 104 degrees as an adult, or when an infant experiences a fever of more than 100.4 degrees.

Because medical practitioners might not recognize an infection as caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria, it is important to seek medical attention if prescribed antibiotics seem to have no effect after four days.

For more information
on MRSA contact
Dr. Anderson at
660-626-2235