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George Magers
Kirkville Resident

Rebuilding | AGR has been trying to build up membership since changed University mission

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Nagel said Monsanto, a large agriculture company, has an established group of AGR alumni that helps graduates receive jobs out of college. He said AGR has built a good rapport with many agriculture companies.

“One guy was getting a job down at somewhere like [Archer Daniels Midland Company], one of those pork producers,” Nagel said. “He sat down and talked to the guy, and he told him he was in AGR, and they talked for awhile. And he said, ‘Yeah, you had the job as soon as you told me that, I just wanted to talk to you.’”

Nagel said this is one reason their recruitment efforts have become more successful in recent years. But Nagel said they are not satisfied and are looking to continue expanding.

Although they had to sell the house on Osteopathy in 1996 due to a lack of members, Magers said they are in the beginning stages of a search for an additional house to their current one at the corner of Normal and Mulanix.

Magers said he credits some of the increase in numbers to an increase in support of the agriculture department from the Board of Regents.

Overall, Magers said he likes the direction the fraternity is headed. He said AGR avoids some of the problems caused by having a larger group of men and their egos in the same house.

“We’re excited about some of the things that the boys are doing now. We’ve got a good size, and we’re at a manageable level,” Magers said.

Magers said the fraternity has been through a lot since that early morning phone call over 30 years ago.

“We’ve worked our way out of it, we have no debt, and now we have the guys that are really on a recruitment move,” Magers said. “Hopefully it’s a sign of great things to come.”



Brian O’Shaughnessy/Index

The Charles E. Still mansion is vacant and needs many renovations, but it has maintained several of its original features. However, the fate of the mansion will be discussed in two weeks at an A.T. Still board meeting.

Mansion needs repairs

BY SHANNON WALTER
Staff Reporter

Historical Places

The Charles E. Still mansion sits vacant across the street from the Northeast Regional Medical Center, awaiting renovations. Charles Still built the house with his wife and two children in 1912, according to the “History of Adair County” by Eugene Violette. After his death, the house was passed to A.T. Still University and was used as a nursing home. Now it is known as the Atlas Club where the osteopathic school’s oldest fraternity meets.

Still held many professions before building the house. He went to business school but quit to learn the printer’s trade at the Kirkville Journal, according to Violette. After a few years, he tired of the printing business, so he studied Osteopathy with his father and was in the first graduating class of the American School of Osteopathy (now A.T. Still University) in 1894. Rather than becoming a doctor of osteopathic medicine himself, he spent time furthering osteopathy and became vice president and general manager of the institution. He also served 17 terms as representative of the district.

The Still family lived in the house

until his daughter became ill with tuberculosis. She couldn’t cope with the climate, so the family moved to Arizona, said Lloyd Cleaver, Atlas Club adviser and doctor of osteopathy. After his death, the house was passed to the school to be used as a nursing home, but three stories and quite a few stairs made the house ill-suited for this use, according to the 1987 Adair County Historic Inventory.

The Atlas Club took over the house in the early 1950s and became a place where a fraternity of men and women at A.T. Still University could live and meet, Cleaver said. The Osteopathic College was started in 1892, and the Atlas Club was formed shortly after as the oldest organization associated with the school.

“The house is vacant now, but it used to house between 20 and 28 students,” Cleaver said. “Times have changed and some other [issues] have caused that not to be the kind of place that people want to live. There’s new modern apartments across the street and people don’t want to live in

communal type atmosphere.”

Cleaver said more than 80 percent of the institution graduates were members of the fraternity. The Atlas Club still hosts meetings in the house to plan events and fundraisers aimed at promoting the betterment of osteopathy and the furthering of the study of medicine.

“When I was a student, it was a very active place,” Cleaver said. “People were there all the time. It was a housing unit then, and you’d go over there if you had a question about any aspect of osteopathic medicine. Your colleagues were there to help you.”

Cleaver said he and several other members of the Atlas Club hope the University will buy the house and renovate it to be used as a museum and hotel for visitors to the school.

“It needs a lot of repair,” he said. “There are no major systems that are badly damaged, but the roof needs to [be] completely rebuilt. It needs interior renovations. There are no structural catastrophes, so it’s a beautiful house. It’s a home that would be completely impossible to reproduce in this day and age. It has some really unique aspects of history that are associated with it.”

The three story house has maintained many of its historic aspects, including marble tile in the entryway,

a tile roof and brick walls. The fate of the home will be discussed at an A.T. Still board meeting.

Cole Woodcox, department chair of English and Linguistics, taught a JINS course that studied different homes in Kirkville. He said the house was built to entertain many guests. Doors in the parlor and front hallway allow the whole first floor to be opened up into a large party space rather than keeping people in the drawing room or parlor.

“Three or four rooms can be opened up to entertain, and the stair hall is one of those,” he said. “Architects were starting to think of this as more of an entertainment space rather than simply a place to put the staircase at the time, so it can be used as a reception hall. The Still house presents entertainment spaces very well.”

Woodcox said he hopes the house is renovated to showcase its grandeur and keep its history alive in Kirkville.

“This is a very important house — not just because of its age, but because the Still family is so important, and I would like to see it renovated,” Woodcox said.

Local band hits low notes for performance

BY RUSS BECKMAN
Reviewer

There is no other musical environment quite like that of an Open Jam Night at Il Spazio. There is a palpable mixture of excitement, ambition and apprehension in the air. New bands and musicians have the opportunity to be heard, and talented and established bands have the chance to get together and have fun. King Pin was one of the talented bands that took the stage.

The band played in the style of jam bands like Phish or, at times, Dave Matthews Band. In this style, bands start the song slowly with one or two instruments, with the other band members eventually joining in after they get the feeling of the song. The song then picks up in speed and volume, crescendo-ing to a climax before slowing back down again. King Pin let the audience know they were up on the stage, but they were never over the top. The different instruments blended into a smooth sound perfect for the relaxed setting.

Their guitar solos were filled with Jimi Hendrix-esque distortion and feedback, making the song more exciting and complex. The drummer’s cymbals were constantly moving and the snare drum rung out like a machine-gun fire during his sections. The bassist and the keyboardist made things emotional with an electric blues feeling during their solos.



Despite each musician’s distinct individual sound during a solo, the band came back together smoothly near the end of the song. But the solos were only part of what made King Pin special.

King Pin is comprised of the usual guitarist, bassist and drummer, and a keyboardist. The keyboarder, Kirkville resident Willy Newell, is a technical genius, on the keyboard. Unlike other bands, with members who play but never specialize in keyboarding, he plays only that instrument and has a great talent for doing so. He generally led the band and usually was the one to start and end a song.

Another distinction of King Pin was the absence of any lyrics or vocals to their songs. This might lead the audience to believe that all of their songs were improvised. Newell insisted they had several songs that were originals and did not need lyrics, as well as several songs that were improvised on stage. Unlike most bands comprised

of members who are relatively the same age, King Pin consists of one upperclassman Truman student, middle-aged Newell and his teenage son and another middle-aged Kirkville man on drums.

If one were to criticize the band though, they would have to look no farther than the stage appearance. King Pin looked as if they were having fun at times, but often they did not really feed any energy back into the crowd. Who does not like to see a guitarist’s fingers fly over the frets and strings during a solo? Half of the time, King Pin’s guitarist was not even facing the audience. Bands should know that they live and die dependent on the audience, and although this band clearly had talent, they lacked performance skills.

King Pin was not the only band to play that night. Many aspiring musicians and people just looking for fun took the stage playing instruments from acoustic guitar, to the harmonica, to a simple maraca. In college towns like Kirkville, open jam nights also give many students who have bands back home a different opportunity.

Sophomore Mike Herr played with a group of friends in his hometown, but after coming to Truman, he has yet to join a band. He said Open Jam nights give him the chance to have fun and to be heard by an audience again. After playing convincing covers of Led Zeppelin, Harry Chapin and The White Stripes on his acoustic guitar, he played original music, which he said he likes to try out in front of bigger audiences before taking it back home to his friends.

Carrier delivers in rain, shine

BY HANNAH DOUGLAS
Staff Reporter

Early Saturday, the Kirkville post office on Jefferson Street had found its rhythm already. Management surveyed as clerks sorted mail and mail carriers prepared for their routes.

Paul vonThun, a city mail carrier, began to organize his mail, equipping himself for a nearly eight mile walk that day. Each morning before he clocks in at 7 a.m., vonThun drives 90 minutes to Kirkville from his home in Shelbina, Mo. He said it was his mother who convinced him to apply for work with the postal service when he was still working as a mechanic, and he is glad she did.

“I don’t know what else I’d be doing right now,” he said.

Since he began work with the postal service 23 years ago, he said procedures for

delivery have changed, though his route each day does not.

“When it’s the same route every day, it can get boring at times,” he said, noting how the hours in solitude give him plenty of time to daydream. “People say it’s just walking, but when you do it day in and day out, it really takes a toll on you.”

Weather conditions can make the route interesting, he said, but they also can make it dangerous. In November 2006 he fell on some ice and tore his rotator cuff. He said the incident kept him from carrying the mail for seven months.

The scanning system he uses each day, known as the Delivery Operation Information System, ables vonThun to scan certain deliveries as he leaves and returns to the office, so there is a record of the time spent on each route.

“I don’t like having a computer telling me what I’m sup-



posed to do,” he said. “It’s really taken the fun out of delivery.”

The art of letter writing has diminished, he said, explaining that over time the volume of first class letters he delivers has decreased. However, the volume of packages he delivers has increased, he said.

“I think the postal service has tried to change with the times, but I still think they could do a better job,” he said. “I don’t know what the future is going to bring.”

He said the Internet has hurt the post office which has raised the cost of stamps in response.

To improve current conditions, vonThun suggested Kirkville residents who have

a change of address remember to forward the information to the post office.

“Put the shoe on the other foot,” he said. “Think of us delivering the mail.”

Clerk Effie Barton said vonThun used to work as a clerk in the office, though she did not work with him until he became a carrier.

In her four years working at the Kirkville post office, she said it has become like a family and that she has respect for von Thun.

“He is very knowledgeable and accountable for his job,” she said. “He’s also very punctual.”

Supervisor Corey King, who used to be a mail carrier in



Krista Goodman/Index

Paul vonThun walks eight miles a day to deliver the mail.

Hannibal, Mo., said that when he began carrying, he worked part time, and it has helped him to relate to the carriers.

“By being a carrier and then going into management ... I know exactly what they have to do to accomplish their job,” he said.

He said that during his time

as a carrier, he just wanted to get the job done and head home, with how grueling each day can be, because postal employees do not drive most of the time.

“It’s not an easy job,” King said. “It is difficult. The ground doesn’t give — your body gives.”