

Alumna assists storm victims

Truman State alumna helps organize meals for Hurricane Sandy victims

BY ANNA GRACE
Staff Reporter

When Truman State alumna Susan Briggs watched Hurricane Sandy strike in her own backyard, she said it made her value what she had and want to share with the less fortunate.

Briggs, Truman State University Alumni Association Board of Directors member, resides in New York City. When Sandy hit the city, Briggs said she felt fortunate that she and her partner Ian Friedman were not physically harmed and kept their electricity, but it was upsetting watching people losing their homes. They decided to start an organization, Chefs for Sandy Relief, to help feed those hit worst by the storm.

"It's hard to watch that on TV and know it's in your backyard," Briggs said.

As she watched people struggling after the storm, she said she and Friedman's first thought was about their own resources and how they could use them to help. Briggs turned to her contacts at Truman. She was impressed by what she called the "Truman spirit."

"Even though it's 1,000 miles, away it feels like five minutes because people wanted to help so generously," Briggs said.

She said she was very thankful for everyone who donated and wanted to help.

As a chef, Briggs said Friedman's first concern was providing victims with a hot meal. Briggs said while Friedman cooked, she played an organizational role, recruiting volunteers and contacting political figures



Submitted photo Alumna Susan Briggs works with Chefs for Sandy Relief volunteers to provide meals for Hurricane Sandy victims at Staten Island. Briggs said she contacted her network at Truman State to help with the relief efforts.

and the Rotary Club to serve food in two locations, and deliver hot meals on foot the Sunday following the storm. Chefs for Sandy Relief partnered with Red Rabbit, a New York City school meal provider, to help provide the meals.

During the course of 36 hours, Briggs said Friedman prepared 1,200 hot meals for storm victims.

Briggs and Friedman went to Staten Island, a borough of New York City that was severely hit by the storm to serve meals. Briggs

said they, along with others from the community, arrived before FEMA and the Red Cross. One of the places the volunteers set up was Midland Beach, one of the hardest hit areas on Staten Island. Briggs said people living there lost everything.

Some buildings were built during the 1800s and even when electricity is returned to the area, it won't be turned on because of old wiring, Briggs said. She said there were students displaced from

schools that were being used as shelters for victims as well as people who were going to be living in hotels for several months.

Diane Arneith, executive director of the Community Health Action of Staten Island, said she was happy to partner with Chefs for Sandy Relief. Arneith said she and Community Health Action of Staten Island work on addressing health disparity for those with the least access to health care.

"There was an absolutely won-

derful outpouring of support of the community," Arneith said.

She said Chefs for Sandy Relief was organized, arriving with hot food already prepared. They handed the meals out near a distribution center, a prime location. They also delivered food to homes where the residents were preoccupied with cleaning the debris in their homes or staying warm.

"I'm very proud of the resources and people," Briggs said. "It's nice to know we can make a difference."

China art exhibit showcases history

BY CHRIS BROWN
Staff Reporter

A Chinese porcelain exhibit and presentation brought students and professors together with an international porcelain expert to educate the Kirksville community about China's porcelain trade.

Junior April Johnston, art professor Wynne Wilbur and porcelain expert Elisabeth Porter helped share the history of the Chinese porcelain trade with Kirksville.

The China Trade Exhibit was displayed in the Truman Art Gallery side gallery from Oct. 16 to Nov. 16, but the China Trade presentation, which occurred Nov. 13, revealed how much careful planning and luck it took to bring the show to Truman, said Aaron Fine, art professor and gallery director.

Fine said historical shows like the China Trade Exhibit help to balance an otherwise contemporary schedule for the art gallery. He said the age and delicate condition of many of the pieces made setting up the China Trade Exhibit more challenging than most exhibits shown at the gallery.

"For this show, we realized we need most of this stuff to be locked down, because not only is it valuable but it's small, and it just makes you nervous as a person trying to protect this stuff," Fine said.

Johnston was one of the student workers who began working with the artifacts more than a year ago to prepare for the exhibit. She said the China Trade

show is different for a college art show because it provides art students and student workers with the opportunity to work with antique artifacts they might have never otherwise been able to.

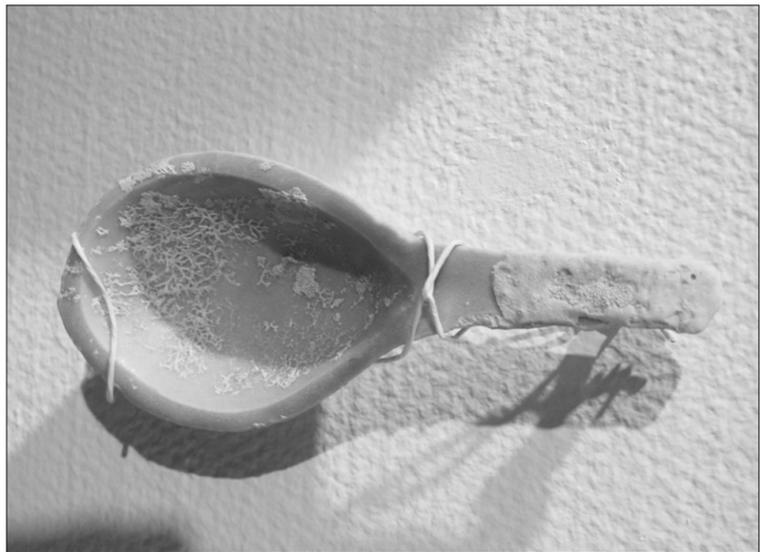
"It's really, really special, at least as a student and an art history student, for there to suddenly be 400 year old artifacts that we can come and enjoy in really close proximity," Johnston said.

Wilbur said the China Trade show originally was suggested by art professor Sara Orel. It started when Orel taught in London for a semester through the Missouri-London Program, Wilbur said.

Porter, Wilbur's cousin, currently runs The Nanking Porcelain Company Limited with her partner, Maurice Hyams, and owns a porcelain shop on Portobello Road in London. Wilbur suggested Orel visit Porter at her shop in London, knowing Porter and Orel would enjoy meeting each other and sharing their interest in fine arts and porcelain. Wilbur said Orel visited the shop and met Porter, and Orel suggested the idea for the China Trade show after she returned to Missouri.

Wilbur recently spent part of her sabbatical in Jingdezhen, China, where Chinese porcelain historically has been made. During the Nov. 13 lecture, she explained how the porcelain tradition began in Jingdezhen about 2,000 years ago and has continued to be the primary way of life for the city's inhabitants to this day.

Orel, Wilbur, Porter, Johnston, and Fine made the exhibit happen with the



Chris Brown/Index This barnacle covered spoon, called "Blanc de Chine Spoon With Sea Encrustation," was one piece displayed in the art gallery during the China Trade Exhibit. It was recovered from the shipwreck of the Tek Sing during 1822.

help of some other art professors, former professors and gallery friends who contributed pieces from their private collections. Porter contributed items from her collection and as well as helped give the presentation, said Fine.

"One of the goals of this is to inform other people, not just the art students, that these are not just dishes, but they have a beautiful history," Wilbur said.

Porter said Chinese export porcelain, the variety featured in the presentation and exhibit, was made in China hundreds of years ago and was meant for shipping to Europe during the time when Europeans first began to buy large amounts of Chinese porcelain.

Porter, who began her career in the porcelain business in New Mexico, has been dealing Chinese export porcelain in

London for 28 years. She said her company, the Nanking Porcelain Company, acquired a large amount of porcelain from a ship which sank during a trip to Europe from Nanking, China, a port through which Chinese porcelain was shipped to Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries.

Porter said Chinese export porcelain also provides a unique look into early cultural interactions between Europeans and the Chinese. She said she was happy to loan some pieces from her collection in New Mexico when she heard about the porcelain exhibition at Truman from Orel and her cousin Wilbur.

"I love that the gallery is here and how they're really pulling in people internationally here and trying to bring some of the world to Truman," Porter said.

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