



# THE BLAND COURIER

50¢

47¢ + 3¢ tax

Volume 109, Number 16

Bland, MO • Wednesday, December 4, 2013 - 12 Pages

## Christmas Giveaway is this Saturday at BCC

Bland Christian Church will host a Christmas Give Away on Saturday, Dec. 7 from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

The give away will include gently used clothing, coats, shoes, toys, household items, Christmas decorations and a lot of miscellaneous items.

If you would like to donate items, they can be dropped off inside the basement doors from November 24 through December 6.

For more information contact Michelle Miller at (573) 619-5477.

## Remembrance Service is this week at Sassmann's Chapel

Sassmann's Chapel in Belle and Bland will be hosting "An Evening of Remembrance" in December.

The community is invited to attend the remembrance service on Thursday, Dec. 6 at the Bland Chapel or Friday, Dec. 7 at the Belle Chapel. The Chapels will be open from 6:00-8:00 p.m. with the remembrance service at 7:00 p.m. both nights.

You and your family are invited to stop by anytime during those hours to view the Memorial DVD and enjoy refreshments. For more information, contact Kenny at (573) 859-3712.

## New exhibit on display at Art Center

The Osage Arts Community Art Center will be presenting a new exhibit entitled "Stitch & Weave" beginning this weekend.

The exhibit will feature quilts by Naomi Bray and weaving by Jan Crow and Mimi Hedi.

The Opening Reception will be held Friday, Dec. 6 from 6:00-8:30 p.m. This exhibition will run through February 22, 2014.

## Bland Council meets Monday

The Bland City Council will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, Dec. 9 at 6:00 p.m. at Bland City Hall. This meeting is open to the public.

## Santa will be in Belle next Saturday

Santa Claus will be coming to Belle to visit with area children on Saturday, Dec. 14 at 11:00 a.m.

The Belle Volunteer Fire Department will be escorting Santa to the 4-way stop in Belle.

This event is sponsored by the Belle Lions Club.

# City will run Marshal issue on April ballot

Members of the Belle City Council voted 4-0 to go before the voters again in an effort to change the current elected Marshal's position to an appointed Police Chief position.

The city has placed the issue on the ballot twice before. The measure failed on the April 1997 ballot with 200 NO votes and 92 YES votes. The measure was again defeated on the April 2013 ballot with 248 NO votes and 112 YES votes.

The council had discussed cutting the Marshal's duties and salary in order to proceed with an appointed Police Chief.

"I'm still undecided on it, I really am," said Alderman Roger Lehnhoff. "There's pros and cons both ways."

"What are the cons

against it?" asked Alderman Kevin Guffey.

Lehnhoff said he would like all the council members to be present so they could discuss the matter. Alderman Tony Gieck was out of town and was participating in the meeting via telephone.

Mayor Steve Vogt told the council Gieck could give his input and vote over the telephone. Lehnhoff said he couldn't understand Gieck over the phone.

Vogt told the council a decision needed to be made before the December 17 filing date.

"I truly believe this is a

backdoor way of getting around the people's will," said Gieck. "I am 100% for appointing a Marshal, but I think it should be up to the people to give up their right to vote for an elected

*"I truly believe this is a backdoor way of getting around the people's will. I am 100% for appointing a Marshal, but I think it should be up to the people to give up their right to vote for an elected Marshal."*

*--Alderman Tony Gieck*

Marshal."

Gieck said if the council wanted the change so badly, it was their job to get the message out.

"I believe it's our job, if we want this so bad, to go around door-to-door and do it that way and let the

people decide to give up their right to vote," said Gieck. "I know you're saying you're not taking away their rights, but basically you are."

Gieck told Guffey he had a lot of photos in the lobby of American Realty development of people who have served in the U.S. Military.

"What was their purpose?" asked Gieck. "Do you not feel this is a backdoor way to get an appointed office?"

"Yes and no, that's my only reservation about it," said Guffey.

Guffey asked if it was fair for the people of Belle when a Marshal decides to run for Sheriff. He said the citizens still have to pay his \$40,000 salary even though he's not working, as well as paying another person to cover his shift.

Gieck said he understood everything Guffey was saying, but did not like the way the politics were playing. He said it is no different than the way the Obama administration is backdooring everything.

"Look at it from every side. They ran for Sheriff to better themselves," said Gieck.

Guffey said he didn't have a problem with that, but felt they should still put in their 40 hour week.

"I am 100% for an appointed Marshal, but not this way," said Gieck.

Alderman Richard Huse said when he first came to Belle, there was a Marshal who decided to work another job.

"It seems like an insult to the voters of this town," said Huse. "I'm not very crazy about the system we've got. I'm with Tony. I believe if this is the right thing to do, we should sell the public on it and put it back on the ballot."

"I can see both sides of it too," said Vogt. "You elect your alderman to run the city and if they're not doing a good job, you replace them."

Vogt said he would like the city to get to a point where there is not a "revolving door" with the Police Department.

"I don't think we publicized it enough for the voters to understand it," said Vogt. "I truly believe if the people understood the issues, they would give the council more control."

"It bothers me when we have an officer on duty during the day and the Marshal isn't there," said Guffey. "There has to be some changes...some drastic changes. Maybe we stirred up a big enough hornet's nest they will listen."

Marshal Tyler Midkiff told the council a lot of people have expressed

*Continued on page 3*



**Art Project** - Sixth grade Art students at Bland Middle School have been making beautiful changes to the newly purchased Osage Arts Community building located by the Belle Post Office. The art panel project is under the direction of Middle School Art instructor Alesia Tibbetts and is being coordinated by Jan Sassmann.

## Volunteers sought for Maries R-II Facility Committee

The Maries County R-II Board of Education is looking for individuals to serve on a facilities committee.

The committee will be reviewing the current facilities to make recommendations to the Board of Education. The committee will meet at least four to five times and will submit a report to the Board of Education of their findings and recommendations.

There is a short application to help the Board of Education in balancing representation on the committee. If you are interested in serving on the committee you may pick up an application at the District Office or call 573-859-3800 to have one sent to you. Please have your application back to the District Office by Tuesday, December 17.

# Two women bound over to Circuit Court

Two women were bound over to circuit court during court action in the Maries County Associate Circuit Court, Judge Kerry Rowden presiding.

Sunshine N. Bay, 37, of Vienna, was bound over on the charge of felony property destruction and misdemeanor domestic assault. Her circuit court appearance scheduled for Friday, December 15 at 9 a.m.

Tonya Walters, 42, of Belle, was bound over to circuit court on two counts of possession of a controlled substance. Her circuit court appearance was scheduled for December 2.

A preliminary hearing was held for Rebecca L. Skasick, 34, of Belle, who

was charged with stealing from the Dollar General Store in Belle. However, the items she stole did not add up to \$500 and Judge Rowden said her prior stealing charges could not be considered as the statute requires a city judge to be a licensed attorney, which was not the case in her Washington, MO charge. Skasick was not bound over to circuit court and Maries County Prosecuting Attorney Terry Schwartz said she would re-file the stealing charge as a misdemeanor. Dollar General Store witnesses said Skasick was recorded stealing on cameras within the Belle store. The merchandise was later identified at the Belle Police

Department as the items still had store tags on them. The items allegedly were stolen over a three-day period and totaled about 100. They were totaled through the store's register and valued about \$350. Skasick was represented by Assistant Public Defender Kim Pulley.

Sunshine Bay was bound over for allegedly damaging over \$13,000 of property owned by Doug James of Vienna. James took the stand in the courtroom last Tuesday. Prosecutor Schwartz questioned him and James said he and Bay were friends. The incident occurred on May 25, 2013 when they planned to go to a friend's place, but Bay became upset because he was getting text messages

from a female acquaintance. He told her they would not go to the friend's place and instead they went to a winery. Bay lost her phone and was upset and "wound up," James said. He took her home because she was mad and she would not get out of his vehicle. In a report to Maries County Sheriff Chris Heitman, James said Bay pulled a knife on him with a blade open and demanded to go back to his house to get her belongings and she would get a ride from his house. He took her to his house, the report said. In court Tuesday, James said once at his house they both went inside. Then she hit him and tried to hit him with other things. His lip was cut. He got out of the

house and she came after him and she threw something and it broke the windshield of his Jeep. He drove away and called 911. He returned about 20 minutes later when the sheriff arrived.

Upon re-entering his house with law enforcement, James said he saw destruction. There were broken windows, broken door glass, broken television and pictures. There was glass everywhere and the wooden frames were damaged. There were holes in the drywall. In the garage a table saw was knocked over and broken. Also a 1969 Firebird was dented, scratched and the

*Continued on page 3*