

# Woman used half-cup idea for name of shop

By Ron Wilson

*Director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University*

Is the cup half full or half empty? The optimist sees it as half full, but the pessimist sees it as half empty. Today we'll learn about a creative small town business owner who uses a half-cup as the theme of her business.

Last week we learned about Mary Jane Constantin, who opened a grocery store in her hometown of Bucklin, Kansas in 2002. As Mary Jane thought about other things which her community might need, she recognized that Bucklin had no coffee shop.

The former gas company building in Bucklin came up for sale, and Mary Jane bought it. The building needed major refurbishing, but when she cleaned it out, she found the original pressed tin ceiling

which she preserved. In the attic, she also found an old cardboard box that said, "Folgers Coffee." It must have been a good omen. Now that box is proudly displayed at the front of the store.

One question was, what to name the coffee shop?

"My Aunt Wilma was a busy lady," Mary Jane said. "She was the youngest of 12 children. In the mornings, she would always say that she only had time for a half-cup of coffee. And she called all her nieces and nephews 'kid.'" So she would say, "How about a half-cup, kid?"

It seemed a fitting name. On Memorial Day 2010, Mary Jane opened the "Half-Cup Kid" coffee shop in Bucklin.

The décor of the store is eye-catching. Mary Jane was at a store which had clocks on sale for half-price, so she bought a pretty clock that was painted gold and burgundy. She liked the colors so much that the

entire coffee shop is now decorated in those attractive colors, including that same clock which hangs on one wall. When she picked out a pretty brown trim to complement these colors, it turned out that the name of this color was "espresso" - another good omen.

Unlike the tin ceiling, the gleaming wood floor in the place is not original. The wood came from a dance floor at a place in Dodge City which had closed.

The shop offers flavored coffees plus other items as well. Breakfast and lunch are offered every day except Sunday. Mary Jane's grocery store, Main Street Market, can be a source for the makings of the meals. The menus are written on old chalkboards salvaged from a closed school building.

Half-Cup Kid offers smoothies, blended cream, cherry limeades, and slushies.

"The blender and espresso machine cost more than the building

itself," Mary Jane said.

The local people seem to have a lot of fun with this coffee shop. A sign inside the shop says, "Will trade coffee for gossip."

A woman passerby on the street commented that Half-Cup Kid has "Starbucks quality at a small town price."

Rural communities face many challenges. One challenge is to sustain institutions such as the local grocery store or the local coffee shop. Mary Jane Constantin chose to buck the trend of closure and

consolidation in rural communities by opening these new stores in her hometown. Not only is she offering those services, she is doing so with skill, creativity and ingenuity. That is a real asset for a rural community like Bucklin, population 713 people. Now, that's rural.

Mary Jane is an Oklahoma transplant, brought here by her husband's teaching job. Why invest in a rural Kansas community?

"Maybe we have some foolishness," Mary Jane said, "but we love it down here."

Is the cup half full or half empty?

Optimists and pessimists will forever debate that question. For Mary Jane Constantin, the phrase "Half-Cup Kid" will forever remind her of her Aunt Wilma. Inside the door of the coffee shop is a framed black-and-white photo of an attractive matron. Of course, it is a picture of Aunt Wilma herself. We commend Mary Jane Constantin for making a difference by offering this service in her rural community.

So is the cup half full or half empty? Either way, I'll have a refill.

## matters of record

The following real estate transactions have been reported by the Sherman County register of deeds:

David Bunker conveys and warrants to Oscar E. Lopez and Sonia Ramirez a tract of land in NE/4 of Sec. 31, T8S, R42W.

Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation to J. Kendall Cooper and Jacque Cooper, Lot 20, 21 and S104' of W/2 of Lot 22, Block 63,

Original Town of Goodland, aka 320 E. 12th St., Goodland.

John F. Koons quit claims to John F. Koons and Marley L. Koons Lot 1 and 2, Block 9, Third Addition to the City of Goodland.

Brain W. Bellamy and Shelly Bellamy, George T. Harrison and Terrel S. Harrison, and Keith S. Wieck convey and warrant to John Studer and Stacy Studer, Lots 5 and

6 in Block 11, First Addition to the City of Goodland.

Sharon R. Mann quit claims to Joni Guyer, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, the N18' of Lot 6, all of Lots 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26, Block 19, Ruleton, KS.

Westar of Kansas, Inc. to Stephen G. West and Amy K. West, Lots 9 and 10 in Block 12, Sharp's Addition to the City of Goodland.

## GHS Cowboys of the Week

*Based on positive academic performance, attendance improvement, positive attitude or random acts of kindness, the student nominees this week are: Cody Hooker and Billy DeHoyos*



*These students receive an Activity Period Pass. These students were randomly selected from all nominees and will receive a local food gift certificate sponsored by Goodland Kiwanis Club, special parking, first in lunch line and recognized throughout the community!*



**Cody Hooker, Freshman**  
Nominated by: Mrs. Myers  
Parents: Scott and Karen Hooker  
Activities: Football, Wrestling, FCCLA



**Billy DeHoyos, Senior**  
Nominated by: Mrs. Reed  
Parents: Rick and Mary DeHoyos  
Activities: FCCLA

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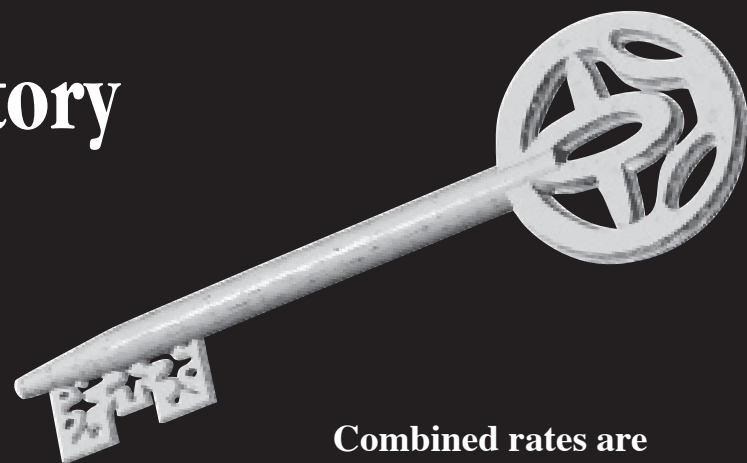
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