

Gabbards hard work pays off

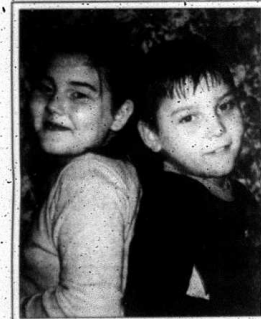
This feature story is by Anita McKinney Barnett, now attending Eastern Kentucky University to gain her bachelor's degree in Public Relations, who has been inspired by Joyce and Don Gabbard to work hard and anything is possible.

When driving on US 25 between Renfro Valley and Berea, there are flowers along the side of the road and a sign that reads Dogwood Gifts and Crafts & Garden Center. The business is self-made by Joyce Gabbard and her husband, Don. On top of the hill above the gift shop are four greenhouses where they grow flowers and produce.

Joyce is a mother of four children, Steve, Michael, Janies, Donna Fay and a grandmother of six. She cares for her 79-year-old mother, Sally Sigmon and her two-year-old granddaughter, Julie full time. She takes care of her home, the gift shop, her mother's place, one of her son's places and the four greenhouses and still makes time to grow a tobacco crop.



My name is Jordan Brock and I am proud to announce the birth of my sister, Kaylee Alexis June, on January 15th. Our parents are Roger and Tammy Brock. Our grandparents are Proctor and Oyal Brock, Curt Smith and Eddy Bowman.



Happy Birthday Brittany & Bub! Love Mom & Dad.



Happy 16th Birthday Krystal Love Mom, Dad & Tyler



On December 19, 2001, Gordon and Rebecca Sowder of Mt. Vernon was blessed with their first born, a son, Logan Ray. Logan was born at Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital. Logan weighed 8 lbs. 4 ozs. and was 20 1/2 inches long. Maternal grandparents are Herbert and Catherine Robbins of Mt. Vernon. Paternal grandparents are Bobby and Eve Sowder of Richmond and Virgil and Martina Alcorn of Mt. Vernon. Great-grandparents are Virgil and Irene Sowder of Richmond and Charlene and the late Lin Reynolds of Mt. Vernon.

Joyce is a very busy woman and enjoys staying active and keeping Don busy. Don jokes and says, "She makes me wish I had never retired. I have never worked so hard." The Gabbards have survived tornadoes and storms tearing through the tobacco crops and tearing down greenhouses. They always pick the business back up together working as a team. The grown Gabbard children help out whenever they can.

Joyce is the only "woman" that has ever run for magistrate for Rockcastle County. She came in as the third runner-up. Joyce graduated from Fugassi Business College of Lexington. While in college she modeled for DavaWare's. She went on to work at First Federal and Savings & Loan, Berea National Bank, Mt. Vernon Signal as a secretary, South Central Bell Phone Company as an operator, State Hospital in Danville as a secretary. She moved back to Eastern Kentucky and worked at Dr. Dehove's

office at Eastern Kentucky University and Winchester Finance. She also delivered newspapers for the Winchester Sun.

After having four children, she became self-employed and started a craft shop and babysitting. She worked with the Homemakers of America and was a Cub Scout Leader. She has a plaque in her gift shop. "In appreciation of your time, hard work and dedication to the Brindle Ridge Fire Department 1968." Don held the position at Brindle Ridge Fire Department as the Secretary and Treasurer.

Dogwood Gifts and Crafts is featured in Kentucky Artisan Heritage Trails (www.kah.net) a pilot program, made possible by the Center for Economic Development Entrepreneurship & Technology (CEDET) of Eastern Kentucky University (EKU). A part of the Kentucky tour-

ism guides.

The Gabbards moved back to Renfro Valley on her grandmother's farm when Don retired from South Central Bell. They started on the gift shop that is built by hand from lumber that they milled out with a wood mizer band saw. Then they grew tobacco and started building greenhouses. The crafts in the gift shop are all handmade except for the porcelain dolls and wrought iron gifts. She helps the senior citizens by having their handmade crafts on consignment in her gift shop.

All of the flowers are hand planted by Joyce, Don, family and friends. Joyce was inspired to make a golf fishpond by an article in Birds and Bloom Magazine, and placed it by the road as visitors turn in to the gift shop. Joyce is famous for her iris plants. Returned customers have told her, "They are the best." The wide variety of items offered has helped the business to succeed.

The Gabbard Center has everything from lawn ornaments to flowers, vegetable plants, produce, hard to find

plants such as elephant ears and large aloe plants that bloom. In the spring bedding plants are available.

The Gift shop has memorial decorations, floral arrangements, custom made wreaths, apple collectibles, angel collectibles, magnets, candles, lamp shades, The Kentucky Cupboard, handcrafted jellies and jams and other products, dolls, trains, wooden toys, shelves, plus many other accessories for the home or office. New item Yoder's Good Health Recipe, used for energy and weight loss.

Joyce Gabbard is truly one busy lady. She enjoys working with crafts and gardening and spending time with her grandchildren. With the help of her children and husband, Don the self-made business has become a success.

Dogwood Gifts and Crafts and Garden Center is located three miles north on U.S. 25 from Renfro Valley, then look for the flowers to the left on Hwy. 1275 (Brindle Ridge). Stop by for an interesting look at homemade goodness. You may even catch Don trying to escape from work. Ha! Ha! Visitors may even find some friends there that she has inspired to work hard and anything is possible.



The Mason Jars recently played at the Grand Ole Opry, several festivals, Matt Paul at Berea and, of course, their own garage for family and friends. If you like Bluegrass Music make a point to see the Mason Jars. From left: Bass Boy on bass, Joseph Wagers on guitar and Kyle Farmer on banjo.

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