

# RED OAK HILLS 2025 Newsletter



## *Sign, Seal and Deliver Some Appreciation*

Show Chris, our mail carrier, some kindness for delivering mail in rain, shine, or Arctic Chill. Write a thank you note, bake some sweets, buy a gift card (\$20 or less by law) or have your child draw a picture. Place it in your mailbox this month.



## **(Un)common Cures.**

Erase Kool-Aid smiles in a hurry. Take a pea-sized amount of toothpaste and run it around the child's mouth; then wipe off with a warm cloth.



To remove permanent marker from your child's skin, try smearing a dab of peanut butter on the stained area. Let it stand for a few minutes, then wipe off.

Soak a cotton ball in vanilla extract and leave it uncovered in a small dish near the back of your fridge's top shelf. The warm vanilla scent will permeate the fridge, resulting in a sweet-smelling interior.

If your microwave is really dirty, put a damp cloth in there for about 30-45 seconds, let it sit (to cool down) then use it to wipe away all the spills and splatters. The steam releases all the stuck on food, like the dried up stuff you would end up scraping off

## **Looking for some indoor FUN!!! Try BRKTHROUGH**

BRKTHROUGH is a social entertainment experience designed for teams of 2-4 players, and is unlike anything you have ever experienced. At over 22,000 square feet of space, it features 40 unique and immersive high-technology challenge rooms that are a fast-paced combination of physical, mental, and skill-based challenges, designed to maximize fun for you and your teammates. It's Team vs Room on an epic level. Located at 6403 W 135th St in Overland Park.

Visit <https://www.brkthrough.com> for more information.



## Who remembers SMAKS Hamburgers

This SMAKS opened in 1954 at 7400 63rd St (now Shawnee Mission Parkway) and Marty Lane just west of Metcalf. A Quiktrip is on the property now. Check out the gas prices behind it. The elephant on Johnson Drive stopped traffic.

“My dad [Bill Fielder] had met a zookeeper and he asked him to bring over an elephant for the opening of SMAKS,” Wes Fielder said. “You’d watch the cars out front and people would slam on their brakes to try to figure out what was going on.”

The first SMAKS opened in 1956 at 5420 Johnson Drive with that traffic stopping stunt. Over the next 40 years, SMAKS would grow into a regional burger chain with locations in seven states. It became a staple for families seeking cheap, quick burgers, thick shakes, and hand-dipped onion rings.

SMAKS helped shape the burger and fast food landscape in and around Kansas City. It’s a story that stretches back more than 70 years and begins with a man named Wayne Jones.

Jones was a butcher for Kroger in Memphis, Tennessee. In 1942, he moved his family to Kansas City so he could manage the meat department here. But when Kroger asked him to manage the whole store, he quit and decided to launch Caterers, Inc. The success of the catering operation helped propel him into the restaurant business.

Allen’s Drive-In was the first burger business for Wayne Jones and William Fielder. In 1944, Jones purchased his first Allen’s Drive-In at 63rd and Paseo. He intended to change the name to “Pappy’s,” but with neon in short supply because of World War II, he had to stick with Allen’s. A year later, his son-in-law William Fielder came aboard to help run Allen’s.

Allen’s offered thin burgers, lean affairs thanks to the addition of soybean, which also gave them their sheen. The burgers were modeled after the success of another local upstart: Winstead’s. The burger universe was a small one then. Winstead’s co-owner Gordon Montgomery bought meat from Jones. [For those who never had the chance to dine at Allen’s, Wes Fielder likens it to Freddy’s Frozen Custard & Steamburgers out of Wichita, Kansas, as the closest current burger stand in operation.]

Over the first decade of ownership, the chain of Allen’s grew slowly out of Kansas City with Kansas outposts added in Topeka and Lawrence. Allen’s was the progenitor to Smaks. People were willing to wait for their food [tableside] at Allen’s, but SMAKS was fast food. The Allen’s Royal burger became the SMAK-A-Roo (a triple stack with lettuce, cheese, and tomato on a toasted bun), served alongside tenderloins, and those hand-dipped onion rings. In 1954, Ted Llewellyn, Jones’ other son-in-law, returned home from the Navy and entered the family business.

A year before Ray Kroc visited Dick and Mac McDonald in 1955, Jones and Llewellyn went out to San Bernardino, California, to see the brothers’ burger shop. McDonald’s had the golden arches. SMAKS would have a series of green overhangs. Burgers would cost a nickel.





In the midst of expansion, Ted Llewelyn wanted to give SMAKS a new identity, something to draw in families. In 1964, advertising executive Bill Witcher came in with an unorthodox pitch: Smaky, a seal puppet that would grant his "seal of approval," to the food at SMAKS. There was even a "SMAKY Meal," with a small burger, fries, a soft drink, and toy. Animals, it turns out, were a big part of SMAKS' identity.

Over a 20-year span, the family had built a regional burger empire. There were a dozen Allen's and more than two dozen SMAKS across Kansas and Missouri. Caterers Inc. had a classroom where managers were taught how to run a restaurant. Bill Gilbert and Paul Robinson managed Allen's before going on to found Houlihan's.

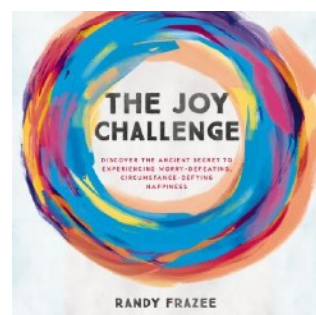


The end for SMAKS and Allen's roughly coincides with the invention of the Happy Meal in Kansas City. Advertising executive Bob Bernstein invented the McDonald's children's meal that was test-marketed in Kansas City in October 1977. Two years later, it would be introduced as a national menu item. For SMAKS, shrinking margins, national competitors entering the market, and a balance sheet heavily weighed down by debt from rapid growth slowly squeezed the life out of the regional chain. In 1983, Smaks filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy. Wendy's purchased several Smaks locations and a few more became Arby's. Within three years, all of the area SMAKS properties closed.

Visit <https://flatlandkc.org/eats-drinks/happened-smaks> for more history on SMAKS.

## The Joy Challenge: Discover the Ancient Secret to Experiencing Worry-Defeating, Circumstance-Defying Happiness by Randy Frazee [local pastor in Lenexa]

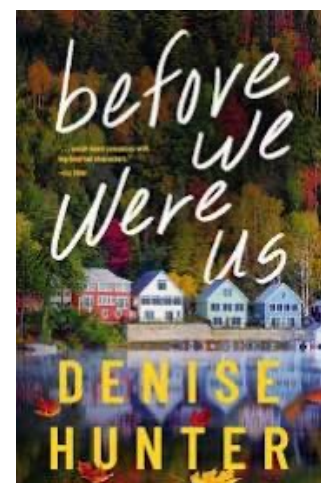
What if you could close the "joy gap," that distance between how you feel now and the way you wish you felt? If this sounds familiar, Frazee has good news for you. In The Joy Challenge, he shares the secret to experiencing genuine joyfulness, the kind of resilient happiness that doesn't evaporate in the face of challenges and setbacks. Bringing together research about the science of happiness with the apostle Paul's masterclass on joy in the book of Philippians, The Joy Challenge will help you discover the vital link between increasing your joy and winning the battle against worry and anxiety; develop patterns and mindsets of gratefulness and forgiveness that clear obstacles to happiness; and access the kind of circumstance-defying contentment that opens the door to a truly fulfilled life--even when there's a gap between the life you have now and the life you hope for.



She can't remember. He can't forget.

Seven months ago, after graduating with a hospitality degree, city girl Lauren Wentworth travelled to rural New Hampshire to become temporary manager of Pinehaven Lodges, a rustic family-owned resort. What started as just a springboard to her dream job became so much more when she fell in love with the owner's son Jonah, the Landry family, and her simple but rewarding position at the resort. Now she's reaching toward a different kind of future than she'd imagined for herself--and happier than she's ever been. But then she falls from a ladder.

When Lauren wakes up in the hospital, she only recalls her first couple months at the resort. Jonah is heartbroken at her memory loss and determined to help Lauren remember the deep feelings they've developed for one another. But Lauren isn't sure she wants to remember falling in love with someone she doesn't even like or giving up her dream career for a rustic resort in Podunk, New Hampshire. What is true and who does she love.



# Chicken Pot Pie with Biscuit Crust



## Ingredients

- ¼ cup butter
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 3 medium celery ribs, chopped
- 3 medium carrots, chopped
- ⅔ cup frozen peas
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cups lower-sodium chicken broth
- ⅔ cup half-and-half cream
- salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 3 cups cooked chicken, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 (16.3 ounce) can refrigerated flaky-style biscuits (such as Pillsbury Grands)
- 1 large egg yolk, beaten
- 1 tablespoon water

## Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C)
2. Melt butter in a skillet over medium-low heat. Add onion, celery, and carrots and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 15 minutes.
3. Stir in peas, flour, parsley, and thyme and cook, stirring constantly, until the flour coats the vegetables and begins to fry, about 5 minutes.
4. Whisk in chicken broth and half-and-half, and cook until the sauce is thick and bubbling. Stir in cooked chicken, and season with salt and pepper.
5. Transfer chicken, vegetables, and sauce into a 7x11-inch baking dish. Arrange biscuits on top of the filling. Beat egg yolk with water in a small bowl. Brush mixture over the biscuits.
6. Bake in the preheated oven until the biscuits are golden brown and the pie filling is bubbly, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from the oven and let rest for 10 minutes before serving.

## About Us

Jana Bonham and Annissa Freeman work together to create this monthly newsletter for our Red Oak Hills community members. Why? We love our community and want us all to stay connected not just for fun and sharing but also for help. The newsletter is to share news, events and fun things with one another. This newsletter will only be in electronic format however feel free to print and share with friends and family.