



Mary Busch Nirmisic holds her Congressional Gold Medal after returning to Columbia from Washington, D.C.

Gold Medal recipient, WW II WASP returns home
Columbia woman greeted by fans

Nirmisic's achievement was recognized by the nation's highest honor, the Congressional Gold Medal. She was the first woman to receive the medal for her service as a Women Airforce Service Pilot during World War II.

When she arrived in Columbia, she was greeted by a large group of fans, including members of the local WASP chapter. Nirmisic was presented with the medal by a group of officials at the airport.

"I'm going to find a mantle to put it on," she said. "My daddy would have been so proud."

Nirmisic said receiving the medal "just goes to show that every little country girl that wants to do something can do it."

When asked what she will do with the medal, she replied, "I'm going to find a mantle to put it on."

She doesn't have a mantle, but now she has a reason to get one.



The Red Line Saxophone Quartet will travel from New York to attend the competition. The group was given a special award during the 2009 Plowman Competition.

Plowman Competition attracts top musicians to Columbia

By LAUREN RABIN
 missourian.com

Musicians from across the nation will be in Columbia this weekend for the fourth Plowman Chamber Music Competition. Eighteen non-professional ensembles will compete for a grand prize of \$5,000.

"I am looking forward to hearing some of the greatest chamber music performances," said Vivian Tzuratska, the artistic director and a founder of the competition, which began in 2006.

Musicians are coming from states including Illinois, Colorado, Texas and Pennsylvania.

The competition is in memory of the late Janice Plowman, a Columbia community member who dedicated her life to education and the arts.

The Red Line Saxophone Quartet is coming from Rochester, N.Y., where members Brandon Kins, Gai Qian, Doug O'Connor and Quinn Lewis attend the Eastern School of Music, one of the 2009 Plowman Competition. Red Line will give one of the judges special recognition awards.

"I hope to have a great time as well as to see some of the best music in the world, which is extremely rare for chamber music, especially for saxophone quartets," Tzuratska said.

O'Connor, who plays soprano sax, said the group looks forward to coming to Columbia.

This year's judges are Russian pianist Boris Berman of Yale University, Israeli violist Amir Arad of Indiana University and American trombonist Mark Kellogg of Eastman and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. The judges were scheduled to participate in class discussions and lectures with students in the MU School of Music this week.

In addition to the \$5,000 grand prize, there are \$2,000 first prizes in the categories of Piano and Strings, and Woodwinds, Brass and Percussion and two \$500 honorable mentions. There is a special honor and Lucy Viarengo Audience Prize, which is decided by listeners, Tzuratska said.

All competition events are open to the public and will be held Saturday at First Baptist Church and Sunday at Missouri Theatre Center.

This year will be the first year the event is cosponsored by the Missouri Symphony Society and the Olin Chamber Music Series. The MU Chamber Music Series, the first either day, are available at the Missouri Theatre box office.



Mary Busch Nirmisic, center, is greeted at the Columbia Regional Airport by Salute to Veterans chairman Mary McCleary Powers, left, and Dan McGinnis, right, on Thursday. Nirmisic received the medal for her service in the Women Airforce Service Pilots.

Teen shooting suspect to be tried as adult

A second teenager accused of shooting a Walmart employee after a botched robbery attempt has been certified to be tried as an adult.

Damian Dennis Davis, 16, was charged Wednesday with first-degree assault, robbery and armed criminal action. He is being held on \$500,000 bond in the Boone County Jail.

Police say Davis went to the Walmart at 815 Conkey Road on Dec. 14 with another teen, Harrison Davis, 17, and tried to rob an employee who had just gotten off work.

Ken Jacobs, 34, was shot three times — twice in the back and once in the hand. Police said the two suspects then tried to take money from Jacobs. Jacobs was taken to University Hospital and later released.

After the two were arrested in January, Harrison Davis made "incriminating statements" to investigators during an interrogation, police said, but Damian Davis was "not cooperative."

Both were being held at the jail as of 4:30 p.m. Thursday.

— Matt Peacock

Third business robbed this week

An armed man robbed the Boone Bay novelty store at 1122 Wilbur Boulevard late Wednesday night, police said.

A masked man entered the store around 11 p.m., pointed a gun at the clerk, demanded some money and ran once he got it, said Jesse Haden, public information officer for the Columbia Police Department.

"He is one of those things where very likely it could be the same guy," Haden said. "But as investigators, they have to be open-minded. It could be three different people."

— Matt Peacock

Additional DWI patrolling this weekend

Boone County residents can expect to see more law enforcement than usual patrolling the roads this weekend.

The Missouri Department of Transportation issued a grant to the Sheriff's Department for deputies to work extra shifts as part of the "You Drink & Drive, You Lose" campaign. Mayor Tom Reddin said the deputies would be looking for impaired drivers.

Reddin said there would not be a DWI checkpoint as part of the extra enforcement this weekend.

The Boone County Sheriff's Department will have extra deputies patrolling as part of the "You Drink & Drive, You Lose" campaign. Mayor Tom Reddin said the deputies would be looking for impaired drivers.

— Alix Wiggins

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