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HOME & FAMILY

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TASTE

Fall flavor



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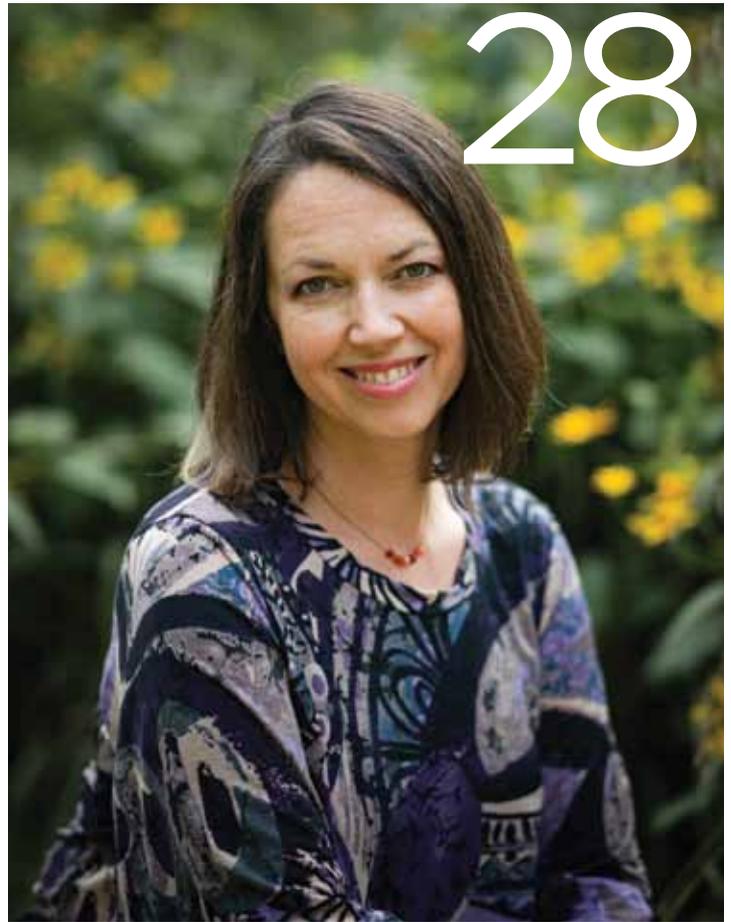
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COLUMBUS

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Hello!

I am back in the office, and the first few weeks have been an emotional roller coaster. One of the biggest challenges has been getting Eli to take a bottle. A few weeks before my maternity leave ended he suddenly decided to start refusing a bottle. Until he takes one, I have to drive to his daycare every three hours to feed him so he won't go hungry. After buying every single bottle sold at Target and many more from Amazon, I am hoping and praying he will eventually take one.

I have not worked a full week since my return.

Due to the bottle complications and Eli having an elevated temperature, I only managed to work two full days the first week. The second week I had to

work from home because two of his daycare teachers contracted COVID-19 and closed the daycare all week. Fingers crossed week three goes better.

After experiencing a roller coaster of emotions these first two weeks, I decided to try looking at things in a more positive light. Instead of thinking about being sad or stressed, I have been trying to look forward to things. For example, instead of being stressed about leaving work every three hours, I am looking forward to getting to see Eli a few times a day.

Another thing I am looking forward to is my favorite season — fall. Fall is right around the corner, and I am so excited. Fall brings the perfect weather, apple cinnamon candles, sweater weather, hot drinks, bon fires, fall festivals and this year — an adorable costume for Eli.

Fall also brings an abundance of seasonal flavors from apple cinnamon to pumpkin spice. I am not a huge fan of pumpkin spice, so I typically opt for something apple flavored. Check out what apple dishes local restaurants have to offer this fall. Also, read about Skye Nicholson's independent recovery program, Lori Erfmeier's drastic home remodel and the online only business trend.



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In each issue of Columbus, we ask people for their opinions on a variety of topics. This month's question:

What events and activities would you like to see starting up again in the community after the pandemic?



We would like to see more concerts on the library plaza like the symphony orchestras and Black Violins. We also like the movies at Yes cinema and hope there are more of them.
— *Bernita and Bill Melvin*



Lots of jazz, hiring this band, Jazz Me Baby, that is what I would like to see Columbus do a whole lot more. We could play downtown, inside for a major event, fundraisers, the library plaza would be great, Neighborfest would be wonderful, Ethnic Expo would great, just anywhere. I'll tell you, anytime it is warm outside, any day, we are there. If it is zero degrees, we are inside. Columbus needs more jazz.
— *Andy Saurer*



I am looking forward to Ethnic Expo, it will return in early October, and it will be nice to have people and vendors back downtown. I also look forward to the return of the summer concert series that we have downtown on Washington street, Neighborfest is the name we give to it, so happy to see it come back and look forward to it being better attended.
— *Jim Lienhoop with his dog Ellie*



I would like more outdoor concerts. We could have them at Mill Race park at the amphitheater or where they have the veterans concert, downtown by the Veterans Memorial, near the courthouse, really they could be at any park.
— *Sidney Berry*



I would like to see the Iron Pour return. Last year, Josh Kroot, Warren Baumgart, and I had a meeting about bringing this back!
— *Marilyn Brackney*



They should bring Neighborfest back like it was. It drew a lot of people and everyone really enjoyed it.
— *Margie Barr*



Neighborfests, but instead of doing them once a month, try to do them weekly. They could have different food people come from out town and do a food block party and do different themes, maybe a craft one. Although I live in Indy near Garfield Park, my family, the Kestlers, are here. We do a lot of concerts and up there they bring in a whole festival. It is sort of like the one they do in Mill Race, Rock the Park, but up there even though it is on the southside and not downtown, they bring in big names and make it a whole weekend event, that would be great here.
— *Hannah Shaffer*



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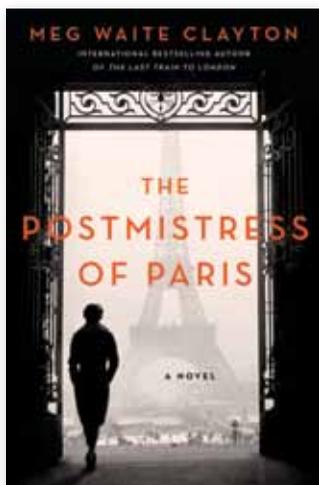
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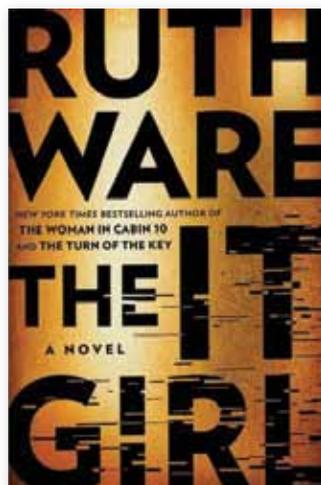
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“The Postmistress of Paris”

By Meg Waite Clayton
I thoroughly enjoy historical fiction, especially those that pay homage to the strong women who played significant roles in WWII. This beautiful yet haunting novel did not disappoint. Inspired by the story of Chicago heiress, Mary Jane Gold and journalist Varian Fry, who smuggled artists and intellectuals out of France to safety, *The Postmistress of Paris* weaves strong characters and varied plot lines to provide another look at the risks taken by some to save the lives of others. We can never be reminded too much about the love and strength of humanity during times of fear and terror.

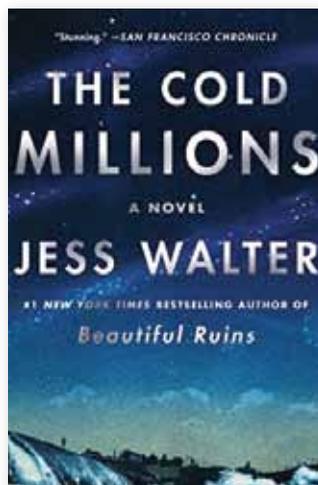
— Theresa Wilson



“The It Girl”

By Ruth Ware
At Oxford University, a group of unlikely students (think *Breakfast Club*, one of my favorite 80’s movies) become fast friends whose lives center around one girl. By the end of their first year, tragedy strikes. Someone is convicted for the crime. The friendships begin to unravel as each person deals with the aftermath. Now, ten years later, Hannah, who delivered the proof that led to the conviction, is having second thoughts. Was it the truth? Did she help convict an innocent person? This is a fast-paced, page-turning thriller with a well-developed group of characters that will keep you guessing! Releases July 12 by Gallery/Scout Press. Pre-order now!

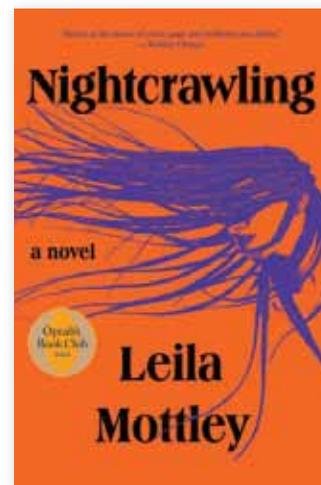
— Theresa Wilson



“The Cold Millions”

By Jess Walter
This historical fiction novel is a story of two brothers swept up in the turbulent class warfare of the early twentieth century. Set in the Pacific Northwest, this slice of history speaks to friendships and brotherly love, and it is filled with captivating characters — some fictional and some based on real individuals. The fight for free speech, income equality, and the right to make an honest, fairly paid living resonates perhaps as loudly now as it did then.

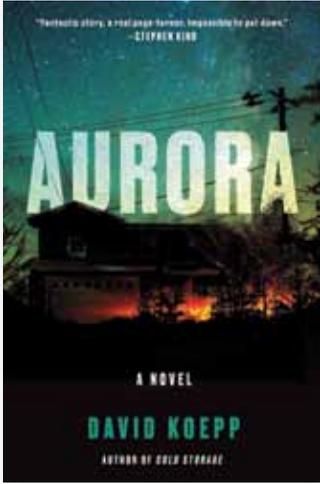
— Kate Stinebring



“Nightcrawling”

By Leila Mottley
In a book about a black teen in Oakland who turns to prostitution out of desperation, there is very little I could personally relate to. And yet, with every page of “*Nightcrawling*,” I felt like I was walking right alongside Kiara. After her father is killed and her mother is sent to prison, Kiara and her brother Marcus are left to fend for themselves. With very little life experience and no family or friends, things quickly fall apart for the siblings. As Marcus pins his hopeless dreams on rap stardom, Kiara knows it will fall to her to keep a roof over their heads. When she stumbles into a night of easy money, Kiara sees a way out of their desperate situation. But it quickly becomes unmanageable, and even as the money starts to roll in, Kiara knows she must find a way out. But is it already too late, too complicated? To read this debut novel from Leila Mottley is to live it. It was not an easy read, but it was a glorious one. The writing was powerful and resonant. The best book of 2022 so far.

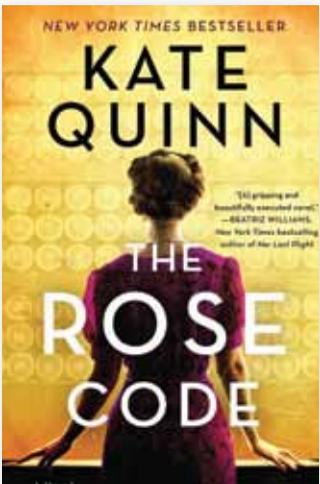
—Angie Revell



“Aurora”

By David Koepp
 “Aurora” by David Koepp examines what happens to our technologically dependent society when it is destroyed by a powerful solar storm. Who survives? The rich? The powerful? The strong? Or those you may not expect? This novel gives a thought provoking look at what humanity is capable of in the face of catastrophe.

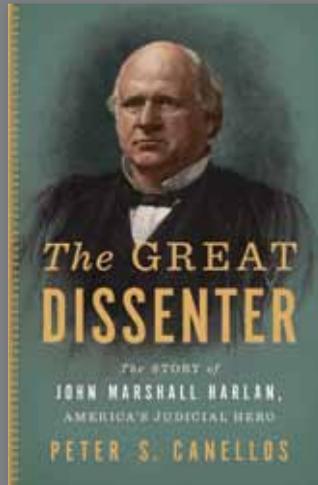
— Tom Watts (Tom is Celia Allman Watts’ husband and an honorary Pointer.)



“The Rose Code”

By Kate Quinn
 My absolute favorite book of 2021 was “The Rose Code” by Kate Quinn. As a huge fan of historical fiction and mystery, this page-turner kept me reading and breathless until the very last page. This is one book I will keep on my shelf to read again!

— Theresa Wilson



“The Great Dissenter: The Story of John Marshall Harlan, America’s Judicial Hero”

By Peter S. Canellos

In a time when the public debate about politicization of the Supreme Court is in the news frequently, this book makes for extremely interesting reading. Justice Harlan served on the court from 1877 to 1911 and is not as well-known as many other Supreme Court justices, but his influence on the Court in the twentieth century was arguably greater than any other justice well into the 20th century. In addition to a well-researched analysis of many of the court’s decisions in the late 1800s and early 1900s regarding civil rights, corporate monopolies, instituting a federal income tax, and protecting children and other exploited workers, the book demonstrates the power those dissenting opinions can have on future decisions. Although the main character is John Harlan, his relationship with Robert Harlan is explored in depth. Robert Harlan may have been a blood relative, resulting from a relationship between John Harlan’s father and an enslaved woman. This aspect of the book adds the dimension of what life was like for black men after the civil war. I highly recommend reading this book.

— By John Stroh

fall flavors

Seasonal culinary options at home

BY BARNEY QUICK // PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANA JONES

Apples, along with persimmons and pumpkins, are part of the triumvirate of autumnal fruit. Their look, feel and taste conjure images of hayrides, football games, flannel shirts and campfires. There are countless ways to incorporate them into fall recipes as well.

Several establishments in our city have come up with imaginative ways to feature apples in a variety of offerings. Let's wander into a few and see what they're doing to celebrate the season of this flavorful foodstuff.







apple critter

Donuts 'n Coffee | 2222 State Street | 812-376-2796

The name of this east side establishment only hints at the panoply of baked delectables available every Monday through Saturday from 4 a.m. until they run out. One will also find rolls, twists, Bismarks, bars and muffins.

And then there's the apple critter.

"It's a yeast product," says owner Dave Stith.

Chopped apples, brown

sugar and cinnamon are added, and then it's given its fritter shape.

"It's not proofed," meaning it's not allowed to rise. "It goes straight into the fryer. Then it's glazed."

A morning spot in business for 41 years is going to have amassed lots of regulars among its customers.

"Years ago, a lot of Cummins executives

came in," says Stith. "They continued to do so as they retired."

He notes that a group of East High School girls meet there on Wednesdays for Bible study, as does a group of men on Thursdays.

He's marked a lot of milestones with his patrons, and even attended some funerals.

"It's family."



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apple crisp pie

Ahlemeyer Farms Old Time Bakery
2034 17th Street | 812-372-7437

This 31-year-old establishment underwent a change in basic approach when Brittany Kiel took it over from her parents three years ago. While it offers many of the same baked goods it has for years, they're all made with vegan ingredients.

The only change she had to make for apple crisp pie was switching out dairy butter. Otherwise, the recipe for this favorite is as it always has been.

She uses a pound of apples, which come from a supplier in Michigan, in each pie.

They're sliced and loaded into a hand-rolled crust.

"On the top, we put a butter, brown sugar and oats mixture," says Kiel. "It gives it a crunchy texture."

The bakery has the pie for sale all year long, but Kiel says that "in the fall, we offer it with caramel drizzle and walnuts."

apple cobbler ice cream

Junkyard Barbecue LLC
812-350-5098

This food truck operation has been selling apple cobbler ice cream from September through November for two years.

"The Seymour Octoberfest in 2020 was where people really took notice," says proprietor Toby Calhoun.

Junkyard Barbecue has a few flavors it runs seasonally in addition to its year-round ice cream varieties.

"We don't have a big-batch freezer," says Calhoun. "We use a 20-quart old-fashioned freezer."

The ice cream is definitely from scratch, made with milk, half-and-half, heavy whipping cream and vanilla extract.

The apple cobbler flavor is made as one might expect, with seasoned crust, brown sugar, butter, cinnamon and apple pie filling added to the basics.

Junkyard Barbecue grew out of a community service activity. Calhoun and his wife Tiffani sold homemade ice cream as an American Cancer Society fundraiser.

"I got a letter from the health department saying that if we wanted to continue, we'd have to establish a business," says Calhoun.

So they decided to add barbecue — ribs, pulled pork and brisket with all the trimmings — to the ice cream.

"I converted my garage into a commissary kitchen and gave up all my hobbies," the equipment for which he'd stored there.

Now the truck parks on a regular basis at Hog Molly Brewing Company, various Cork Liquors locations, and at festivals.

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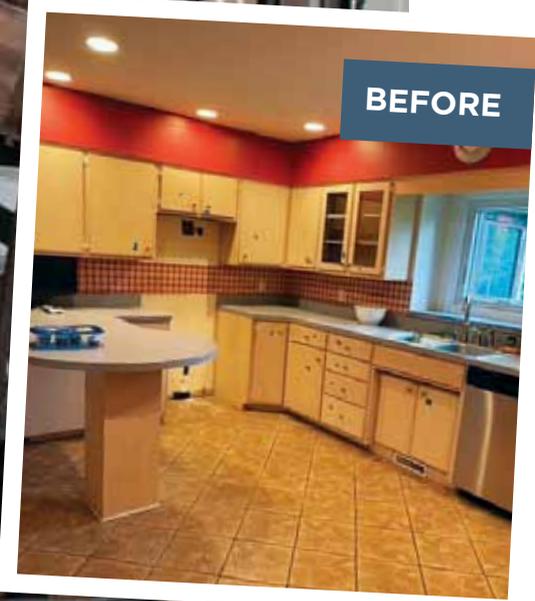
Erfmeiers remodel to better fit their needs

BY GLENDA WINDERS // PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANGELA JACKSON

A while back, Shawn and Lori Erfmeier were at the point of looking for a new house. While they loved the one where they were living east of Columbus, the kitchen, dining room and downstairs living area were inconvenient, dated and didn't serve their casual lifestyle. The problem was, they didn't want to leave. Shawn had built the garage of his dreams, one where he could "hang out, do woodworking, make messes and fix stuff." As new product reliability leader in power systems for Cummins, he had also outfitted an office upstairs in the garage so that he could work from home.

Another issue was that they had grown to like their neighbors. During the pandemic they all took walks together — masked and 6 feet apart — and had "smoke on the sac" barbecues, naming themselves the "Quarentinies." When that was over, they had made new friends.

The solution they settled on was to remodel, and the company they chose to help them was Benchmark Builders and their

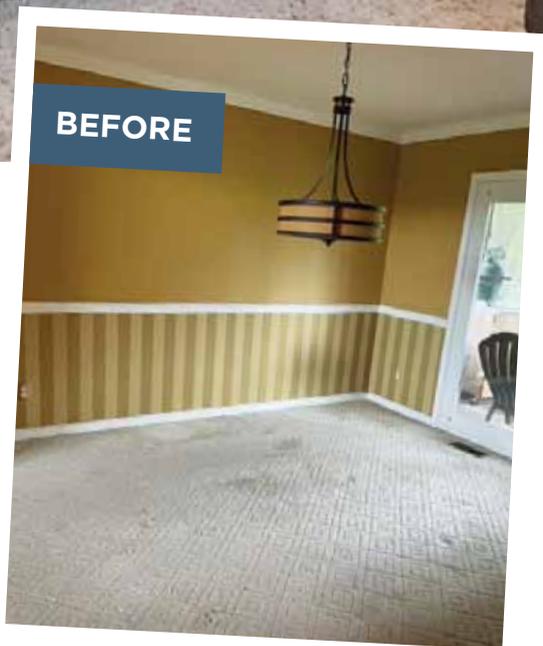


BEFORE



“We don’t have a formal dining room anymore because we didn’t want one. It’s wasted space.”

— Shawn Erfmeier



BEFORE

companion iN Style Kitchen and Bath.

“I can’t say enough good things about them,” Lori said. “They were such good communicators and told us what would happen every day. They were really professional, and their subcontractors were wonderful.”

The house had been built in 1993 with a wall that separated the kitchen



Spencer, Shawn, Lori and Layton Erfmeier with their dogs.

and dining room. Instead of an island, they had only a keyhole counter around which to gather. Those were the first things to go. In their place now is a wide-open great room with a screened-in porch and plenty of space for the Erfmeiers and their two sons, Layton, a junior at Ball State, and Spencer, a senior at East High School. And despite eliminating the dining room

altogether, they still have ample room to entertain.

“We don’t have a formal dining room anymore because we didn’t want one,” Shawn said. “It’s wasted space.”

Their island seats the family, and a long, high table behind their sofa can accommodate extra guests. When they have a crowd, they set up extra tables.

Since Shawn is the chef in this house, Lori was happy to

have him research appliances and choose exactly what he wanted.

“I had no idea how overwhelming making all of the decisions was going to be,” she said. “There are so many products out there — top of the line, then medium and then bottom-of-the line.”

They credit iN Style’s lead interior designer, Jessica Bostic, with making critical

suggestions that moved the project forward, and she says they made her job easy.

“It was an incredibly fun project to work on,” she said, “and Shawn and Lori were fantastic to work with. They had a great sense of style all their own, and I basically just played within their ideas. They came in knowing what kind of functionality they wanted, and I rolled with it from there.”

They said she helped them find what they wanted at prices they could afford, but since they weren’t planning to take on such a project again anytime soon, there were some elements on which they were unwilling to compromise. Two of those were the professional-quality Wolf range and the externally vented hood positioned over it that Shawn says everyone who likes to cook should have.

Something he was sure that he didn’t want was a double oven.



“You really only use it at Thanksgiving and we didn’t have a lot of space,” he said, “so I wanted something more versatile.”

That turned out to be a GE Adventium microwave that costs more than a normal microwave but can also broil, bake and proof. The microwave function makes crusty submarine sandwiches and reheats pizza so that it doesn’t get soggy.

The Erfmeiers chose white wood Shiloh cabinets that give the room a fresh, crisp look and installed two spice drawers. The side of the island that faces the stove is made up of drawers where Shawn stores all of his pans and cooking utensils. He was hesitant to put a salad sink in the island because he was afraid it would get in the way, but now he’s glad he did.

“I always have a sink full of hot soapy water so that I can clean as I go,” he said, “but then I had to empty the sink out if I wanted to wash vegetables. This enables me to make mistakes and not have to plan as carefully.”

Another splurge was the touchless faucets that allow him to turn water on and off even if his hands are messy. Lori’s love of texture led to the brown and white granite countertops, and the backsplash is a rustic-looking white ceramic tile.

Floors here are commercial vinyl, which Bostic suggested because of the couple’s two dogs — Ruby, a Labrador mix, and Louis, an Irish terrier. It’s waterproof and glues down, so it can easily be replaced if

a piece is damaged. Now, they say they love it.

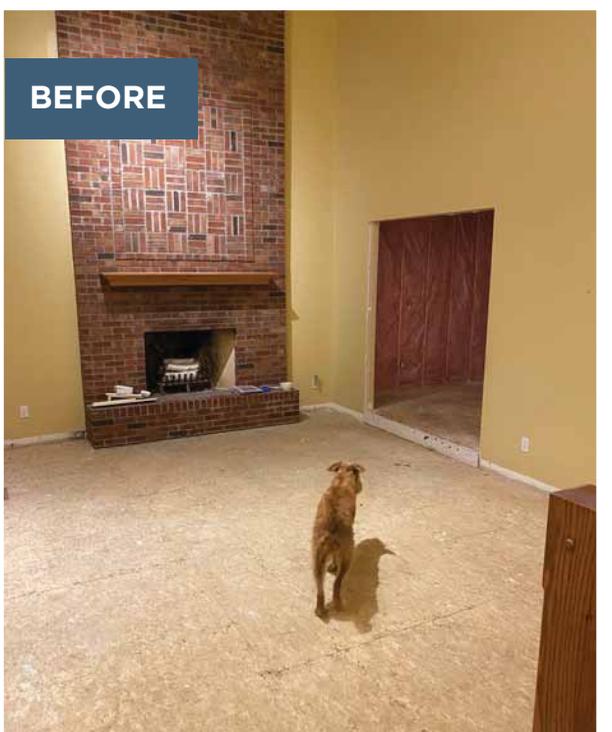
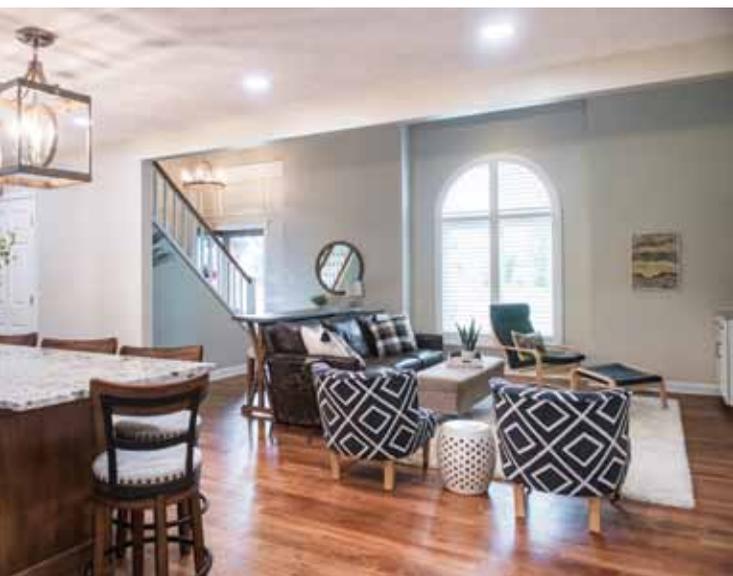
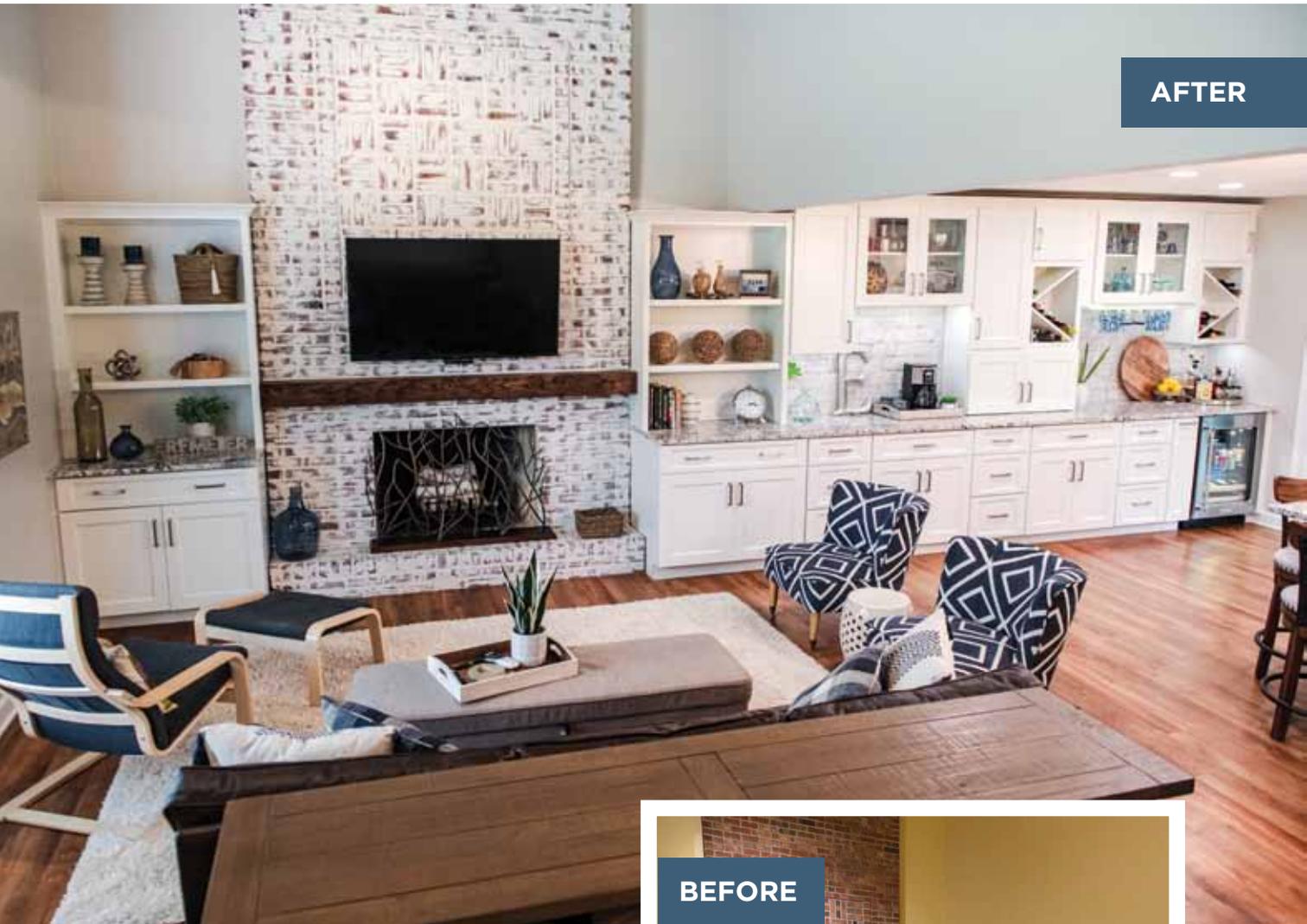
“With the old laminate flooring you could see the same knot hole in 57,000 places,” Shawn said. “I love the natural randomness of wood and all of its blemishes, and I really wanted that in my floor. But I also knew that the dogs would have scratched it up. This was a good compromise.”

A serious woodworker, Shawn made the mantelpiece over the fireplace, several cutting boards on display in the kitchen area and the chandelier that is the focal point of the screened-in porch. When a 200-year-old barn fell down in Hartsville, his father rescued part of

“It was an incredibly fun project to work on, and Shawn and Lori were fantastic to work with. They had a great sense of style all their own, and I basically just played within their ideas.”

— Jessica Bostic





a beam that had been hand-hewn from native timbers and held together with wooden pegs. Shawn created metal brackets to hold it and wired it for lights. Also on the porch are his Big Green Egg grill and comfortable seating that looks out over a massive lawn and trees.

A long white cabinet against the wall in what used to be the dining room provides more storage, and glass doors make it possible to display family treasures. It doubles as a buffet when they entertain, and the appliance garage here hides Lori's laptop with its own outlet for charging. Formerly a pre-K parent-teacher liaison for the Bartholomew County School Corp., now she is

the owner and instructor at Kumon Math and Reading Center, so she frequently works at home, too. This setup allows her to use the island as a desk and then put her work out of sight when she's done.

With the kitchen and dining room finished, however, now some elements in the living room no longer worked. The answer was to extend the new flooring into here, paint the walls and refinish the steps to the second floor bedrooms that had previously been carpeted. But what to do with the red-brick fireplace façade that extended to the ceiling? They loved it, Lori said, but with everything else white and the rooms seeming lighter and

more airy, it "stuck out like a sore thumb."

Benchmark's master tradesman, Enrique Alvarez, came up with the solution. He covered the bricks with a mortar wash, troweling on white mortar and then wiping some of it off before it could set. The result is a modern-looking fireplace they can still use and enjoy but that now ties in with the rest of their new décor. Plantation shutters over the front-facing window in this room complete the new look.

The powder room off the living area didn't require any upgrading, but they painted it a deep navy blue ("my color," Lori says) to reflect the accents she made to the generally neutral color scheme — shades

of brown to complement all of the white. Her artist father made several pieces of collage in the brown-white-blue palette that make for striking focal points in the space.

Shawn credits his wife with the beauty their home now exudes.

"I'm a functional, practical person, so there's a lot of this stuff I don't care about," he said. "If I'm going to use a workspace, I want it to be the best it can be within the budget. But colors and textures — I just know what I like when I see it. I couldn't have imagined this space beforehand, and I couldn't have put it together without Lori. I'd say we're a pretty good team." ©

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Coaching
to find a
better life

Skye Nicholson helps women recover from alcohol abuse

BY GLENDA WINDERS
// PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ANGELA JACKSON

Skye Nicholson will forever remember Jan. 7, 2018, as the day she took alcohol out of the driver's seat of her life, the day she began her journey to sobriety, the day she found her razzle-dazzle.

"I coined that term because of my dislike of the word 'sober,'" she said. "'Sober' sounds dull, beige, grumpy old man, boring — and that was a lot of my fear in the beginning. I didn't want to be any of that."

Today she is the author of "Unexpected Alchemy: Poems of Addiction and Awakening" and the founder of Soul's Truth Coaching, where she helps women recover

from alcohol abuse, and coaches those who want to get their lives going on a new track. But it took a lot of dark days and nights to get her to this point.

Born and raised in Chicago, Nicholson said she had a "lovely" childhood but was a shy only child who was socially awkward. As a high school student she discovered that if she drank alcohol a lot of her anxieties went away.

"I was a smart kid, so I was always on the outside of the cool kids," she said. "Alcohol leveled the playing field. It quieted my brain down, and my inhibitions

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went away. That was really appealing to me. I believed that wine made me a more awesome version of myself.”

Going away to college at the University of Missouri Rolla engineering school didn't help. At that time the department was largely made up of men and the school had the reputation of being a party school, so she said they drank “a lot.” Eventually she graduated from the University of Illinois as an environmental engineer. She took a job in Kansas City — and kept drinking.

“When you're into the business world, everything is about alcohol — networking, happy hours,” she said. “I was keeping up with the boys. I didn't think I was drinking any more than anybody else because all of my close friends were heavy drinkers, just like me.”

She loved the job she had, which involved traveling around the Midwest doing environmental site assessments, but she felt her career was going nowhere, so she changed jobs and worked as an educator at a science museum. She earned her master's degree in curriculum and instruction at the University of Missouri — Kansas City, got a teaching certificate and began teaching science in Title I schools. She loved that job, too, but the drinking continued.

“I was leading a double life,” she said. “My weekends started on Wednesday. I was out at the bars and overdoing it. There was a lot of risky behavior.”

After her marriage to another heavy drinker ended, she returned to Chicago, this time as a teacher at North Lawndale College Prep, whose students were 99% African-American. She became the science department chair, worked with the University of Chicago on urban-development programs, got a Fulbright Scholarship to go to Namibia as an educational ambassador and was voted teacher of the year by her students. She loved that job, too, but it was stressful. Many of her students were in the foster-care system. Others were caring for younger siblings while their parents were at work or in prison. In one case she had to testify in court on behalf of a young man who was arrested for possession of a weapon.

“Teaching is a helping profession, so I was giving, giving, giving of myself all day long,” she said. “It was invigorating while I was doing it, but when I came home afterward I had no tools to take care of myself, to process all of the stuff that I had dealt with during the day, so I drank. I believed that I was pulling it off. I was a respected professional by day and a wild child at night. I was balancing it — kind of.”

Even after she met and married Jarrett Melzer, had their first child, son Zack (now 8) and became a stay-at-home mom, the “mommy” groups in which she was involved provided opportunities to drink. Today she points to the T-shirts, cocktail napkins and

greeting cards that suggest women who are stressed by their children — or anything else — turn to alcohol.

Wake up call

The family moved to Columbus in 2015 at the suggestion of Nicholson's parents, who wanted to retire to Nashville. When the couple came for a visit, Melzer, an industrial controls engineer, found a job at GTI in North Vernon and they found a house they liked. Daughter Nixie (now 6) arrived soon after their move.

But nothing changed until Nicholson saw herself drunk on Facebook. She and some friends had gone to the Commons to see a performance by Jane Lynch and afterward out for drinks at the Garage Pub, where Lynch had gone, too. An excited friend posted a video the following day and tagged the participants.

“Right smack in the middle of that video was me, drunk, age 41, dancing. Something inside of me just clinched up. That was not the person I wanted to be.”

— Skye Nicholson

“Right smack in the middle of that video was me, drunk, age 41, dancing,” she said. “Something inside of me just clinched up. That was not the person I wanted to be. That was not the mom I wanted my kids to have and that was not the woman I wanted to be. I thought OK, something has got to change.”



“What I discovered was myself. Alcohol is a numbing agent, and it numbs universally. Not only does it numb pain, but it numbs joy.”

— Skye Nicholson

that moment to solidify the decision,” she said. “I had said it to another person, which made it real, and I had somebody I had known as a drunk who was now proof that that could change.”

She celebrates him with a poem in her book titled “The Steady.” The two had been friends in high school and never dated, but the poem ends with the line “... as ever before you steadied me and helped me rise.”

Within the first week she read Annie Grace’s “This Naked Mind: Control Alcohol,” which Nicholson said made her look at alcohol in new ways and realize that she could change the belief that she needed it to be comfortable socially.

“What I discovered was myself,” she said. “Alcohol is a numbing agent, and it numbs universally. Not only does it numb pain, but it numbs joy. It increases the stress hormones in the body and causes you to have a higher baseline of anxiety. It also creates this system in your body where the small pleasures of life, like birds chirping and sunshine and your cute kid laughing, don’t cause as much endorphin release because your body is expecting the synthetic pleasure from alcohol.”

At first her plan was just to cut back, but one beer led to another and one glass of wine turned into a bottle until she knew she had to quit altogether. The thought of giving up her “liquid courage” terrified her.

But then, scrolling through Facebook, she found a post

made by an old friend who was celebrating five years of sobriety. Before she could reconsider, she sent him a message and told him she needed to quit drinking. He messaged back and they began a correspondence.

“That was the inspiration and the help I needed at

Life coaching

Skye began writing a blog about her journey that led her aunt to stop drinking, and she has been sober ever since. The same aunt encouraged her to take Grace's training at the This Naked Mind Institute, and after completing that in 2021, Nicholson opened Soul's Truth Coaching to help women with addictions and teach them empowerment. Often getting rid of the addiction is just the beginning. Then clients must deal with whatever issues they were trying to avoid. If they come to her for life coaching, she helps them remove the roadblocks that are getting in the way of their success.

One of those is Marjia

Maxfield, who immigrated from Macedonia to Temecula, California, and operates a custom-tailoring business. She listened when Nicholson was interviewed on a Naked Mind podcast and looked her up because she felt like she was stuck in her life. Since then the two have been meeting by Zoom once a week.

"My goal was to get unstuck," Maxfield said, "and she has helped me so much. She has helped me see where I'm stuck and what makes me stuck and what to avoid. She is a really good listener and connector to what you're saying and what you want. It's just her. She is so open."

The way Nicholson works is to start with a free 30-minute

"discovery" call, usually on Zoom, to assess a person's needs and see if she might be able to help. She offers 30-day group coaching during "Dry January," but typically she meets with each client privately. The sessions are in 12-week packages because she feels that by that time the client's goals may have been met. If not, they'll work together in 12-week blocks for as long as they want. But Nicholson emphasizes that she is not a therapist.

"I call it non-medical mental health," she said. "Coaching is different from therapy. It isn't necessarily meant to be a long-term, forever relationship. It can be, but as a coach I want to take people from where they are and give them tools and tactics and

techniques to get them to where they want to go. My own goal is to work myself out of a job with each person."

Becoming a community member

At the same time she is working on some other projects, and she is grateful for the people who are her mentors in learning how to better help women in crisis. One of them is Beth McNeely, president and founder of Century 21 Breeden Realtors and president of the Columbus Chamber of Commerce.

"When Skye decided to start a coaching business, she came to me," McNeely said. "She asked me, 'How do I even start?' It's an arena where



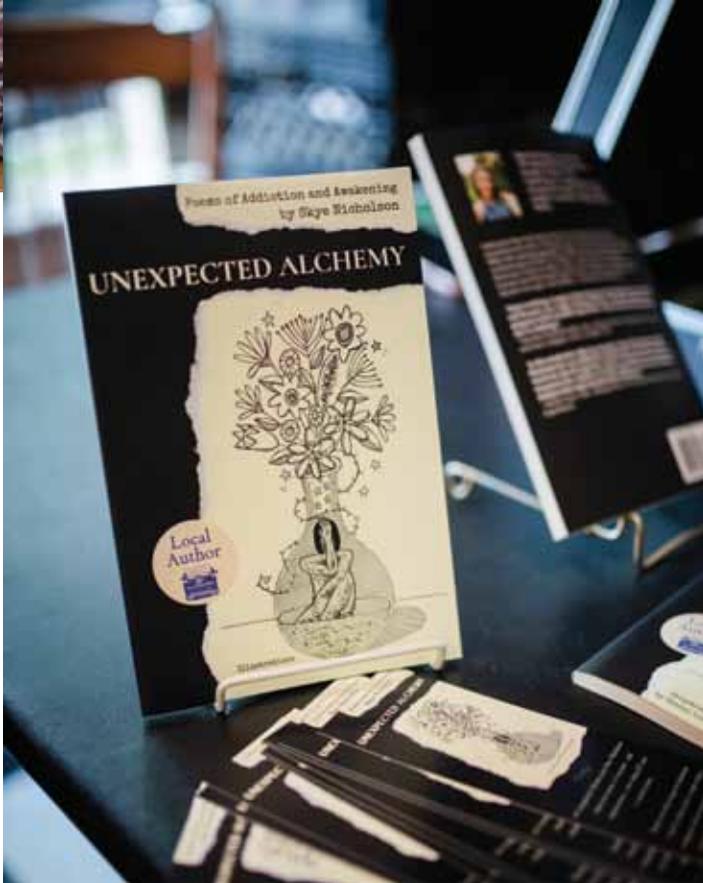
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there's a lot of stigma and not everybody's going to jump on the bandwagon and say, 'Yay! I drink too much and I need help.' People do business with people they know they can trust, so we talked about how important it was for her to become known as a contributing member of our community. For what she's doing, someone really has to trust her and know her as a person. I have been so completely impressed by her ability and her drive to get out into the community."

That drive has led Nicholson to join the Chambers of Commerce in both Columbus and Bloomington, sign books at Viewpoint, speak to the local Rotary group and present her organization at Ignite Columbus. She also hosts a free monthly open-mic night at Elemental Yoga in the Roviari Building, where women and women-identifying people, including teenagers, can share poetry and prose they've written or like.

She'll be the keynote speaker at the Bartholomew Consolidated School Foundation's Tea for Teachers on Sept. 24 and the emcee for Foundation for Youth's Great Girls Wonderful Women event on Oct. 20. She'll host a Sober October group — a virtual guided 30-day break from alcohol — and co-lead a workshop on Oct. 22 at Elemental Yoga titled "ARRIVE: A workshop for moving through and becoming alive." At the moment she is working on a guided journal called "Alchemy of Change," partially funded by an Indiana Arts Commission On-Ramp Entrepreneurial Grant that will be released before the end of this year.

As part of her civic

involvement, Nicholson is an advocate for alternatives to alcohol at social gatherings.

"We're starting to see some really wonderful shifts in our community toward allowing for there to be a non-alcoholic way to network and socialize," she said. "If we can just change the paradigm that alcohol is necessary for every social interaction, then we can start to open events up to people who may not want to drink as much. The Savory Swine is now selling non-alcoholic wine, and the last Chamber after-hours I

went to was at Lucabe, so there was a coffee option as well as the alcohol option."

When she isn't working with clients or writing, she enjoys hiking and camping with her nature-loving family. They ride their bikes together to the park and the farmers market, and their favorite thing to do is wade through creeks looking for fossils and geodes.

Whatever else she is doing, however, most days find her looking for ways to help other women.

"I think women deal with

so much stuff that happens to us privately," she said. "We are the caretakers of everybody else — nurturers of our spouse and our family, and we're often the ones in the healing and helping careers. My ultimate goal with all of this is to normalize and create safe space for women to work through their 'stuff.' In this world of social media there is so much comparison, so much competition. I want to create spaces where we support one another and lift each other up." ☺

"My ultimate goal with all of this is to normalize and create safe space for women to work through their 'stuff.'"

— Skye Nicholson

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Think local, **shop online**

BY REBECCA BERFANGER //
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TONY VASQUEZ

Two retailers find success
with online businesses

It's no secret that online shopping is booming. The U.S. Census released data about ecommerce trends in mid-August that shows a steady line of increases in online sales. Sites that focus on side hustles also share that it's easier now than ever to start an online-only business with the availability of technology, not to mention the cost savings when there is no need for a brick-and-mortar store, such as rent, utilities, and other expenses.

Two examples happening locally include handmade goods and clothing resale online.

Handmade online

Columbus-based KayaSoaps, owned and operated locally since 2015, has a store

on Amazon.com and Etsy.com, has items available on Uncommon Goods, has been sold wholesale to boutiques around the U.S. (although it is not currently available in local boutiques), and features many of their products on Instagram. It was started by Priya Buge and her husband after their twin daughters moved away to college.

"I was making handmade flowers, but now me and my husband needed an activity together which will help us to spend quality time together. We both love gardening. We have lavender in our garden. Each time I smelled it, it reminded me of the lavender soap my father used to bring when I was a child," Buge wrote via email while traveling this summer.

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KayaSoaps](https://etsy.com/shop/KayaSoaps).

She always wondered how lavender soap was made, and decided to do it herself. She researched recipes online and in libraries, made a trial using a basic recipe, and was hooked.

“It turned out so good! It

was very moisturizing, with a creamy lather and beautiful design and texture!” She added it was much better than what was available in the market.

After that trial, she and her husband would experiment

with the recipe, “adding honey, oatmeal, goat milk, clays, plant root powders, fragrance oils, essential oils, infused oils, plant leaf juices and what not! We learnt a lot on how to get color using clays and plant root powders, infused oils and more.”

They ultimately settled on a plant-based recipe using all-natural and organic oils, clays, essential oils and no artificial colorants.

Many of the ingredients come from their garden.

“We grow lavender, eucalyptus, rosemary, roses, lemongrass, peppermint, lemon verbena. The lavender is used to infuse oil, which we use to

make lavender soap. The buds and rose flower petals are sprinkled on the top of soap. The eucalyptus, rosemary and lemon verbena is used in bath salts," she said.

Whatever they don't grow, they source from suppliers who only use organic herbs. The other ingredients are also carefully sourced. For instance, the soaps are made with various saponified oils, otherwise known as oils that have been processed for soap-making: olive oil, organic coconut oil, grape seed oil, rice bran oil, castor oil, organic shea butter, natural clays for color, plant root powder for color and essential oil blend for scent.

They also focus on small batches for their products,

including soaps, body butters, lip balms, lotion bars, bath salts, body oils, muscle rub, toners, facial oils, face masks and candles.

By sticking with small batches, she wrote, "the quality and freshness is maintained. Production, inventory, work space and cash flow is well managed."

Another benefit of running her own online-only business? Buge can set her own standards when it comes to packaging and waste, something she takes very seriously with a zero waste policy.

"We always had decided that if we would sell the soaps and products, we will not add more trash on earth. We will help to grow more herbs and plants by consuming them

in our products. We will help to sustain the traditional handmade paper making and the people who make them. Our tiny contribution to help [support a] green environment," she wrote. "All the ingredients are plant based, natural and organic, sustainable and 100% recyclable packaging. We also use handmade paper to wrap our

"All the ingredients are plant based, natural and organic, sustainable and 100% recyclable packaging. We also use handmade paper to wrap our soaps. Zero waste to help the environment and ecosystem."

— Priya Buge

soaps. Zero waste to help the environment and ecosystem."

Groovy trends

Another local business, Groovy Thrifts, a resale shop for clothing and



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accessories, operates only on Instagram at [instagram.com/groovythrifts___](https://www.instagram.com/groovythrifts___) (three dashes).

Owner, Baili Ewing, a 2021 graduate of Indiana University with a major in Apparel Merchandising and minor in Fashion Design, clearly has an eye for trends.

“Groovy Thrifts is a one woman show. I thrift the clothing, photograph/post, and ship everything on my own,” she said via email interview.

She described her Instagram store “as vintage and trending clothing,” with “a little something for everyone.”

Since Summer 2020, she has offered a true mix of one-of-a-kind pieces she sources from various thrift stores, including vintage t-shirts featuring bands and cartoon characters, college sweatshirts, knit tops, windbreakers, handbags, and other items.

After graduating in Summer 2021, the store has been a full-time job.

Her customer base is as varied as her clothes, with a range of ages from 15 to 60, and interested in purchasing sizes from XS to XXXL.

“I think the main reason I make sure to offer all sizes is because I want my followers to feel included and know that their size is seen as important to me, as well,” she said, adding that large and extra-large have been popular sizes, “with the trend of the ‘oversized look/fit’ right now!”

She decided to sell thrifted clothing because “I find unique pieces from 1970 through 1990s that can’t be bought at your local boutiques today. By selling these nique items, it allows me to differentiate myself from other clothing stores and businesses. There is only one of each piece I find,

unlike other stores that have multiples of the same item with small, medium and large. Having one of each item makes it more rare and makes my followers more excited to purchase," she said.

Through Groovy Thrifts, Ewing also offers styling advice. She'll communicate personally with customers to meet their needs.

Ewing will often share a preview post with a few items ahead of time. Then, she'll post photos of each individual item worn by her to give a sense of how they look on a real person. Each post includes the opening bid amount and a deadline — usually 24 to 48 hours after an item is posted. Shoppers place their bids in the comments until bidding closes. They have 24 hours to pay Ewing, who

will then ship each treasure to its new owner, anywhere in the United States.

Her inventory is updated weekly. Sometimes she offers seasonal items. For instance, around back-to-school, she sold several vintage university crewneck sweatshirts.

"I always look forward to my seasonal drops!" She said. "I had a 'red, white and blue drop' before the Fourth of July this year, and I'm currently saving and planning for Halloween and Christmas!"

As for current trends, she said, "I am preparing my fall/winter collection. Some popular fall winter trends that you will see on my page will be crochet, denim, and colorful fun layering pieces!"

The majority of her sales are on Instagram, Ewing said,

"Instagram is a popular app that all ages use and check everyday.

Makes it more fun for my followers when they don't have to constantly check a website everyday. It's a platform they are already on and using on an everyday basis."

— Baili Ewing

because "it's quick and easy to post my content on.

Instagram is a popular app that all ages use and check everyday. Makes it more fun for my followers when they don't have to constantly check a website everyday. It's a platform they are already on and using on an everyday basis."

She has also done two

different pop-up shows where she had a tent, tables, and racks to sell her clothes. Groovy Thrifts will be at Hope Heritage Days on Sept. 24 and 25.

"I'm so excited! This will be the largest event I have participated in," she said. ©



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Jessica Wagner & Bradley Hunt

*Ceremony at East Columbus Christian Church, reception at Factory 12 Event Loft
June 18, 2022*

Jessica Wagner and Bradley Hunt began their love story where many modern couples do — on a dating app — but quickly began building a relationship meant to last. Their first date almost didn't happen because Jessica had a hair emergency and was running late, but Bradley often jokes that he thought he was getting stood up and almost left.

Two years later, Bradley was glad he stuck around and proposed to Jessica on the canal in Indianapolis.

"He rented a gondola and proposed right in the middle of the canal. It was a beautiful moment full of cheers coming from people who were dining and walking on the canal," Jessica said.

The couple has a video to commemorate the moment thanks to a thoughtful jogger who was quick to pull out his phone.

"We were both so nervous and hands shaking so much he put the ring on the wrong finger," she said.

When wedding planning began, Jessica said she always wanted it to feel like a fairytale. The theme was a whimsical fairytale with colors of dusty blue and blush, and the venue was filled with beautiful flowers.

"The day was absolutely magical, filled with love and laughter," Jessica said. "Everything I had envisioned became a reality. I felt I was living in my own fairytale!"

Brad added, "Our wedding was what I always imagined for myself, except better. The food, the music, the laughter, all of it was something I thought you only saw in movies."

"When thinking about what getting married would be like, all I really wanted was my family and friends to be there dancing the night away, smiling and laughing, he said. "I never imagined that the venue would be so beautiful. I never dreamed the food would taste so good and that the smiles and laughter would go that late into the night. Our wedding was nothing short of perfect!"

The couple honeymooned in Savannah, Georgia and enjoyed exploring downtown Savannah and relaxing at Tybee Island.





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1. Fireworks light up the night.
2. Zoey Groover plays on an inflatable slide.
3. Jennifer Sizemore wears a patriotic head decoration.
4. People line up at food trucks.
5. Alivia Torres watches fireworks explode in the night sky.
6. Fireworks explode in the night sky.
7. Grace Chen plays with a sparkler.
8. Keith Jones prepares kettle corn.
9. Dallicia Scott, left, and Brysen Shuffitt play catch.
10. Zeppelin Davis blows bubbles.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY Mike Wolanin







Sharing culture

Dancers perform during the Ganesh Festival — a portion of the four event Ethnic Expo in 2021.

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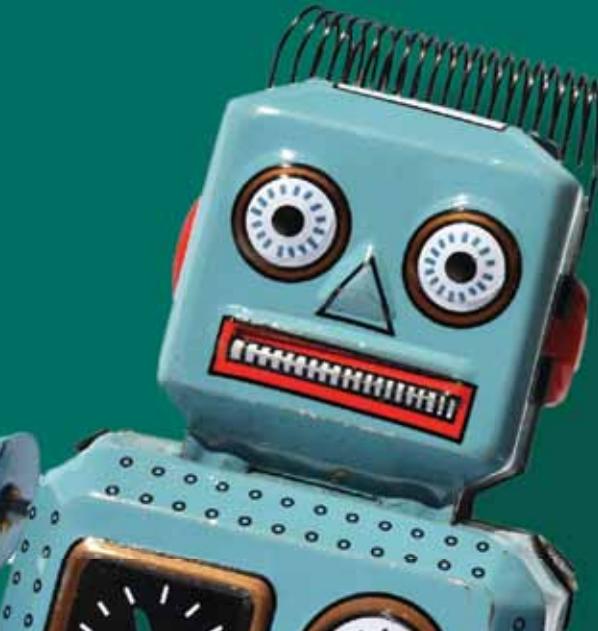
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