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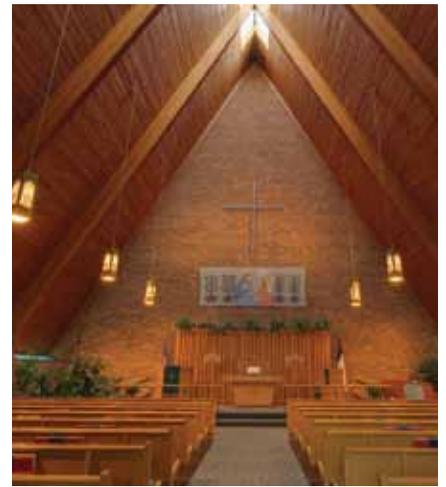
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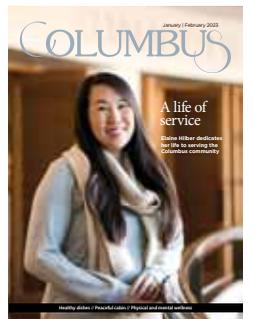


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HOME & FAMILY

A Personal Oasis

Gail Blankenship finds peace in Lost Lake cabin



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Elaine Hilber
photographed by
Angela Jackson

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Healthy Choices



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New Year, New Home



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COLUMBUS

January 18, 2023

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New year, new editor

Hello, Columbus! I hope you all are having a fantastic start to the new year.

Allow me to introduce myself; I'm Rachel, and I'm excited to begin my career as the new editor of Columbus Magazine!

As a lifelong Columbus resident, I grew up attending Parkside Elementary School, Northside Middle School and Columbus East High School. Most recently, I graduated from Purdue University (Boiler Up!) last May with majors in professional writing and general communication. Throughout my time in the Columbus school system, I was heavily involved in the band program and had my determined, yet indecisive mind set on going into the medical field. Never in a million years did I see myself where I am now!

Since May, I've discovered that the time after college graduation is filled with an alarming amount of uncertainty. One day, I think I have it all figured out, but then the next day, I don't. I am grateful for being able to return to Columbus in this capacity, as the familiarity has made post-grad life much easier to contend with.

In my free time, I enjoy cracking dad jokes with my dad, spending often-needed time with my mom and hanging out with my two younger brothers. I also enjoy spending quality time with my boyfriend; we both grew up in Columbus and love exploring our hometown together.

I'm looking forward to working with our amazing team that helps bring each issue of this magazine to life. In my inaugural issue, I hope you enjoy reading about healthy restaurant dishes and wellness spas that you can find around the area, learning more about city councilwoman Elaine Hilber and discovering the intricacies of Gail Blankenship's home.

Columbus is a unique city that's full of unknown stories; please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you would like yours told!

Until next time,

Rachel Hensley

rhensley@aimmediaindiana.com





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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 are you looking forward to this year?



We just want peace and harmony and families to be together.

— Pam Whiteside and Missy Borkhardt



I am hoping that everyone has a much brighter spirit this year and just has a happier outlook.

— Janice Montgomery



I'm looking forward to making more sky dives this year and hoping for a safe year for officers.

— Alan Trisler



We are having a baby in March, so she is going to have a little baby brother.

— Megan Reynolds with her daughter Hazel Reynolds



I'm looking forward to spending time with my family and friends, creating memories with my grandchildren, new discoveries and enjoying the fresh air. I am also excited about new, creative opportunities for the Bartholomew County Historical Society.

— Diane Robbins



I think what I am looking forward to most in the new year is family-oriented. I am looking forward to opportunities to spend time with my son, he is an elementary kid, so just those years with him and my wife. Also, having new experiences with him, he's going to be starting sports, so just that kind of thing.

— John Bundick



I am getting ready to have shoulder surgery tomorrow and looking forward to not having pain and getting back the function I once had. Also, I run Athletico, an outpatient physical therapy clinic. We have had tremendous growth this year in volume and the outcome has been phenomenal and I look forward to continual growth and further development of the clinic.

— Dan Becker



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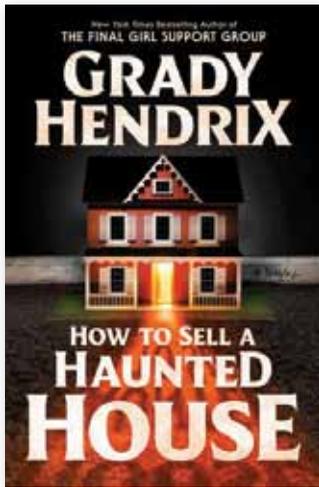
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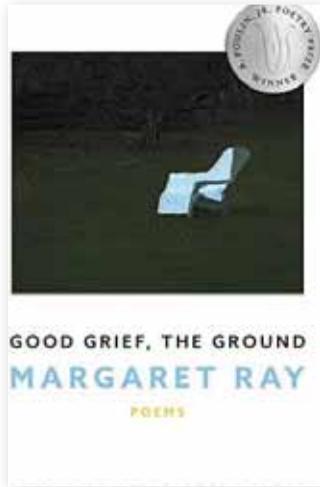


“How to Sell a Haunted House”

By Grady Hendrix

Selling your home can be a nightmare. In Grady Hendrix’s latest southern gothic horror comedy (I think I just invented a new genre) novel, it is a nightmare. After the death of her parents, Louise is tasked with selling the family home — a home that is filled to the rafters with the remnants of her father’s academic career and her mother’s disturbingly large collection of puppets and dolls. All the mirrors are covered with newspaper, and the attic door is nailed shut. Truth be told, I am a big, ole ‘fraidy cat,’ but I absolutely love Hendrix’s novels. Yes, they are scary, but he is a master at mixing horror with heartfelt moments and beautiful and insightful examinations of relationships with laugh-out-loud hilarity. His previous novels, “The Southern Book Club’s Guide to Slaying Vampires” and “The Final Girl Support Group” have been popular with Viewpoint customers. I have no doubt that this title will fly off the shelves. (Available January 17, 2023.)

— Nanne Cutler



“Good Grief, the Ground”

By Margaret Ray

This collection has it all — reflections on girlhood (in “My Younger Self Speaks to Me and I Write Down What She Says”) finding beauty in an ordinary (even in Florida, “the land of forgetting,” she writes) and lighthearted voice, even on emotionally heavy subjects. Writing a poem that is funny, without being mocking or pretentious, is a difficult task, yet Ray seems to do it with ease with lines like, “I got here by driving across the border from Vermont and also via a violent history of colonization.” She also writes about death, as poets often do, and the different ways we experience and think about it. I laughed, but I also felt a heaviness, or grief, alongside it, and I loved each poem so much, I wanted to read it all over again as soon as I finished. (Available April 4, 2023.)

— Kylie Brooks

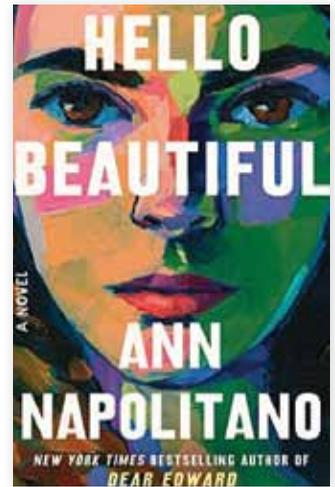


“Spare”

By Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex

If you’ve been captivated by the hit Netflix series “The Crown,” or been glued to coverage of the recent losses of Queen Elizabeth and just a year prior, Prince Philip, or if you ever set your alarm to wake up early for a royal wedding, then you will be just as excited as I am about “Spare” by Prince Harry. Promising a raw, honest self-examination of how Harry moved past the tragic death of his mother, Princess Diana, and into adulthood, this memoir will be a must-read for any royal watcher. No mention is made in the marketing materials that he might address the shocking controversy of his detachment from the royal family or subsequent flight to America with his wife, Meghan Markle, but I’m keeping my fingers crossed that he’ll delve into that, too. Otherwise, I’ll be waiting eagerly for a second installment someday. (Available January 10, 2023.)

— Angie Revell

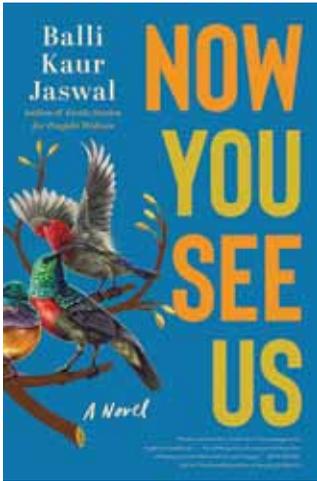


“Hello Beautiful”

By Ann Napolitano

The back of the jacket for “Hello Beautiful” by Ann Napolitano, of “Dear Edward” fame, reads something like, “What if we choose to look for the love we have for people rather than the disappointments that stress relationships?” Interesting. Do we have breaking points with folks in our lives? Should we? “Hello Beautiful” slowly walks the reader through the tragedies and unsets of the Padavano family, with a specific focus on the four sisters. I found myself frustrated by the acceptance (loving?) of circumstances that befall the clan. Perhaps this says something about me; might it say something about you? Read with that thought in mind. This might make a good book group book; but be warned, the pace is even all the way through ... as only love can be. (Available March 14, 2023.)

— Polly Verbanic

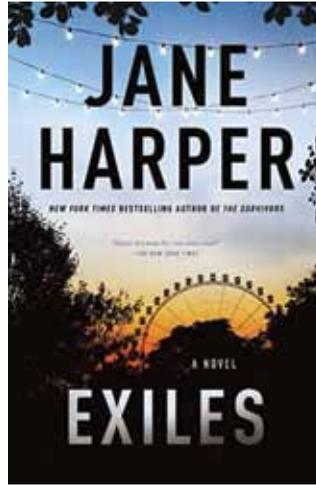


“Now You See Us”

By Balli Kaur Jaswal

“Now You See Us” by Balli Kaur Jaswal is an interesting behind-the-scenes look into the lives and struggles of three Filipina immigrant domestic workers living in wealthy and class-conscious Singapore. When a fellow maid is falsely accused of murder, the three women band together to prove her innocence. A novel of defying patriarchy and teamwork, this will be a good book for fans of “Crazy Rich Asians” and “The Help.” (Available March 7, 2023.)

— April Ginnings

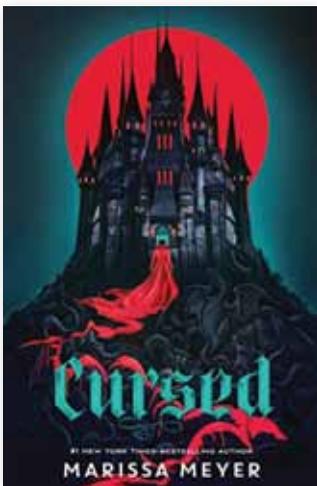


“Exiles”

By Jane Harper

I am looking forward to 2023 when some of my favorite authors are coming out with new books. I have read all of Jane Harper’s novels and can’t wait for her next hard-to-put-down, edge-of-your-seat mystery, “Exiles.” Set in her native land of Australia, this is the third book featuring Aaron Falk. They don’t have to be read in order to enjoy “Exiles,” but pick up “Force of Nature” and “The Dry” if you want to read them first. (Available January 31, 2023.)

— Kelli Strickland



“Cursed”

By Marissa Meyer

Marissa Meyer published another amazing book, “Cursed” (the sequel to “Gilded”) on November 8, 2022. I’m sure all Marissa Meyer fans like myself are excited for what comes next. Marissa told Bustle that she had four new books on the horizon, and we later found out those were “Instant Karma,” “Gilded” and “Cursed.” But what’s the fourth? On October 19, 2022, Marissa posted a caption on Instagram mentioning being behind on the second “Fortuna Beach” book. This seems to mean a sequel to “Instant Karma” is up next! Watch here and I’ll alert you to the next Marissa Meyer offering.

— Gabby Revell



“Looking for Jane”

By Heather Marshall

Heather Marshall makes a brilliant debut in the historical fiction genre with this novel inspired by Canada’s Jane Collective. The life-changing choices faced by the women in “Looking for Jane” could not be more relevant than they are today. Stretching across five decades and stitching together the lives of three generations of women, this powerful and thought-provoking novel is a must-read for anyone who cares about women and their right to make decisions about their future. (Available February 7, 2023.)

— Beth Stroh



healthy SPECIALTIES

Local eateries offer healthy dishes to start the new year out strong

BY BARNEY QUICK //
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANA JONES

Sometimes people want a meal out that tends toward the healthful side of the spectrum. Still, they want to sit down to an attractive plate rather than something austere and utilitarian. It's possible to see one's vitality without sacrificing flavor and flair. That's definitely so in Columbus. Let's stop in at a few establishments and see what they're offering in the way of fresh and nutritious specialties.







Miller's Chicken Breast

at Upland Pumphouse 148 Lindsey Street | 812-799-3587

Many of Columbus' restaurants are situated in historic buildings. The Upland Pumphouse is set inside a structure built in 1903, served as the city's original water works and has to be on anybody's top ten list. Since it's become a brewpub, a west-facing patio that affords one a splendid view of the river and the hills in the distance has been added.

The name for the Miller's Chicken Breast dish was chosen to point out its origin. Miller's Poultry is a northern Indiana organic-chicken producer that has its roots in a 1940s dairy farm. It's a family

operation that utilizes humane methods of raising chickens, as its New Paris feed mill makes the corn and soybean diet the birds consume. The processing plant is in Orland.

"They run a very clean operation," said Pumphouse executive chef, Taylor Hoover. "They maintain high standards for bird maintenance. The chickens are free-range and get more daylight than is legally required."

She noted that the chickens are hand-weighted and packaged, and air-chilled but never frozen. Birds are slaughtered one day and in

stores the next.

The chicken breast for this dish is given the sous vide (vacuum-sealed and bathed at a precise temperature) treatment.

"That really locks in the flavor," said Hoover.

It then "spends a bit of time in the fryer, to give it a golden color" and then is finished in the oven.

Once out of the oven, it's garnished with a beurre blanc. The dish also includes potato puree and seasoned Brussels sprouts.

"I'd say we go through twenty a week," said Hoover.

Sweet Chili Glazed Salmon

at 4th Street Bar and Grill

433 4th Street | 812-376-7063

Izzy Chavez, the menu planner, said the Sweet Chili Glazed Salmon is quite popular among the salmon offerings.

The glaze is made in-house. Pineapple juice, orange juice and dried jalapeño peppers are blended and reduced over low heat and is applied as the North Atlantic salmon is coming off the grill. It's garnished with diced scallions and served with rice and a blend of carrots, onion, broccoli and celery.

"It's been on the menu many years, and we still sell a lot of it," Chavez said.

Bartender Kelsey Tindell always recommends pairing it with a Pinot Grigio to cut the (good) fatty character of the fish.

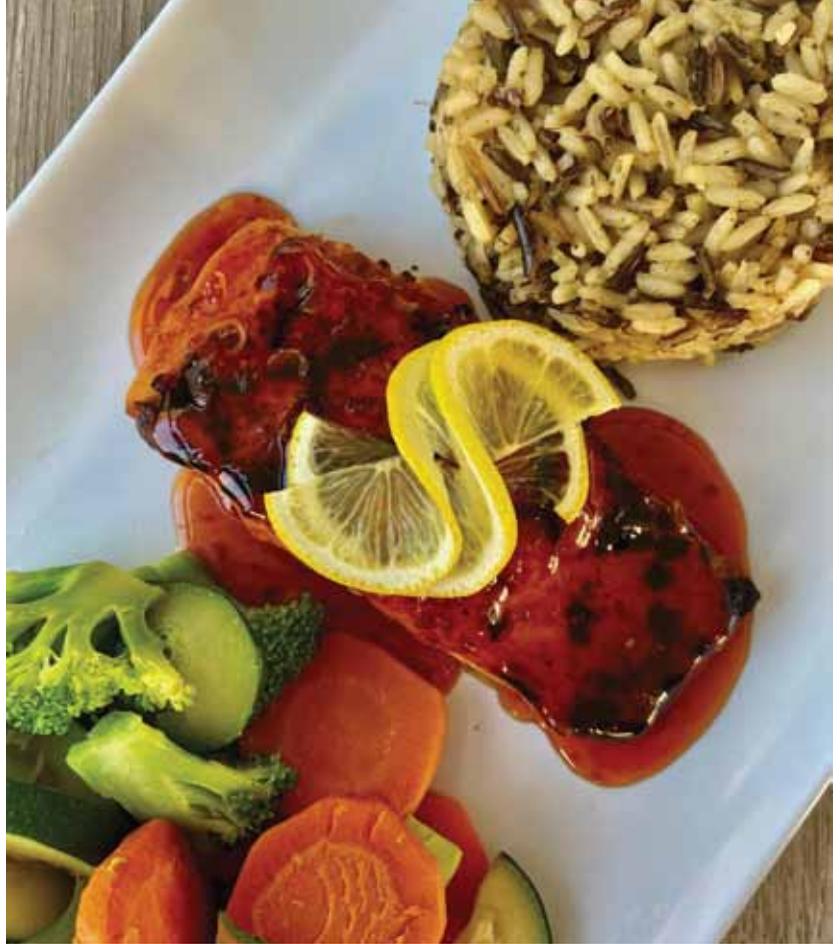


Photo submitted by 4th Street Bar and Grill



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Power Grain Bowl

at Fresh Fork
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500 Jackson Street |
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This business is situated in the Cummins headquarters campus at 5th and Jackson Streets, mainly because the power-generation company has been its biggest customer since it opened in 2016. Fresh Fork did a brand redo right before the pandemic, and since then, others have used its services in increasing numbers.

The healthful dish featured here is the Power Grain Bowl. It's served buffet-style, so you can customize it to your tastes.

The lineup of ingredients begins with greens to create a bed for your masterpiece. Further possibilities include fresh, seasonal roasted vegetables, protein options (ginger sesame grilled tofu, herb-grilled chicken, lemon-pepper salmon, rosemary grilled shrimp and marinated flank steak), toasted almonds, tortilla chips and sauces of the chef's choice.

"It's an option we started offering in April," said area catering manager, Allison Kunkler. "Our menu is pretty wide because we serve so many demographics."



Italian Panini

at Big Woods

11622 NE Executive Drive, #G-020 |
812-703-9300

The Big Woods/Quaff On/Hard Truth array of activities started with a pizza parlor in downtown Nashville, and has grown to include a distillery and brand of spirits produced by it and a constellation of restaurants around central Indiana.

The Big Woods is located in the Simon Properties outlet mall at the I-65/US 31 Taylorsville interchange.

Erik Moody, who has worked in about ten kitchens throughout his career and has worked at Big Woods for the past year, said that the classic Italian Panini is a big seller there.

The contents between the bread slices consist of spinach, pepperoni, ham, mozzarella and garlic mayonnaise. It's pressed until all the cheese is melted and then served with a choice of chips, side salad, fruit or mac and cheese.

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Finding *peace*

BY GLENDA WINDERS //
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANGELA JACKSON

Gail Blankenship finds
comfort in Lost Lake cabin





Gail Blankenship
and her dog Charlie.

Gail Blankenship's favorite part of the home she built isn't part of the house at all. It's the long, narrow gravel driveway, the trees that surround her house and the lake she looks out onto from her front porch.

"I love being around people, and I enjoy my time with others and helping them with their healing," said Blankenship, who is a massage therapist. "But I do like my away time. I'm a pretty private person, and I see my home as a little retreat to get away from things."



Her retreat is on Lost Lake, just across the Brown County line, in a community established in 1946 by four Columbus attorneys who wanted a getaway where they could hunt and fish.

Today, the owners of the 19 lots share the spring-fed lake, where no motors are allowed, as well as the 53 acres of trails they created for hiking, hunting or ATV riding. Most of the homes

are vacation cottages, but a few retirees live there year-round and keep the snow plowed in the winter.

Blankenship discovered Brown County when she was married and rented a cottage there for her husband's birthday.

"That's where the whole obsession with having a cabin in the woods began," she said. "I wanted my children to know the woods and nature with no TV or other distractions."

Blankenship asked her children if they would rather have expensive vacations or a cabin that they could return to, and they went with the cabin. When she found this cabin, however, it already had an offer on it. Luckily the other buyer eventually decided she didn't want to tackle the gravel driveway, so the realtor called Blankenship, and she went to have a look.

"As soon as I turned into the driveway, I knew. I didn't even care what the cabin was like. When I started driving on the gravel road, I knew this was it, and when I got to the lake that was a bonus."

When Blankenship's marriage ended, her husband kept their house in Fishers and she stayed at the lake. She eventually moved to Florida but always came back to spend vacations. She recalled, during one of her visits, seeing smoke coming from her home as she returned after being gone for just a few minutes. Soon, the entire structure was engulfed in flames, and in the end, only a wood-burning stove remained. The cause of the fire was determined to be a baseboard heater.

With nothing to do but start over, Blankenship called on builder Leslie Howard from Sey-

mour. He had retired but agreed to help her out.

"Les and I talked one time," she said. "I told him I wanted it to be just like the old cabin, the same footprint, but I wanted an extra bathroom. I drew it on a piece of paper and handed it to him and said, 'This is what I want.'"

She came back one time to check on the progress and liked everything she saw. The next time she saw the house it was finished. Howard told her it was the easiest build he'd ever done because no one was there to ask him to make changes or be underfoot.

"It was my birthday, March 3, and I got out of the car and said, 'It's perfect. It's exactly what I wanted.'"

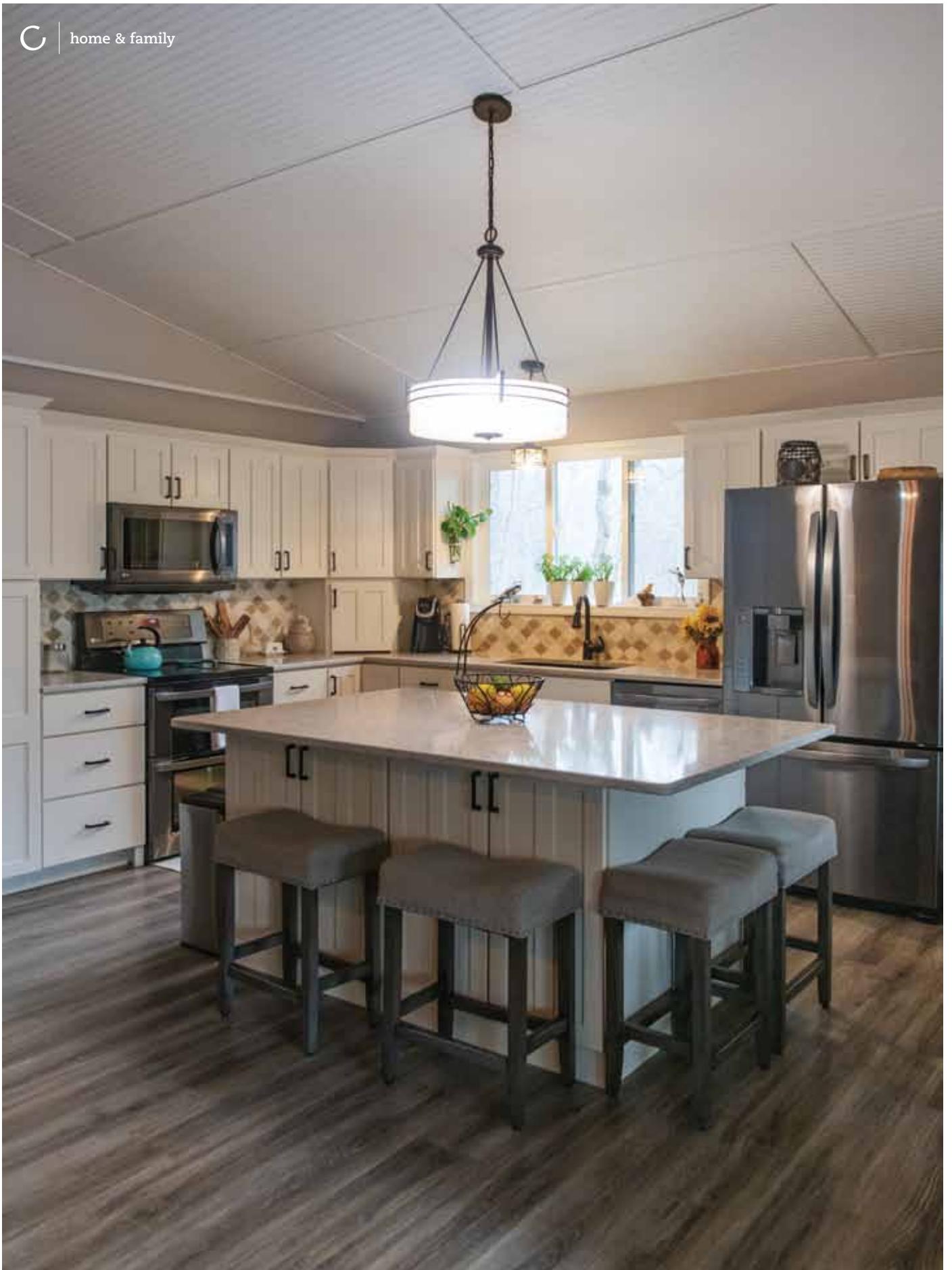
The secret to her ideal home, she said, was keeping everything simple and easy.

"I decided not to do a dining room because everyone is always in the kitchen," she said. "So I wanted a big island. We hang out there and on the front porch as a family when the kids are here."

Blankenship keeps outdoor heaters so that even cold weather finds her and her gang — daughter, Mikaela, son, Cameron and five grandchildren, with another one on the way — sitting outside. A fire pit with seating serves the same purpose.

The colors she chose are all neutrals — lots of grays, browns and muted greens — which she says mimic some of the colors in nature and bring the outside in. The flooring throughout is engineered hardwood that she chose because it resists water and dirt — perfect for a lakeside home where children are frequent visitors.







The kitchen cabinets and island are crisp white with black hardware and white quartz countertops. The appliances are LG black stainless steel, as is the farmhouse sink under three curtainless windows that look out into the woods. The patterned backsplash is also in shades of pale browns and grays.

In the master bedroom, Blankenship said the best feature is the large window beside her bed where she and her labradoodle, Charlie, start each day by snuggling in and watching whatever is happening outside. In the adjoining bathroom, she splurged for a deep soaker tub with jets.

“I love taking baths and do it almost every night,” she said. “I always preach to my clients to add Epsom salts and a

tablespoon of baking soda, and that’s what I do. It really does relax sore muscles.”

A pocket door in this room provides privacy for the commode, and another pocket door to the bedroom saves space. In both bathrooms there is pebbly flooring that was originally designed to be a backsplash.

“The builder said he cussed me a few times while he was doing the grout,” she said, laughing, “and I said that’s OK.”

She understood his frustration but wanted the floors to have the effect of being outdoors.

Both bedrooms are simple — pale walls and just enough furniture for comfort and storage. A giant dreamcatcher covers one wall of the master

“I love taking baths and do it almost every night. I always preach to my clients to add Epsom salts and a tablespoon of baking soda, and that’s what I do. It really does relax sore muscles.”

— Gail Blankenship





bedroom, and the only piece of furniture besides the bed is a chest of drawers.

In the living room, too, accessories are limited to some antique jugs that flank the gas-fueled fireplace, over which is mounted a TV set. A comfortable sectional sofa and chair provide plenty of seating for anyone who gathers there. An artist herself, Blankenship has work by other people on her walls since she is in the habit of giving her own pieces away. Also part of the home's 1,152 square feet is a laundry room and a space that serves as her studio. This area is heated by an electric furnace.

The story of how Blankenship arrived at her peaceful place, however, is as long and winding as her driveway and just as emblematic of her strength and fortitude. At the age of 15, she was abandoned by her mother in an apartment in Indianapolis. They had moved



there from Cincinnati, so she didn't know anyone who could help her.

Nevertheless, she continued going to high school and working at jobs in fast-food restaurants. Eventually, a friend's aunt told her about an opening at JennAir. She landed the job and did drafting for them while she finished high school at night. She stayed with them for 10 years, during which they paid for her to get an associate degree in business administration from IUPUI.

"They were my family and my foundation," she said.

From there, her path took her to DowAgroSciences in Indianapolis, where she also stayed for 10 years, then to Fort Pierce, Florida, where she learned to be a massage therapist and turned a cottage on the Intracoastal Highway into a wellness center. For a while, she traveled through Europe and ran her business from there, but when COVID-19 hit, she wanted to come home. She sold her business and came back to the cabin.

"There was just something about this place," she said. "A lot of times when I would come home to visit, I could almost hug the house. I was just so happy to be home. When I left I would be in tears all the way down the lane, so I knew where I belonged was here. It was my safe spot and where I was happy. Florida is beautiful, but I love the seasons here in Indiana."

Now, she works weekdays at Clear Choice Chiropractic in Columbus. During the weekends she runs her Honey



Bee Massage Studio — which she named because of the importance of bees to nature — in Nashville. She also does painted finishes for Nashville chainsaw sculptor Chris Trotter, at Wooden Wonders.

Along the way, she has taught art classes, done set designs for Indianapolis theaters and picked up a second associate degree, this one in interior design, from

IUPUI. She has never used it professionally, but what she learned is evident in how she designed her cabin.

"I believe everything you learn to do is a building block to where you are now," she said. "Things happen for a reason, and you continue to just grow and do new things. Life has its little hiccups, but it has been a fun, crazy journey." ©



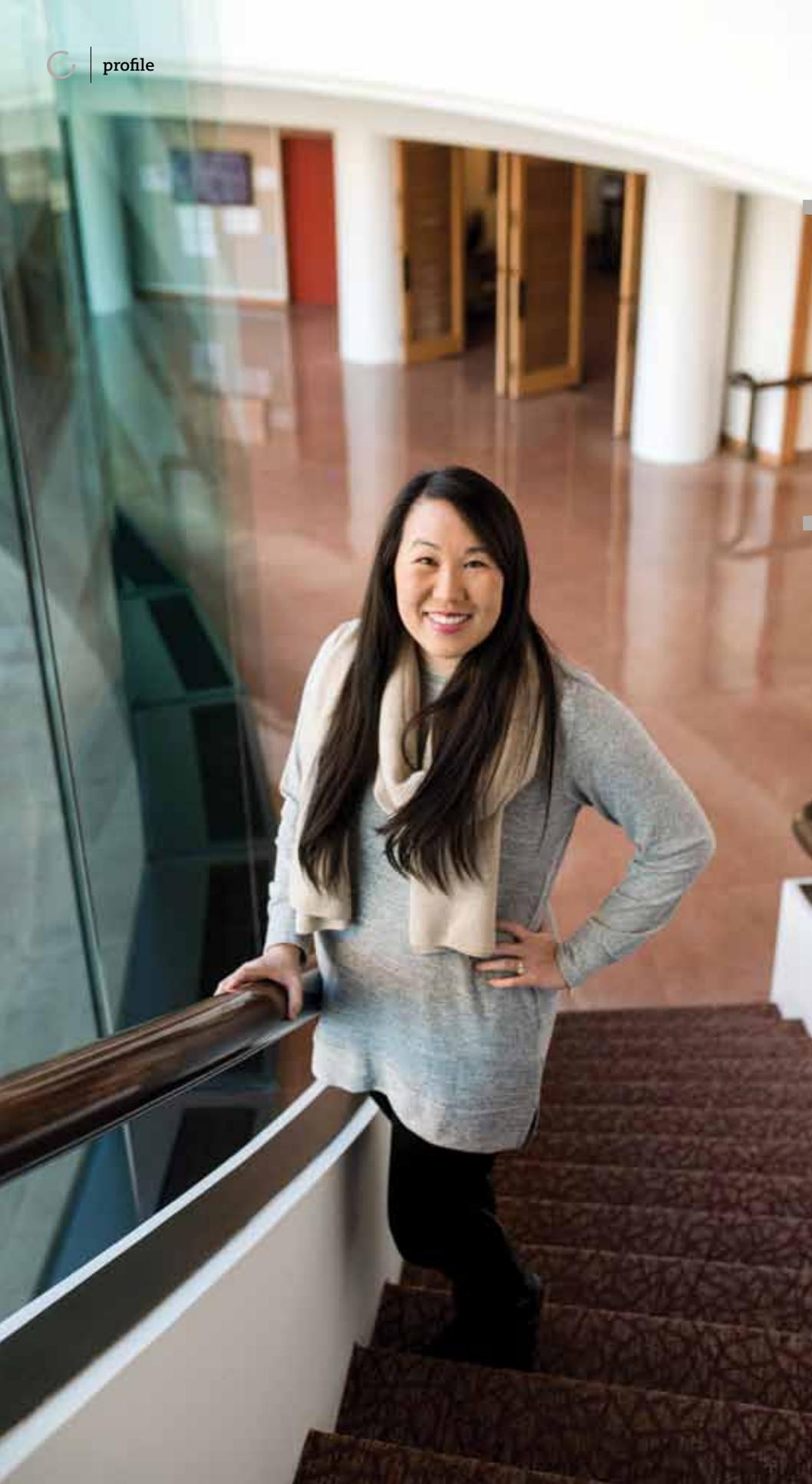
Elaine, Jordan Hilber and their daughter Mila.



A triple threat

Elaine Hilber's journey to becoming a community leader, city councilwoman and mother

BY GLENDA WINDERS //
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANGELA JACKSON



It would never have occurred to Columbus native Elaine Hilber to run for public office if it hadn't been for former Mayor Fred Armstrong. The two were having a beer together one evening at a local restaurant when he brought up the subject of her running for city council.

"I couldn't remember the last time Fred was so excited or adamant about something," Hilber recalled. "He was my mentor, but he didn't really tell me what to do. But he brought this up and said, 'You have to do this. You would be great.'"

Since he was a close and trusted family friend, she signed up to run. But when she realized what it would entail, she had second thoughts.

"When I thought about it later, it was like, 'Oh my gosh. You mean people have to vote for me and I have to knock on doors? That's crazy. Why would I sign up for something like that?' But it was too late."

She ran as a Democrat and won that race in 2015, as well as the next one in 2019. Now, she is finishing up her second term and planning to run for a third.

Hilber was born in Columbus to parents Ryan and Jean Hou, whose own parents had fled from China to Taiwan after the Chinese Civil War. When she was in kindergarten, she rushed home from school one day to tell her dad how excited she was to have a Black friend in her class. When he

“I couldn’t remember the last time Fred was so excited or adamant about something. He was my mentor, but he didn’t really tell me what to do. But he brought this up and said, ‘You have to do this. You would be great.’”

— Elaine Hilber

asked her what she was, she answered, “White.”

“My dad panicked,” she said. “He said that we need to make sure our kids know who they are.”

To help make that happen, he started the Columbus Chinese Language School with five other families who studied Chinese for two hours each Sunday. Today, the school has grown to have more than 70 students and several classes and Hilber speaks fluent Chinese.

While her dad went on to found the Columbus Chinese Cultural Association, she went to the ABC Stewart School, the old Central Middle School and Columbus North High School, where she was a swimmer. After she graduated from the Indiana University Kelley School of Business, she returned to Columbus to take a job with Cummins Inc. She has been there for nearly 14 years and currently works as a pricing manager for off-highway engines that are

largely related to construction and agriculture.

When she returned to town her parents advised her to get involved with the community, so she started volunteering for non-profits, beginning with the Columbus Chinese Cultural Association.

“I was the first female, youngest and first American president of the board,” she said. “It was completely by accident due to a language misunderstanding that it happened, but it was a big learning opportunity for me and kick-started my leadership journey.”

From there she went to the United Way to join their community impact teams, and she also joined the board of the Foundation for Youth. Thanks to an Ignite Columbus talk she gave, she and her husband, Jordan, along with Travis Perry, were able to start the Columbus Craft Beer Fest in 2016.

She met Jordan at work, where they were friends long

before their relationship developed into something more. The couple has been married for three years and welcomed a daughter, Mila Jean, in August. Hilber said Jordan was a huge help during the 2019 campaign and will be again in the coming year.

When Armstrong originally tapped her to run for office, she clearly had the skills, but she said the stresses of the campaign year surprised her.

“This is the first job I’ve ever done where you have to be really, really good at something that’s not related to serving,” she said. “The job itself — being on city council — is nothing like the campaign year. You have people who are really good at campaigning who might not be good at serving and vice versa. If someone might be a good council person but isn’t good at campaigning, they won’t get elected.”

One of the hardest parts, she said, is being in the spotlight.



“I’m not very good at the whole ‘look at me’ thing,” she said. “During the campaign all eyes are on me. Standing up in front of people and giving speeches and putting myself out there is hard for me. But I really enjoy serving and I really enjoy helping people. If you want to lead, that’s just part of the territory.”

Another thing that has been hard for Hilber is hearing people say negative — and sometimes racist — things about her. One of the most hurtful was the comment that she would never win because Asians don’t vote.

“A lot of people were not so kind to me in 2015 because I was a nobody who was running against a somebody, and some people didn’t like that,” she said. “I especially remember the people who were nice to me

before I was elected, because after I was elected, everyone was nice to me.”

One of the people she remembers most fondly is now-County Commissioner, Tony London.

“I went to Tony to buy T-shirts for the campaign,” she said. “He didn’t know me; we had never met. But he was so excited for me and really kind to me. I never forgot that.”

London has positive memories of the beginning of their friendship, too. And even though he is a Republican, he was glad to see her run and thinks she has done a good job.

“I was so excited to see young people getting involved,” he said. “When I listened to her talk I was just blown away by her knowledge of things that were going on. She was obviously extremely intelligent,

and I was impressed from the very beginning. It has been fun watching her go through her term and get re-elected and see how she thinks through things. She is very methodical and analytical. She has been a joy to get to know.”

She spent that first campaign year readying herself for the responsibilities she hoped to shoulder. She laughs when she says she felt like she was “dating the city,” because she met with as many influential people as she could to learn about their expectations of city council members and what they thought the city needed.

She joined Toastmasters International to improve her public speaking skills and went to workshops in Washington, D.C., to learn how to run a campaign. She knocked on every door in her district twice

to try to meet everyone. She attended the Citizens Safety Academy to learn about the police department, she met with every department head and current city council member and read the newspaper every day to learn what issues were important in the city.

Once she was elected and in her new role as city councilwoman, she fell in love with the job. Besides the meetings where she helps make decisions, she also enjoys getting to know her constituents.

“It’s nice when someone reaches out to you and you know where to send them or who you can call to get help,” she said. “I try to listen to everyone and let them know that I heard them. I tell them I’m glad they wanted to be involved with the process and I hope they will continue to be interested in city council and what we do. I feel like the least I can do is respond, and I feel like that is the bare minimum you should be expecting from your public servants, even if they can’t do anything about the issue, and that happens a lot.”

She said many people don’t understand exactly what city council does and what its limitations are. She has often been asked to fix problems and change laws that are outside of her influence. One person, for example, asked if she could make marijuana legal.

“I think part of our job is to educate people about what the different offices do. Another part is learning about the city departments — such as engineering and parks and redevelopment — and understanding what they do before we go to the public and promise the moon. I know who to call to get problems solved. We do things like fixing potholes and picking up trash.”

She also has some legislative successes of which she is proud. One is allowing chickens inside the city limits. In the beginning, she was the only council member in favor of it, but she was able to convince her colleagues to vote her way. Others are allowing fireworks on Diwali and putting a landlord registry in place so that in case of emergencies owners of apartments and rental houses can be reached on their cell phones. But she said no matter what the subject is and how hard she and other council members work at reaching the right decision, someone will disagree “100 percent of the time.”

In addition to Armstrong’s initial encouragement, Hilber said another reason she wanted to run for office was to make her parents proud.

“My mom and dad have done so much here in Columbus with helping the Chinese community grow and helping the Columbus

community with trips to China, and getting involved with the community and helping Columbus grow in diversity,” she said. “I didn’t want the community ever to look back and say Ryan and Jean Hou did so much and their daughter did nothing. I wanted to make sure I do right by my parents.”

For a while, Hilber was undecided about running for a third term since her job and city council leave her little extra time for her husband and child, but in the end, it was because of her daughter that she decided to run again.

“I think it’s important for Mila to see that Mom can do all the things men with small babies can, too,” she said.

Once again, Armstrong is one of her greatest supporters. In fact, he’d like to see her seek higher offices.

“I wish she would look to going a little bit higher up in the political spectrum,” he said, “but that’s all up to her. She is very, very smart and she takes the whole scope of things and tries to figure out what’s the best scenario. She’s a very personable people person and a great city councilwoman. She doesn’t go by what the other council people say. She thinks about it and investigates it before she makes a decision. She is a really good, good person, and she really loves Columbus.” ©

“I try to listen to everyone and let them know that I heard them. I tell them I’m glad they wanted to be involved with the process and I hope they will continue to be interested in city council and what we do.”

— Elaine Hilber



NEW YEAR, NEW GOALS

Complementary services can help create a healthier new you

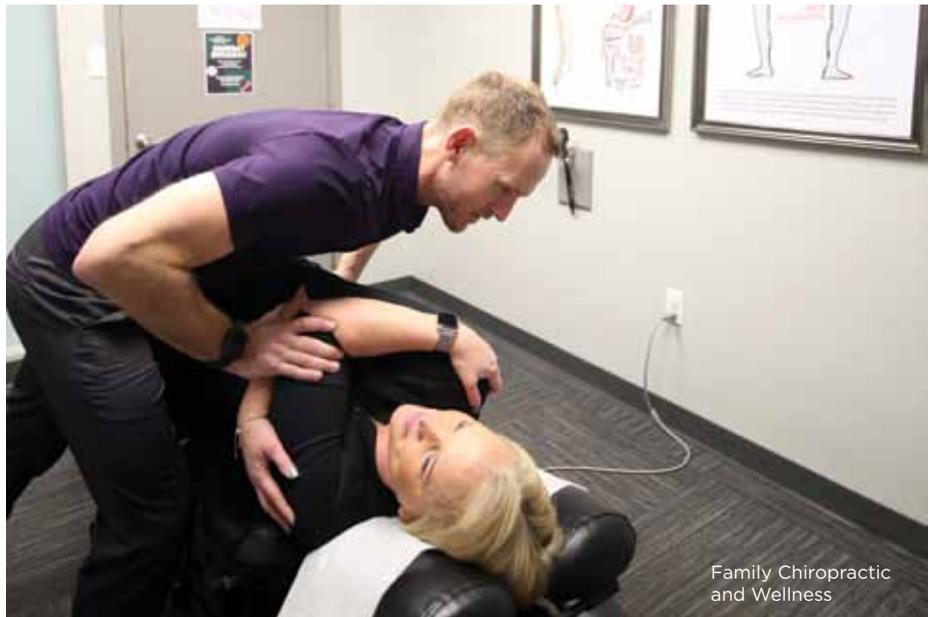
BY REBECCA BERFANGER //
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARLA CLARK



Zen Wellness Company



Rejuvenate MedSpa



Family Chiropractic and Wellness

Among the top New Year's resolutions are losing weight and managing stress. While it's always a good idea to start by talking to your doctor about your physical and mental health, particularly if you have any new symptoms or are looking to make a drastic change, there are also a host of complementary services to add to your health journey in a holistic way.

We've rounded up just a few local businesses that offer workouts and classes that focus on inner and outer strength, chiropractic treatments to help improve posture, as well as address old and new injuries and a nurse practitioner who can meet with patients to prescribe complementary supplements to other medical treatments.



Top: Kate Connor, instructor, sets up the pilates equipment at Zen Fitness. // Bottom: Sarah Hess, instructor, at left, and Brittany Huesman, owner and instructor, clockwise from left, during a Cardi-Yo Sculpt class.

THE ZEN WELLNESS COMPANY

639 Washington St., Columbus
812-552-5900
thezenwellnessco.com

The Zen Wellness Company

As the name suggests, one of the overall goals of the classes and one-on-one training offered at Zen Wellness Company, originally Zen Fitness when it opened in 2009, and now with new owner, Brittany Huesman, is to work toward both strong physical and mental health.

Their motto is “nourish, move, breathe.”

Zen Wellness Company’s new member package is a flat rate for unlimited classes for two weeks, including barre, different styles of yoga, and floor and reformer Pilates classes. Huesman said this helps not only the prospective member get a sense of what is offered, but also for her team to see what might be a good fit in terms of ongoing participation for each new client. That might include one-on-one fitness instruction, health and wellness coaching or a regular routine for classes.

Setting a routine is crucial to help meet any New Year’s fitness goal, she said.

“A couple things I tell people are [first], don’t bite off more than you can chew. They’ll think they can go from nothing to working out every single day, and that is a recipe for burnout,” she said, then added that she’d rather see someone start by going to the same classes two or three times a week, and then building up over time.

She also said a community atmosphere has helped the studio’s clients, as well as her personally, first as a member and instructor for many years before taking over.

“I don’t have motivation to work out at home. I sign up for a class, and that instructor is inspecting me and the class is expecting me,” she said. “Clients have forged deep friendships. Having a sense of community helps you stick to your fitness goals, so it’s not just about going for a 45-minute workout and leaving.”

She also recommended a well-rounded approach to getting healthy. “Fitness is one aspect of it. You can do a 45-minute workout class every day, but if you’re not eating well, not drinking enough water, not getting enough sleep, not moving throughout the day, you won’t see progress.”

In addition to fitness classes, Zen Wellness offers regular sessions that focus on holistic health. In January, there will be a mini-retreat including yoga, meditation, goal setting and a nature walk. This type of event is offered year-round as monthly sessions on a range of topics geared toward self-improvement. Recent classes covered holiday stress, negative emotions and there is also a monthly “happy hour” for members to meet and support each other through their work.

Family Chiropractic and Wellness

Offering a holistic approach to chiropractic treatment, Mandy Wyant and the other chiropractic doctors at Family Chiropractic and Wellness are trained in a number of specialties.

“We treat what most people think of chiropractic care helping with. Back pain, neck pain, headaches,” Wyant said. “But what people don’t always realize is the main thing we’re treating is the nervous system. So keeping the spine healthy, and keeping good alignment in

the body helps to remove any interference or irritation to the central nervous system.”

She added by keeping the nervous system healthy, chiropractors can help reduce their patient’s pain. This also includes joint pain, not just pain in the neck and spine.

While many patients come to her practice when they are already in pain, she recommends being proactive.

“You don’t have to be hurting to see us,” she said. “Just like you would go to the dentist to get your teeth checked, and catch anything early on.



Dr. Mandy Wyant positions the x-ray machine for Kate Braidich at Family Chiropractic and Wellness.



Dr. Chad Bigler performs an adjustment on Tami May at Family Chiropractic and Wellness.

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That's really our goal. Most of the conditions we see come from repetition over time. As there's more time, as you get older, we tend to see more problems that people think of for chiropractic care. We love to see a patient who is 30 years old and just starting to feel the tensions of life and work and repetitive use."

At every initial consultation, Wyant or another chiropractor will go over a full health

history, including pain, prior injuries — including sports or auto accidents — ongoing concerns, such as wanting to start a new workout routine, and what has or hasn't worked in the past. They will check the patient's posture from all angles, range of motion and then see how joints are working. They may also do an X-ray. At a follow-up appointment, Wyant or someone on her team will go over the results and work on a treatment plan, including homework.

"Some of it is posture and habits, and breaking any bad habits, starting good ones. But also some of it is just the basics," she said, including, "getting enough water, getting enough sleep, moving your body, getting up once an hour from the desk, trying to break those postures and giving your body more movement throughout the day."

In addition to chiropractic work that addresses general aches and pains, Wyant added her team enjoys working with patients in pre- and post-natal chiropractic care, helping patients address old sports injuries — which may pop up for patients starting a new exercise regimen in the new year, and generally helping their patients as long-term partners in pain management.

Rejuvenate MedSpa

Started by Sue Becker, a family nurse practitioner, and staffed by Becker and a team of other nurses, Rejuvenate MedSpa offers several supplements to help their patients with a variety of symptoms, including

IV-administered hydration and nutrient therapy, hormone replacement therapy, vitamin injections and weight loss therapy.

With many of these therapies available at the local pharmacy in tablet form, why do her patients opt for an IV that can take up to 60 minutes?

“Studies have shown that people can absorb as little as 10% of nutrients that you take by mouth,” Becker said. “Particularly people with leaky gut syndrome, Crohn’s disease, if they have had a bariatric surgery or a gluten intolerance. Even healthy people don’t absorb nutrients properly.”

She added that given how poor our nutrition is in general, we aren’t getting enough nutrients.

“These special formulations aren’t medical treatment, but are aimed at managing symptoms,” she said.

When many people first come in who are seeking a general boost due to fatigue, Becker will often suggest the “Myers’ Cocktail,” which she called “the gold standard.”

An IV supplement created by Dr. John Myers, it includes a combination of vitamins

and minerals available over-the-counter: vitamin C, B-complex vitamins, calcium, magnesium, zinc and glutathione, an antioxidant that occurs naturally in the body, helps with immunity and may help give skin a youthful glow. She added it also has helped patients with migraines.

Rejuvenate also offers an IV to help with issues pertaining to hydration, energy, mental and cognitive health, athletic performance and immunity.

In addition to supplements, Becker can prescribe a weight loss injectable for patients who are at least 30 BMI, or a combination of at least 27 BMI and have another obesity comorbidity.

Rejuvenate also offers hormone pellets, which are injected under the skin for better absorption than other

types of medication. These can help prevent osteoporosis and improve stamina and overall quality of life, she said.

“We are not what is considered traditional medicine,” she said. “You don’t go to your GP and say, ‘I’m low on energy.’ We offer complementary medicine as an adjunct to other services. You don’t come to us instead of seeing GP, but to complement your healthcare services.”

If you are going to go through a major transformation involving your personal, physical or mental health, it may be time to schedule an appointment with your doctor. However, complementary services may also provide the additional boost you need to set attainable goals and improve your overall quality of life in the new year. ©

REJUVENATE MEDSPA

4050 25th St., Columbus
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medspa-in.com

Walter Gill receives the NAD+ infusion IV therapy given by Sue Becker at Rejuvenate MedSpa.



Erika Matthews & Luke Brown

*Ceremony and reception at Irwin Gardens
June 25, 2021*

Love usually appears when we least expect it. Erika Matthews and Luke Brown discovered this when they met at a college party in 2016. A party that neither were planning to attend; but luck or fate had other ideas for them that night and pushed them both to go. The host of the party, who later became one of Erika's bridesmaids, still takes credit for being the one who set them up. But whether or not it was luck, fate or a planned set-up, Erika and Luke are grateful and happy that they changed their minds and attended the party.

After a few years of dating, their love blossomed and they knew they wanted to spend the rest of their lives together. The only question remaining was how and when Luke will propose. So after careful clandestine planning with Erika's family, they decided the most romantic place for him to propose would be the beach her family took her to as a child.

"Luke proposed to me at the beach my family took us each summer growing up!" Erika said. "I suspected something big was going down the moment he asked to go on a 'beach walk,'" which isn't normally his go-to beach activity."

Not wanting to ruin Luke's plan, Erika continued to play along, even though she wanted to burst with excitement and anticipation.

"The sun was setting, casting those cotton-candy colors across the sky, and the sand was still warm under our feet from the heat of the day," she recalled. "When he got down on one knee, my entire family crested over the nearest dune cheering! I pounced on him in a hug, and obviously said yes."

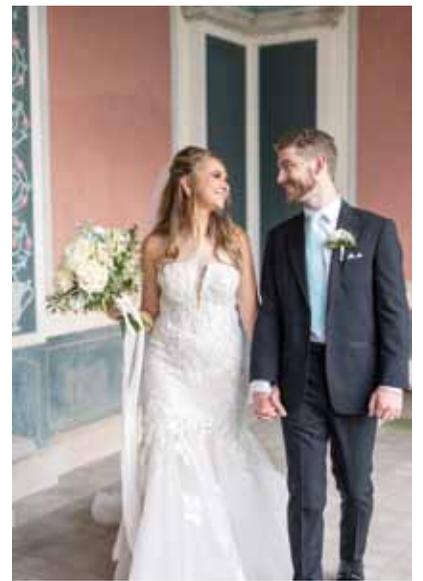
They planned a June wedding, they wanted a 'botanical' theme. Erika's wedding dress was adorned with floral patterns and they chose to have the ceremony at Irwin Gardens, where the highlight of the two-acre property is the garden, a beautiful maze based on the Casa degli Innamorati (House of Lovers) in Pompeii. After the ceremony, friends and family commenced to the sprawling forest behind her parents' home for the reception.

When asked how she felt on her wedding day, Erika said, "Utterly exhilarated. How can one not be when marrying their best friend?"

As for a honeymoon, well, they did travel, but it wasn't the romantic trip they wanted.

"Because of my studies as a PhD student, we did travel after the wedding to Kenya so I could collect data," Erika said. "While there, we went on a safari to Masai Mara, which was incredible."





Grace Kestler & Matthew Neville

*Ceremony at Harrison Lake Country Club, reception at The Commons
July 9, 2022*

Grace Kestler and Matthew Neville were born and raised in Columbus, but they didn't meet until they were adults. They met in 2018, through their common interest in local politics, and soon after their first meeting, they began dating.

After dating for nearly three years, Matthew and his son, Emmett, planned the proposal together. Pretending it was a day just like any other, they had fun in town, and after going to Chuck-E-Cheese to enjoy some ice cream, Matthew and Emmet decided it was time to go home and unleash their plan.

However, after coming home, Grace went to her office for an unexpected meeting, leaving Matthew and Emmett to worry if their timing wasn't right. But after her meeting, the boys called Grace out to the living room where she found them both on one knee.

"It was the cutest thing," Grace said. "It was so special that it happened at home, as much of our relationship formed while home during COVID. I loved having Emmett involved too!"

And after Grace accepted their proposal, Emmett had no qualms about telling everyone, "She cried like a baby."

The wedding ceremony was set on a lake that Grace grew up on, but at first the weather wasn't cooperating with them.

"Our ceremony was outside and it was raining all morning. I was determined that we were having it outside, so oddly I wasn't worried. It cleared up just a few minutes before people started arriving!" Grace said.

"Luckily it cleared up at just the perfect time," Matthew said.

Grace designed the invitations, ceremony programs and menus. "We wanted the wedding to be very vibrant and fun!" Grace said. "Our ultimate goal was to create a unique experience for our guests... down to the ceremony, food, music and décor."

They wrote their own vows and sentiments to each other as well.

"Having us write our own vows and design the ceremony to reflect who we are made the ceremony itself incredibly special, as we had the opportunity to share things not only with each other, but our friends and family who were there with us." Matthew said.

"I had never been more confident about a decision in my life — I couldn't wait to see him at the end of the aisle," Grace said.

They went to Sicily for their honeymoon. They travelled to four different cities around the island enjoying the views and great seafood.





Su Casa Diversity Gala

The Commons

Nov. 5

1. People dance to the music played by DJ Carlos.
2. Tres leches dessert.
3. Cesar Gamez and Magda Gamez pose for a photograph at the photo booth.
4. Sabrina Fan, Kelly Tan, Linda Shi, Lu Qiu, Ya Su and Huri Li.
5. Lydia Happel, Lauren Reed, Audrey Hood and Songa Rugangaz.
6. Tonya Sisco, Nebil Baghum and Hanna Omar.
7. Paige Sandwell, Keerti Palanisamy and Malu Ribeiro pose with their Bahama Mama drinks, the event signature cocktail.
8. Damien Cabanne and Anastasia Vilkova toast.
9. Mary Ferdon and Felicia Garr.
10. Guests dine and mingle.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARLA CLARK







Playing in the Snow

Snow coats the Puddles and Frog Pond statue at the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation administration building.

PHOTO BY TONY VASQUEZ | WWW.TONYVASQUEZ.NET

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