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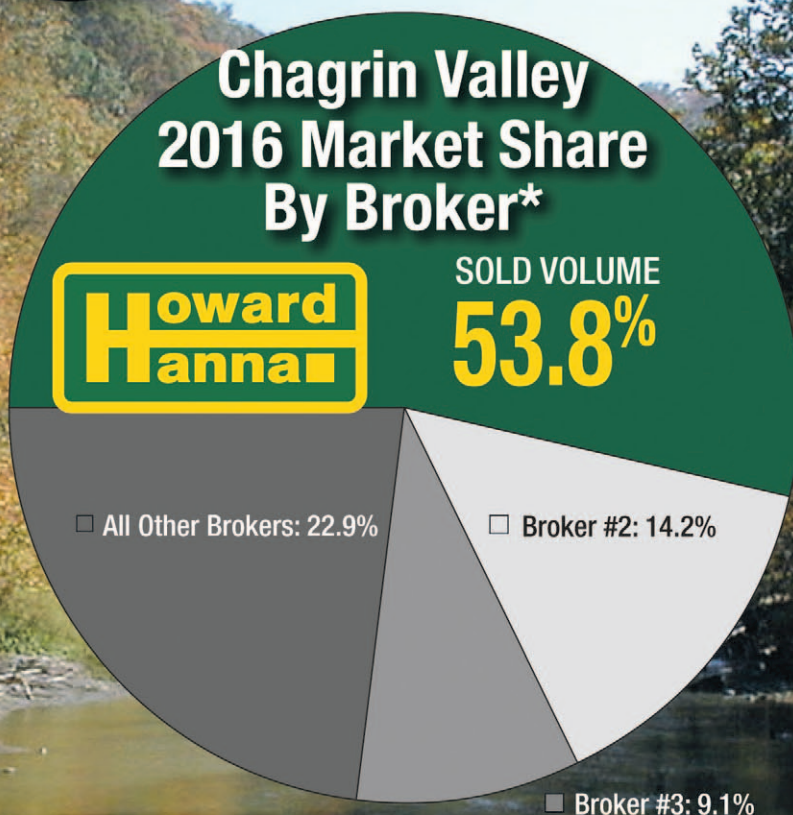
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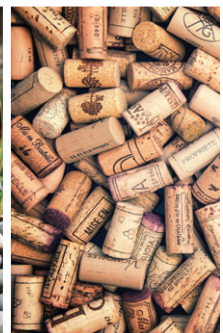
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Contents



This annual publication is a collaboration of the Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Chagrin Valley Times to provide a presentation of all the Chagrin Valley has to offer whether you are a resident, local business or a visitor to the community. It highlights many areas of interest from leisure activities to businesses. It is more than a magazine. It can serve as a resource for things to do and places to go throughout the coming year.

If you are seeking more information about any aspect of events, services or events available in the 13 member communities which comprise the Chamber, stop by the Chamber office in the Chagrin Falls Township Town Hall on Main Street or visit the Chamber's website at www.cvcc.org.

This magazine is a promotion of all the Chagrin Valley has to offer. For residents and visitors, it provides a guide to the many jewels in our area that we otherwise may not be aware. It also highlights the wide-ranging locally owned businesses that make our community so distinctive.

We all benefit when we support our community's businesses. The Chamber is comprised of over 500 local businesses from restaurants to landscapers to automobile repair shops. Not only do they have a business in the Valley but they live and raise their families here. They are invested in the community. By your patronizing these businesses our community will continue to thrive. According to a recent study, 48 percent of revenue generated at local retailers and restaurants is circulated back into local communities.

Browse through the magazine. Keep it accessible. Look through it again and again during the coming twelve months. Each time you might discover another community treasure worth seeking out.

Chris Horn, President, Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce



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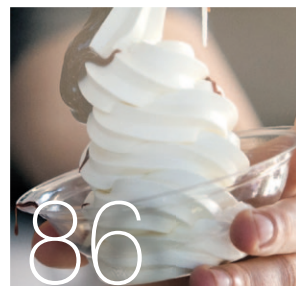
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525 E. Washington St., Chagrin Falls, Ohio 44022
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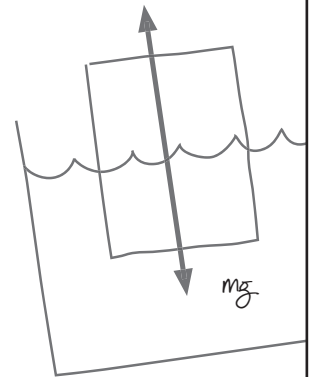
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Empowerment of arts

Youth programs give valley alum confidence to pursue careers

By VALERI FURST

They have their roots firmly planted in the Chagrin Valley nurtured by experiences in local theater organizations. Alumni who trained at Stagecrafters in Orange Village, Chagrin Valley Little Theatre in Chagrin Falls and other community drama groups left home and went out into the world. Their experiences both in the spotlight and behind the scenes put them on a path to exciting and successful careers both on and off the stage.

Youth theater gives woman creative confidence

In her senior year of college, Carly Cott's dream of being a professional photographer was literally stolen when a thief took the computer and camera equipment that contained all of her pictures. Ms. Cott quickly learned she would not get a photography job without a portfolio. She was devastated but also determined to find a job doing something else. That willpower came in large part from Ms. Cott's childhood in Chagrin Falls where her participation in theater provided the lesson of how to be self-assured in the face of rejection.

"When you try out for parts and don't get them, you learn to just keep on going. So when all my equipment was taken I rejected my first thought that I was going to end up back home in Chagrin Falls, living in the basement. I spoke with my professors, my friends, and made a lot of cold calls to see what I could do instead."

Networking got Ms. Cott her first job at Creative Artists Agency, one of the largest talent and sports agencies in the industry where she quickly worked her way up to a position in the publishing and celebrity book department. When Ms. Cott realized she didn't want to work behind the scenes, she networked again and got a position with Bionic, an organization comprised of successful entrepreneurs which partners with Fortune 100 companies such as General Electric to help them have the flexibility and capability to grow as quickly as start-up businesses. Ms. Cott, now 24 and living in New York City, credits her success to the idea of creative confidence.

"Without creative confidence, our ideas quickly escape us, problems go unsolved, and we revert back to our comfortable old habits of thinking and doing. My background in the Cleveland theater community instilled creative confidence deep within me. Without it, I don't know if I would have had the courage to put myself out there. It empowered me to be both an effective thinker and a doer."



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2017-18 Chagrin Valley Magazine **13**



Brittany Schreiber

Booking producer draws on stage training

Imagine getting to work with Celine Dion, Ed Sheeran or Shania Twain. For Brittany Schreiber, 30, it is just another day at work. She is the music booking producer for NBC's "Today" show.

Ms. Schreiber was a theater kid growing up in Pepper Pike, performing in shows and working as a student producer with Stagecrafters Youth Theatre. That set the ground work for what would ultimately be her dream job.

"My love of music and performing definitely grew out of my childhood. I love the theater, going to shows, listening to music. I am marrying a Broadway producer. So it is definitely in my blood, but I am just not an active participant anymore."

At Syracuse University, Ms. Schreiber was a television production major which led to her first

job in the NBC page program where participants rotate through different departments. She got to work on shows such as "Saturday Night Live" which reignited that love of live performance. Working her way up the ranks of the Today show first as an assistant to the producer, then a researcher and an associate producer, she became the music booking producer two and a half years ago. The transition gave Ms. Schreiber a dream job in New York City that combines her love of theater, music and live performance.

"Being where I am today comes from the confidence that I was taught in theater not only as a performer but also working behind the scenes. As a student producer, I worked with people of all ages and was given a lot of responsibility. Different activities teach you different skills and learning at a young age about communication, teamwork. Working hard helps shape who you are and gives you the confidence to really go after what you want."

Chagrin grad blends love of storytelling with music

Growing up in Chagrin Falls, Gordon Leary took a lot of drawing classes, participated in theater, and spent 12 years taking piano lessons. All of it set him on the path for his future as a book writer and lyricist in New York City.

"There is a direct evolution for me from drawing to piano playing to composer to lyricist. Everything with the arts involves the act of storytelling – even in first grade where you draw a picture and come home and tell your parents what the picture is all about. I found a way to combine my love of story writing with my understanding of music."

While in high school, Mr. Leary composed his first musical which was performed in his senior year. Mr. Leary thought he would be a composer but in college, he found his real passion was story writing. He went to graduate school at New York University which is the only college in the world that offers a master's degree in musical theater writing.

Today, at 35, Mr. Leary lives in New York and has worked on several full-length mu-



Gordon Leary

sicals. His shows have been seen across the United States, Canada, and in Seoul, Korea. He won the 2009 Richard Rodgers award for "Cheer Wars," a musical about the cheerleading mother who hired a hit man to kill her rival. Next year, he will be in San Diego for the world premiere of his show about Anita Bryant, the beauty queen, orange juice

spokeswoman turned anti-gay activist.

"The arts are about empathy and understanding someone else's humanity," Mr. Leary said. "You have to put yourself in other people's shoes whether acting a part or playing someone else's music. As a writer I am trying to get into other people's heads to understand what drives them."

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Music director strikes new chord with wellness center

When Jared Stein was 16 years old, he got the lead in the musical “George M.” There was just one problem. The part required tap dancing, a skill Mr. Stein did not possess.

“I told them I don’t tap dance and was told, ‘Oh you will.’ They got me a dance coach and a lot of training and I learned how to tap. It took a ton of work but that taught me if you put your mind to something, you can do it.”

For Mr. Stein, 36, that lesson has served him well throughout his career. It helped get him his first major job as music director for the national tour of “Rent.”

“I grew up in Orange playing the piano and Dad was a stickler about practicing. I didn’t appreciate it until college where I was asked to help with auditions, provide accompaniment for performances and learned about music direction. I oversaw all the musical elements of a show including putting the band together, working with vocals, and it opened the door for employment. When the opportunity came up for “Rent,” I threw my name into the hat, and learned the music in three days.”

Mr. Stein went on to be the music director for several Broadway shows and touring productions including “Spring Awakening,” “American Idiot” and the revival of “Hair.” But in the back of his mind, an idea for a new venture was forming. In 2012, Mr. Stein took the leap and moved to California with his partner Kim to develop The Springs, a wellness center complete with juice bar, yoga studio and vegan restaurant in downtown Los Angeles. The doors opened in 2014.

“I wouldn’t know how to approach something like this without my experiences in theater. We handled it like we would with opening a show. We were the producers and we were creating something where people are spending their money and want to be entertained,” Mr. Stein said. “We were asked, why are you giving up your career to do this in L.A., but the risk wasn’t a deterrent. There was an opportunity and we grabbed it knowing if you work hard, you can make things happen.”

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Cabaret founder now puts coffee in spotlight

John Rubenstein, 48, didn't go to business school – he didn't even have experience in the food or retail industry. Yet today, Mr. Rubenstein is a king of coffee in New York City. The founder and owner of Joe's Coffee Company, he has 19 stores in the Big Apple, two in Philadelphia, and a wholesale company that sells to hotels and restaurants.

Mr. Rubenstein grew up in Pepper Pike, performing in and directing shows. He started the Cabaret Troupe and a performance day camp which are now run by Stagecrafters Youth Theatre through the Orange Education and Recreation Department. When he moved to New York in 1999, he got a job as a casting director and eventually became an agent, but he wasn't really happy. Combining the expertise he had gained in the world of theater with a love and interest in coffee, Mr. Rubenstein found himself on the road to entrepreneurship.

"Producing a play or starting a business involves many of the same skills. In both situations, you wear a lot of different hats. In theater, you have an overall vision, you set goals and get things done, you need to know how many tickets have to be sold to break even, and so on. Those skills provided a great education."

John Rubenstein



When Mr. Rubenstein opened his first store in 2003, America's love affair with gourmet coffee hadn't traveled far beyond places like Seattle and Portland. Today, it is a competitive market but Mr. Rubenstein believes the skills that got him where he is today will continue to serve him well.

"We have a brand loyalty similar to people who have a favorite hometown restaurant. Creating that was actually less pressure than working in the world of entertainment. It is the same skill set but a different product and the best part is being in control of my own destiny." ■

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Photo courtesy of Cleveland Metroparks

The American Hiking Society's 2016 "60 Hikes Within 60 Miles" of Cleveland devotes an entire chapter to the Cleveland Metroparks' South Chagrin Reservation, with special attention to a carved feature formerly known as Squaw Rock. The carving was completed by blacksmith, artist and early Chagrin Falls resident, Henry Church Jr. in the 1880s.

Historic landmark

Metroparks changes name of 'Squaw Rock'

By DWIGHT WOODWARD

What's in a name?

When it comes to the local landmark Squaw Rock, recently renamed the Henry Church Rock in honor of its carver, it depends on who you talk to. Squaw Rock is a huge boulder of Berea sandstone jutting out of the Chagrin River in the South Chagrin Reservation of the Cleveland Metroparks in Bentleyville. The rock and its numerous carvings are a well-known landmark and common destination for hikers and residents of Northeast Ohio. The historic rock, chiseled by the Chagrin Falls blacksmith Henry Church Jr. in the 1880s, depicts a mermaid-like squaw, a serpent and other symbols. The squaw represents the Native Americans and the snake the incoming white man and culture at the time, according to Wendy Weirich, director of outdoor experiences for the Metroparks.



Squaw Rock, a huge sandstone boulder jutting out of the Chagrin River, features a mermaid-like squaw, a serpent, sailing ships and other carvings.

Mr. Church was an abolitionist and a spiritualist – he believed in communicating with those who came before him,” said Ms. Weirich, a former naturalist at the nearby Look About Lodge in the South Chagrin Reservation. Ms. Weirich’s naturalist work for more than a decade has familiarized her with the carved rock.

“If you look at the rock, there are three sailing ships representing the white man. There is a man in a coonskin cap and a log cabin next to him and there is the capital building. Church is talking about how the

white man spread across the country. On the other side is the serpent with a woman and a lot of icons. There is a quiver with arrows and the four phases of the moon.”

With 2017 marking the 100th anniversary of the metroparks, the staff reviewed park signage and decided to change the official name of Squaw Rock to the Henry Church Rock, according to Jacqueline Gerling, director of metroparks public relations.

Why?

Continued on page 22



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Continued from page 20

"We had been thinking about it for a long time in doing research for the anniversary," said Judy Mackeigan, metroparks historian and archivist. "Here was a chance to honor influential people, our unsung heroes."

The signs at the South Chagrin Reservation were changed in April of 2017 to reflect the name change, honoring Henry Church Jr., though shortening his name to simply "Henry Church."

"It was a good time to set aside the old name. Henry Church didn't call it 'Squaw Rock,'" Ms. Mackeigan said.

Mr. Church was a blacksmith by trade, following in the footsteps of his father Henry, one of the founders of Chagrin Falls. Despite having no formal training in the arts, Mr. Church Jr., in his later years began painting and carving rocks; his grave marker is a life-size lion he carved and had placed on his grave at the Chagrin Falls Evergreen Cemetery.

Mr. Church Jr. operated his blacksmith shop on the site of the current Masonic Hall building at the corner of Washington and

Franklin streets in Chagrin Falls. After work, Mr. Church walked more than a mile to the site of Squaw Rock where he chiseled the images, returning home to the light of lanterns he carried with him.

Change unexpected

The name change came as quite a surprise to members of the Chagrin Falls Historical Society, according to Jane Babinsky. In addition to being president of the Historical Society, Ms. Babinsky has a personal interest in the name change — her great-great grandfather was Henry Church Jr.

"I don't know if I buy all that," said Ms. Babinsky, referring to the metroparks stated reason for the name change. "He (Henry Church Jr.) referred to it as 'Squaw Rock' and it was known as 'Squaw Rock.' I think there was a feeling within in the metroparks organization that thought 'Squaw' was not politically correct. We are wondering if they received a lot of letters asking them to change the name."

Newspaper clippings in the historical society archives indicate the name change has

been debated for decades.

Ms. Babinsky also wondered why the metroparks did not use the name "Henry Church Jr." as the "Church" alone designation may confuse people with his father, Henry Church.

Ms. Mackeigan said the Henry Church designation was chosen because Henry Church Jr. often signed his work as simply Henry Church and that's the name inscribed on the rock, whatever name you prefer.

While the word "squaw" may have a negative or pejorative connotation now, its original meaning was simply an Algonquin word meaning "woman," "princess" or "wife," according to Skip Church. Skip Church's great uncle was Henry Church Jr., brother of his great-grandfather Austin.

Skip Church, a 1971 graduate of Chagrin Falls High School, returned to Chagrin Falls last autumn to be inducted into the Chagrin Falls High School Achievement Hall of Fame for his work in broadcasting and video production. He and his brother, John, toured the Chagrin Falls Historical Society and examined artifacts donated to the museum by family members.

"I find it curious that the meaning of what was originally an Algonquin word for young woman was kidnapped by insensitive racists and now their meaning is the one that is offensive. Because the word has the potential to offend, I have no problem with the name change."

Skip Church said he has a postcard of "Squaw Rock" dated 1912.

Nationwide movement

Nationwide, the word "squaw" is now seen as pejorative with many local communities, particularly in Western states, legislating name changes of historic landmarks to more politically correct designations. For example, Squaw Peak in Phoenix, Arizona, was renamed Piestewa Peak in honor of Army Spc. Lori Ann Piestewa, the first known Native American woman to die in combat in the U.S. military, and the first female soldier to be killed in action in the 2003 Iraq War.

Large signs in South Chagrin Reservation now designate the carved rock as the Henry Church Rock, but the recent name change may take time to have an impact on the spoken name, particularly for people who grew up with Squaw Rock.

Ms. Babinsky said she was traveling in California and stopped to chat with some people who had been to Chagrin Falls. "When they asked me where I was from, I said, 'Chagrin Falls.' They said, 'Oh, that's where Squaw Rock is, right?'"

According to author Diane Stressing, "Some speculate that the collage (Squaw Rock) is a celebration of American History; others believe it is meant to be a condemnation of our government's policies in the late 1800s. This much we know: His work (Henry Church Jr.) continues to lure many people to this trail." ■



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Church Jr. is central to Chagrin Falls history

By DWIGHT WOODWARD

Squaw Rock in the South Chagrin Reservation of the Cleveland Metroparks has been known by that name far and wide since its carver, Henry Church Jr., completed it in 1885. Postcards from the late 19th and early 20th centuries depict the rock as Squaw Rock.

Now that the metroparks board has changed the name of the rock to the Henry Church Rock, visitors to the landmark in Bentleyville may wonder: Who was Henry Church Jr.?

With the exception of members of the Chagrin Falls Historical Society and perhaps other native Chagrinites, the Church name probably doesn't ring a bell with most folks the way that Squaw Rock does.

In his day, Henry Church Jr., the Chagrin Falls blacksmith and self-taught artist, became known in Northeast Ohio but his name did not gain national recognition in his lifetime. But Mr. Church's sculpture and paintings, like those of many artists who die before their work is recognized, would survive after his death and attract national attention in the late 20th century. Mr. Church's sculpture and paintings have found homes in displays at the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City and the Abbey Rockefeller Folk Art Museum in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Mr. Church's life-size lion sculpture that marks his grave in the Chagrin Falls Evergreen Cemetery spent 18 years at the Cleveland Museum of Art, but was returned to its original resting place in 2014 as Mr. Church's grave marker, said Jane Babinsky, president of the Chagrin Falls Historical Society and great-great granddaughter of Mr. Church.

The museum had displayed the lion, which sat in Mr. Church's front yard on Franklin Street until a couple years before his death, prominently but put it in storage after the museum was remodeled. The sculpture once had glass eyes and a child holding a chain attached to the lion. But vandals removed the eyes and child. The sculpture was based on Isaiah 11:16 - "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf and the young lion and the falling together: and a little child shall lead them."

Local pioneers

Henry Church and Clarissa Church were among the first settlers in what is now the Village of Chagrin Falls.

"I think my family was the third family in Chagrin Falls," said Skip Church, great-grandson of Austin Church, "It was a 21-day journey from Amherst," said Skip. Austin Church, Henry Church Jr.'s brother, kept a diary. Skip has a copy of the diary that he shared.

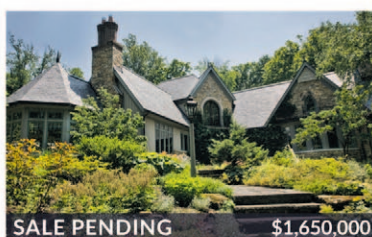
A year before the Church family's arrival in Chagrin Falls, village founder Noah Graves purchased the village land from

Edward Paine of Chardon in 1933, securing the village property with a \$100 down payment for a \$2,000 tract of land that was split by the border of Geauga and Cuyahoga County as it is today. Mr. Graves achieved his goal of building a paper mill on the river. At that time, the land between Chagrin Falls and Chardon was "a primeval forest, with no road or any communication in that direction," according to the "History of Chagrin Falls and Vicinity," written by C.T. Blakeslee and published in 1874.

Mr. Graves returned to Amherst,

Continued on page 24

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Continued from page 23

Massachusetts, where Henry Church also lived and invited his friend to settle in Chagrin Falls and practice his trade as a blacksmith.

The elder Mr. Church agreed and he and Clarissa traveled over the Berkshire Hills by “public conveyance” and journeyed on to Buffalo on the Erie Canal. A steamship took them from Buffalo and a lumber wagon brought them to Chagrin Falls, arriving Oct. 4, 1834, following a 21-day journey. Mr. Church had a house constructed where the men’s clothing store Joseph A. Bank now operates. His blacksmith shop was built just north of the home. It was the third house constructed in Chagrin Falls, according to Ms. Babinsky. Mr. Church later, after a stint in now Parkman Township working as a blacksmith, moved his shop to the site of the current Masonic Hall building.

Ms. Babinsky and her grandmother Miriam Church Stem wrote, “The Life and Work of Henry Church, Jr.” published in 1987. Ms. Babinsky writes of early life in the village, quoting from Austin Church’s diary.

“For a few years they had hard work to make things meet and Henry was born (May 20, 1836) when father could hardly keep the family from hunger ... and mother used to say Henry was born when none of the family had enough to eat.” The father (Henry Church) hunted wild turkey, deer and wild pigeons for meat. They had to make everything they used – all clothing, the carpets for the floor, the candles to see at night ... the mother boarded the carpenters who came to build other houses.”

Henry Church and his namesake were

strong abolitionists. The Church family shared their house with runaway slaves, providing meals and shelter as part of the Underground Railroad.

Henry Church Jr. left school after sixth grade and began practicing the blacksmith trade with his father. Mr. Church Jr. displayed an artistic bent as a child, carving objects out of wood and drawing.

The Church children attended a school on East Cottage Street at the end of School Lane which ran from Orange Street to Cottage Street. Henry’s drawing of the school house, depicted in Ms. Babinsky’s book, is the only surviving drawing of the school. Mr. Church drew other early village buildings, including the Asbury Seminary built by the Methodists on the site of the present day Intermediate School on Philomethian Street, currently being renovated by the Chagrin Falls Exempted Village School District.

Philomethian means “love of Methodism,” and the seminary was given the name in honor of Francis Asbury, a circuit riding bishop. The Asbury Seminary was demolished to make room for the first Chagrin Falls public school and now operates in Lexington, Kentucky.

Looking back

Sorting through documents and books about Mr. Church Jr. at the Chagrin Falls Historical Society and the Chagrin Falls Public Library reveals varying accounts and details of the artist’s life, art and his carving of the famed rock which he did in secret after work.

While Mr. Church had no formal training in art, or any formal schooling after sixth grade, he was a great reader and also

found inspiration from watching Archibald M. Willard, painter of the well-known “The Spirit of ‘76” that honors the founding of the United States centennial, Ms. Babinsky said. Mr. Willard was the same age as Mr. Church and lived on Bell Street in Russell Township just east of the old cemetery growing up. Later, Mr. Church would walk to Solon over muddy roads to watch Mr. Willard paint or take the Erie Railroad train to Cleveland where Mr. Willard had a studio.

Perhaps the most accurate and detailed account of Mr. Church’s childhood inspiration for the carving, and his actual carving of the rock several decades later, is from a profile of Church by an anonymous author, published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer Sunday on July 12, 1891 with the headline, “A Sketch of the Most Remarkable Man in Northern Ohio, Who He Is, Where He Lives and What He Has Done.”

The sketch, now reproduced as a 19-page document, was written by a man the Plain Dealer identified as “Stonehouse” at the time. Editors apparently took the sketch to be true as they published it verbatim.

Stonehouse wrote the profile, titled “Genius Near Home,” after visiting Church at his art gallery and interviewing him in the museum above his blacksmith shop. Stonehouse notes that decades of blacksmith work had an impact on Mr. Church’s body as his back could not stand up to the daily labor of shoeing horses and other blacksmith tasks when he reached his mid-50s. Fortunately for Mr. Church, his art talent allowed him to devote his time to art as blacksmith work waned. Mr. Church also displayed his work and sold it at a museum at Geauga Lake Park where he charged 10 cents for admission.

Stonehouse writes that Church received his inspiration for his carving when he was a young man hunting with his father near the Chagrin River. As they were hunting along the Aurora branch, about two miles from Chagrin Falls, they came upon an “Indian,” or Native American, wigwam and several Native Americans, including a young princess.

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"His father pointed out to him, nestled among the trees, an Indian Wigwam, and as a boy, peering curiously and not without fear, through the bushes, watched the Indians. A few remnants of the race who had at that time almost disappeared from Ohio, moving about at their tasks," Stonehouse wrote. "The boy's attention was especially arrested by a squaw, and he observed her closely."

Nearby, Mr. Church spotted a large boulder of sandstone that would one day become his carving site.

"If I live," he said, "I will sometime cut into that stone." Then, answering his own thoughts, he asked himself, "And what now?" And he felt impelled on as if by some inspiration to the reply, "A squaw!"

Mr. Church was a "spiritualist" and believed spirits inspired him and guided his hands and life, according to Stonehouse.

"He is a strong spiritualist ... and it is often that he recognizes the presence of spirits about him and then receives messages from them," Stonehouse wrote. "He thoroughly believes that his hand is gifted by the spirits as he works, and indeed, so peculiar is his case that we cannot be surprised that he so explains it."

One of Church's portraits depicts Jesus Christ and his self portrait, depicting his own image with long hair and a long beard, shows spirits hovering around his head.

"It is so lovely to think we do not have to die, but that we shed our bodies like a husk of corn," Mr. Church told Stonehouse.

After the inspiration for Squaw Rock came as a boy, it would be more than 40 years before Mr. Church, thinking "I am getting old," returned to the Chagrin River to carve the rock. After working at his blacksmith trade during the day, Mr. Church would walk from the village to the rock nightly, chiseling various images on the rock that display the white man's arrival in North America and subsequent conquest of the land. Mr. Church walked the 2 miles from the village to the rock and returned home with lanterns in his hand to guide his way at night.

In addition to "Squaw Rock," Mr. Church became known nationally following an exhibition of his work at the Whitney Museum in 1980. After that, his humorous 1890s depiction of monkeys fighting over a banana in an otherwise Victorian-style still life of fruit, was purchased by the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center in Williamsburg, Virginia.

A larger-than-life metal frog Mr. Church created was purchased for placement in Cleveland Public Square but it was lost en route. ■

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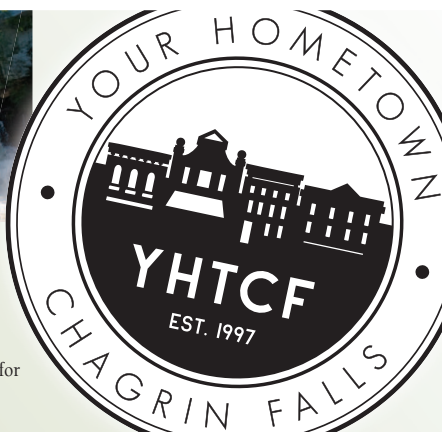


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The Chagrin Falls Historical Society discovers, preserves and shares evidence of and knowledge about the history of Chagrin Falls and vicinity. The Society does this to enable all who live, work, and visit the area to appreciate its past, understand its present, and plan for its future.

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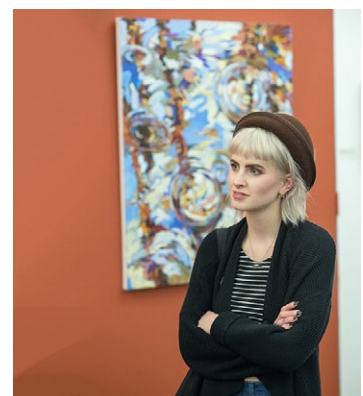
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Interactive map enhances Chagrin Valley experience

By KRISTA S. KANO

In the Chagrin Valley, there's always some big event just around the corner.

February brings restaurant week. In May, there's Blossom Time. June welcomes the Valley Art Center's Art by the Falls. Horse enthusiasts head to Moreland Hills in July for the Hunter Jumper Classic. Film buffs flock to the valley for the Chagrin Documentary Film Festival in October. There are garden tours and ghost hunts, tree lightings and popcorn ball drops.

"You may be coming for Blossom Time, but we want you to come back," said Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Molly Gebler.

The chamber is now working on giving visitors the best experience possible, catered just to them, with a new interactive map and itinerary generator launched in August.

With the iMap and Go Guide, developed by Lunar Cow, users can search by using a keyword for the arts, hiking, kid-friendly activities and more, and the map will show other nearby chamber member restaurants and stores that may appeal to them. They can then print the itinerary and map for an easy guide to the valley.

"This agenda will pack them full with things to do the whole time they're here, based on what they're coming in for," Mrs. Gebler said. "That's what I love about this. It encourages people to come to the valley and explore it."

The map also will provide profiles on each of the chamber's 13 communities so that visitors know what to expect and can decide where to go. So, a photographer looking for beautiful scenery will be directed to Gates Mills or Hunting Valley, and a shopaholic may be directed to Woodmere's Eton Chagrin Boulevard center for Tiffany's or the Apple store or maybe to downtown Chagrin Falls where they can buy Hermes scarves at Cuffs, the only location to buy the French scarves outside of Paris and New York City.

For retail and restaurants, the map will only be highlighting chamber members, but to help people find exactly what they want, the guide will also include the many parks, historical tours and playgrounds the village has to offer.

Every couple of years, the chamber commissions a printed map, but after interviewing Lunar Cow, Mrs. Gebler said they knew the interactive map and itinerary generator would "bring the chamber up to a new level."

"We (the chamber) want to be the place

where people go when they want to know. When they're thinking of where to eat, or where to go they come to the chamber and we'll help guide them into a plan. This Go Guide and this map will allow us to touch so many more people. The internet is where you go to find everything and as a chamber, we want people to come to the valley and we want this to be a destination for visitors."

But most importantly, Mrs. Gebler wants people to love the valley as much as she does.

"It's so hard to explain Chagrin because it's not a place, it's an experience. Everyone leaves the valley in love and wants to come back. I invite anyone to visit. We have so much to offer."

For more information about the Chamber of Commerce, the map and the itinerary, visit www.CVCC.org. ■

If you're in the Chagrin Valley, you should...

Walk across a walkable bridge – Gates Mills

Take a hike to Henry Church Rock – South Chagrin Reservation, Bentleyville

Find the largest bobolink bird colony in South Russell Village Park – South Russell

Enjoy outdoor yoga – Chagrin Falls

See more than 300 chestnut logs that built Look About Lodge – Bentleyville

Enjoy an ice cream cone from the famous Popcorn Shop – Chagrin Falls

Speed down the sled hill at Beartown Lakes Park – Auburn Township

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Photos by Peggy Turbett

Derek Hunter, left, and his mother Shari Hunter take lunch orders at Two Cafe and Boutique in Bainbridge. Mrs. Hunter opened the café two years ago to offer high-quality coffee, locally grown fare and fair-trade accessories by a staff that trains and employs people with exceptionalities into the local workforce.

Exceptional programs, exceptional individuals

By MATT WEINKAM

Chagrin Valley is already known for beautiful scenery and charming small towns, but it's quickly gaining a reputation for innovative programs for people with physical, cognitive and emotional exceptions. Three exciting organizations in the area – two new, one longstanding – are inspiring change in what was once known as “disability services” and transforming lives in the process.

Two Café and Boutique

Founder Shari Hunter says that even though Two Café and Boutique in Bainbridge opened in 2015 it really started 24 years ago when her third child, Derek, was born.

Although he was diagnosed with Down syndrome, Mrs. Hunter learned early on that the biggest challenge he faced had nothing



Chef David Cosentino works an omelet as employee Derek Hunter prepares serving dishes.

to do with his cognition and everything to do with that label: Down syndrome. People wanted to treat him differently, separate him from other kids, place him in this box, she explained.

After seeing what programs did and did not work for her son, Mrs. Hunter knew

there was a better way to raise children with exceptionalities and integrate them into schools and businesses. As she said, “We all have exceptionalities. Some of us just unfortunately got labeled.” So Mrs. Hunter went back to graduate school for an intervention

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Continued from page 32

specialist license and started a foundation.

The Two Foundation is a nonprofit whose mission is to integrate people with exceptionalities into the local workforce. To achieve that mission, Mrs. Hunter opened Two Café and Boutique, a local business at the corner of East Washington Street and State Route 306 that serves local farm to fork food and sells organic skincare products while also acting as a job training center for people with exceptionalities. The business is an integrated classroom where job seekers get lessons in self-awareness, self-advocacy, communication skills, and job-specific skills in a real-world environment.

Mrs. Hunter's integrated, real-world job training model has already shown remarkable results. In only two years, the Two Foundation has already trained more than 50 individuals and placed their workers in positions at Drug Mart, Home Depot, Giant Eagle, Einstein Bagels, Ganley Subaru, Crumb and Spigot, the Geauga County Board of Developmental Disabilities as well as other local companies and organizations.

One former job seeker, Katie, had been stuck in a sheltered workshop programs for years, unable to find work. After coming to Two Café she is now an employee of the month at Home Depot.



Gliding Stars is an adaptive program that provides instruction and adaptive equipment to people of all ages and abilities to improve their life through ice skating. The program was initially founded in 1977 in New York, and the Chagrin Valley chapter was started by Melinda Bednarik and Rachel Wymer last year.

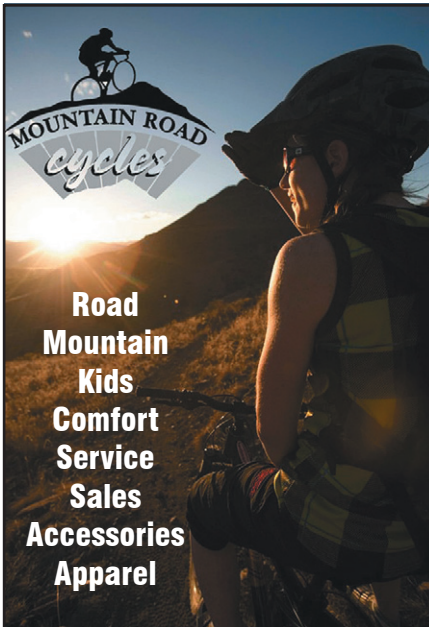
Another former job seeker, Enrique, had real difficulty connecting with people. Now he is employee of the month at Ganley Subaru East. "He called recently to check in and let me know how things are going and at the end of the phone call he said, 'I love you,'" Mrs. Hunter recalled. "I couldn't believe the change. I said, is this the same Enrique?"

Mrs. Hunter has also been overwhelmed by the support of the local community. Businesses call asking her to send them more employees, local organizations offer grants and

funding, and last year the Federated Church in Chagrin Falls voted to give their Christmas Eve offering of more than \$36,000 to the Two Foundation.

"The heart of the people in Chagrin Valley is amazing," Mrs. Hunter said.

Her goal is to keep expanding. "I want to make Geauga County the model for the rest of the state," Mrs. Hunter said. "I want the Two Café and Boutique to be the place everybody wants to be."



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Gliding Stars

Little does Mrs. Hunter know that Two Café and Boutique has already inspired others.

Melinda Bednarik, a special education teacher originally from Mentor, and Rachel Wymer, a physical therapist from Macedonia, saw what Mrs. Hunter was able to accomplish with Two Café and Boutique, and it gave them the courage to start a local program of their own: Gliding Stars.

Gliding Stars is an adaptive skating program that provides skating instruction and adaptive equipment to people of all ages with the mission of improving the lives of people with special needs through skating. Originally founded in 1977 by Elizabeth O'Donnell in Buffalo, New York, Gliding Stars has chapters at skating rinks throughout the Midwest, including Findlay, Ohio, where Ms. Bednarik volunteered for five years.

Last year Ms. Bednarik and Ms. Wymer saw an opportunity to bring Gliding Stars to the Chagrin Valley but they worried about the difficulty of starting a new chapter on their own. When they saw what Mrs. Hunter was able to do with something as challenging as Two Café and Boutique, they were motivated. "Shari was a role model," Ms. Bednarik said.

The pair quickly got to work. "We thought of the idea in July and then worked our butts off until we were able to start it in the last week of February," she added. The program was an instant success.

Seventeen students from ages 5 to 24 joined, an impressive number for an untested first-time program. Each week the group had 21 or more volunteers, a number that continued to increase as friends would talk to friends, encouraging more people to get involved. Best of all, parents and volunteers saw significant growth in the skaters as the program progressed.

"In ten weeks we saw huge, huge changes with these kids. Not only physically but emotionally and socially as well," Ms. Bednarik said.

For instance, Austin and Grady, twin boys with autism, had a difficult time during the early lessons. "We tried every accommodation possible," Ms. Bednarik said. "Walkers, gait trainers, the mom and dad went out on the ice, but still nothing." But during dress rehearsal for the end-of-the-program skating show, the two boys put on their costumes and started skating by themselves. "They were laughing, twirling around, they wouldn't get off the ice," she recalled. "The parents were so thankful."

Katie O'Hara, mother of 5-year-old Jack, was another grateful parent. She wrote Ms. Bednarik and Ms. Wymer after seeing how important the Gliding Stars was for her son: "I was not kidding when I told you how much this program has already changed his

behavior, social skills, communication and focus. No one (teachers at his school) could believe he stayed on the ice longer than ten minutes," she wrote.

Skaters, parents and volunteers all are looking forward to the upcoming season. Ms. Bednarik and Ms. Wymer hope to build on their success with longer sessions, more volunteers, and better outreach.

Having seen the positive impact on the rink and in the community, the Pond owner Elisa Nash is invested, too. "It's a unique program. There's nothing really like this in the area," Ms. Nash said. "I'm excited to see Gliding Stars grow."

Fieldstone Farm

To see what programs like Two Café and Gliding Stars can grow to become, just drive a short distance to Snyder Road in Bainbridge where Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center has been helping people with physical, cognitive and emotional challenges for 39 years.

Fieldstone Farms started in 1978 with just eight riders. For years, instructors borrowed horses and rented time from area barns to lead therapeutic riding lessons until they built their current specialized facility 20

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Photo by Peggy Turbett

Ezra Ellis, 5, on Pilgrim exchanges high-fives with Deborah Dorsey, left and Leslie Kantra after having a good ride during an equine therapy class at Fieldstone Farm.

Continued from page 35

years ago. Today they are one of the largest centers of its kind in the country serving more than 1,200 students a year.

"This is an extraordinarily unique facility," said Dennis Watts as he watched his 11-year-old grandson Josh maneuvering his horse Nick with the help of volunteers during a therapeutic riding session. "I've looked online and corresponded with friends in other states and this is a national treasure."

Josh has been riding for six years and his grandfather has seen him make steady progress in his strength, posture, communication and

confidence level. "It's good to see him proud of the things he's done. You can see he's happy to make these strides. That makes us happy. It affects everybody," Mr. Watts said.

The program has been such a success for Melissa Ellis's son, Ezra, also 5 years old, that the family was able to drop expensive private therapy sessions that Ezra didn't enjoy. "He doesn't think riding horses is therapy," Mrs. Ellis said. "He thinks it's fun."

Ezra and Josh's classmate Noah, 5, has made great strides, too. "My husband would always give Noah rides on his shoulders but have to hold him really tight," explained Noah's mom Sandra Sawastuk. "Then a couple

of weeks ago he gave him a ride and Noah could sit up completely by himself. You could tell just how much strength he had gained. It was exciting to see it," Mrs. Sawastuk said.

Fieldstone Farms has collected countless stories like these over the last four decades while Gliding Stars and the Two Foundation are writing new ones. All three organizations attribute their success to the generous support and forward thinking of the Chagrin Valley community.

"The people of this area really rally behind these organizations," said Maureen Foster, chief development officer of Fieldstone Farm. "They're exceptional." ■



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Reel connections

Chagrin Cinemas' deep community ties

By LAURI GROSS

"In the 1950s, TV was supposed to kill the movies and in the 1980s, home video was supposed to kill the movies," said David Huffman, director of marketing at Cleveland Cinemas, which includes the Chagrin Cinemas in Bainbridge.

Reports of the movies' death are greatly exaggerated and, in fact, the movies are alive and well, he said.

"People really identify their local theater with their hometown. It's where they have formative memories," he added, as he recalled where he first saw the original "Star Wars" movie in his youth. "People make those memories all the time (at movie theaters)."

Mr. Huffman should know. In 2016, he saw 416 movies.

"I've always been a movie person," he said. "I'm fortunate now that part of my job is that I get paid to watch movies." He has a degree in film history, theory and criticism and has been in the movie business for 25 years.

"I literally watch everything," Mr. Huffman said, "from the strangest little foreign films to popcorn Hollywood movies. The new 'War for the Planet of the Apes' is a great movie. I also love a fun bad movie

where they set out to make a good movie but it turns out to be awful," he laughed.

In addition to the Chagrin Cinemas, Cleveland Cinemas manages and/or owns the Cedar Lee Theatre in Cleveland Heights, Capitol Theatre on Cleveland's West Side, Shaker Square Cinemas, Tower City Cinemas, the Apollo Theatre in Oberlin, and one theater in Pittsburgh.

The Chagrin Cinemas opened in 1989 with six screens and later added three more. An annex added an additional five, for a total of 14. Then, a few years ago, they converted the theater to digital but did not convert the 35mm film projectors in the annex so that space remains dormant and the theater is back to nine screens. All the screens are approximately the same size but the theaters differ in how many people they seat. The largest fits about 300 people and the smallest, about 165. Capital improvements are in the works, Mr. Huffman said. As for food, Chagrin Cinemas offers plenty of options for every taste including the very popular caramel corn.

"Concessions sales do drive the business," Mr. Huffman said. "A lot of people don't understand that the studios dictate ticket pricing and also they do get the majority of admission money."

The Chagrin Cinemas' community involvement includes special events such as the \$1 Summer Family Film Series offered

Wednesdays at 10 a.m. in the summer, and a birthday party room. "This is very popular, especially in summer," Mr. Huffman said of the party room. "It's not unusual to have two to four birthday parties every weekend." The package includes seeing a movie and using the party room for cake and presents.

A popular venue, Chagrin Cinemas regularly hosts charitable events including fundraisers for the Cleveland chapter of A Special Wish Foundation and major gatherings for the Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce. "In the lobby, we set up food," Mr. Huffman said. "There is quite a lot of lobby space. Usually we would use an auditorium if there is a speaker."

"We have partnered with different businesses in the neighborhood and people have done hybrid events," Mr. Huffman said, referring particularly to the Golf Dome and mini-golf next door, as well as nearby restaurants. "We always want to get other businesses involved as much as possible."

Once the industry switched to digital format, assistive technologies became much more realistic. These include closed-captioning devices that theater patrons use individually at their seats, and audio descriptions delivered via headphones for blind or low-vision patrons. "As long as the films are encoded with the technology, these will work," said Mr. Huffman, adding that most films are encoded. Chagrin Cinemas recently added

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Photo by Geoff Powers

both these technologies, which are available on request.

Mr. Huffman recommends seeing all genres of movies at the theater but he especially believes certain movies really must be seen there. "Watching comedy at home is not nearly as fun as watching it with a theater full

of people," he said. "With comedy and horror, the shared experience is so much better."

While each movie-goer experiences a film in their individual way, whole communities benefit from people enjoying shared experiences like they do at their neighborhood cinema. ■

Chagrin Cinemas, owned by Cleveland Cinemas, in Bainbridge is a nine-theater venue that also hosts large functions, like the Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce Awards ceremony.

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The Club at Hillbrook includes a 40-room Tudor mansion as well as spaces for events perfect for groups from 50 to 300 people.

Valley venues

Event spaces range from formal to historic

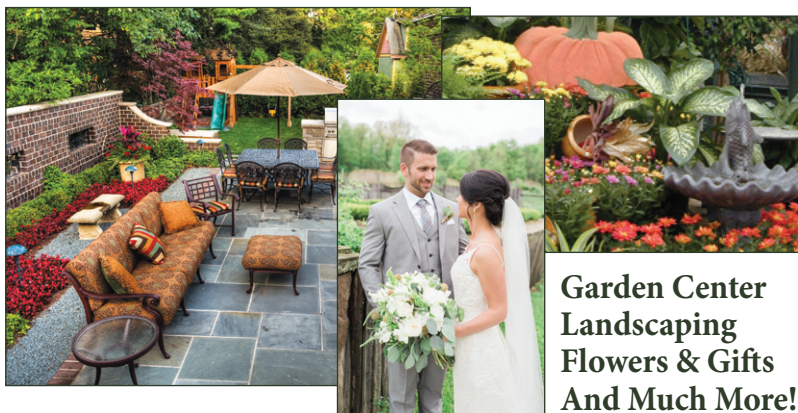
By LAURI GROSS

Planning a large formal wedding, a small corporate event, a child's birthday, a baby shower, class reunion or just about any other event? At Chagrin Valley venues, the options are nearly endless and, together, they present captivating possibilities for the perfect event, no matter what form that may take.

ASM International, formerly known as the American Society for Metals, is a professional organization for materials scientists

and engineers and the group offers unusual spaces for gatherings of up to 25 people indoors, and flexible outdoor space. ASM, located in Russell Township, is known as the home of the world's largest open air geodesic dome. The dome is the focal point of the group's 100-acre campus that also features meeting rooms with scenic views of the dome and grounds.

Kathleen Dangelo, who owns Ohio Valley Group and the new Sapphire Creek Winery and Gardens with her husband, Andy,



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advises people shopping for a venue to consider these options. “What kind of event do you want to have? A sit-down dinner? A buffet? A pre-cocktail hour? Consider the whole way you want your day to unfold,” she said.

Betty MacIver is the rental agent for Township Hall in downtown Chagrin Falls. When someone is considering booking that building for an event, Ms. MacIver tells them, “the Township Hall is right in the village. That is an asset. A lot of people enjoy having their guests be able to walk through town.”

Gina Ranucci, director of special events at the Club at Hillbrook in Russell said, “The key is making the couple feel like anything is possible. We can be flexible to help make their vision come to life.” The Club at Hillbrook is private so the host would need to be sponsored by a Hillbrook member or take advantage of their affordable membership options.

When people visit ThornCreek Winery in Aurora, “the place sells itself,” said General Manager David Walker. “People say it looks so much like a California winery that they feel like they are transported somewhere else. They can’t believe they are in Northeast Ohio.”

Patricia Runion, the general manager of Pine Lake Trout Club in Bainbridge, said the club is popular for “celebrations of life” gatherings, as well as weddings and all other events. “People fall in love with it,” she said. “The majority say the attraction is our rustic ambience and secluded setting. They love the feel of our property and it sells itself. People are amazed that it is here,” she added. Although Pine Lake is a private club, non-members are welcome to use the venue for events, including the cabins on the property.

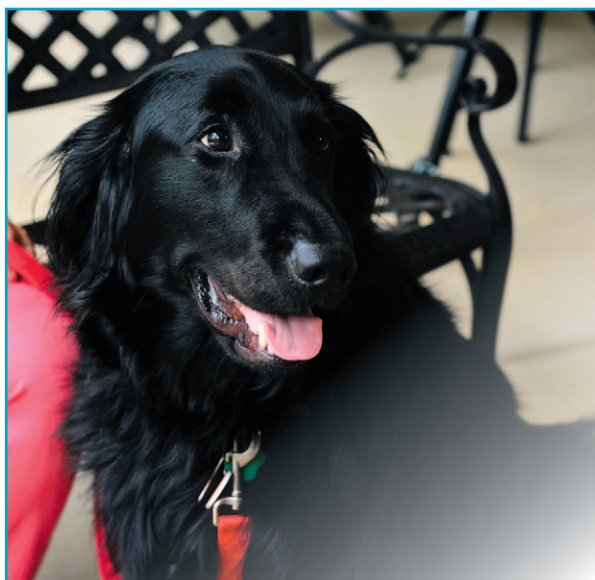
“We have all kinds of vignettes across the (ThornCreek) property,” Mr. Walker added. “We have a tented terrace, a turf area (with artificial turf) with planters and tall trees, a fountain area and a waterfall, two herb gardens and two other gardens.” The tented terrace entertainment space also features a babbling brook and twinkling lights in an area that comfortably accommodates up to 200 people. Inside, ThornCreek offers a casually elegant European-style tasting room and lounge.

“Most couples come to Hillbrook because they want an outdoor/indoor option as well as a rustic feel,” said Ms. Ranucci. “We have an area with a covered patio that offers the same backdrop they would have with an outdoor ceremony.” The Club at Hillbrook offers at least four distinct event spaces which can accommodate 50 to 300 people.

Ms. Ranucci said, “In taking a drive up to Hillbrook you feel like you’re not quite in Northeast Ohio anymore. That, and the



Known as home of the world’s largest open-air geodesic dome, ASM International in Russell, makes for an unusual event venue with striking views. Photo courtesy ASM International.



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Continued on page 42



A babbling brook, waterfall and stone dance floor enhance the ambience for any event in this tented waterfall garden at ThornCreek Winery and Gardens.

Continued from page 41

feeling of the old Tudor mansion; many say they feel like they are in another world.” The Club at Hillbrook also offers seven overnight suites, and a dressing area for bridal parties.

Ms. MacIver said of the Chagrin Falls Township Hall, “The hall is theirs to do what they want. It amazes me what people can do with that space. People walk in and see a vision.” The hall fits 110 people for a seated dinner, or about 200 without tables and chairs.

Expected to open in February of 2018, Sapphire Creek Winery and Gardens is situated on the 14.5-acre site of Ohio Valley Group in Bainbridge. In designing Sapphire Creek, the Dangelos set out to capture the seamless blend of indoor and outdoor spaces popular in the Napa and Sonoma regions of California. The rustic-modern winery features expansive windows, sweeping woodland views and stunning ever-changing gardens.

Sapphire Creek’s flexible design allows the formation of private, intimate spaces, as well as a single wide-open space for 350 people. “The Great Lawn is a perfect spot for the wedding ceremony and before the ceremony, the bridal party can get dressed and enjoy champagne in the Loft while the groom and groomsmen can enjoy the cellar,” said Ms. Dangelo.

No matter where, when or why, unforgettable events and a lifetime of memories are plentiful at these Valley venues. ■



Known as the Lounge Underground, this wine cellar at Thorn Creek Winery and Gardens features steel wine tanks, chandeliers and magnificent vibrant original art for memorable events.



Events at the Chagrin Falls Township Hall make it easy for guests to enjoy a stroll through town.



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Library learning

Local branches offer resources, nurture knowledge

By KRISTA S. KANO

In the Chagrin Valley, libraries are more than just a place to pick up a book. They're clubhouses, lecture halls and forums to exchange ideas. They're hands-on classrooms, resource centers and places to meet old friends and make new ones.

"It's part of the family and it's part of life," said Beth Davidian of Chagrin Falls.

Ms. Davidian, the president of the Friends of the Chagrin Falls Library, grew up going to the local Chagrin Falls library for story hours and movies, and years later, brought her own daughter to the library for the same activities. Now, even as her daughter is grown and studying to become a librarian, Ms. Davidian still spends a great deal of time at the library.

"I see tutoring going on and students meeting to help each other with homework. There are people who are there every day using the free Wi-Fi and computers, and I think they must be running a small business from the library. There are Wii game nights and movies and all kinds of events, especially for kids but also for everybody. There's always something going on," Ms. Davidian said.

The four libraries of the valley – the Chagrin Falls, Gates Mills and Orange branches of the Cuyahoga County Public Library and the Bainbridge Branch of the Geauga County Public Library – are as diverse as the communities they serve and the librarians work to cater to the needs and requests of their patrons.

Chagrin Falls, for example, is an educated community of both retirees and young families who want to be engaged and their library programming reflects that, according to Branch Manager Katherine Malmquist.

For children, they bring in magicians, animals and the Bubble Lady. They host weekly story times, and every year, the branch hosts special kids programs in conjunction with the Chautauqua-in-Chagrin series.

For adults, Ms. Malmquist said, the library

Continued on page 44

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Continued from page 43

branch brings in Dr. Rose Breckinridge from the Cleveland Orchestra to discuss the new pieces the orchestra will perform in the approaching season, and it hosts book clubs and activity groups.

"We want to be a place where people can come and meet and do things together – to be a community resource," said Ms. Malmquist, who also manages the Gates Mills Branch.

"We find that both branches love history for adults. History, music, art and nostalgia. We recently brought in someone to talk about 1960s surf music and that was very popular. People were talking about musicians of the past as if they knew them directly," Ms. Malmquist said.

At the Orange library – serving Orange, Pepper Pike, Moreland Hills, Hunting Valley and Woodmere – it's more about learning.

"In this area, people can find their own entertainment, so the music programs and the pure entertainment programs aren't as popular. Here, people are always looking to learn a new skill or be part of a group that's learning together," Orange Manager Julie Liedtke said.

Ms. Liedtke continued that her branch has been developing a series called "Learn with Lynda," where adults meet to learn how to use Lynda.com – a tutorial program that offers courses in business, technology and creative skills – and help each other learn the new skills. Ms. Liedtke said that the first Learn with Lynda was held this summer and brought in a group of adults who were excited to learn from each other.

Even the children and teens like to learn together, and one of their most popular teen

programs is their SAT/ACT prep programs held every winter and spring. The library also focuses on STEAM programming for its children and teens and works with the Orange School District, located just across the street, to offer robotics and coding courses that piggy back off of what the children have learned in school.

Similarly, the Bainbridge library works with its community to organize programming, according to Branch Manager Eric Coulbourne. In honor of Bainbridge's bicentennial, the library has been working with the Bainbridge Historical Society to offer coinciding programming. The library recently held a cheese evening with Rothenbuhler Cheese of Middlefield to pay homage to one of Bainbridge's early industries. They also have been displaying early Bainbridge artifacts in the showcases. The library has hosted concerts by the Kenston High School jazz band and the Chagrin Valley Herb Society garden maintains the library gardens.

Mr. Coulbourne explained that the Bainbridge library is always working to find creative programs. They recently organized a successful Escape the Room challenge for teens, have had evenings of hand-dipping chocolate, and taken offsite hikes and service projects to go along with their summer reading program. Currently, they're working on organizing a paint class for kid modeled after the popular adult painting courses with wine, often known as Paint and Sip.

"We're calling ours 'Paint and Sippy Cup,'" Mr. Coulbourne said.

He continued that the library is always looking to expand its services, and librarians are constantly trying to anticipate patrons'

needs. For example, Mr. Coulbourne said they're currently researching whether they can sell stamps at the library. And after a patron requested the book "When We're Singin': The Partridge Family and their Music" by Johnny Ray Miller, librarians invited Mr. Miller to speak at the library, after realizing that he was a local author.

"We're always on the lookout for new exciting events that our patrons will love and if they work out, we try to figure out how we can do it again, and how we can do it better," Mr. Coulbourne said. ■

Libraries

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Photos by Michael Johnson

Woodcarver Joe Leonard, below, has a studio in Garrettsville where he creates and restores carousel animals. Mr. Leonard's work can be seen internationally, including at Disneyland Paris.

Carousel carver

Garrettsville artist's wood creations at Disneyland Paris

By VALERI FURST

Many people probably just drive by Joe Leonard's art studio on State Route 88 in Garrettsville without stopping. The signs outside give no indication that inside is the work of an internationally recognized wood carver who specializes in restoring and creating carousel animals. His work can be seen the world over including on the carousel at Disneyland Paris.

As for how it all began, Mr. Leonard, 68, explained, "I started dabbling in woodcarving when I graduated from art school. I mostly made 3-D models for brochures and props for TV but then I joined some carving clubs and someone brought in a carousel horse that needed legs. I got the job which led to more work and eventually a 40-year career."

At first, Mr. Leonard mostly focused on



restoration. Then, during the 1980s, the cost of carousel animals skyrocketed and people could no longer afford to buy one and have it repaired. That's when Mr. Leonard started taking commissions, not just of horses but also menagerie animals such as lions, giraffes and rabbits. Within the carousel animal world he became well known, and that is when Disney came calling.

"It took one and a half years to complete the project which involved making 17 horses

for the Carousel de Lancelot in Disneyland Paris. I did the designing and carving with the assistance of four additional hires because there was no way I could do it alone. Each horse was 7 feet long, six and a half feet wide and 250 pounds. They are the largest carousel horses in the world."

Leonard has carved animals for collectors around the world including those in Japan, France, Singapore, Canada and Lebanon.

Continued on page 51

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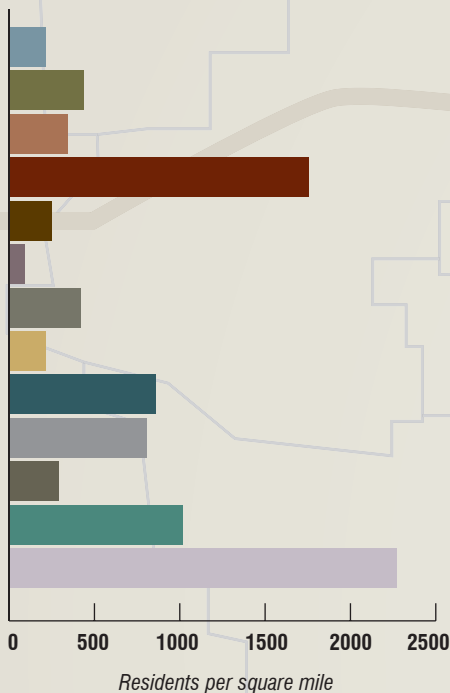
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Profile: The Chagrin Valley

Schools and comfortable living are just two of the reasons so many people decide to live in the Chagrin Valley.

POPULATION DENSITY



KEY:

- Auburn
- Bainbridge
- Bentleyville
- Chagrin Falls
- Gates Mills
- Hunting Valley
- Moreland Hills
- Newbury
- Orange
- Pepper Pike
- Russell
- South Russell
- Woodmere

CHAGRIN VALLEY SCHOOLS

	No. of students in class of 2016	% of graduates college bound
PUBLIC	Chagrin Falls	168 90%
	Kenston	245 92%
	Mayfield	339 90%
	Newbury	49 71%
	Orange	161 98%
	West Geauga	187 86%
PRIVATE	Gilmour Academy, Boarding	115 90%
	Hathaway Brown, All girls, K-12	85 100%
	Hawken, K-12	113 100%
	Laurel School, All Girls, K-12	64 100%
	Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin	169 97%
	University School, all boys, K-12	104 100%

13 communities, 1 valley

The Chagrin Valley is a study in contrasts. It extends from the quarter-square mile community of Woodmere and quaint Village of Chagrin Falls, both packed with upscale stores and lovely homes, to the sprawling countryside of Bainbridge, Russell and beyond. Lush green parks teeming with plant and animal life are true natural jewels of the area cherished and protected by residents.

- KEY:**
- Park territories
 - Non Valley communities
 - Valley community boundaries
 - Rivers, streams and creeks
 - Major roads and highways
 - County boundary

PEPPER PIKE

population of 5,694 | 7.5 sq. miles | established in 1924
 \$382,730 median home cost
 School district: Orange

WOODMERE

population of 746 | 0.33 sq. miles | established in 1944
 \$171,860 median home cost
 School district: Orange

ORANGE

population of 3,259 | 3.82 sq. miles | established in 1929
 \$310,170 median home cost
 School district: Orange

MORELAND HILLS

population of 3,032 | 7.23 sq. miles | established in 1929
 \$393,520 average home cost
 School district: Orange

CHAGRIN FALLS

population of 4,039 | 2.1 sq. miles | established in 1844
 \$244,530 median home cost
 School district: Chagrin Falls

BENTLEYVILLE

population of 889 | 2.6 sq. miles | established in 1829
 \$542,120 median home cost
 School district: Chagrin Falls

GATES MILLS

population of 2,256 | 9.1 sq. miles | established in 1920

- 🏠 \$326,900 median home cost
- 🎓 School district: Mayfield

RUSSELL

population of 5,609 | 19.2 sq. miles | established in 1827

- 🏠 \$213,150 median home cost
- 🎓 School district: West Geauga

HUNTING VALLEY

population of 705 | 8 sq. miles | established in 1924

- 🏠 \$970,300 median home cost
- 🎓 School district: Orange

SOUTH RUSSELL

population of 3,921 | 5 sq. miles | established in 1923

- 🏠 \$284,030 median home cost
- 🎓 School district: Chagrin Falls

AUBURN TOWNSHIP

population of 6,035 | 25 sq. miles | established in 1817

- 🏠 \$266,310 median home cost
- 🎓 School district: Kenston

NEWBURY TOWNSHIP

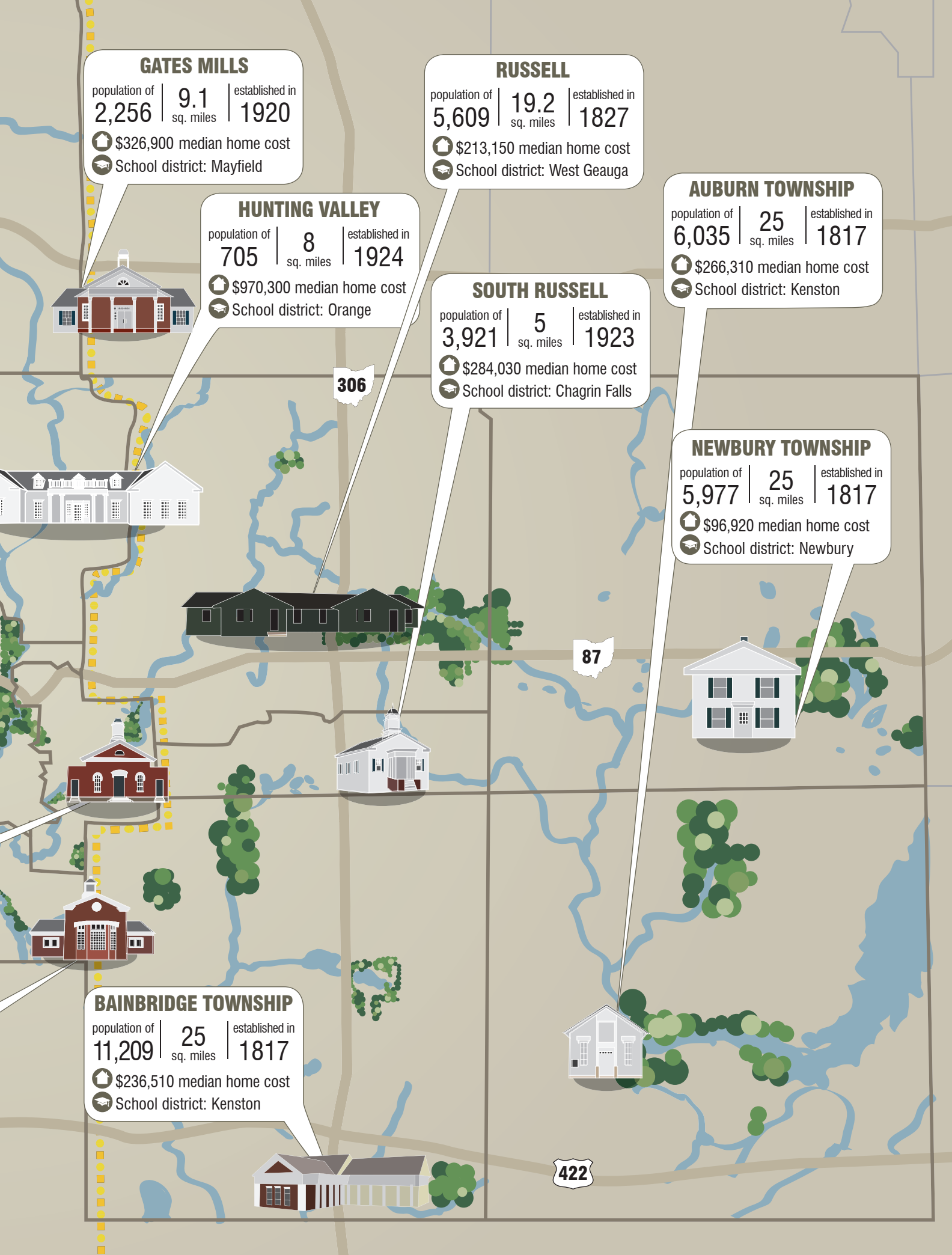
population of 5,977 | 25 sq. miles | established in 1817

- 🏠 \$96,920 median home cost
- 🎓 School district: Newbury

BAINBRIDGE TOWNSHIP

population of 11,209 | 25 sq. miles | established in 1817

- 🏠 \$236,510 median home cost
- 🎓 School district: Kenston





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Continued from page 46

France, Singapore, Canada and Lebanon. Depending on the piece, it can take several months to a year and a half to complete. His most popular commission is a 9-foot armored Pegasus. Mr. Leonard currently is working on the fourth. In addition to the animals, Mr. Leonard does custom work for various churches and contractors and also teaches carving workshops.

"People come from all over the U.S. and Canada to learn or practice the trade. It is great to see that this is not a dying art form. In fact, it seems to be seeing a resurgence with more and more people getting into it."

Mr. Leonard has lived in Garrettsville for 35 years. He and his wife, Liz, who also is an artist, opened their gallery two years ago which is located just a few doors down from their home. They wanted a space that could house their work and also provide a showcase for other artists in the area. Paintings, blown glass, jewelry, pottery and much more is on display from 28 local artists. Yet Mr. Leonard's carousel animals are definitely the center of attention. "There is no room for shortcuts. It is time consuming but I am grateful that people still want it and are willing to spend money for it. The profession chose me. It's what I do and I will probably keep doing it until I drop." ■

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Duty and honor

Veterans' memorials convey feelings of power and peace

By LAURI GROSS

"Almost every community needs to have some remembrance in a physical form of the sacrifice our veterans have made to keep this country free," said Russell Township Trustee Jim Mueller. "It's particularly important to let our young people know and be reminded of their sacrifice."

Considering the number of veterans' memorials throughout the Chagrin Valley, it appears residents agree with Mr. Mueller. In addition to physical memorials, many area townships recognize veterans with parades and cemeteries that honor our fallen.

Russell Township's veterans' memorial is still in the planning stages. The new park board appointed by the trustees has "made that a priority and we are going to try to get it done in the next few years," said Mr. Mueller, who explained that the group has architectural drawings for the memorial that will include flags and an area to engrave the names of Russell residents who died in action. The memorial will likely be located next to the Russell police station.

The Valley's largest and most well-known veterans' memorial is the Geauga County Veterans' Memorial in Claridon Township near University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. Opened in 2009, and eight years in the making, the memorial includes the names of nearly 13,000 veterans from Geau-



Photo courtesy Geauga County Veterans' Service Commission

The Geauga County Veterans' Memorial features a 30-foot obelisk, five giant monoliths and the engraved names of nearly 13,000 veterans.

ga County who served from the Revolutionary War up to the present, engraved on five giant stone monoliths that surround a 30-foot tall obelisk. The space also includes curved walkways and beautiful landscaping for

an overall effect that commands a sense of pride, peace and power, all at the same time.

Like most veterans' memorials, each aspect of the Geauga County Veterans' Memorial is deeply symbolic and deliberate, right down to

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the 22 maples that represent Geauga's townships and municipalities. There are no picnic tables or benches here. Rather, the memorial is intended for visitors to experience the space on their own, although it occasionally does serve as home base for events such as Memorial Day commemorations.

In Heritage Park, on Chillicothe Road in Bainbridge, adjacent to that township's town hall, a veterans' memorial stands as part of a 7-acre space that also includes two baseball fields, two soccer/lacrosse fields, the historic Bissell-Tucek house, a bell-shaped pavilion and an area with flags and benches.

Bainbridge Service Director James Stanek explained that, "There is a flag for each branch of the service and the monument pays tribute to all Bainbridge men and women which have served the country, giving special recognition to those which died in that service."

One bench is dedicated to Flora and Carlton Lowe. Mr. Lowe was a World War I veteran who was the first to bring to the U.S. from Belgium, the tuberous begonia, which is now the official flower of Bainbridge. The other bench pays tribute to the school which used to be on the site and was donated by the Kenston Alumni Association.

Marty Sfiligoj, chairman of the Bainbridge Park Committee explained that the park was dedicated in 2011 and, in addition to hosting youth sports, the site is used for

community concerts at the pavilion, Parks Committee meetings and other events such as Historical Society flea markets.

Newbury Township Veterans' Memorial Park sits on a 3.3-acre site, at the intersection of Routes 44 and 87. The township broke ground on the project in mid-2015 and it is expected to remain a work in progress for a few more years, as fundraising continues. As for the design, "Every element has significance to the whole," said Newbury Trustee Glen Quigley. For instance, each side of the pentagon-shaped gazebo represents one branch of the military. "The five-sided approach is a general theme," Mr. Quigley added. "There will be five native trees that again represent the five branches of service. The landscape will include hedges representative of those in European battles. Grasses will be representative of the Vietnam area. A balance beam will be part of the playground area and, from above, it will spell out WWII," he said.

The playground area will be constructed of hardscape materials with an industrial look and feel. There also will be flags and stone outcroppings or stepping stones reminiscent of cemetery stones one might find at a battle site. A plaque will feature the inscribed names of nearly 700 Newbury residents who have served. As part of Newbury's ongoing bicentennial celebration, a Civil War reenactment is planned at the Veteran's Memorial. Mr.

Quigley also envisions other uses for the park.

"Local churches are welcome to have sunrise services there," he said. "The gazebo and tree-lined area will be a nice place for weddings, and bands can play there." An Eagle Scout candidate plans to build a fire pit at the park that will be used for flag retirement.

Adjacent to the Burton Township Administration Building on Rapids road, is the 38-acre Veterans' Memorial Forest and Park. Originally dedicated to the veterans of WWII, the park was rededicated in 1984 to all those who have served the country in the military. Also, since that time, the memorial has included a flagpole on a stone base that honors the military branches. The park also features a pavilion and playground, as well as four walking trails. Burton Township Trustee Dan Whiting said the trails are dedicated to the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines.

The park is partly in Burton Village and partly in the township. "Adjacent to the park is the Burton Headwaters Park, which is 98 acres," said Mr. Whiting. "On the same grounds, is the Memorial Cemetery, the oldest in the township."

None of these memorials would have been possible without a community commitment and generous support of individuals, non-profit groups and local businesses who recognize that there are those who must always be honored and remembered. ■

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Luxury boutique

Kowall family delivers personal service and quality clothing at Cuffs

By PARIS WOLFE

Zach and Cameron Kowall aren't taking over Cuffs, the luxury clothing retailer started by their parents Rodger and Patty Kowall in downtown Chagrin Falls. A straight-faced Zach said, "The store is taking us over. We're preserving what my mom and dad started."

And, that is more than a boutique that sells handmade or hand-tailored suits and ties of European and American origin as well as classic women's clothing. "We're not just preserving Cuffs, but preserving craftsmanship and a quality way of life," said Zach, the older brother.

Of course, the senior Kowalls aren't retiring anytime soon. A long weekend now and then might keep them off the floor, but they're still logging time with customers.

Together the family is preserving something nearly extinct in a day of fast fashion and online retailing. They're giving consumers a place to experience quality workmanship like hand-sewn buttonholes. And, attentive service informed by personal files kept on regular customers.



Photos by Peggy Turbett

Rodger and Patti Kowall, founders of Cuffs Clothing Company, entrust the daily management of the classic haberdashery to sons Cameron, center, and Zachary, right. The boutique opened in 1981 in downtown Chagrin Falls.

They have an old-world grace and style that starts with a handshake and offer of refreshment – water? Wine? – and continues to opening the car door for a female shopper.

The experience is a bit like visiting a wealthy aunt's home. Inside a converted brick-and-mortar house, small rooms sport vivid vintage Asian rugs. More than 800 silk

ties cover a large snookertable and classic suits in wool, cashmere, silk blends and lightweight summer cotton line up like books in a library. And, like a library, the vibe suggests speaking formally in hushed tones.

Upon entry, one of the Kowalls is ready to guide a shopper to a physical and aesthetic match. They know that finding that "right"

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While Cuffs started in 1981, it has a deeper history. The Chagrin Falls store grew out of Rodger Kowall’s retail career at Bunce Brothers where he built a following. Eventually, his entrepreneurial spirit pushed him to hang a shingle.

Over the years the clientele grew and so did the merchandise. For example, they were the first in the United States to have brands like Polo Ralph Lauren and Hermes. Other brands include Oxxford, Southwick and more.

“Dad was always in the clothing business, but he’s an entrepreneur at heart. Retail sales is in his blood,” said Zach. “It’s in mine too because I grew up with it.”

Graduates of University School in Hunting Valley, Zach and Cameron have degrees from Middlebury College in Vermont. After working outside the family business, they returned to Northeast Ohio to work with mom and dad. Zach is a buyer, sales person and operating officer and Cameron does accounting, shares managerial duties and spends time on the floor.

“Cuffs is still around because we’re all so invested in it,” Zach said. And, that means keeping to a mission of providing a product and service that goes beyond trends like

cuffs or pleats and addresses quality, fit and lifestyle.

“We try to dress a man who’s confident

in his own style,” said Zach. And, he anticipates Cuffs will be filling that need for a long time to come. ■

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Monica Potter Home in Garrettsville was started by the well-known “Parenthood” and “Con Air” actress a little over two years ago. A Cleveland native, Ms. Potter started the store to create jobs and to sell her line of handmade beauty products.

Coming home

Monica Potter’s dream to create jobs becomes a reality in Ohio

By VALERI FURST

Two and a half years after her store opened, Monica Potter is still as passionate as ever about the store in Garrettsville which bears her name. The Cleveland native, who has had starring roles in films such as “Con Air” and “Patch Adams” and on TV in “Parenthood” and “Boston Legal,” decided to open a brick and mortar store to provide a destination for her line of body care products and create jobs. It is an idea that dates back to when she was 10 years old



Photos by Michael Johnson

growing up in Cleveland.

In a phone call from her home in Los Angeles, Ms. Potter explained, “I remember calling (U.S.) Sen. (George) Voinovich’s office and talking to a secretary, telling her I wanted to create a place where people can work, make something and feed their families. It’s a dream that stayed with me so that even when I was living and working in California, I knew I wanted to do something back

home to teach people a skill and find them jobs.”

The store, Monica Potter Home, has a rustic farmhouse feel; the scent of coffee is in the air while candles, soft music and soothing lighting provide an environment of comfort. It contains several items produced by local vendors and artists. Yet, what draws many shoppers from as far away as Italy, are Ms. Potter’s handmade body products.

"I tried so many beauty products and nothing worked. I started mixing different oils and ingredients together and found the simplest ingredients worked best. People asked me what I used for my skin and I would share recipes. I started developing formulas with a chemist. I came up with the idea for a product and we went through thousands of recipes to get it right. Every product has meaning to me."

Ms. Potter's Lavender Mist was used years ago to help her young son get to sleep. The Sea Buckthorn Balm was created because Ms. Potter had eczema growing up and wanted something that could be used for a variety of skin conditions. The balm is

"I knew I wanted to do something back home to teach people a skill and find them jobs."

— Monica Potter

now used by cancer patients to help with radiation burns and surgical scars and has led to a partnership with Cleveland Clinic which plans to sell Ms. Potter's products in their wellness center.

Ms. Potter's next venture will keep her in Los Angeles. She is currently in pre-production for a new drama on CBS, "Wisdom of the Crowd," opposite Jeremy Piven. Yet the business of Monica Potter Home is never far from her mind. Ms. Potter explains "it's personal" and stems from her family and the community where she grew up. She credits her work ethic and entrepreneurship ideals to her parents, Paul and Nancy Brokaw. From her mother, who held a job as a cleaning lady at the Euclid Square Mall, Ms. Potter learned the importance of working hard. From her father, who was an inventor, she learned how it can take a lot of failures to finally achieve success. The store is in Garrettsville because that is where her sister, Jessica Brokaw, lives. Underlying it all is that 10-year-old girl who wanted to create a place where people can learn skills and provide for their families.

"This all started in my home in California. Now there are six full and part-time workers that are based in Cleveland including my chemist and the people working at Monica Potter Home. Creating this business and making it grow has been hard and I have made every mistake possible but my goal is to run the company locally. I believe in the people of this area and am determined to make it work," Ms. Potter said. ■



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Masterful designs

Jeweler takes pride in creating unique pieces

By BARBARA CHRISTIAN

Chagrin Valley shop owner Chad Verhoff proudly tells customers it was an Italian shoemaker who inspired and still informs his one-of-a-kind, customer oriented and personal service motivated Jackson Grey Jewelers.

“My grandfather was the go-to shoemaker in town – Lima, Ohio – and as a kid I would watch how good he was with his customers. He was always in his work apron and that is pretty much me today.”

In fact, family has been an important asset to the jeweler in many ways throughout his 30 years in the industry.

Thirty years working in his chosen career is an astonishing number considering Mr. Verhoff is 44 years old. How that came to pass begins with another family member.

Although she had no idea at the time, it was his mother, a dental hygienist, who set him on his chosen career path.

“I was 14 when my mom took me to a jewelry store, it was my first time, and I was fascinated watching the jewelers. And that was pretty much it for me,”

He credits his businessman father with



Photo by Peggy Turbett

Jackson Grey Jewelers owner Chad Verhoff has been working in the jewelry business for 30 years. The store is named for Mr. Verhoff's two sons, Jackson and Greyson.

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instilling one supremely crucial principle that remains with him today.

"He got me my first paper route, I had to be up and out early seven days a week. He wanted me to have a strong work ethic."

Today, family remains an important part of Jackson Grey Jewelers. He refers to his wife, Lisa Purdy, as "the best partner and friend I could have."

In a very literal sense, the name of the business is a family name. It starts by understanding there is no Jackson Grey. The business was named for two people, the couple's sons Jackson, 8 and Greyson, 5. The corporate name JGJ adds a letter "J" for his daughter Jordyn, 19.

30 years and counting

Mr. Verhoff has earned his three decades in the industry by "watching, learning and doing," collaborating with his customers, keeping promises, making deadlines and creating quality work whether it be a simple repair or an original design jewelry piece.

Although he did not attend a fine arts school, his credentials are impeccable having been trained at the now 86-year-old Gemological Institute of America.

Mr. Verhoff continued his education at the Revere Academy of Jewelry Arts in San Francisco and apprenticed with a European master jeweler in Chicago.

He worked at his trade in Atlanta before returning to Northeast Ohio and positions with Cleveland's legendary Potter and Melan Inc. and Jewelry Arts of Hudson before setting out on his own.

The Verhoffs took their leap of faith three years ago when they opened their three-person, full-service retail, design, repair and restoration business in 1,000 square feet of space at the Gallery boutique mall on East Washington Street in South Russell.

Two years ago, Lauren Baracz came on-board as sales assistant and according to Mr. Verhoff, "our Swiss Army knife" for the multitude of tasks she is learning to do.

The shop is encased in windows, which allow customers and passers-by to see into the retail store, workshop and office areas. There are no secrets. Every phase of the Jackson Grey operation is out in the open for everyone to see.

The feeling of total visibility and accessibility is comforting to the customer, Mr. Verhoff pointed out, and it carries over into the custom design part of the business. Clients are always invited to sit at the bench and watch him work on whatever it is being done for them.

The retail space features all of the items one would expect to find in a jewelry store. There are engagement rings and wedding bands, bracelets and necklaces for special occasion giving.

But he knew going in he could not supply or keep up with an inventory that is so

far reaching if he were to depend on making it all by himself. He solved the supply and demand problem by scouring the country for jewelers and designers who do work in a retail capacity.

He found 26 unique artist/craftspeople, 25 of whom live and work in the U.S. One is Canadian and all are exclusive to Jackson Grey in Ohio. He likes to say his retail price point satisfies a range of \$30 to \$30,000.

Some of the more unique pieces in his inventory right now are lightweight wooden watches made of recycled wood and popular with those buying for an outdoorsman.

The flip side of the inventory includes little girls' first pearl earrings of keepsake quality. On the more exotic side are pieces made of Persian turquoise mined in Turkey at a facility that has a personal connection to the artist.

Jackson Grey carries a line of one-of-a-kind, custom-made silver pendants and charms that can be made from almost any two dimensional image such as a child's drawing or silhouette. For the man hard to buy for there are precious metal flasks and cigar cutters.

Full service philosophy

Mr. Verhoff has the training, experience and capability to perform 200 jeweler-unique skills from stone resetting to redesigning a family heirloom to collaborating with the customer in the creation of a new piece of jewelry that will become a future family heirloom.

Nothing is sent out. Everything brought into the store stays in the store which means neither Mr. Verhoff nor his customers are at the mercy of a third party who may not hold the same standards of promise keeping, deadlines and attention to detail.

That level of service comes from a confluence of his three decades of watching, learning and doing what is required to own and operate a store that can meet the challenge of "whatever comes through the door."

He is, he adds, a solver of problems and he smiles recalling that has included everything from fixing a cane handle and silver boot tips to a gold tooth once brought in for repair.

As for original design work he executes himself, the jeweler recalls two of his favorite pieces. There was an unusual bracelet made of silver combined with horsehair from an adored animal dear to the heart of a customer and equestrian.

A piece of coral from a favorite Florida beach was used to cast a duplicate which became a necklace pendant for a customer who used it to hold the ashes of her late life partner. His ashes had been scattered from the same coral beach.

Technology and computer aided design programs permits him to create designs and lifelike images then share them via email with customers wherever they may be located. They see what they are getting, Mr. Verhoff said.

The fun comes when they pick up the piece in person and see in person what they saw on their computer monitor.

At the end of the day, Mr. Verhoff said it may be old-fashioned thinking in this age of chain stores, but for him the joy of doing business comes in serving the needs of the customer whatever they may be.

"We aren't about spread sheets and profit margins but developing relationships with the people who trust us whether it is a simple repair, purchase of a gift or redesign of a precious keepsake." ■

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Art of estate sales

Expert has eye for hidden treasures

By PARIS WOLFE

As she was preparing an estate sale, Michelle Alexander of Alexander's Estate in Chagrin Falls noticed a distinctive wooden peppermill in the trash bin. A family member had "cleaned up" before calling in Mrs. Alexander to curate, price and manage a sale at the Northeast Ohio home.

Mrs. Alexander was pretty certain the peppermill would sell. So she plucked it from the container and looked closely. It was a hand-crafted teak wood Danish, mid-century peppermill worth more than \$250.

Stories like this are why Mrs. Alexander's expertise is sought after. A home décor specialist for 30 years – including a stint on HGTV – she knows antiques and decorative arts. In fact, she has several degrees from Cleveland State University.

She uses that background to help homeowners sell their life's belongings. As an estate sale manager, the Chagrin Falls resident is often hired to sell home contents when someone is downsizing or has passed away.

The peppermill story informs her first piece of advice: "Don't throw away anything before I arrive."

Grandma's quirky, dated knickknacks just might be collectible porcelain. That simple crystal decanter could be Baccarat and worth far more than \$5. Mrs. Alexander knows.



Photos by Peggy Turbett

Michelle Alexander of Alexander's Estate in Chagrin Falls uses her antique and decorative arts knowledge to run successful estate sales. Mrs. Alexander once found a peppermill in a client's trash bin worth more than \$250.

A powerful marketer with a large mailing list, she can deliver a crowd that will pay. On the flip side, she delivers fine home décor below retail prices for those seeking great value. Her goal is to find the balance point in the secondary market that benefits sellers and buyers.

This isn't like asking a friend to press price stickers on kids' toys and old clothes. In the hierarchy of second-hand, estate sales crown

the pyramid. They're usually comprehensive of household belongings. With Mrs. Alexander's clients they include luxury items ranging from Louis XV chairs to Louis Vuitton purses.

A typical sale starts weeks before the event, when owners or estate executors are at a vulnerable point in their lives. This is when she puts on her "therapist" hat and listens to their stories. Everyone has stories that release their

An advertisement for Dynamic Design. It features a photograph of a brick house with a red roof and green bushes. The text "proud to be your Hometown Printer" is overlaid on the image. The Dynamic Design logo is in the top right corner, and the tagline "Your project. Your printer. Your partner." is below it. At the bottom, the contact information "CHAGRIN FALLS • OHIO • WWW.DYNAMICDES.COM • 440-708-1010" is displayed.

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emotional attachments to belongings. Sharing is part of relationship building. So, Mrs. Alexander listens and listens carefully.

"We have to have like-mindedness. This is collaboration," she explained. She's turned down jobs when she feels her approach won't meet expectations.

In the first meeting she explains why she's the best "divestment specialist" for the job. Estate sales require a diverse skill set and Mrs. Alexander has it – a home decorating background, pricing expertise, merchandising skills, event management experience and marketing know-how.

Her intangible value is her sensitive and graceful personality, according to her business partner and husband Scott Alexander. Mr. Alexander quit his management job to join Mrs. Alexander, when the business grew and needed another manager. Mr. Scott said Mrs. Alexander is the heart of the company. Without her, it's a shell.

When the ink is dry on an agreement, the Al-

exanders and trusted helpers get the sense of an estate. Like well-trained retailers they start by grouping and merchandising similar items. A Gorham crystal decanter and glasses from the living room coffee table might be grouped with Waterford wine glasses from the dining room hutch. The team creates shopping vignettes that buyers unknowingly expect. Put simply, they make things look good.

Curating combined with pricing, can take several days. Mrs. Alexander doesn't just sell a Steinway grand piano. She sells an "1859 Steinway & Sons Art Case Grand Piano with ormolu-mounted mixed woods, Kingwood & Tulip cross bands and parquetry panels, richly ornate with lyre-shaped pedals." (Ormolu refers to a gilding technique.)

This is where her art and décor background pays off. She knows the words to use and she collects the rest by calling Steinway & Sons with the piano's serial number. Using digital media to

share these details and a catalog of photos with a national audience assures this treasure finds an appreciative buyer who will pay a fair price.

Finally, sale day arrives. Mrs. Alexander trades her ponytail, Doc Martins and business T-shirt for elegant attire and becomes hostess and sale facilitator. Because shoppers can be eager, even unruly, she uses common crowd control practices. An hour before sale she places sequentially numbered playing cards in a silver dish at the front door. Early birds draw cards to hold a place in line.

A few minutes before show time, she hands out blue shoe covers and dispenses advice. At one sale she tells shoppers that designer purses and luxury wear are upstairs. She asks them to be gentle with the Pradas and Guccis.

Promptly at 9 a.m. she allows the first 10 folks through the door. After they disperse she welcomes a few more. As some leave, some enter. The flow continues. Mrs. Alexander's mom watches over the expensive women's accessories while Mr. Alexander swipes credit cards and keeps the checkout line moving. Staging employees throughout the house eases the experience for everyone.

Within an hour many small things have sold. "The hardest thing to sell is furniture. There's a huge market for small items," says Alexander. And, that's another reason to keep an entire estate intact until she's identified the most salable items. Remember the peppermill. ■

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Brewing up craft coffee

Photos by Peggy Turbett



Businesses send irresistible aroma wafting through Chagrin Valley

By SUE HOFFMAN

For newlyweds Alyson Kjeldahl and Luke Baker, it takes the right planning, experience, coffee beans, equipment and a good dose of passion to produce an excellent cup of coffee. The owners of Gray Duck Coffee, located a short distance past the Chagrin Valley Roller Rink at 7207 Chagrin Road, put all of those ingredients into the coffee roastery they opened last December.

"We really got into it because of a shared love of coffee," Ms. Kjeldahl, 32, said before heading to their wedding, July 8, at a winery in her home state of Minnesota. "We had a lot to learn about all the different types of coffee and roasting and brewing methods. It's something we're passionate about."

Their experience had started at a coffee house and roastery owned by Mr. Baker's brother and sister-in-law in Park City, Utah. "We had helped them out over the years, and they encouraged us to start the business," said Ms. Kjeldahl, who has worked in marketing. "We had the luxury of learning from people who already went through the process and served as our mentors."

A coffee house like the one in Park City might be included in their future plans. For now, the pair, who met while studying for their master's degrees in business at Cleveland State University, is concentrating on the roastery. "Our first year has gone very well," said Ms. Kjeldahl.

In just several months, Gray Duck, a small batch, specialty coffee roastery, has established retail and wholesale accounts in the Chagrin Valley and throughout the country. Locally, their coffee is sold at Chuck's Fine Wines in Chagrin Falls, Mazzulo's in Bainbridge and ThornCreek Winery in Aurora, among other establishments.

"The Chagrin Valley community has been super supportive," Ms. Kjeldahl said. Gray Duck's online store and subscription-based sales have also flourished, serving customers across the nation. Subscription customers choose the coffee, quantity and the frequency of shipment.

The key to Gray Duck's growth is quality, Ms. Kjeldahl said. "We start by selecting single-origin green (unroasted) coffees from the world's best coffee growing regions. Then we roast to preserve the natural flavors that are unique to each coffee."

Continued on page 64



The Leonard family, from left, Timothy, Wendy and Kaytie, own and operate Tame Rabbit, a coffee shop located in South Russell. Tame Rabbit is just one of many independently owned coffee shops in the Chagrin Valley.

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Continued from page 63

Gray Duck purchases its beans from a specialty coffee importer that buys from coffee farms around the world, she said. "We are constantly rotating the single origin coffees we're offering, so that everyone can try something new. We always try to have a good balance of coffees from Central and South America and Africa. Central and South American coffee tends to be more chocolatey and nutty. African coffees have fruitier, brighter profiles, which are more exotic," she said.

During their honeymoon in Hawaii, the couple toured Kona and Ka'u coffee plantations to develop direct farm relationships for potential purchases.

"We take a very much roast-to-order approach," Ms. Kjeldahl said. Gray Duck uses a small gas drum roaster, in which a cylindrical drum rotates over a gas burner. Ms. Kjeldahl and Mr. Baker place the coffee beans in the drum, which spins over the flame.

The couple focuses on third-wave coffee roasting, in which they strive to maintain the characteristics of each specialty coffee. Third-wave also refers to the evolution of coffee from a mass-produced commodity to better quality coffee, with more direct trade, sustainability, and innovative brew methods, according to Esquire.

"Specialty coffee" refers to the special microclimates that produce beans with unique characteristics, Ric Rhinehart wrote in a 2009 article for the Specialty Coffee Association of America. Producing an excellent cup of coffee involves many actors, he said, from the farmer and miller to the roaster and brewer, with handling by intermediaries as

well. "The first key concept here and through the supply chain, is potential. Until the moment that the roasted coffee is brewed and transformed into a beverage, the concept of a specialty coffee is locked up as a possibility, just a potentially wonderful gustatory experience."

Ms. Kjeldahl reiterated that many important steps are required to achieve an excellent cup of coffee. Gray Duck's role is to select top-notch coffee beans and roast them in a way that maintains their quality, she said. "That's another reason we do small batch. The fresher the coffee, the better the taste will be."

Wake up and smell coffee from around the world

Several locally owned and operated coffee houses have sprung up recently on the Chagrin Valley coffee scene. These specialized cafes feature a wide array of freshly brewed coffee and tea among their other creative offerings.

Coffee lovers may want to try a dry cappuccino with a shot of espresso and foam – a European favorite – at Lemon Falls, 95 N. Main St. in Chagrin Falls village; the "bullet-proof" dark roast coffee at Cultivate, at 524 E. Washington St. in South Russell; a "lavender latte" at Tame Rabbit, 516 E. Washington St. in South Russell; or a variety of teas at any of these establishments.

Like Gray Duck, Tame Rabbit, which opened a couple months ago in the former T Move Studio location, roasts its own coffee beans.

"My mother (Wendy) and I run the shop, and my dad (Timothy Leonard) roasts the coffee," explained Kaytie Leonard, 24. The

family, residing in Moreland Hills, purchases green coffee beans from around the world. While they are continuously trying new beans they currently feature beans from Africa (Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Congo, and Tanzania), Asia (Yemen and Sumatra in Western Asia), South and Central America (Colombia, Costa Rica, and Guatemala), and North America (Kona coffee from Hawaii).

Behind the counter the baristas work with an array of coffee making equipment, from the traditional Italian espresso machine, to Chemex pour-overs and even immersion drip systems for their decaf beans. Each day, the Leonards dial in their beans, accounting for changes in temperature, moisture and more to tweak their selections to assure the perfect taste in each cup of brew and espresso drinks.

"Several of the beans are organic," said Ms. Leonard, a graduate of Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. "We go through different importers, either focusing on fair trade," or other systems that provide even higher compensation to farmers. "That's important to us- where it comes from and how the farmers are being treated.

"We rotate the espresso beans often for variety," Ms. Leonard said. "Customers can also choose from our selection of 13 plus countries for their pour-overs, in order to have an 'around the world' experience. We want people to come in and learn about coffee. We love it and hope everyone does too."

The family calls their beverages a "vacation in a cup." For their customers' enjoyment, Tame Rabbit provides a relaxing atmosphere with cozy décor, books to share, and customer seating options ranging from a former church pew to upholstered sofas and chairs.



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"We brought a little of everything," said Mrs. Leonard, a Perry (Lake County) native who worked as a labor and delivery nurse for 20 years. She met Mr. Leonard in basic training, and the family lived in several places around the world. The couple retired from U.S. Army service after Desert Storm. Mr. Leonard, who is described by his daughter as a "serial entrepreneur," has owned several businesses, including a shoe store, and continues to work in the field of data analytics.

Before opening Tame Rabbit, the couple attended the American Barista and Coffee School in Portland, Oregon and Ms. Leonard took several courses on coffee making.

Ms. Leonard, who had majored in film and English, was working in Austin, Texas when her parents asked her to join them and serve as general manager.

In addition to coffee, the menu includes teas purchased from Inca Tea in Cleveland, iced drinks, juice coolers, and small bites such as honey almond avocado toast, breakfast tacos and an assortment of baked goods.

The family wanted to offer a "third home," besides home and work, to their customers, Ms. Leonard said.

The Chagrin Valley was the perfect place, said Mrs. Leonard, whose fond childhood memories include annual visits to the nearby Chagrin Falls village at Christmas time.

"We love this town," Ms. Leonard said. "People come into the shop and run into people they know, and I love it. I'm learning people's names and becoming part of their life."

Cultivating 'something for everyone'

Set in a "wellness district" in South Russell that includes Chagrin Yoga, Snap Fitness, and other health establishments, the new café Cultivate has responded to the preferences of fitness clientele, and that starts with an excellent cup of coffee or tea.

"We surveyed them to see what they would like," said Kimberly Gibson, who owns Cultivate with her husband Jimmy. "These people love coffee." One of their favorites is the café's "bullet-proof coffee," a dark roast, drip brewed coffee with a shot of MCT oil and "grass-fed" butter. "It's great for anyone in a workout program."

Cultivate opened at the end of last year. All of the café's coffee beans are purchased from Rising Star coffee in Cleveland, a certified kosher roaster importing beans from farmers in Africa, and Central and South America.

Many customers choose their teas, which are purchased from Storehouse Tea of Cleveland, added general manager Heather Stewart, a lifelong Newbury resident who received her barista training in Washington, D.C.

"We do a lot of dirty chai's for custom-

ers. It's chai tea latte with a double shot of espresso. We have brewed iced and hot teas available. Selections sometimes depend on the weather. What's better on a rainy day than ginger turmeric with local honey? On a hot day, many prefer iced mint herbal tea. It's very refreshing."

Beyond the beverages, Cultivate's lunch-dinner menu includes "cultivated bowls" of fresh produce from local farms, certified Angus beef and free range chicken, plus an array of organic, vegetarian and vegan selections. All-day breakfast fare features such popular choices as avocado toast, with sprouted bread topped with avocado, Hima-

layan pink salt, extra virgin olive oil, lemon zest and cracked black pepper; and bowls of steel cut oats, acai or yogurt, with granola, peanut butter and banana, and other combinations. "Cultivate your own" wraps and bowls, bone broth, and assorted smoothies are available throughout the day.

"We wanted to open a café that was fun, a little quirky, a little trendy, with something for everyone," Mrs. Gibson said. Helping to create that atmosphere are the repurposed fishing buckets used as lamps, and shelves from a former chicken coop and church pew.

Continued on page 66

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Continued from page 65

"The old is the new 'new,'" she quipped. Cultivate also features local artwork from a different artist or photographer each month.

"Cultivate is part of a life style change," she said. "It is the wave of the future in fast, casual dining. You eat it here or take it out, and it's ready in minutes. There's a stigma about fast food. We're fast food too, but we're fast food healthy."

The Gibsons, who have two daughters and another on the way, own Hungry Bee catering and retail shop, further east on Washington Street in Bainbridge. They will be the caterers at the Ohio Valley Group's Sapphire Creek Winery now under construction in Bainbridge. "We already have a dozen weddings booked at the winery in 2018," Mrs. Gibson said.

The Gibsons, who reside in Bainbridge, bring much experience to Cultivate. Mrs. Gibson, who grew up in Auburn Township on the McCune Family Apiaries bee farm and graduated from Kenston High School, attended the Culinary Institute in New York on a full scholarship. Mr. Gibson was a chef at Moxie, where the couple met, and Red, the Steakhouse in Beachwood.

"I came back to support this community," Mrs. Gibson said. "If you grew up in Chagrin Falls and don't come back, you want to come back. This is a community that supports its young people and independent business owners."

Lemon Falls turns 6

Another Cleveland-area native, Jim Linhart, moved from Los Angeles to start Lemon Falls Café and Marketplace at the corner of North Main and West Orange streets in



Photo by Peggy Turbett

Jim Linhart, left, and Pablo Montiel moved from Los Angeles to Chagrin Falls to open Lemon Falls Café and Market Place, located at the corner of North Main and West Orange streets.

Chagrin Falls.

"I was in the furniture manufacturing business, and it was time to turn corners once again," Mr. Linhart, a Mentor High School graduate, reminisced. "I had a friend who had a place in L.A. that was successful. I watched her and thought, 'I could do this.'"

Lemon Falls will be 6 years old next January. "Business is better than ever," said Mr. Linhart, whose business partner Pablo Montiel moved to the Cleveland area from L.A. to help start and run the café.

"Of course, I've never worked so hard in my life," Mr. Linhart said. "All of our menu

items are homemade. We use the best, fresh ingredients out there. Everything is bought locally, and we try to use as much as possible that's organic."

Growing up, he said, "We were always in Chagrin," and he wanted to open his business there.

The café, co-owned and managed by Mr. Linhart, Mr. Montiel and their families, features a number of coffee and tea specialties along with an ample selection of breakfast and lunch items. "We also cater, and have take-out food for dinner, including chicken cutlets, lasagna, macaroni and cheese and meatloaf.

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"People come in for coffee, but they also love our breakfasts," Mr. Linhart said. The café bakes its pastries each day. "We offer fresh scones, breakfast wraps, fried egg sandwiches and a Greek yogurt parfait that's beyond delicious." The café's steel cut oatmeal is chopped rather than rolled. "You have to cook it longer, but it has a better texture."

For lunch, customers have a number of salads and sandwiches from which to choose, along with the soup of the day. "Our kale Caesar, served with or without chicken, is our most popular salad," he said. The item combines kale, romaine, chopped egg, parmesan and a light Caesar dressing. Sandwiches range from tarragon chicken salad with grapes and toasted almonds, to a four-cheese panini, and a Maine-style lobster roll.

For coffee, Mr. Linhart said, "We custom (prepare) our drinks to whatever the customer wants. We have a lot of European customers who like a dry cappuccino with a shot of espresso and topped with foam (frothy milk). Others enjoy regular American coffee, as well as cappuccino, latte and mochas.

"Our iced coffees are very popular," Mr. Linhart said. "There's no bitterness and the actual taste of the bean comes through." Many customers enjoy the iced teas, brewed with green, black or ginger peach varieties.

Lemon Falls purchases its coffee beans from Caruso's Coffee in Brecksville, a certified organic and kosher company which roasts coffees separately by origin and type. Caruso's sources Arabica beans from each of the world's major growing regions. The café grinds the coffee just before brewing, and sells it for table consumption, take-out, and by the package.

The restaurant's tea is from Mighty Leaf in California.

Mr. Linhart, a Pepper Pike resident, said he learned to cook from his two grandmothers, and what they taught him was perfect for the café. "Most of what we do is home-style cooking. I've been very lucky." ■

Tips for the perfect cup of coffee at home*:

- Always start with whole bean coffee.
- Keep the coffee beans in a cool, dry place, and consume them within four to six weeks.
- Grind coffee just before brewing using a burr grinder.
- Use the appropriate grind size for the brew method: medium for drip coffee, coarse for French press. Adjust as necessary: Coffee will taste acidic or tart if it's too coarsely ground (under extracted), and bitter if it's too fine (over extracted).
- Use good tasting water for brewing coffee.
- For step-by-step brew guides, visit www.grayduck.coffee.

**Provided by Gray Duck Coffee*

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Visit President James Garfield's birthplace cabin Moreland Hills

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Attend the Chagrin Valley Hunter Jumper Classic – Moreland Hills

See a Community Theatre production – Chagrin Falls, Gates Mills, Orange Village

Shop local Farmers Markets – South Russell and Chagrin Falls

Wow the kids at the new Auburn Community Park playground– Auburn Township

Hop in to local galleries and arts organizations during the Chagrin Valley Arts Hop in May – Chagrin Falls

Take your dog to the Dog Park in Orange Village Park - Orange Village

Watch an outdoor movie during the summer – Orange Village and Pepper Pike

Feed the ducks – Chagrin Falls

Kayak, canoe, paddle board or catch a fish at LaDue Reservoir – Auburn Township

Take a sled ride down the sledding hill in South Chagrin Reservation - Bentleyville

See a documentary at the Chagrin Documentary Film Festival in October – Chagrin Falls

Drive through and see some grand homes and estates – Gates Mills

Listen to street musicians during the Music Crawl in June – Chagrin Falls

Watch a 4th of July Parade and enjoy a community day – Chagrin Falls, Gates Mills

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Hunan owners flow into success

By TONY LANGE

Just like using chopsticks requires the uniform coordination of thumb and fingers, the restaurant success of Hunan by the Falls has thrived on the balance of a three-pronged ownership since it opened 24 years ago on East Washington Street in South Russell.

Executive Chef Kenny Chau, who cultivated his craft in Hong Kong with special training in the siu tsau tradition of steaming and barbecue techniques, puts a certain touch on his dishes that is unmistakable to his audience of fine diners.

Manager Aileen Chin also has a Hong Kong heritage but was introduced to the art of Chinese cuisine during her teenage years living in



Ghana, Africa, before she moved to the U.S. and found her education niche in accounting.

And Marketing Director David Cameron of Orange Village discovered his world of

Balado Shrimp, with hot peppers, Spanish onions, green peas and scallions, has a spicy tomato-based Balado sauce over noodles.

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Gai Lon features Asian leafy broccolini with tofu sautéed in light garlic sauce, at Hunan by the Falls on East Washington Street. The menu was created by co-owners Chef Kenny Chau, Manager Aileen Chin and Marketing Director David Cameron.

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Chinese flavors – or Chinese Dutch flavors – as a 7-year-old living in The Hague, Netherlands, where his father’s company stationed him for a year.

“Well, without (Mr. Chau), life would be different, let’s put it that way,” said Mr. Cameron, who described the co-ownership at Hunan as three unique rivers flowing from separate mountains to converge.

“It takes more than that,” Mr. Cameron said about the talents of Mr. Chau, whom he considers one of the best chefs, if not the best, in the Cleveland area. “It’s like, if your thumb didn’t have any fingers, how well would you do with your hand? If your fingers didn’t have a thumb – I mean, that’s the point. We all came together and did our own special parts.”

The fine taste buds of those in the Chagrin Valley also have made Hunan by the Falls the thriving business it is today. The average person’s taste is about a five or six out of 10, while it takes a 10 out of 10 to be a chef like Mr. Chau, Mr. Cameron said.

While some restaurant goers fall in love with one dish that keeps them coming back time and time again at certain establishments, Hunan by the Falls prides itself in providing a bill of fare that pushes its patrons to be adventurous in each visit, Mrs. Chin said.

Born in Hong Kong during the 1950s, when the city was under British Crown rule, Mrs. Chin said she was sheltered in a protective Chinese family with three brothers, even having a private driver to take her to school. She moved to West Africa when she was 13 years old after her dad accepted a work opportunity as a special textiles technician



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in a primitive Ghana community.

While there wasn't a big Chinese community in Ghana, the chefs from a high-end restaurant came to her house to play mahjong – Chinese dominoes – and teach her family one entree every weekend, she said.

"Our house was just always entertaining," Mrs. Chin said. "Pretty much all the chefs came to my house. I would just sit on the counter (to watch them cook), and then I get to take the first bite. I get to taste the food. So, I observed everything."

Over in the Netherlands as a 7-year-old, meanwhile, Mr. Cameron unlocked his world to egg rolls, chicken chow mein and pork fried rice with a pair of young companions, who would venture to a restaurant across the street following a kids' movie at the American Club. They roamed freely around The Hague, he said.

But, after a year, the Cameron family was back in the U.S. Unfortunately, Mr. Cameron's father was frugal and his family rarely ate out, despite the fact that he often lobbied for Chinese food, he said. In turn, he didn't broaden his palate until he made his own money and learned how to drive.

During his final year at Case Western Reserve University in the mid-1970s, Mr. Cameron had a pair of friends move to New York City who enticed him to travel beyond the "Western" tastes of Chinese food in Northeast Ohio.

The Cantonese delicate nuances of ginger and garlic, as well as the Szechuan flavors brought on by the pungent and spicy heat that that could force a sweat – two worlds apart joined by skilled knife-cut meats and vegetables – made the Chinese culinary genre a special experience in New York, he said.

"So, I learned many new dishes and, in doing so, learned to distinguish and appreciate the many differences and similarities," Mr. Cameron said. "Yet the more I learned, the more I understood that the varieties and possibilities were endless, limited only by the imagination of the region and willingness of the diner. One lifetime is not nearly enough to take it all in."

Meanwhile, after living out her teenage years in Ghana, Mrs. Chin said she was proposed to at the age of 19 in somewhat of an arranged fashion by a man in Hong Kong, where her family would return on vacation each year. With open-minded parents, however, Mrs. Chin decided she wasn't ready to settle down. Instead, she moved to Chicago to join her older brother and attend Northeastern Illinois University to pursue an accounting degree.

In the United States, Mrs. Chin quickly learned the freedom of driving and the value of hard work, she said. Speaking Cantonese with her Hong Kong roots, breaking the dialect barrier of a Taishanese restaurant owner was step one in getting her first job, she said.

"I just walked into a Chinese restaurant, and

I said, 'If you're willing to teach, I'm willing to learn,'" she said. "So, I came to America, worked as a server to make my own living, raised myself through college—I'm very proud. I cried my first time I worked as a server."

After two years in Chicago, Mrs. Chin said she was having too much fun and decided to move to Northeast Ohio to refocus her studies at Cleveland State University. From there, she dabbled in and out of the restaurant business, even convincing her parents to loan her \$20,000, promising to pay it back with interest, in order to buy a share in her friend's startup establishment in Bedford Heights.

She then tested her restaurateur abilities in Coventry and Akron, got bored, went back to school and then got married at age 29. Opening a restaurant was never her top ambition in life, she said.

"Never (did I want to be a restaurateur)," Mrs. Chin said. "I wanted to be a doctor, I wanted to be a lawyer, but restaurants were always at the bottom of my list, except I love to eat."

When she and a friend got back into the restaurant business in a small, 1,500-square-foot establishment in Lyndhurst, Mrs. Chin and her employees would go eat at Chef Chau's restaurant in Chinatown during their days off, she said.

Mr. Cameron said he never thought about going into the restaurant business either.

"It was by accident," he said about hook-

ing up with Mr. Chau. "Basically, I liked following him because he was so good. I would find him, lose him, find him, lose him, because he was cooking all around town."

Mr. Chau's ability to hit the mark with balances of aromatics, "breath of the dragon" wok flavor and orchestration of the subtleties in sauces is concert perfect, Mr. Cameron said. Few have the gene, and fewer have cultivated it into an art, he said.

"He's considered one of the best Chinese cooks in the city," Mr. Cameron said. "When he cooks and he cares, you've never had a better dish."

Mr. Cameron said he convinced Mr. Chau he'd be well-appreciated in the Chagrin Valley, where there was a vacuum of great food, especially Chinese. Mrs. Chin had established a reputation in her own right for her gracious, competent operation in front-of-the-house management, he said.

Mr. Cameron knew how to take care of some of the loose ends, like finding a location, negotiating a lease, interior design – with the help of a good architect and artist – branding, marketing and advertising, he said.

When they converged to open Hunan by the Falls in 1993, Mr. Cameron, Mrs. Chin and Mr. Chau all had a hand in creating the menu, and they made sure not to restrict ingredients in order to fully feature the special talents that can shine when freedom in the kitchen is unleashed. ■



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The Welshfield Inn in Troy Township, built in 1840 as a stage-coach stop between Cleveland and Youngstown, keeps its standards for comfort and classic fare after upgrading by the Driftwood Group. Scott Kuhn added the inn to his Driftwood restaurant group 11 years ago.

Photos by Peggy Turbett

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By MARIE ELIUM

When Scott Kuhn added the Welshfield Inn to his restaurant group 11 years ago, he knew he was acquiring a sprawling, historic building and a Geauga County landmark.

He didn't know he also was getting a restaurant staff that considered Welshfield part of a family – theirs. Mr. Kuhn quickly found that generations of local residents considered the 1840s inn-turned-restaurant a reliable source of employment. When a family member “aged out,” often a younger daughter or son came along to take up as a server or kitchen helper.

Mr. Kuhn happily embraced the tradition. While some restaurant owners say their employees are the centerpiece of their business, at the Welshfield it's not just talk.

“It's a unique set of people who work here,” Mr. Kuhn said. “Everyone here is dedicated to their craft and is dedicated to the restaurant. Two and three generations of family members work here and it's these people that make the restaurant.”

The Welshfield, located on Route 422 in Troy Township employs nearly 60 people, making it one of the area's largest employers. Mr. Kuhn's Driftwood Restaurants and Catering owns six other award-winning and acclaimed Cleveland-area restaurants: 87 West, Bin 216, Washington Place Bistro & Inn, Cibreo Italian Kitchen, Green Rooster Farms and Hodge's. Among them all, the Welshfield Inn stands out not only because of its employees but also – most important for a restaurant – its food. The Welshfield Inn may be out in the middle of almost-nowhere but compared to Mr. Kuhn's other more urban restaurants it has the highest sales revenue among them.

Serving a side of history

Mr. Kuhn and his partner run Driftwood Restaurants and Catering from offices on the Welshfield's second floor. It's a quiet enclave and relatively close to Mr. Kuhn's Portage County home. He has deep ties to the area, graduating from nearby Solon High School. He attended the culinary program at the University of Akron and graduated from



Braised pot roast, with certified angus beef, hand-mashed potatoes and heirloom carrots is a specialty of Chef Stephanie Felicetty, who incorporates locally sourced food in her cuisine at the Welshfield Inn.



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The landmark Welshfield Inn, built in 1840 as a stage coach stop, offers a cozy dining room. The restaurant offers a full-service patio and has a family-oriented staff.

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Malone College, now Malone University.

The Welshfield Inn has had many incarnations during its storied history, and Mr. Kuhn has been careful to retain its charm. The inn was constructed by Alden Nash and was used as a stagecoach stop for travelers making the two-day trip from Youngstown to Cleveland.

Brian and Pauline Holmes bought the inn and restaurant in 1946, making it a destination for diners for more than 45 years.

When Mr. Kuhn bought it, the inn, with its soaring white pillars, broad front porch and massive pine trees, was showing its age. His Driftwood group pumped a substantial amount of money into the building, with much-needed upgrades that secured the



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appealing structure for future generations.

The Welshfield has three large rooms and a separate bar room. Diners can enjoy a cozy table near a fireplace, a booth in the central bar area or a table in a sunlit room overlooking the inn's well-kept gardens. During part of the year, an outdoor patio is open to guests for dining. The patio was ranked in the top five of all Greater Cleveland dining patios in a recent poll.

Mr. Kuhn said he and his staff incorporate locally sourced foods into the menus for the restaurant group. The Mackenzie Salad at the Welshfield uses goat cheese from Hiram's Mackenzie Creamery. Greens and vegetables often come from Maplestar Farm, a certified organic grower in Auburn Township.

Because of its location, Mr. Kuhn understands that the Welshfield Inn is a destination restaurant. People don't stop there on their way to a movie or a play. He knows and appreciates that the historic building and grounds complement the dining experience, along with an accomplished staff.

"After the first couple of years, we realized we had to make some changes or improvements, the old adage you have to spend money to make money. We knew if we could get (diners) here once we'd be able to keep them," Mr. Kuhn said.

Creative menu offerings

The Welshfield offers brunch, and daily lunch and dinner options. Its signature basket of warm bread and sweet rolls set the mood for the homey and hearty fare. Menu items range from a fried bologna sandwich on a Portuguese roll with a fried egg and roasted garlic aioli to braised short rib pot pie, homemade soups and creative salads.

Many of the restaurant's specials have come from employees' suggestions. Diners can order \$6 burgers on Mondays, Thursdays are the two for \$40 dinners, with a shared appetizer, two entrees and a bottle of wine, and Fridays are the always crowd-pleasing, all-you-can-eat beer battered fish dinners, all overseen by Welshfield Inn chef Stephanie Felicetty.

In 2010 the restaurant group bought a former wood-frame church adjacent to the property. The purchase gave Mr. Kuhn an opportunity to expand the Welshfield Inn's catering business. Just beyond the patio garden is a large, tented area for outdoor receptions (heaters take the chill off when necessary), and a walkway to the church for smaller gatherings.

The outdoor reception area accommodates 225 people, and the church another 100 guests. A large tree nearby is a treasured spot for wedding photos, and many couples hold their wedding ceremony outdoors near the tent reception area. The Welshfield hosts about 25 weddings a year. Couples can highlight the casual, country atmosphere or transform the venue into an elegant reception area depending on their choice of lighting and décor.



Seasoned server Katie Perko, takes a young patron's meal choice on the full-service patio, is part of a family-oriented staff at Welshfield Inn in Burton. The Welshfield offers brunch and daily lunch and dinner options.

The church property also has allowed the Welshfield Inn to host their well-attended clam bakes each fall, a Duckhorn Vineyards five-course dinner, and other special events in addition to the regular restaurant business.

With its transition from stagecoach stop to destination restaurant, the Welshfield Inn seems

set for its next century of service to the region.


"The Welshfield Inn just stands out among all of our businesses," Mr. Kuhn said. "You'll get a friendly smile, good consistent food. When you go to the Welshfield Inn you step back in time and I think people appreciate that." ■

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A portrait of Chef Tim Bando, a middle-aged man with a grey beard and mustache, wearing a pink button-down shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a dimly lit restaurant interior with a bar, shelves of bottles, and warm lighting.

After working at various restaurants in Cleveland, New York and Chicago, Chef Tim Bando opened Grove Hill in downtown Chagrin Falls in 2014. The restaurant's name pays homage to the annual Halloween pumpkin roll in the village.

Photos by Peggy Turbett

On a
roll

Chef Tim Bando adds Grove Hill to his successful culinary creations

By PARIS WOLFE

Tim Bando presses his iPhone to his left ear and nudges at a white paper coffee cup on a vintage mahogany desk. An oscillating fan circulates unconditioned air in a tan cement-block basement office. The black desk phone rings urgently. A vendor looks in after dropping off oysters on ice. A bearded, apron-clad cook with an English accent asks how to prepare the octopus for that night.

It's just 1:30 p.m. and Mr. Bando is under siege; his restaurant – Grove Hill in Chagrin Falls – doesn't open for three hours, but he has phone problems and a lot of magic must happen before Happy Hour at 4:30 p.m.

Thus is the glamorous life of a restaurant owner and chef. Mr. Bando opened Grove Hill three years ago in the former Raintree restaurant space behind Yours Truly, on the west side of the plaza and across from Heinen's grocery store. The 150-seat dining room hasn't changed much from its Raintree days – woodwork is lighter, but the stained and beveled glass windows remain. Some of that will change soon if everything goes as planned.

Mr. Bando has an interesting, if unusual, career progression. First, he has no warm, fuzzy grandma/mom stories to tell. And, he spent years in serving and managing, front-of-house positions before moving to the kitchen or back-of-house.

Mr. Bando's career was foreshadowed when he was a junior in high school and started cooking for girls. His first dish? Chicken cacciatore with tomato, onion, green peppers and herbs. An Italian dish was a no-brainer for this teenager with Sicilian heritage.

Both he and the girlfriend were surprised how good it was.

When he decided to pursue food as a career in the 1980s, it wasn't trendy. The Food Network didn't exist and he didn't know about schools like the Culinary Institute of America. So, he enrolled at Kent State University. While there he became a bartender at the iconic Ray's and inched a bit closer to his food future.

Dropping out of college, he continued bartending. It wasn't until the late 1990s that he returned to Kent where, he likes to joke, he is a junior in good standing.

In the meantime, he started bartending at Herb's in Rocky River. Tips were generous



Sautéed rainbow trout pairs with tricolor salad and yellow tomato sauce on the summer menu at Grove Hill, presented by chef and restaurateur Tim Bando in Chagrin Falls.

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A generous pork chop draped with rosemary-mustard peaches and almond couscous was prepared by chef and restaurateur Tim Bando at Grove Hill in Chagrin Falls. The restaurant is located behind Yours Truly restaurant and looks into the shopping plaza parking lot.

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and life was good for a single guy. To up his game he took a server position at another iconic institution Giovanni's in Beachwood.

Scrolling through memories in his head, Mr. Bando names Cleveland restaurant legends that he's worked with. It's hard to keep track of people and places. Carl Quagliata, Michael Symon, Piccolo Mondo, Marlin Kaplin. Cleveland, Chicago, New York. He was a bartender, a server and a manager.

At one point he took a detour through Amish country where a chef/owner Patrick McCafferty was experimenting with farm-to-table before the public embraced it. That was when he decided to move to the back of the house.

"I got the bug and wanted to cook," he said. At 30 he took a position as sous chef at Mr. Symon's Caxton Café. He spent time in kitchens at Moxie, Tutto a Posto and Market Square Bistro. Then, one night he was working the final shift at Theory in Tremont. Drinking with owner Doug Petkovic and a long-time patron he was offered an opportunity to create a restaurant in the Hamptons. The result – The Meeting House – was both financially and creatively rewarding. "We killed it," he reminisced.

That rolled into another opportunity in New York City's West Village, creating a restaurant known ironically as Tremont. The restaurant was a semifinalist for a James Beard Best New Restaurant award and significantly successful.

To keep pace with restaurant life, Mr. Bando and his wife moved from Long Island to Manhattan where real estate was expensive. They downsized to a 500-square-foot

"I got the bug and wanted to cook," he said. At 30 he took a position as sous chef at Mr. Symon's Caxton Café. He spent time in kitchens at Moxie, Tutto a Posto and Market Square Bistro. Then, one night he was working the final shift at Theory in Tremont. Drinking with owner Doug Petkovic and a long-time patron he was offered an opportunity to create a restaurant in the Hamptons. The result – The Meeting House – was both financially and creatively rewarding. "We killed it" he reminisced. — Tim Bando

apartment near the restaurant. With three young children underfoot, everyday life was claustrophobic. So, after much angst, they returned to Northeast Ohio.

Again, Mr. Bando bounced about earning his chops and spreading his expertise. He worked at Crop in Cleveland as well as Deagan's in Lakewood. He helped open Humble Wine Bar in Lakewood and The Standard on East 185th Street in Cleveland.

Then, he had a watershed moment and decided he wanted to work for himself. So, he jumped into the abyss of unemployment. He grabbed gigs with Marigold Catering while re-envisioning his life.

And, that led to Raintree. He knew the

42-year-old restaurant was ready for a transition and he offered to buy it. After some brief cleanup and renovation, he reopened the building as Grove Hill on July 14, 2015.

The name is a playful riff on Chagrin Falls' famed Halloween pumpkin roll down Grove Hill at the north end of town. And, the pumpkin is integrated into the restaurant's logo.

Asked about the future, he expects to continue tweaking the menu like he always has. Otherwise, the restaurant gypsy said, "The future surprises me most of the time, it never ends up where you think it's going to be. I stopped that planning-thing a long time ago." ■

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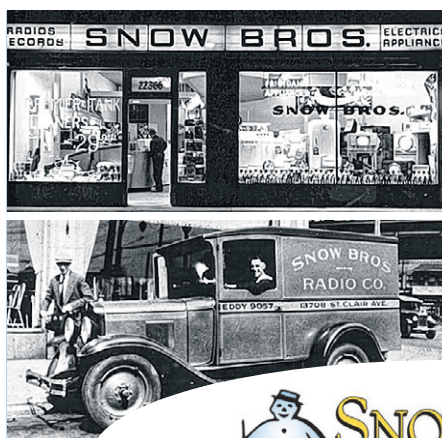
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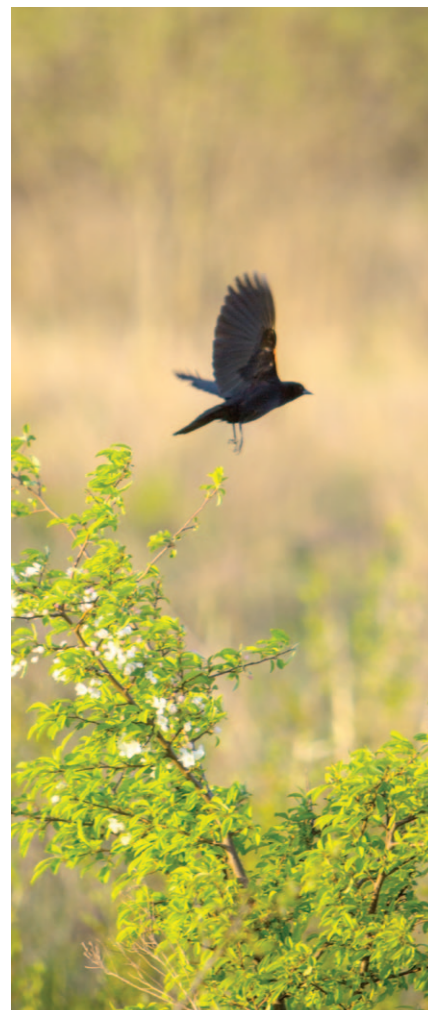
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Barbecue is king at
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By RYAN DENTSCHEFF

Restaurateurs might fear smoke, but that's exactly what Cowboy Food and Drink in Bainbridge is built on.

The hometown barbecue-themed restaurant specializes in smoked meats and focuses on creating a unique flavor and experience for every customer that walks through the door.

"Our philosophy is we believe in great food and great service, and we believe in making things from scratch," said Adam Kleinhenz, regional vice president of operations for Trifecta Management Group, the restaurant owner. "We really want to be that niche in the community that guests are looking for. We want to be that place that the Bainbridge, Chagrin Falls, Solon areas, can call their neighborhood restaurant."

A customer walking through the doors



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The Burger Bomb at Cowboy Food and Drink loads a classic burger with pulled pork, coleslaw barbecue sauce and crispy fried onions at the restaurant in Bainbridge.



at 8586 E. Washington St. are greeted with rustic decor in a spacious and open setting. The large horseshoe-shaped bar stocked with dozens of spirits, beers and wines immediately catches the eye as does the newly installed 150-inch projection screen TV display above a small wooden stage platform at the opposite side of the restaurant. Wood is certainly the decorating material of choice with its natural features giving Cowboy a sense of simplicity and comfort.

Providing comfort is at the center of everything the staff tries to provide, from the atmosphere to the food, Executive Chef Steven Kormanec said.

"To me, our business is completely about treating the locals to the quality that they deserve," he said. "We don't see our customers as just guests. Here at Cowboy, they're neighbors to us. And just like how you would want yourself to be treated well at your neighbor's house, we try to emulate that here.

"Come on in, sit down, have an ice cold beer, have a beautiful slab of ribs, watch whatever sport or local interest event going

Continued on page 84

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Continued from page 83

on, on our 150-inch TV screen, let your kids play some games and relax for a while. Let us do the work, because you deserve a break too.”

The rear corner of the restaurant features arcade games and a pool table.

Cowboy has been serving up barbecue classics for more than 12 years. About nine years ago, Trifecta Management Group, a California-based management company, was hired by the previous restaurant owners to help boost sales and operate the business. A few years later, the original owners wanted to sell the restaurant, and the Golden State business made the buy. Cowboy is a unique location and not part of a chain. It is the only restaurant owned or managed by Trifecta in Northeast Ohio.

To even further enhance the experience of receiving top level food and service, Mr. Kleinhenz said they have spent the past few years improving the audio visuals within the restaurant by adding new HDTVs, and revamping the 300-square-foot outdoor patio. They ditched their old plastic patio furniture and replaced it with eight large picnic tables. The outdoor space also features a bar and a fire pit. Installing new umbrellas and lighting in the space was another part of the patio's recent transformation.

“Because our food and service have always been good, we enhanced the atmosphere. We wanted to create that feeling that you're sitting in your backyard,” Mr. Kleinhenz said. “We want Cowboy to be that place where it's an extension of your home, so we really wanted to make the re-investment in that.”

At the end of the day, the most important reason most customers visit restaurants is for the food. And the staples at Cowboy, Mr. Kleinhenz said, are smoked meats, particularly the ribs, brisket, pulled pork and wings.

Perfecting those meats is Mr. Kormanec, who studied under a national award winning pit master.

“The things he showed me are so easy

A small order of Smoke House Wings in a wet bourbon molasses sauce packs a ton of flavor at Cowboy Food and Drink in Bainbridge.





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once you grasp them,” he said, “but it’s understanding the science of what happens to your meat, vegetables, any product that you put through a smoker. It really boils down to a science.”

Mr. Kormanec said his favorite item on the menu to both eat and cook is definitely the ribs. “They’re slow smoked and each bite comes off of the bone cleanly. The magic of the fat of the pork, the slow smoke, the barbecue rub hand rubbed onto the meat, they’re things you can’t replicate with a machine.”

Another favorite of his, and the most

popular item on the menu, is chicken wings – smoked for more than three hours and never touched by a fryer.

“It’s obscene some of the comments and compliments we receive about our wings,” he said with a laugh. He added that he recommends getting the wings with the sauce on the side for dipping because they’re so good plain with only the dry rubbed spices.

But burgers have a following as well. All of the meat comes to the restaurant fresh, never frozen, and the burgers are then hand-formed on the spot. Just about everything in the restaurant, from the spices to sauces and even the buttermilk ranch is made from scratch at the restaurant.

“We take the time and spend the money on our people rather than pay a manufacturer,” Mr. Kormanec said. “We choose to gainfully employ local folks and put out the best possible product we can and truly put our hearts and souls into every plate.”

Libations also are a draw to Cowboy. The restaurant offers nearly two-dozen beers and a variety of wines, bourbons and other liquor.

“We really want to be the local place, so we make sure we have Great Lakes Dortmunder Gold on tap and we look at other local beers, bourbons and wines that are hot in the market that we can bring in,” he said. “We’re always trying to keep our hand on the pulse of those items to make sure we can get the best product we can that’s in the local market.”

Ultimately, what it comes down to at Cowboy, he said, is continuing to provide the best food and drink selections with the best service and atmosphere they can offer. That has been what has kept the restaurant open for more than a decade and what keeps customers coming back.

With the recent addition of a portable smoker, the restaurant has been taking their smoked classics to the customers, catering local weddings and parties.

“We want to be that place where you know it’s consistent great food and consistent great service,” Mr. Kleinhenz concluded. ■



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Richard Cibik, left, operated Dairy Island on East Washington Street from 1976 to 1990, and now his son Rick Cibik, right, has taken over the business.

All in the family

Photos by Michael Johnson

Cibiks serving up ice cream at Dairy Island for four decades



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By JOAN DEMIRJIAN

The Cibik family has been selling ice cream for 42 years at Dairy Island in Bainbridge. According to their count, an estimated 5 million ice cream desserts have been served over the years.

Now, the family is taking their signature ice cream on the road. Rick Cibik, who worked at Dairy Island as a boy when his parents owned it, is looking forward to selling ice cream and other culinary offerings from a school bus being converted into a food truck.

It is fitting, he said. His father drove a school bus for many years. "Now, I'll be driving one," Mr. Cibik said.

The idea for the Dairy Island bus was inspired by his experience working on an Indian reservation in Arizona where he turned two school buses into party buses. "I was general manager of Fort McDowell Adventures, a tourism enterprise catering to corporate groups," he said. From the bus, they served corporate parties, complete with food and music.

Mr. Cibik saw the school bus in a Twinsburg car lot and bought it. Once converted, the bus, currently parked at Dairy Island on East Washington Street, will be on the go to many special events including private parties and festivals.

He will be working on the vehicle during

the winter months to prepare it for spring of 2018. It will serve ice cream and hot foods. "We will come to you," he said.

Dairy Island's "Create your own Ice Cream" contest has had more than 150 patrons coming up with a host of different flavors over the past months. The most popular flavor won the Flavor of the Year and the creator will receive free ice cream for 2018.

Each week, Dairy Island has spotlighted the flavor of the week. Recently it was "Fire Works." Another flavor submitted was "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," featuring Cracker Jacks, peanuts and hot fudge.

A favorite has been "Cereal Killer" with Froot Loops, Lucky Charms, Captain Crunch and cookie dough. Cookie dough is always popular, Mr. Cibik added.

Mr. Cibik also promoted a high school art contest for students at Kenston and West Geauga high schools working with Kenston fine arts director Todd Malkus. "It was my idea for a mural and his idea for the contest," Mr. Cibik said.

The five winners painted their designs on plywood and the art work is displayed on the walls at Dairy Island, giving patrons the opportunity to enjoy their favorite ice cream while looking over the designs. He plans to include more area schools in the contest in the coming year.

Long family history

Dairy Island has had a long history in the Cibik family. Mr. Cibik's parents Richard and Elaine Cibik, formerly of Solon and now living in Aurora, operated Dairy Island from 1976 to 1990.

"My dad was driving a Wonder Bread truck and found this place for sale," Mr. Cibik said. It was a simple ice cream stand at the time.

It was established and owned by Nick and Dominic Nardi. The original building was constructed in 1958 and the ice cream stand was called the Chagrin Dairy Bar. The Nardi brothers built the miniature golf course behind the ice cream stand and it is still in business today as Fantasy Island Miniature Golf.

Nick and Dominic trained Richard and Elaine Cibik to run the ice cream stand, and the Nardi granddaughters worked for the Cibiks.

For a time the business was a combination of Jake's Restaurant featuring hot food and Dairy Island featuring the ice cream and cold drinks.

Continued on page 88



While Dairy Island on East Washington Street serves cheeseburgers and fries, they're best known for their homemade frozen custard and frozen yogurt.

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Rick Cibik, owner of Dairy Island on East Washington State purchased the business from his brother Jim in April 2017. The business remains in the family and Rick Cibik's son Jake quit a job in Los Angeles to join the Bainbridge team.

Continued from page 87

"My dad expanded the small building and he did the landscaping," Mr. Cibik said. "There was one picnic table out front when they bought the business, and he added the tables and patio."

Mrs. Cibik came up with the signature Turtle Sundae and the E.T. Sundae. Mr.

Cibik recalled how kids would ask for "eyes" on their ice cream cones and they began using candy eyes, a longtime signature touch of the business.

The Cibiks became a part of the community with their customer service and dedication to their patrons. "People liked that," Mr. Cibik said. "Little kids would come and

eventually work for us. My parents turned it into the family business it is."

Mr. Cibik and his brother Jim and sister Julie worked at Dairy Island every summer. At the time, they lived in Parma and would sometimes stay overnight in a camper to avoid the long drive.

He later graduated from Kent State University and was in tourism for the Yavapai Indians 2000 to 2014.

Mr. Cibik returned to Ohio in 2015 and bought the Dairy Island from his brother Jim in April of 2017. Keeping the business in the family made sense, he said.

Today, the Dairy Island menu includes a variety of foods from cheeseburgers and grilled chicken and fresh-cut fries to milk shakes, drinks, homemade frozen custard, frozen yogurt, chocolate-covered bananas and more.

The business is open seven days a week, from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. for six months in the year. There are 21 part-time employees and two full-time workers.

Mr. Cibik noted that his son Jake was in Los Angeles and quit his job to join the team in Bainbridge.

Jake Cibik said he remembers coming every summer to Dairy Island. He noted, "It's hard work and we work 12-hour days," but it is rewarding interacting with patrons. His fiancée Maggie Behrens is featured in a photo on the menu, enjoying an ice cream cone.

"We are appreciative of our longtime customers and the community is like our family," Rick Cibik said.

Sept. 30 is the last day of the Dairy Island season and it will reopen April 1, 2018. ■



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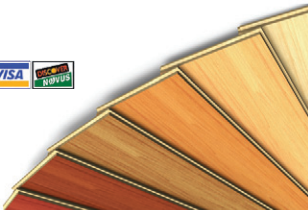
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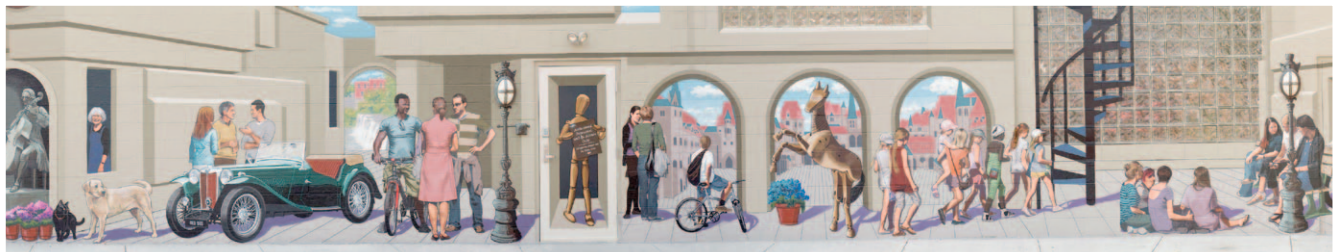
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