

WINK

Magazine

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Bend Me Shape Me

Amy Lee
Yoga
& Wellness

Opens
In Jeff
City!

INSIDE:

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*Yard Love celebrates Life's
Biggest Occasions*

• **Event Horizon**
*B's Custom Occasions:
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• **In Style**
*Jordan Leach shines
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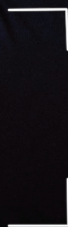
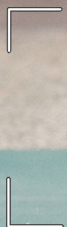


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BEND ME SHAPE ME

Amy Lea Yoga & Wellness opens in Jefferson City

BY DEVEN SALAZAR
WINK STAFF WRITER

Amy Lea Hodges recently opened her brick and mortar yoga studio and is excited for a new journey of bettering lives.

The Amy Lea Yoga & Wellness studio in

downtown Jefferson City opened officially in early March, but Hodges has been teaching in gyms and at home for nine years.

“I was a psychotherapist for many years and began teaching yoga in graduate school over twenty years ago,” Hodges said. “I continued teaching yoga while practicing and I wasn’t



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fulfilled with my job and I really felt my calling was to teach yoga so I worked part time and in 2014 I decided to begin teach yoga full time in the area.”

“I worked at Field of Dreams and National Fitness and taught classes there for a long time. During the pandemic when everything shut down I moved into a home that had space for me to have my own studio.”

“I got that space ready and when we were allowed to, I opened up. Some spaces took longer to invite people back, like gyms, but I didn’t need to draw in a large crowd and my business grew at my house.”

After a few years teaching at her home she found that she could no longer accommodate her growing list of students.

“Luckily I outgrew my home studio so I had to find a place quickly and we found our new location in Downtown Jefferson City which is starting to grow and revitalize, which is amazing,” she said.

Her new studio, located at 102 East Old AJ Highway Suite B in Jefferson City allows her to continue to grow and teach her students to heal their bodies.

“I want to help the community heal and teach



them to make themselves feel better,” Hodges said. “The movement and the stretching allows us to connect the mind with the body so the mind can understand what the body is saying. The body is medicine and I want people to understand that.”

She teaches several different classes that teaches students to connect the mind to the body.

“I teach a variety of classes and styles of yoga but most of my teachings are rooted in the style of Ashtanga (eight limbs), and it’s an older style of

yoga,” Hodges said. “I’m very authentic with what I teach and it leans into slowing down and honoring the body.”

“I want people to learn the importance of restoring before starting to bang it up. You can injure the body before restoring. Your body is your vehicle and I want to teach people to drive it.”

Hodges explained a few different classes she offers at her studio.

“I teach beginner classes which are more foundational classes which teach people the building blocks

of yoga and prepare them for the more advanced classes I offer,” she said.

“My best class for people to take to restore their body is my Yen style. That is where we are propped up on bolsters and we relax the body into a pose appropriately so the body will restore itself and reset the central nervous system.”

She explained how the central nervous system can be overworked by everyday life and how yoga can relieve that stress.

“What is wrong with a lot of people is their central nervous system is overloaded with the news, what’s going on in the world and just life in general. The nervous system just gets over worked a lot with life and this style helps eliminate that stress that people feel,” she said.

Hodges highlighted what her classes look like and the support her students give each other.

“There are men and women in all of our class and of all ages. All equipment is provided if you don’t have your own and we are just a welcoming family,” she said. “That’s what I love about my classes; if someone is new to a class the other students in the class surround them and welcome them and make them feel safe in the environment so they have

the ability to grow.”

“What people will find after their first is class is where their body has resistance and that is very normal and with a little dedication and discipline your body will begin to open.”

Hodges discussed new member discounts and how to maintain membership with her studio.

“Everyone’s first class is free and their second class is \$10 dollars. Then for one-time-only interested participants can buy a package for \$50 which will allow them to attend any class during the month,” she said.

“We will custom make packages for people to fit their schedules and interests. We are very flexible here and want to make yoga more accessible for the community.”

“I do not make people sign contracts, and I never want people to feel pressured to come in. I don’t want them to feel harassed with emails or texts about coming in to take a class. We want them to be welcomed.”

As new students join her classes she wants to ensure they take their own pace with her classes.

“I want people to feel safe to start their journey to better health. This is their journey and no one else’s. They can move as slow or as quickly as they like, there is no pressure to move into an advanced class we want people to go at their own pace.”

Hodges explained the importance and usefulness of practicing yoga regularly.

“Yoga has so many benefits. It leads to better physical health, from lower blood pressure, increased hormone balance and the alignment of the spine,” she said. “We have seen a growth in bone density and it also helps with depression and anxiety. If done correctly there is not one aspect of your life that it won’t improve.”

Hodges has many goals for her yoga studio, but overall she wants people to have a better life.

“My goal for the community is that they are able to take at least one thing from my classes to make their life better and happier,” she said. “I want people to take real self-care and truly working on healing and that will make their arms stronger to hold the people that they love.”

“The breath is the lullaby for the mind which calms the body. Then your life calms, your children’s lives calm, your coworker’s lives calm, your neighbor’s lives calm. It’s just as contagious and panic.”

After many years of working in the industry the growth she sees in her students is what keeps her going.



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“I love the growth that I see in people and when they come to me and say I don’t wake up in pain anymore or that they don’t respond like the used to is what truly keeps me going,” she said. “They were doing it themselves and they created space in their mind, body and spirit.”

She talked about being nervous when she decided to pursue teaching yoga full time, but in the end her experience has been worthwhile.

“When I first began to teach yoga full time it was a big leap and I thought people would think I was crazy for quitting my job and not using a degree that I went to

school for many years to receive, but all those years in school helped me get to where I am now,” she said.

“I love teaching yoga and helping others. I don’t even consider this work. Since I’ve been teaching I never say ‘oh I’m going to work’ I say I’m going to teach a class which is a big difference when you are doing something you love and passionate about.”

“I used to sit back and wait for something bad to happen but I realized you can’t control the future and when you’re doing something you love when the bad times come it’s easier to get through it.”



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SIGN OF THE TIMES

Yard Love celebrates life's big occasions

BY WADE LITTLETON

WINK STAFF WRITER

Nikki Rickard was looking for a business opportunity.

"I had prayed for a long time about opening a coffee and bagel shop," Rickard said. "After much research, (I found out) that was not feasible financially. Then this opportunity became available."

Yard Love is a sign business that celebrates life's events. Whether it's a birthday, wedding anniversary or anything in between, Yard Love can deliver almost any message.

"Since I had previous experience with putting up church signs,

I thought, 'Why not?' I love helping others and we can financially make this work," Rickard said.

Rickard has business in her genes. Her great-grandfather was one of the most successful African-American men in his Kentucky home town, owning a slaughter house, pool hall and land.

"I bought my inventory in January," she said. "My territory covers eight zip codes, including Hamblen, Hawkins and Jefferson counties, but we can go anywhere there is not already a Yard Love affiliate."

Rickard said that those working for Yard Love own their own ter-

ritories independently and get to keep 100% of profits.

Rickard came to Morristown after graduating from Lee-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina. She took a job at Carson-Newman University in 2001. She met her husband Jason at C-N and they are married.

Cost of sign rentals are \$90, including tax, and are set up the evening before the event. Events that can be celebrated include birthdays, welcome home, congratulations, baby showers, graduations and anniversaries. Rickard can be reached at 423-736-8175.

EVENT HORIZON

B's Custom Occasions makes parties to remember

BY MARY CATHERINE ATKINS
WINK WRITER

If you've been to an event or special celebration in Morristown, then chances are you have been to one of B's Custom Occasions' beautifully curated parties.

B's Custom Occasions was started by Brigett Reagan and is done solely out of her home.

From gorgeous balloon arches to hand made sculptures, to monogrammed place cards and everything in between, Bridgette doesn't leave a single detail undone.

Walking into one of her events is an experience and one often has to pause to take in all of the details and magic she has sprinkled in every corner.

Her passion for parties began early in life. She remembers her mom always going above and beyond to ensure she had the best



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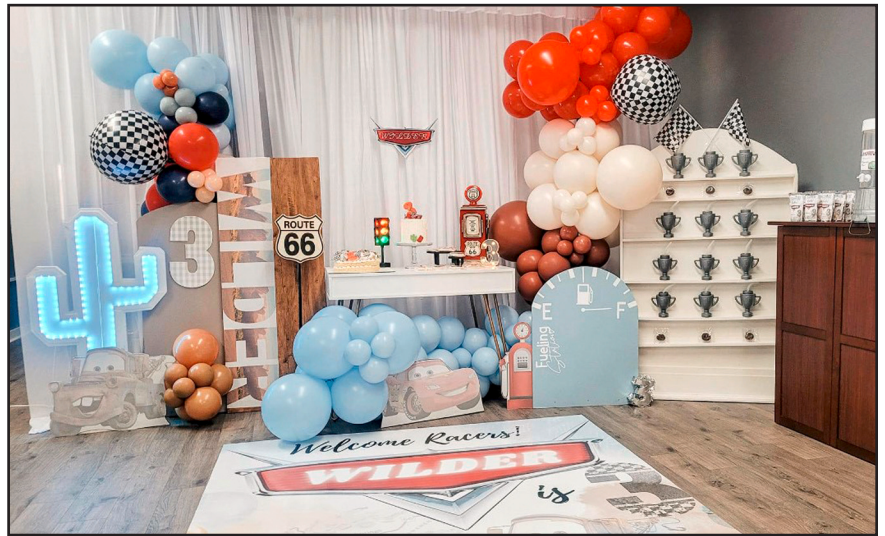
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birthday parties possible growing up. She carried that tradition on to her own children and discovered that not only did she enjoy the entire process from planning to production, but she had a real knack for it.

Planning a party or wedding can be stressful and time consuming, but Bridgett takes on all of the worry so you can enjoy your special day without the added hassle of coordinating. No only is she a talented organizer, but she has a passion for décor, and a keen eye for arrangement, all skills she has put together to form a very successful endeavor that keeps her booked up throughout the



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- May 5 1st "Live on the Lawn" Concert & Night Market
- May 6 Morristown's Art & Bluegrass Festival
- June 2 2nd "Live on the Lawn" Concert & Night Market
- July 7 3rd "Live on the Lawn" Concert & Night Market
- July 28 Family Movie Night on the Lawn
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year.

One thing Bridgett is passionate about as a small business owner, is supporting other small businesses as well. She says this value was instilled early on in life.

"I'm a small-town girl from Grainger County, and growing up we always used to help each other," Bridgett said.

She says not only does it give her joy to know she is supporting another small business, but making those professional connections can be vital.

Cake and cookie bakers, venue owners and more will benefit whenever Bridgett is planning an event, and she always ensures that she gives shout-outs on social media to give credit where credit is due.

When planning weddings, Bridgett takes special care to attend to each bride and listen to their vision and bring it to life.

She keeps her communication lines open and keeps clients abreast every step of the way. She prioritizes the satisfaction of her clients above all

else because she knows how important it is to make happy memories on their special day, and she goes above and beyond to ensure that happens.

She says, "you'll always end up getting more than what you ask for."

B's Custom Occasions has grown over the years and pretty soon she says she will need to expand production out of her home. Bridgett says her ultimate goal would be to find a permanent space that could be all inclusive for production, storage, set-up and party hosting.

events



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IN STYLE

Stylist Jordan Leach shines in role with Cabi Clothing

BY DEVEN SALAZAR
WINK STAFF WRITER

A local Cabi Clothing stylist prepares to bring new clothes to the area for the spring season.

Jordan Leach, who has been a stylist with Cabi for three seasons, is one of only two stylist in the area who will offer Cabi's long line of 2023 spring apparel.

With pieces ranging from dressed to sweaters, Cabi ensures there is something for everyone to enjoy the spring weather, according to Leach.

Cabi was founded in 2001 through the belief that when people are in relationship with each other, they're better whether doing life together, simply helping each other explore our personal style, or building businesses alongside each other.

It believes connections help women step into a place of greater confidence and are able to bring our greatest contributions to others and the world.

The company does this by providing an in home styling experience for women throughout the country.

Behind each piece of Cabi clothing, individuals have



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their own personal Stylist who gets to know them and recommends pieces that truly fit their body and lifestyle.

“What we do is we have a host who throws a party, invites all her friends and we bring in clothes that Cabi has designed and manufactured and we sell those garments right from the comfort of their homes,” Leach said.

A Cabi stylist walks participants through the latest Collection and curates the perfect look for individuals. Her expertise and attention to personal detail will leave all guests styled with the latest fashion.

Typically the hostess

provides the stylist with a guest list and the stylist works diligently to create invitations and invite guests to the party.

Leach encourages anyone interested in purchasing clothes from Cabi to reach out to her.

“No one should be nervous about attending a party because it’s a get-together with some of your closet friends where you can enjoy each other’s company while also shop for some beautiful clothes,” Leach said. “You can visit Cabi’s website to see the full catalogue of the clothing that we sell and you can also enter your location to find a stylist near you.”

“You can also reach out to me directly and I can work with you to find clothes that match your style.”

Leach is a very successful and trusted stylist and that is seen through her recent award, winning the rookie of the season after having the most sales in her experience category.

“There are a few hundred stylist in my sales category so I had the most sales in that division,” Leach said

Leach had been a customer of Cabi for several months before she was encouraged by a stylist to join the team.

“I had bought clothes from Cabi for a long time and I have always loved

the brand, the quality of clothes and the friendships I’ve made through Cabi and their parties,” Leach said. “It wasn’t until my current team lead, who used to be my stylist, was talking to me after a party and said how she thought this would be a really great fit for me.”

“I thought working with Cabi would help me have a more creative side that I enjoy.”

Leach credits the relationships built and the support from the clothing company as the reason she has stayed.

“Cabi is such a wonderful company and is continuing to grow and I have

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just enjoyed being a part of the organization,” Leach said. “I am not originally from Morristown and this has been a great way to form deep relationships with women in the area.”

“I just love how the company supports their stylist, but I also love the relationships I have been able to build through being a part of Cabi.”

Cabi also has other services to help women find the latest and hottest fashion with their Curated by Cabi, and Cabi Tap.

Curated by Cabi is a monthly subscription curated by a stylist with all the styles that fit her budget and the subscription is sent straight to her door.

Cabi Tap is a free app that clients can save and track their favorite pieces and shop on the go.

However, Cabi doesn’t only provide



women with the latest styles, it also gives women the opportunity to help others find what clothes works best for them.

Cabi stylists offer an opportunity to shop Cabi’s seasonal Collection and provide personalized styling ser-

vices to women.

Leach explained how others could join the Cabi brand as a stylist.

“I actually just brought on a team member last season,” Leach said. “She had reached out to me about her desire and I talked her through the process and helped her get in contact with Cabi headquarters and walked her through the application process.”

“Cabi has a lot of flexibility with women who are looking for a full time position but also want to work with Cabi on the side. I encourage anyone interested in joining Cabi to talk with a stylist in their area.”

Cabi is a great way for women to find connections, confidence, in home styling experience.

For more information on Cabi and its products visit its website or email jleach2912@gmail.com

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From left: Katherine Smith (Chief Customer Officer), Kim Ratcliff (Finance and Accounting Manager), Brandy Holland (Business Insurance Team Lead), Christine Gosser (Employee Benefits Team Lead) and Brandi Lane (Family Insurance Team Lead).

THE STRATE PATH

Strate Insurance Group continues legacy of women in leadership roles

Women-led since the beginning, Strate Insurance Group in Morristown utilizes the strengths of its predominantly female leadership staff to guide the company, and its clients, into the future.

Tom Strate started Jack Strate

Agency with his parents, Jack and Agnes Strate, in 1978.

Agnes graduated from Vanderbilt University with a non-traditional degree. She did not major in home economics; she instead studied Business. The achievement was rare: a female earning a four-year business degree in 1952.

Jack and Tom formed the sales force of the small business, while Ag-

nes ensured that payroll and insurance company payments were made. She kept the business running at a healthy pace, according to Katherine Strate Smith, Tom's daughter and the granddaughter of Agnes and Jack.

"My grandfather was very optimistic and extroverted; he was a people person. My grandmother was much more of an introvert and a behind-the-scenes person. Their roles in the

agency were reflective of their personalities and strengths.”

“We’ve had a long history of having women in the business, not only in support roles, but in client-facing and leadership roles,” Katherine said.

The first two non-family employees were Barbara Jarnigan and Gloria Horner. They kept Jack and Tom in line and started the customer service department.

“I remember going to the office as a little girl and sitting with Barbara and Gloria,” said Katherine. “I loved watching them work, and I especially enjoyed listening to them tease my dad and grandfather. Those were great memories.”

Jane Strate Hopson, Katherine’s aunt, was also part of the employee benefits team at the agency for a number of years.

“No business is exclusively men or women,” said Tom Strate, current President and CEO of Strate Insurance Group. “Throughout the years, we have always focused on finding the right balance of talent, knowledge and experience.”

“I’m so proud of our history. We’ve always been an equal opportunity employer, but it is amazing to see so many examples of women who have had meaningful and fruitful careers in our business since day one,” Katherine said.

‘I also could see great examples of women in leadership roles at Strate. They were very well respected and were given opportunities to grow and make a positive impact on the organization.’

Katherine Strate Smith
Chief Customer Officer

WINK had to ask: So, did you ever expect you would work at Strate Insurance Group?

The answer was quick and to the point: “Nope.”

Katherine joined the company in 2018 as a Business Insurance Sales Agent and now serves as Chief Customer Officer overseeing all agency sales, service, and operational functions.

“It helps that I trust my dad. Growing up with him, I always felt respected. I always felt a sense of worth, like I could be anything I wanted to be. I wasn’t pigeon-holed into a certain role or career.

“I’ve spoken to other men and women who work with their fathers, and they don’t have the same experience as I do,” Katherine said. “Tom and I don’t agree on everything, but we complement each other. If we disagree on something and we feel bad about it later, we’re not afraid to

call each other and say ‘I’m sorry.’ We’re really focused on preserving our relationship first and foremost.”

“When I made the decision to come back and work here, I knew that first I had to earn my place in the

company. I also could see great examples of women in leadership roles at Strate. They were very well respected and were given opportunities to grow and make a positive impact on the organization.”

So you found a strong female leadership environment already in place when you arrived on board?

“Absolutely,” she said.

“My dad’s right-hand person for 20 years was a wonderful woman named Tammy McDaniel. She started as a junior account manager and demonstrated an incredible work ethic and desire to learn. She eventually became the VP of Operations. She was so



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Tom Strate and Katherine Strate Smith

objective, so fair, so methodical. The staff trusted her implicitly. She managed and built the agency's operations as well as our IT infrastructure."

With an expanding business comes expanded responsibilities. The Strate Leadership Team now has five members that oversee each discipline of the business: Family Insurance, Business Insurance, Employee Benefits, and Finance and Administration. The Team Leaders, respectively, are Brandi Lane, Brandy Holland, Christine

Gosser, Kim Ratcliff and Katherine.

"Each of our team leaders has worked hard to develop an expertise in their individual disciplines," said Katherine. "We work together to set agency and departmental goals, based on our customers' needs. I am beyond thankful to have a team of smart, fun, talented, and caring leaders who want to develop our staff and do great work for our customers."

Strate Insurance Group is also blessed with the talents and expertise of

Cathy King, a Business Insurance Customer Relationship Manager. "Cathy is an excellent example of someone who has dedicated themselves to learning our business—both from a technical and relationship standpoint," said Katherine. "Her clients love working with her because she is extremely knowledgeable and she knows how to build great customer relationships." This is clearly demonstrated to clients through the many industry designations that Cathy has earned throughout her

professional career, including CPCU, ARM, CIC, AAI, and CPIW.

The strength of Strate Insurance Group comes from its employees.

"We have a very robust hiring process," said Katherine. "We are particular about who we add to our team. Our clients have high standards, and we feel a great responsibility to find team members who can meet and exceed our clients' expectations."

Candidates go through multiple rounds of interviews that can include

scenario roleplaying, a written technical exercise, group interviews, and more.

“We look for folks who exhibit our agency values of Trust, Relationship, Experience, and Knowledge,” said Katherine. “We also want team members who have a growth mindset, meaning they learn from failure, they celebrate the successes of others, they want to keep learning, and they embrace challenges.”

Strate has also had to exhibit a growth mindset in a post-Covid world.

“If it was 2019 and you told me we would have a hybrid work arrangement

with two full-time remote employees, I would have said you were crazy,” said Tom. “COVID taught us we can use new forms of technology to do our jobs, and our high bar for finding team members made us search for candidates outside our backyard.”

Strate Insurance Group currently employs 16 people, two of whom live out of state and work remotely full time.

The company is indebted to the Morristown Area Chamber of Commerce and the Morristown Industrial Board for their work in support of consistent development and progress

in the region over the past 40 years.

“Most of our clients are based here in the Lakeway Area,” Katherine said. “Some of them are headquartered out of town, but they see the value in working with a local advisor. They like to work with a team who will come to their office and meet with them and their employees. As industry in our area has grown, so has our business. We would not be here today if it wasn’t for our customers.”

What makes the Strate team different?

“It all goes back to our values,” Katherine said.

“We want to build trust with our customers by demonstrating our knowledge of our industry and working hard to build genuine relationships with them.”

“We’ve talked a lot this year, just within our team about how we can continue to build on the tradition for forming great relationships. Some of our clients have been with us for over 40 years.

When I walk into our conference room and see the portrait of my grandparents on the wall, I remember their legacy and want to make them proud.”

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