



*at*home™ IN CENTRAL ILLINOIS

SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER
2022

Campus Confidential

UI volleyball coach
Chris Tamas and
wife Jen have built
their 'forever home'
outside Mahomet

A New Purpose

Tolono woman channeled grief over
daughter's death into garden

This One's Just Right

Third house in southwest Champaign
is a charm for Chicago transplants

Barn yarn

Son's wedding transformed old barn
outside DeWitt into events center



\$5.95

news-gazette.com



Spruce up your Windows

*Bold Shades
Simple Blinds
Timeless Shutters*

*Flooring Surfaces is
now your source for
Window Treatments
Custom fit and
installed by design
professionals*



Spruce up your Floors

*Porcelain Floors
Elegant Hardwoods
Decorative Mosaics*

*Flooring Surfaces
brings world fashion
to Central Illinois
With 1 million sqft
of flooring in stock*



FLOORING SURFACES

Has Your Floor Covered

Showroom Open
401 Mercury Drive
Champaign, IL
217.398.1990

www.flooringsurfacesinc.com

TOP LAWYERS

CHAMPAIGN-URBANA AREA

BASED UPON A SURVEY OF THEIR PEERS



These **LEADING LAWYERS** have been recommended by their peers to be among the **TOP LAWYERS** in Illinois.

Delmar K. Banner	Banner Ford LLP	Champaign	217.353.4900	Agriculture; Close/Private Held Bus; RE: Commercial; RE: Finance; Trust/Will/Estate
Chad S. Beckett	Beckett Law Office PC	Urbana	217.328.0263	Class Act/Mass Tort Plaintiff; Close/Private Held; RE: Commercial; Trust/Will/Estate
Muriel Collison	Collison Law Offices Ltd	Champaign	217.751.4878	Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation
John L. Barger	Craig & Craig LLC	Mattoon	217.234.6481	Agriculture; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; RE: Comm; RE: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate
Robert G. Grierson	Craig & Craig LLC	Mattoon	217.234.6481	AG; Bank/Finance Institutions; Close/Private Held; RE: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate
R. Sean Hocking	Craig & Craig LLC	Mattoon	217.234.6481	Personal Injury Defense: General; Products Liability Defense
J. Patrick Lee	Craig & Craig LLC	Mattoon	217.234.6481	Criminal Def: DUI; Criminal Def: Felonies/Misdemeanors; Family; PI Def: General
John F. Watson	Craig & Craig LLC	Mattoon	217.234.6481	Insurance/Insurance Coverage/Reinsurance; Med Mal Defense; PI Defense: General
Bruce L. Bonds	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Employment: Management; Personal Injury Defense: General; Workers' Comp Def
John D. Flodstrom	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Workers' Compensation Defense
Keith E. Fruehling	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Employment: Mgmt; Med Mal Def; PI Def: General; Product Liab Def; Prof'l Mal Def
Joseph K. Guyette	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	PI Def: General; Professional Mal Def: Legal/Tech/Financial; Workers' Comp Defense
Renee L. Monfort	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Health; Medical Malpractice Defense
Michael E. Raub	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Med Mal Def; PI Def: General; Product Liab Def; Prof'l Mal Def: Legal/Tech/Financial
Brian M. Smith	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Civil Rights/Constitutional; Commercial Litigation; Employment: Management
Toney J. Tomaso	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Workers' Compensation Defense
Kenneth R. Torricelli	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	ADR: Personal Injury
Daniel P. Wurl	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Commercial Litigation; Insurance/Insurance Coverage/Reinsurance; Med Mal Defense
James D. Cottrell	James D. Cottrell Law Office	Champaign	217.693.4905	Agriculture; Close/Private Held; Land Use/Zoning; RE: Commercial; Trust/Will/Estate
Larry A. Apfelbaum	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Workers' Compensation
Todd A. Bresney	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1520	Personal Injury: General
Charles N. Edmiston II	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Workers' Compensation
William J. Harrington	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Personal Injury: General
Kathy A. Olivero	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Workers' Compensation
John J. Waldman	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Workers' Compensation
Richard P. Klaus	Klaus LeFebvre & Wince LLP	Champaign	217.337.4700	Civil Appellate; Commercial Litigation; Personal Injury Defense: General
David M. Moss	Moss & Moss PC	Clinton	217.935.8341	Workers' Compensation
Nicholas M. Schiro	Schiro & Themer	Danville	217.443.1721	Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation
Rowan E. Themer	Schiro & Themer	Champaign	217.607.0750	Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation
William A. Peithmann	The Peithmann Law Office	Mahomet	217.586.6102	Agriculture; RE: Commercial; RE: Residential; Tax: Individual; Trust/Will/Estate
Denise Knipp Bates	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Elder; Real Estate: Residential
James D. Green	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Insurance/Insurance Coverage/Reinsurance; Personal Injury Defense: General
Richard R. Harden	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Medical Malpractice Defense; Personal Injury Defense General
Kenneth D. Reifsteck	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Civil Appellate; Workers' Compensation Defense
John M. Sturmanis	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Workers' Compensation Defense
Lott H. Thomas	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Trust/Will/Estate
John T. Wozniak	Wozniak & Associates	Urbana	217.367.1647	Trust/Will/Estate

These **EMERGING LAWYERS** have been identified by their peers to be among the **TOP LAWYERS** in Illinois who are age 40 or younger OR who have been admitted to the practice of law for 10 or fewer years.

Tyler J. Pratt	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Med Mal Def; PI Def: General; Prof'l Mal Def; Transport Def: Aviation/FELA/Maritime
Gina Couri-Cyphers	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Personal Injury: General
Justin N. Brunner	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Civ Rts/Constitution; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Med Mal Def; PI Def: Gen; Prof'l Mal Def
Eric S. Chovanec	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Employment: Management; Labor: Management; Workers' Compensation Defense
Nathan T. Kolb	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Civil Appellate; Insurance/Insur Coverage/Reinsurance; Med Mal Def; PI Def: General

Leading LawyersSM
Find a better lawyer, fasterSM

emerging lawyersSM
on a fast track to the topSM

A lawyer CANNOT buy the distinction of Leading or Emerging Lawyer. The distinction was earned by being among those lawyers most often recommended by their peers. For a full description of our research process, a complete list of all Leading or Emerging Lawyers, and to view profiles of the lawyers listed on this page, go to

www.LeadingLawyers.com

A Division of Law Bulletin Media – est. 1854



24

The piano that concert pianist Brian Murphy practices on is seen from the kitchen of the home he shares with wife Andrea and their three children in southwest Champaign.

Contents

6 **Barn Yarn**

With a push from her son's then-fiancée, Sharon Davis-Devine has turned the family barn outside DeWitt into an event center.

10 **Channeling Her Grief**

After Patty Hicks' 20-year-old daughter was killed in a 2008 car accident, she focused her energy on creating an oasis behind her Tolono home.

16 **Campus Confidential**

UI volleyball coach Chris Tamas and wife Jen have built a retreat outside Mahomet they affectionately

call 'The Puddle' to help them handle the stress of a high-profile life.

24 **Their Goldilocks House**

After two other Champaign homes didn't work out for Chicago transplants Brian and Andrea Murphy, they found one in the city's southwest that was just right.

28 **Brewing Up Something Special**

With fall in full swing, we checked in with three breweries — Blind Pig in Champaign, Riggs Beer Company in Urbana and Triptych in Savoy — to see how they were changing with the seasons.

On our cover

Jen Tamas reads to her daughters in the corner of the great room of their new house outside Mahomet. Photo by Robin Scholz

Find more photos and feature content at [news-gazette.com](https://www.news-gazette.com)

September · October 2022



At Home in Central Illinois won first place in 2020 for best niche publication, and second place for special sections in the Illinois Press Association's Newspapers in Excellence Contests.

**2101 Fox Drive
Champaign, Illinois 61820
217-351-5252**

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
AND PUBLISHER**

Paul M. Barrett
pmbpub@aol.com

**VICE PRESIDENT
OF ADVERTISING**

Mark Lukas
(217) 393-8238

**DIRECTOR OF
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

Jackie Martin
(217) 393-8237

**VICE PRESIDENT
OF NEWS**

Jim Rossow
(217) 393-8261

CONTENT MANAGER

Carolyn Maille-Petersen
camaillepetersen@gmail.com

ART DIRECTOR

Niko Dugan
(217) 393-8253

To order a subscription of At Home Magazine, please contact Bob Ciccone Jr. at (217) 351-5334.

LETTERS

Your input is encouraged. Contact jrossow@news-gazette.com or mail letters to 2101 Fox Drive, Champaign, IL 61820.

At Home in Central Illinois™ is published bi-monthly by Champaign Multimedia Group, LLC., 2101 Fox Drive, Champaign, IL 61820. ©2022 by Champaign Multimedia Group, LLC., all rights reserved. Contents may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher.

Turning over a new leaf



Happy fall, y'all!

Ready or not, the days are getting shorter and the weather is getting wonkier. That's the beauty of life in the Midwest.

There's always a change of weather to keep us on our toes and remind us that our days are unpredictable.

What isn't unpredictable, though, is that we have more lovely homes and gardens to showcase this month, not to mention a new wedding and event venue just in time for the newly engaged to get a peek.

It wouldn't be complete without a food or drink feature, so with Oktoberfest in mind, we talked to three local brewmasters to find out what's on tap now that it's getting cooler outside. Technically, Oktoberfest happens at the end of September — go figure — but it doesn't seem to stop anyone from celebrating throughout the month of October, too. So, for those of you who love your beer, "Prost!"

As for the homes and gardens in this issue, though they are all very different in style and inspiration, they all share a commonality: They are an oasis. Whether located in town or off the beaten path outside Mahomet and Tolono, their owners created them as a place to retreat from the cares of the world.

And that's my wish each time you read an issue of At Home. I hope it carries you away — even for just a moment — from everyday life.

If you are inspired to make a change or do something new, I would love to see what you've done! Email me at camaillepetersen@gmail.com with your home-and-garden projects or food-and-drink feature ideas. I'm all ears.

Cheers,

— Carolyn



University of Illinois volleyball coach Chris Tamas' 8-year-old son, Jimmy, practices piano in the music room created in a nook off the entryway of the new home built by Chris and wife Jen on 40 acres of land they share with two other couples outside Mahomet.

BARN YARN

Have a barn to brag about? Reach out to N-G VP of News Jim Rossow at jrossow@news-gazette.com.

RUSTIC CHARM

Son's wedding provided impetus for family to turn old barn in DeWitt into events center called **Devine Acres**

Story **Kevin Barlow**



Photos **Robin Scholz**

When Sharon Davis-Devine was approached by her son's then-fiancée about having their wedding in their old barn, she was more than a little surprised.

DeWITT

"I thought 'Are you nuts?'" Devine said. "We have lived here for 28 years and it is full of" stuff.

But his fiancée said she loved the way it looked and thought a wedding would be perfect. So she, Davis-Devine's son Nathan and several friends worked for three months to get it in shape.

"This barn was my dream wedding venue when I saw it for the



The sun sets over Devine Acres Red Barn Weddings and Events in rural DeWitt. **INSET:** A stall has been converted to a room where brides can pick out decor.

first time,” Ashley Devine said. “The first time my husband took me here and showed it to me, it was full of stuff and definitely needed some TLC. He thought I was crazy when I said I wanted us to get married in it. But with lots of convincing, work and labor, we turned this into the most beautiful country-wedding venue I could ever have dreamt of.”

By Davis-Devine’s account, her son’s wedding ended up being

beautiful and perfect.

“After that, we thought about all of the work we had done on it and how great it was, and decided to open it up for other couples and events for people to enjoy,” she said.

And thus, Devine Acres Red Barn Weddings and Events at 12589 Pine Road in DeWitt was born.

Three more weddings are planned for this fall, as well as a handful of other events and get-togethers. About 100 people can be seated inside.

"It's a beautiful setting," Davis-Devine said. "We had been here for 28 years and never looked at it like that. It's a huge barn, but we are so happy to have it."

The barn, she estimates, is about 120 years old.

"It was Amish-built, so it was meant to last," she added.

And, Davis-Devine said, it fit in perfectly with her other business. She owns Mamma D's Smokehouse Restaurant and Catering in nearby Weldon, as well as a food truck.

"So we realized that

we could do everything right here and provide a place that is a little bit different," she said. "If you want something fancy, this isn't right for you. But if you want something old fashioned and rustic, this is the place."

While the barn refurbishment is complete, the Devine family is always looking to improve it.

"Every year we have to repaint it because it is so old, the weather just tears the paint right off," she said. "We continue to do some landscaping work and adding a few items to add to the atmosphere, but we like it just because of its history and so we don't want to do too much to ruin that." 




Quality calls for Precision.

Siding • Windows • Walls • Garage doors • Cabinets
Drywall texturing • Epoxy floors & much more!

Precision Painting

Ask how to get your **FREE estimate!**

Thanks for voting us **#1** in the Painting Category
of The People's Choice 2019 awards!

(217) 384-7590
701 West Park Avenue, Champaign, Illinois 61820
whyprecision.com

3003271

*~ 50 Years ~
Stained & Decorative Glass since 1972*



Artist: Marilyn Pollard
marilyngfx@gmail.com

Glass FX 217-359-0048

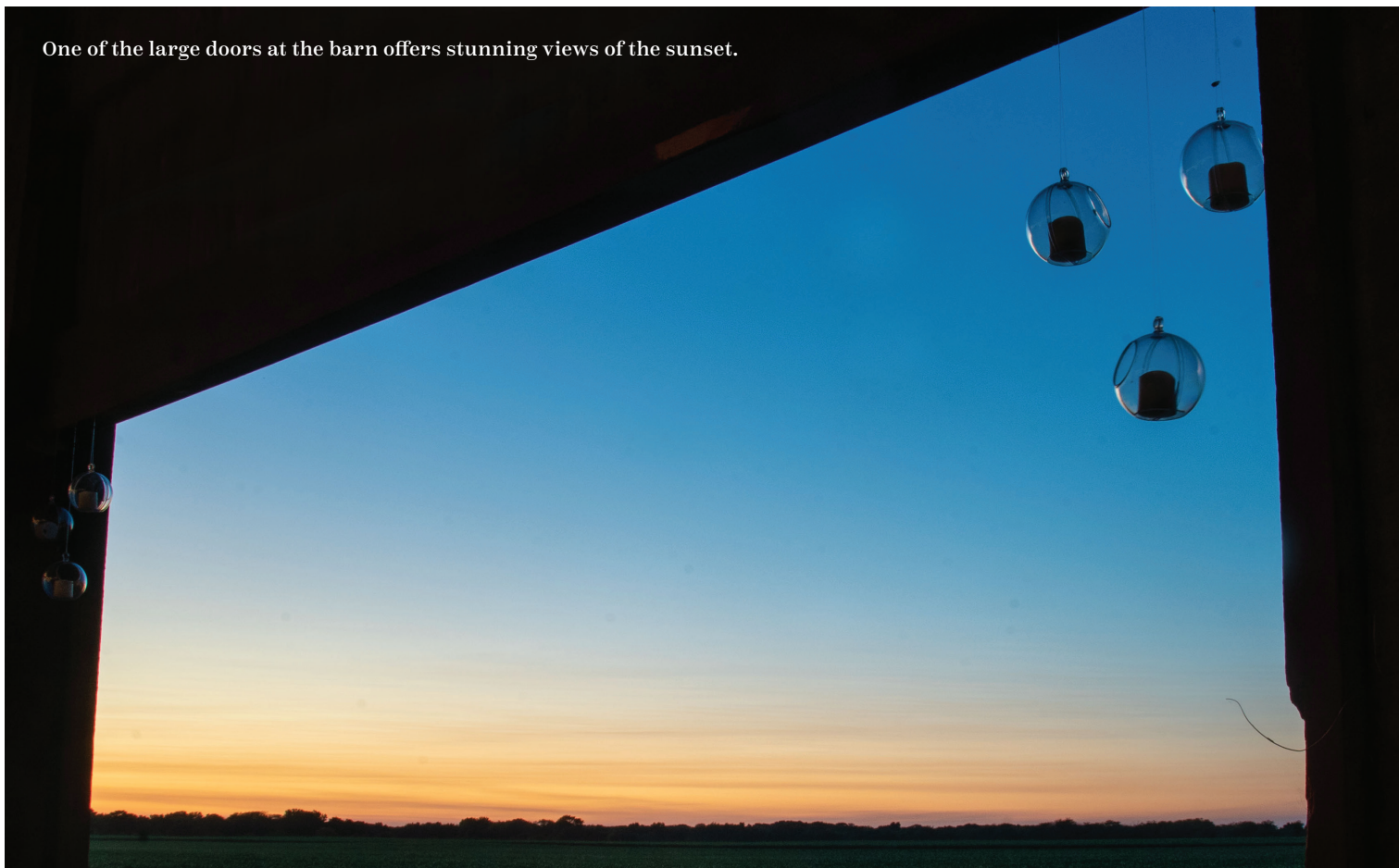
103 E. Clark Street
Champaign



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The main reception area; a sliding door is used as a place for photos; candles and glass decorate the guest area.



One of the large doors at the barn offers stunning views of the sunset.





From GRIEF to GROWTH



Story **Carolyn Maille-Petersen**



Photos **Robin Scholz**

TOLONO

Grief comes out in different ways for different people. ¶ For Patty Hicks, who lost her 20-year-old daughter, Holly Billman, in a 2008 accident caused by a reckless driver, grief grew a garden that has become a source of joy and solace.

Creating a backyard retreat helped Patty work through the pain and anger she felt after her daughter's death. That summer, Patty started digging out a 20-foot-square space in the backyard of the home she shares with husband Mike. The space eventually became a patio, and doing it by hand was very therapeutic.

"While trying to cope and stay strong in front of the rest of my family, I found if I worked in the yard I could cry, talk to myself and work through my feelings," she says.

Her family urged her to hire someone to do the work, but she wanted to do it herself. With no prior experience, she learned as she went, laying down gravel and pavers while leaning on advice from her dad to complete it.



After losing her 20-year-old daughter in a 2008 accident, **Patty Hicks** dug deep — literally — to create a backyard oasis at her home in Tolono

She knew that she also wanted a water feature, but decided that was best left to the professionals. She brought in Chris' Water Gardens in Homer to create a soothing backyard stream next to her patio. The stream is surrounded by rocks of various shapes and sizes, some of which were given to her by friends and family who dug them out of their fields and hauled them to her house.

But that wasn't the end of it.

"Of course, I had to landscape around the stream," she says. She planted a Tiger Eye sumac tree at the top of the stream where water bubbles out of the rocks, along with a mock orange bush, decorative grasses and a variety of perennials, some of which were gifted to her by friends.

"Perennials are wonderful because they come back every year!" she says. "They also bloom at different times of the season, so you always have change."

Currently, she has hostas, hydrangeas, black-eyed Susans, coneflowers, irises, phlox from a start given to her by her grandmother, tickseed, pampas grass, peony bushes, coral bells, sedum, roses and holly bushes, in a nod to her daughter's name.

Don't expect to see the same flowers in the yard every year, though.

"I add, change and rearrange every year," she says. "This year, I added more tulips and lemon cypress bushes."

She also changed the paint color on her metal chairs and painted a picture of a bald eagle on the park bench that sits in another flower bed at the edge of her yard. Last year, the park bench was emblazoned with a monarch butterfly.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A basket of pink and white petunias hangs from the pergola in Patty Hicks' garden in rural Tolono; a collection of old metal chairs from her family that she repainted sit around the fire pit; an old washtub has been repurposed as a planter; eclectic decorations on the garden shed; a sign welcoming weedeers sits on a bench; a decorative rock denotes the location of 'Patty's Patio.'



"It's just too much fun to see what I can create each year," she says.

Other enhancements over the years include opening up the deck by taking down one of the rails and adding steps that span the width of the structure, as well as adding a pergola.

Though Patty was game to make many improvements herself, carpentry was not in her wheelhouse, so she hired Curt Taylor of Taylor Construction. However, she did do the work involved with adding a round gravel seating area behind the patio where she has a fire pit surrounded by her freshly painted metal chairs. She also dug up little pine trees from the cabin her parents, Roger and Sue Salmon, have in southern Illinois, brought them back and planted them around the perimeter of her yard, where they have grown and thrived.

A separate memory garden sits on the opposite side of the patio from her backyard stream, surrounded by angel statues and a decorative concrete bench for quiet contemplation. Within the raised bed is a catalpa tree given to her by a friend, as well as hostas and a few decorative mementos, including a polished black marble stone with Holly's photo on it and a simple white angel on a round stone that was hand-painted by Patty.

"Gardening never really mattered to me before it became my therapy," says Patty. "Now I really love plants and thoroughly enjoy visiting botanical gardens."



She has learned a lot over the years, and her advice to other gardeners is to pay attention to the information that comes with the plant.

"You can't really mess it up," she says. "If you don't like something or it grows too big for the space you have it in, move it!"

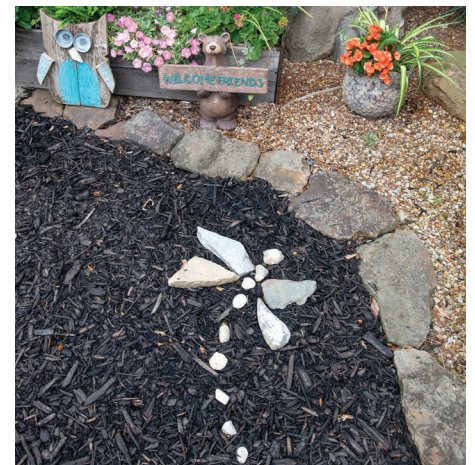
One of the best things about her gardens are the memories she made while creating them, she says, and those she has made in them. It is also a reminder of how thankful she is for the support she received from her family and her community.

"We've celebrated my retirement, holidays and birthday parties and many get-togethers in this wonderful space," she says. "So I'm very proud to have created a space that not only honors my daughter's memory, but is a source of joy for all who gather here." 

TOP: Succulents grow in a log on a table in front of a flower-print couch on the deck.

ABOVE: A water feature in the garden is watched over by a cardinal carved at a covered-bridge festival in Indiana.

BELOW: A dragonfly made of rocks is on display in a mulched area.





Among the eclectic items in Patty Hicks' garden, clockwise from top left: A horseshoe crab; an owl and a praying mantis made from rebar; a pot shaped like blue jeans; a bench with a bald eagle on it; a horseshoe frog; and a metal palm tree.





Our Precision Neuromuscular Massage Therapy doesn't just feel wonderful, it significantly reduces muscular pain and discomfort.

Online scheduling and gift certificates are available.

407 Windsor Road
Champaign
217-351-1011

44 E. Main St., Ste 102
Champaign
217-730-3008

Now also offering sessions at I Hotel



BodyWork
Associates

www.BodyWorkAssociates.com

SERVING CU SINCE 1982



Keep It Spicy with



MICHAELS'

CATERING

217-351-2500

MichaelsCateringEvents.com



The Tamases: From left, Josie, Jen, Jimmy, Chris and Carly.

BALL'S

With a high-profile job at the University of Illinois, Tamases and wife Jen

Story **Carolyn Maille-Petersen** § Photos **Robin Scholz**

MAHOMET

Take a leisurely drive through the countryside past lush green fields of corn and soybeans, and you'll find the family retreat of University of Illinois volleyball coach Chris Tamas and his wife and volunteer assistant coach, Jen.

Hidden down a winding, tree-lined gravel road, their brand-spanking-new coastal-cottage-style home comes into view as visitors emerge from the trees into a circular gravel drive. The front porch, decked out with pumpkins, magenta-and-gold mums and a scattering of muddy kids' boots, welcomes guests and provides a clue to the kind of relaxed lifestyle the Tamases embrace when at home and away from the spotlight.

Chris, Jen and their three children — Jimmy, 8, Josie, 6, and Carly, 4 — moved into their home in mid-May. The interior is finished with the exception of some decorative touches, but the landscaping is still in progress and will be for some time; thus the need for boots when tromping around outdoors.

The two-story, four-bedroom, four-and-a-half-bathroom dwelling built by Premier Homes is located on 40 acres of land they share with two other couples. The decision to build and make the move to a rural setting came about when a friend found a large tract of land for sale north of Mahomet. She sent out a query to their mutual friend group asking if anyone was interested in building along with them, essentially creating their own mini-neighborhood.



White walls and a vaulted ceiling enhance the light, bright feeling created by the floor-to-ceiling windows in the great room at the home of Chris and Jen Tamas. **LEFT:** Jen had the whole main floor, including the entryway, painted in Sherwin-Williams' 'Extra White.'



IN THEIR COURT

*job and growing family, UI volleyball coach **Chris** have built an oasis of serenity outside Mahomet*







The Tamases jumped at the opportunity, as did one other couple. Once complete, the shared property that the families affectionately call “The Puddle” will have three homes connected by pathways and built around a pond that will be aerated, stocked with fish and ready for swimming. There will also be other trails leading to the Sangamon River, Jen says.

When building, the Tamases focused on the beauty of the landscape, which is

full of mature trees. Natural light floods the open floor plan thanks to the floor-to-ceiling windows that stretch across the back side of the main floor, bringing the outdoors inside. The light and bright feeling is enhanced by the white walls and vaulted ceiling in the main living area.

Jen loves white and had the whole main floor painted in Sherwin-Williams’ “Extra White,” with touches of “Boothbay

Grey” in the hallways and “Pale Oak” in the bedrooms.

When deciding on the design of the house, she spent a lot of time browsing Pinterest and Instagram. In particular, she likes the design style of Kelly Rinzema, a lifestyle blogger who has a popular website and Instagram page called “The Lilypad Cottage.” Rinzema’s living room was the inspiration for Jen and Chris’ living and dining room.



Time to Refinance?

Opening doors to
your possibilities.



Mitch Wilson

217.872.7562
217.859.6123

mitch.wilson
@hickorypointbank.com

Loan Originator Identifier: 1718980
Loan Origination Company Identifier: 433956

Contact me for rates

HICKORY 
POINT BANK **Invested.**

HICKORYPOINTBANK.COM

 EQUAL HOUSING LENDER MEMBER FDIC



ABOVE: The kitchen, dining area and family room flow together in a great room.

RIGHT: A cabinet in the kitchen/dining area showcases Jen Tamas' collection of Blue Willow dishware.

BELOW: The backsplash in the kitchen is white subway tile.



To help with design decisions, Jen took screenshots of the Pinterest and Instagram pages she liked.

"I actually printed them out at Walgreens ... and put them in a photo album," she says. "Then I would just turn the pages at night and I would think, like, 'Why do I love this? What about this picture pulls me? Why do I always gravitate to this?'"

After a while, Jen narrowed it down to the 25-30 pictures she liked the most. The hardest decision she had to make though, was choosing a backsplash in the kitchen.

"I was nervous," Jen says. "I just have white, white, white everywhere. And then I'm having to pull the trigger on what the backsplash is going to be."

She toyed with the idea of a contrasting color.

"So, I almost abandoned every picture that I've ever loved in my workbook to going with a more like tan, taupe grey," she says. "But then my girlfriend said, 'But did you forget your love language is (a) bright white kitchen? That's who you are.'"

In the end, Jen chose white subway tile for the backsplash and had to trust that when she brought in her furniture and dishes, she would infuse enough color into their home that it wouldn't look sterile.

"I'm so glad that she kind of pushed me over the edge of 'Stick to your gut, do the white, it's not gonna look like an insane asylum, it will be great,'" Jen says with a laugh.

"I think that if you stick to a bright — like a white or neutral palette — it will survive decades and decades later," she says. "I lived in Europe for 10 years, and the homes in Italy or the homes in Russia — the ones that I would walk into and go, 'Oh wow, I feel like I'm in a really beautiful apartment'" — were the ones that were all white.

"They stuck to the basics there, so I kind of had to force myself to not take too many color risks."

Some key design features in the Tamas home are the board-and-batten walls, the stone fireplace surrounded by built-in bookshelves, the large open kitchen and a second, smaller sink in the kitchen with an instant hot-water faucet that's perfect for a single cup of tea or a bowl of noodles, Jen says.



The Tamases are having a fireplace mantel custom-made from an oak tree on the property that had to be cut down, but in the meantime, they have a temporary one in place.

The kitchen sits near the center of the main floor and includes plenty of seating so they can host the volleyball team, as well as staff and their families.

“The kitchen needed to be a layout where we could put a lot of people and host bigger things, but we also didn’t want to get so big that when we’re empty-nesters we feel like we’re in a huge house,” Jen says. “We still wanted to feel intimate.”

Down the hallway past the kitchen and the dining room is the laundry room, which has a special tiled zone for bathing a dog, as well as a separate mudroom across the hall that leads to the garage and a main-floor powder room. It is also the location of the stairs to their children’s bedrooms on the second floor.

At the end of the hall is the main bedroom suite that features more floor-to-ceiling windows and sliding glass doors leading to the backyard. A short hallway between the bedroom and main bathroom houses a walk-in closet with a small stacking washer and dryer.

The spacious main bathroom



The main bathroom has white octagonal marble and a large tub.

has octagonal white marble flooring and a large freestanding tub that invites its occupant to relax while gazing out the windows at the forest of trees that surrounds the home and shields it from view.

Back at the center of the home, next to the front door, is a piano nook with pocket doors that houses not only an upright piano that all three of their children use to practice, but also Chris’ guitar. Beyond the piano nook and the living room, on the opposite end of the house from the main bedroom, is a guest bedroom and bathroom, also with spectacular natural views.

To offset the white walls and cabinetry, Jen and Chris have filled their home with art. From the six framed, custom-printed maps of places they have lived to the mementos of their time as professional volleyball

players in Europe and Asia, their home showcases the lives they have led thus far.

In the kitchen display cabinets is a hodgepodge collection of Blue Willow dishware that includes some of Chris’ grandmother’s dishes, along with teapots that Jen found secondhand and used for tea time with her two daughters.

“They would have chocolate milk out of a teapot and I would have regular tea,” she says.

The blue-and-white color scheme is central to Jen’s decorating style.

“I love how casual it can be and how fancy it can be,” she says.

Jen is also a fan of toile, chinoiserie and anything with a bird motif, all of which can be spotted throughout

the home on vases, drapery and wallpaper. She has a particularly sentimental grouping of wooden quail figurines on the shelves in her living room that remind her of the quail at her parents’ home in California. She has plans for a “bird wall” eventually, with framed pictures of birds that they see in their yard.

“There’ll be a basket of binoculars and a journal on the table that says, ‘What did you see today?’” she says.

It’s a way to keep her children interacting with nature, she says.

Once the pond fills — all of which is dependent on the rain — they will be able to landscape their backyard, she says. Their plans include a wooden deck that runs the length of the back of the house, with a step down to a tier filled with natural grasses, followed by another tier filled with perennial wildflowers, and below that, the pond.

The Tamases have moved a lot in pursuit of their dreams and enjoyed the many places they have lived, Jen says, but they are ready to stop moving and settle down. They love the quality of life in central Illinois and the laid-back pace.

“It’s just an incredible place to raise kids,” Jen says. “We want to stay here for life if everybody will have us. We love the people here.”



The laundry room, above, has a special zone, left, with a tiled area for bathing a dog and a dog door.

Thank you for voting us as the top pool building and service company in the 2022 People's Choice Awards!

Your Expert Pool Builder and Pool Remodel Company



imperial POOLS

turning your backyard into something extraordinary

Build Your Pool

Pool Service and Repair

Pool Renovation



We are grateful for our many happy clients who have trusted us for years. Thank you!

Ask About The Salt Water Pool Alternative You Will Love

217-586-4400 imperialpoolsinc.com

CHANGE of PI

Thrown a couple of curveballs with their first two homes, **Andrea and Brian Murphy** found their perfect fit in south



PLANS

, Chicago transplants
thwest Champaign



Story **Kevin Barlow**



Photos **Robin Scholz**

CHAMPAIGN

Andrea and Brian Murphy were packed up and ready to make the move to their nearly complete home in Champaign in 2018, but things got off to a rocky start for the Chicago transplants.

"Everything went left the week we moved here," Andrea says. "So, we had to make other plans."

The house they were building didn't work out, which meant having to quickly find another place to live. Luckily, they found and bought an older home on Church Street.

"It was about 100 years old," Andrea says.

And though they loved the home, they discovered that it couldn't be renovated to fit the needs of their growing family, so they began to look again.

They finally found a property on Peifer Lane in southwest Champaign.

"It had been vacant for more than two years," Andrea says. "We kept asking why. 'Was there anything wrong with it? Why hasn't it sold?'"



LEFT: The living-room area as seen from above at the Murphy home on Peifer Lane in southwest Champaign.

ABOVE: Sleeping buddies hang out on one of the boys' beds.



ABOVE: The Murphys turned an open area on the second story of their home into a seating area.

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: The spacious kitchen; a music/reading room where Brian Murphy, a concert pianist, practices; the bedroom of eldest child Max.

The only answer that real-estate agents could find was that the house was “too finished.”

The couple asked for an explanation.

“The basement is too finished, and that meant that there was not much storage downstairs to put your stuff that you aren’t using,” Andrea says. “We came from Chicago, and so that is the opposite of what an issue there would be. So we didn’t see that as a problem at all.”

The Murphys bought it and moved in to the house in the first week of December 2019.

“We had the cabinets painted as a temporary fix ... and we ended up hosting our whole entire family for Christmas,” Andrea says.

Three months later, the pandemic hit, and that “too finished” basement came in handy.

“For home-schooling, it was perfect,” she adds. “It gave us plenty of room.”

With separate rooms for art, indoor play and movie viewing, it is perfect for the Murphys and their three children: Maximus, 10, Charles, 8, and Olive, 21 months.

Over the years, the Murphys have made a variety of improvements to the home.

“We brought some life into a property that had sat for two years,” she says.

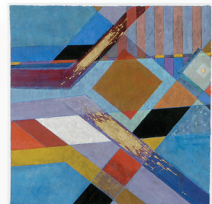
They had a treehouse for the kids and a stand-alone office built for Brian at their Church Street home, so when they moved, they brought those two structures along. They also installed an in-ground pool and set up Brian’s office next to it. His office, which has electricity, air conditioning and heating, could be converted to a poolhouse if they ever decided to sell.



Art – the ultimate finishing touch!



Victor Wang



Glenn Bradshaw



Mata Ortiz



120 W. Main Street Urbana • 217-384-2253
Open 10am-5pm Wednesday - Saturday • Cinemagallery.cc



Inside their home, they refinished the floors, painted everything, installed all-new lighting throughout, changed the bathroom cabinets and added wainscoting in the living room.

There is also a dedicated music room for Brian, who is a concert pianist, although his full-time job is as a technology sales-force consultant.

"We have two pianos in here" Andrea says, adding it's one of her favorite rooms because it's where they gather for the holidays and have their library of books on the built-in shelves. "It's where we sing, it's where we read. It's where we cozy up, especially during Christmas time."

And there is the art, too.

"We have a couple of Dr. Seuss originals," she says. "Those are special to us."

When reflecting on the changes they have made to their home, Andrea began to realize a pattern.

"I really love the traditional," she says.

From arched doorways to built-in bookcases and wainscoting, she likes the kind of details you can find in older homes. She also prefers defined rooms.

"Every room in this home is used," she says. "Every room is purposeful."

It gives her the feeling of a "cozy blanket."

And while the Murphys enjoy their home, they also fell in love with the community.

"It is slower than Chicago, and it is quieter, and we like that," she says. "I like the peace this community gives me. I realized how stressed we were. We aren't like that anymore. It's clean here, there is no traffic, and we feel we are at home." 

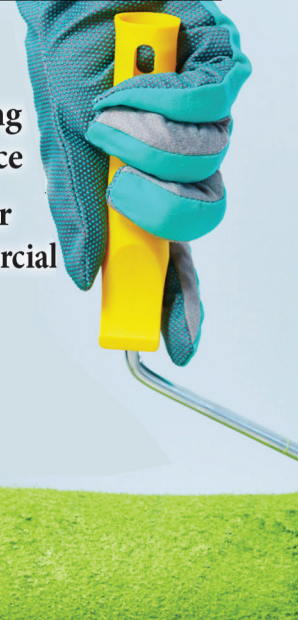
A to Z

Painting & Decorating, Inc.

217-643-2600 | mjt013160@gmail.com
atozpaintinganddecorating.com

**A Complete Painting
& Decorating Service**

**Interior & Exterior
Residential & Commercial**





Serving the greater Champaign Urbana Area

HOORAY, BEER!

There's not
three area

1. BLIND PIG BREWERY

Story **Kevin Barlow**



Photo **Provided**

CHAMPAIGN

Blind Pig Brewery owner Chris Knight said his most popular beer right now is U of IPA. And it doesn't matter what season it is.

"Our customers love it, and so do I," he said. "That is one of our core beers, and we make that available all of the time."

IPA stands for India pale ale, an especially hoppy style. U of IPA is described as a well-balanced IPA, not too malty and not overly bitter. It contains a generous dry-hopping of Citra and Galaxy hops, giving it a citrus aroma.

It is made with pale, hi-dried and crystal malts and an unusual blend of several types of hops. It is crisp and dry.

Located at 120 N. Walnut St. in Champaign, the brewery has been making its own beer since 2009. It was the first time since Prohibition that full- or all-grain beer was made commercially in the area. Knight helped kick-start the craft-beer business in C-U when he opened the Blind Pig as a bar in 1990.

Several other draught beers are available, including another one of Knight's favorites, Columbia Street Coffee Stout. It is described as a smooth, roasty stout made with cold-brewed coffee (Black Velvet and Sumatra) from their neighbors at Columbia Street Roastery.



A selection of Blind Pig Brewery's six packs: From left, Blue Pils, Hattori Hanzo Pale Ale, U of IPA and Columbia Street Coffee Stout.

"It's coffee," Knight says, "lots of coffee, with a dark caramel flavor. It's clearly not a beer you would drink in the summer, because it is a stout, but when that chill comes in the air, it's really good."

As the seasons change, Knight said the tastes for styles of beers change.

"The colder it gets, the less I like the lagers and the more I like the heavy stouts," he said. "A lot of people are like that. We adjust, and with the change of seasons, we are always keeping an eye on what is popular and what might need changing."

Autumn is always an exciting

time for Blind Pig.

"It's the start of the school year, but it's also the change in seasons, and the beer they drank during the summer is probably going to be different than the beer they drink during

the fall," he said.

"We are blessed with some great, loyal customers who are very smart about what they like, and they keep coming back, and that is very much appreciated." 



**Voted #1 in Dog Training for the
2022 People's Choice Awards**

2703 Clark Road, Champaign
jodievees.com (217) 841-3909

nothing like some suds on a crisp fall day. We checked in with a breweries to see how they're changing with the season.

2. RIGGS BEER CO.

Story **Kevin Barlow**



Photo **Robin Scholz**

URBANA

For Matt Riggs, there are many reasons to love fall.

"Fall is one of my favorite times of the year," said the co-founder of Riggs Beer Company, a family-owned production brewery and tap room in Urbana. "Being a farmer, it's when the harvest season gets underway and the weather is the best that we see all year long. The football season is underway, the baseball playoffs are in full swing and especially for central Illinois, there is plenty to do."

And as the seasons change, so do the tastes of beer drinkers.

One of Riggs' favorites is Oktoberfest, a Munich-style festival beer made with 100 percent German barley malt and hops.

"We release it at the same time that Oktoberfest is held in Germany (Sept. 17-Oct. 3)," he said. "Most breweries release it weeks or months before we do, but I feel like that beer, really more than any other beer style, is tied to a certain time of the year. We like to honor the tradition of releasing that beer just as the leaves are starting to change and the temperatures are starting to drop."



Matt Riggs moves a pallet of prepared cans as a hefeweizen is canned at Riggs Beer Company in Urbana.

The customers love it, he adds.

"We have never changed the recipe in six years," he said. "We make it the same way. It doesn't matter how much we make of it, it sells out immediately. As a brewer, that tells me 'Don't mess this up and don't make any changes.'"

Riggs said the brewery's success can be traced to learning the business in Germany.

"I lived and worked in Germany for several years," he said. "I went to school in Germany, and that just adds another connection to Oktoberfest."

He holds a German Master Brewer certification from Doemens Academy in Munich.

Riggs and his brother, Darin, are fifth-generation family farmers, ROTC scholars, University of Illinois alums and, since 2015, owners and operators of the brewery.

"On our farm, we grow beer," Matt said.

Today, Riggs Beer Company distributes its product throughout central Illinois. The brewery sits on 20 acres of land that includes a tap room, a spacious beer garden and several acres of wheat and clover fields.

"The Oktoberfest beer is perfect for this area with the harvest, football and Halloween approaching," he said. "It really sets the mood." 

 **Maid to Perfection®** Champaign County's Complete Cleaning Service

Thank you for voting us #1 in the 2022 People's Choice Awards!



mtpchampaign.com

Request A Free In-Home Estimate

One Call Cleans It All! **217-398-1881**

WINNER OF THE 2022 PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS

 **FRESHCOAT®** Painting Done RIGHT!



CALL TODAY FOR A FREE QUOTE: (217)240-7758

FRESHCOATPAINTERS.COM/LOCATIONS/CHAMPAIGN/



From left, Triptych brewers Josh Martin, Luke Taggart, owner Anthony Benjamin and Whitney Braddock show off their hazy pale ale, Dank Meme, at their production facility in Savoy.

3. TRIPTYCH BREWING

Story **Kevin Barlow**



Photo **Ethan Simmons**

SAVOY

Triptych Brewing's ownership consists of four families that have made and continue to make their vision of exploring the intersection of community and the art of beer brewing a reality.

The Benjamins, Altstetters, Voigtlanders and Amachers are committed to this dream, one beer at a time.

"Our customers love our fest beer, Oktoberfest," general manager Mike Miller said. "As the season gets colder, most people tend to go toward the stouts a little more. I personally prefer drinking stouts all year long, but not everybody does."

When Triptych started in 2013, it had approximately 500 square feet devoted to beer production and brewed on a cobbled-together, three-barrel system into one of two five-barrel fermenters.

Today, it has over 8,000 square feet devoted to the brewing

process and brews on a modern three-vessel, 15-barrel, steam-powered system capable of producing almost anything its employees can dream up. At any given time, more than 300 barrels of up to 12 different beers are fermenting in a facility that has been lovingly dubbed "The Memory."

So far, the brewery has produced more than 2 million cans.

"The fall is an interesting time, and we cater to the adjustment to what people want," Miller said. "During fall, it seems like our customers want more of a toastiness type of drink, something maybe with some caramel in it."

But autumn is a great time of the year for craft beer, he said.

"There is that feeling in the air and you aren't looking for a beer on a hot afternoon, but it's more about taste," he said. "I think we have so much to offer. We don't believe that every Triptych beer will be for everyone, but we think that there is a Triptych beer for everyone." 

RegCakes

cakes - breads - pastries

100% Gluten Free




Thank you for voting for us!

Lincoln Square Mall, Urbana IL

www.RegCakes.com



Furnace Doctors

Heating & Air Conditioning

Serving the Champaign/Urbana & All Surrounding Areas

Finalist for Best Heating & Air Conditioning business in the People's Choice Awards!

217-510-2010 furnacedocs.com

2022

People's Choice Awards



Experienced. Honest. Effective.

Thank you to all
of our valued clients
for their recognition
and support in the 2022
People's Choice Awards.

- Copper Creek Team



ROOFING



HOME IMPROVEMENT



RESTORATION



coppercreek217.com (217) 596-9016 coppercreek217@gmail.com



2101 FOX DRIVE
CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820

PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CHAMPAIGN, IL
PERMIT NO. 880

Hundreds of Bedroom, Dining, and Living Room Items Now

IN STOCK

READY TO TAKE HOME TODAY!



ILLINOIS' LARGEST AMISH FURNITURE OUTLET

HAVE YOUR FURNITURE DELIVERED or TAKE IT HOME TODAY!

468 E Springfield Rd, Arcola, IL 61910 • 217-268-3355 • KauffmanAmishFurnitureOutlet.com