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exchange

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ISSUE 4 2024

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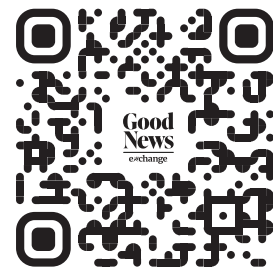
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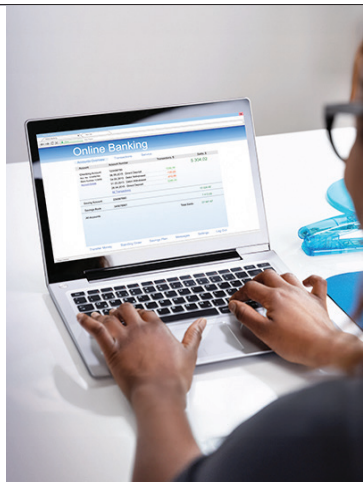
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The impact of ‘shop local’

Together we can ensure that their legacies continue, our economy is kept stable, and our community continues to thrive.

THE ECONOMIC Policy Institute reports that for every dollar spent at a locally owned business, 68 cents of it stays in the local economy. Compare this to 32 cents staying in a local community when spending money at a chain store. The University of Florida conducted an analysis that showed how local businesses help fight high unemployment rates. When large companies lay off workers, local businesses are able to provide employment opportunities and maintain a consistent workforce. This is critical in sustaining our community and keeping money flowing within it.

Our locally owned businesses have helped our community become what it

is today. The long-standing staples in our community have created bridges between the generations. People who were once shoppers at a young age are now the mature employees who always greet you with a smile. And as new decades come and go, their smiles never fade. And the young shoppers they smile to will one day be in their shoes.

We should all continue to make an effort to support our local businesses. Not only does it help create a stronger economy for our town, but it also helps preserve the memories and traditions of generations before us. Together we can ensure that their legacies continue, our economy is kept stable, and our community continues to thrive. **GN**

Wesley Bryant,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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CHAPTER 1 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local positive stories you may have missed.

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Submit a positive story on our website:



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Photography by Adin Parks

◀ Alicia Fields



Charles Fortney

Empowering Bowling Green's workforce

The GGC Employer Services story

By Haley Potter // Photography by Amanda Guy

IN BOWLING Green, Graves Gilbert Clinic Employer Services stands as a vital support system for the community's rapidly growing workforce. Executive Director of Employer Services Charles Fortney emphasizes the critical link between economic development and the vitality of a healthy workforce.

"Economic development depends on having healthy employees and promoting a healthy work environment," said Fortney. With over 85 years of experience and a team of over 200 dedicated medical professionals, Graves Gilbert Clinic is one of Kentucky's largest physician-owned medical groups, ensuring unparalleled health care provision for the area.

Fortney brought extensive experience serving workplace needs by partnering with Graves Gilbert Clinic in 2017.

"We facilitate the seamless onboarding of candidates for various roles, spanning from manufacturing to health care," Fortney explains.



▲ Andria McGregor and Kimberly May



▲ Devin Hyams, Kayce Bowie, Mikaela Hyams, Elizabeth Ashley Reinke, Charles Fortney, and Kimberly May

In a landscape where workplace health protocols are not just formalities but essential requisites, Graves Gilbert Clinic Employer Services are indispensable. With seven Walk-In Care/WorkCare clinics located across Bowling Green, Glasgow, and Franklin, the clinic ensures that access to essential medical testing and treatment is both convenient and efficient for employers and employees alike.

Fortney takes pride in the clinic's broad reach, regularly serving numerous businesses and employers. His commitment extends beyond mere transactions,

aiming to positively impact lives and fortify the economic fabric of the community.

Reflecting on the evolving job market and the intricacies of the hiring process, Fortney stresses the significance of robust health service partnerships.

"Employers seek to not only recruit and retain top talent but also ensure the health and wellbeing of their workforce and their families," he notes, underlining Graves Gilbert Clinic's unwavering dedication to being a reliable ally in this journey.

“

At Graves Gilbert Clinic,
we prioritize patient-
centered care and strive
for the best outcomes.

- Charles Fortney

Graves Gilbert Clinic's mission is to provide comprehensive care through its network of primary care providers and specialists.

"At Graves Gilbert Clinic, we prioritize patient-centered care and strive for the best outcomes," he affirms, citing the clinic's commitment to providing the same quality healthcare at all our convenient access locations across southern Kentucky.

Having been a resident of Bowling Green for 34 years, Fortney has witnessed the community's transformation and the evolving health care landscape. Despite the challenges posed by cultural and linguistic diversity, he views it as an enriching aspect that contributes to the community's vibrancy and growth. Graves Gilbert Clinic is expanding its employer services team to support the growing southern Kentucky region with the recent addition of Emily Harlan as employer services manager.

"Emily brings a wealth of experience and knowledge of the area, and we are excited to welcome her to the team," said Fortney.

Fortney and the dedicated team at Graves Gilbert Clinic WorkCare continue bridging the gap between health care and employment. Their impact reverberates throughout Bowling Green, representing a commitment to empowering their community. **GN**



▲ Jessica Daffron and Elizabeth Ashley Reinke



▲ Mikaela Hyams and Kayce Bowie

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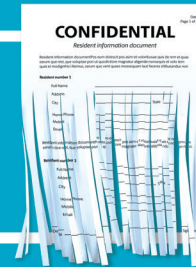
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Crafting the *memories* of our lives

Bowling Green's BlueCotton expands its custom apparel from sea to shining sea.

By Sara Hook // Photography by Amanda Guy



Mike Coffey and
Julie Denton-Price



NEARLY EVERYONE has a drawer full of T-shirts, and in almost every T-shirt drawer are shirts that haven't been worn in years. That's the power of memories, and fostering those memories is the goal of BlueCotton, Bowling Green's own custom apparel business.

The business had a humble start. In 1991, two recent Western Kentucky University (WKU) graduates found themselves with an excess of T-shirts and a few too many bills. They started selling the shirts to sororities, fraternities, WKU, and other universities. BlueCotton apparel can now be found coast to coast. Their home base is still Bowling Green, and Director Julie Denton-Price said seeing their work "in the wild" makes things just a little bit more meaningful.

"It's just very gratifying that when we're here, we get to see the work we do," Denton-Price said. "We're doing that all over. We just don't get to run into it every single day."

Employees might see their work in the grocery store, at a wedding, or a Little League baseball game. Almost always, Denton-Price said, the event has some meaning behind it.

"It's custom apparel, so it's usually for an event, and usually that event has some meaning behind it," Denton-Price said. "T-shirts mark the memories of our lives, and we get to be a part of that every day."

All shirts ordered through BlueCotton are made in Bowling Green at the company's 100,000-square-foot warehouse. Every employee is a part of the community, and Denton-Price said the company works hard to keep that community feeling inside the business as well. Alongside their core values of being customer-centered, having integrity and character, and maintaining growth and profit is the value of fostering a fun, family atmosphere.

"When you start out, everyone is very tight-knit. You hang out together outside of work and know everything about each other. But I would say that hasn't gone away completely," Den-

ton-Price said. “When Mike, my partner, first started [BlueCotton], he would have the team over to his house for dinner, and their Christmas parties were at his house. And while they can’t do that now, [what] a lot of our team truly cherishes of our core values is that family atmosphere.”

There have been quite a few initiatives to benefit employees, the most recent being the company’s Bitcoin initiative. Through the program, employees who remain until 2027 will get a payout at no cost. BlueCotton paid for the entire thing.

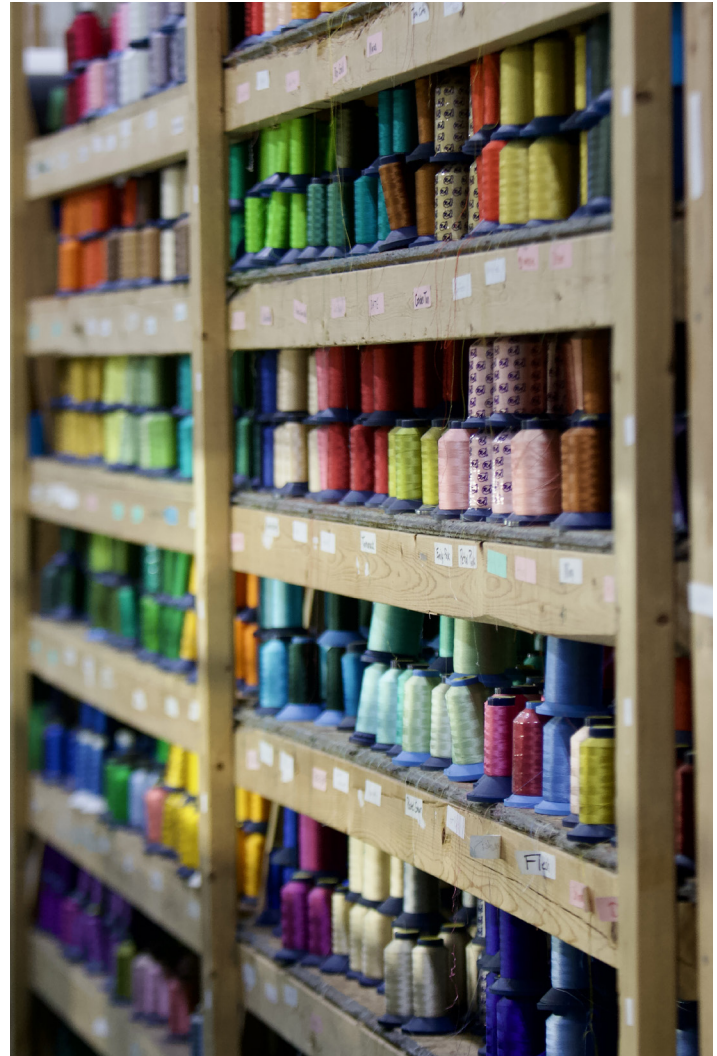
“We just think it’s a way to also enhance their lives, change the trajectory, give them a stake and an asset, and something that they maybe wouldn’t have been able to do on their own,” Denton-Price said.

Most BlueCotton employees come in with no experience and are trained on-site. Denton-Price said the company works to help its employees have security and become good community partners and leaders, even if that means teaching them to manage finances. Even if an employee’s need has nothing to do with the business, it will inevitably bleed into their work. That effort to help people grow is something Denton-Price said she and the CEO are very proud of.

“We want to help see those needs and meet those needs. It’s not us taking care of it for them; it’s us helping them develop skills to manage on their own,” Denton-Price said. “Whether they stay or whether they leave, they are better because of the people they worked with here, the opportunities we provided them, and the support that we give them in the areas where they need it.”

There has been immense growth in the decades since BlueCotton was founded, and the company has big plans for the future. Denton-Price said the company wants to be a place where people can make a career, and they want to be the best for their customers. In that way, their customers can know they are getting the best, and their employees can support their families and give back to the community in a way they may never have thought they could.

“Let’s [not] be mediocre. If we’re going to leave our families every day and come to work for eight hours or more, let’s do it with people we love, and let’s be great,” Denton-Price said. “By growing and being great, we’re doing something good for our customers, the people who are getting the end product, but we’re also enhancing the lives of the people who are getting the work done every day.” GN



“By growing and being great, we’re doing something good for our customers, the people who are getting the end product, but we’re also enhancing the lives of the people who are getting the work done every day.”

- Julie Denton-Price



ALICIA FIELDS

EDUCATING AND ENCOURAGING

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY MED STUDENTS EMPOWER YOUTH WITH KNOWLEDGE OF SKIN CARE.

By Sara Hook // Photography by Adin Parks

SKIN CANCER is one of the most common forms of cancer, especially in young adults. In the past few decades, the diagnosis rates for skin cancer have increased significantly. Combatting this trend can start young, as the University of Kentucky College of Medicine Bowling Green Campus has proven with its new Sun Protection Outreach Teaching by Students (SPOTS) chapter.

SPOTS was founded in 2006 by medical students and dermatology faculty at St. Louis University and Washington University in Missouri. The community outreach program aims to teach students from preschool to high school the early detection and prevention of skin cancer. It came to Bowling Green this past year, and the Warren County Public Elementary Schools are benefiting from the work of local medical students led by Student Ambassador Chair Alicia Fields. Fields was looking for a program to reach local elementary schools and said the content of SPOTS spoke to her. The student ambassadors worked alongside Warren County Public Schools' gifted and talented teacher, Morgan Meredith, to identify specific schools and dates to reach when they launched the community outreach program.

“I wanted to find a program that really aligns with [the] mission of the Admissions Ambassadors, and I also wanted to find something that would address the growing health concerns in Kentucky,” Fields said. “I felt like this program would give us a really unique opportunity to share the importance of sun protection and skin cancer prevention to adolescent students, especially at a time when they’re becoming more responsible for their own personal health practices.”

The trained volunteers went to their first school in October. They went to one more in the fall and two this spring. Fields said they hope to double their outreach for the next school year.

“We started relatively small,” Fields said. “We didn’t want to be too ambitious with a brand new project. We obviously wanted to make sure this would work for the school system and that it was what they were hoping for. We wanted to make sure that our medical students enjoyed the program because we wanted them to be very interactive and engaged.”

It might seem like a presentation like SPOTS would be long and tedious, but a very interactive PowerPoint presentation with engaged presenters means students love it. Fields said one even asked her if they would return the next week to teach more. The medical students covered the ABCDEs of detecting skin cancer and the ways to mitigate risk, and they let students use a skin analyzer machine to test each other’s skin. Fields said they primarily try to emphasize the beauty of natural skin.

“I think that’s such a positive message that we’re sending to children at this age, to [boost] their self-esteem,” Fields said. “You don’t have to give in to peer pressure. If everybody around you is tan, you can say, ‘You know what? It’s great; my skin’s beautiful, and I’m not changing a thing about it.’”

The schools in Bowling Green have been very receptive to SPOTS, and Fields

and her volunteers are wanted in every school. Eventually, the University of Kentucky College of Medicine would like its SPOTS chapter to grow to that size, but small steps are necessary for both the planning and the recruiting of volunteers. There are currently 25 trained medical students involved, but the big challenge in getting more is the student’s schedules. For third-year students, finding times within the school day when they can help is especially hard.

“They’re either in a clinic or in a hospital, so it’s mostly first and second-year students who are delivering this,” Fields said. “I think as the program continues to grow, we’ll probably be able to incorporate some fourth-year students as well because their schedules have a lot more flexibility once they get to that point.”

Currently, the presentations are given to gifted and talented elementary school students, who are more likely to have an interest in STEM courses and medicine. As the program is able to expand, however, Fields said they would love to see it reach every elementary student in Bowling Green. After all, skin cancer is a risk for everyone.

Her biggest hope is that those children will have a much lower risk of developing skin cancer if they have the information they need — information Fields said she did not have when she was younger.

“I definitely wish I would have made different choices, and I wish I would have had students like this coming into my school and telling me, ‘Don’t go to the tanning bed,’ because I did. I did a lot when I was in high school,” Fields said. “If you know and understand the purpose of sun-protective methods, you can significantly decrease your incidence of having skin cancer in the future. I really hope that we’re going to be making a difference and potentially seeing those rates drop for our young adults.” **GN**



"YOU DON'T HAVE TO GIVE IN TO PEER PRESSURE. IF EVERYBODY AROUND YOU IS TAN, YOU CAN SAY, 'YOU KNOW WHAT? IT'S GREAT; MY SKIN'S BEAUTIFUL, AND I'M NOT CHANGING A THING ABOUT IT.'"

- ALICIA FIELDS





Building Stronger Communities

Through positive stories

Consuming angry, sad, and negative news can make readers feel overwhelmed and helpless. We want to remember there are still uplifting people to meet and positive stories to tell.

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TINY KITCHEN WITH HUGE FLAVORS

Authentic Thai food
worth waiting For

ON CHESTNUT Street, there's a quaint vintage house that's been turned into a restaurant. There, you'll find Thai Thai, which has some of the best Thai food in the South. On the walls of the dining area are signs that read something like, "We have a small kitchen, and it takes some time to make the food — please be patient."

Patience comes with many rewards at Thai Thai. Once you get your drink and place your order, you can go outside and pet the resident cats while waiting. That's just one of many charming aspects of this amazing restaurant. Another is the lovely back patio, festooned with cafe lights where you can see the owner's cats lounging on the furniture and rolling over, begging for affection. There's also a large koi pond in front of the restaurant where the fish are bigger than the aforementioned cats!

The menu is extensive for a kitchen this size, with both seafood and vegetarian options. You get your choice of heat level, which ranges from level one for no heat to level five, meaning "Thai Spicy." The spring rolls,





crispy and served with a delicious sweet chili sauce, are a must-get for appetizers, and so were the gyoza dumplings stuffed with pork and vegetables.

There are numerous pad Thai variations with your choice of protein, as well as some fabulous curries and traditional Thai entrees. The Thai beef salad, called “Yum Nue,” with thinly sliced steak mixed with red onion, green onion, cilantro, and lime dressing, is a standout. So is the “Thai Thai Phad Kra-Proa,” a traditional Thai dish made with bell peppers, sweet basil, and your choice of protein.

There is a limited dessert menu with Thai doughnuts, custard, and fried cheesecake. Also available is an extensive tea menu, featuring all sorts of herbal and traditional Thai teas, and a full bar, including wine and Thai beers such as Singha and Chang.

There isn't a dedicated children's menu, but when I've dined at Thai Thai, I've seen plenty of little ones slurping noodles and eating the chicken satay. Just tell your kids it's like nuggets with no scary clown.

Ta-Ta, the owner of Thai Thai, exudes charm and graciousness effortlessly. With her warm hospitality, she has crafted an exquisite and authentic Thai dining experience at an affordable price point. The charming ambiance, coupled with an extensive menu, truly sets this establishment apart, making it one of the premier dining destinations in Bowling Green. **GN**

GOOD NEWS IS COMING TO DINNER!

We will feature a local food critic's thoughts as they dine in Bowling Green. This month Eve Vawter visited Thai Thai.

Eve Vawter
FoodCriticBowlingGreen@gmail.com.

THAI THAI

712 Chestnut St., Bowling Green
(270) 782-7899
www.thaithaibowlinggreen.com
Facebook: Thai Thai Restaurant





CHAPTER 2 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local people or businesses you need to know about.

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- 36 A taste of Kentucky, a taste of Bowling Green
- 40 Big news from BG Shakery
- 44 Meet the young entrepreneur

Our stories are based on submissions from local people.

Submit yours here:



goodnewsmags.com

Photography by Adin Parks

◀ Kari McConnell



Shop Local

You can make Bowling Green prosper by
supporting local businesses

WHEN YOU shop locally, you're making a statement – and not the kind that causes controversy or makes people pick sides. You're taking a stand for your neighbors. You're spending your time and money on people who are just like you. Our local stores probably don't have billionaire investors, but they can have the most important investment of all. It means more. It has a greater impact on lives. And it lasts much longer than the ink on a printed contract. You have the opportunity to be that investor. And no, we're not talking about

getting into a pricey business deal. We're talking about just showing up.

When you walk into a store, and the owner hears the *ding* from the bell above the door, you're giving the gift of love. It's a simple affirmation of a smile and burst of joy that someone walked into this local store, but it's good enough to make someone's day.

That's the statement and investment that can change a life. So visit your local businesses. Your support changes not only you and the owner but the community as a whole. **GN**



Bowling Green



White Squirrel Brewery and Blue Holler Brew Supplies

A taste of Kentucky, a taste of Bowling Green

White Squirrel Brewery and Blue Holler Brew Supplies join the West Kentucky Brewery Hop.

By Sara Hook // Photography by Amanda Guy



BOURBON DISTILLERIES have been a staple of Kentucky for decades, but craft breweries have begun to become more popular as well. There are now dozens of breweries across the state, and Bowling Green can boast two: White Squirrel Brewery and Blue Holler Brew Supplies. While both businesses are relatively new, participation in the West Kentucky Brewery Hop is sure to bring craft beer enthusiasts to Bowling Green.

The West Kentucky Brewery Hop is a trail of craft beer experiences made up of 13 breweries spanning nine communities across Kentucky. Currently, over 500 people are participating, earning points and prizes for each location they visit. In addition to those rewards, the two Bowling Green locations have a lot to offer.

White Squirrel was originally opened in 2019, but the brewery had to close during the COVID-19 pandemic and only recently reopened. Despite this, owner Sean Stevens said there are constant plans to grow.



Sean Stevens



“We’ve got 12 taps, 11 of them are ours right now — we’re constantly trying new beers, we’ve got live music, we’ve got food trucks,” Stevens said. “We’re just constantly trying to find new ways to get our name out there.”

The new warehouse where White Squirrel is located gives the brewery a lot of room to grow, Stevens said. Recently, a new tank was bought to raise the capacity as well. The brewery does events with a firetruck and pop-up TVs. The business itself is kid-friendly and dog-friendly, and Stevens said he considers it “Bowling

Green’s living room.” White Squirrel’s customers have supported the brewery in turn.

“They supported us a lot before we shut down, and they’ve come back just as strong,” Stevens said. “Bowling Green’s been great to us.”

While Blue Holler has been in Bowling Green for a few years longer, it, too, has had to deal with unexpected closure. Not long after the brewery reopened after the COVID-19 pandemic, a tornado hit the building and tore it down. Like White Squirrel, Blue Holler has been welcomed back by the community, and the business

has many plans to expand, owner Chris Karracker said. His brewery focuses on the community side of beer drinking rather than entertainment, and his events work to make lifelong friends out of simple customers.

“Right now, I’m having a hard time making enough beer to keep all of my taps full,” Karracker said. “Before COVID, I was in about 30 different restaurants in a three-county area... so we’re going to expand back up to that first and foremost. And then I’ve got a company that’s going to come in with a mobile canning line; we’ll start canning beers.”



“

What better way to boost the growing craft beer scene, which we know is a driver of visitation, in our part of the state than by collaborating with other tourism offices to create a robust experience?

– Abby Dixon

Joining the West Kentucky Brewery Hop has allowed White Squirrel and Blue Holler to reach enthusiasts across Kentucky. The commerce it brings is beneficial to Bowling Green as well, Karracker said.

“It helps the brewery enthusiasts. Even some people who aren’t enthusiasts can see it online somewhere and go, ‘Hey, that sounds good — something I never would have thought of,’” Karracker said. “In Kentucky, we’re not exactly known as a ‘craft beer community.’ Out west, northeast — a lot of those little towns — they’ll have 15, 20 breweries, and they don’t really have to advertise. People just know to go there if they want a good beer, and I think [the West Kentucky Brewery Hop] kind of helps bring some of that mentality into this area.”

While the trail is state-wide, the West Kentucky Brewery Hop itself is organized by the Henderson Tourist Commission. Executive Director Abby Dixon said that the primary reason for creating the trail was to support small businesses in Henderson County and other cities across Kentucky.

“Like most communities, ours struggled in the height of the pandemic,” Dixon said. “We know that our small businesses make up the personality of our town, so propping them up was key. We also know that visitors aren’t looking at county lines. They’d rather experience full itineraries and road trips throughout regions. What better way to boost the growing craft beer scene, which we know is a driver of visitation, in our part of the state than by collaborating with other tourism offices to create a robust experience?”

Initially, the West Kentucky Brewery Hop operated through passport-style booklets and stamps, but the booklets ran out quickly. To keep up with demand and keep in touch with participants, it recently changed to a digital pass. That demand is reflected in the breweries involved. As Dixon said

many have noted increased foot traffic.

“Our breweries have noted the collaborative spirit of the hop, which fosters regional connections and supports the growth of craft beer here in Western Kentucky,” Dixon said. “We’re definitely seeing the goal of cross-promoting these unique breweries come to fruition.”

For craft beer enthusiasts in Bowling Green, White Squirrel Brewery and Blue Holler Brew Supplies are an excellent place to start. **GN**



Kari McConnell

Big News from BG Shakery

Scoops, shakes, and more

By Amanda E. West // Photography by Adin Parks

IMAGINE BUTTERY-SOFT Bliss Artisan ice cream in flavors such as brownie batter chunk, chocolate sea-salted cashew, cake batter, white chocolate mocha, maple brown sugar cinnamon, Mississippi mud, double vanilla, or a refreshing dairy-free option such as pineapple strawberry sorbet. This, my friends, is BG Shakery, where you'll delight in scoops, shakes, and more.

The shakery also offers luscious floats in flavors like German chocolate cake, pineapple strawberry sorbet, banana toasted walnut, white chocolate macadamia nut, red velvet, and blackberry cobbler. If you prefer your ice cream in a cone or a wedge, those are made fresh daily. With a wide variety of gluten-free milkshake flavors, the "traditional" milkshakes are anything but! The "Build Your Own Fancy Shakes" includes caramel praline pecan, latte, peppermint bark, and roasted pistachio.

Now, all of these sweet treats are no longer confined to one location! BG Shakery has gone 100% mobile, with not one but two mobile carts available for weddings, engagement parties, baby showers, birthday par-

ties, community fundraisers, events, and festivals within a two-hour radius of Bowling Green.

On May 20, BG Shakery will roll out its tantalizing summer flavors, including lavender honey, mango strawberry sorbet, fried corn, zesty lemon, and key lime pie, alongside 60 other customizable flavors. With new concoctions debuting every season, you're sure to find your new favorites.

The owner, Kari McConnell, is a native of Bowling Green and understands the importance of supporting other entrepreneurs — especially other women. She partnered with Tiana Post over at Awaken Bakery to offer her 100% gluten-free cinnamon rolls, cake pops, donuts, 'sammies,' cupcakes, and an assortment of cookies. Ridley's Roasthouse prides itself on its locally roasted espresso beans, so McConnell pairs them with BG Shakery's frappes, affogatos, cappuccinos, and more. Because, as McConnell said, "Is there really anything better than coffee and ice cream?" McConnell is a soon-to-be staple at The Nest BGKY now that her fabulous ice cream sundae bar will be added to its party packages.

“We love tailoring our flavors and milkshakes to your special day or event,” enthused McConnell. “We’ve done Taylor Swift-inspired birthday flavors and shakes, which was a lot of fun. However, one of our most recent events, the ‘Wizards World Experience’ at SOKY Marketplace, was one of my most favorites! We were able to create a ‘Butterbeer Cheer’ milkshake with our butter-toasted pecan and pecan pie ice cream, cream soda, butterscotch, and caramel. It was incredible. We also crafted house shakes for Ravenclaw, Slytherin, Gryffindor, and Hufflepuff.

“For the 21+ night, we partnered locally to create ‘Boozy Potions,’ in which we partnered with local distillers and brewers to create the ‘Half Blooded Prince,’ ‘Love Potion,’ and the ‘Butterbeer Bourbon Cheer’ from Burton James Distillers. Our ‘Slytherin Stout Float’ was compliments of White Squirrel. This event was incredible. Butterbeer milkshakes were better than I ever could’ve imagined, and we cannot wait until the next one!”

In October 2022, Angie and Woody from Tell City, Indiana, who perfected the Bliss Artisan Creamery Ice Cream brand, walked through the doors of the BG Shakery. With them, they brought 60+ flavors of dairy and non-dairy delights that aren’t available anywhere else for a 90-mile radius of Bowling Green, and McConnell knew she’d found a “sweet” deal.

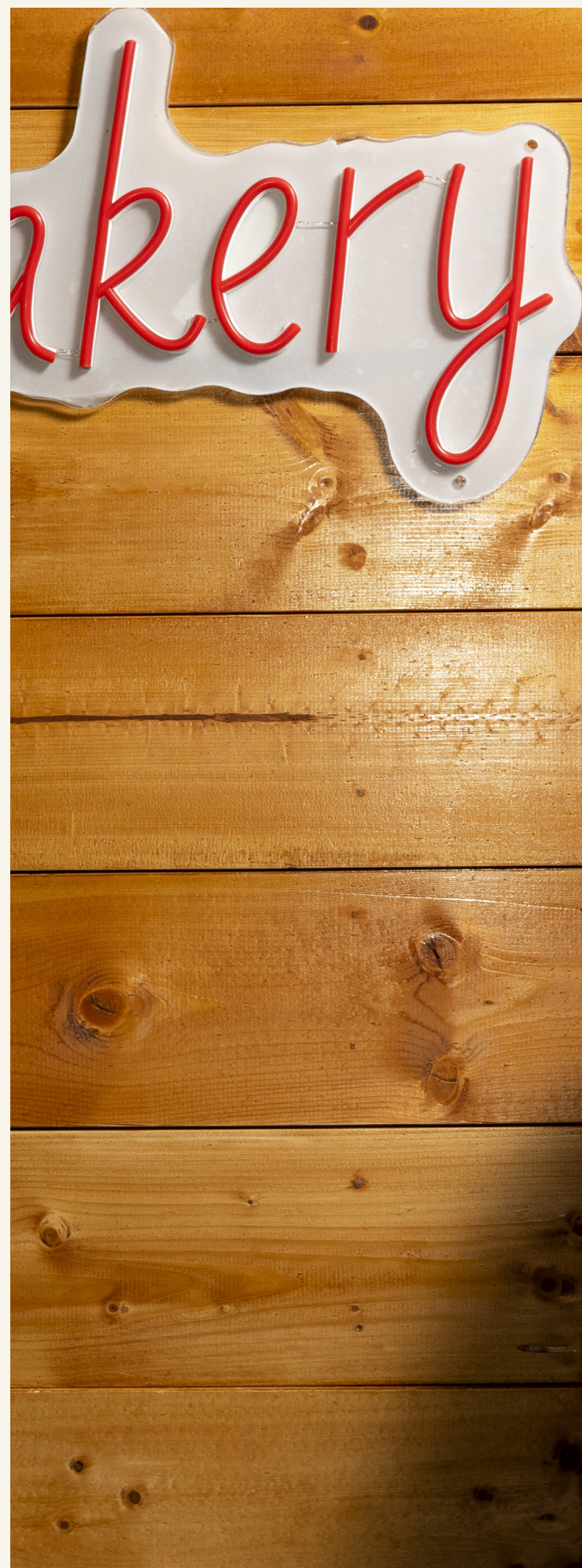
“My favorite thing we offer is anything that uses Ridley’s Roasthouse. Our affogato is incredible, which is a shot of espresso paired with your choice of one of our flavors. It is amazing with a traditional sweet cream, white chocolate mocha, sea-salted caramel, or maple brown sugar cinnamon. I also love our shakes with an added shot or two of espresso. One of our manager’s favorites here at BG Shakery is the brownie batter chunk with a shot of espresso.”

With so many delectable flavors to choose from, there’s no wrong choice.

McConnell also said, “I love seeing our customers’ faces when they find their favorite ice cream flavor. We also love getting to see regulars who have continued to support us in our store and attend mobile events. We love getting to experience birthdays, weddings, date nights, and — one of my favorites — getting to provide ‘Christmas in July’ for a military family who could not celebrate Christmas together. Families put their phones down and connect through board games and laughter. When we create an amazing experience for our customers, we’re also able to give back and support others in our community.”

Look for BG Shakery at the SOKY Marketplace Farmer’s Market, First Fridays in Scottsville, Charms at the Farm, White Squirrel 420 Festival, the Warren County Easter Egg Hunt, and many more events. **GN**

For a complete list, check out BG Shakery on Facebook or visit www.bgshakery.com.





“

I love seeing our customers' faces when they find their favorite ice cream flavor.

- Kari McConnell



Elizabeth's Cafe

Meet the young entrepreneur

A Bowling Green teen experiences success with Elizabeth's Cafe.

By Gabriel Grant Huff // Photography by Amanda Guy



IF YOU live in Bowling Green, you may have seen an “Elizabeth’s Cafe” food truck riding around the city. This is not just any ordinary food truck. A teenager runs this business.

Her main dishes are tacos, walking tacos, and smash burgers — made with two mini brioche buns, ground beef, seasoning, and cheddar cheese. For sides, she serves sweet corn, coleslaw, and chips. Customers can complete the meal with Chaney’s Ice Cream or baked goods, such as homemade cookies.

The mastermind behind this food truck business Elizabeth’s Cafe is Elizabeth Coulter. The 15-year-old girl is a Bowling Green native. Her dad, Brandon Coulter, has lived in the same city all his life, marrying Jessica in 2007. Elizabeth was born soon after.

Elizabeth participates in taekwondo, volleyball, and, of course, cooking activities. She is also a worship leader at her church and attends culinary school, becoming the youngest person to ever enroll in her class. The idea for her cafe sprung up about a year ago, and the business began in the late summer of 2023.



Elizabeth Coulter

“This started when I was about in sixth grade and when I became homeschooled,” Elizabeth said. “And it just really put the gas pedal on to make me go to my passion, because I’ve been watching all these baking shows and cooking shows ever since I was little. And I’m like, ‘Oh, I really want to do that.’ But homeschool really pushed me to be able to follow that dream.”

That epiphany came at the perfect time because she had been facing adversity in life. She was bullied in grade school. Having dyslexia added extra challenges as well.

“All those things were hitting her, and for her to be able to find what she wants to do — we were fully supportive of that as parents,” Jessica said.

Both parents worked in economics and accounting, so they had no idea how to start a food business. They sought every piece of advice and information they could find, which included reaching out to many friends and finding people who could train Elizabeth. Soon enough, they were ready for the food truck business. But here’s a fact that may surprise most people: The homeschooler bought the truck herself with money she earned from working.

“She actually picked out the truck, designed the truck, and ordered the food truck,” said Jessica, who moved to Bowling Green in 1996.

Rather than aiming for 500 to 1,000 customers, they took her business to her very own neighborhood and three schools in the area — Cumberland Trace Elementary, Rich Pond Elementary School, and William H. Natcher Elementary. They book Elizabeth for special events as well. Usually, the family participates in one to two events per month as they balance Elizabeth’s schedule with schoolwork and extracurricular activities.



Being her first year in the food truck industry, us, as her parents, wanted to let her start on a smaller scale so that she would begin and understand the business, where she could modify her menus and figure out how many things she can cook in a certain time and how fast she could get it done, so it wouldn’t be overwhelming for her,” Jessica said.

Back in December, Elizabeth made over 600 gingerbread and sugar cookies for Santa’s Lookout, an event for children to enjoy riding a train, meeting Santa, catching a barrel ride, eating treats, and more.

“This was her thing that she wanted to do and so as parents, we supported her in that, and tried to help her with budgeting and figuring all the things out,” Jessica said.

Jessica drives the trailer and takes orders. Brandon assists with the grill and hands over food. Even Hannah, Elizabeth’s 11-year-old sister, helps by preparing ice cream and calling out orders.

“My favorite part is being able to cook for people,” Elizabeth said about her cafe. “I like when they taste my food and say, ‘Oh, it tastes really good,’ and it just makes me feel good.”

▶
Brandon,
Elizabeth,
Hannah, and
Jessica Coulter

Elizabeth plans to own a restaurant one day and appreciates the support her family has provided.

“It’s just really helpful in a lot of ways to have that because sometimes you don’t think you’re doing a great job, and then you have that family behind you ... saying you’re doing a great job at it and don’t give up on a dream,” the homeschooler said.

Such support goes a long way for teenagers like Elizabeth, who serves as a great example and encouragement for other young people with entrepreneurial inspirations. **GN**



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My favorite part is being able to cook for people. I like when they taste my food and say, 'Oh, it tastes really good,' and it just makes me feel good.

- Elizabeth Coulter



▲ Hannah and Elizabeth

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Good Times

CHAPTER 3 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local events, charities, and nonprofits.

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Photography by Gretchen Clark

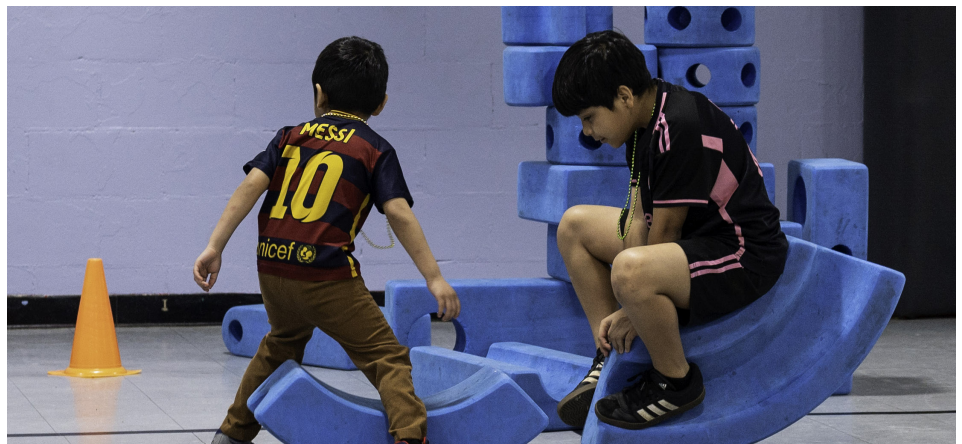
◀ Kimberly Page

Leprechaun Scavenger Hunt - March 9



Photography by Gretchen Clark

The Foundry, a Christian community center, transformed into a beacon of community enrichment, hosting an array of events to educate and uplift local children.



1. Felicia Love 2. Evron Carlson, DJ Buselmeier, and Justin Reesy of BG Fire Dept. 3. Meagan Bourn and Ileana Friese 4. Marie Bincent 5. Ricardo Arce, Ana Karen Talamantes, Nyla Talamantes, Gael Talamantes, Matthias Arce, and Leonardo Talamantes

Wild Yeast - March 11



Photography by Gretchen Clark

Bowling Green's community education hosted a captivating event centered on the myriad benefits and artful preparation of sourdough bread. Guiding this culinary adventure was the skilled artisan, Kimberly Page, a maestro of the baking world, whose expertise elevated the class into a delightful exploration of the ancient and delectable realm of sourdough.



1. Megan Sterling 2. Tyler Mobley
3. Christiana Miller, Megan Sterling, and Katherine Martinez

Western Kentucky University Jazz Band - March 9



Photography by Gretchen Clark

The stage, bathed in a ray of electrifying colors, stood adorned with instruments waiting to unveil their musical notes. The ambiance was intimate; a hush fell as the musicians took their positions, and the spotlight intensified. The event was held on the campus of WKU and directed by Dr. Sarah Herbert.



1. Patrick Johnson and Shaylee Baxter 2. Dalton Childress 3. Nathaniel Nash, Jalen Allred, Micah Buckham, Simon Bozone, Coly Monarch, Ashton Hoelscher, Jeffrey Meyers, and JP Gibbs 4. Anna Donovan and Dalton Childress 5. JP Gibbs, Jeffrey Meyers, Ashton Hoelscher, and Colby Monarch 6. Patrick Johnson

Western Kentucky University Basketball Coach - April 2



Photos submitted by Seth-Patrick Holman

Western Kentucky University held a press conference recently in Diddle Arena to introduce its new men's basketball head coach. WKU President Timothy C. Caboni and WKU Director of Athletics Todd Stewart presided.



1. Timothy C. Caboni, Hank Plona, and Todd Stewart
2. Timothy C. Caboni, Hank Plona, and Todd Stewart 3. Hank Plona

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S \$6.19 | M \$9.29 | L \$13.29

Corned beef brisket, pastrami, melted provolone, mustard, mayo, and Italian dressing.

SMOKEHOUSE BEEF & CHEDDAR BRISKET®

S \$6.99 | M \$10.99 | L \$13.99

Smoked beef brisket, melted cheddar, BBQ sauce & mayo with a dill pickle spear served on the side.

SPICY CAJUN CHICKEN

S \$6.39 | M \$9.29 | L \$12.99

Grilled, Cajun-seasoned chicken breast, jalapeños, melted pepper jack cheese, lettuce, onions, deli mustard, and our housemade Cajun mayo.

JAMAICAN JERK TURKEY

S \$6.09 | M \$9.09 | L \$12.89

Smoked Turkey Breast Topped with Jamaican Jerk seasoning, Pepper Jack Cheese, Mayo, lettuce, tomato, onion, and Jamaican Jerk sweet mustard sauce

PEPPERONI MEATBALL

S \$6.99 | M \$10.99 | L \$13.99

Italian meatballs, marinara, extra provolone, crispy pepperoni, and Italian seasoning on a toasted garlic bread roll.

BUILD YOUR OWN SUB

Served hot, or make it cold.

Choose your protein, bread, cheese, veggies, and condiments.

Try it Fully Involved® with lettuce, tomato, onion, mayo and deli mustard

SMOKED TURKEY BREAD M \$8.99

VIRGINIA HONEY HAM \$8.99

GRILLED CHICKEN BREAD S \$6.29 | M \$9.19 | L \$12.99

PASTRAMI S \$6.29 | M \$9.09 | L \$12.79

ROAST BEEF S \$6.09 | M \$9.09 | L \$12.79

CORNED BEEF S \$6.09 | M \$9.09 | L \$12.79

TUNA SALAD S \$5.99 | M \$8.99 | L \$12.19

A blend of tuna, relish, mayo and black pepper with provolone. Served cold.

VEGGIE \$8.89

Caramelized onions and green bell peppers savory mushrooms, Provolone, cheddar, Monterey Jack, lettuce, tomato, onion, mayo, deli mustard, and Italian dressed

All subs and extras also available in small and large sizes.

EXTRAS

Extra Cheese 95¢
Add Bacon \$1.50
Add savory mushrooms 90¢
Gluten-free roll \$2.49

KIDS' COMBOS

Choose Meatball, Smoked Turkey Breast, or Virginia Honey Ham with Provolone, or Grilled Cheddar Cheese \$5.99

Served with 12 oz AHA! flavored water, dessert, and a kid-sized fire hat

SALADS

All salads start with Romaine; diced tomato, green bell pepper, and cucumber, Mozzarella; and choice of dressing

HOOK & LADDER SALAD® \$9.99

Smoked turkey breast and Virginia honey ham

ITALIAN WITH GRILLED CHICKEN SALAD® \$9.99

Grilled chicken breast and Genoa salami

FIREHOUSE SALAD® \$9.99

Smoked turkey breast, Virginia honey ham, or grilled chicken breast

NO MEAT \$7.99



Thanks to supporters like you, FIREHOUSE SUBS PUBLIC SAFETY FOUNDATION has awarded millions of dollars worth of lifesaving equipment and resources to fire, police and public safety organizations across the country.

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