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SUMMER 2020 | MAGAZINE

Dog Days of Summer

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SUMMER
LIKE ICE CREAM

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REBOUND
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LEGACY
OF DAVID ROSS



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GREATER LAFAYETTE MAGAZINE

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MISSION

Greater Lafayette Magazine captures the spirit and vitality of the people who call Greater Lafayette home and what it means to live, work and thrive here. It tells the region's success stories, from business expansions, entrepreneurship, leadership and philanthropy to quality of life, arts and cultural events. Our hope is that readers of Greater Lafayette Magazine will become active participants in the world around them and join in our mission to make Greater Lafayette the place where progress, creativity and community come together.

AUDIENCE

Greater Lafayette Magazine serves as the leading quality-of-life and business trade publication for the area. Leveraging our award-winning team of writers and designers, Greater Lafayette Magazine attracts a diverse group of readers who are engaged in the community as consumers, visitors, business leaders, volunteers, residents and future residents of Tippecanoe County. This publication is for anyone that appreciates a good story that not only reveals something new about our community but offers insight and pride for the place we call home.

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WE ARE *Greater* TOGETHER



Carol Bangert, editor of Greater Lafayette Magazine, and Fargo

Welcome to the Summer edition of Greater Lafayette Magazine. And what a summer it's been so far! COVID-19 is still front and center in our lives, but we've seen a glimmer of hope that things may one day return to normal, or something close to it. And that hope is apparent right here in Greater Lafayette, as restaurants start to reopen, businesses

welcome customers into stores again and baseball fields and basketball courts start to see some action. This issue of GLM highlights some of the entrepreneurs, businesses and programs that make our communities hum along, even in the roughest times.

The cover story on our love for dogs is a prime example. Myriad locally owned businesses cater to a dog's every need – from a top-notch grooming to puppy training to a swanky overnight stay – and if you have a dog, you'll want to check them out. The feature on how restaurants have recovered from the effects of COVID-19 is nothing short of inspirational. Some reimaged their menus, others switched gears to offer carry-out options, while others reinvented themselves altogether.

You'll also meet some remarkable Greater Lafayette entrepreneurs: Brittany Whitenack, who founded the Antique Candle Co.; Isaac Childres, the mastermind behind the board game Gloomhaven; and David Ross, the 1893 Purdue University graduate whose work and visionary thinking set the university on course to be the world-class institution it is today.

And let's not forget about food! Food trucks are showing up everywhere in Greater Lafayette, and the range of offerings is astounding. But if you're looking for ice cream, you won't be disappointed with the choices at Budge's, the Frozen Custard or the Silver Dipper.

I hope this issue of Greater Lafayette Magazine reminds you that there are indeed signs of normalcy in our community – and what a wonderful and special community this is.

Carol



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features

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Cheyenne enjoys a sunny spring day at the Lafayette Dog Park.

Photo by Christine Petkov

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From Carol Bangert



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Taking it in another direction

Provenance extends
live-work-learn-play
opportunities to
Purdue's western edge

BY KEN THOMPSON
PHOTOS PROVIDED





Decades after his parents lived in Married Student Housing while attending Purdue University, Rich Michal is playing a role in a “once in a century” project that will turn the complex into a memory.

Michal, vice president of the Purdue Research Foundation, is excited to talk about Provenance, part of the \$1.2 billion, long-term Discovery Park District project that will transform the west side of campus with the creation of a walkable urban neighborhood.

Provenance is the latest offshoot of the State Street Project, a combined effort of Purdue and the city of West Lafayette. The \$120 million project has, during the past four years, changed traffic patterns from the Wabash River, through downtown West Lafayette and Purdue University out to U.S. 231. Purdue President Mitch Daniels saw an opportunity for the Discovery Park District to take advantage of the State Street work to find industry that would be a good fit with the university’s strengths and then build housing and amenities for those workers.

“The original genesis was to help finance and help pay for that State Street investment but the bigger picture is this is an opportunity to attract the best student minds and faculty and to retain some of those,”



Michal says. “We’ve got 40,000 students a year, and the majority of those are gradually moving elsewhere. We want to give them a reason to stay in West Lafayette. It’s about providing that live, work, learn, play opportunity.

“Saab and Schweitzer (Engineering Laboratory) love the fact we’re going to have those homes right there where folks can ride their bikes to work in addition to all the educational, cultural and athletic opportunities the university provides.”

Old Town Design Group of Carmel has come up with a plan that will feature a combination of 500 single-family detached homes, townhomes and apartments. Justin Moffett, a partner of Old Town, says the design will harken back to early 1900s homes with the majority of home lots having garage access through alleys. That eliminates front driveways and enhances the walk-

ability of the neighborhood.

“They’ve done similar projects in midtown Carmel and we loved their product,” Michal says. “They are more of a traditional looking craftsman-style home. They do the front porches and the alley-loaded garages. We felt like their semi-custom product was more appealing and more original.”

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Old Town’s construction plans remain on schedule to begin this summer according to Erin Easter, director of development for the city of West Lafayette. Old Town hopes to have a model home ready by February and begin selling lots this fall.

“This is the first new neighborhood in the city limits in quite some time,” Easter says. “PRF, the city and the university worked closely on the design aesthetic for the neighborhood.”

Provenance is targeting an upscale clientele with single-family

homes starting in the low \$400,000 range, and townhomes starting at \$350,000. By spring 2021, the first families will be able to move into two- and three-story townhomes that will have a private outdoor living area and a two-car garage.

Single family detached homes will be available this spring as well, ranging in size from 1,600 to 3,536 square feet. These semi-custom homes will have the option of master bedrooms upstairs and downstairs, as well as ranch design.

By summer 2021, Old Town anticipates the completion of 142 apartments spread out over four buildings. The following year, 108 more units will be available over five buildings. Studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom units will be available.

That won’t be all of the change coming to the west side of campus.

“Between the Aerospace District and Discovery Park District, we anticipate a lot of growth in the southwest side of the city,” Easter says. “Businesses typically follow residents, so once we have a residential base, you will start to see

other amenities popping up in the area,” Easter says.

Michal hopes those amenities include health care and a large grocery store, which could lead to the end of another long-standing complex.

“What I’m hoping is two things: one, work with the university to put in a micro-hospital or health care facility,” he says. “The other thing ... we’d love to get a 20-30,000-square-foot grocery right there off the corner of State and McCormick. With Purdue and access to students, plus 500 rooftops, we think our chances of landing a grocery will increase substantially.

“Purdue West has been a great facility. It was a great complex and it’s helped us generate a lot of revenue over its lifetime. But it’s old, tired and there may be a better use of the land there. We’d love to have a health care facility there and right across the street, just south of Hort Park, have a grocery and some retail. And all of that will help us attract more students, staff, faculty and corporations.”

Saab, which will be manufacturing military training aircraft, is the

latest corporation to buy into the long-term vision. It won’t be the last in Purdue’s effort to retain its best and brightest.

“There are folks working right now with the PRF and the university to try to attract similar businesses to Saab, aerospace and aviation companies,” Michal says. “We’ve got a great partnership with Rolls Royce. We’re also trying to re-establish a commercial service with the airport. We’re hopeful on that.

“We’re trying to help promote and support the university as it changes the world through its faculty, students and technology. We’re attracting corporations here to help them in recruiting our students and tapping into our research institutions. We want them to come here, establish roots and plant a flag on campus.”

Years from now, Michal envisions Provenance being a desirable place to live like another West Lafayette neighborhood.

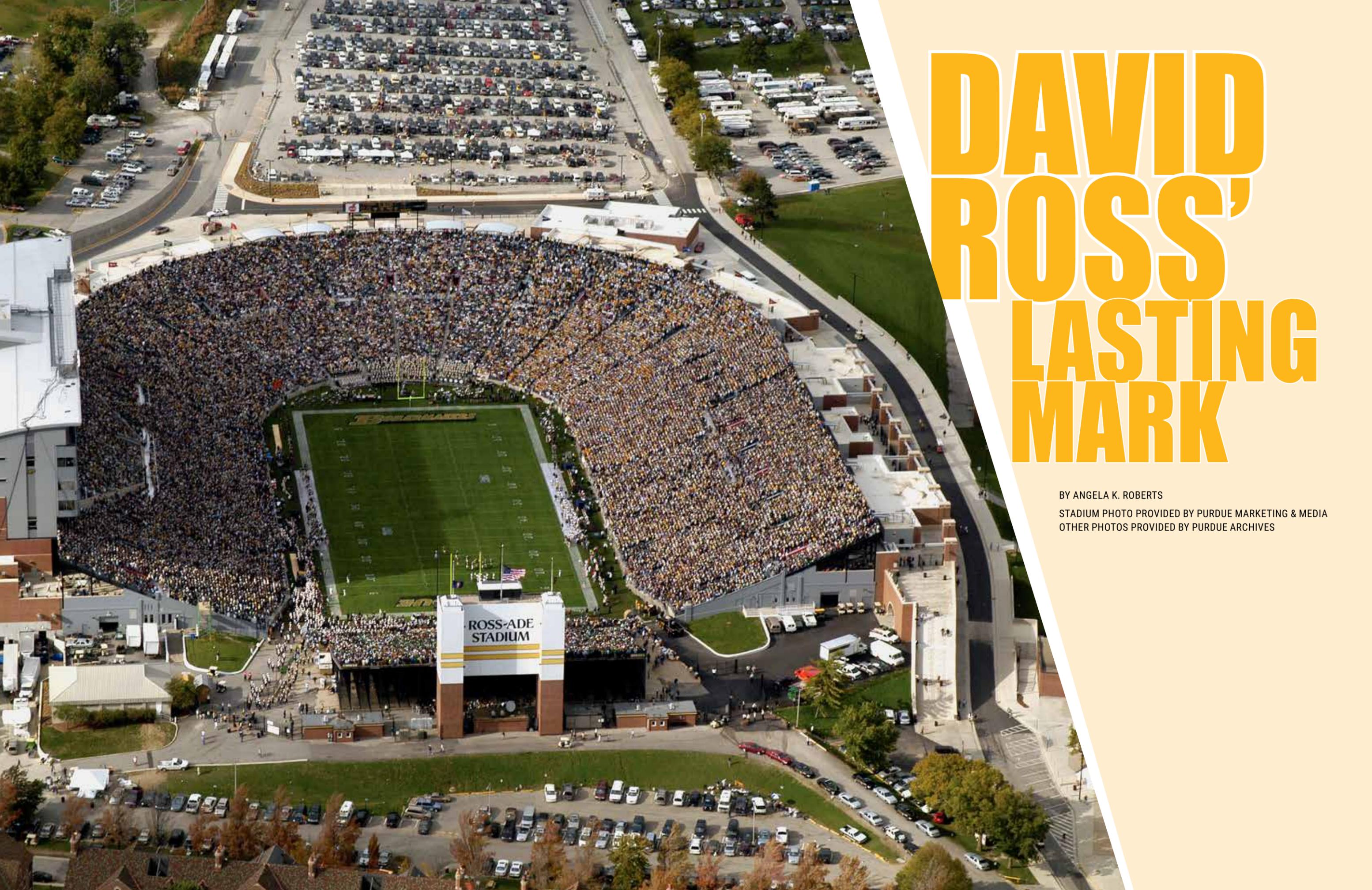
“Look at Hills and Dales and how beautiful a neighborhood that is,” Michal says. “Something like that.” ★



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DAVID ROSS' LASTING MARK

BY ANGELA K. ROBERTS

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n 1922, David Edward Ross, engineer, businessman and noted Purdue University alumnus, asked Tippecanoe County Judge Henry Vinton to introduce him to another Purdue graduate of note —playwright and syndicated newspaper columnist George Ade, five years his senior.

After meeting in the judge’s chambers, Ross asked Ade to take a short drive with him. Parking at an old dairy farm northwest of Purdue’s tiny campus, they climbed uphill, then peered down into a vast natural bowl carved into the landscape.

Then, as Robert Kriebel writes in “Ross-Ade: Their Purdue Stories, Stadium and Legacies,” the engineer gave a pitch something like this:

“Here is where we [Trustees] will put our recreational field and stadium. You’ll notice that much of the work of grading and providing a hillside of just the right slope for a stadium grandstand has already been done [by Nature]. It’s about the same size as the ancient stadium of Athens. I had a man look up the dimensions. There isn’t much difference.”

Ade nodded in agreement, Kriebel notes, saying it did indeed seem to be about the same size as the Panathenaic Stadium, which Ade had visited in 1898. But, he wondered, what did this have to do with him?

Ross said that he hoped Ade would help him finance a stadium for the university, to which Ade responded that he’d tried to promote several projects at Purdue, but had never had much luck. He concluded, “To help someone else would be a great relief. So my answer is yes.”

Ade’s words were his stock in trade, and yet it was the soft-spoken engineer who persuaded *him* that day. And it was Ross who convinced alumni to give half a million dollars to build the Purdue Memorial Union, who purchased land for an airport and an engineering survey camp, and who pushed for the creation of the Purdue Research Foundation to spur innovation and discovery at the university.

Of course, money talks, too, and the contributions that Ross made to the university and the community before and after his death, along with the businesses that he created, have left a lasting legacy at Purdue and Greater Lafayette.

“David Ross helped lay the groundwork that made Purdue a modern university. Almost everything about Purdue in the first 40 years of the 20th century directly involved Ross,” says Adriana Harmeyer, archivist for university history with Purdue University Archives and Special Collections. “We remember him for Ross-Ade Stadium, which itself is a wonderful legacy, but his actions as a trustee and advocate for the university created some of our most important resources, especially the Purdue Research Foundation that continues to enable groundbreaking research that changes the world.”



Adriana Harmeyer

A visionary with mechanical aptitude

Born in 1871, Ross had been a tinkerer throughout childhood and wanted to study engineering at Purdue. But he almost didn’t make it to college. His father, a farmer who expected Ross to pursue an agrarian career, thought that college would be a waste of time. Thankfully, the young man’s Uncle Will intervened, offering to house Ross in his Lafayette home and pay for his tuition and books.



David Ross



George Ade

Ross led a quiet college life, biographers note, and he reportedly received so-so grades for most of his coursework. His graduation, however, coincided with the birth of the automobile, presenting a golden opportunity for the visionary with mechanical aptitude. Returning to his family homestead, he began creating devices in the farm shop based on ideas from technical journals.

“He applied for patents on three working parts — a differential gear mechanism, a gear-shifting device and a rear-axle differential — and got them,” writes Jay Cooperider in a biographical document published by Tippecanoe County. “About the same time, he came up with the first of a number of patentable steering gears.”

In 1906, Ross founded the Ross Gear and Tool Company with his uncles Will and Linn, both seasoned salesmen. In 1914, Ross joined the City Council, a seat he held for four years. While World War I raged overseas, Ross’ plant contributed to the effort by manufacturing steering gears for military trucks.

The year after the war ended, in 1918, the Ross family spun out a new company, Fairfield Manufacturing. In 1927, they founded yet another business, Rostone Corporation, to manufacture artificial stone from waste products such as fly ash, limestone and shale. While the company’s original product never took off, Rostone eventually reinvented itself into a manufacturer of electrical insulators.

Ross, in fact, seemed to have much more success than failure over his lifetime. All told, he patented 88 devices and made millions through his business ventures, much of that money going back to Purdue University.

A passion for university-based research

“Ross’ reappearance at Purdue can be traced to 1920, when he was asked to serve on an alumni committee that since 1911 had been trying to raise money for a student union,” writes Cooperider. “When Ross joined the committee, \$50,000 had been collected. Largely through his efforts, more than \$500,000 was raised by the time the first part of the Memorial Union was completed in 1922.”

While soliciting alumni donations, Ross had heard grumbles that they wanted their alma mater to have a grand stadium like other universities. The newly minted board trustee got to work, and in 1924, two years after that hill-top negotiation with Ade, the Boilermakers played their first game in the new 13,000-person stadium.

Then Ross turned his attention to his true passion: university-based research and development. In 1930, several years after he began lobbying for the university to forge closer bonds with industry, the Purdue Research Foundation was incorporated. Ross seeded the venture with \$25,000 in Ross Gear stock.

Later, he purchased land west of campus for an airport and another tract overlooking the Wabash River for a surveying camp and football practice field (now the home of the county-owned Ross Camp). He also spearheaded development of the university’s first long-range master plan, a process that continues today.

“His contributions touched every aspect of the university: athletics through Ross-Ade Stadium, student life through the Purdue Memorial Union, and education and research through the Purdue Research Foundation and Purdue Airport,” Harmeyer says. “This was the lasting mark he was able to leave on the world.”

When Ross arrived at Purdue as a freshman in 1889, she notes, the university had fewer than 500 students. By the time of his death, more than 8,000 students were enrolled, and the footprint of the university had more than quadrupled. "In addition to his own substantial contributions, he got to watch Purdue grow from a small, newly established university to a world-class research institution," she says.

Forever tied to the university

Ross died in 1943 after suffering a debilitating stroke the year before that left him unable to speak. His closest surviving family member was a sister.

While Ross remained a bachelor until his death, local author Angie Klink has uncovered evidence of a long-term relationship between Ross and a Purdue staffer. Klink has written several Purdue-related books, including "Divided Paths, Common Ground: The Story of Mary Matthews and Lella Gaddis, Pioneering Purdue Women Who Introduced Science into the Home."

Klink says that Gaddis, Indiana's first state leader of home demonstration agents in Purdue's Department of Agricultural Extension, lived her entire life with her sister, Kate, who kept line-a-day diaries from 1906 until 1946. Diary notations throughout the years mention Lella Gaddis having dinner with Ross, going on rides with him and visiting his country home, in what is now Ross Hills Park.

"From evidence in Kate's diaries of the amount of time Ross and Gaddis spent together, I say yes, it was serious," she says. That evidence was backed up by information gleaned from a family member still living when Klink wrote her book.

Unfortunately, the diaries from 1938 to 1944 are missing, so it's unclear what transpired between the two in the last few years of Ross' life. And there's no evidence of why they never married, if they were indeed in love. Klink wonders if it was simply because they both led high-profile lives at Purdue. "Maybe they liked their independence and wanted to keep it that way," she says.

Ross was not a churchgoer, but the Gaddis sisters and many other Purdue folks belonged to Central Presbyterian Church, and that's where his funeral was held. Afterwards, the university closed campus for two hours so that faculty, staff and students could attend a memorial service by Purdue Research Foundation.

Ross, who at his request was buried on a knoll where Slayter Hill is now located, left most of his estate to Purdue, Home Hospital and several relatives.

"In many ways, Purdue was his family and his home," Harmeyer says. "I don't think he would have chosen to be buried on Purdue's campus if he hadn't felt that his legacy was forever tied to the university and its success." ★



Courtesy Purdue University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections

Ross is buried on what is now Slater Hill.

"...his legacy was forever tied to the university and its success"



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BY CINDY GERLACH
PHOTOS PROVIDED



the great

comeback

Discover how local restaurants are adapting to a COVID world



Everyone loves eating out. Perhaps your ideal evening is sitting down to fine dining, with candles and linen napkins, a fine bottle of wine; maybe you like to be perched on a stool across from your favorite bartender, chatting with other regulars. Or maybe your idea of a fun night out is grabbing hamburgers or pizza with the kids. However you do it, it's a treat to have someone else mix your drink or prepare your dinner and have it brought to your table, served with a friendly smile.

And suddenly, in March, it all stopped. Under orders designed to help contain the spread of COVID-19, restaurants around the state were forced to close to dine-in customers, relegated only to carry-out. Restaurants quickly had to adapt and change. Now, as they slowly reopen their dining rooms to customers, what does that mean? What changes have they had to make? And what does the future look like?

Bistro 501

The popular restaurant on the corner of Main and Fifth streets in downtown Lafayette is not necessarily known for its carry-out menu, though it's always been an option, says Theresa Buckley who, with sister, Cheyenne, and mother, Mary, owns and operates the restaurant.

Most people, says Buckley, choose the Bistro for its atmosphere and service. But when forced to shut its doors, having done carry-out, they were quickly able to adapt.

"We had to adjust what we were offering so it would travel well," she says. They focused on a menu with entrées that would look appetizing when people opened the box.

Menu changes were made; staff members who had been servers were suddenly delivering meals — anything people could do to get hours.

Flexibility has been important. In general, Buckley says, they try to be as green as possible and not order a lot of disposable products. But with the carry-out model, they had to change. And change again and



again, as food shortages might mean ingredients were not available, or a particular carry-out box or bag was suddenly not available through their suppliers.

They used the opportunity to unveil the Bistro Market, allowing customers to purchase specialty food items through the store, including dairy and eggs, bakery and breads, produce, butcher and fresh seafood, meal kits, pantry items (dried beans and pasta, deli items) and even household items such as hand sanitizer and paper products. It was an idea they'd been mulling, Buckley says, but with the shutdown, it seemed like an opportune time to try it. Yet it brought up its own issues, as many of the items purchased arrive in bulk, so plans had to be made for repackaging.

Following a deep cleaning, when the restaurant reopened in June, Buckley had to oversee a number of changes in protocol. The restaurant created a safety promise to its customers and implemented some changes, including one door for entry and a separate door for exits; all

restroom doors have foot openers. Customers must have reservations. Employees are screened for their health every day and will be wearing masks, even in the kitchen. Tables are six feet apart, and parties must be six or fewer. Water service will be different, and salt and pepper will not be on the table.

Buckley is doing everything she can to keep the restaurant safe for both customers and her staff. She knows how much regulars miss sitting at the bar, but that reopening will have to wait until it's approved.

It's an unpredictable time, says Buckley, as she juggles the already challenging job of day-to-day restaurant business with the extra hurdles of life during a pandemic. Like many people, she has had difficulty getting the proper personal protective equipment needed for her employees. And she is sensitive to the needs of people struggling with anxiety and depression during these difficult days.

The restaurant's bottom line has suffered, she says; with no Purdue graduation weekend or Mother's

Day brunch, Bistro lost business. With no downtown events, they know their revenues will be down. Ordinarily Bistro would have had its annual Lobster Bake and jazz Thursdays — sadly, not this year.

“We have a high ratio of high-risk guests,” she says. “It’s a lot to manage, and we’re trying to do so super-respectfully of our staff. We’re not comfortable taking risks with others’ health.”

Folie

Across the street at Folie, Hallie Gorup and her husband, John, were monitoring the situation long before many locals, as John is a local physician and their daughter was studying in Italy last spring. They were tuned in to what was happening with the novel coronavirus; thus, even before the state mandated closures, the Gorups had decided to shut Folie’s doors for a time.

“We were paying more attention than the average person,” Hallie Gorup says. “We decided the respectful thing to do would be to shut down temporarily.”

Many of their staff members are Purdue students, so when the university closed, they left, meaning Folie did not have to deal with layoffs.

As they pivoted to a take-out model, they dealt with many of the same issues Bistro did, as they tried to adapt a menu that is based on presentation, on a plate, to a box. The menu was scaled way back, and they used the opportunity to experiment with the menu; knowing that volume was down, if food items weren’t a big hit, they had not made quite the investment.

“It’s been a nice challenge for the chef,” Gorup says, as he would try out his creativity with different entrées. “Sometimes it was robust, sometimes it was nothing.”

When restrictions were lifted to offer wine as a carryout option, that helped boost the bottom line as well, Gorup says.

As the restaurant reopened, Gorup says the transition back was not too difficult.

“We were never a crowded restaurant,” she says. “And we have a

small kitchen staff, which allows for better distancing.”

Folie has made accommodations to meet the guidelines, which means no bar seating and not filling the restaurant. And while there is a lot more cleaning, Gorup points out that they were already meeting those sanitation standards anyway. Staff members were already washing their hands frequently, and the sanitizing was already happening. Now they’re just more cognizant.

“Our biggest challenge is not being



able to seat parties of six or larger,” she says. “But we’re more than happy to comply. You have to be a part of the solution.”

While the restaurant is not yet overflowing with business, they do have groups come in, pleased that there is someplace to go for a special celebration or an evening out. And they are weathering the storm. Summer has always been a slower time, and there is uncertainty about when large-scale entertaining will be back in full force.

“‘Recovery’ is a generous word right now,” Gorup says. “But I’m not complaining.”

Christos, The Bryant, Red Seven and Café Literato

For the Christos hospitality group, adding extra hygiene standards is just par for the course, says owner Manny Papadogiannis.

“For us, all the pieces were there — washing hands for 20 seconds, sanitizing surfaces,” he says. “Those

are all in the health department guidelines.”

The restaurants have merely upped the work they were already doing. They’ve added hooks to bathroom doors, enabling customers to open them using their wrists; employees are wearing facial coverings. Papadogiannis says they’re adhering to the county health department guidelines. But they are also tapping into other resources.

Customers are encouraged to use apps for reservations or to get their names on a wait list — available through the restaurant websites.

“Everybody has to step up their game,” he says. “You want to be safe wherever you go.”

Papadogiannis points out that, for all the worries about restaurants, they are much cleaner than other places. In a big box store, hundreds, maybe even thousands, of people go through each day. Restaurants have much lighter traffic and they are cleaning so much more often.

“If you compare the number of staff and customers we have coming in, we can do that with that ratio,” he says.

“It’s a little bit of an adjustment. But you do what you need to do to get through this. It’s going to take a while. It’s going to be a very long road for the restaurant industry.”

La Scala

La Scala used to be known for its farm-fresh food and Italian fare in its historic downtown Lafayette locale.

But that was before. It closed the doors on its dining room right before the shutdown.

Owner Kirsten Serrano found herself reeling, trying to figure out what to do as the business she and her husband, Paco, opened 21 years ago was shuttered.

The couple’s first response was to found Community Comfort, a plan to feed the community — because, Serrano says, that’s what she does.



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“It was a lot,” she says. They were working around the clock.

But what was next?

“I literally just sat with a pencil and paper one day, and thought, what can we do?” she says. “We have all these assets — a community kitchen, a farm, experience.”

And the answer came to her — not out of pessimism, but out of realism. Because she does not see herself reopening La Scala before the time feels right.

Hence, she developed Good to Go, a meal subscription service. It is modeled after many other meal-kit services, except with this one, it’s not just ingredients, but food that is chef-prepared, ready to serve.

“Our stuff is cooked, it’s ready to go,” she says. “It’s farm-fresh food; we prepare it and deliver it to your door.”

Good to Go is delivered on Thursdays. Depending on your plan, you’ll get entrees, sides, dessert, and an extra surprise — local products, extra produce from the farm or promotions.

As the service grows, they’ll be able to bring back more of their employees. It’s satisfying, Serrano says. Because, after all, feeding people is what she does best. And this venture? It’s helping La Scala stay afloat.

“We’re building a model that can survive a pandemic.”

Revolution Barbeque

Opening a new restaurant is challenging enough. If your grand opening was scheduled for March 2020? Well, it’s tough to open a new business when the entire country is shutting down.

But Revolution Barbeque has simply rolled with the punches, says Debbie McGregor. They just turned the opening into more of a soft opening.

“It didn’t stop us!” she says.

McGregor runs the new restaurant — an off-shoot, if you will, of Revolution Bakery on Fifth Street — with her daughter, Sarah McGregor Ray (the creative force, her mother says) and her son, Jonathan. Her husband, Geoff, a contractor, has helped with the remodeling of the restaurant on Main Street. It’s a true family endeavor.

The restaurant was already set up for fast-casual dining, says McGregor. So take-out food was easy enough to accommodate.

Because they ended up rolling out their business a little slower than they had planned, it allowed them to defer some remodeling in the dining room. And when they did open, they had rearranged the space, removing some tables to factor in distancing requirements.

“Not many people are able to reconstruct their whole dining room,” McGregor says.

Like all restaurants, they’ve paid attention to hygiene and sanitation standards. But of course, she says, they would have anyway.

“You are cleaning all the time; you’re always washing your hands,” she says. “We always wore gloves.” They just added a few extra steps, such as how they take items to and from the table.

And, sadly, they had to put away the cute napkin holders they had purchased for the tables — they’ll have to make their debut at a later date.

McGregor knows that for some people, dining out is still filled with



some unease. But she is anxious to make everyone’s experience as painless as possible. For people worried about the exchange of cash or touching a screen to sign for a credit card transaction, she will meet people where they are, at their level of comfort.

Customers who were already regulars at the bakery had been eagerly anticipating the opening of the new barbeque place, McGregor says. And they’ve all been very supportive. From a promotion through Greater Lafayette Commerce promoting purchasing of restaurant gift cards to generous tips from customers, McGregor has felt embraced by the city.

“It has been working,” she says. “We’ve had good support from the community.”

As restaurants work to keep their doors open, anxious to serve their customers, Gorup says she hopes people will stop and realize how vital these businesses are to the lifeblood of Lafayette.

“They live in the community and they’ve always been very giving. When people need donations, restaurants are on the front lines, the first asked,” Gorup says. “I do hope there is better recognition and support for the restaurant community.” ★

The Serrano family farm provides the farm-fresh food for its new business venture — Good To Go.



The 'cool factor' in coworking

How MatchBOX is building Greater Lafayette's entrepreneurial economy

BY ANGELA K. ROBERTS
PHOTOS PROVIDED

Sporting stained concrete floors, exposed brick, glass-walled conference rooms, and a mixture of bar stools and table seating, MatchBOX Coworking Studio is, as its website says, a “coffee shop mashed up with an office park in an old garage.” It’s also a cross between an open office rental space, a maker studio and a business incubator, all designed to grow Greater Lafayette’s entrepreneurial economy.

Launched in 2014 in an old car repair shop west of downtown Lafayette’s Tippecanoe County Public Library, MBX boasts 11,000 square feet with reserved and open office spaces, conference rooms and a lot of support for its members, including training and networking opportunities.

“MBX offers a pretty unique vibe and environment for our members,” says Amanda Findlay, MatchBOX managing director. “We also offer members access to the MBX Maker LAB, with laser cutters, 3D printers, and tools and kits for making, prototyping and small-scale manufacturing.”

MatchBOX has evolved over the last six years, says Jason Tennenhouse, executive director. “When we opened the doors, we didn’t know if anyone would come, so at the beginning we were just trying to cast a wide net and educate and survive — classic startup style,” Tennenhouse says. “We have been increasing our acceleration work and productivity steadily since then, and doing some pretty amazing things I think a lot of people don’t realize are happening in Lafayette.”



Making key connections

MBX may still be a best-kept secret among some locals, but not Kirsten Serrano, who co-owns La Scala Italian Restaurant in downtown Lafayette and joined the studio three years ago. “I needed to have a place where I could concentrate on finishing school — nutrition — and do some political advocacy work,” says Serrano, who was pursuing a degree from Bauman College at the time.

As part of her internship, Serrano conducted a series of nutrition workshops in MatchBOX conference rooms. After graduation, she began seeing clients in the facility. Since then, her nutrition business, Small Wonder Food, has expanded beyond consultations. In 2018, she launched the Food Smarts podcast with local marketing strategist Amie Mullikin. In mid-2020, she published the book “Eat to Your Advantage.”

MBX has been instrumental in that growth, Serrano says.

“I have made many key connections at MatchBOX, from my podcast partner to my book publisher and even the person who built my new membership site. I have also attended many great workshops and learning events,” she says. “The staff is just incredible. Every one of them has inspired me or connected me in some way or another.”

A place for quirky misfits

Seasoned entrepreneur Mikel Berger says that MatchBOX is the kind of place that he wished had existed when he started his first company, DelMar Software Development. “I worked from home at first, and it felt like a big leap to sign a one-year or multi-year lease, especially when I occasionally needed another office,” says Berger, a co-founder of MBX.

Berger’s latest project is Little Engine Ventures, a private investment partnership he started in 2016 with fellow MBX member Daryl Starr.

Starr, the founder and former CEO of an agricultural company, joined the coworking studio before it officially opened. While Little Engine Ventures has a private office a few blocks away, both men retain memberships at MBX.

“My membership at MatchBOX has secured several partnerships during the founding phase of Little Engine Ventures. As many members can attest, an invite to meet a prospective person at MatchBOX has a cool factor that makes working with a scrappy startup somewhat less crazy, and more fun,” he says.

Starr describes MBX members as “quirky and great.” Berger echoes those thoughts, adding, “We at MatchBOX like to think of ourselves as the right kind of misfits. We’re like the junk drawer of economic development projects. Isn’t all the cool stuff that you don’t exactly know where to put in your junk drawer?”

Integrating into Greater Lafayette

Indianapolis transplant Polly Barks says that MatchBOX helped her integrate into Greater Lafayette when she moved here in 2017. Barks, who had launched the website PollyBarks.com while living in Indy, was in the early stages of developing a zero-waste education and consulting business. After taking a five-week course for new and pivoting entrepreneurs, she joined



the studio. She now supplements her freelance income as part-time marketing manager for MBX.

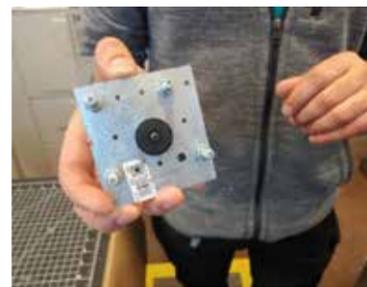
“Doing 100 percent freelance work meant I was constantly at home — too often that meant I was unfocused, and to be honest, probably watching YouTube videos. It was really nice to have a space so I could separate my work life from my home life,” Barks says. “I also really enjoyed the workshops since I could learn — for free — from other members or outside speakers.”

Two other newcomers to Lafayette, Tyler Knochel and Steven Sauder, participated in the first iteration of MBX’s Acceleration Program. Now, they use their MatchBOX membership for meeting with clients of their web development and digital strategy business, HustleFish.

“The ability to meet with clients in a professional space instead of at a coffee shop or our living room — we wouldn’t do that — is invaluable to us. Beyond that, the community has been huge,” Knochel says. “We’ve been able to do better work thanks to MatchBOX, we’ve gotten new clients thanks to MatchBOX, we’ve clarified our business model thanks to MatchBOX, we’ve been more creative and had better ideas thanks to MatchBOX, we’ve drunk gallons and gallons of coffee thanks to MatchBOX. We have benefited from MatchBOX in so many ways, but ultimately the most important thing MatchBOX provides is community.”

Supporting businesses in what’s next

Much like the Great Recession of 2008, which sparked the coworking movement in the United States, the first half of 2020 has already been a time of economic upheaval. Findlay notes that some MBX members have been deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including restaurateurs and professionals who rely on in-person instruction. To respond, MatchBOX staff have added educational programs on concepts such as pivoting and product expansion.



They’ve also shifted to online instructional models. In early March, when cities and states began issuing stay-at-home orders, MBX staff decided to take their Entrepreneur Development Acceleration program online and open applications to participants across the state. The program yielded a record number of applicants, which Findlay attributes to layoffs, furloughs and uncertainty in the job market. The 12-week Venture Development summer acceleration program also was offered online this year.

“Times of crisis and uncertainty are ripe for innovation. When 9 to 5 jobs are threatened by furloughs, or the future of certain industries are unknown, or consumer behaviors shift significantly, people tend to embrace their entrepreneurial ideas or freelancing talents a bit more,” Findlay says.

“Greater Lafayette will need coworking communities, workshops and acceleration programming now more than ever. Small businesses will need community support, new founders will need guidance. I think MatchBOX is positioned to be a valuable resource for our members and our community businesses as we move forward. We’re really focused on being there for them, for supporting them in what’s next.” ★

“Times of crises and uncertainty are ripe for innovation.”

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Vicki Davis visits the dog park with (from left) Baloo, Hank and Cheyenne.

It's a Dog's Life

BY RADONNA FIORINI PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE PETKOV

Our furry canine companions are no longer just man's best friend; they're often considered family, and businesses designed to train, pamper and groom them have sprung up across Greater Lafayette.

While there are about 20 dog grooming businesses in the area, some newer ones focus on strengthening the human/animal bond or providing services such as doggy day care and spa experiences.

Paul Whitehurst, owner of Pooch Palace Resort, had an epiphany in 2016 when his beloved German shepherd Zoey passed away.

“She was my kid. She was everything to me,” says Whitehurst. “When she passed away ... I was at a crossroads. For a long time I’d had this idea in my head to provide an upscale pet resort. I wanted to target other owners who are true pet parents.”

After 18 years in the corporate world, Whitehurst decided to pursue his dream, and in 2017 on the first anniversary of Zoey’s passing, he opened the first Pooch Palace Resort on Beck Lane in Lafayette. The business was so successful that in February he opened a second location on Sagamore Parkway in West Lafayette. While ruefully acknowledging that opening a new business during a pandemic is not the best idea, Whitehurst says many customers are grateful that the waiting lists for grooming and boarding are shorter.

Pooch Palace offers grooming, boarding, day-care and training. Dogs boarded there stay in private “hotel” rooms equipped with toddler beds and a television tuned to DogTV. The dogs get five potty breaks each day and absent owners can check in on, and even talk to, their pets through a private Webcam accessed through their phones.

The business also offers grooming and full or half-day care where dogs play in groups either indoors or out. The outdoor play park features



a synthetic turf called Pup-Grass specifically designed for dogs. That means your pet will never come home muddy, Whitehurst says.

The business closed for a while as the COVID-19 pandemic ramped up, but it reopened with limited hours and services in April, and then more fully in May. Whitehurst hopes to be back to full capacity by August.

He affirms that one of the reasons his business has been so successful is pet owners are more invested in their furry friends than ever before. But a disruptive family member can bring chaos and tension into a home, so training and understanding is key to living harmoniously with a pet.

That’s where Julie Shaw and her business, Stepping Stone Animal Training, comes in. Shaw has spent her professional career focusing on animal behavior and is one of only 16 board-certified veterinary behavior technicians in the country. After spending many years in private practice and teaching Purdue vet students, Shaw became convinced that dog owners needed help understanding their pet’s behavior and learning how to work *with* the animal.

“Animal behavior is very complex,” Shaw says. “If owners get the information (they need) early on, it makes a big difference. We are not just treating the dog, but helping the owner understand the world through the dog’s eyes.”

Stepping Stone, located on Teal Road in Lafayette, is dedicated to strengthening and protecting the human-animal bond. To that end, the business

offers programs lasting between four and eight weeks for puppies and older dogs. Puppy classes focus on training the littlest fur balls to be calm, happy and emotionally healthy pets. Small class sizes and academy-educated trainers also help older dogs that need to learn socialization skills and manners.



Paul Whitehurst spends some time with one of Pooch Palace’s guests.



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Stepping Stone offers classes for puppies and older dogs.

“All dogs have their own quirkiness and individual challenges,” says Shaw. “We encourage what is positive in them and help identify what behaviors they need to work on.”

Shaw emphasizes that the programs are not daycare, but provide a very structured environment in which the dogs are always learning, while still being allowed to be dogs.

Lafayette resident Diana Cavanaugh took her Bernese mountain dog, Jojo, to Stepping Stone in 2017, when the puppy was about three months old. The experience was a good one for the entire family and helped them work together and be consistent with Jojo’s training.

“It was great because we were able to get the entire family involved and everyone was on the same page when it came to training,” Cavanaugh says. “The team that worked with us was very knowledgeable and patient.”

While some of Stepping Stone’s services have been curtailed because of the pandemic, the company’s virtual services have taken off, Shaw says. She offers group, puppy and adult classes online that include videos, reading assignments and virtual check-ins each week.

Shaw is concerned about the many families that have adopted dogs during the pandemic and been home with little structure or opportunity for the pet to be in different situations. When school and regular work schedules resume and the house is empty, those dogs will likely have problems, she says, adding that puppies need to be socialized in their first eight to 14 weeks. In the spring, Stepping Stone began hosting pandemic puppy parties for dogs 16-weeks and younger. Once a week, the pups come to Stepping Stone for supervised play and interaction with new people and other puppies. Owners can watch the fun on their phones.

Shaw takes an holistic approach to each dog’s welfare, assessing both the animal’s physical and mental health. Some dogs have chemical imbalances in their brains and need medication, so understanding each dog’s behavior is critical, she says.

That holistic approach also informs grooming at Stepping Stone. Shaw calls the service fear-free grooming, and dogs are trained to cooperate with the groomer so that the experience is

less stressful. For example, dogs are allowed to jump off the grooming table and come back when they’re ready. Each one receives a report card with suggestions for the owner of behaviors to work on.

“We are the first in the country to offer this,” she says. “You pay more because we are using behavior modification. Pain can be a factor in grooming so we are constantly grading them on their emotional and physical health.”

And another local business is training groomers in Shaw’s methods. Kerri Wagner, owner of Bark Avenue Day Spa on Britt Farm Road in Lafayette, and her staff of five worked with Stepping Stone to better understand animal behavior.

“(All dogs) teach us something,” Wagner says. “I believe all of the dogs that are scared and unable to be groomed ... have taught us that dogs really do learn and react to everything so differently than us. Stepping Stone Animal Training has really helped us learn this and is teaching us how to help all the animals with their behavior.”

Bark Avenue groomers don’t usually cage dogs coming in for a bath and a haircut. Open-top kennels are used if necessary; otherwise dogs are together in the grooming room. And if Bark Avenue can’t effectively help a dog that comes in, Wagner sends that dog to a Stepping Stone groomer who helps with behavior modification.

The staff at Bark Avenue Day Spa



Bark Avenue staff work to understand a dog's reaction to being groomed.



Dog parks give dogs the opportunity to run freely and socialize with other dogs.



And the word “spa” in the company name is not hyperbole. Pet parents can choose for their furry family member a variety of luxury experiences, including mud baths, blueberry facials with a mini face massage and hot oil treatments. If you live in Lafayette or West Lafayette, a groomer also will pick up your pooch from home and bring the freshly coiffed critter back at the end of the work day.

Good training and behavior bring many positives to dogs and owners alike, but some dog owners face the additional challenge of not having a fenced yard or much time for long walks. For those with high-energy animals, a trip to a dog park may be a real treat.

Dog parks give owners the chance to exercise their dogs and provide socialization with other pets and their humans, says Tracy Walder, director of operations for the Dog Park Association of Greater Lafayette. The non-profit oversees Shamrock Dog Park on Sanford Street near Lafayette’s Wabash River. The facility is supported by the Lafayette Parks Department.

“Shamrock Dog Park provides a secure off-leash area for dogs to interact and release energy,” says Walder. “Poor dog behavior is often a

result of poor socialization and pent-up energy. The dog park helps owners satisfy the needs of their dogs. A tired dog is a well-behaved dog.”

The facility requires a paid membership and has an extensive list of regulations designed to keep dogs and their owners safe and happy. Dogs must be healthy and up-to-date with vaccinations. Members receive a key fob that allows them into the park.

Shamrock Dog Park enjoys good support from some local veterinarians, who help with fund-raising events and provide information about vaccinations and health issues. Two vets write monthly articles for the member Facebook page and volunteer during special events, Walder says. The volunteer board also appreciates the working relationship they have with Buckles Feed Depot and Pet Supplies Plus, Lafayette companies that support the park’s work.

Walder, who owns CritterSitters (an in-home pet care service) and is a founding member of the park, says overall the members are a close-knit community, working to make their relationships with their dogs a healthy part of their lives.

“Most people are a little apprehensive about the first time letting their dog off leash in the

park, and it is rewarding to see other members assure them that it will be just fine,” she says. “Our members find that their dogs are aware when they are headed to the park and are happy to interact with other dogs. People can socialize over a shared interest and also have a sounding board when there are questions about behavior, health, veterinarian or daycare choices.”

Sarah Huber has been going to the park since she moved to Lafayette in 2016 with her dog Hazel. Hazel has since passed away, but now Sarah goes almost every day with her goldendoodles, Juniper and Ike.

“I look forward to going to the dog park as much as my dogs!” Huber says. “Walking them on leashes, even long walks, doesn’t tire them out. They are running and playing the entire time (at the park) and it brings me such joy to see them both run in big circles across the field and play with other dogs. They just seem the happiest and their best selves at the park. Both can barely contain themselves as we pull up to the park each day.”

And there are other perks. Huber wanted her pets to be comfortable around other dogs and people, so the park gives opportunities for Ike

and Juniper to have new experiences. She’s made friends there and says going is a great way to either start the day or decompress after work.

“I am as happy as the dogs,” she says. “The members are great. When you go, there’s no pressure to talk to people. You can do your own thing, but if you want to chat, it’s a great group of people.”

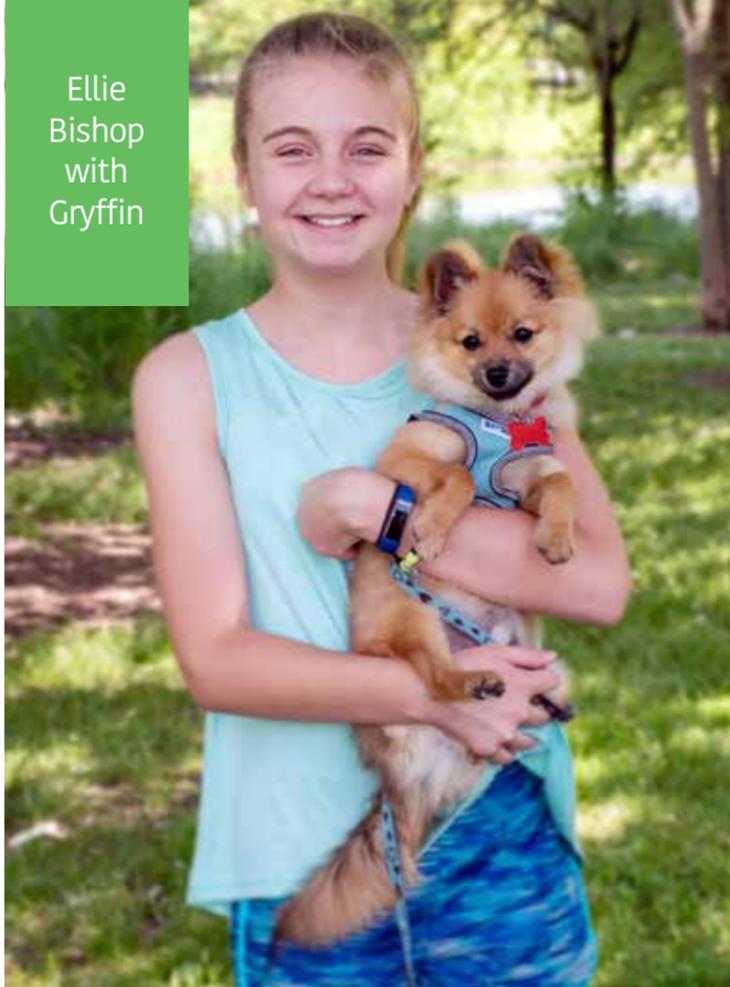
Huber’s advice to a pet parent who has never used a dog park is to evaluate your own pet’s behavior and take it slow. If you don’t know how your dog might react to other dogs off leash, first try one of the fields that don’t have many dogs. There are fenced areas for big and small dogs, and the park offers a day pass and occasional free play days. Those dates and other information about rules and requirements can be found on the park’s website.

The park closed for more than eight weeks when the pandemic hit, but it opened again toward the end of May. To help ensure safety, communal toys and water containers have been removed and soap has been added at the water stations. Members are asked to abide by social distancing rules, wear masks and bring their own hand sanitizer. ★



On a sunny Saturday in June, Greater Lafayette Magazine headed to Armstrong Park to photograph dog owners and their furry pals. Here's who we met:

Jacob Kuhn & Kara Simon-Kuhn with Zelda



Ellie Bishop with Gryffin



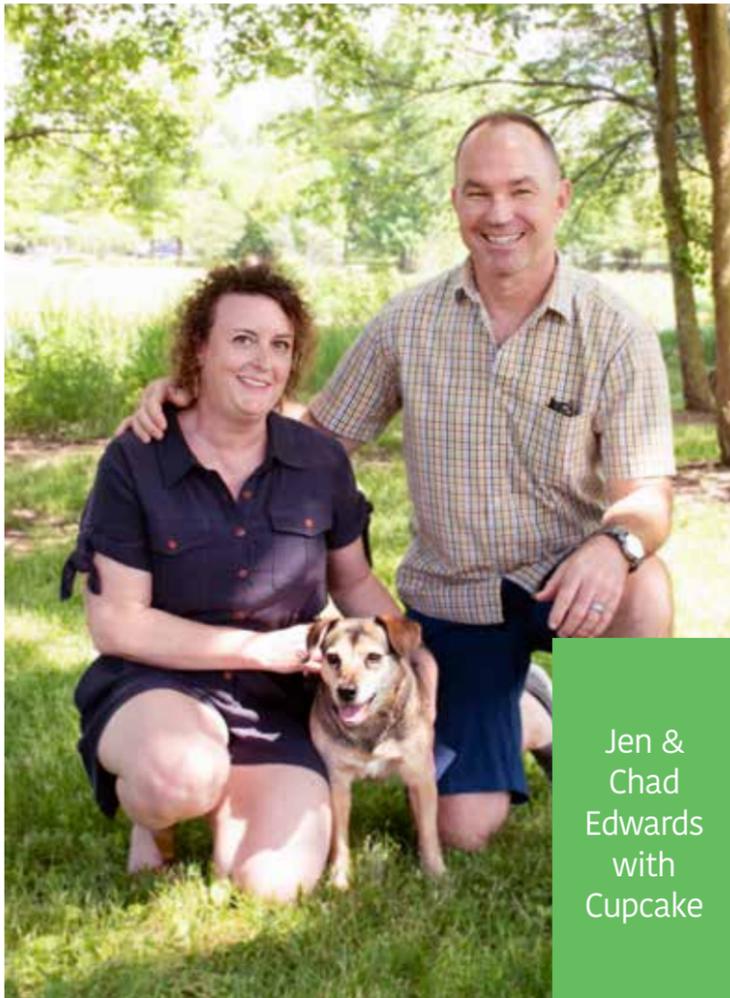
Lori Bauerle with Finn



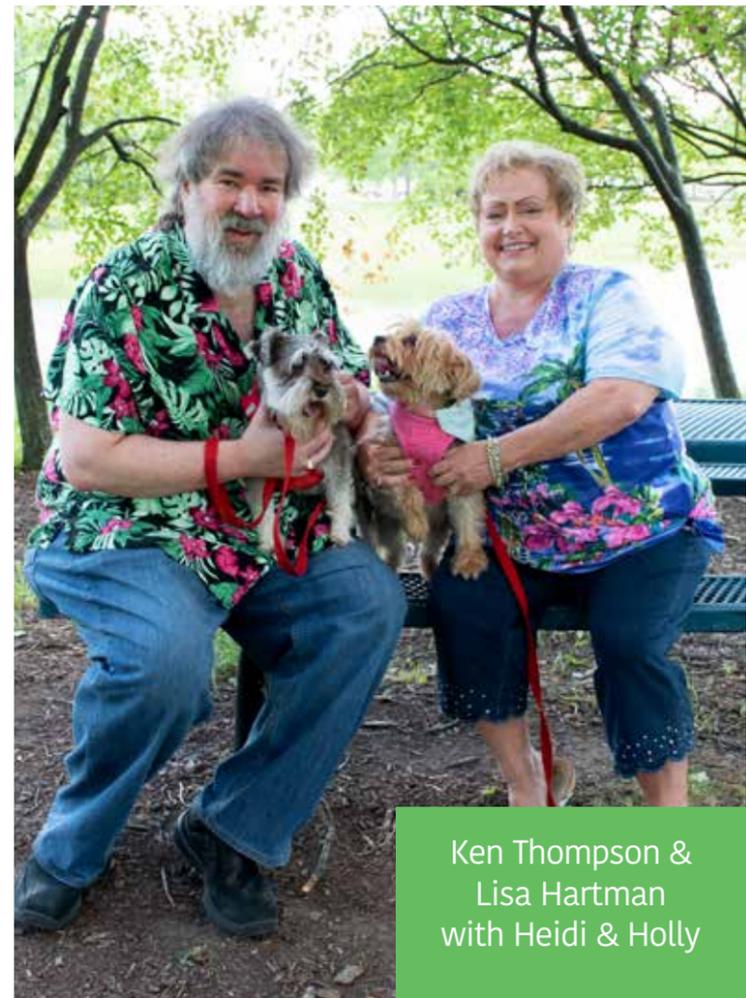
Angela Roberts with Jessie



Terry Seal with Bell Pepper



Jen & Chad Edwards with Cupcake



Ken Thompson & Lisa Hartman with Heidi & Holly



Cameron McWilliams & daughter Sami with Max



Collette Chidalek with Mochi



Bob Segó with Milady & Sassy



Deb Banks & granddaughter Jade with Tango

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Food trucks roll out unique, flavorful fare **TO GO**

BY ANGELA K. ROBERTS
PHOTOS PROVIDED

Street food in the United States dates back to the late 17th century, when vendors in East Coast cities began selling meals from carts and street kitchens. In the ensuing 300-plus years, food-truck offerings have grown from 19th century chuckwagons to 20th century ice cream trucks and hot dog carts and now to 21st century gourmet restaurants on wheels.

Today, in towns like Greater Lafayette, a growing number of food trucks can satisfy all but the pickiest of eaters. Here, we feature six vendors along with a more comprehensive list for your culinary journey. Check each website for details.

EMT FOOD TRUCK emtfoodtruck.com

Amber Davis grew up during what she calls the “quick food era, where most of what we consumed involved cans of cream of ... boxes or jars of ... frozen microwaveable things ... powdery mixes of who knows what.” Thankfully, she learned where food really came from by picking vegetables and collecting eggs at her grandmother’s rural home. Now, since 2012, Davis’ EMT (Emergency Munchie Technicians) Food Truck has tended to locals’ homegrown food needs with gourmet vegetarian and vegan menu items, including salads, waffle sandwiches and lemonades crafted from homemade simple syrup and fresh pureed fruit.

If you want to kick it up a notch, try the Mac Nugget Poppers, dusted in panko crumbs and fried. “I think mac and cheese is something everyone can get down with,” Davis says. Some menu items are gluten-free. Visit the truck at the West Lafayette Farmers Market, Brokerage Brewing Company and various Greater Lafayette neighborhoods.

FAMOUS FRANK’S facebook.com/famousfranksPU

On most Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights during Purdue University’s academic year, around the corner from the line at Harry’s Chocolate Shop, you’ll find hungry college students waiting to feast on triple-layered grilled cheese, wonton wraps and other fried goodies that pair well with beer. Begun in 1995 as a push-cart business, Famous Frank’s first sold hot dogs, Polish sausages and Bratwurst outside the original Von’s Comic Book Shop. By 2005, owner Frank Farmer had acquired his first food truck, equipped with a fryer for expanding his offerings. Later, while cooking for hungry college men at a local fraternity, Farmer created his own version of Fat Sandwiches, which he describes as “some sort of concoction of mozzarella sticks, fries, steak and sauces all on a hoagie.” For people wanting a gluten-free and vegan option, Frank’s sells falafel wraps from a local restaurant.





THE GUAC BOX

[facebook.com/guacbox765](https://www.facebook.com/guacbox765)
[wherestheguac.com](https://www.wherestheguac.com)

Avocadoes seem to be one of those foods that you either love or hate. But even if you're firmly entrenched in the latter group, you should find plenty to savor at the Guac Box. It's owned by chef Matt Bestich, who tested his recipes at a Purdue fraternity before purchasing a truck "fully loaded and ready to go" in 2018. Bestich's truck specializes in modern Tex-Mex tacos named after friends and family, including the Kelly, a taco with creamy queso and crispy shoestring potatoes, and the Nick, with street corn, cotija cheese and guac. All tacos can be made gluten-free, vegetarian or vegan; the chips – which you can get with hand-smashed guacamole – are

made from gluten-free corn tortillas. Currently, the truck parks regularly at Brokerage Brewing Company and has been visiting local neighborhoods during the pandemic. "Food trucks are the original curbside service," Bestich says.

GYPSY JOE COFFEE SHOP

[facebook.com/gypsyjoecoffeeshop](https://www.facebook.com/gypsyjoecoffeeshop)
[instagram.com/gypsyjoecoffeeshop](https://www.instagram.com/gypsyjoecoffeeshop)

Working in a coffee shop years ago, Ashley Huff dreamed of opening up her own place where she could serve brewed drinks with a side of positivity. In 2019, when a deal fell through on a building she had her eye on, Huff decided to take her idea mobile. The aptly named Gypsy Joe Coffee Shop sells brewed coffee, lattes, chai tea, lemonade and freshly brewed iced tea. Sugar-free



syrops and non-dairy milks such as soy and almond also are available. Unlike most coffeehouse social media accounts, Huff doesn't post much about coffee at all, preferring instead to infuse her followers' feeds with words and photos of affirmation. "You will find daily posts from my heart, so if I can't reach you with coffee, I hope at least that starts your day off right," she says. For some joe to go, visit her regularly on State Road 43 just outside Battle Ground.

PURITAN CONEY ISLAND EXPRESS

[facebook.com/puritanconeyislandexpress](https://www.facebook.com/puritanconeyislandexpress)

Gary Dowell has loved coney dogs since he was a child. Back then, while riding shotgun in his dad's fuel truck, Dowell would disembark



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downtown at Lou's Puritan Coney Island to pick up lunch while his father drove around the block. Later, when he was working at a local gravel pit, Dowell spent his winter months helping out at Main Street Coney, which had acquired the Puritan recipe. When that establishment closed, the owner gave Dowell the recipe for the savory sauce made of hamburger and several spices, which he used to open a food truck business in 2019. A café at Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana followed in 2020. While coney dogs made with the 75-year-old recipe are still a specialty, nacho supremes are the number one seller. Customers needing a gluten-friendly option can ask for a hot dog without the bun.

RTB CHEFS
facebook.com/rtbfoodtruck
rtbchefs.com

Mac and cheese with pulled pork or brisket? Why not. For smoked-meat foodies – especially those who like to wash down their meals with a pint of local beer – RTB Chefs routinely parks next to Brokerage Brewing Company, selling sandwiches, wraps and salads, most with smoked meat. Owned and operated by Jordan and Krissy Mirick, the business, which launched three years ago, grew out of a catering company in Illinois. “Chef Jordan has worked in a variety of restau-

rants from high-end fine dining to a local bar and grill,” the couple says. “We always enjoyed creating food to bring people together.” The truck, which also can be found at Murphy’s USA gas station on Veterans Memorial Parkway, has some vegan and vegetarian options. The meats are gluten-free without barbecue sauce. ★



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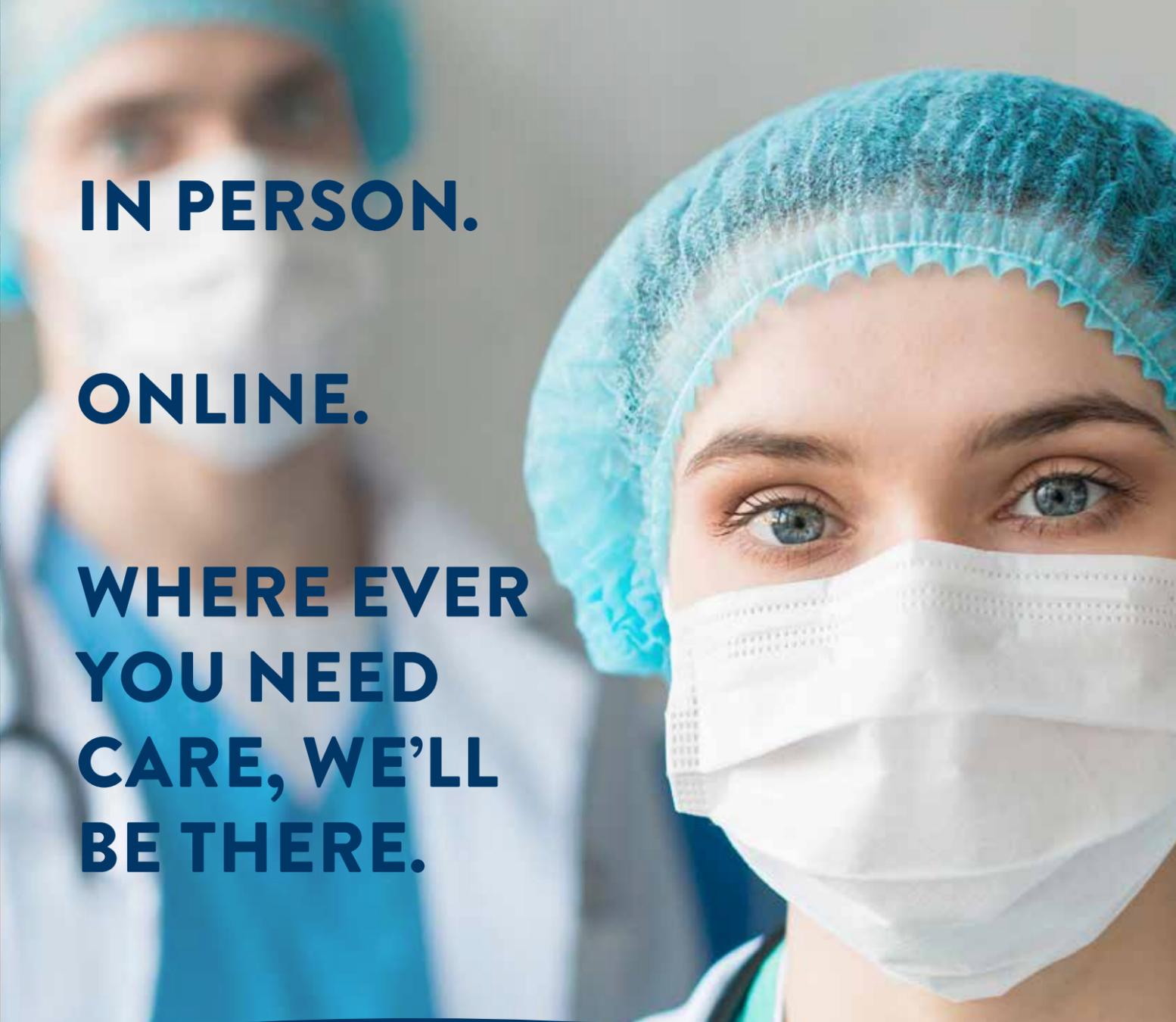
HERE ARE SOME OTHER FOOD TRUCKS IN THE AREA:

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- Frosty Freeze Food Truck: facebook.com/frostyfreezenovelties
- Grilled Chicken and Rice: ordergr.com
- Igloo On The Go: igloofrozenscustard.com
- Kona Ice of Tippecanoe County: facebook.com/konaiceofmidwestindiana
- L Kora Fastfood: facebook.com/lkora.fastfood
- Mitchell's Mexican Food Truck: facebook.com/MitchellsMex
- Porky's BBQ - Food Trailer: facebook.com/porkysbbqtrailer
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Rejuvenating Main Street

If you think downtown Lafayette is looking picturesque these days, then you've been watching its evolution. Over the past decades, while the downtown had its share of charm, sidewalks were looking as if they needed an update, a little tweaking to enhance the ambience.

Rejuvenating Main Street, a streetscaping program that has been underway for more than 15 years, continues this summer, improving sidewalks, adding gathering places downtown and planting trees.

It's a beautification project that not only makes the downtown scene more attractive, but it is a boon to business as well.

Plans for this project date back as far as the late 1970s, says Dennis Carson, economic development director for the City of Lafayette. Funding was made available in the mid-2000s; the first phase of the plan was rolled out in 2005.

So why the need to change the look of downtown? For decades, when people lived and worked near the downtown, it was the major shopping and business center, with retail shops lining the streets, anchored by the Courthouse, with restaurants and movie theaters. It was the shopping and business district.

BY CINDY GERLACH
PHOTOS PROVIDED

It's a beautification project that not only makes the downtown scene more attractive, but it is a boon to business as well.



The feel of downtown Lafayette began to shift and change in the 1960s and '70s, as it did in downtowns throughout the United States. With widespread use of the automobile and people moving farther away from the city center into more suburban neighborhoods, a shift occurred. By the 1980s, many businesses had fled to Market Square or the Tippecanoe Mall; single-screen movie theaters — places like the Long Center and the old Mars Theatre — had been abandoned in favor of larger multiplexes.

Downtowns were in danger.

But, Carson says, Lafayette's downtown fared much better than those of other, similar-sized cities.

"Fortunately, even in that time, there was a lot of interest in downtown," he says. Along with the Courthouse, many law firms and banks remained, as well as the newspaper and other government offices.

So the city took the lead, focusing on historic preservation. Much of the downtown consisted of buildings dating back to the first half of the 20th century, and the city wanted to preserve that architecture, knowing its value.

"One of the early efforts was historic preservation, to establish the historic district," says Carson. "They really tried to preserve the architecture we have. We lost some, too, but we've been able to preserve a lot."

But the need went beyond historic preservation and into safety. The sidewalks were so old that many had the WPA stamps, dating them back to the 1930s.

"It got to a point where not only did we need to do it for aesthetics, but there were several safety and ADA issues," Carson says.

Thus the streetscape plan for downtown was meant to enhance the district on several fronts. Clearly, part of the goal was simply to beautify downtown. Sidewalks have been widened, and the corners are larger, with benches added, making it easier for people to gather.

And with wider sidewalks, downtown restaurants were able to take advantage and add more outdoor dining space.

Bike racks encourage people to use other methods of transportation. And public art installations add visual interest.

If you've walked through downtown, you've seen the improvements. These all make downtown more accessible to people with a specific destination or those who just want to walk and browse, soaking up the small-town yet big-city aesthetic.

"One thing we really want to improve on is the pedestrian experience," Carson says. "So they don't park, go into the shop, then get in their car and leave. We want to encourage people to walk the downtown as much as possible."

For summer 2020, the project expands to upper Main Street, between 10th and 11th streets. Both sides of 10th Street, from Main north to Ferry, will see the widened sidewalks, striping and tree installation. The next phase will see the same improvements on the south side of Main Street between 10th and 11th, as well as 11th Street between Main and Ferry. The final phase, wrapping up at the end of September, will take the project south on both sides of 10th Street to Columbia.

The project is paid for through Tax Increment Financing, or TIF districts.



Business owners have been asked to contribute to a portion of the project in front of their buildings.

“There was a little apprehension at first,” Carson says. “But once it was done, everyone was really pleased.”

The energy and enthusiasm associated with downtown has increased over the past few years, with urban living opportunities and more retail and restaurants than ever, says Carson.

Over time, that value will continue to increase. With the variety of arts and culture opportunities, the festivals, and more shopping and dining options, people will continue to see and enjoy the revitalization of the streetscape project.

“It’s really transformed Main Street,” Carson says. “We’ve gotten a lot of comments; it’s been pretty well received. Over time we’ll see increased property values. It helps, helps maintain these historic structures. It’s been a fun thing and it’s been well received.” ★

For details on the project, visit lafayettedowntownisopen.com

PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE PETKOV





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Burning bright

Brittany Whitenack's candle company ships its products across the U.S. and Canada.





When Lafayette native Brittany Whitenack started making candles in her spare time, she had no idea that in five years, she would be the founder and CEO of a thriving company on the verge of expansion. In fact, she didn't even anticipate having more than five employees. But with support from the community

(in person and online) and a lot of hard work, Antique Candle Co. has grown to 34 employees who develop, market, make and ship candles all over the United States and Canada.

A graduate of McCutcheon High School and the Krannert School of Management at Purdue University, Whitenack has always loved candles.

"I would always buy a candle when I went to the grocery store," she says.

As a young professional, she bought a \$100 candle-making kit as a creative outlet and admits that her first few batches of candles weren't quite the high-quality products she sells today. "It's as much a science as an art," she explains. "I just kept making them and getting better and better."

Once she had honed her candle-making skills, she used the business skills she'd learned at Purdue to create a five-year plan for a company; she reached her five-year goal in just over two years.

"I didn't plan on all the growth," Whitenack says. "It just happened. We kept hiring the right people."

Due to exponential growth, Antique Candle Co. will be moving to a new facility, hopefully by the beginning of 2021. The company's new home will be located at 1611 Schuyler Avenue in Lafayette in an old dairy factory built in 1950. At 10,000 square feet, the building is ideal for manufacturing and will provide Antique Candle Co. with a proper loading dock, air conditioning in the warehouse and office space. The \$1 million renovations are scheduled to begin as soon as all permits are approved.

"This new home for the business — right here in Lafayette — will be the very first space that's all ours, built just for us with everything we need so we can continue to grow in the town we love," says Jaycie Tierney, brand manager for Antique Candle Co.

Tierney began as a part-time candle maker while still a student at Purdue. Her part-time job became a full-time job after graduation, and she now has the opportunity to use her degree working for a company she loves.

"It has been a blessing to grow with this company and work with some of the most kind-hearted people I've ever had the pleasure to be

"...it's as much a science, as an art."

“...we cherish our community so much



and always have their interest in our hearts...

friends with,” she says.

“This journey has made me fully understand the importance of supporting small businesses and the hardworking individuals behind the scenes.”

According to Whitenack, the employees at Antique Candle Co. are a constant source of the company’s success.

“Every single employee here, maybe their job isn’t to make candles, but they know how to make a candle,” she says. “They know the process. They know the product in and out. This helps with customer experience, social media, all marketing.”

One of Whitenack’s long-time employees is customer service specialist Ed McQuinn.

“I was Brittany’s first employee, so I have seen us manually stamping a few labels, and making candles on a stove, all the way to where we are now making thousands of candles every day,” he says.

The thousands of soy candles are each imprinted with a label that says “Made in Lafayette, IN” and include scents such as clean cotton, lavender vanilla, momma’s kitchen and many seasonal scents, including tree farm and pineapple coconut. Antique Candle Co. candles are sold in 400 retail locations in the United States and Canada, including The Homestead in West Lafayette.

Now entering its sixth year, Antique Candle Co. has seen much success through wholesale and retail

business.

When looking toward the future, McQuinn says he “can’t wait to see what we will do in regards to wholesale, and branching into other markets.”

Whitenack also attributes a large part of the company’s growth to e-commerce and direct marketing through social media platforms. Antique Candle Co. has a robust Instagram presence where employees post to stories at least 10 times a day to help build relationships with customers.

“As an e-commerce business and a small business, creating those relationships is so important when we can’t always see everyone face-to-face,” Tierney says. “Despite not



...Without them, we wouldn’t be where we are today.”

meeting most of them in person, many friends get to know our team as individuals through Instagram and other social media.”

And the company treats the relationships they build with candle friends, their customers and social media followers, like those they have with friends they know in their personal lives.

“At Antique Candle Co., we cherish our community so much and always have their interests in our hearts,” explains Tierney. “Without them, we wouldn’t be where we are today.”

The relational approach to business seems to correlate with Antique Candle Co.’s growth. According to Whitenack, the company has seen the most e-commerce growth in the

years where their followers have grown on social media.

“Our social media is engaging and genuine,” she says.

Even as many retailers have been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Antique Candle Co. has remained true to the value it places on taking care of employees by paying employees throughout the pandemic. The company makes sure that paying employees well is factored into its business plan.

“I always knew I wanted to pay our employees well,” says Whitenack. “Paying good employees well creates a higher quality product and better work environment.”

That work environment is something Whitenack and Antique Candle

Co. employees hold in high regard.

“The best part of owning a business is cultivating a work culture that I would want to work in,” she says.

As Antique Candle Co. prepares to renovate and eventually move into its new space, it will continue to value its employees, customers and quality in its products as the business grows and shines light on the members of the Lafayette community who work hard and find joy in sharing their candle-making talents. ★

BY KEN THOMPSON
PHOTOS PROVIDED

So much to scream about...



Local ice cream shops dole out summer's signature treat

In any other year, one of the joys of summertime is an ice cream cone after a ballgame or a day at the park.

But 2020 hasn't been any other year. Fortunately for Greater Lafayette, two ice cream institutions and a relative newcomer are open for business. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted Silver Dipper more than the Original Frozen Custard and Budge's, which unlike Silver Dipper, are seasonal businesses.

David Carlson, whose family opened the first of two Silver Dipper stores in 2001, lost about a month of business.

"In mid-March we decided to close out of an abundance of caution," Carlson says. "We sold our existing inventory to other small independent ice cream shops in Indiana. By mid-April our supplier was ramping up production again and we decided to reopen."

Silver Dipper, which has locations at 201 E. State St. and 307 Sagamore Parkway West, has strictly followed guidelines from the Tippecanoe County Health Department regarding cleaning, masks and social distancing.

"The reopening has gone well," Carlson says. "Since we began accepting credit cards in 2016, we were already set up to provide contactless payment options. We also created an online store thru silverdipper.com, where customers can order and pay online, then pick up their order through carryout or curbside."

The Carlson family spent years working in Chicago and commuting from northwest Indiana, all with a goal of buying a business in central Indiana. The Carlsons purchased the Baskin Robbins store at Purdue West in 2000, believing the presence of Purdue University and Tippecanoe County's diversified economy was a good business risk.

A year later, the Carlsons broke away from Baskin Robbins and opened the Silver Dipper location on Sagamore Parkway. Two years later, the Levee store followed.

"We decided to go independent in order to have more control over product quality, pricing and equipment," Carlson says.

"We consider the Sagamore Parkway store to be our 'family store' and the Levee to be the 'campus store.' But we see a lot of families and Lafayette customers at our Levee location too. Plus being the largest city in the county we see customers from all over the area."





One of Silver Dipper's trademarks is a variety of flavors, approximately 40 year-round flavors which are available on the website.

"We try to keep a variety to appeal to everyone, but it is customer demand that determines which flavors we carry," Carlson says. "We also carry 'no sugar added' options as well as Italian ices, which are non-dairy and non-fat."

When asked to list Silver Dipper's best-selling flavors, Carlson names Zanzibar, Oreo, Cookie Dough, Zoreo (Zanzibar and Oreo mixed together) and Peanut Butter Cookie Dough.

Only Zanzibar made the lengthy list of Carlson family favorites, which include Toffee Chocolate Chip, This S&! Just Got Serious, Chocolate Cherry Bomb, Coconut Almond Bliss and Pistachio.

Carlson and his family are grateful that not only have customers returned to buy ice cream but also merchandise such as Silver Dipper themed T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, cups and stickers.

"Lately, we have seen customers purchase them as a way to support their favorite local businesses during this difficult time," he says.

"We have been touched by the amount of support and concern for our business. We have loved being a part of the community the past 20 years and look forward to many more years serving our customers."

When it comes to years of serving Greater Lafayette customers, few local businesses can approach the many decades that the Original Frozen Custard and Budge's have been open.

The Original Frozen Custard had a humble beginning in 1932, when Florence and Charles Kirkhoff began selling vanilla frozen custard from a stand next to Columbian Park. A year later, the Kirkhoffs' secret recipe was expanded to include chocolate and strawberry frozen custard.

The Kirkhoffs had to use salt to freeze their frozen custard because modern refrigeration and freezers were not yet available. While the recipe remains a secret to this day, we do know that frozen custard contains 4 percent egg yolk and a fraction of the whipped air contained in regular ice cream.

Another Frozen Custard tradition, the fruit drink, was created because Florence Kirkhoff didn't care for soda pop. Charles Kirkhoff's business sense, though, led to a deal with Coca-Cola in 1934. The Original Frozen Custard remains one of Coca-Cola's oldest accounts.



The iconic art deco building was constructed in 1949 across from what is now Loeb Stadium. Twenty years later, the Kirkhoffs passed the business to their daughter, Charlene, and her husband, Dick Lodde. They expanded the menu to offer more products, flavors and food.

The Kirkhoffs originally called their business "The Igloo," a name that was revived in 1998 by Bill and Kathy Lodde. The two Igloo locations on Veterans Memorial Parkway have expanded the line of Frozen Custard flavors, added more sundaes and sandwiches, including an old favorite: the Original Double Decker.

Budge's (pronounced bud-gees) bills itself as "Lafayette's best kept secret since 1942."

Like the Original Frozen Custard, Budge's had a simple beginning when Wallace Budge converted a gas station on the corner of 14th and Hartford streets into a root beer stand.

The original stand was razed in the 1950s and the current structure was built facing 14th Street. It was then that Budge's added ice cream, burgers and other treats to the menu.

That helped Budge's draw lunchtime business from nearby St. Elizabeth Hospital and after-school lines from Linnwood Elementary students. Budge ran the business until he sold out in 1968.

The years have passed, and St. Elizabeth is no longer in the neighborhood. Neither is Linnwood Elementary School. But Budge's is still around and approaching its 80th birthday.

Its menu probably wouldn't be recognized by Charles Budge today, with flavored drinks, a wide variety of ice cream, shakes, parfaits, sodas and sundaes. Food options range from the traditional cheeseburger to chicken tenders and coney dogs. ★



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BOARD GAME JACKPOT

Glowing reviews for Isaac Childres' Gloomhaven



Sure, Isaac Childres played some board games as a kid — who didn't? He may have played games like Sorry or Clue. He even has memories of playing some of these games by himself.

"I have vivid memories of playing Monopoly by myself, moving all the different characters," he recalls.

"I was very bored as a child."

But neither those simple activities, nor his foray into high school board games, could have foretold his future in games.

Childres is the mastermind behind the popular board game Gloomhaven, described on the game's official website as "Euro-inspired tactical combat in an evolving campaign." The game involves collaboration in order to clear out dungeons and ruins in this corner of the world; the game evolves based on players' decisions and their skills, which change as the game progresses. It has swept the market by storm, with rave reviews from users on sites such as boardgamegeek.com

It might be worth mentioning, too, that prior to designing and developing this game, Childres had another sideline as a career option; he had a few opportunities afforded him when he finished up his doctorate in physics at Purdue University.

So where did this passion come from? Because it was not instilled in him by weekends playing Dungeons and Dragons when he was in high school, as so many teenagers do. Some kids are self-proclaimed board game nerds; Childres was not really one of those kids.

Growing up in California, Childres did play — some — but it wasn't his primary hobby. His friends were the ones with the characters and the dice, though Childres may have managed a dungeon or two.

"My parents were pretty conservative," he says. "It took some convincing."

It was during his time at Purdue that Childres became interested in role-playing games. He joined a group that met at the Purdue Memorial Union on Thursday nights, opening his eyes to this world of games.

After spending time with friends playing these sorts of games, he began to think about what it might be like to create his own game.

"I started thinking about my ideal board game," he says. "It started as a challenge — can I develop a board game?"

As it turns out, the short answer was yes. The product of his first attempt was a game called Forge War, which its website describes as a game where players are blacksmiths in a kingdom "rife with marauding harpies, cursed dungeons and fire-breathing dragons." Players must gather ore from mines and create weapons, which they will use on quests.

Childres launched a Kickstarter campaign, a crowd-funding platform that helps fund creative projects. The game took a fair amount of work — perhaps more work than he had first imagined, as it went through several iterations. It took lots of preparation, and he realized at one point that he would need to hire out the art and design work.

"How hard can cards be?" he laughs now, recalling his mindset when he started — before he brought in the pros.

And yet, in the meantime, he still finished his doctorate, knowing that he might not end up using that degree. But he also knew it was something to fall back on.

"My philosophy was this is going to be a degree that says that I'm smart,"

he says; he knew he could always find a job if he needed to.

When he ventured out with that first attempt into game design, he knew it was a risk. But he wanted to give it a try. He and his wife had that difficult conversation. His first game netted a profit, but not enough to live on.

"Let's do this for a year, see if I can be successful at it," he told her. "Then I kind of hit the lottery and came out with the perfect game at the perfect time."

Board games are nothing new; evidence of prehistoric board games predate the written word. Some games come and go; others — games like Clue, Yahtzee, Monopoly and Risk — have been around for the better part of the last century. These mass-market games are widely popular and commercially successful, available in every big box store.

But thousands of board games are released each year to more niche markets. These games often require hours to play and have elaborate, complex rules and procedures. Dungeons and Dragons was one of the early examples of these role-playing games, popular among teenagers ever since.

More complex games, adventures that take five to six hours to play, have become more commercially successful over the past several years; the popularity of mass-market games like Catan and its offshoots show that the market is not yet saturated.

Yet dig deeper, and there are dozens of possibilities, games with elaborate set-ups and back stories.

"Sometimes you feel like you are in your own secret society," Childres says.

After his first attempt, he decided to try again. The result was Gloom-

haven, a board game that has been met with glowing reviews. The goal, Childres says, was to create a game that was self-contained, one where users would not have to continually purchase expansion packs in order to continue playing.

"I don't like that business model, kind of nickel and diming your customers," he says.

The first Kickstarter raised \$400,000; his second Kickstarter, three years ago, raised \$4 million in just 30 minutes. Clearly, Childres was onto something.

"It's been a lot more successful than I ever anticipated."

In the meantime, he lives a quiet life in his Lafayette home with his wife, who is finishing up her degree in creative writing at Purdue. He is working on several other ideas for board games, playing with ideas, seeing what comes of them.

Childres has been known to pop into Merlin's Beard, a local shop for board game aficionados, and he still visits the Thursday night group at the Union. These days, the group is made up of mostly Purdue students, with few of his friends still in town. But that's OK, he says; the group will change, with new people coming and going.

As will he. When his wife finishes her degree, Childres suspects they, too, will move on from Lafayette. They'll find a new place to call home, and he'll find another board gaming group.

For now, he is pleased with the success of Gloomhaven, happy that he can take his hobby, his passion, and share them with others.

"It's been the best job I could imagine," he says. "I can't imagine a better fit for me, doing something I love." ★

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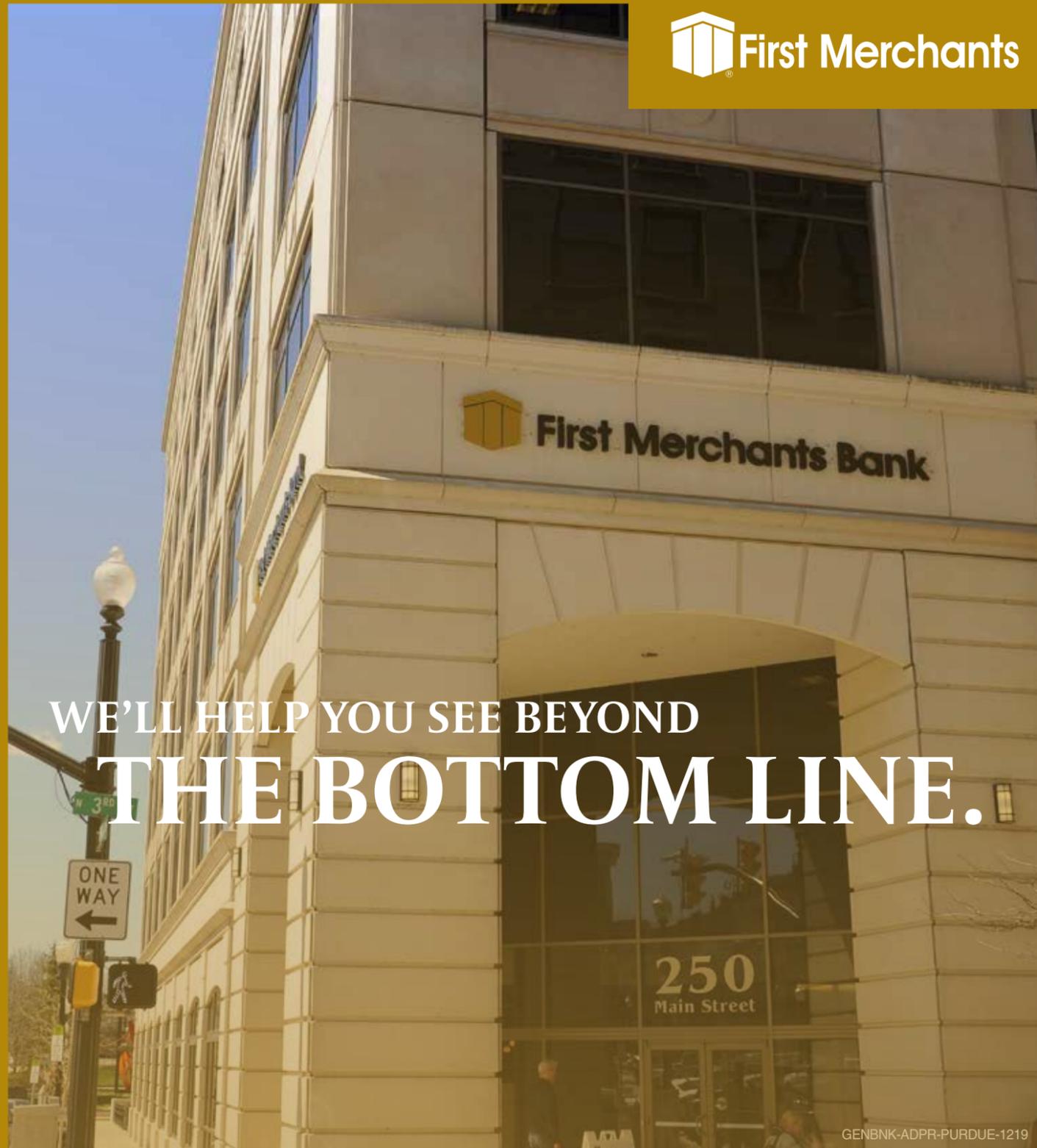
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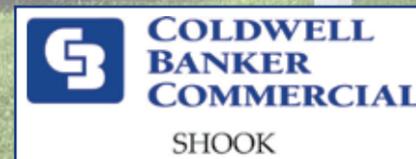
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