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DECEMBER 2024
ISSUE 1



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LOCAL EVENTS

Hey guys! It's the Event List! Now – be aware that events can and **DO** change without notice. I called bars, scenesters, scoured Facebook, put the word out - and this is what came of it. If you are not on the list and want to be - email me at bazookareloaded@gmail.com. If you **ARE** on the list and don't want to be in the future, same deal. Email me. This is simply a community service so people know what's happening in the area. **Don't get yer undies in a twist.** Unless specified, all events are in Paducah and surrounding suburbs.

THURSDAYS

Thursdays at the Grand Lodge on 5th, bluegrass music

FRIDAYS

Silver Bullet - Karaoke
Rockers - Karaoke

FRIDAY, NOV 22ND

- Paducah Beer Werks - Cherry and Jerry Ragtime
- Carson Center - KANSAS 50th Anniversary Tour
- Evergreens Coffee and Wine Bar - Tiffany Dawn

SATURDAY, NOV 23RD

- Metropolis Community Center - Project Hope Christmas Bazaar
- The Beer Garden (Benton) - Ethan Torsac
- Social 360 - Midlife Crisis
- Purple Toad Winery - Jordan Skoda and the Damwrights
- Moon River Bar&Grill (Cadiz) - Top Tier Band
- Southern State (Fulton, TN) - Lew Jetton and 61 South

SUNDAY, NOV 24TH

- Paducah Beer Werks - Open Mic with Allen Music

TUESDAY, NOV 26TH

- Bridgestone Arena (Nash) - Jelly Roll

WEDNESDAY, NOV 27TH

- Dry Ground Brewery - Halfway To Lowertown feat. The Picket Brothers
- Old Fashioned Cigar Bar - Cigars, Bourbon And Music w/ Todd Belt
- K.C.'s - Wildflower Honey and the Hot Biscuits

FRIDAY, NOV 29TH

- Wild Hair Studios: Merry Yule Black Friday Sale
- VFW 1191 - Blessed Bike Fest and Bikes for
- Black Santa presented by Blessed Bike Shop

SATURDAYS

Silver Bullet - Karaoke
Rockers - Live Music

2ND & LAST SUNDAYS

Dam Brewhaus (Benton)
- Open Mic

and A New Breed (Veterans' Coalition) feat. Be Good Elliot, The Wish You Weres, Jaelon Harris, and DJK (food and fun, too!)
■ Paducah Beer Werks - Cade Crider and the Zero/Titans of Siren

SATURDAY, NOV 30TH

- Downtown Paducah - Shop Local Saturday!
- A Centered Space (Gilbertsville) - Reiki Share
- Club 2020 Bar&Grill - Black Santa 270 Chili and Dumplin' Fundraiser, 1200 N. 8th St.
- Social 360 - The Underdogs
- 200 Kentucky Ave. - Paducah Improv presents Gobble! Gobble! feat. HA! Teen Improv
- Moose Lodge - Lew Jetton and 61 South
- Evansville - 2nd Annual Witches Market
- Moosie's Grub Shack - 2nd Annual Hangin' w/ the Moose
- Metropolis - Christmas Tree Lighting

SUNDAY, DEC 1ST

- W.C. Young Community Center - Annual World AIDS Day Event - All Red Affair! Host Jeremiah Cook, Live performance by Jaelon Harris, Special Guest Appearances by Barbara Dare, Dee Struxion, and many more!
- Maiden Alley Cinema - World AIDS Day Event with LivWell, and showing of "5B" and Q&A

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4TH

- The Factory (STL) - The Bald and The Beautiful feat. Trixie and Katya!

THURSDAY, DEC 5TH

- Carson Center - Cirque Dreams Holiday
- Market House Theater - A Christmas Story (runs through Dec 22nd)
- Atomic City/Social 360 - Santa Bear's Toy

Drive and Concert feat. Jonathan Len, Lew Jetton, Haleigh Martin, Reggie Lafaye and more!

FRIDAY, DEC 6TH

- Charlie Joe's Bar&Grill - Krooked Jester

SATURDAY, DEC 7TH

- Social 360 - Wildflower Honey and the Hot Biscuits
- The Grand on Fifth - Holiday Market
- Fancy Farm - Christmas Bazaar
- Mayfield/Graves Co Fairgrounds - Just For You Vendor and Craft Show
- Kuttawa - Christmas in Kuttawa
- Downtown Paducah - Christmas Parade
- Brookport - Annual Winter Wonderland
- Greater Lincoln Heights MBC - Black Santa 270: Food, Toys, And Pics with Santa
- Metropolis - Vintage Christmas Parade
- Purple Toad Winery - Haleigh Martin
- MBMG Studios - Watch Party Telethon of the Stars
- Trader's Mall - Gun Show

SUNDAY, DEC 8TH

- Carson Center - A Charlie Brown Christmas Live!
- Paducah Beer Werks - Second Sunday Bluegrass Jam
- Dry Ground Brewery - Paint n' Sip with Outfit Inc

THURSDAY, DEC 12TH

- Bricolage - S+M Studios Pop Up Shop
- Bridgestone Arena (Nash) - Justin Timberlake
- Yeiser Art Center - Paducah Affordable Art Show

FRIDAY, DEC 13TH

- Elk's Lodge (Metropolis) - Killer Xmas Party w/ Corey Evitts
- Social 360 - Six String Circus

SATURDAY, DEC 14TH

- Lourdes Auxiliary Christmas Market
- MBMG Studios - Women + Resilience: An Evening of Empowerment and Sisterhood
- Bob's Drive In - 3rd Annual Community Christmas w/ Cody Campbell
- Walker's Bluff Casino - Lew Jetton and 61 South
- Paducah Middle School - Holiday Market

SUNDAY, DEC 15TH

- Carson Center - Christmas with C.S. Lewis

TUESDAY, DEC 17TH

- Dry Ground Brewery - Comedy Open Mic

WEDNESDAY, DEC 18TH

- Dry Ground Brewery - Goodwood Pint Night

FRIDAY, DEC 20TH

- The Dam Brewhaus - Lew Jetton (Solo Acoustic)
- Social 360 - Midlife Crisis

SATURDAY, DEC 21ST (SOLSTICE!)

- A Centered Space - Candlelit Evening and Gathering
- Four Rivers Harley Davidson - Pics w/ Santa
- Evergreens Coffee and Wine Bar - That's A Wrap! Voiced Thoughts Season 3 Wrap Party
- Purple Toad Winery - Wildflower Honey and the Hot Biscuits
- The Johnson Bar - The Olys
- Paducah Beer Werks - Allen's Music/Time in the String Recital

TUESDAY, DEC 24TH

- McCracken County Courthouse - Scarf in the Park, free hats, scarves, gloves and more.

FRIDAY, DEC 27TH

- Social 360 - Todd Belt
- Paducah Beer Werks - Charmers/Family Bags/ Cody Parsons and the Heavy

SATURDAY, DEC 28TH

- Social 360 - The Cruisers
- Paducah Beer Werks - Drag Show (Performers TBA)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31ST (NYE!)

- The 1857 Hotel - DV8 NYE Party feat. DJ Mandy Vixen and entertainment by the Original DV8 Divas Kara Belle, Brianna Dupree, Rochelle D'Leight, and Leimomi!
- The Beer Garden (Benton) - High Noon Moon & NYE Party
- Dry Ground Brewery - NYE Party w/ The Wish You Weres

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Editor's Note

xoxo Bella

Hey guys! Welcome to Bazoooka Reloaded Magazine! So glad to have you here! Some of you may remember Bazoooka from the old days, it ran from 2009-2012 in the Paducah area. If you are an old fan - welcome back! If you have never heard of us, well...hold on, it's gonna be a helluva ride.

Our hope is to be a voice for those who don't often get heard. We want to amplify those voices, let people know about events, entertain you, inform you, and hopefully bolster community.

In this issue, you will find articles about musical and societal trailblazers like Jewelia, get info on how to survive in the current political climate, hear about some cool events happening in the area, learn about resources if you are struggling, and maybe see some cool stuff, too!

We want to delight our audience, and make you feel less alone. Because that's just the worst part about the society we are living in today. Most of us are struggling with something - be it financial, physical, mental, or emotional. We hope to help ease that burden just a little bit. Just knowing you aren't the only one having a tough time - sometimes helps. Most of us are guilty of scrolling Facebook and seeing perfect lives and wondering, what the hell am I doing wrong? Well - most people don't air their dirty laundry. Trust me - 99% of the folks out there do not have their shit together.

But hey - if you are working on it, on getting your head straight and your shit together, good for you. You are ahead of more than half the populace.

And Bazoooka Reloaded is here to help! Maybe get you out there, give you the confidence to live authentically, and find your voice.

We are always looking for writers, photographers, events to promote, and anyone who wants to be one of the helpers - get in touch with us at bazookareloaded@gmail.com.

Together - hell, you never know what we could achieve! I'm just glad to have you along for the ride. Yes, it can be scary and exciting and nerve-wracking and exhilarating, all at the same time. We are here to fight the good fight. So get your big girl britches on - let's do this.

Signed,
Bella Bazoooka

Cover

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EVERYBODY NEEDS A LITTLE HELP SOMETIMES

It's been a rough...few years. It seems like most of us are still struggling to recover - mentally, physically, and financially - from Covid. Prices for everything are still high, and with new policies coming, no one knows what's going to happen.

Thankfully, Western Kentucky, and Paducah in particular, is an area with lots of non-profit organizations who are there to help. This list is in no way comprehensive - we are going to make this a regular thing, sharing places that will help with a meal or utility assistance. In fact - you can call the United Way 211 hotline 24-hours a day, and they can refer you to organizations to help you with whatever you are struggling with. If talking on the phone isn't your thing - you can find them online at uwb211.org - where information can be translated into other languages as well.

Now - most of this info was taken off of websites or through phone calls - so there may be changes which have not been updated. If the info is wrong - it's totally on me!

Paducah Cooperative Ministries (PCM)

402 Legion Dr., Paducah
270-442-6795, 9am-noon and 1-3pm

PCM can provide a 3-5 day supply of emergency groceries to families in crisis monthly through one program, and five times a year from the food pantry. You need a picture ID and Social Security cards for all members in the household. However - even if you don't have those things, you should still call and see what they can do, especially when it comes to food.

There is the Fresh Start Village for women and single mothers with children. As to my knowledge they are full at the moment, but if you are interested in getting more info, give them a call. They can provide emergency assistance with rent, utilities, stranded transportation assistance, and replacement ID. They can help one time a year - and you must provide photo ID, monthly household income and expenses, SSNs (Social Security Numbers) for each member of the household. You will also need a disconnect notice from the utility or an eviction notice from the landlord. They are usually limited to amounts up to \$175.

Community Kitchen

1237 Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. Paducah, Ky.
270-575-3400

They have a free hot meal for everyone (as far as I know) from 11am-1pm, Mon-Fri. They also provide showers and a place to wash your clothes. I was told that sometimes they are able to help with other things, it just depends on the resources they have on hand at the moment.

STAY - School & Transition Assistance for Youth

270-816-4670

Now this is only if you have a child in the Paducah City School System, but this program aims to help students in transitional (homeless) situations. That can look different for different people - it could be living in hotels/motels, shared housing or "couch surfing", or sleeping in a car. The McKinney-Vento liaison for

Paducah Public Schools is Heather Anderson. Students have rights - for example, if you have to move from one part of the city to another, they can help with transportation so that child can stay in their original school. If you are in a transitional situation, give them a call and see if they can help.

Heart USA - 270-538-5828

If you are struggling with your prescriptions, health items like canes, test strips, etc - they may be able to help. They have durable medical supplies, community health workers, medical transportation and even a food pantry. They are a great organization and can often direct you towards other resources as well.

St. Vincent de Paul Helpline -

270-575-1008 Tues-Thurs, 10am - 1pm
2025 Cairo Rd, Paducah, KY

St. Vincent Help Line can provide many services to McCracken County residents. They can help with utilities once every six months - electric, gas, sewer, propane, and can help with rent as well. You need to have a picture ID, SS cards for everyone in the house, and a copy of the bill. They also have a food pantry and can give clothing vouchers to the St. Vincent de Paul thrift store next door. In some cases they can provide financial assistance for prescriptions, transportation, and other needs. The best thing to do is just give them a call and tell them your situation.

Mental Health Help and Crisis Line - 988

988 is a free-of-charge number to call who can help by getting you in contact with suicide prevention, mental health, and substance abuse counselors.

Goodwill Opportunity Center

1601 Broadway, Paducah, KY. 1-844-495-9675
goodwillky.org

Goodwill Opportunity Centers can help someone get on their feet in so many ways. They serve Kentuckians who have disabilities or experience other challenges in the workforce, such as criminal backgrounds, language barriers, limited education, lack of transportation, and chronic poverty. We have a huge Opportunity Center downtown, they have a ton of incentive programs where you can pass classes and qualify to get a brand new laptop or even help with getting a car. I have been through there just checking things out, and it's a very warm and welcoming environment

Washington Street Baptist Church Warming Center

739 Washington St. Paducah, KY 270-442-8033

When the temp is below 40° (they go by WPSD Weather Reports) - and if they have the volunteers, check and see if the warming center is open. You can arrive from 5:30 to 10pm, and have to leave by 6:30-8:30am. No weapons, no one intoxicated. There is a 20-person capacity and it's first come, first serve. They have shower facilities, and unaccompanied youth are accepted. If they have the resources they provide dinner and breakfast.

Merryman House Domestic Crisis Center

24 Hour Crisis Hotline - 1-800-585-2686

If you are trying to escape abuse, I know there are a lot of complications. When you are ready - Merryman House can help with so much. They can provide emergency shelter, clothes, a bed, food, and time to rest. Once you are able to think straight - they offer a ton of transitional programs. If you can do it SAFELY, check out their website -

merrymanhouse.org

From the website - they serve Ballard, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Marshall, and McCracken counties. "Merryman House offers a 24/7 staffed crisis hotline and emergency shelter, safety planning, comprehensive case management and advocacy, court advocacy, support groups and education, housing stabilization and assistance, and more. It has three outreach offices located in McCracken, Marshall and Calloway counties. All services are free and confidential."

River City Mission

270-442-7921 from 8am to 6pm Mon-Sat
1466 Bechtold Rd, Paducah, KY

River City Mission is a shelter for single men and families. They serve an average of 60 men and families per day, serving approx. 180 meals per day. They do not accept women or unmarried couples. Call first and see if they have room.

LGBTQIA+ Support Services

OUT Paducah, on Facebook and at outpaducah@gmail.com

Outfit, Inc., on Facebook and at outfitincky.org
LivWell Community Health Services, HIV clinic and more, 270-444-8183, 1903 Broadway, Paducah

Family Service Society

270-443-4838

827 Joe Clifton Dr, Paducah, Ky

Family Service Society provides assistance to residents of Paducah/McCracken County in need by assisting with basic needs such as food, clothing, prescription medications, emergency dental, utility assistance, personal hygiene items, household goods and Christmas food assistance. Great people who can help with a lot - give them a call and see.

Scarf in the Park - McCracken County Courthouse on Christmas Eve - there will be hats, scarves, gloves, and more for anyone who needs them.

Location of some of the Blessing Boxes in McCracken - these need to be filled, too! So if you feel like giving, there is a list on outfitincky.org that can give you ideas on things to put in them! They need not just easy-to-eat without heating food stuffs, but things like baby supplies, hand warmers, chapstick, waters - and more.

McCracken County Library

- McCracken County Extension Office on New Holt Rd.
- Journey of Faith Church, behind Jackson St. McDonald's
- Rick's Pharmacy On Mayfield Rd.
- Morgan Elementary on S. 28th St.
- Lourdes Hospital across from the Marshall Nemer Pavillion
- Grace Episcopal Church in back off Kentucky Ave.
- Fountain Ave. United Methodist Church
- Christ Temple Food Pantry on Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr.

Now - as was said - there are MANY more resources in the tri-state area. We will be including new ones each month. If your organization or church wants to get the word out and help people - please send an email to bazookareloaded@gmail.com - we will get the info out that we can. Also - if you are doing fundraising events for a non-profit, we try to share that info as well! Let's get everyone the help they need!

Hope & Fury OPINIONS — THE POPULAR & DISDAINED...

“What I wish you knew before buying a gun”

BY KAREN FARTHING

I guess it's time for “the talk” about gunz and being a responsibly armed person. Certain... recent events... have a lot of people who might have previously been fiercely anti-gun rethinking that position (and for good reasons). Welcome to the Second Amendment!

Let me just get the political discussion out of the way RIGHT NOW. If you're on Team Red or Team Blue - I didn't vote for your team. I'm rabidly Libertarian, and my stance on politics is fairly simple:

1. Every human right, for every human being, every single minute.
2. Don't hurt people and don't take their stuff.
3. Do no harm but take no shit.
4. Both “wings” of government fly the same bird. That bird is currently a giant, bloated, rights-trampling, war-mongering asshole who is a couple of standard deviations below the norm when it comes to decision making. It doesn't matter who's running it - they're all in the same club, and we peasants ain't in it (oops - mighta said too much on that one).

ANYWAY - back to the gun people discussion. Because if you've chosen to exercise your constitutional right to carry, you're a gun person, now. So - WELCOME!! I'm glad you're here! I look forward to joining you on your journey. Seriously - you can call me ANYTIME. Do not be surprised, however, when I geek out on my favorite topics - mindset and resilience. I have a touch of the ‘tism (legit, I do), and I will absolutely tell you more than you may want to know.

Case in point - I got into a discussion recently about how gun people are “dangerous”. I was trying to explain that we weren't dangerous, but truth be told, we ARE. We are a danger to those who would harm others. We are a danger in that we are prepared to do violence but choose not to. We are a danger because we pay attention and proceed (as much as possible) from a position of logic and dispassion, rather than emotion. We are dangerous because we are very self-disciplined people.

We have a force continuum. Never really explicitly laid out, but we all follow the same path. The GUN is at the END of that continuum. Anyone who carries a tool for self-defense should strive for the following:

1. Mindfulness. Actively pay attention. Do mental exercises that improve memory, and that encourage us to see things as they ARE, not as we would wish them to be. Cognitive dissonance is a THING - don't let it catch you up. Believe what your eyes and ears are telling you because they ain't lyin' (also, unless it's near the 4th of July, it's NEVER fireworks, especially INSIDE Walmart or in the parking lot). We practice what's called “deselection” - we carry ourselves in such a way that criminals and bad actors will be more likely to choose another target. “Look like work, not like a challenge.” ~ Tamara Keel
2. Mindset. “The will to survive is not as important as the will to prevail...” ~ Jeff Cooper. Decide - beforehand - that we are going to do more than just SURVIVE an attack. We are going to WIN. The will to fight is something that must be developed before you're in the middle of an altercation. We've already decided to fight, if necessary. We also set solid boundaries in our daily lives. Trying to set a HARD boundary against someone who wishes you harm is NOT something you do on the fly. So, my friends who like to be people-pleasers at the expense of themselves (you know who you are) ...y'all need to start enforcing some reasonable boundaries with your friends and loved ones. This will pay off in CASH MONEY when it comes to your personal safety.
3. Decision Making. Practice making hard decisions under stress. Normally that stress is a clock or a live scenario. But we learn by FAILURE in controlled environments. I know that force-on-force classes are expensive, and they aren't everyone's cup of tea. Also, getting shot by simunitions sucks. My friend Shelley Hill built a FABULOUS course called Image Based Decisional Skills that uses - you guessed it - PICTURES that let you practice making decisions at home or in a group.
4. De-Escalation. Take classes, practice live scenarios, and get our asses handed to us in the effort to figure this out. Also spend time studying how the violently unstable, criminals, and bad actors think so that if de-escalation is possible, we stand a decent chance of making

it work. I recommend Dr. William April's work at Personal Defense Network if you want a peek. If you're a reader, “Never Split the Difference: Negotiating As If Your Life Depended On It,” by Chris Voss is THE book to read on de-escalation.

5. Physical prowess. Not gonna lie - I need some work on this one. I recently started learning to box, because I need some empty-handed skills, and I desperately need some work on my cardio (check out Roughhouse Boxing in Lone Oak; Brandon is a fantastic coach). This has not been easy. I'm in my 50s and I am...fluffy. But please realize that keeping yourself fit (within your limitations - I know we're not all able-bodied) is just as important as skill at arms. You're much less likely to go for the gun if you have the skill to hold your own or triumph in a fight with a bigger, meaner opponent. More importantly, you move better, allowing yourself to put distance between you and an attacker. Distance = Time. Time + Distance = Options.

6. Less-lethal strategies and tools. Most of us learn how to use another tool, like Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) - also known as pepper spray. Anyone who carries a firearm but does NOT carry a less lethal option is depriving themselves of a way to avoid a deadly encounter. You definitely need SOMETHING to use that comes AFTER hard language, but BEFORE physical or deadly force. I recommend OC over anything else - tasers, saps, kubitons, knives, etc. - because OC is a tool that enforces DISTANCE. It stops someone before they get into melee range. Kinda hard for someone to hurt you if they aren't close enough to lay hands on you. I also only recommend two OC manufacturers - POM and Sabre. Their quality control is the best in the file:///Users/admin/Downloads/Messenger_creation_66C7C63D-CCDD-46E5-A486-EC6875953628.jpeg industry. I know that my OC is going to work and it's going to work quickly.

7. The firearm. The LAST tool in the box. And the one that carries the most likelihood of disaster. None of us want to use it. But if we have to, WE CAN NOT MISS. We train for YEARS to make sure that we are swift and accurate. If that round does not go EXACTLY where we want it to go, we run the risk of killing an innocent person. That's not acceptable. We also practice for YEARS so that skill at arms becomes an almost automatic function, freeing up brain power to make decisions. We aren't going to fire an entire magazine at an attacker in a panic because we've trained ourselves to behave in a less-panicked manner. We will use only what's necessary to stop the threat. THIS WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT AT YOUR TRIAL. And, make no mistake, there WILL be a trial. The State JEALOUSLY reserves the use of lethal force for itself, and it gets tetchy when the peasantry manage to save themselves. (Oops - there's that Libertarian bias again.)

So. Are we dangerous? Yes. But not for the reasons you may think. My most fervent wish is that I get to leave this earth without taking a life. So, I train, and I learn how to solve problems before they get to the point of deadly force. However, if it comes to that, I will not miss.

IF YOU ARE GOING TO CARRY - your constitutional right is not enough; your concealed carry class is not enough. Get trained.

HOST: Danette Mahabeer-Turner

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HOPE IS VITAL IN 2024

BY YAUNTO

"You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time." — Angela Davis

"Let this radicalize you rather than lead you to despair." — Mariame Kaba

"If you want to create an open society, your means of doing so must be consistent with the society you want to create. Means and ends are absolutely inseparable. Violence begets violence. Hatred begets hatred. Anger begets anger, every minute of the day, in the smallest moments as well as the largest." — John Lewis

I began by writing a piece full of righteous indignation. Oh, I had pithy one liners and devastating name calling and hypocrisy call-outs galore. Oh, I was smug and smarmy and sarcastic. But here's the thing, I believe while some of that can help us feel better momentarily, they ultimately aren't productive because:

A. It's really only an outburst of emotion, temporarily cathartic yet signifying nothing
B. Right wing extremists don't care about being called names and they especially don't care about having hypocrisy clearly revealed. If they had any sense of shame or propriety, we likely wouldn't be where we are.

This upcoming administration is alarming. It's disorientating. It's gonna be a shit show. It's gonna be outrage after shock after "this isn't who we are." On that note: gently, lovingly, this is who we are. The president elect of 2024 is the white American id personified. "But I'm a white person and I'm not like that!" Super, me too. However, 59% of our men and 53% of our women who vote show that this IS who we white Americans are. White Americans have inflicted countless horrors upon marginalized groups since before the official inception of this nation. We have to reckon with the fact that this IS who we are. So what do we do about it?

In the days after the election, there's been a lot of wailing and gnashing of teeth. And I get it, the entire day following the 2016 election, I seriously dehydrated myself crying all day and couldn't get out of bed except to vomit. We need to feel our feelings and honor our emotions. But, this is important, we cannot wallow in despair. Wallowing in despair leads to inaction and can give way an attitude of nihilism. And that nihilism will help fuel this upcoming administration's efforts to dismantle everything we thought this country stood for and sell it for parts.

Here's some of my thoughts. I'm a non-expert who cares deeply about liberation for all and the lofty notions of liberty and justice for all that this country preaches but generally hasn't practiced.

Media literacy is going to be so important for the next four to however many years. We've all fallen victim to misinformation (bad information on accident) and disinformation (bad information on purpose). With deep fakes and AI generated imagery evolving and refining, it's going to be all the more important to vet your sources. If something is making you feel extreme emotions, it's likely by design. Read up on media literacy from time to time as a refresher and reminder of the information ecosystem we're up against.

Learn from experts. There are many people out there who are knowledgeable about authoritarianism, fascism, racism, transphobia, reproductive justice, etc. Seek out those devoted to specific topics that matter to you. They may be more measured in response than the outrage peddlers but they'll have a higher quality of information to share. There's so much out there about liberatory politics, about the history of conservatives manufacturing crises to manipulate and control a populace, about freedom fighters during this country's various civil rights movements, and much much more. Learn from those who've come before us and fought some of these same battles.

Be mindful of doom scrolling/social media use. Watch for those who are spouting off outrage and click bait, manipulating our strong emotional responses. Staying in a constant level of distress isn't good for our bodies or communities. Things to be aware of as you're scrolling news or social media would be things like is my pulse racing? Am I feeling excessive anxiety? Yes, we need to be informed about what's happening and it's also ok to not obsess over every last thing.

Form communities. Get together a like-minded group of folks for a book club, a bike riding group, a walking group, a general meetup. Be around people who believe in what you believe in, even if you don't 100% agree on how to get there.

Be aware of what's happening at places like public and school libraries. These book bans are one symptom of the onslaught of censorship we're going to face. The powers that be can get people to agree to all kinds of horrific shit if they claim it's for the safety and well-being of the youth. But the youth have a right to information and it's being taken from them under a false guise of protection with the ultimate aim of blocking information regarding racism in our his-

tory and restricting access for young people to learn about sexuality and gender identity. Get involved and be mindful of anything purporting to benefit "the children." It's a well worn manipulation tactic (see the Satanic Panic from the 80s for a good example).

Celebrate the wins! Good things are still happening, people are still fighting for justice and equality. Like Mr. Rogers said, look for the helpers. Then join the if you can! You can be the helpers!

Be hard on systems and soft on people. The left is notorious for tearing each other apart for perceived ideological impurities. This is something I've certainly been guilty of. Social media facilitates and amplifies this behavior like a wildfire. Save energy for the systemic issues. Trying to fight all battles all the time will leave you disheartened and exhausted.

Extremists on the right will work hard to divide us on the left and scapegoat marginalized communities. They're already practicing this, trying to pin everything wrong with this country on immigrants and trans people just trying to live their fucking lives and get by. We don't have to fall for these tactics.

Don't organize on corporate social media. They are run by sycophants of the upcoming administration and will throttle/delete/hide information accordingly. Remember in 2020 when the Black Lives Matter protests popped off and Facebook decided to revamp your timeline where it showed things from days ago instead of what people were posting today? That was on purpose to make organizing more challenging. Organizing on corporate social media not only leaves the success of your aims at the whims of billionaire sympathizers, it also excludes people who aren't on these websites. There were ways to get like minded people together prior to social media and they still exist today. Which leads me to...

...we don't have to reinvent the wheel here. There's already organizations devoted to immigrant rights, anti-racism, reproductive justice, trans rights, disability rights, etc etc and infinitum. Pick causes that are important to you and lend efforts to preexisting organizations. They've been operating before this current nonsense, they'll likely be there after as well. Fly by night orgs popping up in response to a current administration can do good work, but I highly recommend going for established groups that have been doing the work.

Be mindful of viral trends online that are performative. Remember the safety pin thing a few years ago? I've heard about a blue bracelet something or other that's come up recently. What do those things actually accomplish? They purport to show that you're an ally. We cannot designate ourselves as allies, that's for others to decide based on our actions. I believe a better practice than passively putting on a piece of flair is to work towards liberation in partnership with whatever marginalized group is ostensibly represented by the piece of flair du jour.

Timothy Snyder is an expert in authoritarianism. He wrote a book called *On Tyranny* which is short but has great information. The first concept he talks about is Don't Obey In Advance. Obeying in advance shows authoritarians what they can get away with. I've heard recently about people who talk of "camouflaging," trying to normalize their appearance so as not to be a target. I cannot speak to what an individual needs to do to protect themselves, and I withhold judgment on any individual's decision to keep safe. My opinion is this call to mask your true self is obeying in advance. Many people cannot camouflage, they are visibly queer, trans, or have more melanin in their skin or a different eye shape that is obvious to all. What are they supposed to do? Does hiding who you are help those who cannot?

Remember that joy, community, love, and hope are resistance. Right wing extremists want those of us committed to liberation and justice to be frightened, disheartened, despairing. We can defy them by expressing love and joy to one another. We'll have bad days, weeks, years and that's ok. We just can't wallow in despair. Please ensure you find an activity, or multiple activities, that brings you joy and make time for it. This is very important for your mental well-being.

I'll end with this quote from Sarah McBride, our very first transgender senator from Delaware elected in 2024 (a win! celebrate!). She said on NPR "...I have to believe that if we do what every previous generation of Americans have done before us, if we continue to summon our hope, we will make this moment what an advocate I know once called a slingshot moment, where, yes, we are pulled backward, but the pressure and tension of being pulled backwards ultimately propels us to destinations that we've never been before. And I believe this can be that kind of moment."

A wise man once said "Be excellent to each other." Put it into action. We are all we have. None of us are free until all of us are free.

A non comprehensive author suggestion list for surviving this bullshit we're about to get hit with:

Angela Davis	Julia Serrano
bell hooks	Thich Nhat Hanh
Mariame Kaba	Pema Chödrön
John Lewis	Sarah Kendzior
Rev. Martin Luther King Jr	Howard Zinn
Timothy Snyder	Frederick Douglass
Hannah Arendt	Ida B. Wells
Naomi Klein	Nikole Hannah-Jones
Isabel Wilkerson	

ENERGY HEALING

AND HOW IT CAN BETTER YOUR LIFE!

BY BELLA BAZOOKA

I will admit, in the past when someone talked about having their Chakras aligned or they were having their auras cleansed - I kinda rolled my eyes. I thought energy work was, for lack of a better word - hippy dippy crap.

That was before my experiences with it. I had always been a bit curious about energy work - a kind of catch-all term used for many different disciplines that simply believe that your body is made of energy and that energy can be manipulated. There are a variety of holistic healing practices that use the natural mind-body connection which can restore the flow and balance of energy throughout the body, spirit, and mind.

Some of these practices are: Acupuncture, Reflexology, Reiki, Qigong, Sound Healing, Breath Work, Chakra Healing, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT, also known as tapping) Magnetic Field Therapy, and many more. Many of these techniques are thousands of years old, and have healed people with no access to Western medicine for centuries.

I have personally worked with Reiki, Chakra Healing, and Sound Cleansing. I am going to tell you a little about a couple of my experiences so that maybe you can get an idea if this would be helpful for you, and what to expect when you go.

Reiki - It's a big buzzword these days, you have probably heard it often. Everybody is into reiki, it seems! Reiki is a practice that was developed about a hundred years ago by a Japanese Buddhist named Mikao Usui. According to an article on the Goop website, Reiki is "based on a simple spiritual principle: We're all guided by the same invisible life force, and it controls our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. When the energy flows freely, we can tap into unknown reserves of power. When it runs into blockages (often said to be caused by negative thinking, unhealed trauma, or stress overload), we function at a suboptimal level."

And who doesn't have trauma?

I asked Jana Duffy, a Usui and Tibetan Karuna Reiki Master/Teacher who is based out of the Magnolia House in Mayfield, about Reiki, and she had this to say:

"Reiki is a basic technique of laying hands on or above the body to realign energy chakras. It helps to clear negativity that we tend to accumulate. Most clients feel 'lighter' after a session. It sounds weird, but it's better experienced than explained."

"The most beneficial thing in my opinion is the relaxation that comes with getting a reiki treatment. I have had very few clients who don't fall asleep on my table within 10 minutes."

I went to my first Reiki session a little nervous, but the practitioner was a friend, so that helped. Most of the time it is set up like a massage. You want to be in comfortable clothing, you will lay down on a table, and it will generally be a dim, relaxing atmosphere - often with soft music playing and calming smells around you. If the room is too cold or hot, or you need a pillow under your knees - tell your practitioner, they want you comfortable, too!

The practitioner will not touch you at all if you ask them not to. Otherwise it is a very light touch, barely feathering your body. Pay attention to your breathing and what you

feel as they try to open your energy channels and make them flow. You may get images in your head, and depending on your practitioner, they may also get images and tell you what they saw.

It can last anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour and a half. Prices usually range from \$50-\$100.

After my session - we discussed what we each had seen as she worked over my body. She said she saw a tidal wave, but that it was good. Like I was going to gather my personal power and, like a tidal wave, sweep everyone along with me and spread across the land. She also saw the goddess Athena, sitting above my left shoulder. The goddess of wisdom, there to guide me. Now, this was about three years ago - so you can imagine at the time I didn't feel very powerful at all! But that stayed with me, and has given me comfort when I doubted myself.

Now, for a little more intense and powerful experience, at least for me - is the sound cleansing. I worked with a woman out of A Centered Space in Gilbertsville - which, according to its website, "is a mind, body, spirit health collaborative, offering holistic counseling/trauma clearing/hypnosis for healing, energetic healing/clearing, groups/classes, yoga, fitness classes, art classes, and other special events" along with hosting The Good Wu events twice a year! There are some amazing folks there - and they often have group reiki which is a wonderful way to experience it for a reasonable cost, usually between \$10-\$20 or a love donation (what you can afford.)

Back to the sound cleansing. So, a very powerful local healer saw my daughter and myself. My session was INTENSE. She placed sound bowls around me, lit some incense and sticks of wood, and started walking around me, running her hands just above my body and making the bowls sing. I don't know exactly how she did it - but suddenly I was crying, and coughing, I almost had to puke. She was pulling things out of me. Nothing you could see, but I could *feel* it.

Man - let me tell you - I have tried talk therapy since I was in my early 20's. I've been on meds for depression and mood stabilization most of my life. I have done some crazy stuff to deal with my past trauma. But this - this was something different. And POWERFUL.

I cannot express it enough - I could literally *feel* what seemed like a rotten, black, goo-like substance being pulled from my body. I was choking and ugly crying big time - but this little woman just stood in front of me and kept pulling. Breaking a sweat!

After it was over - I felt so refreshed! I felt like a huge weight had lifted, I was buoyant! It was amazing. I have since had her come to spiritually cleanse my house as well.

Another great resource here in town is Wild Hair Studios Rock Shop on Broadway, the largest retail store and metaphysical resource center in the region. Owner Susan Edwards knows her stuff! They often have events and classes there

which deal with alternative healing methods, divination, and more. We hope to have her contribute some articles here in the future, and their ad in this issue is positively brilliant. Check out their Facebook page for classes and events!

In fact - it was at the Rock Shop where we learned an important clue regarding my daughter's mystery stomach pains. A woman used a tuning fork - she would hit it and set it on my kiddo's head, then heart, then stomach, etc. Each time she put the tuning fork on a spot she would wait a few minutes for it to stop vibrating. When she put it on my daughter's stomach - it stopped IMMEDIATELY. I saw that with my own eyes and was flabbergasted.

I was wide-eyed. The woman turned to me and said, "You're daughter has an energy suck in her gut. Western medicine won't be able to cure this." And to a certain extent, she was right. We later, years later, got a diagnosis - my daughter had rapid gastric emptying syndrome, probably related to her Ehlers Danlos. And there isn't any cure in Western medicine. But I swear, that sound cleansing we did made a huge difference in her quality of life.

Energy Work and alternative medicine will be an oft-covered feature in this paper. It seems like the Western medicine machine and Big Pharma are just here to keep you barely alive, but sick and weak. I firmly believe there are cures out there that we know nothing about - simply because corporations make more money by treating us than curing us. I have turned to my higher power many times, asking what my purpose is - and it's always the same thing. Connect people, make sure they don't feel alone, and more recently, it has shown me that I need to spread the word about alternative healing methods. Wait until we get to the article on EMDR! That stuff has absolutely changed my life.

If you have any questions regarding energy healing or practitioners and where to find them, feel free to email me at bazookareloaded@gmail.com. Goodness knows, we are all going to have to be mentally tough and strong for what's to come!

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World AIDS Day 2024 My Health, My Right!

BY BELLA BAZOOKA

Global celebrations and commemorations for World AIDS Day is December 1st, 2024. We celebrate strides made in the face of the pandemic, and remember those who were lost in the fight.

The theme for World AIDS Day this year is “Taking the rights path: My Health, My Right!” As of 2023, 39.9 million people globally are living with HIV. Approximately 630,000 people died from the disease last year, and over 1.3 million new cases were reported.

Two events are scheduled for fighting the good fight this year.

The first is the All Red Affair, being held at the W. C. Young Community Center on Sunday, Dec 1st, at 3 p.m. Presented by Paducah Pride United Together - this glam event is free but donations are welcome. They ask that all attendees wear red “in memory of those who have lost the fight, and those who are still in the fight.”

Co-organizer Rafiel Banks Nailing said, “It is important for us to raise awareness, remember lives that fought the good fight, and those that are still in the fight! Every year this event helps us to also promote access to treatment, and encourage global unity while advocating for justice and equality! Many are affected by this but feel alone, we are here to change that feeling! Each year there is a different theme organized to grasp the main goal and concept of World AIDS Day. This years World AIDS Day theme is: Take the Rights Path: My health, my right! We hope to see you Sunday December 1,2024 at the WC Young Community Center at 3:00pm to become educated, and help fight a great cause!”

Hosted by Jeremiah Cook, with live performances by Jaelon Harris, and special guest appearances by Barbara Dare and Dee Struxion, and speaker Target 4 UK Health-care - this promises to be an unforgettable event.

The second event was still being finalized close to

press time, but we can say that LivWell Community Health Services will also be hosting an event with a Q&A at Maiden Alley Cinema on Sunday, December 1st, with a showing of the documentary “5B”. It’s a documentary that talks about the first designated floor during the beginning of the epidemic in a San Francisco hospital, and how “the nurses’ emphasis on humanity and consideration of holistic well-being was a small miracle amid a devastating crisis and the ensuing panic about risk and infection.”

A.J. Garnett, of LivWell Community Health Services, said, “World AIDS Day helps us to remember those who came before us in the fight against HIV/AIDS and to remind us of how far we still have to go. People who once would have had little hope and even less support now live and thrive with HIV in all walks of life. The fight is always happening but this day shines a bigger light for us to see the path that led us here, and gives us a platform to get people tested and treated while crushing the stigma surrounding those living with HIV born from the ignorance of not knowing any better.”

If you don’t know your status - it’s a good time to get checked! Many of us know someone who lost their life to HIV/AIDS, and the loss is especially hard to take when we know how much stigma is still surrounding the disease and how few get tested. So get tested! Share your stories and find your voice!



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PHOTO BY GABE CAMACHO

BY BELLA BAZOOKA

I have been following Jewelia for quite some time, a couple of years at least. I saw this woman who was rejecting societal norms, fighting like hell to make it, did not give a DAMN what people thought of her - and I was just mesmerized.

Some of you may recognize her as the amazing local electric violinist who performed at many functions including Pride one year, but she is SO much more!

This first time we met at a coffee shop by WKCTC campus, I was a tad nervous! But it was so funny, in the "get to know you" banter - we would say something and then other would say, "Omg! Me, too!" It was definitely a Romy and Michelle moment!

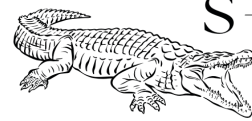
So here you go - you are meeting a powerhouse right now! It may be the first time you hear her name, but it definitely won't be the last!

Hey Jewelia! I have been following you for a looong time! Back before you were doing your exciting dare challenge! I know your journey stems from a desperate escape from religious indoctrination. Can you tell us a little about your upbringing, and how that shaped your views on the world before you broke free? Your family's values, moral compass, etc.

Hi Chrystal! First of all, thank you so much for including me in your publication.

What a breath of fresh air for this area! You are doing us a huge service, by providing an alternative news and entertainment source. I can't thank you enough for that. Also, thank you for being apart of my journey! I've also enjoyed following yours, and most of all just adore how honest and candid you are about life! So let's dig in. I appreciate how you say a "desperate escape from religious indoctrination". Some would scoff at that, however it's truly how I felt at the time. No I wasn't physically abused, and I wasn't literally chained to a bed. But the mental chains... wow. They were hard to break. I was in bondage for a very long time. Who's to blame? The responsibility of this atrocity, that has happened to so many of us, is to be put on the monster that mainstream Christianity has become. Jesus would be ashamed, and furious I do believe. Christians have used and abused His name to control and demean so many of us. Growing up in a conservative fundamentalist household, we were extremely sheltered. I was homeschooled, so that I could be indoctrinated towards very specific religious beliefs. Beliefs that I now look back on with horror.

I was taught to essentially hate and judge others, not like me. I was taught that I was better, superior than others, because I was "chosen, and therefore saved" from Hell. (Eww!! How disgusting is that!?) As I got older, the rules that went along with all of it were unbearable. I couldn't breathe. I hated

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myself because of it. It wasn't possible for me to successfully be what was required of me. So I eventually rebelled. I went to a bar (Mother Duncan's) one night for an open mic to play my violin. I had never been to a bar before. I wore a modest dress, and had a ribbon in my hair. I played a hymn. As naive as one could be... I was in my early twenties, and had never dated before, because I wasn't allowed to. My parents pressured me into signing a contract stating they were in control of my life and my decisions, after I graduated from college. I was supposed to "court" and they were supposed to help choose a mate for me that was according to their belief system. Well, I was done sitting around waiting. I went into the bar, and met a guitarist who was super talented - also playing at the open mic. He was quite shy. But there was something about him that drew me in. We started playing music together, and just, clicked. My parents found out I was spending time with someone NOT in their church, and they were not happy about it, to say the least.

I decided to move out of their house, and break the contract. I started renting an apartment near this guitarist. And shortly after we got married.

It wasn't a healthy marriage, and eventually I had to leave. But we are good friends today, and get along way better as co-parenting partners than we did as a married couple.

I am now re-married to the man of my dreams, but it was a long road to get here... and I take nothing for granted.

All that to say, it's been a wild ride. I have so much to say, and still have baggage from my upbringing. I have been in therapy for 9 years working through it, and will probably spend the rest of my life continuing to dissect what hap-

pened. There is stuff that pops up, and occasionally I'll still hear from people from the past. Those that are still involved in the world I left, so they don't understand who I have become. Their judgment is harsh. I have had to find a new kind of people. Those that accept me, for me. I consider you a part of my tribe now too Chrystal! Thank you for being a safe place for me, and so many others in this community.

Was there a defining moment that made you realize that this wasn't you, that you weren't being your authentic self? Or did it happen over time? Were there small rebellions at first, or did you just say "fuck it" and explode?

Very good questions! It's funny you say explode, because there was actually a specific day where I woke up and said "fuck it, enough is enough". I remember it vividly. Even though I had technically rebelled in order to get married and start a family, I was still enmeshed with my family of origin, and still occasionally going to their church. Still trying to get their approval. Well... one day my brother told me something a family member had said behind my back, and it was the straw that broke the camels back. I got so angry! I finally allowed myself to actually feel the anger. After years of avoiding that emotion because I had been taught to stay away from it. Just smile and be happy. Um NO! I was so over it. I called this person, and told her I was tired of her fucking bullshit. She can't stand cussing. So I just went off on her. For the first time in my life, I didn't let her say a word, and hung up. I was shaking so hard, I accidentally dropped my phone on the asphalt. It shattered. I knew in



Jewelina

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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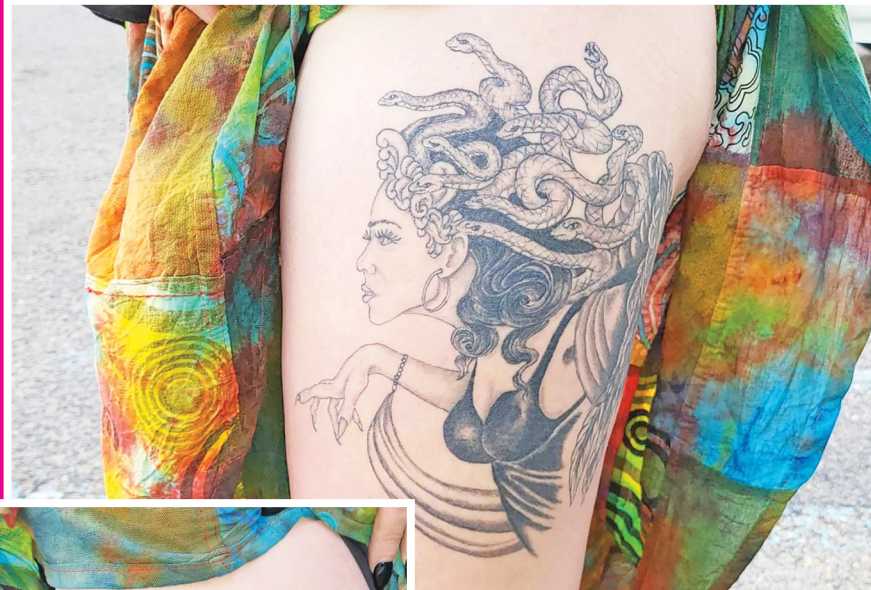
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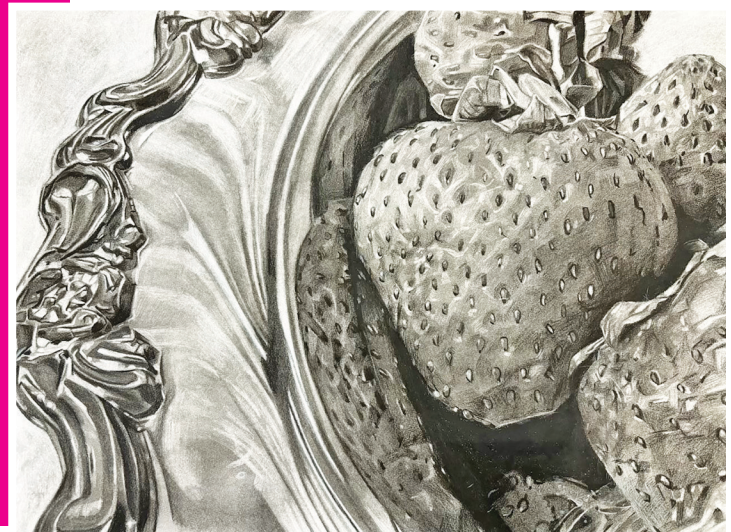
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CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE BRICK HOUSE: A NORTH SIDE LEGACY

BY CORA SIMS

In the heart of Paducah's North Side sits a red brick building that's more than just bricks and mortar. It's a vibe, a legacy, and for so many, it's home. The Brick House. This year, this iconic spot is celebrating an incredible milestone—50 years of being a place where the community gathers, laughs, and makes memories that last a lifetime.

The Brick House isn't just a bar. It's a cornerstone of the North Side. For five decades, it's been the spot where folks come to unwind, celebrate, and reconnect. If you grew up here, chances are you've got a story tied to this place—whether it's a family gathering, a night out with friends, or just stopping by to soak in the familiar warmth of home.

For those who've left Paducah, The Brick House is always on the list when they return. It's where the past and present meet. It's that one place where the vibe hasn't changed, even when everything else has. The music, the laughter, the love—it's all still there, flowing through the walls and out into the community.

The Brick House is more than a business—it's a part of our culture. It's where people from all walks of life have come together, year after year, to share moments big and small. And it's still standing strong, proving that when you're built on love, connection, and community, you can weather anything. This milestone gives us a chance to reflect on all The Brick House has meant to our community. It's been the backdrop for birthdays, anniversaries, reunions, and countless moments that don't make it to a photo album but live forever in our hearts. Whether you came for the good music, great drinks, or just the energy that can't be duplicated, The Brick House has always delivered.

For many Black families in Paducah, The Brick House holds an even deeper meaning. It's been said that it is a space that's been ours in a world that hasn't always been kind. It's a symbol of joy, of our ability to create something familiar and lasting despite the odds. A lot has changed in 50 years—both in Paducah and beyond—but The Brick House has remained, a constant reminder of who we are and how far we've come.

You can't talk about The Brick House without talking about the memories. Ask anyone who's been there, and they'll tell you about the time they danced all night to their favorite song, or the bartender who always knew their drink before they even asked. They'll tell you about the regulars who became like family and the strangers who felt like old friends by the end of the night. The Brick House isn't just a place; it's a feeling.

Let's not forget the legacy of ownership and stewardship that has kept this space alive for half a century. Running a business isn't easy, especially one that has to balance being a bar, a community hub, and a cultural landmark. Yet, year after year, The Brick House has not only survived but thrived. That's a testament to the vision, hard work, and love of everyone who's been a part of its story—from the owners to the staff to the patrons who keep coming back.

Celebrating 50 years also means looking to the future. The Brick House has already proven it can stand the test of time, but the best is yet to come. As Paducah continues to grow and change, The Brick House will remain a place where the community can come together, no matter what. It will continue to be a space where memories are made, where people are welcomed with open arms, and where the spirit of the North Side lives on.

This celebration is about more than the building itself; it's about everything The Brick House represents. It's a reminder that when we build something with love and intention, it lasts. It's proof that our stories matter, that our spaces matter, and that our joy is worth preserving.

So, as we celebrate The Brick House, let's also celebrate the people who've made The Brick House what it is—those who've poured their hearts into keeping it alive and those who fill it with life every day. Let's honor the legacy, cherish the memories, and look forward to the moments still to come. Here's to The Brick House—a symbol of strength, community, and everything that makes Paducah's North Side special. Cheers to the last 50 years and the memories still to be made. Because in the heart of our city, The Brick House will always be more than a bar. It's home.

"Time and Togetherness"

The longevity of The Brick House isn't just a testament to the people who have run it or the patrons who have supported it. It's a testament to the power of a space that understands what it means to be a gathering place. In a time where businesses come and go, The Brick House has endured. It's outlived trends, recessions, and countless changes in the world around it. Why? Because it has always been more than a business.

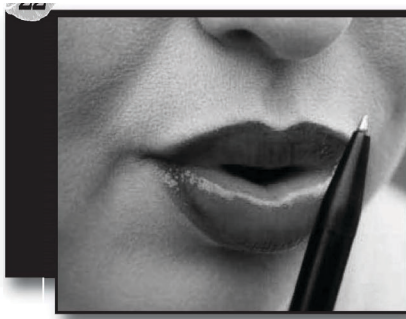
It's where families celebrate reunions after years apart. It's where couples have fallen in love on the dance floor. It's where old friends meet up to laugh like no time has passed and new friendships are born over shared drinks and good music.

When you walk into The Brick House, you can feel its history. The walls have seen generations pass through, each leaving their mark in some way. It's in the stories that get told and retold, the pictures tucked away in albums, and the sense of belonging that hits you as soon as you walk in.

For 50 years, The Brick House has been a place where life happens. The kind of life that's real and raw, filled with all the highs and lows that make us human. It's been there for the celebrations, the hard days, and everything in between. And it's done it all with a sense of pride and purpose that can't be replicated. As we look ahead, the next chapter of The Brick House is one we can all be excited about. With its legacy firmly in place, there's no limit to what this space can continue to be for the community. More memories, more laughter, and more nights that remind us why we keep coming back.

So here's to The Brick House—a place that's more than a place, a legacy that's more than a moment. It's a reminder of where we've been and a promise of where we're going. And as we celebrate 50 years, we know one thing for sure: The Brick House will always be home.





Sex in the Sticks

Bellablue, Love Guru, is a pagan goddess of silly sweet snuggles, long licks of skin and nibbles of the neck, of babies, moonlight and rock and roll. Okay, enough BS for the moment. I am not a licensed sex therapist, couples counselor, or cosmetologist – but I still do great makeup. With many lovely and lusty experiences behind me, including a passion for romance novels, the selling of sex toys, and even a brief stint as a dominatrix, I shall try to help all my darlins with love and lust advice of their very own. Originally I was going to do a love question and a lust question, but the more I do this, the more I realize that the two are often intertwined, as they should be. So send your queries to Bella at bazookapaducah@gmail.com. And even if I'm totally full of shit, I promise it will at least be entertaining.

The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of Bella Bazooka

BY BELLA

As many of you know from my previous incarnation of this magazine, this column is kind of my sacred space. It's where I printed a lot of very personal stuff, and felt free to share stories about myself.

This is a happy story - though it does take some dark turns at times. I'm going to try and be succinct, because there is a lot to get through. So some details may be left out - some names changed for privacy...but you'll get the gist.

A lot of you have been asking what happened to the old paper. Now, I have been told by multiple people who love me and with my best interests at heart that I don't owe anyone an explanation about my life, which is true - but in the words of Fat Amy from Pitch Perfect, "I guess I don't feel like I'm really living if I'm not being 100% honest. And my real name is Fat Patricia."

So - here we go.

In late 2007, I had my second child, who now goes by Bella, Jr. An absolutely beautiful little girl who I live and die for, but it wasn't under the absolute best of circumstances. I was on my own, I also had four-year-old Jack Attack to look after, and my mother had a brain hemorrhage three days after Bella was born, so I thought my mom was going to die and had pretty much zero help - after a nasty C-section. There was no father in the picture, and it was a struggle. The cherry on top was BRUTAL postpartum depression. I spent 2008 in a green recliner. It wasn't all bad - but there were times when it got *really* bad. I talked about my experience in-depth on the Voiced Thoughts podcast - you can find their ad in this issue if you are interested.

Basically - I wanted to die. I had thoughts of hurting my child and myself - which is actually VERY common, but no one admits it because they are scared their kids will get taken. I had decided to end it all. With the thoughts I was having, I knew I couldn't possibly ever be a good mother, and everyone would be better off without me. I made the plans - a hot bathtub, plenty of pills, and a razor. I was going to commit suicide.

Then two things happened. First - I decided that, hell - if I was going to KILL myself - I was going to go out with a bang. I *literally* had nothing to lose anymore. I wouldn't be here! So I was going to do the one thing I had always wanted to do, which was start my own paper. A wild and crazy zine that spoke truth to power and talked about blow-jobs in Paducah, Kentucky. The buckle of the Bible Belt.

The second thing that happened was I was misdiagnosed as having generalized depression. They put me on some strong antidepressants. What we *didn't* know at the time was, well - I was bipolar. I had been telling doctors this for

years, because manic-depression, as we called it back then, ran in my family. But they wouldn't listen. (Do they ever?)

What happens when you give a bipolar person antidepressants is they become manic. So right about the time I had the glorious plan of having a magazine - they decided to put my mind and body on the rollercoaster that is constant mania. If you have never experienced hyper-mania - let me tell you, it feels GREAT lol. You feel like Leo on the bow of the Titanic - "I'm king of the world!"

And that's what happened. I became Queen of Paducah, Queen of the Sinners. I was running about seven projects at a time from pinup girls to Facebook groups to huge events for a thousand people and printing a magazine every month (give or take a few days.) Toast of the town. Definitely infamous.

But I also brought a lot of wonderful things to fruition. I built credibility because no one could buy a positive review. And even though I can do snarky VERY well - I didn't tear down people's passion projects. If I didn't like your band or food - I just didn't write about you. Who am I to dump on someone's hard work and dreams? Now - if you are being a horrible entity, a fraud, a hypocrite - I will go after that. But on matters of taste? You do you, boo.

It also caused a bit of a Renaissance in Paducah, because when people had a place where they could actually promote their events, more events started getting planned! It was great. It really was.

But after a few years of that, of running ninety to nothing, my body decided I just couldn't do it anymore. It was around June of 2012 - the last issue, when my body just said, "Fuck this shit - we are tired, and YOU will no longer get out of bed."

BAM. I was done.

This is where it gets pretty dark. I had used drugs periodically to self-medicate and control the mental illness I was struggling with over the years. But now - I was dead to the world. Thank God my mother was well enough at this time to take care of my kids for the most part. Because what came next was a descent into hell.

Someone close to me thought it would be a good idea to shoot me up with speed. I didn't care. I was near death, honestly. And I kinda get it - they just saw me sleeping 22 hours a day for months on end and just wanted me to GET UP. Welp - that will get you up! It will also have you doing a LOT of fucked up things. After a few months of some of the most degrading, disgusting shit you can possibly imagine - in November of 2012, I called a suicide hotline. I told the lady I wasn't going to kill myself, but I couldn't stop thinking about stabbing myself repeatedly in the face. And that the embankments were calling my name. She sent

an ambulance, and I went into the hospital.

Thank GOD it was a certain local psychiatrist on duty. He sat with me for about an hour, looking over my files, and he said, "Duh - you are bipolar." (He might not have said 'duh' but that's how it felt.) I bawled because I had been telling people that for years.

I spent a week in the psych ward. Which actually, is not a bad place. It's great for a reset and almost like a mini-vacay with lots of chocolate ice cream and interesting people to talk to! I stand by this.

When I got out - I got all of my things out of my apartment, cut off ties with all but my oldest friends, and it took a LONG time for me to heal. We are talking years.

I realized a lot of things. I had over-sexualized myself most of my life due to sexual trauma which started when I was a small child and happened many times over the years, which is very common. So from 2012 - 2020, I had sex *maybe* five or six times? Not partners - actual occurrences. I didn't dress up, I didn't go out. I had gained a lot of weight from the new bipolar meds and was very ashamed of how I looked, and what I had done.

Around 2015 I started going back to school and graduated with a Bachelors in Journalism in 2018. Then, Bella Jr. got really sick. It took us three years to find a diagnosis, and it is a totally different kind of hell to watch your child scream in pain every night and not be able to do a goddamn thing about it. But - we eventually got it under a modicum of control, and we are dealing with it the best we can.

Of course then there was Covid. As a creative-type, of course my life-long job has been as a server and bartender lol. That stopped. And when I tried to go back to work that fall, my knees said - nope! YOU stopped for five seconds and now you are screwed. The docs at the Orthopedic Institute were like - you have the knees of an 80-year-old woman. You not only have a torn meniscus, you have *zero* cartilage. It's bone on bone. So I need double knee replacement surgery, which I can't get until I lose weight. And it's kinda hard to lose weight when you can barely walk. I looked into gastric surgery, but I have to lose weight for that, too. Sigh.

But things kinda worked out. I moved out of my mom's, started doing energy healing, started going to Lotus (which I highly recommend for those with sexual trauma), and I was in a good place.

Last September, sitting at a bar patio enjoying a beer, a friend said, "Would you ever do Bazooka again?"

I said, "I've thought about it, but I definitely wanted to

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

FOOTBALL... IN THIS MAGAZINE?

BY JACK HOUSTON

In the midst of political fury, violence, stress, and holidays, you can always count on one thing: the NFL being batshit crazy by week 10. There's been reverse hurdles, legendary comebacks, AFC North bloodbaths, and an Ayahuasca dream that told Aaron Rodgers to pull a Brett Favre and bring all his buddies with him to New York. There are 11 teams with 3 or less wins TEN WEEKS INTO THE SEASON (My Titans being one of them), and somehow the fucking Lions are 8-1. The end times are near I'm afraid.

Let's dive into some of the storylines and predictions for the rest of the season by each division.

AFC NORTH:

If I told you at the beginning of the season that by week 10 there would be one team that's 7-2 and leading the division, who would you think it would be? A re-tooled version of the Cleveland Browns? The juggernaut Ravens with reigning MVP Lamar Jackson? Maybe even the dynamic duo in Cincy with Joe Burrow and Ja'marr Chase? No, it's the fucking Russel Wilson/Justin Fields Steelers. To be fair, if Mike Tomlin could carry Big Ben's rotting corpse to the playoffs in 2021, then surely, he could do the same with a regressing Mr. Unlimited. Ultimately it won't matter, the Ravens will win the division, and the Steelers will go 9-8, sneak into the playoffs and get blown out by the Bills in the wildcard.

AFC SOUTH:

Houston is profiting from the rest of the division being so ass that the Colts, Jaguars, and Titans will all be fighting for a top pick in next year's draft. They have at least 4-5 wins guaranteed from their division alone. Will Levis doesn't know which team to throw to, Anthony Richardson needs naptime after each drive, and Trevor Lawrence is being paid \$250,000,000 to lead the Jags to 2-8. Houston will get the 4 seed and maybe CJ can lead them to a playoff win, however, Houston is not out of the woods yet.

AFC EAST:

The Bills are damn near playing perfect football, Miami can't catch a break, the Patriots were expected to have their worst season in 25 years, and the Jets were preseason Superbowl contenders (Both the Jets and the Patriots are 3-7). Even with Allen throwing 0 TD and 2 INT against the Colts, the Bills still won. Joe Burrow has to be jealous. It's hard not to imagine a future where the Bills get the 2 seed, Miami, New York, and the Patriots don't make the playoffs, and Josh Allen gets throttled by Patrick Mahomes in the divisional.

AFC WEST:

At this point we have to assume that Patrick Mahomes is doing blood rituals in the locker room and that there's a Baphomet statue in the basement of Arrowhead field. There is no world where this team should be 9-0. The NFL scriptwriters are getting lazy at this point. The Chiefs win because they blocked a last-second game winning field goal from the Broncos? Sure, fuck it, why not, it's the Chiefs. The rest of the AFC West has to ask themselves some questions. Is Bo Nix really the answer in Denver? Is Jim Harbaugh going to be stronger than the Charger Curse and make the playoffs? When will the pain and suffering end for Raiders's fans? We know who's going to win the division. We will have to see if anyone else from the AFC West will make it to the dance too.

NFC NORTH:

The Lions are a juggernaut. I would not have believed that prior to 2022, however Dan Campbell has somehow reinvented Jared Goff (except for that one game where he threw 5 interceptions). Brad Holmes has hit a homerun with seemingly every draft pick. They might have to fight Minnesota for the division title though. The Vikings have lucked out with Sam Darnold just randomly being good again. This gives JJ hopefully a little more time for the game to slow down and to mature hopefully. Green Bay has (maybe) found their 3rd franchise quarterback in a row with Jordan Love and could maybe even make a push for the title themselves. The Bears are the Bears. They drafted Caleb Williams for his talent, and now are going to ruin him with bad coaching. Same thing that happened with Justin Fields.

NFC SOUTH:

I really hoped that Baker Mayfield and the boys would bring home the title, however, with meh coaching and three major injuries, they're going to be lucky to get 2nd place in the NFC South. Atlanta on paper should be one of the better teams in the conference. Veteran QB, three big playmakers, and a new coaching staff to put it all together. But it's not all together - it's like when you're putting together a desk and then you end up leaving a half-constructed product on your living room floor. They're 6-4, and we've seen some nice games out of them, but they must be consistent if they're going to go far in the playoffs. The Panthers stink and the Derek Carr experiment has to end. Put in Spencer and see what he can do.

NFC EAST:

The Commanders are hot with their young dual threat QB; however, they still have to get past the Eagles if they want that illustrious home game come

January. Saquon is making magic happen on the field and it's just enough to hide the mediocre play behind center. Dallas fucking sucks and it's what Jerry Jones deserves. Dak will not be getting that contract extension, and it's about time to fire McCarthy, too. Overall, I think that Philly has the experience that Washington doesn't and will ultimately win the division but watch out for Jayden Daniels in the playoffs. Oh yeah, I guess there's the Giants too.

NFC WEST:

The 49ers are back to being mid again right after another Superbowl loss. Somehow the Cardinals are faring well, the Rams are just now getting back into the groove after getting Puka and Kupp back, and as for the Seahawks, it's looking like Genos magical two years are up. Except for a couple of tough games against the Vikings and 49ers, the Cardinals have potential to win out and win the division. As for the rest of the gang, it's going to be really tough to call. The Rams and 49ers could easily make a push for the division. The Seahawks probably aren't going to though.

Now it's time for my award predictions and my Superbowl predictions (These are all very subject to be wrong). As for the awards, I think that if he's going to be as dominant for the rest of the year as he has been, it has to be Josh Allen for MVP. Dude didn't even throw a pick until week 8 and the Bills are 8-1. OPOY could be torn between Chase and Henry, however with a projected 2000 yards and 20 TDs on the ground, I can't not give the nod to Derrick Henry. DPOY always leans towards sacks and Trey Hendrickson is already at 11 through 10 games, however Xavier McKinney has 6 picks (one of them a pick 6) and a sack. If he continues to play well, I could see him making some noise for the award. If Kirk Cousins brings the NFC South title to Atlanta, especially after a torn Achilles in Minnesota, he will get CPOY. COTY will go to Dan Campbell for breaking the Lions curse. OROY will go to Jayden Daniels, and DROY will go to either Jared Verse or Laiatu Latu. The odds favor Verse, but don't be surprised if Latu takes it home. Finally, my Superbowl predictions. We all know who's going to represent the AFC for the 3rd time in a row (don't be surprised if it's the Ravens or the Bills though), but I think that the most put together team on paper is the Motor City Detroit Lions. I have them beating the Eagles in the NFCCG, and (hear me out) even beating the Kansas City Chiefs in Superbowl 56. Hopefully they can end all of this evil emanating from Kansas City, MO.

Well, there you have it, an in-depth review of the season so far, and even some predictions that I guarantee you will look stupid come February. In fact, I'm writing this on November 11th, so fuck it, it all could be wrong by the time you're reading this. Just remember, on any given Sunday, anything can happen.

“HARTSON SAYS ‘WE’RE BACK... BEATCHES!”

INFINITE GOOD TIMES & GEEKING OUT!

BY BELLA BAZOOKA

Alex Martin has been a staple around the Paducah underground/alt music scene for more years than either of us care to recount. He is the drummer for The punk band The Queers and co-owner of Infinite Collectibles, which is located at 3215 Irvin Cobb Dr, Suite #103 (next to Penn Station). He is one of the kindest, most giving people you will ever meet. So we decided to spotlight Infinite Collectibles on their ninth anniversary, and tell you a little more about them!

Hey Alex! We are so excited to be exploring Infinite Collectibles in our first monthly business spotlight! Now - I know you are super busy with being the drummer for The Queers and on tour all the time, what in the world inspired you to add more to your plate by starting a brick and mortar comics/video games/collectibles emporium?

As life long nerds, my brother Adam (who is the President and co-owner of Infinite Collectibles) and I had been working together at the Wickliffe papermill as diesel mechanics when we started saving money to buy comic books and statues to sell at comic book conventions on the weekends. We had amassed a pretty large inventory by the time the papermill announced it was shutting down, so we started looking at possibly opening a spot to sell comics. When we approached Mike Robinson from Gamer's Paradise about renting a small section from him he surprised us by offering to sell Gamer's Paradise to us. We took the bait and started as Infinite Collectibles selling comics, video games and more! It's been a wild ride!

What do you think you offer the area that no one else does? What makes you guys stick out?

The best thing about Infinite Collectibles is that we are fans of this stuff ourselves, so we have engaging debates and passionate discussions over movies, video games, TCG (trading-card games) and more. We're always playing some great music and every customer is treated as a friend. We also have an amazing selection of hard to find comic books, video games and collectible cards!

Tell us about some of the events you guys host! I know you do Magic the Gathering tournaments, what else do you do or is in the works?

We've dipped heavily into the TCG world and Magic The Gathering has been at the forefront of that but also the new One Piece TCG has been extremely popular. We are hosting official events from Bandai with

great turn out and prizes. We also offer an "All Play" every couple weeks for customers to come in and play any games they like. Another awesome thing is we do these after official hours so we can play as well and have fun with our customers, I suck at the card games but it's a win/win for everyone! Burnham and Adam play almost weekly!

What has been the biggest support factor in your life - what makes you able to do all these wonderful things?

Our parents, Mark and Vickie Martin, always supported anything we wanted to do. That's a major advantage that Adam and I are grateful to have had. We've ventured into music and owning a business but regardless of if we succeeded or failed we knew our parents were proud of us and loved us.

Adam and I are both married to incredible women (Shara and Lindsey) who have supported every decision we've made as well. Especially when it was difficult.

Hiring Zach Burnham was an awesome decision. Burnham is a wealth of knowledge for everything we sell and he's always teaching (or correcting) Adam and I haha. Burnham brings a lot to Infinite Collectibles and he's always been there to keep Adam and I in check haha! I truly love him and all of our customers do as well.

Lastly, we teamed up with our ol' buddy Dale Roberts in the last year or so to bring even more rare and collectible items to the store. Dale is a major player in the high-end collectibles world, Having over 30 years of experience with major comic conventions and his own incredible inventory. We are always super excited to learn and grow!

What would you say are some of the more rare and exotic things you have in your collection?

Currently we have the first appearance of the Fantastic Four, which is the first Stan Lee and Jack Kirby comic published by Marvel Comics in 1961. It started everything! That's an awesome comic book to have! The store has had sooooo many incredible cards, video games and comics it's hard to recall all of it.

Teenagers/gamers/boys are NOTORIOUSLY hard to shop for - can you give our readers some Christmas ideas that are available in your shop?

This year Deadpool & Wolverine, Venom and Penguin were popular movies/tv with teenagers, we have a vast majority of items for anything related to those and we always offer giftcards for anyone who just wants to pop in and grab one!

What are some of YOUR favorite



comics/series/games? Tell us why you love them!

I'm super old-school on gaming so my favorites are NES titles like Mega Man 2, Contra and Castlevania! They remind me of the early 90s and just how much fun we had. Plus the music is incredible.

My favorite literary character is Spider-Man. I always was something of an outcast or reject, so I identified with Peter Parker. I love that Spider-Man can save NYC but gets home and can't make himself a bowl of cereal because he's too broke for milk. It's the commonality of the character that makes him so popular to me and millions of others.

This is your 9-year anniversary (Congrats btw!), you have moved to a more desirable location, expanded your inventory - what's next?

We've been going for years now and as you mentioned we moved 1 year ago into our new location by Penn Station. It's been an incredible journey, what's awesome is making all these friends who have common interests. Adam and I love supporting our community as well, we always run Toys for Tots donations, sponsor school events, little league and tons of charity stuff.

Infinite Collectibles is in it for the long haul and we are dedicated to bringing our customers the best items and experience we

can!

Now, you guys buy inventory as well - what are some of the more sought after items that people might want to check their collections for to make some extra holiday money?

We buy, sell and trade every single day of the week so we can keep awesome new items coming into the store at all times.

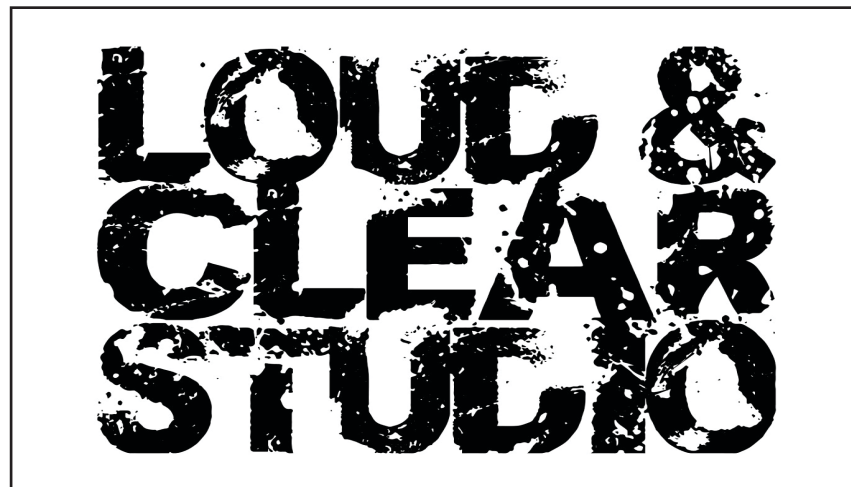
So check your closets, under your beds and the attic for comic books, video games, action figures and trading cards!!

I've noticed that retro-gaming has become increasingly more popular in recent years - why do you think that is?

I think retro games keep growing for a few reasons. It seems people who grew up playing certain games are now adults with their own money and they can buy whatever they want for nostalgia. A lot of old school games are made for two players and it's a ton of fun to be in the same room with your buddies playing the same game like we all did in the old days.

Is there anything I have left out that you would like to add?

I just want to say that we are thankful for all the support from all of our customers and we are grateful to have become friends with so many awesome people through Infinite Collectibles. We can't wait to see you!



WAKING SLEEPING BEAUTY

that moment, I had just done something that would change the course of my life forever. A few weeks later, I decided to also end my marriage. And everything essentially changed overnight.

Tell us about how you started expressing your new self - I believe it started with a blog? What did you have to say?

I started expressing myself first of all by undressing myself. Sounds strange, but I did a boudoir shoot on my 30th birthday and it was the most empowering thing ever! After being taught my body and sexuality was something to be ashamed of... I decided to embrace my body and sexuality! Talk about a high. I'll never forget how powerful I felt during that photoshoot. I have used social media, vlogs, blogs, and music videos as a way for self expression from that point forward. To tell my story, and share my experiences artistically. I went through a period more recently, while I was running my music business, where I started to be more fake. I refused to share some parts of myself because I was afraid I would be judged, and lose business. But I started to again feel stifled and inauthentic. So I canceled my business all together! And am now free to be the witch mermaid fairy creature I've always been haha.

What inspired you to pick up the violin again?

Ok I absolutely love this question! In my mid-twenties I was playing violin in the symphony, but was quite burnt out after being involved in the classical music world my whole life. So I quit playing all together. I went back to school, and earned an MBA. I just wanted a fresh start. I was also now a single mom of two young children. After I essentially broke up with my parents, and my husband, I also got training to be a life coach. I started helping others work towards their dream life. One day I turned on the TV randomly (I don't typically watch TV) and saw a young man playing his heart out with this unusual looking violin! He was playing a current hit, and I was absolutely mesmerized. It dawned on me, I could do that! I WILL DO THAT. So I turned the TV back off, and went and got my acoustic violin from underneath the bed. I dusted it off, and played my favorite song of all time, Dancing Queen by Abba. I propped up my phone, and made a video. Now mind you, it had been years since I touched a violin. Regardless, I decided to start a YouTube channel, and work towards a new dream. I posted the video on my channel, and also submitted it to America's Got Talent, since that was the show the young man was on. I wanted to pay it forward. I knew how watching him had just changed my life, so I spent the next 6 years auditioning and doing all sorts of things to try and get chosen

for the show. Just simply playing electric violin didn't get my act chosen - so I tried playing while dancing. Playing on stilts. Playing while flying in the air. But after all my attempts, my act never got chosen. However, because of being so public about it, I got recruited to be on ANOTHER reality television show, and got to perform my act on national television after all! Filming was this past spring, and it hasn't aired yet. My only hope is that when it does, another mom will see it out there and pick her art back up. If that happens, all the years of sweat, tears and crazy stunts, will have been worth it.

What has been the hardest part of shedding your old skin, belief systems, and emerging as the butterfly you are today?

The hardest part has been not listening to those from my past. And those that don't agree with what I stand for, and who I am today. I have received a lot of backlash since I started putting myself out there. I have even received death threats. This is why I try not to show pictures of my children publicly. But yea.. that's been hard. But it's why I've sort of created an alter ego. Jewelia. My real name is Julia, but becoming Jewelia helps me feel strong and unstoppable, in spite of whatever hate tries to come my way. Also, as a person that believes in magick, I have started doing more protective spell work, so that I can keep moving forward. My goal is to help empower others that were like me, and help us all come together to make our world a more unified and accepting place to be.

How have your old friends/family/ church reacted to this new you?

Not well. I unfortunately had to cut myself off from basically everyone. Including my family. I was, and am done, being bullied. There are thankfully a few former church members who also left, and we all keep in touch as we will forever be bonded. We all have the same scars, and in a strange way, that is comforting. Their friendships mean a lot.

I know you have a secret awesome surprise coming up - can you give us any teasers?

So yes, that reality show! I keep saying it's coming and some may think I'm full of it, because it still hasn't aired yet lol. When it does air, it will be quite entertaining and I can't wait for you to see it! We just all have to be patient as it may be up to a year before it airs. But I made it to episode 5, it's on a major network, and I got to speak my message for the world to hear. I just hope it makes a difference!

I know you have collaborated with some amazing other artists - can you tell us a little about that? Weren't you referred to as a "secret weapon"?

Ahh yes, I recently was featured on

an album with Lil Wayne. We were both featured artists on this album, so that was super cool! The album is out now, and the Artist is God's Only Villain, who is from Paducah. Be sure to check it out! His album was featured in a New York Times Article in which they gave me a shout out. Referred to me as a 'secret weapon' which made me giggle. I see myself as such, because I have been underestimated my whole life. So I've learned to use that to my advantage. Ultimately, I want to be snuck inside the Trojan Horse, go into the middle of all this shit that has become of our society, and blow it up from within. But please keep this on the DL, can't be giving away ALL our secrets.

Your new album is dropping soon. I know it is deeply personal to you. What would you say is the core message behind the album? And when does it drop and where!?

The new album is most certainly deeply personal to me, yes. It's actually what helped me recently become even more authentic. The lyrics in some of the songs have helped me continue to come out of my shell. Half the album is purely instrumental, and half the album includes spoken word. It will drop on New Years Day, and is titled "Deep End." When I first went through my transformation, my father said "Julia went off the deep end" and I always took that as a compliment. I love the deep end! It's more fun to swim than the shallow end.

You will be able to find it on all major streaming platforms! I will also be selling physical copies. I really want to sell cassette tapes of it too - I know that's silly, but I'm a nostalgic person lol.

What song do you think expresses your journey the most?

So I actually dedicated one of the songs on the album, to my period of transformation. It's titled the same as the album, "Deep End". It is basically a narrative of my personal transformation and rebellion against societal norms. My journey from an internal struggle and societal judgment, to a triumphant new, unapologetic self. The song overall is aggressive, and chaotic. But I feel that it expresses the intense emotions and experiences involved in the process.

Where do you see your journey taking you? Where would you like to be personally and professionally in, say, a year?

This is an excellent question. I get so caught up in the daily routine of taking care of children, I haven't really even had a chance to think about this lately. But since you asked, I will take this opportunity to consider where it is I would like to be a year from now. To start with, I would like to have another album out in addition to this first one! My dream is to just continue creating original music, for the rest of my days. I'm not trying to compete within the music industry by no means, and will NEVER sell

my soul. If that means I never "make it" I'm more than happy to just continue as things are. My definition of success has already been achieved. I moved into the woods, and am living the exact life I want to live. My plan is to wild-school my youngest, and I want to have one more child. Being a mom is my greatest joy, and that journey is out of the public eye. My children will always be my greatest accomplishment. But as far as professionally, I would like to create a Religious Trauma course to help those of us who are diagnosed with PTSD and C-PTSD due to the affects of Religious Trauma Syndrome. I am also going to really start focusing on growing my instagram, and creating content to help others that were like me. As of now, my only real platform is social media, since I live in a small town. So I will continue to use it to the best of my ability.

Are there any fun anecdotes or personal messages that we didn't cover that you would like to share? (Didn't know of you wanted to get into sex work or paganism!)

I don't have any advice besides, Just Be You. No matter what, just be yourself!

What is your favorite comfort movie that always cheers you up?

Mulan.

Favorite food —

Sushi, but I love all food I haven't met a food I don't like yet lol.

What did you want to be when you were little?

I wanted to be a professional violinist, and a mom. As a child, I always said I wanted 20 kids. Omg lol.

Favorite Christmas present as a kid —

A pogo stick!

Coollest experience with a famous person —

This person is not famous, but my favorite person in the whole world, and the coolest experiences I have ever had, are with my husband. I would like to end this interview by giving him the biggest shoutout ever! He allows me to be myself, and he never judges me even in my more 'wild' moments. I have calmed down a lot since we got together, and he is my rock. He is also my protector, and an excellent provider for me and the children. He supports me and my art, and my desire to stay home as our children are still young. He is simply amazing, and I love him like crazy! Life has brought me to exactly the person I was supposed to be with. And for that, I will always be eternally grateful.

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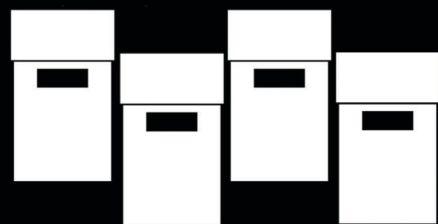


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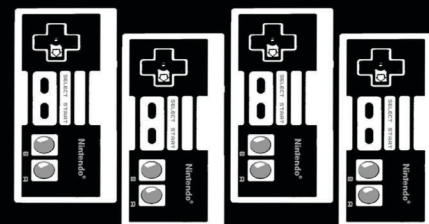
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THE HISTORY OF THE BIKERS' ANNUAL TOY RUN

With an event like the Bikers Annual Toy Run in its 41st year, it's especially important to know how it all began. I felt privileged to get the history from James Hooper, one of the visionaries since the beginning.

It all started with some fellas who spent their weekends in an old garage behind a Justin Willham's house on Clarks River Rd. They'd gather on the weekends, BBQ, maybe drink a beer, and work on their bikes. Those shovelheads needed to be worked on quite regularly, and there was no better excuse to get together.

But, I should begin with the originals. James Hooper, who's still riding, has only missed one Toy Run in 41yrs. He and Les Ringstaff, "Spider", a cross-country truck driver, are the surviving founders.

Gone but never forgotten are: Jerry Don Baker, who drew the Santa still on the posters, Justin Willham, the man with the garage where Paducah's Toy Run became a reality, and Keith Ford. It's Ford's 1969 yellow shovelhead that the Santa is riding in our posters.

There have been people since the beginning like Tony Stinnett and Larry Byasses, and women who still help to this day, who used crayons to color the first posters as children, and of course Wild-Man and Ann Allbritten, who Mr. Hooper credits with keeping the Toy Run going as life got hectic for others.

However, it was these five men who, according to Mr. Hooper, were looking through an Easy Rider Magazine and saw that in California bikers were having their go at a toy run, decided it sounded like a good idea, and was it ever!

Mr. Hooper never thought the Toy Run would grow like it has. It was difficult at first. Bikers didn't have the best reputation. The mayor, police, and the parks department were more than a little hesitant to get on board. However, Keith Ford worked for the city picking up trash on an old scooter. He knew where to go. It was Sandra



Lynn with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services who was willing to take help when help was offered. She has also been a part of the Bikers Annual Toy Run since.

In beginning, it was word of mouth with as many flyers as they could put up, in as many places who would allow. It was only about 20 people, and an old pickup truck filled with toys and good intentions. Many didn't have much themselves, but that's probably why they were so dedicated to making sure children didn't go without.

With the magic of Christmas, here we are 41 years later, and bikers from Washington State to Maine come to support the Bikers Annual Toy Run in Paducah, Ken-

tucky. Its like a family reunion for many, being the only time they get to see their old friends. But every year, new bonds are forming. Everyone from families with babies to 80-year-old women who've never ridden a motorcycle, and so many in-between, show up to support this cause.

For Mr. Hooper, and many other parade goers, it's the families with their kids who line the streets from Paducah Square to Noble Park watching the motorcycles and truckloads of toys go by that is the most inspiring. As the flyers say, Santa rides regardless of the weather and so do we!

The Bikers Annual Toy Run supports nine counties of children in the foster care system, and it's not just for Christmas. The donations go to buy food if needed or send children to summer camp. It's truly like no other.

No one person is responsible for the Toy Run, it's a community, and many are driven to help. They are all VOLUNTEERS, getting nothing for their labors except to know the good they are doing for children and their families.

Reminding them during the holidays, a difficult time of year for many who have an unstable home or have lost family members in any way, that there is an enormous amount of support for them.

Throughout the years countless children and their families, be it their birth or foster, have witnessed the love and support from the biker community. Many of them have been driven to help continue the tradition as volunteers or donors keeping this growing for the future children so they, too, will be reminded that there is a huge community of people who have never stopped showing up. The biker community has refused to waiver in its dedication. That is why thousands show up in Paducah the 3rd Saturday of November regardless of the weather.



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LOCAL MUSIC SPOTLIGHT

BLAYNE

BY JACK HOUSTON

There I stood on the top of a hill overlooking the scenic Nashville skyline at 1am listening to ambient music and talking with BLAYNE. The wind is cold, there's a herd of sheep 50 feet away from us, and you can see the Batman building perfectly. He talks to me about how he wants to be something different, something more than just an artist. He wants to be a visionary. He wants to revolutionize how the music game is played and beat the system as his own man – no, instead he wants to beat the system as a movement, standing for an idea. The idea that each person can be their own artist. He wants his family, friends, and fans to stand at his side and do what most people don't think they can do - control his own destiny.

From selling out shows in Nashville, to reaching over 10,000 monthly listeners on Spotify alone, BLAYNE is just now beginning his journey to superstardom. BLAYNE is a trailblazer, unafraid and unapologetic to show his personality and unique sound to the world, he is growing quickly and it's looking like he's not going to stop anytime soon for anybody or anything. However, he wasn't always like this, this story starts with a timid and shy 13-year-old boy that plays guitar to his grandmothers' old vinyl records. That's Nathaniel, the one that would grow into the phenomenon "BLAYNE".

In his earlier years, he always had music around him. His uncle and dad both play instruments, and his entire family has a love for it. Eventually, of course, this would guide him down the road to converting a closet into a makeshift studio with a not so good quality microphone with pillows

and blankets for acoustic treatment, finding a not so good quality YouTube beat, and making his first unofficial song "Quarter Pounder with Cheese". Of course, these were trivial to him in the moment, however it would always stick with him. Freestyling on YouTube beats was very common in his youth and even now. After high school he would enlist into the U.S. Airforce with his wife Audrey by his side, and move 8 hours away to Barksdale AF base in Shreveport, LA. He would meet some key people there that would eventually lead to his first alias, Skii.

His first official experience of making music was much more rooted in the hip hop and rap community. This is the alias he released his first song on Spotify with "Come up freestyle". After talking about it with his manager, close friends, and family, he eventually changed his artist's name to "BLAYNE" his middle name. Along with this change of name, you also saw a change in style. As he continued making music as "BLAYNE" and doing shows in Nashville and releasing more on Spotify, he also became more confident in his voice, his team, and his message. He began to experiment with different sounds. One of his songs "DØN'T STAY" has a lot of inspiration from bands such as Deftones. One of his unreleased songs "Ballad of a Sinner" takes inspiration from the grandiose sounds of "The Weeknd". You would probably have to listen to his music to know what his style and genre is. The closest his team has gotten to a label is "Ethereal Hip Hop" or "Indie RnB".

BLAYNE says that "I wouldn't be where I am



today if it wasn't for the people around me". And in turn, the people around him could not be prouder of him and all of the work he has put into music. I was able to go to one of his shows in March, and there's no one more capable of making a crowd stop and wonder "Woah who's this guy?" He stole the show in every aspect of the phrase. The audience was attentive. When he's on stage it is like a whole different persona comes out of him.

Overall, if there's any local artist you should be paying attention to, it's 100% BLAYNE and there should be no other discussion. He is groundbreaking in his sound and style, the music he makes comes from the heart, and the passion he puts into his craft is palpable. You can find him on Spotify and Apple Music under BLAYNE and find him on Instagram at @blayneofficial. Don't miss your opportunity to be a part of the movement now while you can, because he is only going up from here, and the story is nowhere near done.

SEX IN THE STICKS

be in a good place before I did it again." He said, "Think about it, I'd like to invest."

I didn't jump on it. I thought about it long and hard for months. Because - even though it wasn't the mag's fault - I did almost die last time.

But things were so much different. I've walked through the fire and came out of it, a little crispy but ALIVE. I've been working on myself for twelve years. Hard-core EMDR therapy, energy work, you name it. I have the BEST psychiatrist and therapist. I'm not done growing - because you should always be growing. One of the kiddos is out of the house on his own and the other is 17, so I'm damn near an empty-nester. I have time on my hands, and as long as I can control when I expend energy and how much - it's doable. I have learned the

lessons about self-care and taking breaks the hard way.

February rolled around - and I started getting back out there. One of the first networking events I went to was a diversity event at MBMG studios where I met Ronnie Jones and Danette Mahabeer-Turner and Aime Tooley - who have all been so supportive, along with Rafiel Banks Nailing and Tisa Monne. I did Danette's podcast and Ronnie's Poetry After Dark, started going to the Sprocket morning coffee hours on Wednesdays - and every time I told people about the paper they were like, "OMG we need this so badly!"

They pumped me up. We do need it! And if you are reading this right now - damnit, I did do it! Lol.

If there is a moral to this story, and the story keeps on rolling, as you know, is that sometimes, in your life - you may feel like you are rotting. Just sitting in the same chair, binging shows you aren't even paying attention to. But you

aren't rotting. You are fermenting. You are sitting quietly while all those ideas and passions are doing this beautiful alchemy under the surface. It won't come to fruition on its own. You are going to have to eventually get up and start. And like I have told my kids - sometimes you fall. Sometimes you fall a LOT. Just keep getting back up, man. You can wallow. I did. Now - yeah, I got a Bachelors while being a single mom raising two ah-mazing kids lol - that in itself was a feat. But I did plenty of wallowing as well. Trust me.

My favorite movie is Shawshank Redemption. In it is a quote. Tim Robbins' character says, "Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things. And no good thing ever dies."

Don't lose hope. You are NOT alone. There are so many wonderful, quirky little communities in Western Kentucky - and you may not have found your tribe yet - but you will. And together, we can do anything. :)



Sammi

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