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A MISSING VOICE

ONLY 1 BILL PRIMARILY SPONSORED BY A BLACK, KENTUCKY LEGISLATOR HAS BEEN PASSED IN 5 YEARS



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ON THE COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF LRC PUBLIC



Just like Heine Brothers', the LEO has always been about our community. Local arts, restaurants, books, sports, theatre, film, music - the LEO covers it all, and goes deep into the stories and people of Louisville that no one else is able to. Plus, being named "The best place to pick up the LEO" year after year by the readers of the LEO has been a fun part of the journey.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I'M WITH THE ANTI-MAPPERS

By Aaron Yarmuth | leo@leoweekly.com

IT'S GOOD TO SEE Louisville getting back to its normal routines and traditions. The Kentucky Derby and Derby Festival are approaching, albeit still modified. Some are spending April days indoors not because of quarantine but, rather, because we can't breath the pollen-infused air outdoors. Most telling, though, is that the community can once again lose its collective mind over a train map.

To be clear, I stand with the anti-mappers... this is an outrage! (More on that in a minute.)

But, it's not even a real train map. It's a hypothetical train map... a "vision" map, produced by Amtrak. The map depicts what new cities and services could be added to its existing passenger train network if the federal government invested in rail infrastructure — something along the lines of the \$80 billion designated specifically for rail in President Joe Biden's American Jobs Plan.

And, guess what? Louisville made the map! We could soon be able to travel by train to other major U.S. cities!

Then we started to look closer at the map.

OK, we barely made the map. Louisville would essentially be a standalone extension of Amtrak's existing Midwest corridor, with the only practical connections to major cities being Indianapolis,

then Chicago and on to Milwaukee. No, this train service wouldn't help us go east, or west, or south... so Louisville is still not viewed as a major city, and Kentucky is still fly-over country. We suck.

So it was, a good, old fashioned Louisville-spiraling sequence of emotions — from happy and optimistic to cynical, contemptuous and mad as hell.

We're back!

Fortunately, LEO offers more time than the Twittersphere to digest and add perspective to this outrage. So let's relax and look at the future of rail for Louisville... and this map!

First, Louisville isn't being selfish or self-centered by wanting to connect beyond Indiana and the Midwest. If it makes sense economically to connect Louisville to Indy and Chicago, it has to make sense for Louisville to be connected to Cincinnati, St. Louis, Nashville and on to Memphis and Atlanta. That's not just so we are connected to those cities — making all those quick, safe, easy trips — but it's so all of those cities are connected, as well. Without Louisville, the South and Midwest will remain regionally segregated.

Louisville is the only city that can connect the entire South with the entire Midwest.

Fortunately, in 2009 the Georgia

Department of Transportation studied the feasibility of the "Atlanta-Louisville corridor," including three high speed rail options, each passing through Chattanooga and Nashville. The first, cheapest, high-speed option is a shared-use route, which would partially follow existing commercial CSX Transportation lines. With an average speed of 72 mph, you could be in Atlanta in just under seven hours. The second option, a dedicated high speed line, would average 122 mph and get you to Atlanta in three-and-a-half hours. The third option, a "maglev" service — using magnetic levitation to propel the train over 220 mph — would average 143 mph and get you to The ATL in three hours.

The Georgia study led the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet to conclude in a 2015 report that each of the "alternatives performed well under the operating ratio analysis, resulting in anticipated ridership versus estimated revenue ratios well above the necessary benefit-cost ratio for all three scenarios.... The operating revenue surplus could encourage investment from the private sector, reducing public financing required.... [T]he study recommended that the results be used to set priorities for future state planning and corridor development activities. In particular, this study found that high-speed passenger rail

service is feasible in the Atlanta-Chattanooga-Nashville-Louisville Corridor."

I'm in for the levitating train.

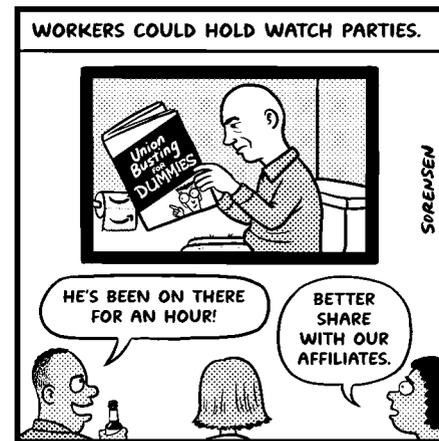
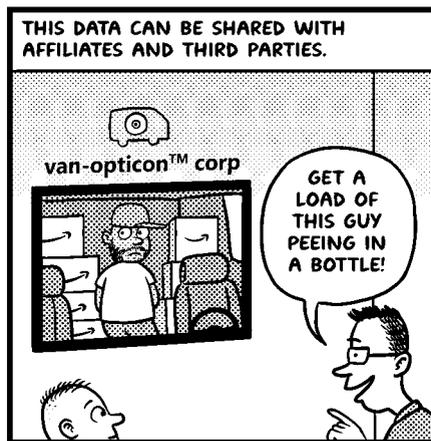
And if the "Atlanta-Louisville corridor" is feasible, Louisville to Indy and the Midwest has to be feasible, as well, along with Cincinnati and St. Louis — each one multiplying the economic impact of infrastructure connectivity.

So let's not dwell on Amtrak's primitive map. What we need first is the American Jobs Act, which Mitch McConnell has vowed Republicans will oppose.

I recommend, instead of sharing your thoughts on Twitter, share your thoughts with every Republican in the state — from senators McConnell and Paul to the five House representatives and every state legislator. Let them know that you want President Biden's American Jobs Plan passed and a real map drawn, one that makes Louisville the new high speed rail American gateway.

Then, we can worry about the details later. •

JEN SORENSEN



LOCAL UNIVERSITIES TO TEACH BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

By James J. Wilkerson | leo@leoweekly.com

BEFORE I was the Title IX Guy, I was a law clerk at the Jefferson County Attorney's office. One sunny day last January, it was my turn to retrieve the office mail, and as I was leaving the Hall of Justice, I heard the nearby screams of a young woman. As I looked down the steps toward the corner of Jefferson and 6th, I quickly discovered the source of the distress. In broad daylight, there was a man trying to lift a woman off her feet and shove her into the trunk of his car. It is not every day you see an attempted abduction in front of the courthouse, but here I stood, part of a crowd that looked on in shock and confusion. As others around me pulled their cellphones out to record the incident, thoughts ran through my head of heroically running down and physically subduing this scoundrel until the authorities arrived as the crowd cheered my bravery. But then I remembered that I am no longer the agile 20-something I once was. I turned around, ran back inside the courthouse, and alerted the bored looking sheriffs sitting by the metal detectors, who were more than happy to delve into the heroics outside.

BORN IN KENTUCKY

The Green Dot program was designed by former UK faculty member Dorothy Edwards in 2006. The goal of the program is to empower bystanders to use prevention methods to reduce power-based violence such as sexual assault, domestic assault and stalking. Today, Edwards serves as the president of Alteristic, the organization responsible for training and certifying Green Dot instructors who will ultimately teach this form of bystander intervention on their respective campuses.

Perhaps the most crucial area of the training is teaching participants the many methods of intervention they have at their disposal in any given situation. Known as the "Three Ds," Green Dot designates intervention behaviors into three categories: Direct, Delegation or Distraction.

The program begins by asking participants to visualize their campus community as a map with various red and green dots scattered throughout. The red dots represent incidents of sexual assault, dating violence and stalking while the green dots represent behaviors

and choices that can prevent the red dots from occurring. If we can fill the map with green dots, then red dots will not have room to exist, bringing forth a culture change to that community.

Of course, intervening in situations of assault and violence may not be as easy for some as it is for others. Be it a fear of confrontation or the diffusion of responsibility, people have personal barriers that stand in their way of intervening in specific situations. Green Dot asks participants to identify those barriers as doing so is the first step in finding the proper tools of intervention.

Perhaps the most crucial area of the training is teaching

participants the many methods of intervention they have at their disposal in any given situation. Known as the "Three Ds," Green Dot designates intervention behaviors into three categories: direct, delegation or distraction. As the name suggests, direct intervention sees a bystander physically or verbally interjecting themselves in a scenario. Meanwhile intervention through delegation includes involving an authority figure like a professor or a campus police officer. Lastly, distraction intervention involves creating a diversion that will defuse the situation. The diversion could be as simple as asking one of the parties for directions or to borrow something like a phone charger or a pen. Through the Three Ds, Green Dot seeks to put numerous tools in the bystander toolbox which can be utilized appropriately in rela-



James J. Wilkerson.

tion to the situation, while meeting the user's comfort level.

Research from UK in 2017 has proven Green Dot to be a successful program. Twenty-six high schools were studied over the course of five years with half of the schools being taught the Green Dot method while the other half received no bystander intervention training at all. By the third and fourth years of the study, sexual assault victimization rates lowered by 12% at the schools that offered Green Dot to their students. There were 120 fewer incidents in the third year of the study and 88 fewer in the fourth year.

LOCAL BUY IN

As a part of their Office of Violence Against Women grant, 10 staff and faculty members from Indiana University Southeast enrolled in Alteristic's Green Dot instructor training last December. IUS' OVW Grant Project Coordinator Nikki Green spearheaded the University's involvement in the program and invited several staff members from UofL to participate as well. Over four full days, the participants were immersed in the curriculum and at the program's conclusion, were certified to teach Green Dot at their respective universities.

IUS wasted no time in educating their campus community. Since January, faculty from the university's Schools of Education and Counseling have already received training as well as the members of the Student Conduct Hearing Panels and a group of academic

advisors. "There is a good buzz around the program as people are excited to see how they can help," said Green. While the training is only available to staff and faculty members at the moment, she states that future plans include training the student body, as several Greek organizations and the Student Government Association have already expressed interest in seeing their members trained. And while the Green Dot team at UofL is not quite ready to share their plans just yet, members of their campus community are also excited about their training launch later in the year. "This training is really important for our campus," says Assistant Title IX Coordinator Sarah Mudd. Mudd states that 80 to 90% of perpetrators of sexual assault are someone the victim knows. "If we have our students trained, they will be able to identify the warning signs and will be able to help limit the number of assaults, which is the main point of all of this," she continues.

Green Dot training will hopefully equip local undergraduates with the tools they need to overcome their personal barriers and intervene in a manner that is safe and comfortable to them. As Green says, "people need to understand it's not complicated." "Everybody can do something," she continued. And it is that something that could very well change campus culture. •

James J. Wilkerson, J.D., is the director of Staff Diversity and Equity and the Deputy Title IX Coordinator at IU Southeast.

FINAL DAYS OF THE SESSION: WHAT PASSED, WHAT DIDN'T

By Danielle Grady | dgrady@leoweekly.com

EVERY hour of the final two days of the Kentucky legislative session is eventful. One minute, you're cursing state leadership. The next, you're pleasantly surprised that something passed or relieved that it got dropped. It can be hard to keep track of what made it through and what didn't. Here's a lil' rundown on what you may have missed:

OVERRIDDEN VETOS

Much of the first day was actually devoted to overriding Gov. Andy Beshear's vetoes of legislation already delivered out of the Capitol by Kentucky's Republican supermajority. Out of 24 bills and one joint resolution that Beshear vetoed, only three were spared from Republican wrath.

There was speculation that Kentucky's school choice bill wouldn't be overridden, but it happened with the minimum number of votes needed: 51. Now, a bill that Republicans have been reworking for several sessions has finally passed: It will devote state funds to tax credits for people donating to scholarships for some private schools. In addition, it will move funds with students if they choose to attend a school outside of their district, diverting resources from others.

WHAT PASSED

No-knock Warrants: Senate Bill 4, Senate President Robert Stivers' bill limiting the use of no-knock warrants in Kentucky passed with a couple new amendments. The legislation will restrict the issuance of such warrants to situations involving a suspected violent crime. The bill also required no-knock warrants to be carried out by special

response teams wearing body cameras. But, an amendment added by Rep. John Blanton, R-Salyersville, would strike that requirement for counties with populations under 90,000 if special response teams aren't available quickly. Smaller counties would also be able to use other types of recording devices, including audio-only devices. Finally, the amendment included a requirement that a paramedic or EMT to be on stand-by during the execution of the warrant.

West End TIF: House Bill 321, establishing a tax-increment finance district in West Louisville, or a TIF, passed last-minute in the legislature. A TIF is supposed to stir economic development. It sets a base tax rate for businesses in the area. As property values

rise, the money collected by the government above the base tax rate goes back to economic development projects in the TIF district. To kick off the TIF, the legislature also approved

\$30 million for projects in the area. This particular TIF also contains a provision meant to prevent gentrification by freezing property taxes for homeowners. Activists still harbor concerns that rents will be raised on residents.

Pandemic Funds: The legislature figured out where to send some of that \$2.6 billion that Kentucky received from the federal government as part of the American Rescue Act. With three bills, they allocated \$1.1 billion total, with \$140 million for one year of full-day kindergarten, \$127 million for investments in school buildings, \$50 million for broadband expansion, \$250 million for clean drinking water and wastewater projects and \$575 million going toward paying off the federal

unemployment loan given to Kentucky in 2020.

Anti-abortion: Republicans have found yet a new way to ban abortion without actually banning it. House Bill 91 proposes an amendment to the state constitution that, if approved, would say that there is no right to an abortion in Kentucky. It won't actually outlaw abortion in Kentucky because of *Roe v. Wade*, but it sets up the possibility in the event that the Supreme Court ruling is overturned. Gov. Andy Beshear can't veto the bill, because it's a constitutional amendment proposal, so the issue will be on the ballot in 2022.

Open Records: Senate Bill 48 would allow police, judges, prosecutors and their families dodge having certain records about them released. These government employees could shield their addresses, birth dates, email addresses, phone numbers and more from records request.

COVID liability: Senate Bill 5 could protect "essential" businesses from being sued in coronavirus-related lawsuits as long as they "reasonably" tried to follow Kentucky's coronavirus regulations.

WHAT FAILED

Louisville's civilian review board of Louisville police will not have subpoena power — a key aspect of making it more effective than the former Citizens Commission on Police Accountability. House Bill 309 would have allowed the civilian review board to ask the council's Metro Government Oversight and Audit Committee for subpoenas. After facing backlash from some Metro Council members for not granting direct subpoena power, it failed.

The much-maligned Senate Bill 211, which would, among other things, have made it illegal to taunt a police officer, did not get a vote in the House after passing the Senate. •

THORNS & ROSES



THE WORST, BEST & MOST ABSURD

THORN: SCHOOL CHOICE... FOR SOME

State Republicans finally landed a school choice bill, overriding Gov. Beshear's veto of House Bill 563, which will undermine public schools and exacerbate achievement gaps. "School choice"... sounds like it came straight from the Republican messaging machine that brought "pro-life" and "right-to-work." Like those other misnomers, school choice will afford some kids the opportunity to attend a school outside of their home district. Say... instead of JCPS, a kid can go to Oldham County. The funding that would have gone to JCPS? That now goes to Oldham County. But at least you get to choose where your child goes to school, right? Yeah right. Let's see how many — and which — kids get to choose their school. Oh, and you're still on the hook for your taxes, even if your kid wasn't the lucky one to get in somewhere else.

THORN: SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS... FOR SOME

Speaking of misnomers, another section of House Bill 563, creates a system for scholarship tax credits. I'm sorry, they're called "education opportunity accounts"... because who can be against education or opportunity? And, accounts usually have money in them, so... LFG with with the EOA! Who are we kidding? This is just another damn school voucher. Now, with an EOA, a few kids will receive scholarship funding to pay for private school tuition and other expenses. Once again, the funding — not to mention the child, themselves — will leave the public school system and head to a private school, church or organization. The fortunate children will be chosen by newly formed, third-party organizations who will administer the EOAs. Not only is this yet another way Republicans are undermining public education, but this measure includes the bonus of a tax credit for wealthy people and corporations who donate to EOA organizations. So now they're cutting into the state's coffers as well as the public school system.

THORN: MITCH CAN'T BE SERIOUS

Earlier this week, during an event in Lexington, U.S. Senate Republican Minority Leader Mitch McConnell questioned the need for the latest round of federal stimulus that will send more than \$2.4 billion to Kentucky. Whether his comments are performative politics to trash the Biden administration, or special interest squawking, it's pathetic. The state is recovering from a devastating year, and the allocated money is a tool for a better future.

THORN: ESCAPE FROM THE INFIELD

The governor is out here still asking us to continue to make good decisions during the pandemic, but some of the worst decisions (outside of the General Assembly) in the state of Kentucky get made in the infield during the Kentucky Derby — which will be open for business this year. Churchill Downs announced they'll be selling a limited number of tickets for the infield, around 25-35%, but is anyone so delusional that they think the boozed-up wildcards that buy those tickets are actually going to take and maintain reasonable safety precautions, or give a semblance of a fuck? Nah, we all know they'll be acting like it's a giant frat party. Seated tickets are one thing, but this is just irresponsible.

A MISSING VOICE

ONLY 1 BILL PRIMARILY SPONSORED BY A BLACK, KENTUCKY LEGISLATOR HAS BEEN PASSED IN 5 YEARS

By Danielle Grady | dgrady@leoweekly.com



Sen. Gerald Neal, D-Louisville. | PHOTOS PROVIDED BY LRC PUBLIC INFORMATION.

STATE REP. Attica Scott was the primary sponsor on 14 bills during the Kentucky General Assembly's 2021 session. They would have, among other things, required Kentucky Medicaid to cover lactation services; banned no-knock warrants throughout Kentucky; and eliminated taxes on feminine hygiene products.

None passed. In fact, no bills primarily sponsored by Scott, D-Louisville, have passed at all since she became the first Black, female legislator to be elected to the statehouse in almost 20 years. And, until this year — since at least 2017 — no bills led by Kentucky's Black (and all-Democrat)

legislators have passed, according to a data analysis by LEO Weekly. In that same time period, starting when Republicans took over both chambers, white Democrats have managed to pass 4.6 bills a year on average — a paltry number, but still more than their Black colleagues.

Even when factoring in bills that Kentucky's Black lawmakers are co-sponsors on, their endorsed legislation has consistently not passed as often as bills featuring white Democrats. This year, 11 out of 144, or 7.6%, of bills that Black legislators were co- or primary sponsors on passed. But, 45 of 282, or around 16%, of bills with at least one white Democratic sponsor of some sort passed.

Eight of the legislature's 33 Democrats are part of the Kentucky Black Legislative Caucus, which also includes Rep. Nima Kulkarni, the only Asian American lawmaker in the state house. None of her primarily-sponsored bills have passed either since she joined the legislature in 2019.

This year, freshman lawmaker Rep. Pamela Stevenson, D-Louisville, a retired colonel, pushed through House Bill 398, which she says will help house veterans without homes and feed those without steady access to food by reorganizing the state Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Scott said she celebrates Stevenson's win. But — “We also acknowledge that in five years, one member has had a



Rep. Pamela Stevenson, D-Louisville, comments on House Bill 91, a bill proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Kentucky relating to abortion, in the House.



Sen. Gerald Neal, D-Louisville, speaks with House Minority Caucus Chair Derrick Graham, D-Frankfort, in the House.

bill pass, and it took five years to get there.”

Opportunities for Kentucky’s Black lawmakers to pass bills evaporated when Republicans claimed their supermajority.

“Institutional and systemic racism is real,” said Scott, “and once the Republicans became the majority in the legislature, that’s when we effectively had bills by members of the legislative Black Caucus either not heard or not passed.”

It’s been difficult for white Democrats, as well, but Scott said she has watched while at least some of her party colleagues have had their bills receive hearings, pass and be signed into law.

“We have had none of that as members of the legislative Black Caucus,” she said.

Senate President Robert Stivers, R-Manchester, said that he thinks the reason why Black legislators don’t get bills passed has more to do with a difference in party and philosophy than anything else, and there is still an opportunity for members of the Black Caucus to have their perspective heard, even in the minority.

“The opportunity to voice your perspective and have a chance to add your perspective is in the committee and on the floor,” Stivers said. “And that stays the same and has been consistent for my whole career whether Republicans or Democrats controlled the chambers.”

David Osborne, R-Prospect, the speaker of the House, said in a statement that his chamber is “committed to crafting good policy, not necessarily” Republican or Democrat policy.

“Since being given the majority in 2016, our primary focus has been improving the quality of life for all Kentuckians by creating jobs and growing our economy, increasing access to health care, and investing in education,” he said. “The majority of bills we pass receive bipartisan support and a fair amount of the legislation is the result of collaboration and bipartisan cosponsorship.”

Black Caucus said there’s actually “a lot of complexity” to why Black lawmakers are less likely to see their bills pass. The issues they prioritize and the environment of the legislature — its party makeup, rules and emotional temperature — all play into it. For Rep. Scott, safety concerns have also made it more difficult for her to do her job at times.

This year’s racial justice movement provided an opportunity for change. There were victories for Kentucky’s Black lawmakers, but it is not clear if gains will continue into the future.

Regardless of the reasons why Black lawmakers’ bills don’t pass, a different and valuable perspective has been almost completely wiped from the statehouse — one that could help Kentuckians throughout the Commonwealth.

“Our’s are the bills that uplift people, take care of people, make life better for folks across the Commonwealth,” said Scott.

THE ‘COMPLEXITY’ IN WHY BLACK-LED BILLS DON’T PASS

Kentucky’s Black lawmakers all being in the minority party isn’t the only reason that Neal lists for why he and his peers’ struggle to get bills passed, but it is the first one.

Because Republicans rule, they decide which committees that bills get assigned to. This year, the supermajority changed the rules so that it could choose not to send a bill to committee at all. If a bill gets to committee, the Republican chairs are the ones deciding whether the bills receive hearings.

Senate Minority Leader Morgan McGarvey said that the majority party, whoever it is, has an “enormous amount of control” in the Kentucky General Assembly.

“If I had the power to get people’s bills called up I would use it,” he said.

Sen. Gerald Neal, D-Louisville, the longest-serving member of the

But, there are other reasons that Neal gave for why his bills don’t pass. From what he has observed, Black lawmakers tend to sponsor bills that address equity, justice, fairness, race and gender. They have spearheaded efforts to restore voting rights for felons, eliminate the death penalty, raise the minimum wage and more.

House Minority Leader Joni Jenkins said that she thinks party is the main reason why her Black colleagues can’t pass their bills, too, but she also acknowledged that there are bills from Black legislators covering issues that are probably foreign to their counterparts from majority white, rural areas.

“When I came to the General Assembly, women, the numbers of women in the General Assembly, are similar now to the numbers of people of color in the General,” she said. “And I’ve always said that I felt like I was in the minority even when I was in the majority. And I always think, from my perspective, that women back in the ‘90s had to work harder. And now I see that from a little bit different lens that I think I see the people of color, having to work harder to get their bills attention.”

Sponsoring outlier bills also makes it more difficult for Black legislators to form relationships with other lawmakers, said Rep. Reginald Meeks of Louisville, the chair of the Black Caucus. And, relationships are key to passing bills.

Sen. Reginald Thomas of Lexington said that his bills tend to be more progressive. Nationally, Black lawmakers lean more liberal than their Democratic colleagues, and their bills do, too, said Stephen Voss, an associate professor of political science at UK. This includes bills that they co-sponsor. But, Kentucky’s Black lawmakers run the gamut from conservative to progressive, said Kentucky Democratic Party Chair Colmon Elridge. And, Rep. Scott cautions against using the word “progressive” to describe all bills from Black lawmakers. The bills that members of the Black Caucus are promoting are bills that would benefit the entire state, she said.

Meeks agrees that Black-sponsored bills contain something for everyone. “Ironically, many of our issues are also issues that the vast majority of legislators, they resonate

back home,” he said. “But, there isn’t anyone or any group necessarily back home who’s touting those issues.”

Even when Democrats held more seats in the legislature, there were issues that Black legislators advocated for that other members of their party ignored, said Meeks, such as making it easier to register to vote.

“Quite honestly,” he said, “there are times when it’s evident that the party itself is not prepared to take the lead, to be bold, to be advocates for all of the party.”

As House minority leader now, Jenkins said that the Black Caucus is an important part of the House Democratic Caucus. One thing she tries to do is ensure that legislators of color are assigned to important committees, such as those addressing education and elections.

McGarvey said that a focus of the Senate Democratic Caucus is equity. There are small things he does to help inch Black-led legislation along. For example, with Sen. Neal’s recent hate crime bill, most Senate Democrats signed on as co-sponsors in a sign of support. It did not pass.

“There’s a disparity there and it’s frustrating and it needs to be fixed,” McGarvey said. “Because I think the General Assembly is designed to represent the viewpoints and experiences of every person in the Commonwealth and to deny hearing so many of our Black legislators’ bills is often-times to deny those experiences being heard in the General Assembly.”

Neal, who is also the longest serving senator in the General Assembly, said there was an increase in partisanship in the Senate when previous Republican leadership changed the rules of the chamber to limit minority party expression on bills. Another wrecking ball to bipartisan relationships came when current Republican leadership changed the seating chart in the General Assembly so that Democrats and Republicans were separated, Neal said.

But, Stivers said that it’s actually easier now for Democrats to pass bills than it was for Republicans when they were a superminority.

“When I first came in, Republicans weren’t allowed to pass any bills in the Senate — zero,” said Stivers.

Now, in the Senate, the majority party doesn’t steal the minority party’s bills if they like them, he said. Republicans also introduce the budget earlier in the session than Democrats used to, he continued. And, the seating chart change was not a political move, according to Stivers, but rather an effort to make the legislative process more efficient.

Neal said there are other ways he can influence the legislature in his position as a minority lawmaker. He’ll talk to other legislators about their bills, and he’ll introduce some legislation just to start a discussion. He’s used to being at a disadvantage.

“I don’t feel like a victim,” he said. “I’m not a victim. In fact, I feel powerful in this situation because I understand it.”

A SOMETIMES UNSAFE ENVIRONMENT

For the most part, Sen. Neal has good things to say about the social environment in the General Assembly, from the ‘90s until now.

“I think I’ve been treated well, like anybody else,” he said. “For the most part, the Senate is a place of, even when

we legislate, you try to promote gentility and respect and a more laidback protocol.”

But, there have been times when he has had to correct other lawmakers when they have addressed him in ways that weren’t appropriate given his race.

“I don’t think they were directed at me to hurt me, but they were words that I couldn’t accept, and I would have to correct who it was right on the spot,” he said.

Some legislators, though, have felt threatened by the actions of their colleagues.

Rep. Scott said she was concerned for her safety during her first year as a legislator, because of the now deceased Rep. Dan Johnson. During his campaign, it came out that Johnson had posted racist photos on Facebook: pictures of Michelle and Barack Obama with their nose and mouths edited to look like apes and another photo of a primate, labeling it as a photo of former President Obama.

“I was, and I think it’s important to keep in mind, I was the only Black woman serving at the time and the only women of color serving at the time which made me a particular target for people,” she said.

Rep. Meeks and Sen. George Brown of Lexington would accompany her through the halls of the Capitol. House leadership never reached out to Scott about Rep. Johnson, and Scott did not reach out to them. But, they did assign Johnson a seat directly behind Scott on the House floor.

Rep. Scott said she has also felt unsafe when armed protesters have come to the Capitol. One time, an armed group surrounded Rep. Meeks while she was walking with him to the Capitol building. They thought he was another lawmaker, one who had proposed a “commonsense gun measure.” Scott yelled at the group that they had the wrong person until they eventually cleared a path for them to leave.

It’s moments like these that Scott said have complicated her role as a legislator.

“I was elected to represent the people in District 41, part of Jefferson County in Frankfort, and it makes it difficult for me to do that in a healthy and safe way when not only am I experiencing threatening situations from people who come to the Capitol from different parts of Kentucky, but I’m also facing it from legislators and facing erasure from legislators so they wouldn’t even know if we were being threatened,” Scott said.



The six House members of the Kentucky Black Legislative Caucus. In back, Reps. Nima Kulkarni, Derrick Graham and Pamela Stevenson. In front, Reps. George Brown, Attica Scott and Reginald Meeks.

Kentucky State Police, who provide security to the Capitol, did not return a call and email for comment.

THIS SESSION’S OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

There was a chance this year for the Kentucky legislature to do something different.

When the public learned that Louisville police had shot and killed Breonna Taylor, Kentucky joined the list of states with high-profile law enforcement killings of Black people.

“I think all across the country, legislatures are saying, not just in Kentucky but across the country, we’ve got to do better. We just cannot sit by and accept this any longer,” said Sen. Thomas. “Kentucky is no different than a lot of legislatures. We’ve got to address this. This is a problem in our country.”

This legislative session was different. But, in some ways it was still the same.

The legislature passed at least five bills that were, in part, inspired by the country’s racial justice movement, said

Stivers. But, most were done with all-white, all-Republican lead sponsors, and — in some cases — contained aspects that several Black lawmakers objected to.

There was Senate Bill 4, sponsored by Stivers, which limited the issuance of no-knock warrants in Kentucky, the type of warrant that was obtained in the raid that ended in Breonna Taylor’s killing. Scott had introduced a ban on no-knock warrants called Breonna’s Law before SB 4, but it did not progress farther than a committee hearing. By the time SB 4 passed, it was laden with an amendment that carved out exceptions for smaller counties, but it also adopted one of her wishes: for emergency medical services to be present during a raid.

There was Senate Bill 80, which made it easier to decertify police officers. It was sponsored by Sen. Danny Carroll, a Republican and former police officer from Benton.

There was Senate Bill 10, which established a commission in the legislature to study inequities in the state, sponsored by Sen. David Givens, R-Greensburg. Scott called it “performative politics.” Neal and Thomas were co-sponsors on the bill, and Neal told LEO it was a unique attempt by the state legislature to own the issue of race. But, they both dropped their support after an amendment specified that the Prosecutors Advisory Council would have a say in naming a board member instead of the executive director of the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights.

There was House Bill 321, which created a TIF to bring economic development to The West End of Louisville, sponsored by Rep. Brandon Reed, R-Hodgenville. Sen. Neal played a part in creating it. Black lawmakers were split on voting for it.

The last of the five bills that Stivers said was inspired by the racial justice movement, SB 270, was sponsored by a Democrat — Senate Minority Leader Morgan McGarvey. It allows Louisville’s historically-Black university, Simmons College, to receive Kentucky tuition grants and to offer a teaching program.

In his statement, Osborne expressed an interest in tackling more issues of inequity in the House.

“It is clear that we have very real, very grave disparities rooted not only in race but also in poverty,” he said. “This issue has our attention and we will continue to seek input and collaboration to find ways to address these disparities in strategic and intentional ways.”

He specifically highlighted Scott, saying she “played a



Rep. Attica Scott, D-Louisville, was the primary sponsor of 14 bills in the 2021 legislative session. None were passed. | PHOTO BY KATHRYN HARRINGTON.

role in the shaping of the final version of SB 4.”

For Scott, though, the legislative session was filled with frustrations. In addition to Breonna’s Law being overtaken by SB 4, a bill of hers was “literally stolen” by a Republican legislator, she said. Scott’s House Bill 185 would have established maternal and infant mortality teams in Kentucky. One day later, Samara Heavrin, R-Leitchfield, introduced House Bill 212, which would require the state Department of Public Health to keep track of maternal and child fatalities data by race, income and geography. Scott also sponsored House Bill 27, which would have required the Department to track maternal deaths, specifically, by region, race and ethnicity.

Heavrin’s bill passed. Scott’s bills did not make it to committee.

“That was my experience this session,” said Scott.

Heavrin did not respond to a request for comment from LEO.

For Rep. Stevenson, her first year in the legislature was a triumphant one, but it’s not clear what her win means for the rest of the Black Caucus.

Stevenson was assigned to the House Standing Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs & Public Protection. In her committee assignment, she proposed HB 398, and invited a fellow member, Rep. Bobby McCool, R-Van Lear, to be primary co-sponsor.

Stevenson thought from the beginning that she could get the bill passed because it focused on veterans and “nobody

likes to vote against the veteran,” she said. Through the legislators she built a relationship with on the Veterans Committee, she was also able to reach leadership and ask them to bring her bill forward.

Her hope is that the passage of her bill means that more bills from Black legislators will pass in future sessions.

“The reasons why all the firsts matter is so there can be a second, a third, a fourth and a fifth,” said Stevenson.

Jenkins is less optimistic.

“I think, to really see a change, you’re gonna have to see people of color in the party that’s in the majority,” she said.

McGarvey said that there are changes that could be made to the General Assembly to make the institution more equitable. For example, bills could automatically receive a hearing if the majority of the members of a chamber sponsored it. He also thinks that the redistricting process should be nonpartisan.

Scott said she doesn’t know if there will be more bills passed by the Black Caucus in the near future.

“That’s really in the hands of the supermajority,” she said. “And what their commitment is to racial justice and equity.”

Data scientist Robert Kahne helped with this story.

STAFF PICKS

THURSDAY, APRIL 8

“Promise, Witness, Remembrance”: National Advisory Panel Discussion

Virtual | Zoom | promisewitnessremembrance.com | Free | 6-7 p.m.

Before you check out the Speed’s upcoming exhibit about the life and death of Breonna

ART Taylor called “Promise, Witness, Remembrance,” learn about how the exhibition came to be at

this online panel discussion. Curator Allison Glenn will speak with a few of the advisors who helped assemble the exhibit, including Black artists and arts professionals like Amy Sherald, Jon Sesrie-Goff and Mecca Brooks, about their contributions throughout the process. Space is limited, so register in advance. — Carolyn Brown



Allison Glenn.

FRIDAY, APRIL 9-MAY 2

Dino Safari

Louisville Mega Cavern | 1841 Taylor Ave. | louisvillemegacavern.com | \$50-\$80 per vehicle | 10 a.m.-9 p.m.

You don’t need to travel to an island off the coast of Costa Rica for this Jurassic Park. Load

LIFE FINDS A WAY up the car for a prehistoric drive through the Louisville Mega Cavern. Imagine Exhibitions leads an interactive, educational dino experience... with some thrills, too: “Travel back in time to experience earthquakes and dinosaur battles ... encountering dinosaurs like the Diplodocus and the terrifying

T-Rex. Visitors may just help save the life of a dinosaur along the way!” This is the kind of experience that will keep the kids talking long after leaving the caverns. It might even inspire the next great paleontologist. —LEO



FRIDAY, APRIL 9-10

Spring Market

Westport Village | 1315 Herr Lane | [Search Facebook](#) | No cover | Times vary

Spring weather has returned, and so has the outdoor market experience — with masks and social distancing, of course. Stop by Westport Village to check out 11 local vendors selling

SPRING IS HERE food, art and gifts. The Market runs from noon to 5 p.m. on Friday and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. — Carolyn Brown



SATURDAY, APRIL 10

African-Americans Who Shaped the Whiskey Industry

Frazier History Museum | 829 W. Main St. | [Search Facebook](#) | \$25-\$35 | 6-10 p.m.

Master Blender Victoria Eady Butler knows a thing or two about whiskey — her great-great-grandfather, former slave Nathan “Nearest” Green, taught Jack Daniel about the distillation process.

LEGACY

Today, his legacy lives on through the Black-owned brand Uncle Nearest Premium Whiskey. (Incidentally, the parent company of the Jack Daniel’s brand is Louisville’s own Brown-Forman, who started a program last summer to support up-and-coming Black professionals in the industry.) Butler, currently the only Black woman named a master blender in the American alcohol industry, got her start in the whiskey business only two years ago after retiring from an admin position in Nashville. Now, she’s in the industry to stay. Join Butler at the Frazier Museum for an educational night of food and drink to learn about the influential Black Americans who have made the industry what it is today. — Carolyn Brown



SATURDAY, APRIL 10

Puppy Shower!!!

PG&J's Dog Bar | 800 Baxter Ave. | [Search Facebook](#)
 Donation-based admission | Noon-4 p.m.

If you've remained "healthy at home" for the last year, good job and thank you. But, you might have missed the opening of one of the coolest new bars... a dog bar to be specific. PG&J's Dog Bar is a beautiful new bar and dog park

PAWESOME

on Baxter Avenue, near the intersection at the top of Broadway. PG&J's offer an indoor/outdoor off-leash dog park, so you don't have to leave the pup behind while you go for coffee, beer or cocktails. So, if you haven't made it yet, this Puppy Shower is a great opportunity to get your fill of pups and socializing. Adoptable dogs looking for forever family will welcome you with hugs, kisses and games, and the bar will be open as well. You must be 21 or older to play inside, but a family-friendly zone will be available out front. For a list of puppy wishlist items to donate, check the Facebook event page, where there is also a link to Amazon for quick, easy gifts. —LEO



SATURDAY, APRIL 10

Saturdays On The Square:
Pop Up Market And Music

Charlestown Town Square | 304 Main Cross St., Charlestown, Indiana
[Search Facebook](#) | Free | 10 a.m.

Looking for some laid back Saturday morning fun? Scoot on over to Charlestown, about 20 minutes north of downtown Louisville, for a morning of eats, drinks, live music and shopping with local vendors. The Charlestown City Sing-along band gets things going at 10 a.m. And, if you're interested in setting up shop as one of the vendors, find additional information and forms at [charlestownparks.com](#). —LEO

SING



SATURDAY, APRIL 10-11

Open Studio Weekend

Various locations | [openstudioweekend.org](#) | \$10-\$12 | 12-6 p.m. each day

Popular art activities continue to come back as more people get vaccinated for COVID-19.

ART One such event is Open Studio Weekend. Organized by Louisville Visual Art and UofL's Hite Art Institute, it features behind-the-scenes studio visits of Louisville Metro artists. Normally held in autumn, the 7th annual OSW has been rescheduled to spring. The ticket to OSW has a studio directory listing over 50 participating artists with studio locations. It raises funds for LVA's Children's Fine Art Classes and the Hite's Mary Spencer Nay Memorial Scholarship. COVID-19 protocols will be enforced. —Jo Anne Triplett



Melanie Miller and Casey Hyland of Hyland Glass with LVA Director Kristian Anderson.

SATURDAY, APRIL 10-11

Zoeller Pump Company Pegasus Parade

Various Places | [discover.kdf.org](#) | Free | Times vary

The Pegasus Parade is coming back — to more than 35 neighborhoods around the city.

DERBY It's still the same parade you know and love, but this year, the Kentucky Derby Festival is bringing it directly to the people over the span of two afternoons.

The exact routes are a secret until closer to the time; the KDF doesn't want people to plan to get together in large groups.

Join the fun by decorating your porch and hashtagging a photo of it with #PegasusPorchParade or #DerbyFestivalSpirit on social media. —Carolyn Brown



Sawyer: Introducing smilin' Sawyer! This handsome eleven-year-old Border Collie mix found himself at the Kentucky Humane Society when his owner passed away. He's had time to grieve and now he's looking for a new best friend! While we don't know much about Sawyer's past, we do know he has lived with dogs before! He would be happy to meet any resident canines in the home to see if they can be buddies! Sawyer loves people and getting scratches! He had several teeth removed when he came to KHS so now he eats canned food and he loves it. Could Sawyer be the best bud you've been waiting for? If so, schedule an appointment to meet him at the Main Campus, 241 Steedly Drive, by visiting kyhumane.org/dogs today! Sawyer is neutered, micro-chipped and up-to-date on all vaccinations.



Shisu: Meet the insanely sweet, borderline obnoxiously sweet, Shisu! Shisu (pronounced like a slurred version of the dog breed Shih Tzu) is a three-year-old grey tabby cat who came to the Kentucky Humane Society when his family couldn't care for him. Shisu is now looking for a new place to call home! First thing you should know about Shisu is that he tested positive for Feline Leukemia (FeLV) upon coming to the shelter. Because of this, he does need to be the only cat or be with other FeLV cats. Second most important thing you should know about Shisu, HE LOVES EVERYONE! Cats, dogs, kids- you name it, Shisu is determined to be best friends. He lived with another FeLV cat in his previous home and he loved playing with the dog in his last home. His dream home would be one that includes a playful dog that he can wrestle with! Shisu also loves to talk. He will have a conversation whether you are actively participating or not. He's simply a talker—maybe he was a talk show host in his previous life. Who knows! Last thing you need to know about Shisu is that he is worthy of all the love in the world. He loves people so much and likes to perch on them like a parrot. Could this overly sweet and hilarious cat be the one your family is missing? Shisu is neutered, micro-chipped and up-to-date on all vaccinations. Schedule an appointment to meet him at the East Campus, 1000 Lyndon Lane, by visiting kyhumane.org/cats today!



Kentucky
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www.kyhumane.org

STAFF PICKS

SUNDAY, APRIL 11

Henry Hart: Music Along the Riverways

Virtual | Facebook Live, YouTube Live | kentuckyperformingarts.org | 4 p.m. | Free

In this historic tribute night that explores the African American influence on the area's music, locals will celebrate Kentucky-born violinist, composer and bandleader Henry Hart (1839-1915). The event — led by composer Rachel Grimes, educator Dr. Clark Kimberling and historian Michael L. Jones — will look at Hart's work and career, which began on steamboats on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and eventually landed in Indianapolis. —LEO



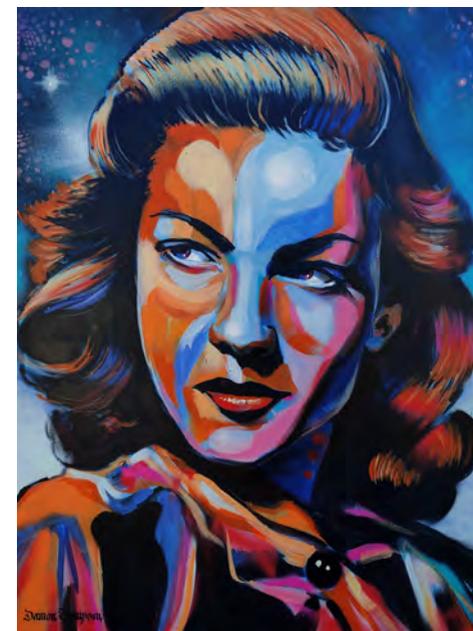
Henry Hart
The Indianapolis News
April 6, 1901

THROUGH MAY 3

'Archetypes' By Damon Thompson

Tim Faulkner Gallery | 991 Logan St. | Search Facebook | Free

Louisville has been blessed with mural artist Damon Thompson's work on its buildings and walls. One of the highlights is the dual portraits of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor commissioned by sculptor Ed Hamilton on the side of his South Shelby Street studio. Thompson's solo show at Tim Faulkner Gallery brings his art indoors. It features nearly 40 new paintings consisting largely of celebrity portraits. The power behind the face is the same — "to capture, in an image, the complete range of an individual," he said, "their emotions, life experiences and truths." —Jo Anne Triplett



HEADLINERS HAS ANNOUNCED SIX PARKING LOT CONCERTS IN MAY

By Scott Recker | leo@leoweekly.com

AFTER MORE than a year without a concert, Headliners Music Hall has announced six shows — mostly by local bands — that will take place throughout May in the parking lot shared by the venue and its neighbor, Distillery Commons.

Things kick off with Quiet Hollers and Heather Summers on Friday, May 14, followed by the Fleetwood Mac cover band Back2Mac on Saturday and Sunday, May 15-16. Two weeks later, Nick Dittmeier & The Sawdusters and Wolfpen Branch will perform on May 28, followed Keller Williams (who is currently on an outdoor-only national tour) on May 29. Finally, the series will end with Carly Johnson's long-awaited album release party with guest Scott T. Smith on May 30.

"Thanks to all of your support during these trying times, we're going to come back better than ever," Production Simple and Headliners Music Hall co-owner Billy Hardison said in a press release. "And we're not taking your concern and generosity for granted. We love our city and we want to continue to help it heal. Come join us and let's step into a brighter future."

All concerts will be completely seated, with four-person pods being sold between \$80-\$156, depending on the show. Those can be purchased beginning at noon on Friday, April 2 via the Headliners website. No individual tickets will be sold, and all pods must be bought in advance. The pods will be distanced at least six feet from one another, and drink service will be provided. Every event will be cashless, and masks will be required whenever you leave your pod.

THE ROAD BACK

When bars reopened at the end of last June, with 50% capacity limitations and social distancing requirements, the consensus among local venues was that concerts were still too dangerous and challenging to hold, despite significant financial setbacks. Most promoters LEO spoke with back then felt the virus was still too present to have safe shows, and aspects including state-to-state travel and capacity restrictions compromised effective touring and profitable concerts.

Since then, some have returned to



Carly Johnson.

holding live music, but on a much smaller scale. Headliners, a 700 capacity venue, has not had an inside concert since the pandemic began in March, because, after adhering to distancing measures, it would only be able to get 100 people into the venue.

But, an outdoor, parking lot show offers a safer and more practical alternative. And it currently allows for more fans — 356 per show.

"It's twofold — the safety factor definitely comes into play," Hardison told LEO. "As the science shows, with being outside. Not everyone is going to be vaccinated yet. We haven't reached herd immunity... And it allows us to hit the economic equation of being able to sell more tickets, because we have more area to do that. We're not bound by those walls."

Headliners attempted to hold outdoor, parking lot concerts last fall, but by the time they were able to figure out the new set-up and schedule in October, a surge

hit, and they canceled those shows out of concerns for public safety.

"I still stand by our decision then — we did head into a surge," Hardison said. "We made the right decision to cancel those shows. And we think we're making the right decision now, to go ahead and move forward with these."

"And I'd like to think that the majority of our ticket buyers are going to choose to be vaccinated, so that's encouraging," Hardison continued.

A LONG-AWAITED PARTY

Prior to the pandemic, singer-songwriter Carly Johnson was scheduled to release her debut full-length via a concert at Headliners on May 15, 2020. Now, the album has already been released, but when the show to celebrate it happens during this outdoor series on May 30, Johnson intends to bring a 16-piece band so her layered, soulful record comes to life.

"I'm pulling out all of the stops for this

one," Johnson said. "I'm having a four-piece horn section, three back-up singers. There's going to be a string quartet. It's going to be all of the things that I want. It took a lot of people to make this record happen, so I want it to sound like it should."

Johnson also feels good about how Headliners designed and planned this series.

"I think it's so cool how creative they're being, about making it happen outside, and it's going to be safe, and it's going to be fun — I don't feel like we're compromising anything. I think, if anything, what this has all taught us is that the music industry is as resilient as we hoped. And now, looking at this new approach, having it outside, there's going to be drink table service — it sounds like it's going to be more fun than before. Everybody gets a seat. It sounds like a really nice, well-oiled machine of a festive-type feel." •



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MUSIC

NEW INDIE VENUE TO REPLACE JIMMY CAN'T DANCE

By Scott Recker | leo@leoweekly.com



McKinley Moore, left, performing as a member of the local band Pleasure Boys.

ANOTHER PLACE SANDWICH SHOP was a downtown lunchtime institution, serving the Louisville business district for five decades. It's sibling space, the jazz-themed basement lounge Jimmy Can't Dance, was starting to become a destination for the local music scene. But, unfortunately, the pandemic took both businesses. The good news is that the local brewery Against the Grain has acquired both spaces, and they plan to honor what both businesses were, with slightly different spins.

The upstairs will become Against the Grain Sandwich Emporium, which will continue to cater to the lunch crowd. The downstairs will be turned into The Flamingo Lounge, featuring cocktails and Against the Grain beers, as well as concerts and other live entertainment, which will be booked by local musician and promoter McKinley Moore, who previously spearheaded the events at Kaiju. At Kaiju, Moore had his finger on the pulse of the music scene, booking both longtime staples and up-and-coming artists that had just put out a demo, with the genres and styles spanning the

entire, diverse local ecosystem. With The Flamingo Lounge, which is about the same size as the venue at Kaiju, with a modest capacity of 100, Moore plans to do the same thing — constantly be combing through new music and booking what clicks.

"It's a little selfish, I guess, but for the most part, I've just tried to always book things that I like, and hopefully that translates well, and so far it has," Moore told LEO. "I try to keep my ear to what's going on... There's a lot of good music in this city to choose from. There are a lot of good people."

Jimmy Can't Dance leaned toward sit-down jazz shows, although they definitely did some experimental concepts. The Flamingo Lounge is going to cover a broader range of music and most likely reflect what Kaiju's schedule used to look like.

"We're going to keep it pretty versatile, so if we want to have a seated show we can, but if we want to pack as many people in there as we can for a punk show, then we can do that too," Moore said.

Downtown has undoubtedly taken a hit

lately. And, even before the pandemic, many locals felt the city center pertained to tourists more than them, but Against the Grain and Moore are betting that a business like this will stick.

"We believe in Louisville," co-owner of Against the Grain Sam Cruz said in a press release. "This city is amazing. The principal partners of Against the Grain hail from Indiana, Kansas, and Kentucky, but this city gave us all a home. It drew us together to realize our collective dream of Against the Grain. We are committed to Louisville and, more specifically, downtown Louisville. Before the pandemic, Louisville exuded all the energy and excitement that guaranteed visitors would have a great time here. Like many when the pandemic hit, we were given the time to be introspective of our values and goals. We've enjoyed a social awakening and an opportunity to arise an even better city than before. We're more than excited at the chance to reinvest and reinvigorate downtown Louisville." •





BURGERIM ADDS DELICIOUS INDIAN FLAVOR BURGERS

By Robin Garr | LouisvilleHotBytes.com

The new aloo tikki burger at BurgerIM puts a meatless Indian patty of potatoes, peas, and carrots into the more familiar setting of lettuce, cheese, onions and tomatoes on a sesame seed bun. | PHOTOS BY ROBIN GARR.

I DON'T NORMALLY go back to a place I've reviewed only a year or so ago, but I'm making an exception for BurgerIM. Why? Grace under pressure merits applause. Also, Indian food!

Here's what I'm talking about: The owners, the husband-and-wife team of Nirmal Raj and Veronica Michel, opened their doors in mid-March last year, just a few days before the pandemic shut down in-restaurant dining.

That was a palpable hit, but it wasn't the only one. Around the same time, BurgerIM's California-based parent corporation, Burgerim Group USA, spectacularly collapsed, its bankrupt owner fleeing the country.

Nevertheless, Michel and Raj persevered, promoting the place on social media and turning out burgers of excellent quality that drew consumer raves. Like the Timex watch of yore, they took a lickin' and kept on tickin'.

Then I learned that they've added new menu items as they approach their first birthday on April 17. Not just any burgers,

either, but creative inventions infused with flavorful Indian spices.

That did it! Off we went, planning to enjoy the sunny but chilly spring day dining in the Vogue Center's promenade. Then I noticed that it was sunny and chilly and extremely breezy too. Never mind! Indoors we went, and felt quite safe with the tables correctly spaced a little more than the required six feet. A table in a far corner made it even better. If I was in a higher-risk category and hadn't been vaccinated, though, I'd still choose takeout for now.

Figuring out the menu in advance is a bit complicated, as the menu you get when you scroll down BurgerIM's web page and the takeout menu reached via the blue "View Menu" button at the top of the page are not quite the same, and only the takeout menu shows prices. It's easy to find out what's up for sure, though, when you get in and see the huge menu overhead. It's also worthwhile to check BurgerIM's Facebook page for daily specials.

It takes a minute to get used to the takeout menu's format. It offers Classic



Here's a peek at the six layers of goodness inside BurgerIM's aloo tikki burger.



BurgerIM's new chili chicken burger is actually a whole piece of roasted boneless chicken loaded with fiery Indian spices.

BurgerIM with build-your-own options. Then there's a long list of beverages before we move on to the pardon-the-expression meat of the menu, Big BurgerIM. You'll find 22 variations on the burger here, most of them priced at either \$8.99 or \$9.99, topping out at the \$15.99 Master Piece with its double 1/3-pound Angus beef patty, double bacon, cheddar cheese, fried egg, double onion rings and house sauce. Take that, Big Mac! Also \$15.99 is a keto burger, with two Angus beef patties and double bacon and cheese.

That many burgers allows room for creativity, and you'll find it in such inventions as an aloha salmon burger, dry-aged beef burger or Greek lamb burger (all \$9.99). Feeling fishy? A cod burger and a crab cake burger are both \$8.99. If you wish to avoid animal flesh, the Impossible Burger is \$11.99, as is a meatless black bean burger; a falafel burger is \$8.99. Indian flavors, reflecting owner Raj's heritage, include aloo tikki and chili chicken burgers (\$8.99) and an \$8.99 mirchi burger, bringing fiery Indian spice to the patty.

We came for the Indian options and were happy with two tasty burgers and two good sides. As in my curbside visit last year, everything was prepared very well, signaling a kitchen that cares about all the details. The spicy Indian-accented dishes weren't just hot but showed complex and delicious flavors.

The chili chicken burger (\$9.99) was a burger only in that it sits on a bun. It's not ground meat but a whole chunk of boneless chicken breast of very high quality: halal chicken, according to the menu. It had been grilled and coated with a fiery, taste-bud-tlingling red Indian-accented chili paste. It

was full of flavor, firm but not tough, and big enough to overflow the bun on all sides. It sat on a decent white sesame bun with a bed of cooling yogurt-based raita and a few leaves of fresh arugula. On top of the chicken were a couple of pale-pink winter tomato slices and a few onion slices.

A side of onion rings (\$3.99 a la carte, \$2.99 as part of a combo with a burger) also reflected BurgerIM's commitment to quality. Very thick-sliced onion rings were battered and fried to a golden crisp.

Aloo tikki means potato patties in Hindi, and that's the base of BurgerIM's new aloo tikki burger (\$8.99). A quarter-pound of potato, pea, and carrot pancake with aromatic spices is placed into a sesame-seed bun with all manner of goodness to kick it up: fiery, bright-red Sriracha aioli, yogurt raita, and familiar burger fixings of lettuce, cheese, onions and tomatoes.

A side of falafel balls (\$4.99) rang the flavor bell too: Four spheres, two the size of ping-pong balls and two flattened and smaller, were fashioned from a ground chickpea and tahini dough studded with bits of parsley, deep-fried golden brown and served with a small tub of sesame-scented tahini for dipping.

Lunch for two was \$29.63, plus a \$7.41 tip. •

BURGERIM
3733 Lexington Road
The Vogue Center
901-1101
burgerimlouisvilleky.com

VEG OUT

ROC SERVES GREAT VEGGIE OPTIONS

By Joe DeSensi | leo@leoweekly.com

IN THE HEART of the Highlands, ROC creates authentic Italian cuisine with many ingredients imported from Italia.

We were seated by the restaurant's namesake, Rocco, who checked in with us several times throughout the evening. Between the made-from-scratch pastas, the layout of courses on the menu and the intimate setting, ROC feels like a little Manhattan bistro right out of little Italy.

Having the best selection of Michter's I have ever seen, I decided my imbibing would have a decidedly Shively-distillery theme for the evening starting with a very well-priced, generous pour of Michter's 10 year (\$10/ounce) bourbon with one large "roc" of ice. With my other fist also available for drinking, I joined my wife in her selection of a light, crisp Benito Ferrara Greco di Tufo that is imported from the owner's region of Italy.

They have an extensive by-the-glass wine list that is very reasonable, but if you are looking for something amazing and you're the one that just won the billion in the lottery, they have some very rare selections that would make any sommelier proud. Like the wine list, they have an accessible mid-shelf spirits list (like a \$7 Woodford Reserve Double Oak or Rock Hill Farms at \$5 a finger).

We were split between the caprese salad with buffalo mozzarella (\$15) and the caprese fresca (with fresh burrata, \$15), so we got both. Hope and I have been on a burrata kick over the last year of the apocalypse. Their burrata was severed over warm, thinly cut zucchini and eggplant accented with a balsamic reduction. The caprese had a generous ball of imported mozzarella over fresh tomatoes with a basil olive oil drizzle that added aromatics and a zesty burst of savory. Each was amazing, but we mixed and matched flavors across the two antipasti.

For my second spirit of the night, I went for the Michter's Barrel Strength Limited Release Rye (\$20). I also added a cube of ice to open the nose and slightly lower the proof. It drinks more like a bourbon... which I am fine with. Hope stuck with the Sorrento vino

from round one.

For a main course (opting to skip a couple courses from the traditional Italian 5 hour, 7 course nightly meal), I ordered the penne and vegetables with vodka sauce (\$19) and subbed the gluten free pasta for an extra \$2.



The problem with great gluten free pasta is that I end up asking the server 12 or 13 times if they are sure it is GF. This was one of those pastas served with crisp carrots, zucchini and micro-greens with a savory orange vodka sauce with

some fresh Parm on top. The sauce did the heavy lifting here with a complex flavor without being too rich or masking the veggie paste goodness below.

Hope had the Scottish salmon (think of English salmon that you can't understand and gets in more fights), a generous cut of fish served with asparagus, and butternut squash plated in a mustard sauce. Hope said the fish was perfectly seared, and the mix of veggies and the sauce allowed her to create sweet, savory and umami bites.

Hope isn't a huge sweets person, but we found something on the dessert menu to tempt her... a dessert cheese plate. With favorites like aged Parmigiano Reggiano, manchengo, dolce gorgonzola served with micro greens, large pieces of crostini (not GF) and a large ramekin of warm honey. It was quite a plate of food, so we needed additional imbibing material for parings purposes. Hope stayed with the Italian theme with a bubbling glass of Prosecco, and I decided to indulge with a finger of Michter's 20 year bourbon. Only the second time I have ever had the 20, and it was as perfect as I remembered. The honey with both the mild and bolder cheeses was an excellent combo, but paired with amazing spirits, it is something to savor. •

ROC
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ARE NFTS A BOON OR BUST FOR LOCAL ARTISTS?

By Syd Bishop | leo@leoweekly.com

A RECENT SPATE of news stories have featured the trend of non-fungible tokens (NFTs) as a new vehicle to push various forms of art. For example, the Kings of Leon are releasing their new album as an NFT. Likewise, the artist Beeple sold a collage entitled “Everydays: The First 5000 Days” as an NFT for an astonishing \$69 million, the fourth highest-grossing art sale in history. Untangling the jargon behind the movement is daunting, but the appeal for Louisville musicians is there. For Radet 5, a visual artist and musician who has played with Vyva Melinkolya and Bathroom Laws, it’s impossible to ignore.

“I am interested in the technology,” Radet 5 said, “but mostly just (because) I’m broke, and any opportunity to make rent needs to be considered.”

“I already work full time, and if I can squeeze a little sustenance out of the little art time I have available by just throwing it through a system... like that potential is hard to ignore. If I could afford to produce art for nothing I would, but I’ve got bills.”

To say that NFTs are complicated is an understatement. The history of NFTs is a little longer than you might imagine, with the concept initially coined around 2012 and the actual creator still a mystery. Related to bitcoins, NFTs were specialized tokens called satoshis, which represented a fraction of a total bitcoin. These satoshis were used to see everything from

artwork to actual real estate.

As a concept, non-fungible tokens present an abstraction between art and ownership. Since Napster and others revolutionized how an entire generation consumes media, music and art have progressively taken up more and more digital space. This evolution of how media is consumed has led to economic hardships for many involved, especially musicians. For example, Spotify, a streaming service with 4 billion subscribers, only pays about .003 or .005 cents per stream. That means that you would need more than 300 streams at the low end to make a dollar. That figure has fluctuated over time, with Spotify gradually decreasing payouts to artists and distributors. An NFT features a unique “signature,” meaning that the ownership of the music is verifiable through blockchain technology. Think of an NFT then as a digital watermark, a vessel that creators can tie directly to the final product through smart contracts.

Because they are digital files, NFTs include not only the authentication process of who owns the product, but who created it. For artists, that means it’s impossible to have any unpaid appropriation of their art without consent.

The most common way to create an NFT is to use a service like Ethereum, which is currently the largest blockchain service for NFTs. Whichever blockchain

you choose, you’re subject to the rules and criteria of that site. Within your selected blockchain, you choose your digital wallet of choice, then you need to purchase the appropriate amount of cryptocurrency to ensure the creation of your work. Next up, find the NFT platform that works best for you. These platforms are basically just marketplaces for the sale of your goods, and — for music — include sites like Catalog or Audius.

There are plenty more sites and options out there, and in many cases, you can create an NFT directly on the site. Make sure they are compatible with U.S. laws before you proceed. Just like with many other digital services, you follow the prompts accordingly, including the imagery and text, contractual or otherwise, that you want in the file. Mileage varies from site to site, so look for something that’s a good fit for you. You don’t have to be a tech wizard to get in there and make the work, so don’t be nervous about any perceived bars to admission. As noted above, there is a great potential for artists to cash in on this concept in a way that subverts low-paying subscription services. Kings of Leon, who recently released three unique tokens at the beginning of March, have reportedly earned approximately \$2 million in sales. For Floyd Patterson, the emcee better known as Pronoun, there is plenty of potential in with NFTs, albeit with some reasonable concerns.

“I love the idea of selling my work and getting paid if that work is sold later, but whether that happens is up to the consumer,” said Patterson. “Limewire existed for a reason. You’d need a STRONG fanbase to really take advantage. You also get paid in cryptocurrency, most of which have speculative value that will change, for better or worse. It’d be like selling your work for stocks. It could work out, it could also end up worthless.”

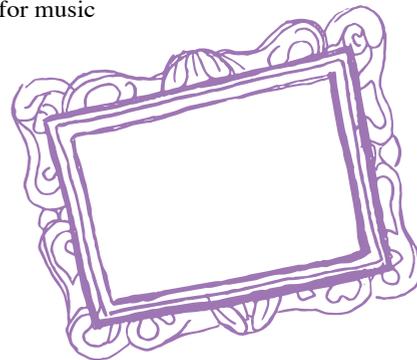
As of this writing, there are at least three cryptocurrency ATMs in Louisville, which provide artists interested in pursuing the form an opportunity to cash out.

In addition to the obvious downsides of the fluctuating value of cryptocurrencies as the return on your work, NFTs create a substantial environmental concern. The environmental concerns with NFTs are less unique to that delivery method and are instead part and parcel to blockchain and cryptocurrencies in general. Transactions are authenticated through complex networks of servers that “prove” that the work is “real.”

Basically, the more people that utilize blockchain technologies, the more servers are required to make it work.

Those servers take an enormous amount of power to keep functional, to the degree that just these server farms utilize more energy in a year than entire countries. The hope is that as the technology develops, it will encourage more green energy innovations to match the output. For Radet, the environmental concerns are real, but not specific to the medium. “NFTs are not a root cause of either the negative impact of energy usage on the environment or rampant neoliberal commoditization, so getting rid of or avoiding them isn’t going to help more than placating our own consciences and bolstering our egos.”

Suffice it to say, NFTs offer an interesting alternative to modern methods of releasing art into the world, but recentring the curation of art firmly on the artist. The attention to NFTs has illustrated the flaws in capitalist distribution channels for art, both in terms of the exploitation of artists by big tech and the very real concerns over energy consumption in the face of climate change. Irrespective of whether or not this trend perseveres, it’s worth considering any way to reframe our consumption of art and treatment of artists as a whole. •



The most common way to create an NFT is to use a service like Ethereum, which is currently the largest blockchain service for NFTs. Whichever blockchain you choose, you’re subject to the rules and criteria of that site. Within your selected blockchain, you choose your digital wallet of choice, then you need to purchase the appropriate amount of cryptocurrency to ensure the creation of your work.

KENTUCKY SHAKESPEARE TAKE 'ROMEO AND JULIET' ON TOUR

By Erica Rucker | erucker@leoweekly.com

KENTUCKY SHAKESPEARE has remained committed to the vision of bringing the works of William Shakespeare to the Louisville area for 61 years. This has allowed them to become an integral part of the local arts community and treasured by generations of Louisvillians. This year, with the support of the National Endowment for the Arts and Arts Midwest, they continue the tradition of presenting the works of Shakespeare on their spring tour. The tour will present "Romeo and Juliet."

LEO caught up with Associate Artistic Director of Kentucky Shakespeare Amy Attaway to discuss the tour and the precautions they are taking to keep their actors and audience safe. As always, Kentucky Shakespeare performances are free and open to the public.

LEO: Tell us about the spring tour of 'Romeo and Juliet.'

Amy Attaway: We were slated to go to 28 parks this year, pending all the permitting — and we're still waiting for [it], from Metro parks. We're very hopeful that it's going to come through, but it hasn't yet. So I have to say asterisk. There was a potential that we might not get the permits to do this. If all that comes through, then we'll go to 23. We're going to some places that aren't Metro parks. We're going to go to several schools in person; some schools, via livestream. And, we also just recorded it this weekend with schools. They're getting a pre-recorded version.

Are the Indiana performances new?

So, we have for the past — I'm not sure if they did it the first year — for the past many years,

been going to the Southern Indiana part. So in this year they were the first ones that we got booked because you know, their restrictions across the river were less harsh than they are here. I shouldn't say harsh. But, anyway, so they were the first ones to get us on the books. We're going to Corydon, in Jeffersonville and New Albany, um, in April and May, late April. . . early May. Then we're also going to Richmond, Indiana, which is a lot further away because that's where Richmond Shakespeare is. They bring us into that.

What are the safety measures?

I'll talk about the audience perspective, first. People who have been coming to the tours for a long time, the difference that they'll see is that we'll have some extra staff on hand. We'll be helping people socially distance in their pods. We'll ask the audience to wear masks. Um, we, won't be super strict about enforcing that, because it's outdoors. People who are up close to the performers, we'll ask that they wear masks, and we'll have hand sanitizer stations



Romeo and Friar in Kentucky Shakespeare's production of "Romeo and Juliet"

all around. From the performer's perspective, we rehearsed in masks, almost exclusively right up until the end. We've very cautions about hand sanitizer and we share props as little as possible.

Most of the cast has now had at least one vaccine. We're on the way to having the cast vaccinated.

Why "Romeo and Juliet?"

We programmed this play long before anybody had ever heard of COVID-19. So. . . but being in this time and being with this play, with these words, I'm hearing it in all these new and wonderful ways. And that's another big thing about Shakespeare. The other thing that

I've heard more acutely than I have before is just the desire to be in contact, and people preventing you from being together with each other, you know, there's this mysterious reason. You don't understand that you can't be around people or, you know, a person, specifically, in the case of Romeo and Juliet, but nobody in the play really understands what the families are fighting about. •

Socially distanced performances of "Romeo and Juliet" kick off on Saturday, April 17 at The Maples Park in Crestwood.



Romeo & Juliet



Kentucky Shakespeare's cast for "Romeo and Juliet".

MODERN DANCER AMBERLY M. SIMPSON DISCUSSES HER ROAD TO PERFORMANCE SHE'S BRINGING HER AMBO DANCE THEATRE'S 'REDUCED TO NOISE' TO A DIGITAL AUDIENCE

By Erica Rucker | erucker@leoweekly.com

AMBO DANCE THEATRE will present their performance, "Reduced to Noise: A NACHMO-inspired collaboration," from April 9 – 18. The production will feature five new works created by company dancers and directors. Ambo Dance Theatre is a modern and postmodern dance company formed by dancer and Hadley Creative Amberly M. Simpson in 2019. The "Reduced to Noise" project is a locally filmed digital production.

Simpson, who is the founding and artistic director of the company, filmed one of the performances based on the idea of unsolicited advice. She explained how the company decided on the theme for the upcoming performance.

"I choreographed one of them," said Simpson. "But the rest of them were done by company members who had an interest in creating a work. So, basically we, at the start of the year, we did this kind of bigger experimental show, which is just a production with several different choreographers from within the company."

"And, we use this process called NACHMO to create the dances, which it stands for National Choreography Month. Basically, every January they do something called January challenge, which is every day for that month, they'll release a really short prompt to you. It's just kind of like, they call it the 'choreographic kick in the pants.'"

Simpson cut her teeth on hard work and has turned that kick in the pants into opportunity. Her journey to Ambo Dance Theatre was not easy.

Simpson was raised in Glendale California and began dancing when she was young. It wasn't her favorite thing.

"When I was really little, I think like first grade, my mom really wanted me to dance," Simpson said. "So she enrolled me in just a little ballet class at our local community center. My family was really, really poor, so we, you know, we could not afford going to a studio or that sort of thing. I just found that I was bored senseless."

Simpson tried again a little bit later.

"So, didn't like dancing as like a little, little kid, but then this program came through called the California Dance Institute," she said. "Our school was actually one of their pilot schools, which was really cool, because I found this

footage in, like, I think I was in fifth grade or something performing."

"That was a really, really big program. It's connected with the National Dance Institute, which is run out of New York."

Still it wasn't until high school when she joined a competitive dance team that dance really struck Simpson as something she could really do and enjoy. Her dance team wasn't like the upper middle class white schools. Since Simpson went to an urban school, her team focused on hip-hop and competed in the coed divisions. Their coach was tough and their practices long and brutal.

"It was, like simultaneously one of the most profound and formative experiences of my life, but also like deeply, you know, our coach was really manipulative," Simpson said. "It's one of those things where it's like, I can never answer the question: 'Do the ends justify the means,' because she took kids. . . otherwise like many of us wouldn't have graduated. Many of us wouldn't have had any reason to care about school. And, she took in those kids and turned them into national champions."

After this experience Simpson once again questioned whether or not dance was right for her. She decided to pursue a degree in something besides dance, a degree in psychology with a focus in research on stereotypes and prejudice. She, again, thought she could escape the pull of dance and did so for only about a year before she began "dabbling in ballroom dance."

"I just decided like, nope, full stop. We gotta go. We gotta go back in," Simpson said. "So I dove full force into some dance organizations. I was at Purdue for my undergrad."

"I found a home there in what they called the Purdue Contemporary Dance Company.



Ambo Dance Theatre's "Reduced to Noise" digital performance runs from April 9 – 18. | PHOTOS BY KIM JARETT PHOTOGRAPHY

And they're just a modern dance company. Every semester you audition, and you get cast in different pieces, and there's a show at the end.

Then they also have different opportunities along the way to send you to festivals."

This dance company took her to Prague and let her choose when to return. She took the time to explore and make some decisions about life. One being that she would pursue teaching... but not dance.

She decided to move to Louisville with a friend and enrolled in Bellarmine's teaching program. She got her master's in English



Ambo Dance Theatre company

education and as fate would have it, she ended up returning to dance and now teaches dance at Noe Middle School along with keeping Ambo Dance Theatre moving and growing. •

Information about "Reduced to Noise" is available on the Ambo Dance Theatre website at ambodancetheatre.com. Tickets are pay-what-you-can and since becoming a full 501 (c) 3, Ambo Dance Theatre can now accept donations.

The New York Times Magazine Crossword

MORES

BY JULIAN KWAN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

No. 0328

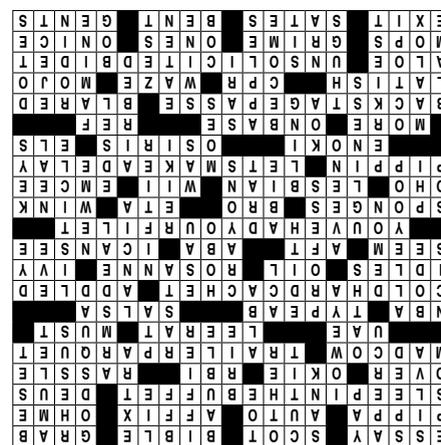
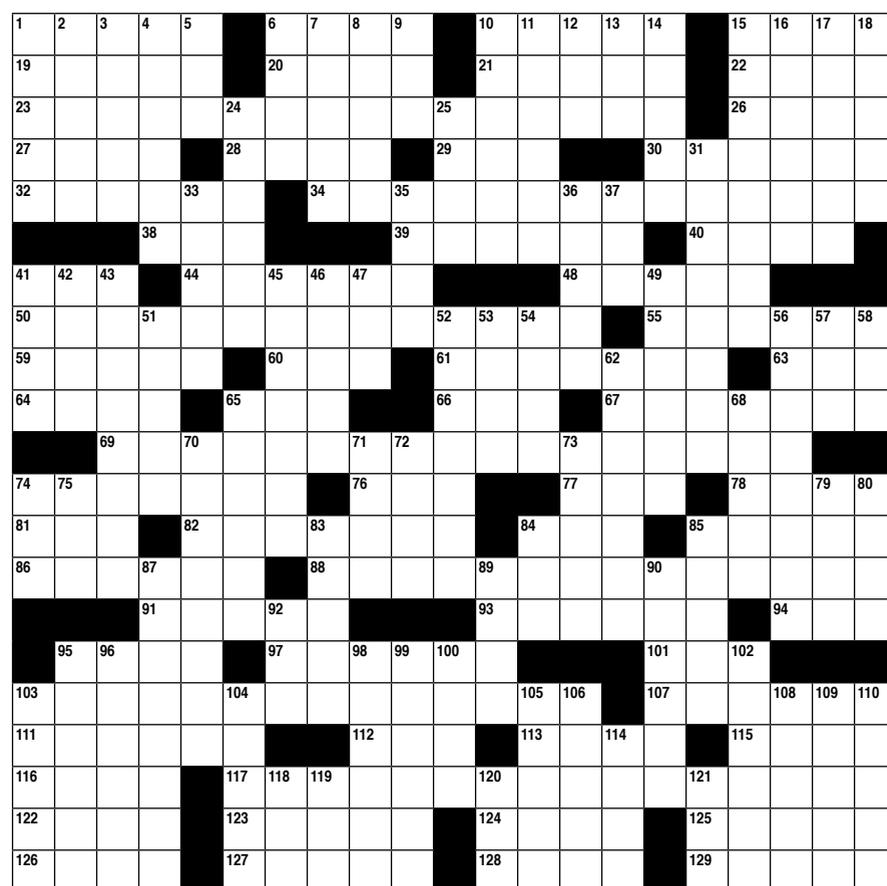
ACROSS

- 1 SAT section eliminated by the College Board in 2021
 6 Firth person?
 10 Best-selling book of all time
 15 Get the attention of
 19 Sister-in-law of Prince William
 20 Lead-in to pilot
 21 Stick on
 22 "Goodness gracious!"
 23 Nod off at a self-serve restaurant?
 26 Jupiter, *exempli gratia*
 27 [Turn the page]
 28 Sooner, informally
 29 Diamond stat
 30 Get down and dirty, in dialect
 32 Bovine disease
 34 Fancy flooring for an R.V.?
 38 Home of Etihad Airways: Abbr.
 39 Eyeball creepily
 40 Requirement
 41 Hoops grp.
 44 Like universal blood recipients
 48 One layer of a seven-layer dip
 50 What the prestigious ice sculptor had?
 55 Unable to think clearly
 59 Goes nowhere, say
 60 Word with holy or heating
 61 Grammy-winning singer Cash
 63 Certain elite school
 64 Appear
 65 Back in the U.S.S.?
 66 Org. to which Taft was elected president after serving as U.S. president
 67 "Yes, that's clear"
 69 "Let everyone else get some steak before taking seconds!"
 74 Mooches
 76 Mate
 77 Grand Central info
 78 Surreptitious bit of communication
 81 "What have we here!"
 82 Like many characters in Alison Bechdel cartoons
 84 Nintendo release of 2006
 85 Show runner
 86 2013 Tony winner for Best Revival of a Musical
 88 "We should stall!"
 91 Long-stemmed mushroom
 93 Egyptian god of the afterlife
 94 Llama's head?
 95 Button clicked to see the rest of an article
 97 Not out, say

- 101 Target of the heckle "What game are you watching?!"
 103 Why no one hangs out in actors' dressing rooms these days?
 107 Played obnoxiously loudly
 111 At 10 or 11 p.m., say
 112 Part of lifeguard training
 113 Navigation app
 115 Lucky charm
 116 American ____ (century plant)
 117 Bathroom fixture that one never asked for?
 122 Their heads get dirty
 123 Dirt
 124 Typos for exclamation marks if you fail to hit Shift
 125 Opposite of neat
 126 ____ strategy
 127 Fills to the max
 128 Set (on)
 129 Bathroom-door sign

DOWN

- 1 ____ salt (magnesium sulfate)
 2 Mixed-martial-arts great Anderson
 3 What a hiree should be brought up to
 4 Brief summary
 5 Gab
 6 Knocked in a pocket, in pool
 7 Handle a job satisfactorily
 8 Additional
 9 ____ the line
 10 Trinket
 11 Less certain
 12 Many a maid of honor, informally
 13 Create an account?
 14 Not included
 15 Marvel group led by Hercules
 16 ____ monkey
 17 Lucky charm
 18 Plague
 24 "My treat next time!"
 25 Cheese sometimes paired with fig jam
 31 Subject of the Iran-contra affair
 33 Requirements for witnesses
 35 Jessica of "L.A.'s Finest"
 36 Believer in Jah
 37 Book-fair organizer, maybe, in brief
 41 Longtime procedural set in Washington, D.C.
 42 Foreshadow
 43 Pass up?
 45 Declare
 46 "All in the Family" mother
 47 Tissue that's prone to tearing, for short
 49 Italian car since 1907
 51 Enemy in the game Doom
 52 Sticks in a box?
 53 Style of women's leather handbags
 54 Isaac and Rebekah's firstborn
 56 Piece with a title like "10 Best Places to ???"
 57 First mate?
 58 Recolor
 62 Comparatively neat
 65 Johnson & Johnson skin-care brand
 68 Moniker after a lifestyle change
 70 Initial problem for a storied duckling
 71 Man's nickname that sounds like consecutive letters of the alphabet
 72 "Phooley!"
 73 Japanese "energy healing"
 74 Bread for dipping
 75 Golden ratio symbol
 79 Actress Patricia of "Breakfast at Tiffany's"
 80 Phone, wallet, ____ (traveler's mental checklist)
 83 Gaudy jewelry
 84 Word in obituaries
 85 Eponymous member of the Ford family
 87 Most cheerful
 89 Fictional establishment selling Duff Beer
 90 Option for an overnight guest
 92 Campsite org.
 95 Antacid brand
 96 Forms of some mythological sea creatures
 98 Turn into
 99 Bob hopes?
 100 Garment worn with a choli
 102 Something Pharaoh's dream foretold in Genesis
 103 Make a goat
 104 Heavies



SAVAGE LOVE

By Dan Savage | mail@savagelove.net @fakedansavage

CONCESSIONS



Q: I'm a 29-year-old straight male. I've been with my 25-year-old partner for six years. I love her and think that we are perfect for each other. We have all the things that make existing with someone wonderful. But about two years into our relationship I had a two-week-long affair while I was out of the country. I fucked up. I came clean to my partner and we've done our best to work through this over the last four years, but it has obviously caused some trust issues between us. I've never cheated it again and I try every day to work through these issues I caused in our relationship. There's also been two recent instances of me breaking her trust. On a particularly stressful day I was caught sneaking a cigarette—the sneaking part is the issue—and on another occasion I did drugs in our communal back garden with a friend after she had gone to bed. I owned up to both straight away. I view both of these as being a symptom of the lockdown/pandemic prompting me to break with my “normal” behavior. But partner is no longer comfortable allowing me to have the freedom to go out with my friends and partake in drugs without her express permission, which she already said she's unlikely to grant me. The other element to this is, we want kids in three years. We've agreed that I will fully abstain from all drugs after we become parents. My problem is that I trapped between a desire to meet the wants of my partner while also maintaining a degree of autonomy. When we discuss these matters—which we've been doing frequently lately—her argument boils down to this: “You did a bad thing, you need to make concessions so that I feel safe, you having to seek my permission makes me feel safe.” It's coming to loggerheads and I don't know if I'm the unreasonable one here, especially since I'm arguing for the freedom to do an illegal drug. I would appreciate your external, outside, drug-positive perspective in this.

Don't Really Understand Girlfriends Sentiment

A: I had some emergency dental work done this morning and I'm a little strung out on... what are those things called again? Oh, right: drugs. Last night I selected the letters I wanted to respond to in this week's column and I really didn't expect to be on powerful painkillers when I sat down to write my responses

today. In all honesty, I probably shouldn't be operating advice machinery at the moment but deadlines are deadlines. You should take my advice with a grain silo or two of salt, DRUGS, and everyone else should just skip this week's column entirely.

Okay! DRUGS! Here we go! My outside, external, drug-positive-but-with-caveats (see below) perspective on your dilemma boils down to this: Do not make babies with this woman. Don't scramble your DNA together with hers—not unless it makes your dick hard to think about begging this woman for permission every time you wanna smoke a little pot with a friend or take a fucking shit for the next forty years. (And, trust me, you're still going to want to smoke pot after the babies come.) If that kind of begging excites you, great. Have all the fucking babies. But if that doesn't excite you... dude... run the fuck away.

Yeah, yeah: you did a bad thing. You had an affair four years ago and you made the mistake of telling your girlfriend about it even though 1. she most likely was never going to find out about it and 2. you quickly came to regret it. Your regret wasn't instantaneous—like you, DRUGS, your regret took a couple of weeks to come—but the fact that you haven't cheated on her since is a pretty good indication that your regret was sincere. And now here you are four years later, DRUGS, waking up every day and getting back to work on those trust issues. Because you're still in trouble. Because you made the mistake of telling your girlfriend about an affair she would never have found known about if you had kept your mouth shut. But you know... come to think of it... maybe it was a good thing you that you told your girlfriend about the affair, DRUGS. Not because honesty is always the best policy. The famed couples counselor and author and podcaster and Ted Talker Esther Perel urges people who've had affairs to consider the “burden of knowing” before they disclose. If you sincerely regret the affair and it's not going to happen again and your partner is not in any physical risk and is unlikely to hear about the affair from a third party, sparing them the burden of knowing is the second-most loving thing a person can do. (Not cheating at all would, of course, be the most loving thing a person can do.)

So to be clear, DRUGS, I don't think telling your girlfriend was the right thing to do because all affairs must be disclosed. I think telling your particular girlfriend was the right thing to do because she's telling on herself

now. If she doesn't feel like she can trust you ever again—and if she's constantly on the lookout for new reasons why she can't trust you—then she needs to end this relationship. But she hasn't ended the relationship, DRUGS, and you need to ask yourself why she hasn't. I have a hunch: She hasn't ended it because she likes it this way.

Someone who cheats and gets caught and discloses and wants to make it right can expect to spend some time, well, making it right. They should expect to spend some time in the doghouse and, to extend the metaphor, they should expect to spend some time on a short leash. But a person can't spend the rest of their life in the doghouse. A cheater has to take responsibility and be considerate about insecurities the affair may have created or worsened. But if a cheater has done all that and years later the person the cheated won't let them out of the doghouse—or is constantly finding new reasons to keep the cheater in the doghouse—then the doghouse is where the cheated wants the cheater. Forever. Which means instead of being angry you cheated on her, DRUGS, on some level your girlfriend is delighted you cheated on her. Because the wrong thing you did allows her to control you for the rest of your life. But it shouldn't. And if she insists it does or that it should, DRUGS, you should leave her.

About those caveats: You don't specify the drug you used in the backyard with your friend but I'm gonna assume it was weed—which is legal where I live but not where you live. There is, of course, a big difference between stepping out to smoke a little pot after the girlfriend has gone to bed and sneaking out to smoke a lotta meth. And if you're an addict and a little pot has led to a lot of harder drugs in the past, your girlfriend's zero tolerance policy might be justified. But if we're not talking about hard drugs and you don't have addiction issues, DRUGS, you shouldn't have to beg your girlfriend's permission in advance—which she's denied in advance—to smoke a little pot with a buddy.

Q: I've been listening to old episodes of the Savage Lovecast while working from home. Yesterday I heard you explain to straight male listeners that their straight female partners would say “yes” to sex more often if “sex” didn't always mean the woman getting fucked. That really resonated with me, a straight woman with a male partner. When my husband came onto me the next night and I didn't feel like opening up to get basted, instead of saying “no” I offered to jerk him off while he sucked my tits. It was great—for both of us! Total win! Thank you, Dan Savage!

Joyfully Enjoying Relevant Knowledge

A: You're welcome, JERK! It's always nice to hear from folks who've taken my advice and didn't regret it!

mail@savagelove.net

Follow Dan on Twitter @FakeDanSavage.
www.savagelovecast.com

CLASSIFIED LISTINGS

LEGAL

Tribox, LLC at 1971 Brownsboro Road Louisville, KY 40206 hereby declares its intention(s) to apply for a NQ3 Quota Retail Drink License and NQ Malt Beverage Package License and Wine and Malt Beverage by the drink License no later than 04/09/2021. The business to be licensed will be located at 1971 Brownsboro Road, Louisville, KY 40206 DBA Trifecta, Burritos, Pizza, Salads. The members are as follows Richard Morris 705 Danes Hall Drive Louisville, KY 40206 and Christopher Seckman 1745 Frankfort Ave. Louisville, KY 40206. Any person, association, corporation, or body politic may protest the granting of the license(s) by writing the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, 500 Mero St 2NE33, Frankfort, Kentucky, 40601, within thirty (30) days of the date of this legal publication.

Notice is hereby given by M L Auto repair 7601 Preston Hwy, Louisville, Ky 402019 (502)-956-4866. Owner has 14 days to respond in writing to obtain title to the following: 2016 niss versa VIN-3N1CN7AP7GL868984. Owned by Gabrielle Caballero-Yancy 1401 Twin Ridge Rd, Louisville, Ky 40242. Lein holder Old National Bank, E. Main St, Louisville, Ky 40202.

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Chaz Johnson – Unit #112
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Alexis Cooper – Unit #546
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EMPLOYMENT

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DOWNTOWN STRONG

The title 'DOWNTOWN STRONG' is rendered in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The letters are filled with a gradient from gold to blue. The letters 'O', 'T', 'R', and 'O' in 'DOWNTOWN' contain circular cutouts. The first 'O' shows a city skyline at dusk. The 'T' shows a bridge over water. The 'R' shows a row of chess pawns. The second 'O' shows a bridge over water. The letters 'S', 'T', 'R', 'O', 'N', and 'G' in 'STRONG' are solid blue.

LOUISVILLE
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