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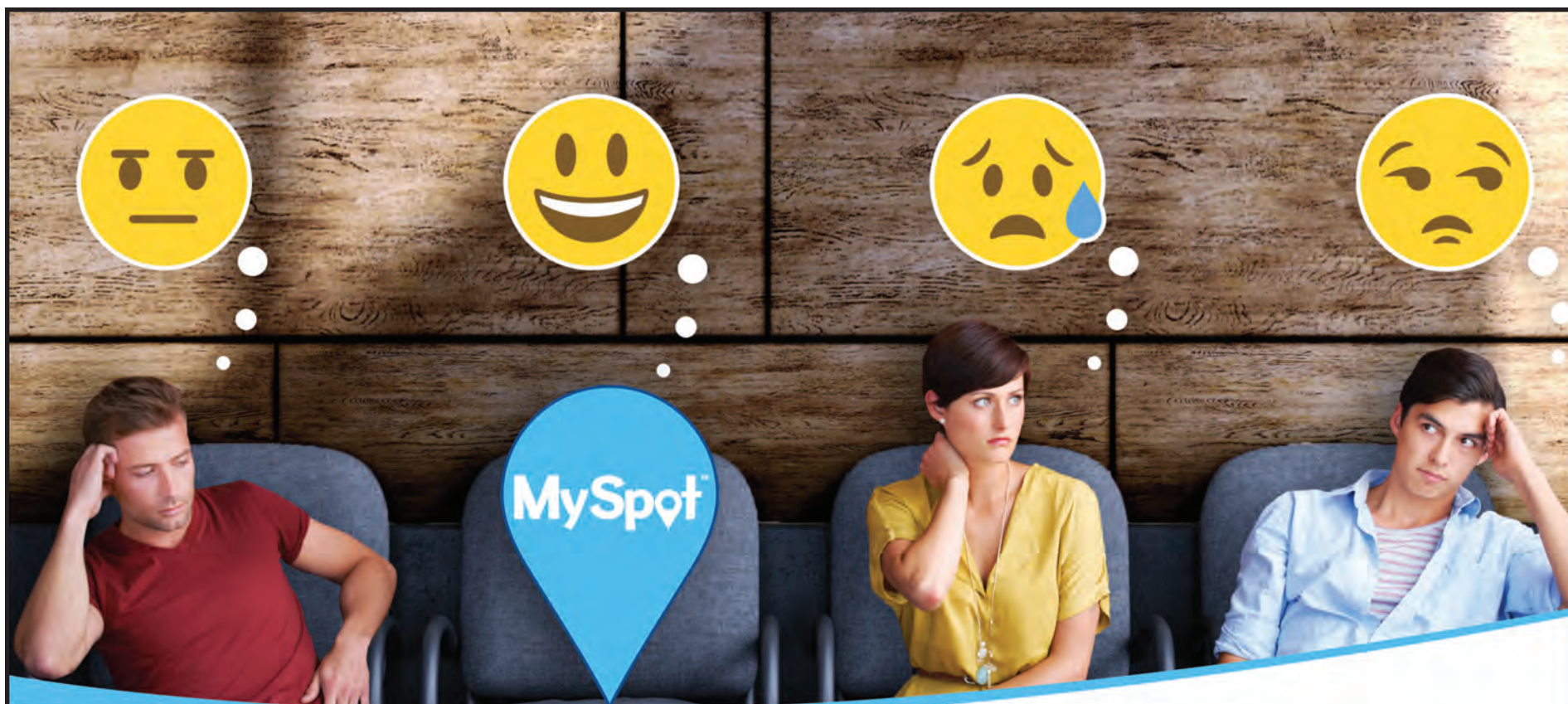
# American Metals Supply grows and adapts

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E.J. Kuiper meets with staff.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HSHS CENTRAL ILLINOIS DIVISION

# E.J. Kuiper takes on interim CEO role at St. John’s

BY CINDA KLINKNA

E.J. Kuiper, the central Illinois division director for HSHS, has worked in Springfield for the past five years, but will soon be taking on a new role with the upcoming departure of Charles Lucore, the CEO of St. John’s Hospital.

Kuiper, age 50, grew up in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. He worked as a physical therapist in Florida before coming to Springfield five years ago after being recruited by HSHS as central Illinois division director. HSHS is a network of hospitals that includes St. John’s (Springfield), St. Mary’s (Decatur), Good Shepherd (Shelbyville) and St. Francis (Litchfield), as well as the College of Nursing at St. John’s.

As division director, Kuiper receives reports from all the CEOs of the various hospitals. For the near future, Kuiper will be doing double duty as both division director and CEO of St. John’s due to the resignation of Charles Lucore. Earlier this month, Lucore announced he would be taking a position with St. Francis Hospital in Roslyn, New York.

The division director’s main responsibility is working on regional strategies and capital planning for all the hospitals in the area network.

The CEO serves at a local hospital with the key role of interaction with the medical staff and the community.

Kuiper says he wants to “build on the good things at St. John’s.” When asked for examples, he says, “St. John’s provides very high-quality service and a good patient experiences. We have a Level I trauma unit, Level II pediatric trauma care unit, a new building that will be geared for women and children and a neonatal unit that will be remodeled.”

Levels I – V are the designations given to trauma care centers, with Level I being the highest rating. St. John’s pediatric care trauma unit is the only Level II in the region.

Kuiper was raised in Amsterdam. His initials stand for Evert Jan; in the Netherlands, the oldest son is given the first name of his paternal grandfather and the middle name of his maternal grandfather. In 1991, he earned a bachelor’s in physical therapy from the Academy for Physical Therapy in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. He came to the United States and settled in Ft. Myers, Florida, as a clinician at a for-profit health care system. He earned his master’s degree from Florida Gulf Coast University in Ft. Myers in 2003 and his doctorate

in physical therapy from the University of St. Augustine in 2004.

His career led to a position in Alton, Illinois, with the Franciscan Sisters Catholic Healthcare system and then to Springfield for a position with HSHS in 2013.

Kuiper says, “Springfield has a lot of medical facilities, and strengthening the relationship with the others will be a goal.” With regards to SIU, Springfield Clinic, HSHS, St. John’s and Memorial, Kuiper says, “Partnering with the leaders of the various facilities is happening and can be enhanced.”

Kuiper will move into offices in the administrative areas at St. John’s from the division office on the St. John’s campus. “I look forward to spending time at the hospital,” Kuiper says. He wants to enhance the relationships with the medical staff – doctors, nurses, and practitioners – and work on projects that strengthen the employees. In addition, Kuiper says the College of Nursing “is an important part of our mission.”

When asked what Kuiper sees as the main difference between health care in the Netherlands and the United States, he explains, “Holland has universal health care, meaning that all

Dutch citizens have basic health care coverage. Based on levels of income, people then can buy even more coverage beyond the basic. Significant resources are spent on the social determinants of health in an effort to develop more of a preventative health care program.”

Kuiper and his wife, Patty, have three children, although none have followed in the health care fields. His son, Joshua, is a golf pro while daughter, Megan, just graduated from law school, and their youngest child, Emily, is attending college in the Tampa area. Kuiper travels to Florida and the Netherlands to see family, although that might not be very often with his double-duty work at St. John’s.

The national search for a new CEO at St. John’s will start after the holidays and Kuiper estimates that will be a four-to-six-month process with a search firm.

In the meantime, Kuiper is looking forward to new challenges, meeting more often with the many medical providers at St. John’s and working with the leaders in the facilities in Springfield.

“Enhancing all aspects of our health care system is what I want to do,” Kuiper says, “and I am honored to lead this organization.” ♦

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# American Metals Supply grows and adapts

BY DAVID BLANCHETTE

A Springfield-based company that has eight locations in six states began more than a half-century ago over a dinner table discussion.

"The business was started in 1962, and I remember sitting at the kitchen table with my dad and mom saying, 'If this doesn't work, we want to be able to keep the house.' It was a big, big deal," said Steve Hassebrock, the former CEO and current chief corporate strategy officer at American Metals Supply Co., Inc.

"At that time, my dad, mom, brother and myself were involved in the business. It was a true family business," he said.

American Metals Supply is a leading wholesale distributor of sheet and coil steel, prefabricated ducts and fittings, and a complete line of heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) products. It began 56 years ago when Steve's father, Al Hassebrock, left his sales job at a building materials distribution company in Springfield to begin his own sheet metal sales company.

Steve has been with the family-owned and operated company for 47 of those years and has seen American Metals Supply grow steadily over the decades.

"We started out on North Dirksen Parkway. We leased some space in a building, we grew a little more, leased more space, and that went on for a number of years," Hassebrock said. "We were a single location until 1990, when we opened a second location in St. Louis."

Following that first expansion, American Metals Supply has added another location every two to four years. They now have operations in Springfield, Illinois, their home base; St. Louis, Hazelwood and Springfield, Missouri; Indianapolis, Indiana; Lenexa, Kansas; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and the newest location that opened this year in Dallas, Texas. American Metals Supply trucks deliver products directly to customers within a 200-mile radius.

"One of the reasons we have had the geographic growth, instead of product growth, is we feel we can manage and do a decent job with a narrow, core group of products," Hassebrock said. "We have fewer than 3,000 Stock Keeping Units (SKUs) and probably most of our competitors would have 40,000 to 50,000."

"The growth has done nothing but strengthen the company. We are a stronger, more competitive company today than we would have been without the growth," Hassebrock said. "My dad died in 1980; he was only 60 years old, and I wish he could see what the kitchen table talk has borne."

Meanwhile, Hassebrock has transitioned out of the company leadership role and his daughter, Chrissy Nardini, became president in 2006.

"We plan to continue staying who we are, very focused and narrow, but to grow geographically to continue to help the company's growth," Nardini said. "We are advancing the American dream one life, one customer, one building at a time. That ties into my family history; my grandfather started this company with \$7,000 and what it has grown to today is the American dream for our family."

Nardini said one way American Metals Supply keeps the American dream from becoming



Steve Hassebrock near a loading dock door at American Metals Supply's Springfield facility.

PHOTO BY DAVID BLANCHETTE

## COVER PHOTO

American Metals Supply former CEO and current Chief Corporate Strategy Officer Steve Hassebrock.

PHOTO/ BY DAVID BLANCHETTE

a nightmare is by being adaptable in the often volatile construction market.

"We've become slightly more commercially focused, the commercial contractor versus the residential, and that started back in 2008-2009 when housing starts dropped significantly and we had to kind of pivot," Nardini said. "We're probably 60 percent to 40 percent commercial to residential, serving mechanical contractors for sheet metal HVAC needs."

The Trump administration's steel tariffs are

another factor that plays a big role in American Metal Supply's business plan.

"We had a foreshadowing that these tariffs were coming, so we started buying heavily in advance of the tariff and tried to advise our customers to do the same," Nardini said. "We've had to buy at higher and higher prices and sell in higher and higher numbers to our customers. Our biggest risk now is if the tariffs get cut back and it starts to have a different impact on steel here domestically, overnight

we could suddenly have our inventory way over-valued."

American Metals Supply is also strategic when they expand. A company veteran, usually from the Springfield home office or the St. Louis operation, will join at least one person with industry experience and business relationships in the target location. This tactic combines corporate knowledge with a customer base in the new location so American Metals Supply can hit the ground running.



“Whether it’s new construction on ground that’s never been built on before or whether it’s rebuilding after a tornado, we’re usually a part of it,” Nardini said. “We had a whole hospital destroyed by a tornado outside of Springfield, Missouri, that we contributed to when they did the rebuild.”

American Metals Supply will continue to focus on growth and, for the short term, Nardini said, that means in Texas. She feels that state has more potential with construction, population movements and the Texas economy, which she said is much better than the Illinois economy.

“But we definitely have not forgotten where we came from and our core customers, whether it’s in Springfield or St. Louis,” Nardini said. “So staying close to them and remembering who brought us to the table is going to be important in the years to come, too. The Midwest roots make you feel a little more grounded; it’s the right mix of good values, a sense of urgency and hard work that a traditional Midwesterner has.”

All eight locations are also steeped in the company’s core values: Commitment to improving employees’ lives; best-in-class performance for all; being a partner to customers and vendors; and being disciplined and numbers-driven.

“When we defined our core values, we decided they had to be more than just something we post on the wall,” Nardini said. “We have to be willing to look for these values in the people we hire, and we have to be willing to fire the people who violate the core values. Otherwise, they aren’t true core values.”

The company’s narrow focus, sales success and core values have led to an enviable retention rate among its 105 employees – 35 percent of American Metals Supply’s workers have been with the company for more than 10 years, and 15 percent have been there for more than 20 years. There’s always some natural turnover in a business, but the company prides itself in



American Metals Supply employees in the Springfield facility’s customer ordering center.

PHOTO BY DAVID BLANCHETTE

taking care of its employees.

“We have a way-above-the-norm 401(K) plan, because we are trying to help our employees retire securely and have the American dream for their families,” said Nardini, who noted that several long-term warehouse and truck driving employees have been able to leave with a seven-figure retirement. “Turnover is expensive, and if we have good people, we try to keep them.”

American Metals Supply is looked upon as

an industry leader and Nardini and Hassebrock have held leadership roles in Heating, Air Conditioning, Refrigeration Distributors International, or HARDI. That organization’s CEO, Talbot Gee, appreciates what father and daughter have brought to HARDI membership.

“Chrissy and her father, Steve, are one of just two family members to have both served as presidents of the predominant trade association for our industry across its more than 70 years of existence,” Gee said. “I have had the

pleasure of benefiting from the wise counsel of Chrissy and Steve and witnessing the tremendous growth and development of American Metals Supply under their leadership.”

“Their shared commitment to constant improvement and doing business the right way has set a powerful standard for our industry well beyond just the markets they serve,” Gee said.

Former CEO Hassebrock has seen many industry changes during his nearly 50 years in



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Company President Chrissy Nardini.

PHOTO BY AMY GRAY

the business.

"The volatility in the business continues to increase. The cycles get shorter, the magnitude from top to bottom gets greater," Hassebrock said. "Steel is our biggest single commodity, and its price can move in three months today more than it moved in a decade just 20 years ago. When you're on the wrong side of it, that it can be a real challenge.

"We are very susceptible to interest rates and the construction cycle because of our narrow focus. When construction goes to nothing, we feel it," Hassebrock said. "But our sales per employee are high, our gross margin per employee is high, and we feel that is a result of the fact that we know what we are doing in the small arena in which we are really competing."

Even though he isn't at the helm any more, Hassebrock still looks forward to coming to work each day at the American Metals Supply main facility, located near the Wabash Avenue and interstate 72 interchange on Springfield's southwest side.

"I get a sense of pride, it somewhat defines me," Hassebrock said. "I enjoy being here when nobody is here, looking at stuff on the computer. I enjoy looking at our numbers. We always try to run the business by the numbers." ♦



American Metals Supply employee Rich Holdman, who has been with the company for 45 years.

PHOTO BY DAVID BLANCHETTE



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# Beyond Abraham Lincoln

## New SCVB director Scott Dahl shares his vision

BY CATHERINE O'CONNOR

The 1980s and 90s were boom years for the local tourism industry, but as in many other places across the country, revenues began to slow significantly following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a slump in the economy, fluctuating gas prices and the city's own financial problems.

Scott Dahl, the energetic new director of the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau (SCVB), has been on the job for only a couple of months, but he has a firm mission to once again reestablish the capital city as a convention venue for statewide meetings, association gatherings, educational events and awards programs. To that end, the SCVB has launched the 60% Occupancy Rate Campaign. The goal is to reach equilibrium with 60 percent of the city's hotel room capacity filled at all times.

A successful recent example of this principal was the five-day National Bikers Roundup, which brought motorcyclists from around the country to Springfield in early August, filling hotel rooms, restaurants and other businesses throughout the city.

A future direction to ensure sustainable growth will include regional marketing that will be a coordinated effort. Including surrounding communities like Litchfield, Petersburg and Jacksonville will be a focus to expand the reach of the SCVB, according to Dahl.

"These towns each have hotel-motel taxes to contribute to the effort, but each of them has been trying to go it alone, resulting in duplication of services and inefficiencies, as neighboring tourist areas compete, rather than coordinate,

with each other," Dahl said. In practical terms, regional marketing will involve the SCVB working with and for outlying communities, including providing a presence at trade shows and on the SCVB website and social media.

To that end, the SCVB has three main communications tools, which function both internally and externally. A calendar update newsletter is sent to their partner list of hotels, visitor attractions, historic sites and businesses, to notify them of what is going on in Springfield and beyond. A partner update newsletter will provide information about significant events and attractions in the area, such as offering an opportunity to market the Sangamon Valley Trail to the fitness traveler. The SCVB also has a consumer newsletter that is delivered to an email list of thousands of names, including everyone who has requested information or service from the SCVB.

As Dahl settles in to his job of revving up tourism in the city, he recognizes the challenges. "We'd like residents to know that tourism is a

\$400 million industry that injects hotel-motel taxes into the economy to fund the 12-person staff at the SCVB," he said. It is important to him that residents know that not only does this cover the cost of staff and operations, but that it delivers some \$1.7 million in extra revenue to the city annually.



Scott Dahl, the new director of the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau (SCVB).

COURTESY OF SCVB

Dahl emphasizes, "I think it is key to make the public aware that there are no taxpayer dollars in the operations of the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau." Since Dahl began his new job late this summer, he has been working hard internally to create a new culture, assemble a new team and fill positions.

The goal, according to Dahl, is to make sure that people are not asking, "What's new at the SCVB?," but will be saying instead, "Look what's going

on at the SCVB."

With that in mind, the city is only weeks away from opening a new SCVB Visitor Center in partnership with the state, inside the former Lincoln-Herndon Law offices on Sixth Street. The

concept will be to provide a "first stop" orientation experience for travelers to begin their stay.

The adult motor coach touring industry is another important market focus for Dahl. There are hundreds of bus tours that travel between Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana and Minnesota to the Branson, Missouri, area daily. "We need to realize the potential for establishing Springfield as a perfect stopover location, by encouraging tour operators to add us to their itinerary and include an extra night stopover, with a day to explore historic sites for those making the regional excursion to Branson," said Dahl.

And the SCVB has just premiered a new concept this month, where costumed Abe and Mary Lincoln actors will greet the motor coaches at their first stop, so the visitors' first impression of Springfield is that it's a friendly town going out of the way to share the Lincoln scene. The goal is to be able to become an additional feature on the itinerary of some 200 motor coach trips each year.

Dahl realizes what a gift it is to be in the city that is most well-known as Abraham Lincoln's hometown, while he suggests that more needs to be done with looking beyond the Lincoln theme.

"I didn't realize the impact of Route 66, and the successful efforts of communities along the route that have begun to step up the Route 66 theme," he said. Many international travelers will rent Harleys in Chicago and make stops in towns like Pontiac and Bloomington, according to Dahl. "We'd like to see Springfield become a major hub for the regional tourism marketing, with the Cozy Dog, Route 66 and our related businesses benefiting, because we can also pair that with the historic sites." ♦

Catherine O'Connor, formerly of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, is a museum and living history tourism veteran, having worked at five Lincoln-era historic sites, including a short stint as a National Park Service interpretive ranger.



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# Sales tax proposal splits business community

BY RACHEL JOHNSON

Already struggling to compete against online stores, Just Beds store owner Steve Stimac is not in favor of a proposed one percent sales tax increase for Sangamon County. If the proposition on the November ballot passes, he says he'll have to pass on higher costs to his customers. A \$450 bed would see a \$4.50 increase due to the tax, while the cost of a \$7 meal at a restaurant would increase by seven cents. However, the tax would not apply to unprepared foods, prescriptions and over-the-counter medications, large vehicles such as cars and boats, or farming equipment.

"I'm against it. Frankly, I think it will affect business. I think that the consumer is already taxed enough as it is. I think we're getting into this real big city-state," Stimac said.

While Stimac made his feelings clear, some business owners have been reluctant to publicly state an opinion about the proposed tax. When approached for comment, many were unaware of the upcoming referendum and confused it with the Springfield city council vote earlier this year, which raised the city's sales tax to 8.75 percent. Approval of the school sales tax would bring Springfield's sales tax rate to 9.75 percent, higher than comparable cities such as Peoria and Champaign, but still lower than Chicago-area communities.

While the business owners interviewed were all aware that the aging school buildings in District 186 need some updating, there seemed to be no consensus on what should be done and where the funding should come from.

Jeremiah Hart, a part-time college student and full-times sales manager of a local tire store, came out in favor of the tax. "I feel that the sales tax is something that is positive. I am

actually a product of 186, considering that I graduated from Springfield High, and I see it as a positive thing for our schools here in Sangamon County," he said.

The tax would be used to improve existing facilities, build new ones, make additions or renovations, enhance security and improve energy efficiency. It would not be used towards salaries, textbooks, buses, computers or operating costs.

Kendra Boesdorfer, who co-owns downtown business Custom Cup Coffee, has three children in the 186 district and is concerned about their safety and security, especially now that shootings are in the headlines regularly. "That's the only reason I would go on record to support any kind of thing like this," she said.

Taxes are never popular, but are a necessity if citizens want to enjoy education for all, emergency services, roads, parks and protection. However, local businessman and former Springfield alderman Frank Edwards feels that people are taxed out. His opinion is that the current tax money raised through property taxes to benefit the schools could be better managed. "I'm not against education," he said. "We all want the best for education."

Upon hearing that District 186 Superintendent Jennifer Gill favors updating the existing three high schools, Edwards expressed concerns. He favors consolidation. "Why not build two new high schools? It would be more efficient, better for our community," he said. "I was a graduate of the class of 1968. In 1968, we were like a tsunami going through the schools. Our classes were huge. They put us on a split shift. I think there were over 800 kids in my senior class. That's one school. Today, we have a little over 15,000 students and they're still using the same model of three high schools."

When asked about that idea, District 186

coordinator of public relations Bree Hankins said that they have asked parents in the district and conducted a quantitative analysis. "Renovation of Lanphier, Southeast and Springfield provides the highest cost-ben-



Co-owner of Custom Cup Coffee, Kendra Boesdorfer, in downtown Springfield is in favor of the one percent sales tax increase.

PHOTOS BY RACHEL JOHNSON



Just Beds Owner Steve Stimac is not in favor of the one percent sales tax increase.

sales tax, what it could be used for, and the various plans for usage around the county. Retiree Lynn Frasco came to the meeting opposed to the tax. He and his children all attended parochial schools. After Gill finished speaking, he announced that he'd changed his mind. "Jennifer's presentation was very thorough. She certainly made a nice presentation of what the goals were. It seemed like a very practical approach to improving the aging infrastructure of the schools," he said.

Local business owners will make their own choice come November. Boesdorfer has already decided. "I live in this county, and we started a small business in this county, and we raise our family in this county. My husband and I try to support the community whenever we can. This proposed plan is for the long-term betterment of our schools. It can only positively benefit our community," she said. ♦

efit value and lowest 30-year life cycle costs," she said. She also pointed out that with three high schools, more students get to participate in interscholastic athletics, performing arts and student leadership. "These activities are often what keep students engaged in core curriculum and spark interests that provide pathways to post-secondary studies and careers," she said.

Gill recently gave a presentation to the Citizens Club of Springfield explaining the proposed



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2018  
15 Under  
Fifteen  
Awards  
Ceremony



Each year, *Springfield Business Journal* partners with United Community Bank to recognize outstanding small businesses in the local area. Fifteen businesses with 15 or fewer employees are selected for this award, based on nominations received from the community. They must be located in Sangamon or Morgan counties and have been in business for at least two years.

On Wednesday, Oct. 17, UCB hosted a reception at its Montvale location for the selectees, their guests and members of the local business community. Megan Henley Brown, owner of Trendsetters and a previous 15 Under Fifteen recipient, was the guest speaker. Todd Wise, president and CEO of UCB, present awards to each of this year's recipients.

For a complete list of all previous winners or to make a nomination for next year's 15 Under Fifteen, go to [www.springfieldbusinessjournal.com](http://www.springfieldbusinessjournal.com) and click on the "awards" tab.



Megan Henley Brown from Trendsetters Floral served as the keynote speaker.



Employees of The Rage Hair Studio were recognized at the event.



Michele Sommers, Diane Beauchamp, Kirsten Bergerud, Jeff Sommers.



Lashonda Fitch, Shelby and Dushun Hogan.



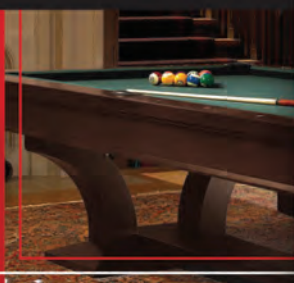
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Grab-A-Java

PHOTO BY STACIE LEWIS

## Springfield loves its local coffee shops

BY ERIC WOODS

Shopping local has become increasingly popular and local coffee houses are no exception. While some small businesses struggle to compete with chain stores, a number of Springfield coffee shops are holding their own against Starbucks and Panera. Whether it's newcomers such as Free Press Coffee and Brown Sugar and Vanilla Beans or a longtime business like Grab-A-Java, local residents seem to show their support.

Free Press Coffee owner Jane Ann Petty grew up in Springfield but moved to Pittsfield 12 years ago. Over time, she and her husband bought several historic buildings there, including a hotel. "Our guests wanted something else. So we had a coffee shop set up off the hotel lobby," said Petty. "I started learning all about coffee, and eventually we expanded to both Mt. Sterling and Springfield."

Free Press Coffee opened its first shop in June of 2014 in Pittsfield, while its newest location opened this past February in Springfield on South Grand Avenue. Petty loves the location. "It is a wonderful area here in Springfield. It works well for the neighborhood," she said. "We serve good, quality coffee, and the quality of the food is top shelf." Free Press Coffee has partnered with Three Twigs Bakery, a locally sourced, organic bakery in town that provides baked goods for Petty.

For self-proclaimed coffee connoisseur Yvonne Waller, opening her own business came down to what she was missing in the local coffee scene. "I was not finding my kind of coffee around town. That gave me the idea to open my own shop," she said. Brown Sugar and Vanilla Beans opened downtown at 304 E. Adam this past summer with the goal of producing smooth, high-quality coffee with no aftertaste. "Our motto is 'Making the World a Warmer Place,'" she said. Along with consumables, Waller also displays and sells vintage artwork.

Waller spent two years planning once she came up with the idea to open a coffee house. After holding a soft opening in which the customers responded well, she knew the coffee house would be something special. "The name Brown Sugar came from the song, but my husband also calls me that," she said. "And I call him Vanilla Beans. So that's where the name came from."

Grab-A-Java, Springfield's first gourmet drive-through coffee shop, opened in 1996 but has recently been acquired by Springfield residents Vicky and Bill Legge. They are excited at how the company continues appealing to customers with its quality products, friendly service and fun personality. "The culture, quality products and strong team made Grab-A-Java a good fit for us. We've been loyal customers for years, so we knew we had an opportunity to be a part of something very special," said Vicky.

"Anytime you have a small business, you have people who see something and want to do it well. I have my own spin on what a coffee house should be," said Petty, who believes the corporate chains might not be able to take the same risks in certain areas that small businesses are willing to take. "We have opportunities to work with local vendors. Plus, the quality of our product is great. The coffee is imported and sourced sustainably."

Brown Sugar and Vanilla Beans is Waller's first business venture, and she is not shy about catering to her customers. "We will deliver your coffee to you," she said. Her coffee shop already brings in numerous regulars. "They see that they love the coffee, the flavors, and they come back. Our specialty is Highlander Grogg, and they also love Jamaican Me Crazy." Waller said her coffee house is also a place where local entrepreneurs can come in, hook up the WiFi, and get their business done over a nice cup of coffee. She also hopes to feature comedy shows and find musicians to perform in the coffee house. "We would like to book private groups to come in for book readings and just enjoy the coffee."

Free Press also brings in its share of regular customers. "We very much see the regulars. We are lucky to be a part of this community," said Petty, who recently closed the location on Toronto Road in order to focus more on the new one on South Grand. "Coffee houses are interested in creating a neighborhood culture. This South Grand location is very special to me."

Given that the industry can change quickly, it is important for local coffee shops to pay attention to trends and keep current in order to offer the best product to the customer. "There is a lot to know. But we will stay focused on making great coffee," said Petty. ♦



# Not just for business majors anymore

## The MBA program at UIS broadens its appeal

BY SCOTT FAINGOLD

Associate professor Nathan Steele, Ph.D., a popular and respected instructor and researcher in the University of Illinois Springfield's college of business and management for over a decade, is excited about his recent appointment as director of the university's Master of Business Administration program. He especially wants to clear up what he sees as some misconceptions about the degree.

"The MBA is a very effective advanced business degree," he said. "If you find yourself in a situation of senior management for an organization, a lot of folks see the MBA as the next proper stone in that career path. However, there are many people who are in management or business administration roles but don't think of themselves that way." Steele includes administrators in the health care and nonprofit sectors as well as those running volunteer organizations or starting entrepreneurial ventures of their own as some of those who would benefit from seeking an MBA.

"It is a highly functional degree for a wide variety of people because, although you will learn some specific content regarding accounting practices and finance, a lot of the things you can learn through a general MBA can be utilized in any environment – even in the home or informal social situations," Steele said. "I teach broadly about why human beings do what they do. A lot of the skills we are teaching are applicable to a wide variety of situations."

According to Steele, while students currently studying in the program run a fairly broad gamut, it could stand to be even broader. "I do

get students from both within and outside of the program because my courses tend to be popular and secretaries from other programs will often suggest them to master's students in the accountancy and management information science programs," he said. "I wind up getting some communication majors and public administration majors – but it's mostly accountancy and business administration students I wind up with."

Steele noted that the program tends to enroll a higher number of female students than other business schools. "Usually that ratio is somewhere around 66-35 male-to-female for business schools, but our program tends to run around 60-40 female-to-male." Still, the program is not as diverse as Steele would like.

There are several lesser known features to the program that he hopes could change people's minds. "We have great flexibility in terms of how long it can take to complete the degree program – ranging from a year-and-a-half to two-and-a-half years." There is also a weekend cohort program held in Peoria, which some students from the Urbana-Champaign campus have registered for, in which a group of MBA students meet and work together on three courses per semester, in a structured fashion which helps them absorb the coursework as a group. "We get a lot of students from here in town, but not nearly as many as we get from other places," Steele said, noting recent enrollees from Illinois College, Truman State, Northern Illinois University and Purdue.

Steele expressed surprise that more UIS undergraduate students don't choose to continue into the MBA program. "If you are in the honor

society here, you don't have to take the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) to get into our program. You'd think that would be the bulk of our MBA students, but it isn't. I'll see one or two in a given semester who I've seen before as undergrads, but that's about it." He also points out that there are alternative admission requirements available for nontraditional students who may have been out of school for a long time, including allowing the GMAT requirement to be waived in the cases of prospective students who can demonstrate significant real world supervisory experience over an extended period.

Steele said that he has found that when



Professor Nathan Steele, Ph.D.

PHOTO COURTESY OF UIS

students with a decade or more of work experience interact with less worldly students, strong learning dynamics can result. "I think the value of the MBA program isn't just in the rigid coursework set by the university," he said. "Often it's in the networks that the students build, along with opportunities to interact with a variety industries and fields." ♦

### Professional Women's Calendar of Events

*You play a key role and we thank you for your contributions to our community.*

#### Association for Women in Communications (AWC)

AWC will host a lunch on Wednesday, Nov. 14 from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Sangamo Club. The program will be "Contemplative Dialogue." For more information or to make reservations, visit [www.awcspringfield.org](http://www.awcspringfield.org).

#### Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL)

IWIL will hold their monthly lunch meeting on Thursday, Nov. 15 from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Sangamo Club. Dr. Tracy Smith will speak on "The Three 'L's' of Life: Listening, Loving, Looking." As the director of population health and community outreach for SIU Center for Family Medicine, Dr. Smith has devoted her professional life to providing access and equity to people in vulnerable situations. She has been a major impetus in the partnership between SIU and Springfield-area organizations in creating measurable, long term change throughout our community—from better health to lower crime rates. Both members and guests are welcome. Registration is \$18 per person on or before Nov. 9 and \$23 afterwards or at the door. Visit [www.iwil.biz](http://www.iwil.biz) for more information or to register.

#### Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois (WE-CI)

WE-CI will hold a holiday social and silent auction on Thursday, Nov. 15 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Illini Country Club. Be sure to invite a friend to be included in the prize giveaways. To register, visit [weci.wildapricot.org/events](http://weci.wildapricot.org/events).

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## MEDICAL NEWS

# SIU and Memorial partner to provide Alzheimer's care

SIU Medicine's Center for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders is renewing its commitment to Springfield-area residents and its 93-county service region with a new partner: Memorial Medical Center. The team will provide care beyond the medical center by offering community-based resources, trainings, research opportunities and support groups.

SIU's state-designated Alzheimer's center, part of the Neuroscience Institute at SIU Medicine, serves more than 4,000 Illinoisans each year through its Springfield clinic and Aging and Memory Network, a community of nearly three dozen health care providers who assess and manage patients with dementia as recommended by SIU Medicine network sites.

As part of the new partnership, the center will restore its biannual Memory Loss Conference for caregivers and health care professionals and expand research and programming for persons with dementia, their family and caregivers. Currently, the center offers eight programs, including Art Express, Early Stage Memory Loss Group, Minds in Motion, TimeSlips, Savvy Caregiver, Stepping Up, Opening Minds through Art, and Music and Memory™.

"Alzheimer's is a devastating disease that robs individuals of their memories and their

personalities as well as their physical health and well-being," said SIU Neuroscience Institute's executive director James Gilchrist, MD. "While there is presently no cure, SIU Medicine and Memorial Medical Center can provide the best care and resources for our patients, their families and their caregivers."

The Alzheimer's Association estimates 5.7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's. By 2050, this number is projected to rise to nearly 14 million.

"Alzheimer's disease takes a terrible toll, not only on patients but also their families and loved ones," said Ed Curtis, president and chief executive officer of Memorial Health System. "Memorial Medical Center is delighted to partner with SIU Medicine to help put a dent in this devastating disease."

The Center for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders was created in 1987 through state and federal funding. When funding was eliminated in 2015, SIU maintained the program and network through private donations, external grants and support from the School of Medicine.

In June 2018, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services approved a state plan amendment which provided support for SIU's state-designated Alzheimer's Center. Memorial Medical Center will receive the \$1.5 million in funding per year to support and expand the

Center for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders. ♦

## Passavant expands behavioral health services

Passavant Area Hospital's behavioral health services are growing with the recent opening of a partial hospitalization program. The facility is located west of the Passavant campus at 559 N. Westgate in Jacksonville.

The partial hospitalization program will provide a bridge between the outpatient and inpatient behavioral health programs at Passavant. The Center for Psychiatric Health is an outpatient treatment facility that treats emotional and behavioral problems, while the Behavioral Health Unit provides treatment to patients with acute behavioral health symptoms requiring hospitalization and stabilization.

Partial hospitalization is for adults who require more therapy than a traditional outpatient setting provides. The program is also for those who have been inpatients and need structured, intensive therapy after discharge from the hospital. Participants return home during the evening and weekends.

Partial hospitalization offers five hours of

daily therapy, Monday through Friday, via a structured, goal-oriented setting. Various types of therapy are used, such as group psychotherapy and education groups. The goal is to improve interpersonal skills, manage symptoms and improve coping skills to help the participant return to daily life. Family members are encouraged to participate in the therapy.

The treatment team includes a psychiatrist, a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, social workers, counselors, registered nurses, behavioral health techs and pastoral care. Jonathan Colen, DO, is the medical director.

Referrals to the partial hospitalization program can be made by physicians, health professionals, social service agencies, families or the person needing the care. Prior to admission, the staff will do a screening and develop a personalized plan of care. For additional information on the partial hospitalization program, call 217-479-5646. ♦

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# Charged with a DUI? Know your rights.

BY TOM PAVLIK

Being pulled over and finding yourself charged by the police with drunk driving can be a horrible end to an otherwise fun evening. Although there is no excuse to drive while intoxicated, it can happen to anyone. All it takes is a momentary lapse in judgment.

What, then, are your rights and what should you do if you are ever charged with driving while intoxicated – often referred to as DUI, or DWI in states other than Illinois?

First, let's talk about the basics. Driving under the influence is defined as operating a motor vehicle while impaired by alcohol or other drugs, including cannabis (marijuana) prescribed for medical purposes, or intoxicating compounds. In Illinois, drivers are legally considered to be under the influence if they have a blood-alcohol content (BAC) of .08 or more, a tetrahydrocannabinol (cannabis) concentration (THC) of either 5 nanograms or more per milliliter of whole blood or 10 nanograms or more per milliliter of other bodily substance, or have used any other controlled substance or are impaired by medication. The law regarding cannabis currently permits persons to have a specific amount of that drug in their system. In the past, cannabis was handled like cocaine, methamphetamine or heroin, with any amount of the substance being considered under the influence if operating a motor vehicle. In addition, an individual with a BAC between .05 and .08 may be convicted of DUI if additional evidence shows the driver was impaired. By far the most common scenario involves alcohol, and that's what this article will concentrate on.

I'm going to assume that we all know the type of driving behavior that will result in a

stop. Assume, then, that you have drawn the attention of a law enforcement officer and are stopped for suspicion of drunk driving. What should you do?

First, you need to know that you don't have to answer any incriminating questions. Feel free to say that you want to speak to an attorney before answering any questions. On the other hand, if you have had just one beer, it's probably best to tell the officer that's why you smell like alcohol.

Typically, the officer will ask you to perform a field sobriety test (FST) at the scene.

Examples include the heel-to-toe test, the one leg stand, and horizontal gaze nystagmus. Whether you pass such a test is left to the officer's subjective judgment, with the officer tallying points for things done incorrectly on the individual test. Accordingly, because there is no law that requires you to perform an FST, you might want to politely decline. Remember, the results of the FST and video of your performance may be used against you in court.

On the other hand, there are laws that require you to submit to either blood or breath tests. If you refuse the officer's request to take

such a chemical test, then Illinois law requires that your license be suspended for a minimum of 12 months if a first-time offender and maximum of 36 months if not a first-time offender – even if you were sober and would have passed the test. This is called “statutory summary suspension.” A first-time offender is automatically enrolled in the Monitoring Device Driving Permit (MDDP) program so that you can drive during the statutory summary suspension, subject to periodic monitoring through a device located in the car and paying the fees and costs associated with the program.

Statutory summary suspensions may be challenged for a whole host of reasons. There is a well-developed body of law in this area, and it's entirely possible that your fact

situation may result in the suspension being dismissed. Consult with an attorney well-versed in this area of the law.

The statutory suspension process is just one aspect of the legal problems that drunk drivers face. The other facet involves the actual criminal charge. If you are convicted of driving under the influence, your license will be revoked for one year, and for five years if due to a second offense committed within a 20-year period. Things get much worse for three-time

offenders – a 10-year revocation. It is possible to get a so-called restricted driving permit that allows limited driving for employment, education or medical care. The likelihood of receiving this permit, and the restrictions imposed, depend on your previous driving record and the undue hardship that is being imposed on the individual.

Regarding the actual criminal charge, conventional wisdom suggests that it's harder for the state to obtain a conviction if the suspected driver refuses a chemical test. By the same token, it's also easier for the state to convict you if you tell the officer how long you have been drinking or how many drinks you consumed. But let's say that you decide to submit to a test. You may be offered the choice between a blood test and a breath test (note that the arresting officer doesn't have to provide you a choice). That same conventional wisdom holds that a breath test is less reliable than a blood test. Moreover, unlike a blood test, no samples are preserved with a breath test. The list of potential issues with breath tests is quite lengthy. Again, it's best to consult with an experienced attorney to see if your breathalyzer tests may be subject to challenge.

Drunk driving is a serious matter – serious in the damage it may cause to you and others and serious in terms of the potential legal repercussions. The best defense is not to get behind the wheel after consuming alcohol. But, if your judgment somehow fails you, don't forget that it may be in your best interest to exercise your legal right to not incriminate yourself. ♦

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# Ansar Shrine Circus benefits local children

BY JANET SEITZ

Sometimes life seems like a three-ring circus. But a real three-ring circus, such as the November Ansar Shrine Circus in Springfield, can offer family fun and provide some stability in the life of a child and family.

"We are known for our funny little hats, our little cars and our clowns, but all of that has a greater purpose," said Rusty Petty, a Shriner since 2012. "Every time you see a Shriner, whether it be in a parade, a dinner or a fundraiser, they are working to not only raise money but to bring awareness to our amazing hospital system. Shriners are a hard-working group ranging from politicians and doctors to mechanics and farmers who come together for a common goal, and that is our hospitals."

Potentate Rich Smith is the head officer for Ansar, one of five Shriners centers in Illinois and part of nearly 200 internationally. Smith explained the charitable fraternity is dedicated to the care of children suffering from burns, orthopedic problems, metabolic bone diseases, spinal problems and cleft lip and palate. "Our hospitals provide the best care available in these areas, regardless of the parents' ability to pay."

Ansar has a membership of more than 2,800 people, spanning central Illinois from Quincy and Pittsfield in the west to Paris and Danville in the east. Smith noted in this large area they have 20 clubs splitting the territory into geographical segments, and within these clubs, have 28 parading units.

The often-heard circus call, "Step right this way folks!" delights children and adults alike. Yet, for some children, just taking a step can be a challenge.

Meghan Tippy of Pawnee said, "Someone once told me that miracles almost never happen all at once. Rather, they happen in tiny increments, one small step at a time." She is witness to that statement. Her daughter, Breanna, was diagnosed in 2012 at age two with hydrocephalus, a condition in which fluid accumulates in the brain, and cerebral palsy, from the resulting pressure. At the time of her diagnosis, Tippy recalled, Breanna could not use her legs at all and army-crawled, dragging her legs behind her. They were referred to Shriners Hospital in St. Louis for assessing and treating her gross motor delay and mobility impairment.

"The patient experience at Shriners was immeasurably better than typical doctor appointments," said Tippy. In a few hours, they saw a variety of medical personnel, therapists specializing in cerebral palsy-related disorders and an on-site orthotics clinic. "It gave me a lot of confidence that her medical and mobility needs would be comprehensively evaluated, covered and monitored."

Breanna has been receiving orthotics annually for six years from Shriners. They work with her local physical therapists and have provided a wide variety of braces as she has grown and developed strength and balance, contributing to her success and

taking unassisted, independent steps this year. While Breanna relies primarily on a walker instead of a wheelchair at school, she can now stand independently for several minutes at a time and continues to develop strength and endurance. "I credit Shriners with a large part of Breanna's miracle story," said her mother. Now eight years old, Breanna is a favorite with the Shriners clowns, according to Tippy.

"As Shriners, we work 362 days a year to raise funds and to bring awareness to our hospitals," said Petty. "The circus is three days that we work to support ourselves and our local clubs and units. We use this money for administrative costs, club and unit insurance, and operating expenses so that our Shriners can continue to go out and support the hospitals. The circus is our continued way of saying thank you to central Illinois for their years of supporting us."

More than 1.3 million patients have been treated since the first Shriners hospital opened in 1922, treating more than 130,000 patients annually. The number for Ansar is much larger, said Petty, but in the greater Springfield area they send between 130-150 patients down to the St. Louis hospital each year.

Alex Rabin is a Springfield attorney who serves as chairman of the board of governors of the St. Louis Hospital and the first Ansar Shriner to enjoy the privilege of being chairman. Rabin said, "Seeing the impact that Shriners has on children's lives is our reward. Spending time around the patients and families is amazing, heartwarming and inspiring. Shriners Hospitals for Children—St. Louis has a deep connection to central Illinois... The Shriners are dedicated to making these miracles happen for children."

For more information on the upcoming circus, visit <http://ansar-shrine.com/shrine-circus/>.

Janet Seitz is a local communications professional, writer and artist. To share your story, contact her at [janetseitz1@gmail.com](mailto:janetseitz1@gmail.com).



Breanna and her family at the circus.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANSAR SHRINE



The Ansar Shrine clowns welcome Breanna to the circus.

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# Anchors Away sets sail for seafood

BY TOM PAVLIK

I love seafood, and I love Cajun food. However, I've always been of the theory that the farther away that I get from the ocean, or New Orleans, the less motivated I am to try a restaurant in this genre. And let's be frank – we're a long way from both. But as I've gotten older, I've tried to keep a more open mind. So I threw caution to the wind and decided to give Anchors Away a few tries.

Anchors Away is located in the former Norb Andy's space on Capitol Avenue between Fifth and Sixth Streets. Now Norb Andy's was, décor wise, getting a little tired and long in the tooth. So I was particularly pleased to see that the new proprietors had given the space a make-over. It still has the low ceilings (kind of makes you think you're in the fo'c'sle of a schooner from days gone by), dark wood and fireplace. But, to my eye, the bones of the space had all been upgraded. As you might expect, given that it's primarily a seafood place, Anchors Away kept, and even amplified, the nautical-themed décor but also upgraded to some nice TVs for visitors who want to make it a game day destination. We also like that each table gets a fresh piece of paper as a covering – which really fits in with the seafood theme.

This isn't a huge place, but it's cozy and inviting. The bar, which has a big footprint, is also available for dining or for sampling Anchors Away's specialty cocktails. Next time I'm there, I plan to try the Shark Tank. No idea what's in it, but it comes with a Swedish fish – enough to get me on board.

I've tried Anchors Away twice now – once with a client who took me and once for lunch with a co-worker. So I've had the opportunity to explore its menu in a way a pure lunch diner might not.

And why's that? Because Anchors Away really has two menus – the seafood boil and the more traditional signature dishes. And, as I'll describe in a moment, the seafood boil might be a hard one to tackle at lunch.

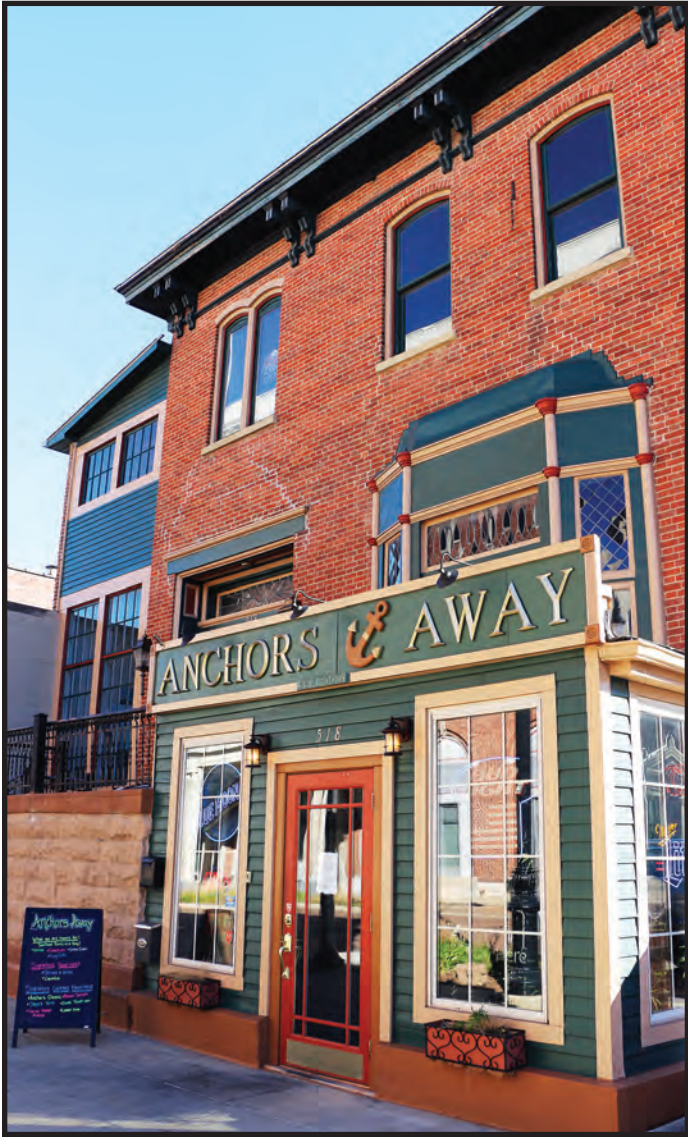
The seafood boil consists of four steps. First, pick your protein (shrimp, mussels, lobster, crawfish or crab). Second, pick your add-ons (corn, potatoes or sausage). Third, pick your seasoning (there are a variety available, but Anchors Away's own blend seems quite popular). Finally, pick your heat level. The add-ons run from \$1.50 to \$3. The crawfish and crab are sold for market rate (\$12.99 for the crawfish to \$44 for the King Crab) while the other proteins run from \$8.99 to \$15.99. As you can imagine, it's a ton of food and a bit of a mess to eat, so don't be shy about putting on the bib that's provided. It's marvelous, but

perhaps not suited for lunch. I'm somewhat of a crawfish snob, and this was some of the best I've had outside of Louisiana and Texas. Don't

Also, Anchors Away has daily specials – the day we visited at lunch it was the po boy (shrimp, oysters or catfish), fries and a drink for \$8.50.

It seemed quite popular with my fellow

other hand, the okra was excellent and everything tasted fresh. Given the quality of Anchor Away's other offerings, I'm of the impression that this version was an anomaly.



Anchors Away is docked on Capitol Avenue between Fifth and Sixth streets.

be afraid to ask for some amped-up heat and make sure to “suck the head” – that's where all the flavor resides.

For those unable or unwilling to tuck into a seafood boil, Anchors Away has you covered. Smaller baskets of shrimp, oysters, fish or lobster are available and come with fries (\$10.99 to \$15.99). There's also barbecue shrimp (a New Orleans' classic, \$10.99, with white rice), shrimp and grits (\$10.99), blackened catfish (\$12.99), and crawfish etouffee (\$10.99). A variety of wings, a pasta and a burger are available for the more terrestrial-minded, and for something green there's the solitary side salad.

looked like a proprietary seasoning that gave them just the right pop. But it was the shrimp itself that stood out. First, they weren't overly coated or battered. Anchors Away allowed the well-seasoned shrimp to stand out. And second, they weren't overcooked and rubbery. Anchors Away nailed this one.

The gumbo (with shrimp, sausage and sirloin) was good but didn't overly excite me. I know there are as many variations of gumbo as there are stars in the sky, but the one constant is a good roux and a depth of flavor. This one was a bit flat in terms of flavor, and I'm not sure the addition of the sirloin added much. On the



Anchors Away's Cajun Shrimp Pasta reels it in.

PHOTOS BY STACIE LEWIS

diners during our lunch visit.

We decided to go with the shrimp basket with choice of regular or garlic fries (\$11.99) and the gumbo served over white rice (\$10.99). The shrimp basket was generously sized for the price. The fries themselves (we went with the regular version) were lightly dusted with what

Service was downright friendly and helpful. I even overheard a server giving some helpful tips to an older couple who had come in from out of town on how to best enjoy our city.

This is a restaurant worth supporting but that might not be on your culinary radar. Give it a shot and let us know what you think. ♦

## ANCHORS AWAY

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Phone: (217) 679-0166

Hours: Monday – 11 am to 9 pm,

Friday - Saturday 11 am to 10 pm, Closed Sunday

Wheelchair Access: Yes

Credit Cards: Yes

Website: [www.anchorsawayil.com](http://www.anchorsawayil.com)

Atmosphere: ★★★★★  
(but expect to smell a bit like fried food)

Service: ★★★★★

Food: ★★★★★

Price: ★★★★★

Suitability for business lunch: ★★★★★

OVERALL: ★★★★★

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