Meet Dr. Charles Champion, a Memphis institution for 50 years.
Fridays & Saturdays in December*
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PICK A PRESENT TO WIN!
10 winners at each time will win Cash, Free Play, Gift Cards, or Memphis Grizzlies tickets.

Just use your Lucky North Club Players Card to play!

*Excludes December 28 & 29

$25,000 HOLIDAY CASH GIVEAWAY
Sunday, December 16
4pm-8:30pm

Five winners every 30 minutes will win $500 CASH!

Receive a Holiday Cash Giveaway entry for every 50 points earned from 8am-8:30pm

TOYS for TOTS DONATION
December 1 - 15

Help bring joy this holiday season by donating to Toys for Tots.

Receive one drawing ticket for every 100 points or $1 you donate.

$2,000 cash drawings December 15, at 9pm 20 winners drawn to win $100 CASH!
In 2008, Memphis voters overwhelmingly passed a referendum that limited city office-holders — including city council and the mayor — to two four-year terms. In that same election, voters also overwhelmingly passed a measure to institute instant runoff (ranked choice) voting in future elections.

Earlier this year, the current council, some of them looking at looming term limits, decided to try and end-run the voters’ will by putting three confusingly worded referenda on the November ballot that would have, if passed, extended term limits and eliminated instant runoff voting.

Thankfully, in the November election, voters saw through the power grab and overwhelmingly crushed the council’s attempt to deceive the public, reaffirming that they wanted to keep two-term limits and instant runoff voting.

But the council wasn’t through with its shenanigans. In the August county elections, three term-limited council members — Janis Fullilove, Edmund Ford Jr., and Bill Morrison — ran for county offices and won, leaving three seats on the 13-member council to be filled. The ethical thing for them to have done at that point would have been to resign their council seats, giving voters in those three districts a chance to select their new council representatives in the then-forthcoming November election.

But nooooooo. All three councilmembers chose to take the full 90-day period allowed by law for them to resign. This meant two things. All three office-holders would draw two salaries for 90 days ( Sweet!), and their replacements would be selected by the remaining council members, rather than by the voters in their districts.

Morrison, of District 1, was the first to resign, and last Tuesday, the council tried to fill his seat, needing votes from seven of the 12 remaining members in order to do it. After several hours and dozens of votes, they gave up and decided to try again next Tuesday, December 4th. The six black council members, minus council Chairman Berlin Boyd, supported Rhonda Logan, a Raleigh community activist. The white male country club caucus favored a fellow named Lonnie Treadaway — and therein lies a bit of a mystery.

If you haven’t heard of Treadaway, there’s a reason: He just moved here. He bought a house in District 1 in July, after moving from Senatobia, Mississippi, where, as recently as May 2017, he ran unsuccessfully as a Republican for alderman.

District 1 is a majority-black area comprised primarily of Raleigh and Berclair. The city of Memphis is two-thirds African-American and votes heavily Democratic. So why would anyone think a white Republican who moved to town five months ago from Mississippi would be a suitable representative on the Memphis City Council? Precisely because he’s a white Republican would be the correct answer. And if you think Treadaway moved into the less-than-luxe Raleigh neighborhood for any other reason than to try to fill a soon-to-be-vacant council seat, I’ve got a good deal on a storefront lease in Raleigh Springs Mall for you. The Treadaway gambit was in the works way before last Tuesday’s vote.

Next Tuesday, it gets even more interesting, as the resignations of Fullilove and Ford will be in effect, leaving just 10 council members to pick three vacant seats. Obtaining the needed seven votes on anything from these folks will involve serious deal-making. Will Treadaway win a seat in next week’s council poker game? Who knows? I wouldn’t be shocked. If I lived in District 1, I would be outraged.

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I do know this: Democracy isn’t supposed to work like this. Incumbents aren’t supposed to be able to appoint their friends to public office. City council members shouldn’t gain office as the result of deal-making between their soon-to-be colleagues. Elected officials are supposed to be — wait for it — elected. ■

Bruce VanWygarden
bruce@memphisflyer.com
History and Holiday Fun are in The House!

Don’t miss the Grand Re-Opening of the Pink Palace Mansion December 8th.

The Pink Palace Mansion opening day is right around the corner! Get ready to step through the mansion doors and step back in time. Experience the history of the mansion and its founder Clarence Saunders like never before. From polar bear to Piggly Wiggly to shrunken founder Clarence Saunders like never before. Visit memphismuseums.org or call 901.636.2362 for more information.

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VERBATIM
“Dang, it’s Thanksgiving. There’s people in Subway with their families, you know? Don’t be running around naked.” — witness to a Thanksgiving Day incident on Summer Avenue involving a mentally ill man and a bag of potato chips. As reported by Fox 13.

HALLMARK
“Most Hallmark movies don’t take place in actual cities. Most Hallmark movies take place in Christmas landscape paintings; some blandly cheery small town with a cutesy name like Evergreen or Snowy Falls or Kringleville or Snugglytown.” — Matt Mueller, culture editor for OnMilwaukee.com. He gave the Memphis-shot flick a score of “bless its heart.”

Fly on the Wall
NEVERENDING ELVIS
The web show “Good Mythical Morning” has been in Memphis visiting St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, sampling barbecue, comparing beans, and ranking stuff like you do on the internet.

One segment, titled “We About to Stuff Our Face-land Up in Graceland,” found co-hosts Rhett McLaughlin and Link Neal sampling the King’s favorite dishes. They were surprised Elvis’ infamous bacon-fried peanut-butter-and-banana sandwich contained no actual bacon. They also tried fried green tomatoes, banana pudding, Chicken à la King, and a fruit-and-nut-laden jello-mold called Pepsi Cola salad.

Wiseacre expands, state investigations, & looking to Rust Hall.

BIGGER BEER
Wiseacre Brewing Co. announced plans last week to build a new, bigger brewery with a taproom and an attached kitchen on vacant lots near the South Main Arts District. The company wants to build a new facility on 2.5 acres of land around B.B. King and Vance. The 40,000 square-foot facility will be for an 80,000-barrel production brewery. Wiseacre reached capacity at its original Broad Avenue location more than two years ago, said Wiseacre co-founder Kellan Bartosch, just three years after it opened.

Construction on the new building is set to begin in winter of 2018.

TBI INVESTIGATIONS
Tennessee Bureau of Investigations (TBI) officials told a Memphis City Council committee last week that the agency is concerned about the amount of personnel it would require to investigate all officer-involved shootings in Shelby County.

City and county leaders started a push for TBI investigations into the shootings after Martavious Banks was shot and critically injured by Memphis police officers here in September. The officer who shot Banks turned off his body camera.

Jimmy Musice, attorney and policy adviser for TBI, said the bureau has limited resources and that other small Tennessee counties could lose some of those resources if TBI investigated all officer-involved shootings here.

The policy in place now only requires that TBI be asked to step in to investigate officer-involved shootings that result in death. Shelby County District Attorney General Amy Weirich, Shelby County Sheriff Floyd Bonner Jr., and Memphis Police Department Director Michael Rallings said that policy is working.

METAL MUSEUM LOOKS TO RUST HALL
Metal Museum leaders are looking to expand the museum to Memphis College of Art’s (MCA) Rust Hall in Overton Park in a $45 million proposed project.

MCA officials announced in October 2017 the school would close by 2020. Earlier this year, city leaders launched Project Overton Park to envision the future for Rust Hall and the Brooks Museum of Art, as its leaders eye a move to a new location on the Memphis riverfront.

Carissa Hussong, the Metal Museum’s executive director, said when the city issues a request for proposals for Rust Hall, the museum intends to submit an application. The museum would keep its French Fort location on the river for artist-in-residency programs. Rust Hall would be the site of the museum’s exhibition spaces, metalworking facilities with apprentices, commissions, and repairs, and an expanded education program, Hussong said.

NUCLEAR OPTION
Dave Freeman, the former chairman for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), and former Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW) president Herman Morris Jr. spoke out last week against a proposal for Memphis to switch to a nuclear power source.

A representative from the group Nuclear Development LLC — the group working to revive an old TVA nuclear power plant in Alabama — told the council last month that the switch could save Memphis around $500 million a year.

But Freeman and Morris told leaders here they have “grave concerns” about the plan.

“This plant is so outdated that even TVA couldn’t complete [the plant] after a half of century of trying,” the two wrote in a letter.

Fuller versions of these stories and more local news can be found on The News Blog at memphisflyer.com.

By Chris Davis. Email him at davis@memphisflyer.com.
Memphis Holiday Parade

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FAMOUS BEALE STREET!
See elementary & high school bands,
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parade in Memphis!

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In the days following the meeting, Memphians turned to social media to express their disdain over the situation, saying that Logan, who’s been involved in the district for over 20 years, is the most qualified. While, Treadaway, a Mississippi transplant who has only lived in Memphis since July, has no roots in the community.

Scott Banbury, a Memphis activist, said Logan is the “obvious choice” to represent Raleigh in a Wednesday Facebook post.

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Desi Franklin, another Memphis activist, said Tuesday’s votes demonstrate the council’s intentions to appoint their associates to the council.

“This is your Memphis City Council,” Franklin wrote. “So, this plan to hand off council appointments to friends of council members, instead of letting the voters elect their own council members, is now even more obviously nothing but a bunch of shenanigans — by a council that can’t even execute their shenanigans.”

Similarly, Charlie Caswell, a pastor at The House Memphis in Raleigh, claims the council is seeking to enhance their own personal agenda “at the expense of an entire district.”

“Last night was truly a hot mess, largely because of the lack of leadership from Berlin Boyd, who was a disgrace,” Caswell said. "On December 4th at 3:30 p.m., we need every citizen to join us at city hall to stand up against the foolishness they call politics and demand the will of the people and not a few who are only benefiting themselves.”

Throughout the rounds of voting Tuesday, Logan repeatedly received six votes — one shy of winning. While Treadaway averaged about three votes.

Supporters of Logan were council members Jamita Swearengen, Martavious Jones, Patrice Robinson, Joe Brown, Edmund Ford Jr., and Janis Fullilove.

Council members Worth Morgan, Frank Colvett Jr., J. Ford Canale, Reid Hedgepeth, and — on a handful of occasions — Boyd supported Treadaway.

Nine hours in, despite objections, Boyd’s fourth motion to recess the meeting and the vote until the council’s next meeting passed.

Boyd’s earlier attempts to delay the vote were referred to as “corruptible” by Brown. That sentiment was echoed by Swearengen, who said that holding the vote means two supporters of Logan, Fullilove and Ford, won’t get to vote, as their resignations became official last week.

Now, a 10-member council will vote on the District 1 appointee at its December 4th meeting, and activists like Caswell are asking the public to show up and voice their opinion.

Criticism is rising on the Memphis City Council’s failure to fill the vacant District 1 seat. With more than 100 rounds of voting, the meeting stretched into the early hours of last Wednesday morning, as the council stood deadlocked on the top two vote-getters from earlier rounds: Rhonda Logan, executive director of the Raleigh Community Development Corp., and Lonnie Treadaway, sales manager for Flinn Broadcasting Corp.

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Your generosity makes an immediate impact on someone’s health.

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On Tuesday, November 20th, when the Memphis City Council began to vote on a replacement for B.B. Morrison, the District 1 councilman elected on August 2nd to serve as Probate Court clerk, the racial distribution on the council effectively shifted from a 7-6 African-American majority to one, for voting purposes, of 7-5.

Hold on to that fact for a few paragraphs of background.

Though the population of District 1 is a black-majority one, voting habits have made that gap more or less marginal, and Morrison, a white educator, had little trouble winning reelection since his first win in 2007, that one stemming from a runoff victory over Stephanie Gatewood, an African-American candidate.

Given the district’s ambivalent demographic factors, it is hard to argue that a “gentleman’s-agreement” circumstance should have mandated a white-for-white replacement in the appointment process. It would be just as easy, if not easier, to suggest that District 1’s majority-black status calls for a credentialed African-American candidate to serve on an interim basis until next October’s regular election process can account for the election of someone to serve a full four-year term.

The elephant in this room is that special replacement elections on the regular November ballot, at negligible cost to taxpayers, could have been facilitated by the timely resignations of Morrison and two other council members who won elections to county positions in the August 2nd general election — District 8, Position 2 Council member Janis Fullilove, now Juvenile Court clerk, and District 6 member Edmund Ford Jr., now a member of the Shelby County Commission.

For whatever reason, all three county election victors chose to push their council incumbencies to the maximum 90-day post-election limit permitted by the city charter, thereby stifling the prospect of their replacement by constituent voters in November and making necessary an appointment process overseen by the remaining council members — already under suspicion, here and there, of tendencies toward bloc voting and collusion.

A note thereto: Current Chair Berlin Boyd, an African American, has earned a reputation for siding consistently with the business-friendly, development-minded council bloc largely made up of the body’s white members.

Indeed, such votes go more toward defining Boyd’s profile than racial factors do, and he was the target of barbs from other black council members last Tuesday when he declined to add his vote, which would have been the seventh and deciding one, to the total acquired, over and over in the council’s more than 100 separate tallies, by District 1 applicant Rhonda Logan.

Consequently, Logan, president of the Raleigh Community Development Corporation and an African American, was unable to win a majority, while her main opponent, Flinn Broadcasting executive Lonnie Treadaway, a white man, topped out at a maximum of five votes from white council members and, upon occasion, one from Boyd.

And now, with a new council vote...
continued from page 9

scheduled for December 4th to fill the Morrison vacancy and Fulilove’s and Ford’s as well, that 7 to 5 ratio in which Boyd’s could have been the deciding vote is no more. The new arithmetic will be 5-5, an even ratio suggesting that, if the white and black members of the council continue to vote as racial blocs (as, for all practical purposes, they did last week), they will, in theory, have an equal chance of prevailing.

The fact is, though, that two of Logan’s votes — those of Fulilove and Ford — will be gone, while all of Treadaway’s previous votes will still presumably be available, and there is no reason to suppose that his candidacy is anything but live and well.

It is fair to say that eyebrows were raised by Treadaway’s bid, given the well-publicized fact that Treadaway ran for an aldermanic position last year in Senatobia, Mississippi (“a community that all would be proud to call home,” his campaign literature proclaimed, along with the statement of fact that he had lived in that city’s Ward 4 for 16 years).

It is also fair to say that a cloud of suspicion for the origin of Treadaway’s ambition immediately fell upon Flinn Broadcasting general counsel Shea Flinn, a former councilman who later became a prominent Chamber of Commerce executive and promoter of various strategies to accelerate the economic growth of the Memphis community.

Flinn makes no secret of his confidence in the abilities and sense of purpose of Treadaway, Flinn Broadcasting’s national sales manager for many years (“Yeah, I support him”) but disclaims any responsibility for his council bid.

“T’m trying to live a Christian life. I’m steering clear of politics,” protests Flinn, a family man with children who also helped the economic growth of the Memphis community. He and other supporters of Treadaway note that their man has worked in Memphis for at least 20 years, now indisputably lives in District 1, and, they say, has a keen desire to serve the community.

Much the same is proclaimed by supporters of Logan, whose website describes her as a “community developer” and quotes her as saying, “My life’s work is devoted to counseling, advocacy, & help.”

For the record, she, like Treadaway, is a transplant to District 1, having lived much of her life elsewhere, though in the city of Memphis.

There’s no law of nature saying that the contest for District 1 must be restricted to one of Treadaway versus Logan, though those were the lines that held through multiple hours of balloting last Tuesday night.

Flinn offers the thought that the balance of forces on December 4th, when the council will try again, to select representatives for three council seats, not just one, will enforcing the necessity for compromise, since neither side will be able to impose its will without enticing votes from the other side.

Given the demographics of the three districts in question, the question will likely turn on whether three new African-American members will be named, creating an 8 to 5 black majority on the council, or two African Americans plus one new white member, which would keep the present ratio intact.

In the long run, meaning by next October’s city general election, the same issue will be up for resolution again. That is, if the council meanwhile is able to name anyone at all to fill the three vacancies. Some observers are already imagining scenarios emerging from the current deadlock that will result in a special called election, after all — one that the taxpayers will be on the hook for, and one that may decide whether the city is governed by an economic vanguard or anew, from the grass roots.

THE COUNCIL DEADLOCK By Jackson Baker

COMMENTS by Greg Cravens
Now that the election is over, let us get back to important things like comparing Memphis/Shelby County to Nashville/Davidson County.

We have the news that Nashville is getting a piece of the Amazon pie, 5,000 high-paying jobs. It comes at a high taxpayer price but is probably worth it. Why Nashville and not Memphis?

Comparing Nashville to Memphis has been a project for me for some time. It is not easy to go through all the published financial data and come up with understandable comparison data. However, let us start with a few facts.

Population: Shelby County: 936,961; Davidson County: 691,243;
Population of the core city: Memphis 653,236; Nashville 444,297
Area: Shelby County: 755 square miles; Davidson County: 525 square miles.
Area of the core city: Memphis, 324 square miles; Urban Nashville, 198 square miles. This means the population density of core city Memphis is 2,016 people per square mile, while the population density of core city Nashville is 2,243 people per square mile.

Memphis’ property tax revenue was $458,671,000 and Shelby County's tax revenue was $793,849,000, for a total of $1,252,520,000 or $1.25 billion. Property tax revenue for Nashville Metro was nearly $1 billion dollars: $971,643,000.

The budget of Memphis and Shelby County is $1.88 billion, while the budget of Metro Nashville is $2.23 billion. Budget expenditures per resident for Memphis and Shelby County were $2,006; in Metro Davidson, expenditure per resident was $2,226.

A more concise budgetary measure is called the Statement of Net Position, which presents information on all of a government's assets, deferred outflows of resources, liabilities, and deferred inflows of resources, with the difference reported as net position. Over time, increases or decreases in net position may serve as a useful indicator of whether the financial position of the government is improving or deteriorating.

Metro Nashville’s net position decreased by $266 million for the year ending 2017. The city of Memphis’ net position decreased by $58 million for the same year.

Metro Nashville’s net position decreased by $266 million for the year ending 2017. The city of Memphis’ net position decreased by $58 million for the same year. Memphis needs to compete in the area of technical job training and skills that are needed in the next few years in manufacturing, healthcare, auto and aircraft maintenance, warehousing, and transportation.

Our new governor has promised to continue free junior college training (“Tennessee Promise”), and hopefully he will allow qualified nonprofits like our local Moore Tech College to participate in the Tennessee Promise program.

Our local shortage of trained people needed by companies like Amazon will not be solved in a few years. But while we upgrade our primary grade education, we need to emphasize trade school education to upgrade our local working wage level and reduce our comparative high poverty level.

Memphis is great, but we can make it grow and prosper with the right education policies. Education is the answer to luring companies to Memphis that need a highly skilled workforce.

Comparing Nashville to Memphis is great, but we can make it grow and prosper with the right education policies. Education is the answer to luring companies to Memphis that need a highly skilled workforce.

Joe Saino is the proprietor of memphissHELBYinform.com, a website devoted to local economic watchdogging.
THE PEOPLE'S CHAMPION

MEET DR. CHARLES CHAMPION, A MEMPHIS INSTITUTION FOR 50 YEARS.

Opaque lenses hide eyes that, for the last four years, have been able to make out only faint light. The man in the glasses, wearing a white coat embroidered with "Dr. Charles A. Champion," sits in a green chair in Champion’s Pharmacy and Herb Store on Elvis Presley Boulevard. Champion is 88 years old, but still has his wits about him.

His wife of 60 years, Carolyn Champion, is sitting to his right. His cane, a stack of newspapers, and a plastic bucket of peppermints are on his left. Trusting his ears and gentle nudges from his wife, he gives one of each to everyone who walks by. Champion is the owner of the South Memphis pharmacy and has been there every day (Tuesday through Saturday) since 1991. But his pharmacy, which was originally located at Third and Mallory, has been open since 1981.

Champion hasn’t always sat in the front of his store greeting customers. That started when he began losing his eyesight in 2015.

GONE DARK

"It started right after my daughter, who also worked here, died," Champion says. "I remember it was May 2015, and I was supposed to go to Oxford to give a speech, but my eyesight started weakening and I had to cancel. Ever since then it’s been declining."

Now, he says, he’s still able to get around familiar spaces like his house and his shop by relying on memory. With his wife by his side and cane in hand, he has to be guided everywhere else he goes.

"Though he can no longer actively do the pharmaceutical work he’s done for over 60 years, Champion says the loss of his eyesight has been fairly easy to accept. "I see it as a plus.""

Before Champion lost his sight, he says he was always tied up making medicine in the back of the store and unable to spend time with customers. “Now I’m free,” he says. “I have papers and candy. I may not be able to do that over here, but I can spend my time doing this and make up for the situation.”

There are days when he misses working with medicine. “Of course, I miss being able to do what I’ve done for 60-plus years.” Sometimes Champion says he pops into the back of the store to help his pharmacist daughters, Charita Champion-Brookins and Carol Champion. He often dictates special recipes stored in his head as they make various concoctions, like one for lye soap. “I tell them what to do, or they get me a chair and I mix it myself,” he says.

Sitting in the shadow of a brimming ceiling-high bookshelf, Champion says he spent his former years reading about medicine and taking in information. Now, it’s all filed away in his brain and Champion says he has to depend on his memory, pointing to his head.

Outside of his office, black tri fold posters with healthy eating tips are on display near the front windows. Across the room, several plaques boasting Champion’s accomplishments line the wall above a counter that reads “counseling and privacy.” Friendly chatter and laughter echo through the room.

If not for the shelves of herbal teas, creams, tinctures, capsules, and powders, you could almost forget you’re in a pharmacy. The place has the feel of a community center, where everyone addresses each other by name, and hugs are par for the course.

Champion says he strives to make people feel at home when they come to his store, striking up conversations with customers about their families or hometowns, whether that be Chicago or Holly Springs, Mississippi. “You just don’t come in here and spend your money without me knowing who you are and where you come from,” he says. “It’s not unusual that I get into three or four deep conversations a day.”

Henry Milow, a customer for 20 years, rests near an old-fashioned popcorn-maker in the lobby. He’s talking with another customer about the benefits of sulfur. Milow is from Detroit, but comes to Champion’s Pharmacy “every time I can make it happen.” He visits Memphis often for his job at a trucking company, and when he does, he stops by a familiar place.

“You can feel the warmth here,” he says. “You know you don’t get that at a lot of places you go now. You just give them money and that’s it. But not here.

It’s different.”

When Milow first visited the store, on the advice of his sister, he says he was looking for something to help his allergies. “My sister told me to try some of Champion’s mixtures,” Milow says. "So I did and in a few days time I was good to go. Now, every time I come to Memphis I know one stop I have to make.”

Milow says he prefers Champion’s products because they are all natural. “You never know
what kind of chemicals you get with some of those synthesized medicines you get from other places. No matter what, they got some natural stuff back there for you or something they can mix together real quick."

**IN STOCK**

While Champion greets customers, his daughters do the heavy lifting, compounding and packaging medicine behind the counter. Unlike most other pharmacies, Champion’s doesn’t fill third-party prescriptions. Instead, they fuse modern medicine with herbal remedies, selling everything from house-made compounded drugs, like eczema ointments, garlic oil capsules, pine tar shampoo, and foot fungus spray.

The store also keeps a full stock of "old, hard to find over-the-counter medicine that old people want," Champion says. Like Father John’s cough medicine and Mutton Tallow used for moisturizing the skin.

"If anybody's got it in Memphis, Champion's got it," Champion says. "You would have to be old enough to even know about some of these products. As a generation of people die out, it's a shame that some of the products on the market will disappear, too."

As a master herbal compounder, Champion also makes almost two dozen of his own remedy kits, called Dr. Champion's Treatment Kits. There's one for kidney stones, body odor, gout, and even swollen testicles. "The list goes on and on," Champion says, but the most popular ailments that people seek homeopathic remedies for overall are migraines, anxiety, and libido issues.

Over the years, Champion says he's also treated a number of customers who were hooked on narcotics. He gives them herbs to help with the withdrawal process and sometimes CBD oils to help with pain. Since the country's ongoing opioid epidemic has been brought to the forefront, Champion says he's been seeing more and more patients who are dealing with addiction issues.

Champion says you can go anywhere in Memphis and pick up herbs, but there's an advantage to buying them from a pharmacist, noting proudly that his store is one of the only herb stores combined with a pharmacy in the state. "I have the knowledge, and I counsel patients," Champion says. "I've been doing that since the state of Tennessee started requiring it in the '80s."

Even now that it's mandated by law, Champion says most pharmacists only do the bare minimum, which is ask your name, birthdate, if you've taken the medicine before, and if you have any questions. But, Champion always asks a list of questions before giving customers anything. He points out myths about certain medications, discusses possible complications, and gives advice to help manage diseases better.

For example, he tells patients with diabetes that they should be on high fiber diets to help control their blood sugar levels. "A lot of people just don't know," Champion says. "And a lot of the time, the doctors and the other pharmacists might not take the time to tell you."

Champion says he also has to be aware of what's happening in the community around him. "When people come in, I ask them what ZIP code they live in to get a better idea of their lifestyle."

In the South Memphis ZIP codes surrounding Champion's store, he says food deserts are rampant, smoking is routine, and the life expectancy is around 60 years. Because of this, Champion says he often has to tell his customers the "hard stuff they don't want to hear" or have never heard before.

"I turn down more people than I serve," Champion says. "Just because you want a certain drug, it doesn't mean you need it. I have to be the one to look out for people. I won't give someone medicine just so they can continue living unhealthy."

Champion's Pharmacy hasn't always focused on herbal medicine. Champion says when he first opened, the pharmacy regularly filled private prescriptions through insurance companies, but he found it hard to make money that way and to, ultimately, stay afloat. That, compounded with a break-in and theft problem, led the family to discontinue filling those prescriptions. "Cold turkey," transitioning solely to herbal medicine 12 years ago.

Champion says he "zeroed in on" what he learned during his time at Xavier University, where he studied pharmacognosy, the study of medicinal drugs obtained from plants or other natural sources. Additionally, he used what he learned over the course of his 12 years working at the pharmacy in John Gaston Hospital — now known as Regional One Health.

**THE JOURNEY**

Born in Memphis and raised in the small Tennessee town of Greenfield, Champion says he didn't always want to be a pharmacist. When he first went to college in the 1950s at Tennessee State University, he went with his mind set on becoming a medical doctor.

"I had no knowledge of pharmacy or pharmacy school," he says. "I didn't even know where one was."

After seeing his grades as he struggled during his first year at TSU, he says he realized he "wasn't fit for that," so he looked for an alternative career path and landed at Xavier University Pharmacy School.

**continued on page 15**
COMING SOON TO MEMPHIS!

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“I enjoyed pharmacy school because it was something new,” Champion says. “I didn’t know anything about pharmacognosy, analytical chemistry, or biochemistry.”

Graduating pharmacy school in 1955, Champion says the draft was hanging over his head, as he searched for a job in his field. Failing to find one, Champion was drafted to be a United States Army pharmacist in Germany.

“I never thought much about it,” Champion says of his time in the Army. “After World War II, it was a basic obligation. I just went and did my time. It wasn’t so bad.”

Overseas, working at almost a dozen different camps and at a hospital making medicine for soldiers, Champion says he tried to get as much experience as possible, knowing he would have to find a job when he got home.

After his two-year tour of duty, he returned to the States and began to work in the John Gaston Hospital pharmacy, where he was the first professional African-American pharmacist to work in a Memphis hospital. Unlike Champion’s time in Germany, where he says he was “accepted by the people,” who trusted him to take care of them, back in Memphis at John Gaston racial tensions were alive.

Champion is married to the daughter of Walter and Lorrie Bailey, owners of the Lorraine Motel at the time Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated there. At the time, Champion was still working at John Gaston, which had no black doctors and where he received little support. Though never directly harassed, he says he started to feel uncomfortable. “It was hard for them to see a black man as a professional back then.”

It was a constant challenge being a black pharmacist in Memphis during the segregated 1960s, Champion says, recalling the meals he had to eat in a separate hospital, away from the white doctors. Champion says the doctors didn’t want to listen to him, even though “I, as an African American, can perform just like anyone else.”

“We’d be here until 10 the next morning if it rehashed everything [from the 1960s],” Champion says, with a chuckle. “I could go on and on talking about that.”

Growing up in Greenfield during the 1940s, Champion says he was used to being alienated because of his race. He says he just stayed in his place.

“For example, even as a pharmacist, I had sense enough not to walk in a drug store and ask for a drink from the soda fountain,” Champion says. “I just stayed in my place, and it’s paid off. It’s not that Icondemned it, I just worked through it.”

SOMETHING GREATER

After working 12 years at John Gaston, Champion began working at Katz drug store as the first African-American pharmacist to be hired by a chain store in the city.

All the while, he was soaking up knowledge. A decade and two years later, Champion took out a loan and opened Champion’s Pharmacy, the store he sits in today. Champion says he always wanted to venture out and “do his own thing.”

“T’ve always wanted to be in private practice,” Champion says. “Since I was in pharmacy school, I had been clipping information and saving it in a notebook. I’ve always been taking notes. I didn’t want to be in a position where people were always telling me what to do, so I had to become the boss.”

With the experience from each chapter of his journey — the army, John Gaston, and even his restaurant job at age 15, where he says he learned how to serve people, in a “little old country town flipping hamburgers,” Champion says he was ready.

“On the first day I opened, I filled more than 100 prescriptions,” he says. “And every day after that, we’ve been going steady.”

It’s been a full circle since the beginning of his career, Champion says, recalling how he’s served customers whose mothers he once gave iron pills to while they were in the maternity ward at John Gaston. “I was taking care of them before they were even born,” Champion says. “Just about every day, I have people come in and say ‘Hey, Dr. Champion, you remember me?’ or ‘I know you from so-and-so.’ I have a big following.”

Champion’s averages about 15,000 customers a year, most from Memphis. Carolyn Champion, her husband’s partner for more than 50 years, sits in the lobby answering the store phone, which is ringing off the hook. She says over the years she’s enjoyed watching the business grow, “starting from nothing to where we are now.”

“We’ve made enough to financially support our family,” she says. “It’s also just been a way of life for us. My children are here with us, and it’s home.”

Champion’s daughters will continue the business when he finally has to hang up the white coat, but until then, Champion has no intention of retiring.

“When you retire when you’re loving what you do?” Champion says. “When you retire, you die. You go home and you just sit.” Champion says he keeps his mind and body fresh so that he can continue to work and set a good example for his customers.

“I have to keep my body in motion,” Champion says, detailing his morning treadmill routine. “I cannot tell people to exercise if I’m not doing it myself. I have to keep my body in motion.”

Champion says because his customers are loyal, they keep him motivated to stick around. As if on cue, a customer calls out, “Hey, Champ, looking good!” as Champion feels his way back to his chair in the front of the store.
Never feel ruffled again.

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Feathers Spa at The Peabody provides the ultimate relaxation experience with services ranging from massage and facials to manicures and pedicures.

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Please order by December 7, 2018 to ensure your cards arrive before Christmas Day.

Pam McDonnell, Artist

Suggested donation $10
Shop Local

MIDTOWN

This holiday season, we’re encouraging our readers to support local businesses by shopping right here at home. Consider these Memphis-area establishments for your gift-giving needs.

Cooper-Young Gallery + Gift Shop
This locally owned shop celebrated its first anniversary in November. Offering a variety of items from local makers, including Texstyle Bags and products from ARCHd and Lindsey Glenn, you’re sure to find something Memphisy here. We especially like this pretty and practical mug designed by owner/artist Jenean Morrison ($15 or two for $25). Visit Cooper-Young Gallery + Gift Shop at cooperyoung.gallery or 889 South Cooper.

Maggie’s Pharm
Open in Overton Square since 1980, Maggie’s Pharm is Memphis’ quintessential purveyor of oils and herbs. Of course, the longstanding shop also stocks candles, cards, coffees, and jewelry, including variations of these beautiful earrings made locally by Insectsy (Rainbow Sunset Moth earrings pictured, $35). Visit Maggie’s Pharm at 13 Florence Street or maggiespharm.com.

Bingham & Broad
Located in the Broad Avenue Arts District, Bingham & Broad partners with local and regional artists to present a year-round makers market with everything from paintings and home decor to handmade jewelry and other unique items. These 901 tea towels ($16) by Statement Goods would be a great kitchen addition. Visit Bingham & Broad at 2563 Broad Avenue or binghamandbroad.com.

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FEATURE By Shara Clark

Anniversary

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Seeking 8 Actresses age 20 to 60+
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Rehearsals Begin late March
Performances May 3 – 5

AS SEEN ON
CHANNEL 13 NEWS

Enjoying the present, but anticipating the future.
Think about it. Would a high-profile
consideration of all factors
in high school
remember those backfires?
That decision
in high school
into that room, and we were split on the
to play another year in college?
when Penny Hardaway took the job as
now (again) wearing blue and gray.
Tiger coach. The young man's family
in the East auditorium. Best of all,
when Penny Hardaway took the job as
Williams — the incomparable Tiger running back — was
willing to announce he's leaving for greener
in his new hometown, during
one the seven-foot star made last week.
from the great LeBron James,
williams announced he was staying.
Wish Hardaway
ready to play professionally . . . but might
choice Williams would make. He was
of that room.

THE TIGERS
AND THE TIGER

When the Tigers tip off the 2019-
we all saw this coming
were no drama, no doubt. And the finest
in the East auditorium. Best of all,
when Penny Hardaway took the job as
williams announced he was staying.
Wish Hardaway
ready to play professionally . . . but might
choice Williams would make. He was
stood in a crowded media room at the University of Memphis Athletics Office Building in January 2005 awaiting a Decision. Certain announcements get the capital-letter treatment, and this was one of them. DeAngelo Williams — the incomparable Tiger running back — was to announce whether he would return to the U of M for his senior season or enter his name for the upcoming NFL draft. There were more than 100 people packed into that room, and we were split on the choice Williams would make. He was ready to play professionally . . . but might he want to play another year in college? Williams announced he was staying. To this day, the cheer that greeted that announcement is the loudest I've heard at a “sporting event” where no score was being kept. It was utter joy, magnified by each individual in that room.

James Wiseman’s Decision (yep, capital letter), announced last week in the auditorium at East High School, may prove to be as significant as the one Williams made almost 14 years ago. And the announcement — this time with a stuffed unicorn as part of the fun — elicited a massive roar from those in attendance (many of them longtime Tiger boosters). But there’s a significant difference between the Williams and Wiseman Decisions: There was no drama last week, no matter how much the ESPN crew and cameras craved it. We knew James Wiseman would play basketball at Memphis, not on November 20th, but on March 20th, when Penny Hardaway took the job as Tiger coach. The young man’s family moved here from Nashville to play for Hardaway in high school. That decision (lower case) was likely harder than the one the seven-foot star made last week.

Think about it. Would a high-profile local basketball prospect host a public gathering in his new hometown, during college basketball’s early signing period, to announce he’s leaving for greener pastures? If young hoop stars have learned nothing else from the great LeBron James, they’ve learned televised Decisions can backfire and damage a man’s reputation for years. Sure, there were four other logos — Wiseman’s “finalists” — displayed in the East auditorium. Best of all, Kentucky’s was on the board. But there was no drama, no doubt. And the finest tribute we can pay Penny Hardaway in his transformation of the Tiger program is that we all saw this coming.

When the Tigers tip off the 2019-20 season, 60 percent of Hardaway’s starting lineup may well be the same 60 percent that helped him win a 2017-18 Tennessee state championship at East. In addition to Wiseman, forward Malcolm Dandridge (a four-star recruit himself) is part of the 2019 Memphis recruiting class. Alex Lomax — a freshman at the U of M and once a Wichita State commit — is already starting for the Tigers. These are Penny’s players. They’ll wear blue and gray because Hardaway is now (again) wearing blue and gray. If the University of Memphis has ever realized so quick a return — and so game-changing a return — on an investment, it may have involved Keith Lee and a shoebox full of cash.

Rome wasn’t built in a day, and neither were Hardaway’s Memphis Tigers. The current team’s interior weakness was exposed during a 20-point loss to Oklahoma State in Orlando on Thanksgiving. Through six games — 20 percent of the regular season — Kyvon Davenport leads Memphis with a pedestrian 6.6 rebounds per game. The Tigers are in need of a player who can protect the rim on defense and attack it when they own the ball. Hmmm. I wonder where one of those might be found?

Wiseman’s announcement was no surprise. Nor should be the occasional stumble this season as a rookie coach gets to know a roster tasked with being, essentially, a preview of things to come. And that’s the first real challenge of the Coach Hardaway Era: accept present shortcomings as we await exceptional solutions.
steppin’ out

What gives you reason to hope?
The Last Word, p. 39

The Art Bar at Crosstown Concourse is cozy and creative.
Spirits, p. 33

FRIDAY November 30

A Christmas Carol
Theatre Memphis, 7 p.m., $35
Ghosts let Scrooge know what’s up in this classic Christmas Dickens tale.

Delight
Crosstown Concourse, 5-8 p.m.
The holiday lights, featuring some 7,500 bulbs, are lit today during this event featuring a giant Lite Brite, live music, a caricature artist, and hot cocoa. Stick around for Concourse’s open house, starting at 5 p.m.

Music of the Knights
Halloran Centre, 7:30 p.m., $45
Music from three legít knights — Andrew Lloyd Webber, Paul McCartney, and Elton John.

If Scrooge Was a Sistah
Hattiloo Theatre, 7:30 p.m., $35
A successful businesswoman with an uncharitable heart gets a lesson she won’t soon forget.

Taste of Hope
Children’s Museum of Memphis, 7-10 p.m., $65
A food-centric fund-raiser benefiting the American Cancer Society.

For Peter Pan on Her 70th Birthday
Playhouse on the Square, 8 p.m., $25
A woman faces getting old by focusing on never growing up.

SATURDAY December 1

Stumbling Santa Pub Crawl
Flying Saucer Draught Emporium, 7-11 p.m.
Join some 3,000 revelers in your best Christmas-related outfit on this annual Downtown pub crawl. Participants should bring cash or a new unwrapped educational toy for the kids of Porter-Leath.

Season of Wonder
Germantown Performing Arts Center, 7:30 p.m., $45-$70
A concert from the IRIS Orchestra and the U of M Chorus with festive music.

Old School By Chris Davis

Who is John Davidson? “My career has been very confusing,” the variety performer and network TV star allowed in a ranging conversation with the Flyer earlier this year. “Is John Davidson just a game host?” he asked rhetorically. “Is he just a singer? Or an actor?”
The answer, of course, is that the indefatigable Davidson, who’s bringing his solo act to BPACC, has been all these things — and something else. As a frequent stand-in for late-night talk pioneer Johnny Carson and longtime host of the celebrity-oriented game show Hollywood Squares, he performed alongside, interviewed, and learned from generations of legendary showpeople.

Davidson describes comedy icon and film star Bob Hope as a primary influence. “He was an early supporter of mine, and he was a total performer,” he says. “I was always attracted to people who knew how to tell a story with a song. … I’m sort of old school — you know, the performers that came on the scene in the ’50s and ’60s and before always thought of being multifaceted performers.”

An early manager told Davidson “don’t be a spear, be a pitchfork.” In other words, don’t do one thing, have “multiple points” of attack.

“The variety is what’s kept me going all these years,” says Davidson, a Broadway veteran who’s hosted beauty pageants, starred in Disney films, guested on countless TV shows, made records, and toured as a well-coiffed song-and-story man. “That’s the old-fashioned way of doing it,” he says.

JOHN DAVIDSON AT THE BARTLETT PERFORMING ARTS AND CONFERENCE CENTER, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH, 7:30 P.M. $40. WWW.BPACC.ORG

Taste of Hope
Children’s Museum of Memphis, 7-10 p.m., $65
A food-centric fund-raiser benefitting the American Cancer Society.

For Peter Pan on Her 70th Birthday
Playhouse on the Square, 8 p.m., $25
A woman faces getting old by focusing on never growing up.

Renaissance man
John Davidson

MEMPHIS FLYER
November 29–December 5, 2018

20
Dr. Strange  By Chris Davis

“Let me tell you, it almost never goes up the sleeve”: Veteran educator and practicing sleight-of-hand artist Lawrence Hass drops some information on the audience in a TEDx talk. The PhD and former professor is working toward a philosophical understanding of stage magic. He wonders how magic performance can be so ancient and universal without having ever been seriously addressed by Western philosophy.

Hass was professor of humanities at Austin College before moving to Memphis with his wife, Rhodes College President Dr. Marjorie Hass. In addition to academic duties, he’s been known to teach magic to magicians at Jeff McBride’s Magic & Mystery School in Las Vegas. In his TED talk, he works toward a sturdy definition that separates magic from the idea of “tricks.” He asks if techniques developed by magicians are somehow more manipulative, deceptive, or dishonest than any other kind of art or stagecraft. Magic, he ultimately determines, is “The artful performance of impossible things that generates energy, delight, and wonder.”

For Hass, who makes his Memphis debut at Beth Sholom Synagogue Saturday, December 1st, the live performance of stage magic constitutes a message of hope and transcendence. “As we live our lives, we constantly confront limits,” he says, listing the usual suspects: sickness, loss, death, and transition, things we want but can’t have, and things we wish were true but aren’t. Then performers like Harry Houdini come along and show us we can escape. Illusionists like David Copperfield defy gravity and levitate. Magicians get their audience thinking big while working on a smaller scale. He’s a prestidigitator, a card manipulator, and a conjurer able to bring inanimate objects to life in his hand.

Impossible, you say? That’s the point. “When everybody wins in the world, that’s real magic,” Hass concludes at the end of one of his online card tricks. It’s a good line. It also seems to be a reasonable summation of this newly minted Memphian’s performance philosophy.

MAGICAL LIFE: AN EVENING WITH LAWRENCE HASS AT BETH SHOLOM SYNAGOGUE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1ST, 7-11 P.M. $50

Tim Blake Nelson (above) plays the eponymous singing cowboy in the Coens’ new film The Ballad of Buster Scruggs. Film, p. 34

SUNDAY December 2

Casey Jones Chapter Model Train Show and Sale
St. George’s Episcopal Church, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., $5 per family
Model train show with a layout, parts for sale, magazines, catalogues, and more.

Carpenter Art Garden Holiday Bazaar
Carpenter Art Garden, 11 a.m.
Featuring stationary, ornaments, gift tags, wrapping paper, potholders, and more.

Hadley Hury
Novel, 2 p.m.
Hadley Hury signs his book of poetry, Almost Naked.

Holiday Open House
Metal Museum, noon-4 p.m.
Guests can make their own ornaments or cookie cutter.

Tea Time with Santa
Chez Philippe, 3-5 p.m., $30
Tea with warm scones and savory and sweet threats. Plus, a gingerbread duck cookie decorating station.

Sheila E and Kirk Whalum
Halloran Centre, 6 and 8:30 p.m., $45-$75
Groovy jazz from Kirk Whalum with special guest, percussionist Sheila E.

A Spectacular Christmas
Lindenwood Christian Church, 7:30 p.m., $10
An evening of holiday music led by organist Chris Nemec.
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Memphis Flyer November 29, December 5, 2018 22
A $25K Question

Incentives may bring niche music production to Memphis.

Music producers in Tennessee had much to be thankful for last week, especially with this announcement: “The Tennessee Entertainment Commission (TEC) Scoring Incentive Program offers a grant up to 25 percent on qualified Tennessee expenditures to companies producing original scores for film, television, animation, commercials, gaming, and multi-media projects within Tennessee.”

For film producers to receive a rebate for hiring local soundtrack producers is a game changer for creatives in these fields. I sat down with Gebre Waddell and Jon Hornyak, president and senior executive director, respectively, of the Recording Academy’s Memphis Chapter, to find out more about how this program came to be, and what it might bring in the future.

Memphis Flyer: I’ve heard about this being in the works for a few years now. What finally made it happen?

Hornyak: The central roadblock on this was the minimum spend. When we started working with [TEC executive director] Bob Raines, the minimum was $100,000, and it just wasn’t gonna work for us. We couldn’t support that. Bob kept working on getting it down, and it still wasn’t enough to make it work for us in Memphis.

Why was the minimum budget for scoring projects such an issue?

Waddell: With the TEC and the people that will have to administer the program, we’re talking about just a few people that have a large workload to deal with. They have to have some kind of limitation so things can work for their staffing levels. And I know these people; they are very passionate people who work till late at night every night, and to put more on their plate was just impossible. So there had to be something to manage the administrative workload.

Was this always for scoring projects only, or music production in general?

JH: If it was for regular album production, the major labels in Nashville would gobble that up. So we were trying to look for a niche that could help the music industry in Nashville and Memphis, but not the typical recording of albums and such. The answer was music for video games and independent films. Nashville was already starting to make music for video games. And in Memphis, when you look at some of the things that Ward Archer’s been doing at his studio or what Jonathan Kirksey’s done or what Scott Bomar’s done, that niche would work here as well.

GW: The Recording Academy didn’t want to support this legislation unless the threshold was gonna be $50K. But the problem was, that $50K level would have only helped Nashville. At a luncheon for this program, we asked all these music producers from Memphis, what’s the maximum you’ve had for a scoring project? And there was a resounding answer in the room: If we did not lower the threshold to $25K, Memphis would see no benefit from this legislation.

I talked to Bob Raines afterward and said we should consider having different thresholds. Just getting from $100K to $50K took years. To get it down to $25K across the board didn’t seem like it was ever gonna happen. So I suggested one threshold for Nashville, and a different threshold for the rest of the state. And that one suggestion was like a Hail Mary pass. It sounds like a huge challenge, legislatively, but it made sense. There’s a primary market, meaning Nashville, set at $50K, and a secondary one that’s the rest of the state, set at $25K. That checks all the boxes for administrative concerns, and ultimately that’s what was adopted.

JH: From the beginning, Raines felt it needed to help the entire state, not just Nashville, for this to work. And we feel good about how it ended up. Because Tennessee is in the incentives game: That’s how Christmas at Graceland got made and how the Sun Records series got made. And this opens the door to future things we can do on a local level.

GW: It couldn’t have happened without building a bridge between Memphis and Nashville. We’re working together. It’s a healing thing. And in this instance, we came together and did something for part of our shared culture, which is music.
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**Johnny's**

130 PEABODY PLACE

10 p.m.-1 a.m.

**Lady Ole 4**

341-345 BEALE 577-1089

Queen Ann and the Memphis Blues Masters

Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays; 8 p.m.-midnight

**Little Miss Heavenly**

2120 MADISON 432-2222

Sunday Brunch with Joyce Cobb Sundays, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

**Memphis Giants**

1737 MADISON 443-5232

124 GE PATTERSON

Celtic Crossing

693 S. COOPER 274-5151

Jeremy Stanford and Joshua Cosby

Sundays, 6-9 p.m.; Candy Company Mondays.
**After Dark: Live Music Schedule November 29 - December 5**

- **The Cove**
  - 2559 BROAD 730-0719
  - Ed Finney & Neptune's Army with Deb Sidney Thursday, Nov. 30, 2 p.m.; The Sketch Friday, Nov. 30, 4 p.m.; Winchester & The Ammunition Saturday, Dec. 1, 9 p.m.; David Collins Frog Squad Sunday, Dec. 2, 6 p.m.; Tailored Makers Monday, Dec. 3, 6:45 p.m.; Ben Minden & Birkenmaier Wednesday, Dec. 5, 5 p.m.; Karaoke Wednesdays, 9 p.m.

- **Growlers**
  - 1911 POPULAR 244-7904
  - 007 All Night Friday, Nov. 30, 5 p.m.; Friday, Nov. 30, 6:30 p.m.; Saturday, Nov. 30, 9 p.m.; Friday, Nov. 30, 10 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 1, 7 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 2, 4 p.m.; Monday, Dec. 3, 6 p.m.; Tuesday, Dec. 4, 6 p.m.; Ben Minden & Birkenmaier Wednesday, Dec. 5, 5 p.m.; Karaoke Wednesdays, 9 p.m.

- **Ingram Hill**
  - 1555 MADISON 865-609-1744
  - Sister Hazel with J.R. Moore of The Blind Sisters Saturday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m.

- **Railgarten**
  - 2160 CENTRAL
  - Alvin Youngblood Hart Friday, Nov. 30, 7 p.m.; Ashley McBryde Saturday, Dec. 1, 7 p.m.

- **The Tower Courtyard at Overton Square**
  - 2092 TRIMBLE PLACE
  - MEMPHIS, TN 38104
  - Acoustic Courtyard last Thursday of every month, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

- **Wild Bill's**
  - 1580 VOLLINTINE 207-3975
  - Jake Joint All Stars Friday, Dec. 1, 8 p.m.; The Wild Will's Band with Tony Chapman, Charles Saxon, and Miss Joyce Henderson Fridays, Saturdays, 11 p.m.-3 a.m.; Memphis Blues

- **O'Hare Bar & Grill**
  - 3445 POPULAR AVE.
  - SUITE, 1
  - Randy Toma Fridays, 7-9 p.m.

- **East Memphis**
  - East of Airways
  - 6069 PARK 763-0676
  - Lee Gardner Fridays, 6:30-9 p.m.; Randy Toma, Solo Guitar Tuesdays, 5:30-8 p.m.; Eddie Harrison Wednesdays, 6:30-9 p.m.

- **North Mississippi/ Tunica**
  - Hollywood Casino
    - 1150 CASINO STRIP RESORT, TUNICA, MS 662-357-7700
    - Live Entertainment every Friday, 8 p.m.-midnight; Saturdays, 9 p.m.-1 a.m.
  - Huey's Millington
    - 8570 US 51 NORTH
    - Royal Blues Band Sunday, Dec. 2, 6-9 p.m.
  - Huey's Germantown
    - 7677 FARMINGTON 318-3034
    - Memphis Soul Revue Sunday, Dec. 2, 8-11:30 p.m.

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    - Royal Blues Band Sunday, Dec. 2, 6-9 p.m.
  - Huey's Germantown
    - 7677 FARMINGTON 318-3034
    - Memphis Soul Revue Sunday, Dec. 2, 8-11:30 p.m.

- **Midtown Crossing Grill**
  - 394 N. WATKINS 443-0502
  - “The Happening” Open Mic Night and Steak Night Thursdays, 6-8 p.m.; Live Music with Coldway Fridays, 6-8 p.m.; Blues Jam hosted by Brad Webb Thursdays, 7-11 p.m.

- **Minglewood Hall**
  - 2119 MADISON 207-5097
  - 2000 N. PARKWAY 843-3000
  - Music Department Wednesdays, 4 p.m.-midnight; Fridays; Rock Starkaraoke Saturdays, 8 p.m.-midnight; Mondays-Saturdays, 8 p.m.-midnight; Wednesdays, 8-11:30 p.m.; Sundays, 4 p.m.

- **The Skitch**
  - 12-11 POPLAR 244-7904
  - 1150 CASINO STRIP RESORT, TUNICA, MS 662-357-7700
  - Live Music with DJ ALXANDR Thursdays, 7-11 p.m.

- **Carver's**
  - 3951 MENDENHALL 762-4458
  - 412-414 N. CLEVELAND
  - Sunday, Dec. 2, 8 p.m.-midnight.

- **Soul of Memphis**
  - 7292 BENJESTOWN 876-5770
  - Steak Night with Tony Butler and the Shelby Forest Pioneers Fridays, 6-8 p.m.

- **Collierville**
  - Huey's Collierville
    - 2130 W. POPULAR 854-4455
    - Twin Soul Sunday, Dec. 2, 8-11:30 p.m.
THEATER

Buckman Arts Center at St. Mary’s School
Roudnev Youth Ballet’s Nutcracker, the timeless tale of Clara and her beloved Nutcracker comes to life on the Buckman stage this Christmas. The dancers of Roudnev Youth Ballet offer a traditional interpretation of this endearing holiday classic. (537-1483), www.roudnnevouthballet.com. Sat., Dec. 1, 10 a.m.-noon, and Sun., Dec. 2, 7-9 p.m. 8077 WILKINSVILLE (872-7170).

Playhouse on the Square

Cannon Center for the Performing Arts
The Great Russian Nutcracker, Moscow Ballet presents world class Russian artists, hand-painted sets, Russian snow maidens, and jubilant nesting penguins bringing the Christmas spirit to life. www.thecannoncenter.com. $28-$68. Thurs., Nov. 29, 7 p.m. www.tnshakecompany.org. $15-$50. Tuesdays-Sundays, 7:30 p.m., and Sun., Dec. 2, 3 p.m. 60 N. PERKINS EXT. (537-1483).

Memphis Shakespeare Company

Train Collectors Association Casey Jones Chapter Model Train Show and Sale
Featuring model trains, accessories, magazines, catalogs, parts for sale, and a model train layout. Great for kids. $5 per family. Sat., Dec. 1, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. ST. GEORGE’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 2425 SOUTH GERMANTOWN (754-7282), WWW.MEMPHISMODELRAILROADERS.COM.

Up in Arms Collective: Response 5
Resistance. Persistence. ARTivism. Twenty artists converge at Crosstown Arts to create original works that explore today’s America. $10. Nov. 30-Dec. 2, 2-7 p.m. CROSSTOWN ARTS GALLERY, 422 N. CLEVELAND.

continued on page 28

Art Trolley Tour
Tour the local galleries and shops on South Main. Last Friday of every month, 6-9 p.m. SOUTH MAIN HISTORIC ARTS DISTRICT, DOWNTOWN.

A Victorian Holiday with Opera Memphis
Dec. 14 & 15
7 - 10 PM
$25
Dixon Gallery & Gardens

Carols, games, festive drinks, magic, and more!
www.operamemphis.org/dixon | 901.202.4533
NEW YEAR. NEW CAR.

AUDI A5 CABRIOLET

DECEMBER 1 – JANUARY 1, 2019

EARNING
Receive one entry for every 25 Tier Credits earned
4am, December 1 - 6:45pm, January 1

10X EARNED ENTRIES
Fridays in December 7, 14, 21 & 28

20X EARNED ENTRIES
Monday, December 31

BONUS ENTRIES
Receive 50 bonus entries when you visit us and accept the offer through the play by Total Rewards app.

SATURDAYS
HOT SEATS | Every 30 Minutes | 6pm - 10pm
You could win a share of $5,000 in holiday gifts and Free Slot Play.
Plus, each winner will receive 100 bonus entries into the Finale Car Drawing.

FINALE CAR DRAWING
Tuesday, January 1
Activation | 4pm - 6:45pm | Promotional Kiosks
Drawing | 7pm | Main Casino Entrance

HORSESHOE.
ongoing art

buckman arts center at st. mary’s school


crosstown concourse

focalpoint art show, exhibition of new work by jason miller, robert fairchild, zoe nadel, ladonna roberts, and lester jones inside focalpoint. through nov. 30. “give a damn! music + activism at stax records,” exhibition of artifacts, including isaac hayes’ 14 foot-long custom made office desk, stage clothing worn by johnnie taylor and hayes, rare photos and documents, short films, music, and original artwork contributed by shelby county students. through dec. 2. wish book: “lay of the land,” exhibition of landscape cyanotypes on fabric photographic works by john pearson. www.crosstownarts.org. through dec. 2.

w. cleveland at north parkway

david lusk gallery

“understory,” exhibition of work by maysey craddock. through dec. 22. 97 tillman (987-3800).

eclectic eye

“year one,” exhibition of works by jill sams. through jan. 2, 2019. 242 s. cooper (276-3937).

fogelman galleries of contemporary art, university of memphis

“absorption,” exhibition of mfa thesis work by kaitlyn dunn, exploring the psychology and physiology of architecture, light, and space. through dec. 7. 3715 central.

germantown performing arts center


graceland


3717 elvis presley (332-3322).

l. rose gallery

“The show must go on,” exhibition of works by gallery artists. the holiday group exhibition is the final show curated by gallery owner linda rose, with paintings, sculpture, and mixed media (767-2200). www.lrossgallery.com. nov. 30-dec. 22.

5040 sanderslin (767-2200).

marshall arts gallery

“Young, gifted, and dope,” episode 2, lyfe is dope and alivepaint present an exhibition curated by jamond bullock featuring artists from across the u.s. and canada. through dec. 19. “love of art” and “memphis,” exhibition of work by nikki gardner and debra edge by appointment only. ongoing.

639 marshall (679-6837).

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Platelet Donors Needed

If you are between the ages of 18 and 50 and in good health, you may be eligible to donate platelets for support of important research activities. Eligible donors can donate every two weeks. Donations require about two hours of your time and you will receive $150 in compensation.

Walk-in donations are not accepted.

For more information or to make an appointment contact:

901-252-3434
info@keybiologics.com
www.keybiologics.com

REAL PEOPLE
REAL NEEDS
REAL SOLUTIONS
Visit mifa.org to volunteer.
There's no place more magical than Elvis Presley's Graceland at Christmas. On December 14 and 15, Graceland will host a special weekend of holiday music and activities highlighted by three incredible live concerts on the Graceland Soundstage at Elvis Presley's Memphis.

**CHRISTMAS WITH ELVIS at Graceland**
Friday, Dec. 14 • 8:00 pm
Graceland Soundstage

The show, conducted by Robin Smith of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra, features Elvis' holiday favorites performed live on stage, with the full, rich sound of a 32-piece orchestra, including members of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, the Tennessee Mass Choir and Havenview Middle School Choir.

**AN ELVIS GOSPEL CHRISTMAS Live at Graceland**
Saturday, Dec. 15 • 5:00 pm
Graceland Soundstage

Enjoy an evening of Elvis' favorite Christmas and gospel classics performed by former members of JD Sumner and the Stamps Quartet and the Blackwood Brothers Quartet.

**ELVIS LIVE IN CONCERT with All-Star BAND**
Saturday, Dec. 15 • 8:30 pm
Graceland Soundstage

An unforgettable concert experience featuring Elvis live in concert on the big screen performing his greatest hits, backed by an all-star band featuring legendary TCB Band guitarist James Burton.

In addition, concert ticket holders will receive free admission to Elvis Presley's Memphis at 3:00 p.m. where they can visit two newly expanded exhibits: ICONS: The Influence of Elvis Presley and Presley Cycles.

For tickets or package options, including complimentary special events, visit Graceland.com/Holiday or call 800-238-2000.

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**WEEKLY GRIND**

**VS CLIPPERS**
WED, DEC. 5 / 7PM
Grizz Rally Flag presented to the first 10,000 fans by FOX Sports Southeast.

**VS LAKERS**
SAT, DEC. 8 / 7PM
Presented by Pinnacle

**VS BLAZERS**
WED, DEC. 12 / 7PM

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**MIDWIFERY**
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Our Holiday Lights are Rockin’!
Friday Night Laser Light Shows

7 PM
Laser Holidays

8 PM
Laser Beatles

9 PM
Laser Pink Floyd

For more information, call 901-636-2362 or visit memphismuseums.org

2360 Forrest Avenue, 38112
$945.00 per month, plus HALF OFF of 1st MONTH’S RENT!”

COMPLETELY RENOVATED 4 PLEX PALACE!
BE THE FIRST TO GRAB UP A COMPLETELY
FRESHENED 1 BR/ 1 BA APARTMENT (L/R can convert second bedroom)!

Walking/Biking distance to Broad Avenue, Memphis Zoo & Rhodes College! FRESH CARPET, PAINT, BEAUTIFULLY RENOVATED BATHROOMS, NEW KITCHEN CABINETS AND GRANITE COUNTERTOPS, ALL NEW STAINLESS APPLS, NEW WINDOWS AND CENTRAL HEAT AND AIR CONDITIONING! EACH UNIT HAS PRIV LAUNDARY AND UPSTAIRS UNITS OFFER PORCH FOR ENTERTAINING! PRIVATE PARKING! SPECIAL HALF OFF OF THE 1ST MOS RENT! Call today for an appointment at 901-260-0206 Ext 1! Upstairs and downstairs apts available!

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Almost Naked
Poems by Hadley Hury

65 S. COOPER (726-4566).

Almost Naked
Poems by Hadley Hury

65 S. COOPER (726-4566).

California Hall, exhibition of historic and contemporary works in a range of different media presenting an expansive vision of African artistry. Through June 21, 2021.

Village Frame & Art

Diocesan Art Exhibit, the annual community campaign collects age-appropriate toys that promote early learning — such as dolls, trucks and building blocks. Dec. 5-8, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.

Memphis Botanic Garden


Booksigning by Hadley Hury, at Novel, Saturday, December 1st at 2 p.m.

Bartlett Art Association. Mondays-Fridays, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Through Dec. 28.
7151 CHERRY FARMS (458-2521).

Angeles Stark’s Studio, 12675 DONELSON (867-8240), 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Nov. 30-Dec. 2, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

10PM-1:30AM

Institute of Contemporary Art, 7282).

City Winery

“20th Century Memphis Photographs,” exhibition of work by Charlie Ivey and Virginia Schneider. Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
540 S. MENDENHALL (767-8882).

1st Annual Toy Truck Fund-Raiser

The annual community campaign collects age-appropriate toys that promote early learning — such as dolls, trucks and building blocks. Dec. 5-8, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
POPULAR COLLECTION SHOPPING CENTER, 4615 POPULAR AVE. (577-2500).
**FOOD By Michael Donahue**

In the Details

Erling Jensen’s chef de cuisine Keith Clinton.

D

rumsticks — not the edible kind — were part of Keith Clinton’s passion as a teenager.

Clinton, 30, chef de cuisine at Erling Jensen, The Restaurant, began playing drums as a high school freshman. “I was horrible,” he says. “I remember some kids walking by. I opened the window and I thought I could impress them. They were some older kids. I remember playing whatever beat I knew how to play, and they just laughed and laughed and laughed.”

But he kept at it. He eventually helped form the In/đels and the Incredible Hook rock bands.

Prior to drumming, Clinton was an avid artist. He excelled at painting and clay molding in middle school. “I liked to put my hands on something and mold something or create something out of a very small thing. I got to kind of do that with playing drums. I got to use my hands. I got to use my body.”

So, cooking was a natural step. Clinton grew up watching his mother make dinner every night. “I don’t know if I was more interested in the food or if I was more interested in how she was doing it.”

Clinton realized the importance of cooking to him after he got a job with a caterer. He thought, “This is what I was made to do.”

He worked saute at Flight Restaurant and Wine Bar before he heard about an opening at Erling’s. “I didn’t know much about this place or what it meant to the Memphis dining scene. I was very ambitious, and I thought, ‘Oh, I can do that. That’s not a big deal. It’s just a restaurant, I work at Flight.’”

Clinton got the job. “I was young, and I thought I knew everything. But I remember the first day I walked in thinking, ‘I don’t know anything about cooking.’”

“Everything was so detailed. And everything was so laborious. Everything took so long to make something perfect. There were so many factors that went into all of it on a level that I had never experienced before.”

Jensen “was riding me a lot and he was very tough.”

The other chefs said, “He’s trying to mold you. He’s trying to shape you. He’s trying to make you better.”

That added “fuel to that passion I already had. I always want to be better. But having someone so predominant and so intelligent and so capable of their craft encourage me in that way. I felt really accelerated. I thought, I’ve got someone who’s got my back on this.”

Clinton quickly caught on. “It wasn’t just making food. It was creating something truly perfect and beautiful. And it was innovative. It was classic preparation to things. Like all this French cooking style I had no idea about.”

Erling Jensen’s is where Clinton wants to be. “I want to change the way fine dining is being done in a sense that I want to present it in a different way. I want diners to experience a more immersive experience. It’s dining. It’s fine. It’s detailed. It’s not just consuming food.”

Dining is “changing your silversware for you. Changing everything out every course. Bringing you all these extra little amuse-bouches and intermezzos and petits fours. Classic dining is so sexy to me. We have that opportunity here to continue to present that sexiness, that fine aspect of enjoying and eating a meal. But we also have a chance to explore.”

Jensen is “a very classic chef who can make any classic preparation of any dish, but he can also employ these people who have their own visions and their own goals and they’re able to push dining in a different area. Do their own thing. But he can also employ these people who have their own visions and their own goals and they’re able to push dining in a different area. Do their own thing.”

“It’s like a 50/50 dining experience. You get to stick to tradition 50 percent of the time, and then the other 50 percent of the time, you get to push the boundaries.”

He also enjoys getting to work at Erling’s with his partner, sous chef Meredith Gardner. “We get to do something beautiful together.”

Clinton hasn’t forgotten about music. “I haven’t stopped playing. But I’m so in love with this. They’re very similar, you know. Making food for someone and having someone enjoy something you’ve created is the same as recording a song and having someone listen to it in their car on the drive home from work or on a long road trip. It’s almost the same experience.”

Erling Jensen: The Restaurant, 1044 South Yates, 763-3700
Art of the Drink

You should try the “meditation of the copulating lizards.”

Until recently, I never really felt comfortable in what I like to call “living room bars” – the type of space, usually dubbed a speakeasy, with deep, communal couches instead of traditional tables and stools. I always felt like I was crashing someone’s private party when I walked in the door. With limited seating options, I’d usually perch on the arm of a couch, or, somewhat uncertainly, flop down into an unoccupied chair as other bar patrons continued their conversations around me.

Yes, I could handle the couch that sat near Charlie Miller’s Elvis Matador painting and the Vampiriella poster at the Lamplighter, but any casual seating arrangement beyond that was a lot for me to negotiate.

That said, I do love the environment at Dodicci, the upstairs lounge with artisan cocktails that is accessible by a set of stairs inside Bar. Yes, sometimes I do feel like an interloper when I jog up the stairs to discover a full crowd, but when I’m early enough to grab a seat, I feel, well, like I’m home somehow – or in the home of a good friend who has a deft touch with artisanal cocktails.

I also feel at home at the intimate upstairs bar at Earnestine & Hazel’s, where, illuminated by twinkling fairy lights, bartender Nate Barnes mixes drinks. Once served, visitors tend to wander, settling down in the various eclectic, sparsely-furnished rooms that were once used by brothel workers.

The newly opened Art Bar at the Crosstown Concourse has been the real game-changer for me. Located in a somewhat hidden series of rooms on the second floor (start at the top of the red staircase and look for the narrow entrance near Crosstown Art’s gallery spaces and Green Room performance space), Art Bar takes the intimate living room lounge concept to the next level.

Crosstown Arts’ Stacy Wright, director of events, decorated the bar with pet-themed “found” art — think porcelain Persian cats positioned on a coffee table beneath paint-by-numbers of English setters and Siamese cats. An interesting — dare I say intoxicating? — cocktail menu by bar manager Bart Mallard adds another creative layer.

Since it opened at the beginning of September, I’ve visited Art Bar numerous times: to catch up with old friends, to meet first dates, and to while away a few hours playing gin rummy. I’ve watched total strangers have fun, and, much to the amusement of a particularly sweet Tinder date, I’ve walked inside to discover that I know 95 percent of the bar’s inhabitants. I’ve sat at the edge of a chair for candid conversation, sprawled on a couch to shuffle playing cards (these, of course, featured fluffy kittens), and drank enough tequila to give me a vicious hangover.

Headache and dry mouth aside, Art Bar has served me well on all occasions.

The cocktail menu itself can be disconcerting. Ordering a drink called “meditation of the copulating lizards” with a straight face is tough on a blind date. Does the drink reference the sinister Aleister Crowley or bring to mind Night of the Iguana by Tennessee Williams? I just want tequila in my glass, please — and while the cactus pear and jalapeño honey combination sounds delicious, I prefer to gesture to the printed menu rather than utter the drink’s name aloud.

Mallard’s concoctions are delectable, but don’t be afraid to order more traditional drinks if that’s your preference. A few weeks ago, I sipped a bit of my drinking partner’s Old Fashioned and was astonished by how smooth it tasted. Maybe I could go back to brown liquor, after all.

The winding space — some rooms feel as narrow as a hallway; others are wide and open — feels easier to navigate once you have a few of Mallard’s drinks under your belt. I’ve picked up my drink and wandered through Art Bar like I was some part of Hemingway’s Moveable Feast, nodding to the Memphis-based artists and writers that have come like moths to a light to occupy this unique place.

Art Bar is open Tuesday through Saturday nights, beginning at 5 p.m. Check it out for yourself. Like the best living room bars in town, the not-so-serious vibe lends itself to some serious fun.
Wagons Ho!
The Coen Brothers torch the Old West in
The Ballad of Buster Scruggs.

The image of the cowboy emerged at roughly the same time as America entered the 20th century. Although his stories are usually set in the late 1800s, the first fictional cowboy was the eponymous star of Owen Wister’s 1902 novel The Virginian. In the first chapters, the Virginian is called a son of a bitch by two different men. He shares a laugh with one and threatens the second one with a drawn pistol in the midst of a poker game. “When you call me that, SMILE!” and this causes the other to laugh.

The genre The Virginian inspired, the Western, has had a huge influence on the American self-image. No matter how woke we believe ourselves to be, inside each of us are fragments of the self-sufficient, rugged individualist, gregarious to his friends but given to sudden flashes of murderous temper when challenged. For better or worse, the cowboy is at the core of the stories Americans tell about themselves.

You will never see a trope exploded with more elan than the Coen Brothers bring to the screen in the first, eponymous segment of The Ballad of Buster Scruggs. At some point during Tim Blake Nelson's (initially) consequence-free, musical murder spree, it will occur to you that the whole singing cowboy thing has always been kinda messed up. Nelson's aw-shucks deadpan, which holds while he's singing on horseback and delivering blistering rounds of ultraviolence is a wonder to behold.

The image of a face with a single bullet hole to the forehead, like a third eye opening, recurs during the six segments of this anthology. The short sketches written by Joel and Ethan Coen are presented like chapters in a Virginian-era book of Western stories. The Coens, who have never seen a genre they didn’t want to tear down and rebuild from first principles, want to go back to the source of the American self-image and ask some questions.

After puncturing Gene Autry’s balloon, the Coens go full Ambrose Bierce in “Near Algodones.” James Franco is a hapless, would-be bandit whose convoluted comeupance makes a mockery of the notion that we are in any way in charge of our own fate.

In “Meal Ticket,” the Brothers take on the perverse incentives and human cost imposed by buccaneer capitalism. Harry Melling plays an actor with no arms or legs who flawlessly delivers lines from Coleridge, Shakespeare, and Lincoln, while Liam Neeson, in a nearly wordless performance, is the sideshow impresario who both supports and exploits him.

The film’s best casting choice is reserved for “All Gold Canyon,” an adaptation of a Jack London short story starring musician Tom Waits. Has no one ever thought to cast the sandpaper-voiced Waits as a grizzled old prospector before, or was he just holding out for the right directors? Either way, it was worth the wait.

From the literature, it looks like taming the Old West was a pretty masculine affair. We’ve all seen Brokeback Mountain. The plight of the women in the wagon trains is the focus of “The Girl Who Got Rattled.” Alice Longabaugh (Zoe Kazan) is an unwilling traveler on the Oregon Trail, dragged along by her elder brother Gilbert (Jefferson Mays) to be married off to an orchard owner at their Western destination. She finds an unexpected

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romantic opportunity in the person of trail rider Billy Knapp (Bill Heck) and reels when her constrained world is suddenly freed by the possibility of free will and happiness.

In the final segment, “The Mortal Remains,” a pious lady (Tyne Daly), a Frenchman (Saul Rubinek), and a talkative trapper (Chelcie Ross) share a long stagecoach ride with a pair of mysterious bad men (Jonjo O’Neill and Brenda Gleeson). It is a troubling thesis statement for the film, that owes a visual debt to The Hateful Eight while underlining the Coens’ existentialism.

The Coens, who have been among the greatest American filmmakers for almost three decades now, want to look at the Western in a new way, and they’re choosing a new way of filmmaking. It’s the Coens’ first all-digital production, so longtime cinematographer Roger Deakins is replaced by Inside Llewyn Davis lenser Bruno Delbonnel.

The film got an enthusiastic reception at the Venice Film Festival this year, where it won Best Screenplay, but outside of a limited release to qualify for Oscar competition, it’s available solely on Netflix. Whether it would have been a financial success in theaters, we’ll never know — though True Grit, the Coens’ last western adventure, made a wagon train full of money. On an artistic level, The Ballad of Buster Scruggs is an unreserved success. ■

The Ballad of Buster Scruggs
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**FILM REVIEW By Chris McCoy**

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What Gives You Hope?

The question everyone struggles with, especially those involved in immigration issues.

Three weeks ago, I sat down with three inspiring folks in a panel on activism and advocacy. Chris Sanders had driven in from Nashville to represent the Tennessee Equality Project. Shahidah Jones from the Official Black Lives Matter Memphis Chapter sat to my right, and next to her was Justin Davis from the Memphis Bus Riders Union.

It felt like home, as if we were just about to have a regular conversation, the only difference being the 50 or so students sitting in rows in front of us and the fact that we were sitting next to each other instead of across a table or in a living room. Home, of course, is relative. It was not the physical elements of that space that made it home but rather the shared ánimo (energy) that I felt being in conversation with them and the students in the room, all of whom are involved in community service.

We covered a range of topics. Mostly, we defined activism and advocacy and were speaking on privilege, allyship, and sustainable change in order to problematize community service — because community service, particularly in higher education institutions, is often over-simplified. In other words, we are not grappling with historical and systemic conditions that create, and most importantly, sustain, inequity, but rather we engage in a short-term exchange of services through which, typically, while not intentionally, we as outsiders of xyz community are receiving greater benefits through knowledge and/or experience. All of that is to say, it was an incredible conversation that could have gone on for hours, especially given the breadth of experiences we could have pulled from through our various, intersecting backgrounds in community organizing.

One of the things that I left with that evening, that continues to linger in my mind, was this question that one of the students presented to us: What gives you hope?

I wasn’t surprised by this question. I even think that I expected it. It’s not the first time I’ve heard it asked at a panel or guest speaker event, and I would venture to say that it won’t be the last. We get asked about hope a lot. By “we,” I mean folks like the ones in the panel who are queer folks, black and brown folks, women, queer women, queer women of color, queer women of color who are immigrants, etc. The combinations of identities in just our four-person panel are probably endless if we go further into experiences shaped by race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexual orientation, ability, and so on. But I list just a few to offer a glimpse into the intersectionality of identities that shape our experiences and thus shape the work we do in fighting against dominant systems that negate if not erase these experiences.

I think that’s why that student asked this question about hope. How do we keep pushing when there are larger structures, laws, and policies that continue to qualify structural racism and gender violence and limit our economic and physical mobility? The student didn’t add that much to the question, but that is what went on in my head and what I believe went on, if not in some form or variation, through the minds of Chris, Shahidah, and Justin.

We sat on that question for a little bit longer than the rest. The thing is, there’s no simple answer. Hope is complicated. It’s not as if we exchange our cup of coffee for a cup of hope each morning and we’re good to go. If anything, I would say that survival kicks in every hour, every day more than hope. When we lobby in Nashville, for example, it’s not because we’re passionate about politics. We understand the immediate effects that politics and policy have on the lives of people, and so we will travel miles to address immoral and unjust laws.

For the past month, both of my parents, along with about 50 volunteers in the Migration Is Beautiful group, have been getting up as early as 4 a.m. to meet refugees who have been recently released from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centers. Each day, they’re gathering and organizing supplies and resources for individuals, adults, families, and children who come into Memphis on Greyhound buses, many who haven’t had a real meal in days and are ill-equipped for cold temperatures.

Folks in the Migration Is Beautiful group are responding to a crisis created by unstable refugee and asylum policies with no foreseeable end in sight. While hope motivates many, the immediate response to this crisis is to offer support as much as possible for people to make it through in a healthy and safe way to the next city in their stops. These action and response movements that exist locally, nationally, and internationally aren’t rooted as simply passions, extracurricular activities, or hobbies for people who are in some way connected to communities that consistently are under attack. This is about surviving this day in order to see the next. This is the ánimo that carries us.

Aylen Mercado is a brown, queer, Latinx chingona and Memphian pursuing an Urban Studies and Latin American and Latinx Studies degree at Rhodes College.
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