

Here Are All the Chefs Competing on 'Top Chef' Season 18 in Portland
The 15 cheftestants will attempt to cook their way to the title this spring.
Food & Wine
By Adam Campbell-Schmitt
February 08, 2021

The pandemic has put a lot of Hollywood on hold, but some cooking competitions have been able to work around and under COVID-19 safety requirements to keep cameras rolling. Such was the case with the most recent season of The Great British Baking Show, which saw the bakers, hosts, and judges (and their families) living in a bubble. A similar effort has been underway for Bravo's iconic Top Chef series, which last summer announced it would be making a few production changes and setting up shop in the show's latest locale, Portland, Oregon.

Padma Lakshmi, Tom Colicchio, and Gail Simmons will all be returning to the Judges' Table, along with a slate of guest judges that includes Richard Blais, Carrie Baird, Nina Compton, Tiffany Derry, Gregory Gourdet, Melissa King, Kristen Kish, Edward Lee, Kwame Onwuachi, Amar Santana, Dale Talde, and Brooke Williamson. We've also been told to expect appearances by the likes of José Andrés, Massimo Bottura, Gabriel Rucker, and Alice Waters, as well as Portlandia stars Fred Armisen and Carrie Brownstein.

Today, we finally found out whose food they'll be judging as we get our first look at the cast of 15 chefs. Take a look below at their names, faces, and bios as provided by Bravo:

Avishar Barua '05

Hometown: Columbus, OH
Current city of residence: Columbus, OH
Occupation/Profession: Executive Chef & GM, Service Bar

Avishar Barua is the Executive Chef and General Manager of Service Bar in Columbus, Ohio. Born in Columbus, Ohio to immigrant parents who left Bangladesh in search of better opportunities in America, Avishar pursued his true passion of cooking after getting bachelor's degrees in biology and psychology at The Ohio State University. After attending culinary school, he went to New York City and trained under Wylie Dufresne at Michelin starred WD~50. He returned to Ohio to open Service Bar for Middle West Spirits, a local grain to glass distiller, where he has since gained national recognition from Food & Wine Magazine for his signature dish, the Cheesy Brisket Crunch.

<https://www.foodandwine.com/news/top-chef/top-chef-season-18-portland-chefs-cast>

Service Bar chef **Avishar Barua '05** set to compete on the new season of 'Top Chef'
ANDY DOWNING | ADOWNING@COLUMBUSALIVE.COM |
Columbus Alive
4:14 pm EST February 8, 2021

When we last checked in with Avishar Barua in August, the Service Bar chef said he was still adapting to operating a restaurant in a pandemic, which had caused him to rethink some of his motivations.

Previously, the chef said he tended to narrow in on minutiae when assembling a dinner plate, obsessing over the sourcing of ingredients and the continual refinement of process (witness the painstaking, three-day undertaking required to bring the eatery's famed fries to the plate). "Now it's more like, if you leave here happy, then we're happy," he said at the time. "Anytime I add anything more than that, it gets complicated."

This more relaxed mindset should serve the chef well as he takes on his most recent challenge: competing on the 18th season of the Emmy-winning Bravo cooking competition "Top Chef."

Earlier today, it was announced that Barua would be one of the 15 chefs vying for the crown on the new season, which was filmed in Portland, Oregon, and returns to the air on April 1. The winner takes home \$250,000.

Other contestants include:

Avishar Barua (Columbus, Ohio)
Dawn Burrell (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)
Gabe Erales (Austin, Texas)
Nelson German (Oakland, California)
Byron Gomez (Aspen, Colorado)
Sasha Grumman (Houston, Texas)
Roscoe Hall (Birmingham, Alabama)
Sara Hauman (Portland, Oregon)
Kiki Louya (Detroit, Michigan)
Maria Mazon (Tucson, Arizona)
Shota Nakajima (Seattle, Washington)
Gabriel Pascuzzi (Portland, Oregon)
Jamie Tran (Las Vegas, Nevada)
Chris Viaud (Milford, New Hampshire)

For Barua, winning "Top Chef" would fall second only to being named the city's Best Chef by Alive in 2019. Watch the trailer for the new season of "Top Chef" [here](https://amp.columbusalive.com/amp/43379851).

<https://amp.columbusalive.com/amp/43379851>

Anderson Concrete names **Jessica Anderson '00** president
By Tristan Navera — Staff reporter
Columbus Business First

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Anderson Concrete Corp. has named its first female president in the company's century-long history.

Jessica Anderson was named president of the Columbus-based ready-mix concrete supplier, which turns 100 this year while a fifth generation joins the business.

Anderson, a member of the fourth generation of the 150 employee-company, is its fifth president and first woman in the role.

"Inclusion has always been a value, and it's one of the reasons I'm here," she said in a press release. "I'm so proud of my family and team members for walking the talk."

She takes the job from her cousin, Doug Anderson, who will assume the new role of CEO.

"While it is a huge responsibility and one that I do not take lightly, I am very proud to follow in my family's footsteps at Anderson Concrete," she said.

Anderson joined the company in 2001, when she began in the accounting department of its sister company, Buckeye Ready-Mix, before becoming treasurer of ALD Precast in 2006. She has also been treasurer of Columbus Bituminous Concrete Corp. since 2010.

Anderson got her MBA from Ohio Dominican University and is active in the American Concrete Institute's Central Ohio chapter, Women Presidents' Organization, and the Conway Center for Family Business, where she contributes on topics around women in business and succession planning. Anderson Concrete was inducted into the Conway Center's Family Business Hall of Fame in 2018.

Doug Anderson, who had been president since 2002, said his cousin would do a "fantastic job" in the role.

"She is experienced, well respected in our industry, and the right choice to lead in our family business. I look forward to working with her in my new role."

Anderson Concrete has six plants around Central Ohio and 90 trucks, and in recent years has been active with major projects in the city, where it supplies ready-mx concrete for roadwork, commercial and residential construction.

Among the major recent projects has been the expansion of Nationwide Children's Hospital, the \$75 million National Veterans Memorial and Museum, the \$300 million Columbus Crew SC stadium, expansion at the John Glenn Columbus International Airport and the \$22 million Dublin Link bridge over the Scioto River.

https://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/news/2021/02/14/anderson-concrete-names-new-president.html?ana=e_columbn_editorschoice_editorschoice&j=90550638&t=Breaking%20News&mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiT0RnMU1HRm1OV05rWXpOailsInQiOiJiRUlySjFreFNOOTBTOHIUQjVXWIR0U1o1d2duT3krWlVBR1RCSmdsN1BVYnNxYzBjOHFncUZCNEswb3dFY3ZkdjF6Q2tOMFQrNFdhMjNXXC9YelpGdkVHbzlhdtFuSDd1d1p0a1p2dnF2a2ZtdDVXZitzRnVlejdJUzJKNjhMTmUifQ%3D%3D

High on the Hoggy's, 30 years later
Gary Seman Jr.
The Columbus Dispatch
Published 11:56 a.m. ET Jan. 25, 2021

Before there was a smokehouse on every corner in central Ohio, there was Hoggy's.

Certainly not the first barbecue purveyor in Columbus, Hoggy's Restaurant and Catering — as it is now called — is a Columbus original and on the heels of celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.

It's been a wild ride for the chain, which once boasted 10 locations, the first opening in the summer of 1991 in Linworth.

The lone Hoggy's is now at 830 Bethel Road.

Kyle Turner '13, son of Hoggy's co-founder Mark Turner, said since a rebranding effort that started about a year ago, the restaurant is on the upswing.

The interior was reworked last year to make it appear like a true Southern barbecue deli. Now meats are cut in front of customers and sides and toppings are served from behind the counter.

"We make everything from scratch," said Turner, director of marketing and business at Hoggy's. "This makes you beholden to the customer."

"Kyle's good at that," Mark Turner said. He kept pushing me: 'Dad, let's make it better, let's make it better, let's bring it out in front of the people.'"

Indeed, Hoggy's has amped up its barbecue game by blending nine of the 13 sauces in-house and making pickles, pickled onions, jalapenos, roasted red pepper butter, pimento cheese and other condiments on the premises.

"We're just trying to build a lot of flavor on everything," he said.

A popular offering for the younger crowd: layered barbecue bowls.

"It brings people in here," Kyle Turner said. "It's just another option. I don't see a lot of barbecue places doing it."

Meats are smoked outside in a Southern Pride smoker, which uses a mix of apple and hickory.

COVID-19 has taken its share of Hoggy's catering business, but store sales have gone up, said Kyle Turner, who wouldn't disclose a percentage.

The uptick in barbecue competition has also served Hoggy's and its customers well, Mark Turner said.

"Personally, I think the competition is good because of makes you better," he said. "Without it, you won't get better."

Mark Turner, who founded Hoggy's with Ken Smith, said he can't pinpoint the rapid decline of Hoggy's, which closed all of its remaining stores, save for Bethel Road, in 2012.

Turned said he believes the fallout from the Great Recession played a big part in the store closings.

"People didn't have that much money," Turner said. "They didn't order catering. That was a big part of it."

Mark Turner and Smith also founded locally based Steak Escape, a cheesesteak chain with an international presence, in 1982.

The team originally opened the Bethel Road store as Johnny Buccelli's, another sandwich concept. They introduced Hoggy's fare and it outgrew the popularity of its in-store sibling, Turner said.

Turner and Smith eventually omitted every sign that Johnny's B's, as it was also called, ever existed, including the sign on the building.

"We didn't intend for that necessarily," Mark Turner said. "We didn't know what we intended. Everyone just said, 'We want Hoggy's.'"

Hours are 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. For more information, call 614-442-1800.

<https://www.dispatch.com/story/business/2021/01/25/hoggys-barbecue-continues-catering-operation/4228124001/>

DePauw University

Greencastle, Ind. - DePauw swept the North Coast Athletic Conference Women's Track and Field Athlete of the Week honors by capturing all three selections after Friday's 61-45 win over visiting Hanover.

Charlotte Borland (Jr., Huntington, Ind./Huntington North) was selected for sprints and hurdles after winning the 200-meter dash (28.12 seconds) and placing second in the 60 meters (8.44). She also was second in the long jump at 4.66m (15-3.5).

Annalise Grammel '20 (Fr., Canal Winchester, Ohio/The Columbus Academy) was the distance/mid-distance choice after winning the mile run (5:29.08) and running the lead leg of the 4 x 400 relay that won in 4:16.36.

Reanna Stiehler (So., Seminole, Fla./Dixie Hollins) was the conference's selection in field events after winning the weight throw (12.14m/39-10) and placing fourth in the shot put (9.87m/32-4.75).

<https://depauwtigers.com/sports/wtrack/2020-21/releases/20210208m0Inv5>

Hondros CBD, medical marijuana businesses just getting started
By Carrie Ghose – Staff reporter, Columbus Business First
Feb 17, 2021, 3:27pm EST

Despite selling four medical marijuana dispensaries to a publicly traded company, the Hondros Family of Companies remains deeply invested in cannabis and its botanical relative hemp.

The Westerville-based holding company has launched two consumer CBD brands in the past few months and is expanding into industrial hemp for linens, pet chews and other products. The family's Verdant Creations still owns a Columbus dispensary and seeks to expand into processing and cultivation in Ohio and other states.

Ohio last year re-legalized agricultural hemp, which looks like cannabis but lacks psychoactive THC. The Hondros family farm in Centerburg grew 6 acres for CBD, and another 15 acres for the fibrous industrial plants. Expect more this growing season, John and Linda Hondros said in an interview.

"There's a whole industry that was vacated that we're hoping to help resurrect here in the state of Ohio," Linda Hondros said.

"I think we're on the tip of the iceberg," John Hondros said.

Kelly Hondros '06, their daughter, and her husband, Corey Poches, run Motive Wellness LLC, a CBD line of muscle balms, edibles and tinctures. They'll eventually assume operations of Anastasia Healthy Skin, which John Hondros launched last week after combining a family recipe and formulas from a business he acquired.

The cannabis-related businesses are separate from Hondros College and other trade schools in the Hondros Education Group.

Both the dispensaries and Motive reached profitability in half the time budgeted, John Hondros said, and that's with word-of-mouth marketing severely curtailed by federal and state regulation. Poches also leads the dispensary business.

"Usually I come up with the crazy entrepreneurial ideas, and I'd get them started," John Hondros said. "And then when they get up to a certain point, I look over it at Linda and say, 'You've got to take it from here.'"

"He speaks the truth there," Linda Hondros said, laughing. After 33 years of marriage and 35 in business together, she's ready to pass the baton to the next generation.

"So our backup quarterbacks are now first string, and they'll lead the charge on (Anastasia) once John finishes launching it," she said.

The \$3.5 million cash-and-stock sale closed Tuesday for four of five Verdant Creations dispensaries to Chicago-based Cresco Labs, a multi-state cannabis operator that trades on the Canadian stock exchange. Cresco now has the maximum number of licenses for a single operator in Ohio.

Anastasia is starting with botanical creams, and will add formulations containing CBD in coming months. John Hondros developed the formula by combining two recipes with roots in Greece, and asked physicians to revise it further. He's been using versions of the cream for a decade to soothe neuropathy in his legs, a phantom tingling and restlessness, plus side effects from maintenance medication since his 2009 treatment for prostate cancer.

"That's why this is more than just a business – it has to do with the comfort that it can give older people with cancer," he said.

Likewise, both source recipes were intensely personal.

His great-grandmother made a balm from olive oil, mint and flowers in the village Lyrkeia, Greece, when the family name was Hondropolis. She hid the recipe in the house's brick wall when Axis forces occupied the village in WWII, he said, then started making it again to soothe the feet of Allied troops after V-E Day.

The other formula was from Anastasia Marie Chehak, a friend in Oklahoma City, where he graduated from law school. Her Anastasia Marie Laboratories Inc. made a line of lotions targeted for neuropathy and other side effects of diabetes, which John Hondros used. When she died in 2017, no one was willing to take over the business until the Hondros family bought the assets. Neither recipe included CBD until now.

https://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/news/2021/02/17/hondros-family-plans-growth-for-marijuana-cbd-hemp.html?ana=e_colum_bn_editorschoice_editorschoice&j=90550978&t=Breaking%20News&mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiWkRkbU9EVmlaRGd3T1dVMYlsInQiOiJySkhCWVZrUXZrMXZGZUVXWUp5Q1VxM3BnTHJWXC9VazhpMzdQa0dlS1hWMUFYPY1cyV01wQ2xkS1krUWVOSHfVZ09VMDdjMGdKVVwvcjVoOEZ0N0lURzIFa2lxR3hoWEVLK0ZBemQ4VHZoZDR4ZVhCOVBrbHBkZTNndWNxcVZtY05QIn0=

At 140 years, Grove City-based E.E. Ward is nation's oldest continuously operating Black-owned business

Alan Froman

ThisWeek group

Published 11:21 a.m. ET Feb. 3, 2021

A moving company plays a vital role for businesses and families, helping them as they move into a new location or a new phase of their lives.

In central Ohio, one such company, E.E. Ward Moving & Storage Co., has carried that load for 14 decades – and its origins can be traced to one of its founders' work in profoundly transforming people's lives.

John T. Ward served as a conductor in Ohio's Underground Railroad, helping slaves escape from bondage to freedom.

Now the company he started in 1881 with his son, William Ward, is marking its 140th anniversary.

E.E. Ward, now at 2235 Southwest Blvd. in Grove City, also is the oldest known continuously operating Black-owned business in the United States, as recognized by the U.S. Department of Commerce and noted in the 2003 Congressional Record.

For 120 years, the company was owned by members of the Ward family.

"It's an honor to be part of that legacy and heritage," said **Brian Brooks '87**, who now co-owns the company with his wife, Dominique. "It's more than that. It's kind of surreal, and it's humbling."

The Wards began their business with two horses and a wagon, he said.

"The skills that John T. had, that he used before and during the Civil War to help lead people from the South to freedom in the North, were skills that he found he could utilize in the business world," Brooks said.

During the Civil War, John T. Ward served as a contractor, moving supplies and equipment for the U.S. Army to Camp Chase, said Dolores White, who was the company's CEO from 1996 until 2001, when her uncle, Eldon Ward, sold it to Brooks and his business partner, Otto Beatty, who no longer is involved in the company.

When John T. and William Ward established the company in 1881, it was known as the Ward Transfer Line.

By the end of the 19th century, the company had been renamed E.E. Ward Transfer and Storage Co. after Edger Earl Ward, John T.'s grandson, who was leading the firm by that time.

"What's amazing to me is to think about all the company has endured to stay in business," Brooks said. "Two world wars, economic ups and downs, including the Great Depression, and now a second pandemic."

Eldon Ward, William's grandson, was engaged in the family business in the mid-1940s and stayed for a half-century, retiring in 1996 and becoming the last Ward family member to serve as owner.

"It was time (to sell)," White said. "My uncle was retired in Arizona, and I was no longer able to fully do my job because I had COPD-related health issues."

But in a way, E.E. Ward has remained in the family, White said.

Brian Brooks is Eldon's godson, she said.

"In many ways, the company is still part of our family," she said.

The family nature of the business extended way beyond the names of the owners, she said.

"We were never about getting rich and making a lot of money," White said. "It was simply about providing a living for the family, and the employees were considered as family, not just workers."

Eldon Ward created a gym facility for employees at the E.E. Ward warehouse.

"He wanted to find ways to lift up people," White said. "He wanted to build up his business but also build up the community. So he was involved in so many organizations, like the United Way, American Red Cross and YMCA."

The YMCA branch at 130 Woodland Ave. in Columbus is named the Eldon and Elsie Ward Family YMCA.

"He was a mentor," White said.

The E.E. Ward warehouse was more than just a place to work, White said.

As a girl, the facility also was a place to play, she said.

"My family members were working there, and I loved to run through the warehouse and climb up and explore all the trucks," she said. "I never thought that I would work there myself one day."

In its early decades, the Ward company specialized in moving pianos, White said.

Records indicate the company moved nearly a million pianos for the Steinway & Sons piano company, she said.

"Back in those days, pianos were the center of entertainment in the home. You didn't have TVs or radios," White said.

Jerome Davis has worked for E.E. Ward for more than 30 years. His tenure as a truck driver straddles the Eldon Ward and Brian Brooks eras.

"Eldon was always someone you could talk to," Davis said. "He'd always say, 'Leave your problems at home when you come to work.' If you had a problem you needed to talk over, he was there for you. Eldon treated you not like an employee but like a friend or even a family member. Everyone wants a boss like that."

Brooks has maintained the high level set by the Ward family, Davis said.

The company's legacy and standing as a successful Black-owned business are especially important during a time when the issues of racial equality and justice are at the forefront, Brooks said.

Many owners of Black-owned businesses have told him how much E.E. Ward's legacy means to them, he said.

"They tell me how it inspires them each morning when they open the doors to their own business," Brooks said.

But the legacy he took over from the Ward family extends beyond race, he said.

"There is a commitment to providing quality service to the customer they established over the years," Brooks said. "Our history and legacy mean a lot, but ultimately, it's the quality of service that keeps a company in business for more than a century."

E.E. Ward opened a second office three years ago in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"There are a large number of people moving from the Midwest to the South and Southeast region, so opening an office there made a lot of sense," Brooks said.

The past year has been a challenge for all companies, he said.

"There are a lot of changes that have taken place over the last year, and some of those changes may be permanent," Brooks said. "We'll just have to see."

Overall, he said, E.E. Ward is in a position to continue to thrive in the 21st century.

The company that started with two horses and a wagon now has 60 to 100 employees seasonally, about 12 to 15 long-haul trucks operating depending on the season and another 10 vehicles serving the Midwest region.

For more information on the business, go to eeward.com.

<https://www.thisweeknews.com/story/news/local/grove-city/2021/02/03/140-years-grove-city-based-e-e-ward-nations-oldest-continuously-operating-black-owned-business/4363704001/>

Seventh Son bringing new bar to Bridge Park

By Dan Eaton – Staff reporter

Columbus Business First

Feb 11, 2021, 8:00am EST

Seventh Son Brewing is bringing a new bar to Bridge Park in Dublin.

The Columbus craft brewery expects to open its newest expansion, The Getaway Brewing Co., at the development in April. It's at 104 N. High St. on the Historic Dublin side of the project, just north of Condado, The Pearl and North High Brewing.

It'll be the third bar for the Seventh Son group. In addition to the mothership brewery in Italian Village, the brewery also operates Antiques on High bar and sour beer brewery in the German Village/Brewery District area.

The Getaway too will have a focus: traditional German beers, Japanese rice lager, foreign export stouts, etc.

“We want a travel, road trip vibe — your favorite beer that you had on your favorite vacation,” co-owner **Collin Castore (attended '90-'92)** said.

He credited co-owner **Jen Burton '95** with the name. Castore and Burton, along with **Travis Spencer (attended '87-'92)**, founded Seventh Son in 2012.

It also just so happens the “mascot” van for Antiques on High is a Dodge Get-A-Way.

The environment will lend itself well to the name too. The Getaway will occupy an almost 4,000-square-foot space. Features include an additional 1,000-square-foot “greenhouse” patio that overlooks the river.

Though there won't be any brewing on site, the space will have fermenters. Base beer will be brewed in Italian Village and transported to Getaway's tanks to ferment and finish. The Getaway beer will be served straight from serving tanks rather than kegs.

The bar will have 36 taps total, with 12 of those for Getaway beers and the remainder featuring a mix of Seventh Son beer, Antiques on High sours or hazy IPAs and Kitty Paw seltzer, as well as wine and cocktails.

The space is being designed by Jenine Monks of Dune House Creative, who also was the interior designer for both Antiques on High and Seventh Son. The design will have a vacation-like feel with greenery, wood, an adobe fireplace, white stucco and terrazzo materials.

“The Getaway is going to be an incredibly fun place for the entire community,” Bob Hoying, principal at Bridge Park develop Crawford Hoying, said in a news release. “Whether you want to drop in for a drink after work, hang out with friends on the weekend or stop by on the way to dinner, The Getaway will offer an experience for everyone. It's the perfect addition to the neighborhood.”

Talks between the brewer and Crawford Hoying began in fall 2019. The initial plan was to open at some point last year, but the Covid-19 pandemic delayed that.

Castore said there were times when he thought they might not go through with it given the current climate, but after talking it through with the developer they came to an agreement that worked for all involved.

“We're at least past the halfway point (with the pandemic),” Castore said. “We can see the light at the end of the tunnel. We're just not sure how long the tunnel is.”

Sales are down for Seventh Son, especially during these winter months, sometimes as low as 20% year-over-year in a given week but generally in the 30% to 50% range. Business was around 70% year-over-year during the summer.

The delivery business continues to generate sales as does a new beer subscription service.

"We're OK," Castore said. "Even if it's slow, it's been a steady slow, which has we've been able to plan for."

Another round of Paycheck Protection Program funds is expected to be a needed infusion. The brewery's Beer Bonds program also generated helpful revenue during these leaner times.

Adding hours and employees is something Castore said he's very much looking forward to doing. Though the company has not had any layoffs, it did cut salaries for staff and hours have been restricted across the board as sales have been down.

He expects at least half the initial Getaway staff to be employees moving from one of the other Seventh Son spaces. The company could hire between five and 15 new employees.

"It's going to be nice to be able to open up more hours," he said. "It's a nice reward for all our employees who've been sticking this out."

https://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/news/2021/02/11/columbus-craft-brewer-launching-new-brand-bar-in.html?ana=e_colum_bn_breakingnews_breakingnews&j=90550152&t=Breaking%20News&mk_tok=eyJpIjoiWVRZMU1UWTF0amRsTmpFNSIsInQiOiJ1c1hldnFjM0xINGtxME9FVW9ocW5HREFTUJURFwvSkJQMSs2MTJzcTZSdEJTR09RQmNyM0N6c3kwRzJhaUFsK1gxUk85MUxObFdDYldGM3oxN0FRcFFGZWE4XC93MEtjK2F0M2JzZjVcLytVcU02VHZyT2tDR1ZqQINpOHE0blpWTyJ9

Murphys to operate Omena Bay Country Store

By Mark Urban murban@record-eagle.com

Traverse City The Record Eagle

Feb 10, 2021

OMENA — So much for Murphy's Law.

Kevin and Amy Murphy, owners of the New Bohemian Café in Northport, emerged from a field of 15 applicants to operate the renovated Omena Bay Country Store. The Murphys were informed in November they landed the right to negotiate a deal to run the store. They recently signed a five-year lease, from **Donald Leathery, Jr. '84**, on the property at 5055 N. West Bay Shore Drive.

A late spring opening is planned for the Omena Bay Country Store.

“We want to have a few weeks before things warm up, both traffic-wise and the weather,” Kevin Murphy said.

The Leathery Company on June 26 purchased the property in the village of Omena from the family estate of the late Richard and Ingrid “Sunny” Colling. The Columbus, Ohio-based Leathery Company “owns, manages and leases over two million square feet of retail, office and warehouse space” according to its website.

Leathery said the Murphys distinguished themselves from a pool of 15 who expressed an interest in running the Omena business that dates back to 1889.

“We were thrilled to have such a strong group to choose from,” Leathery said in an email. “There were many well-qualified applicants. The Murphys stood out from the rest of the field due to their ownership of the existing New Bohemian Café business in Northport.

“The New Bohemian Café has an excellent reputation and makes tremendous food and coffee. We know they will bring that same success to Omena.”

“We were certainly pleased,” Kevin Murphy said. “We went into it knowing we could do a good job of it, but not knowing who we were up against. It didn’t cost us anything, so we put in our best shot.”

The Murphys opened the New Bohemian Café in the spring of 2019 at 110 Waukazoo St. Some of those regulars in its nearly three years of operation may have helped the Murphys land the lease with the Leathery family.

“There are a lot of people from Omena that have been customers of ours in Northport that may have put a bug in the ear of the Leatherys,” Kevin Murphy said.

One thing the Omena Bay Country Store won’t be is a duplication of the Northport business.

“I think it will have some things in common with the café,” Amy Murphy said. “But we’re not looking to open a second location of the café in a new town.”

The Murphys said the New Bohemian Café was designed to address a couple of things they found lacking in Northport when they moved there full-time 8 years ago.

First was the need for a good coffee shop and the second was for some good grab-and-go food similar to places like Village Cheese Shanty in Leland or Fogarelli’s Market in Traverse City. Kevin Murphy said there wasn’t an espresso machine in Northport until they brought one in.

While the Omena Bay Country Store will be more retail than restaurant, the Murphys wanted to make one thing clear for its new customers in Omena.

“We are planning to add coffee,” Amy Murphy said. “We’ve had quite a few people say that’s what the community wants.”

What the Omena Bay Country Store eventually does look like will be determined by the community, the Muphys said.

The transfer of the liquor license is in progress and the store will continue to sell groceries and other camp, cabin and cottage essentials. But whether the store will offer pizza, donuts, ice cream or stand-up paddleboard rentals remains to be determined.

“We’ll spend the first year listening to what the Omena community wants and needs,” Amy Murphy said.

“You have to be shrewd about decision-making and get yourself into something that’s sustainable,” Kevin Murphy added.

Kevin Murphy said the historical name will remain and was “something the Leathery company kind of had an attachment to.”

In an earlier Record-Eagle story, Donald Leathery Jr. said in an email that his parents, “Ann and (the late) Don Leathery, first purchased a house in Omena in 1972 and we have been spending the summers up there ever since. In addition to my family’s home, my sister’s family has a home in Omena as does my mother.

“Omena is a special place where we reconnect with family and friends every year.”

The Omena Bay Country Store may have some staff from its Northport location transfer down. Including the owners, the New Bohemian Café has a staff of eight and is open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. seven days a week. The Omena store should have a staff of two full-time equivalent employees.

The lease in Omena includes an attached three-bedroom, two-bath house as well as a two-bedroom, one-bath apartment above.

The Murphys have formed Omena Bay Properties to manage the house and apartment, which may turn into a year-round rental.

https://www.record-eagle.com/news/business/murphys-to-operate-omena-bay-country-store/article_c8a5e158-67d0-11eb-943b-a7153c297149.html

Following a victory in CardX, LLCv. Derek Schmidt, Chicago-based payments technology company CardX announced that they are now serving businesses in Kansas.

With this result, Kansas becomes the 47th state open to CardX's surcharging model, following Oklahoma, California, and Florida as other recent states to overturn legacy "no surcharge" laws.

"The result in Kansas comes at a key moment for the payments industry," said CardX CEO and Harvard Law graduate **Jonathan Razi '08**. "Surcharging is becoming even more prominent as payments continue to move online, and, with upcoming interchange increases in April, this is timely relief for the many companies that will be looking to reduce their costs of payment acceptance."

In CardX, LLC v. Derek Schmidt, the court evaluated the law's constitutionality "as applied" to CardX's specific payments technology.

"There is still the possibility that the Kansas statute could be enforced against other merchants or providers if the fact pattern were different," noted CardX COO Michael Tomko, also a Harvard Law graduate. "Compliance continues to be the defining question in the surcharging space."

In addition to the card brand rules addressing surcharging, there are a number of state laws governing the issue, including "no surcharge" laws in Colorado, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.

"We're actively reviewing our options for the remaining states, and we intend to be a 50-state provider," added Razi. "Many of our largest clients have expressed interest in a national pricing strategy, and we will continue to push the regulatory movement forward until CardX is available in all 50 states."

About CardX

CardX is a Chicago-based provider of technology solutions for credit card surcharging. A regulatory expert, CardX has served as amicus curiae in the US Supreme Court and continues to shape the compliance landscape. For more information about using CardX to accept credit cards at 0% cost, please visit cardx.com.

<https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/cardx-wins-in-kansas-opens-47th-state-to-cardx-s-credit-card-surcharging-solution-1030130824>

Auto dealers saw sales go down the drain last year, but say they are moving forward more nimbly and focused on customers

By Dan Eaton – Staff reporter, Columbus Business First

Feb 25, 2021, 11:49am EST

Doing more with less is almost a cliché – but that is exactly what some in the auto industry did in 2020.

And that's a good sign for 2021.

Sales were down, but a combination of lower expenses, rising demand and higher prices meant good if not record profits despite the pandemic.

For example, Germain Motor Co. sold 16% fewer vehicles in 2020 than in 2019, but saw its profits rise by 30% for a record year.

"We've become more virtual, more digital and that's made us more efficient," said Chief Operating Officer John Malishenko. "It's not as expensive to produce and manage online sales."

According to market researcher Cox Automotive's most recent quarterly dealer sentiment survey, franchised dealers' feelings about profits are at the highest level in years.

"I was surprised at how decent 2020 ended up being," Ricart Automotive President **Rick Ricart '98** said. "(Sales) were down 8%. That's on the better end. When the pandemic hit, we had to become lean and clean."

With the same dynamics in place for much of this year and those learnings not soon forgotten, dealers are optimistic 2021 could be better.

"I don't have to know what is going to happen," Malishenko said. "I just have to be open to it when it comes through that front door. But I know it's not going to get worse."

Maintaining momentum

In its annual assessment, Cox Automotive said it expects the industry to see sales increase 9% in 2021 to 15.7 million vehicles, after falling 15% to 14.5 million vehicles sold in 2020.

"We thought it would be much worse," Cox Senior Economist Charlie Chesbrough said in a January presentation.

The year really was a bit of a roller coaster for the auto industry. Sales bottomed out in April when only 702,862 vehicles were sold nationwide, but by December, monthly sales had more than doubled to 1.59 million vehicles.

That was the 10th best sales month in the past decade, according to auto valuation and research company Kelley Blue Book.

For certainly most if not all dealers, spring 2020 was bad. (“Abysmal” is the word Malishenko used.)

Germain’s January 2021 was comparable to pre-pandemic 2020, which is a good sign, Malishenko said. Given that, there’s a real opportunity to have a strong first half of the year.

“The challenge is we have to maintain that momentum,” he said.

Although Chesbrough said the forecast is more positive than negative, supply challenges could continue to constrain sales.

But despite fewer units sold, the results weren’t all bad. The average transaction price for a vehicle last year reached nearly \$40,000, according to Kelley Blue Book. Vehicles priced under \$30,000, which made up half the market in 2015, now account for just 23% of sales.

There were actually more vehicles sold last year over \$50,000, at 28% of the market, than under \$30,000.

Digital drive

A year ago, Ricart was spending a lot on marketing to promote its online capabilities. It didn’t envision that side of the business would become so important so fast.

“The pandemic created a bigger market for remote sales,” Ricart said.

That’s ebbed and flowed. It peaked in the early months of the pandemic, but declined as summer went on and customers were more comfortable with in-person shopping.

But winter and the ongoing pandemic started driving up the digital side again.

In January, Ricart said the dealership was getting more online interaction that week than it had in the previous couple months.

“It’s cold. People don’t want to come out, but they know we’re there (online) now,” he said. “That wasn’t the case a year ago.”

Germain is seeing the same.

“It’s like they put us in a time machine and moved us three years down the road,” Malishenko said of digital adoption.

Part of the reason profits are up is that the rise in digital sales is coinciding with a decline in jobs.

Malishenko said Germain has fewer employees today than it did a year ago, though he declined to share the exact number. Ricart, too, is leaner now.

“We are smaller. That’s the new reality,” Malishenko said. “We were selling less cars total and more cars digital. That changed the job description.”

Opportunities and threats

With new car prices rising, the used market remains a bustling alternative.

“Low-priced used cars are absolutely the hardest thing for us to source,” Ricart said. “The supply is constrained. We’re trying to stock up as many used cars as we can.”

The dealership is in such need that its TV advertisements now feature Ricart making a pitch to buy cars.

“We want your car,” Ricart said. “We’ve never done a TV commercial with me yelling about that.”

Fleet and commercial sales took a hit in 2020 as well — estimated to be down 36% nationwide by Cox Automotive. Ricart expects a rebound and even built a facility dedicated to fleet sales and service.

“With the expansion of Amazon and more people having delivery as a job, we expect to see that pick up,” he said. “Those vehicles need to be sold and serviced.”

The commercial side of the business also is where Ricart expects to see more electric vehicles.

“Will it be at the end of 2021? I’m not sure, but it’s coming,” Ricart said. “We’re trying to be on the forefront.”

The push toward electric is a tough one for some dealers, with manufacturers requiring upgrades and new investments.

“It’s not cheap,” Malishenko said. “You have to spend a lot of money now to be able to sell cars that aren’t viable options for consumers yet.”

According to media reports late last year, 150 Cadillac dealers nationwide opted to take buyouts rather than invest in an electric future.

The question remains how much consumer demand there is for electric.

At the same it, it is worth noting that Tesla led all auto brands last year by posting 7% sales growth.

Sales of the Chevrolet Bolt, the best-selling non-Tesla electric, also increased 26% to 20,000 units, according to Kelley Blue Book research.

<https://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/news/2021/02/25/auto-sales-2021.html>

Chelsea Penzone '96 was named one of the top 21 Female Fast Risers in Franchising by Franchise Update Media.



21 FOR '21

Female fast risers share their journey (It's getting better all the time!)

Each year, beginning in 2014, we've dedicated our first issue of the year to Women in Franchising. We asked 21 female franchise leaders ("fast risers") a set of questions intended to show readers what they do, how they got there, and where they're headed—along with some personal and career advice and encouragement to women looking to make their own mark in franchising in the years ahead. Based on their responses, we created some fun stats from this year's group of female franchise leaders:

Age: From 23 to 56, with an average of 37

Title: Across the board: founder, CEO, president, COO, CMO, CIO, CDO, and various other roles in franchise development, marketing, training, technology, and real estate

Years in franchising: From 4 to 16, with an average of just under 10 years (which translates into more than 200 total years of franchise experience!)

Units: 9,153 total, from 6 units to more than 2,000, with an average of 436

Industry: We made sure to select women working in different industries, from service brands to food brands.

We hope our 21 for '21 selection will inspire women aspiring to grow in franchising, even during these highly challenging times. Women clearly have made strong inroads in many roles at franchise companies, a trend we wholeheartedly applaud and support. Our own advice to women seeking a career in franchising's upper echelons? Go for it!





CHELSEA PENZONE, 43

Vice President of Brand Management and Development

Brands: Strategic Franchising Systems (Caring Transitions, Fresh Coat Painters, The Growth Coach, Pet Wants, TruBlue Total House Care)

Years in franchising: 9

No. of units: 500+

What attracted you to franchising? I was first intrigued by franchising while growing up in Columbus, Ohio, where brands like Wendy's, Stanley Steemer, and Donatos Pizza corporate headquarters were located. When I was growing up, my aunt and uncle owned several Donatos locations in Ohio, so I had some exposure to franchising through them. Eventually, I found myself working at Stanley Steemer, and that was where I really started to see the value of franchising.

What was your first job in franchising? Regional marketing manager at Stanley Steemer International. However, this role was focused primarily on corporate locations. I was eventually promoted to director of marketing and oversaw all national marketing functions for the entire organization, which included about 220 franchise locations and more than 60 corporate locations nationwide.

What do you attribute your success to? I have always been very focused on strategy and high-level planning. Although my specialty has always been marketing, I am very operationally driven and focused. I think this has helped me in franchising because I can easily relate to the challenges franchise owners face across all aspects of the business.

What challenges and obstacles have you overcome in your career? I spent my first few years working exclusively in the home services industry where the brands were male-dominated. As a young woman, it was definitely a challenge to be accepted and taken seriously in that environment. Fortunately, I think it set me up for future success and prepared me for most of the challenges I have faced.

Describe your journey to your current position: Most recently, I started working for Strategic Franchising, which consists of five unique franchise brands (Caring Transitions, Fresh Coat Painters, The Growth Coach, Pet Wants, and TruBlue Total House Care). In this new role, I shifted from consumer marketing to lead generation and franchise development, which was a bit of a transition. However, I am really enjoying my new role and feel that

my consumer marketing background has given me a different perspective for franchise development. I am extremely lucky to have the opportunity to work with all five brand leaders and cross-functional teams to achieve our organizational goals and drive franchise development.

What are your future career goals? I would like to continue working in franchising for the foreseeable future. Although marketing is my passion, I am interested in exploring other aspects of franchising and would consider purchasing my own franchise one day.

Advice to young female executives in franchising: Choose organizations that align with your personality and that support your goals. Focus on people and on building relationships. There are great resources in the franchising community, so focus on connecting with like-minded individuals. There are always opportunities to learn and grow from the people around you—especially in franchising. ■

In Memory

Edward J. Griffiths '62, age 77, passed away February 11, 2021. Ed was born on September 29, 1943 in Columbus to the late Edward and Blanche Griffiths. Graduate of Columbus Academy and The Ohio State University. He was a longtime real estate investor in Columbus. He loved the time he spent at Camp Kiwanee, traveling the world with his parents and spending time with friends at the family home on the river. He is preceded in death by his beloved parents. He is survived by his sister, Sally Griffiths (Dan Brown) Blue; nieces, Erin (Colin Gawel) McHam, Shannon (David) Ruma, Rylie McHam and Regan McHam; great-nieces and nephews, Madison, Owen, Lauren, Jimmy, and Lexy; dear friend and cousin Ann Koon (Bob) Flueckiger and daughters, Jennifer and Molly. A private burial will take place at Union Cemetery. He was a loyal friend with a great sense of humor. A Celebration of Ed's Life will be held in the spring. Donations may be made to Columbus Academy. Arrangements completed by EGAN-RYAN NORTHWEST CHAPEL, 4661 Kenny Road. Visit www.egan-ryan.com to offer condolences.

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dispatch/obituary.aspx?n=edward-griffiths&pid=197761929&fhid=12137>