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# Tremmonster

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Tremont Brainery:  
Four New Workshops  
...page 2



affoGATO Cat Cafe:  
Building a Cat  
Community  
...page 3



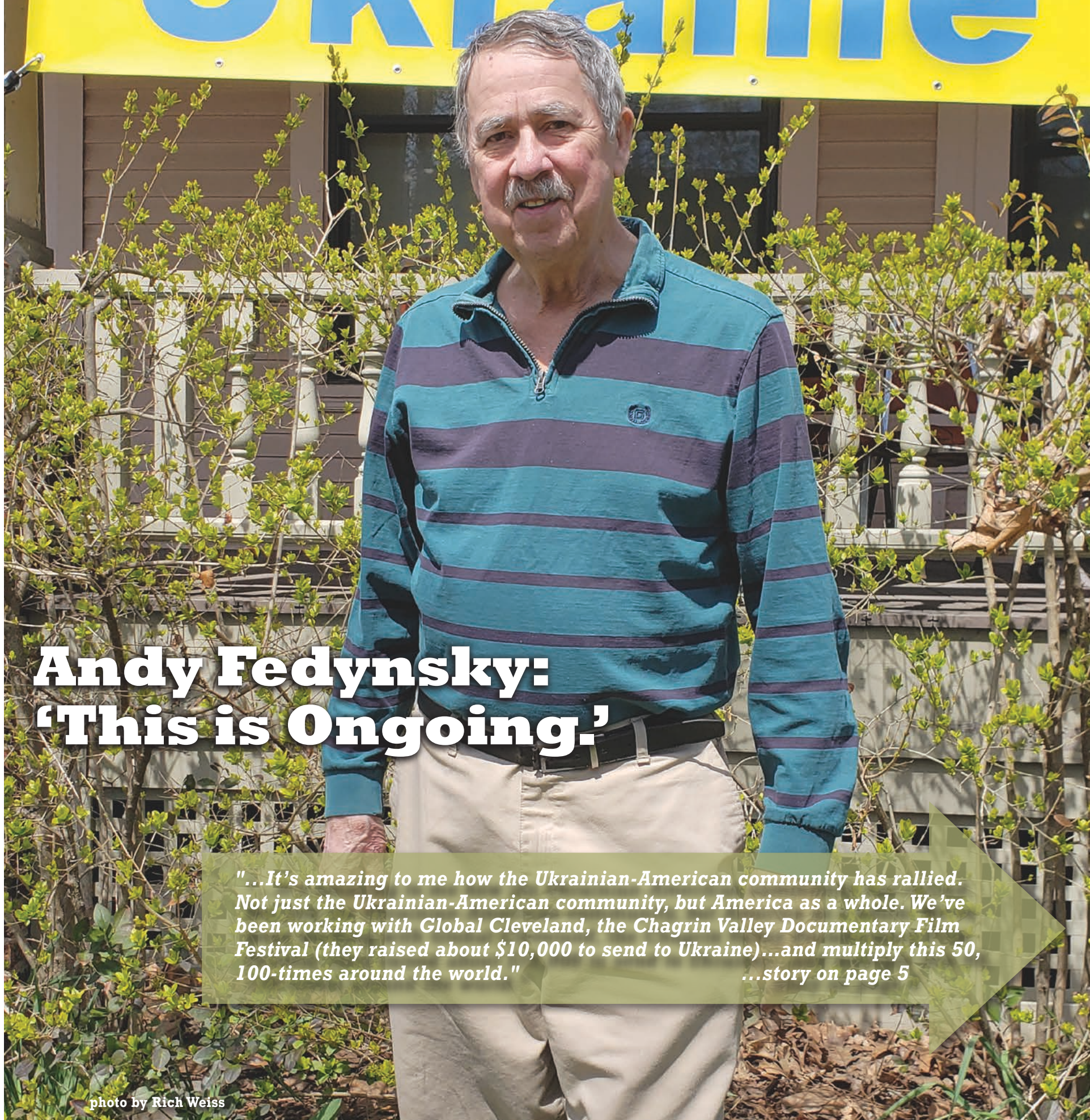
An Interview with  
818 Gallery Owner-  
Operator, Barbara Merrit  
...page 4



Roasted Tremont:  
a Lifelong Dream  
...page 7

INSIDE

# Stand with Ukraine



## Andy Fedynsky: 'This is Ongoing.'

*"...It's amazing to me how the Ukrainian-American community has rallied. Not just the Ukrainian-American community, but America as a whole. We've been working with Global Cleveland, the Chagrin Valley Documentary Film Festival (they raised about \$10,000 to send to Ukraine)...and multiply this 50, 100-times around the world." ...story on page 5*

photo by Rich Weiss



# Tremont Brainery \*Four New Workshops\*



TREMONT BRAINERY AND MERRICK HOUSE PRESENTS:  
**ASL WORKSHOP**  
JUNE 2, 2022 5:30-6:30PM  
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**by Keri November**

Last year, Tremont residents Keri November and Jack Ricchiuto founded Tremont Shot Finders' volunteer effort. This incredible effort helped neighbors locate impossible-to-find COVID-19 vaccinations at the time. Keri November is a full-time lecturer of American Sign Language at Case Western Reserve University. Jack Ricchiuto is a local and national community builder and leadership coach. Together they started their latest effort, the Tremont Brainery: a volunteer effort where neighbors teach neighbors on topics related to any area of skill, knowledge, or expertise.

Tremont Brainery is excited to announce four upcoming workshops!

- Tanya Kaiser of Kaiser Gallery will present "How to Discuss Art with Confidence" at her Gallery! The event starts at 7 pm on Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. Participants must be 21 and over! *There is a requested one-drink minimum.*
- Keri will teach an introductory American Sign Language workshop at the Merrick House in Tremont. The workshop starts at 5:30 pm Thursday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, and runs for one hour. Participants must be 18 and over! Feel free to utilize the flyer below to register through the QR code.
- Keri will also teach an introductory American Sign Language workshop at the new Roasted coffee shop in Tremont. The workshop starts at 5:30 pm Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, and runs for one hour. Participants must be 18 and over! *There is a requested one-item minimum.*
- Jack will also be doing another workshop on Meditation and Mindfulness in May at the fabulous new Roasted space. Details to come!

Go to TremontBrainery.com and select "events." Once you do so, register for the workshop you're interested in signing up for!

For future workshops, if you are interested in teaching a workshop through Tremont Brainery or if you have a topic you would like to learn, you can request a workshop on any topic! Join the Tremont Brainery Facebook group to learn about future workshops and volunteer to teach or request a workshop! Feel free to email me directly if you are not on Facebook at klmnovember18@gmail.com.

@THE SIGN GUY 1972 SIGHTING:

# Good Friday Murals Appear on Tremont Fences



Photo by Sandy Smith

Dave Witzke (a.k.a. The Sign Guy) was sighted painting one of several Tremont fence murals he offered to Tremonsters for Good Friday.

**by The Tremonster**

On Good Friday, *The Tremonster* found The Sign Guy Dave Witzke painting murals on fences of Tremonsters who found his Good Friday fence mural painting offer on the Tremont Neighborhood Crime Watch Page. We asked him how these Good Friday murals came about.

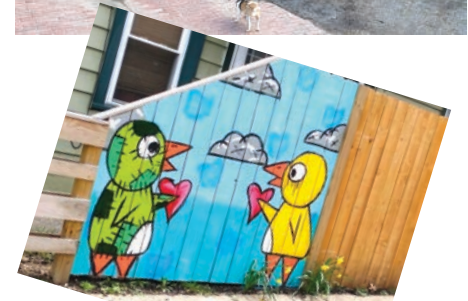
**Dave:** Previously, when I wanted to paint murals, I offered free murals on my Instagram page. Nobody responded.

**The Tremonster: Nobody responded?**

**Dave:** Nobody responded. I go on the Tremont [Neighborhood Crime Watch Facebook] page... I was like, 'Oh, I'll go on and see what's going on over there.' A recent post popped up complaining someone had done some tags on a fence. I'm like, 'Tomorrow's Good Friday...see if I can get some fences in'—you know, to cover that up or whatever. I went on there, posted, and like... [Dave mimed being overrun] Swamped. Yeah, swamped.



Photo by The Tremonster



**The Tremonster:** We saw Sandy Smith responded right away.

**Dave:** Sandy--she was the first one. People were sending me all these different things...I'll never get to them all. But there's going to be another day where I'm going to want to paint—it's a nice day, nothing else is going on...and I want to have all these walls on the back-burner that I can do a different day. I wanted to paint today. I knew I was off, I'm like, 'Oh, I want to paint—it's supposed to be nice. It would be nice to paint a fence or whatever.' But I didn't expect, like...that. I offered these Good Friday murals for free, and... people are giving me money, anyway.

**The Tremonster:** Like donations, though—you're not charging for this work?

**Dave:** Normally, I charge for my work—a two-car garage door is \$500; a one-car garage is \$250-\$300.

That pricing was based years ago on a customer on Literary. I just wanted some extra money...I met with them; I said...Oh yeah, just give me—they said, like, 'No. We're going to give you \$500.' So...they set the price for the doors. Now, people ask me—'Two car garage door?' '500 bucks.' ...and people don't mind paying it!

*If you have a surface you would like The Sign Guy to add to his list, or if you would like to commission a mural for your garage door, follow/contact him @thesignguy1972 on Instagram.*

2601 West 10th Street | Tremont | Cleveland

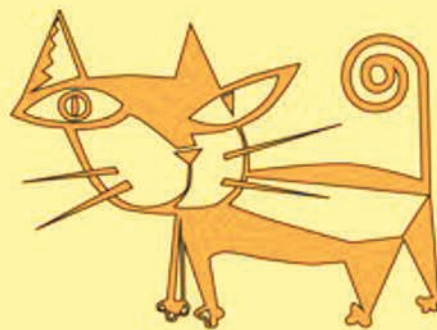


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**ScottRadkeArt.com**

Mascot: Abbey

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# affoGATO Cat Cafe: Building a Cat Community



Photo by The Tremmonster

Eddie and Mandy adapted to survive the pandemic and look forward to re-uniting their cat community.

## A special report by The Tremmonster

The Tremmonster interviewed affoGATO Cat Café co-owners Mandy Miller and Eduardo Crespo at the end of April to check on plans for their future, to see how they're doing today, and to learn about how they navigated their new Tremont business through an unusual second and third year of operation amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

### The Tremmonster: Eddie and Mandy, how have you navigated the last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic?

**Mandy:** We were closed for...what—probably five or six months?

**Eddie:** Somewhere around six months, and then we—

**Mandy:** We did like a partial close...we were closed-closed for a while, then we came back and we were only doing adoption appointments and to-go service. Actually, another local business, Terrapin Bakery over on W. 14th Street, gave us a door to install in our door so that we could do to-go service outside. That helped us survive; that was really awesome.

**Eddie:** They helped us out majorly.

**Mandy:** And then we were slowly easing into opening, and it's been movin' and groovin' since then. The cat side is busy as always—people always want to visit with the cats—so, we're still recommending reservations for that side, even though we're taking walk-ins again, technically. We're just always full because people love the cats, which is nice. The café side is open for dine-in again, so we're encouraging people to come back and get our coffee and snacks and stuff—that's been a big thing because I think people still aren't sure which places are open for dine-in again and which aren't.

**Eddie:** The live stream was a stroke of genius on Mandy and Lea's [co-owner, Lea Crespo] part. We were trying to increase the amount of safety measures we could add to the café while still getting cats adopted out. We were doing meet-and-greets (about 30 minutes at a time) and then we would have to clean for a half hour to an hour between each one...we were doing that for free. We were coming in, introducing people for free, doing the adoptions—the entire adoption fee goes to the shelter [Cleveland APL, affoGATO Café's adoption partner], as it should—

**Mandy:** —I was going to say, I don't know if you know: we don't make anything off of adoptions. We work with the shelter, and we don't want to penalize the cats that are here or make the shelter lose money for the awesome work they're doing—

**Eddie:** —Exactly.

**Mandy:** So, when we do adoptions, all that money goes to the shelter. That's why our cover charge is so important...but that's also why the pandemic has been so difficult.

**Eddie:** [The live stream] was a solution to a bunch of different problems we had. It basically gave us a resource to point to when people asked us about adopting the cats, and they didn't have to come in. As it went on, we generated more interest and

we started getting people subscribing to it. That's been a huge help, too, because it's not a lot of income but it's just a little bit extra to help us survive the pandemic. We just got an amazing response from some members of our little online community that we've created, and they've just been wonderful to us. They've been helping us out, and they've been tuning in every week, seeing the cats, providing us words of encouragement—they get to know the cats via the stream, and the different cats get their different fandoms. Right now, people on our stream love Gracie—she's a 12-year-old who's been with us for a long time...it's just been really nice to build an online community; it's very close-knit, very wonderful, very positive...I can't say enough wonderful things about the people who tune in.

**Mandy:** We stream on Twitch twice a week. It's free to watch, and we encourage people to watch if they're interested in adopting. Even if their schedule won't allow them, or they still don't feel safe, or they can't afford to come visit the cat lounge for our regular hang-outs, they can watch those videos and still get to know the cats. People are able to subscribe and support, as well.

**Eddie:** It increased—without a doubt—the amount of adoptions we've done because you record a video once, and 50 people can watch it. I think we're averaging about 150 views per stream.

**Mandy:** Yeah, yeah, it isn't huge for Twitch standards, but it's nice for our cats.

**The Tremmonster: There are so many businesses that went under during the pandemic. It must have been particularly hard for this business, having made the investments you needed to make. How can you describe, as a mom-and-pop business, going through this pandemic?**

**Mandy:** We're so, so grateful we had really been showing some growth in our first year, and we were so excited that so many cats were getting adopted and that people were enthusiastic about coming to visit—to see it die suddenly...was just so heartbreaking. We'd be here, at the café (we have to come and check on our space) but there were no cats here...we adopted out all the cats right when the pandemic hit, so we're walking through empty space...it was so, so heartbreaking—

**Eddie:** —and then, we have these money sinks: the rent doesn't stop, medical insurance didn't stop—

**Mandy:** —everything.

**Eddie:** Yeah. We applied for grants; we got denied for all of them. It was rough that for six months, we didn't know what we were going to do. We applied for grants because we'd already taken out so many loans, we were cautious about taking on additional Paycheck Protection Program loans...you know, we were raised to be very fiscally responsible: never [take out a loan] you're not sure that you can pay back.

Who knows—if that were to change we'd be up a creek. So, we just tried for grants but got denied.

**Mandy:** There were grants that were designed for women and minority-owned businesses—

**Eddie:** —we are both!—

**Mandy:** —we are both, yes [they laugh]! There were cat cafes in other cities closed: the one in Columbus closed; one of the ones in Pittsburgh closed...so it was very real to us how possible it was that we were going to close. The cat café that we are closest to is Gem City Café in Dayton. Thankfully, they survived as well—knock on wood.

**Eddie:** They seemed to really have their stuff together—we knew they were going to be fine. I think, during the pandemic, they opened a vet clinic—

**Mandy:** —they used their time to open a vet clinic!

**Eddie:** —they're helping even more since the pandemic, which is impressive.

**Mandy:** They were a little more established than us before the pandemic hit, and we're so happy for them.

**The Tremmonster: The numbers of adopted cats was impressive prior to the pandemic; tell us about how many successes there have been throughout this stretch of time.**

**Mandy:** Yeah, it's been great. Like I said, right when the pandemic hit, we adopted out the last cats we had here, so, thankfully, they were all in their nice, new homes to ride everything out. Then, as soon as we were open, there was interest immediately—I think everybody was stuck at home, so, people want companionship...there have been way more adoptions than we expected since we re-opened.

**The Tremmonster: What kinds of adjustments did you need to make when you were open during the pandemic?**

**Mandy:** I think we had a lot of people who felt safe coming here because we took it so seriously—it was a lot of work: we had breaks between each appointment, we were deeply sanitizing the room, there are separate air systems...

**Eddie:** It was a lot of stress. We read lots of articles where cats were catching [COVID-19], and we had an obligation to them to take care of them. They don't know any better; they can't do preventative measures. So, we have to be twice as worried as the average person because we're inviting people into their space.

**The Tremmonster: They have a difficult time with social distancing?**

**Eddie:** Right. And if they were to get sick, they would end up back in the shelter and then all the other cats would be in danger, too...it's just a domino effect that you have to take care of before it becomes a problem.

**The Tremmonster: Do you hear back from families that have adopted your cats?**

**Mandy:** We get so many nice updates! We have a hashtag that people can use: it's #affoGATOalumni—we encourage people to use that [when posting about their adopted cats on social media], or people will stop in or send us emails.

**Eddie:** The emails are kind of detailed!

**Mandy:** Yeah, the emails are pretty detailed and have pictures and stuff. We actually just got an update about one of the cats in our very first group, Kirby. Apparently, she is thriving at home and has a cat wheel that she loves.

**Eddie:** I think you have pictures of Kirby somewhere.

**Mandy:** Yes—from when we were opening—because she was in our first group!

**The Tremmonster: We certainly do have pictures of Kirby.**



Kirby, affoGATO Cat Cafe Alumnus

**Eddie:** She's the petite brown tabby kitten...

**Mandy:** ...she was wearing a pink flower when she came in.

**Eddie:** Yeah.

**Mandy:** We've been getting tons of awesome updates, which is what helps keep us going...knowing that they've gone to these homes, and they're so loved!

**Eddie:** It's a huge boon.

**Mandy:** We're actually working on a project right now making yearbooks of all the cats.

**Eddie:** Mandy is.

**Mandy:** Yes—

**Eddie:** —Mandy is single-handedly creating yearbooks for all the cats!

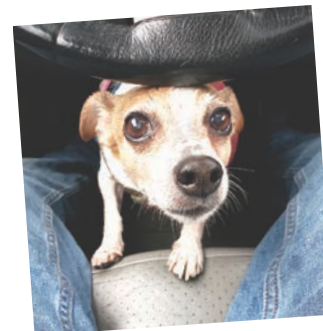
**Mandy:** There's going to be a yearbook (for each year) of all the cats that have gone home. It has their pictures and their adoption date and birthday...

**Eddie:** She's doing great work.

**The Tremmonster: It seems like you're building a cat community.**

**Eddie:** We try!

**Mandy:** All the people that stop in here, that's the mutual connection that we all have. No matter what, everybody loves the cats. It makes for a really nice sense of community...especially when everything is so divisive.



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## An Interview with 818 Gallery Owner-Operator, Barbara Merritt



photos by Barbara Merritt

By Bruce Checefsky

Trained as a fine art photographer with a background in studio arts, Barbara Merritt has been a freelance photographer for over 22 years. She specializes in portrait, event and fine art, and pet photography. Her studio is located at 818 Professor Avenue. Three years ago, she opened 818 Gallery, which shows contemporary art by regional artists four or five times a year. To schedule a photography session or make an appointment to see the gallery contact her at [barbmerritt@gmail.com](mailto:barbmerritt@gmail.com) or call 216-870-2012.

**Bruce: You are both a photographer and gallery owner. Tell me about that.**

**Barbara:** I am an artist and photographer. I also own the 818 Gallery in Tremont. I had a gallery in Tremont in the 1990s on the second floor above the former Fifth Third Bank on Professor Avenue. I moved to Chicago after five years, where I worked for a commercial gallery. After two years, I returned to Cleveland.

**Bruce: Way did you move back to Cleveland?**

**Barbra:** Mostly family reasons. I was born in Cleveland and grew up in Lakewood. I lived in Tremont for ten years. When I returned, the rent was too high. I eventually opened a gallery about the Fahrenheit restaurant on Professor Avenue. The job in Chicago fell through. I had to return home.

**Bruce: What was Tremont like in the 1990s?**

**Barbara:** Tremont was empty except for a few art galleries. There were some restaurants but not many. Asterisk Gallery was on Professor Avenue. We had a lot of parties at the gallery with different Tremont artists.

**Bruce: What first brought you to Tremont?**

**Barbara:** I liked the way it was a very community-driven neighborhood. There were many grassroots organizations in Tremont back then. I get involved with some of them. At that point in my life, I was unsure where I wanted to end up. I gravitated to the arts community. A lifetime of friendships came from that.

**Bruce: What about your return. How was that different?**

**Barbara:** I opened 818 Gallery three years ago. I was a bartender at Edison's Pub. The owner of the building also owns the Fahrenheit restaurant building. We worked out a deal for me to rent the upstairs. When COVID19 hit, I quit bartending and devoted more time to the gallery.

**Bruce: You were involved with photography while also bartending.**

**Barbara:** I have been a freelance photographer for over twenty years. I used to do weddings but not much anymore. I do portraiture and photograph fine art for magazine and catalog publications. I also do pet photography.

**Bruce: What is it like to photograph someone's pet?**

**Barbara:** Crazy, people seem to want to photograph their pets more than their children. I love working with animals.

**Bruce: Do you photograph in your studio or at the pet owner's home?**

**Barbara:** I prefer the studio but outdoor location shoots are great fun. I find it hard to get animals to relax when outdoors. They are usually very excited to be out of the house.

**Bruce: What is it like working with the pet owners?**

**Barbara:** They are very protective and forgiving but also very sweet. For example, I like to watch an owner show up with a dog. They worry about the animal not

behaving or doing something wrong. My job is to make them feel relaxed, both the pet and owner. It is tricky, but I am very good at it.

**Bruce: Do pet owners bring their own props?**

**Barbara:** I ask them to bring favorite toys and stuff like that. I use furniture with costumes and treats. My clients often leave the final photographs up to me. Some clients have specific ideas around Christmas and Halloween. A shooting session lasts about an hour, where I will change and move around the gallery to different locations depending on how the animals react to the environment. Occasionally, I work with an assistant, except when photographing pets. Fewer distractions are better.

**Bruce: Which animals are easiest to work with and which are the hardest?**

**Barbara:** Puppies are the easiest to work with because they get tired fast. Cats are hard to photograph because people are not comfortable bringing their cats out of the home. I am open to all animals except monkeys. No monkeys.

**Bruce: What was the most unusual pet you have photographed?**

**Barbara:** I did a snake portrait once for a friend. I got more comfortable with snakes after that.

**Bruce: What was it like photographing a snake?**

**Barbara:** The owner held the snake to make it more comfortable. I can photograph through glass or in a playpen, but it has to be in a contained space. I would never take a snake outside.

**Bruce: Do owners like to be in the photograph with their pets?**

**Barbara:** Owners like to have their kids with their pets. With aging pets, the owner sometimes likes to be there. They want to hold onto the memory.

**Bruce: What do you say to calm a pet?**

**Barbara:** I let them sniff around and do their thing. The ones that misbehave yield the funniest photographs.

**Bruce: Do you own any pets?**

**Barbara:** I had a cat that passed away last year. I am not ready to start anything new yet.

**Bruce: How would you describe your clientele at the gallery?**

**Barbara:** I have very diverse and distinguished art collectors and casual collectors. Lots of my clients are artists, friends, and family. The Tremont Walkabout brings people to the art gallery, some of which have never been here before. I watch tour buses stop in Tremont. With every new show, there are a slew of new faces. I host four or five shows a year. I look for a match to make a group show when selecting artists and pick a theme based on color or digital art. I also have an open call for artists.

**Bruce: What advice would you give to an artist looking to exhibit?**

**Barbara:** I would say to an artist just starting out to show your work as often as possible and get involved in the Cleveland arts community. The art scene is manageable in a way different from other larger cities. It's easier to get involved and recognized as an artist in a city the size of Cleveland. We are a very close-knit community.



Barbara Merritt has been a freelance photographer for over 22 years. She specializes in portrait, event and fine art, and pet photography.

## The Pelton: Renovating a Pre-Civil War Building in the Heart of Tremont



Photo by The Tremont

The Pelton front building was built in 1860. Since then, there were multiple additions.

by The Tremont

If you're curious about the renovations to the historic building on the northwest corner of W. 10th St. and Literary Ave.—the site of the former Bozalodz II Beauty Salon—James Asimes and Tommy Hasson, of Local Development Partners, are ready to make five of their six apartments available May 1st, and are ready to provide the answers to all your other questions.

The Pelton is the historic, pre-Civil War building renovation taking place at 2258 West 10th St. When the project is finished, it will sport six new, modern apartments and a prime Tremont storefront space with patio, all in an historic building with modern amenities.

James and Tommy met with *The Tremont* shortly before the May 1st availability of the first five apartments at The Pelton.

**The Tremont: Tell us a little about the changes you've made to this incredible building.**

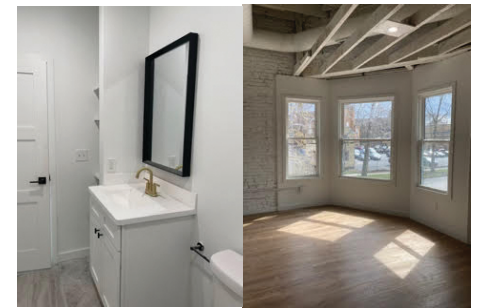
**James:** The front building was built in 1860. Since then, there were multiple additions—the back garage was added around 1920, when the storefront was expanded as well. The buildings were connected by an addition that was installed to connect the garage and the front sometime in the 1950s (this was the only part that was a completely wooden structure), and that had aged very poorly.

**The Tremont: That was the section that looked like a skyway.**

**James:** We took that middle part down, and initially, we had looked at demolishing the garage as well—it was not in good shape when we started on the project. As we started looking at it more closely in researching the building, we realized that portion of the structure was in better condition than we realized. We were able to salvage the garage and turn it into a sixth apartment. We put a lot of work into this property, opened up a retail space with modifications, did a ton of work restoring and repairing the building structure—a lot of work tuck-pointing the building as well—and getting the brick to a useable condition.

**The Tremont: Once you were happy with the structure, what was next?**

**James:** We replaced the roof, replaced the electrical, installed HVAC throughout the building, and added a patio space on the Literary Ave. side for the retail space. We've got guys putting the finishing touches on five of the residential units and they'll be available for rent starting May 1st. The sixth residential unit, the garage, is being framed in now—on the garage unit, we're about two months from being complete. We were able to restore the front doors for the retail space, and we made modifications to make sure the retail space was accessible. When we first looked at it, the old hair salon was only using one half of the first floor, the other half was an apartment. We knew we would have to do a ton of work to the space, so can it be laid out in a way that takes better advantage of how it addresses the street? If we were living in one of the apartments, how would we want it to be set up? We wanted to come at it from that standpoint: keeping the building structure where it is,



Photos courtesy of Local Development Partners

The Pelton apartments are centrally-located, unique, spacious, and include modern amenities.

how would we lay it out, today (following how apartments are laid out today; what people are looking for in apartments)? We were able to achieve the balance of historic and modern through working closely with our architect, Antonia Marinucci. Her quality in design and aesthetic shines through what you see today.

**The Tremont: It might have required less time and energy to take on a 'new-construction' project, starting from the ground-up with new materials—what drew you to take on the restoration of this building instead?**

**Tommy:** A large percentage of that is just who we are and what we want to do as developers. We're neighborhood residents—not Tremont, but Ohio City/Downtown. We're creating that feeling—those threads of the fabric are critically important to us. When you do that, you can combine doing great projects and, also, being successful financially. This was an opportunity to do both...and see that connective tissue. Selfishly, I'm an engineer by training, so I love these old buildings; I love historical stuff. I wanted to save something like this. This was a challenge. As much as it is a development opportunity, it's a challenge to save something.

**James:** You had the Union Army camping in Tremont at the time this building was built—it doesn't just seem like the building comes from another era...it actually does come from a different era. The amount of history and iterations the neighborhood has gone through with this building here... it's pretty incredible. It's also right in the middle of great points of neighborhood access: you've got Professor a block away, Lincoln Park a block away, the Towpath a block away, and it's pretty peaceful.

For more information on The Pelton, the soon-to-be-available storefront space or garage apartment, or the five apartments made available May 1st, email [info@thepelton-tremont.com](mailto:info@thepelton-tremont.com), or call 216-264-6070.



# Andy Fedynsky on the Ukraine Crisis: This is Ongoing



Photo by The Tremontster

Andy Fedynsky, Director of the Ukrainian Museum-Archives, spoke recently with *The Tremontster* about the effort locally and globally to support Ukraine's resistance to Russia's ongoing invasion.

by Rich Weiss

When *The Tremontster* caught up with Andy Fedynsky, Director of the Ukrainian Museum-Archives (1202 Kenilworth Ave.), he was tucked away in an office at the end of a small hallway behind the Lincoln Park-located gallery building, working feverishly on an office computer. Andy took a moment to offer a glimpse into his perspective from right here, in Tremont, on the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the outpouring of support for Ukrainians, locally.

**Andy:** Did you see where the flagship of the Russian fleet sank? The Ukrainians say we bombed it. Russia says, 'No, no, no—there was a fire and ammunition went off.' My question is, what kind of navy sinks its own flagship? [Andy laughed] ...It's crazy, what's going on now. Obviously, about the war, but in terms of what we're facing—interest from people like *The Tremontster*, but also Senator Sherrod Brown—he was here Monday; Senator Rob Portman; U.S.A.I.D. (Agency for International Development); Congressman Tim Ryan; Global Cleveland—Joe Cimperman, of course. It's really astounding how many people have really rallied to Ukraine, and they see this as something that's important, not just for Ukraine, but the United States, the West, and the values that we all share, hopefully, as Americans and Europeans.

**The Tremontster:** When I came back to see you, you were in front of your computer, and it looked like you were being pulled in a bunch of different directions—it seems there has been a sudden demand on your time to connect people as well as produce information about Ukraine—

**Andy:** —Huge. I don't really reflect on it that much, I just react. I get dozens of emails of information but also requests for information...so let me just show you. In fact, this is what I was working on right now [Andy gestures to his computer screen]: 'I would like to donate the archive of my father Ostrovsky, from Tel Aviv, who was a well-known Ukrainian art critic.' The guy wants to donate his archive of art criticism—1,200 items packed into boxes, located in Brooklyn, NY—just before you came over, I was talking to this guy, Igor Ostrovsky.

[Andy brings up another email] This is a professor from the University of Edmonton—this was yesterday—interested in bringing five or six scholars into Tremont. These include [scholars from] The University of Manitoba, Stetson University of St. Andrews, University of Buffalo...

**The Tremontster:** There's a lot of good will in your email inbox.

**Andy:** It's not just the Ukrainian Museum: Rob Portman is going to speaking at the City Club. Sherrod Brown—he's Chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, so the Senate Banking Committee has oversight on sanctions. But also, the World Bank, The International Monetary Fund (IMF)...so, Ukraine is running a deficit of about \$5 billion a month, which is not sustainable. Tomorrow, the finance minister of Ukraine will be in Washington meeting with the IMF. That's what we talked to Sherrod Brown about on Monday: tanks, helicopters, rockets, etc., but also IMF money... these are the kinds of unheralded things that we're doing.

**The Tremontster:** When community members donate to the Ukraine war effort through the Ukrainian Museum-Archive or its local partners, how is the money used?

**Andy:** Here's Cleveland's Maida Association. Look what they've done: 14 pallets of medical aid [in one day]; five pallets [the next day]; five pallets [the next day]... This is what they're collecting. This is just Cleveland...[Andy scrolls down a page on the Maida Association's website] ...hygiene products and bedding. This is ongoing.

**The Tremontster:** Tell me about the Cleveland Maida Association.

**Andy:** Maida is the Ukrainian word for 'public square.' Specifically, in the capital city of Kiev, so, Maida is the 'Independent Square.' It was where Ukrainians rallied for independence in 1991, the Orange Revolution in 2004-2005, and then when Ukraine had committed to join the European Union and Putin forced that to reverse, people spontaneously came out (hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people) to say, 'No. We want to be part of Europe, not Russia.'

So, as a consequence, Putin invaded

Crimea and eastern Ukraine (Donbas). In 2014, Ukrainian Americans in Cleveland rallied to support Ukrainians—many of whom are family and friends—to support Ukraine's effort to defend itself. And now, of course, with the war, they've rallied even more. They've been organizing literally tons of humanitarian assistance—one of the connections is MedWish, a medical assistance group that takes medical equipment from hospitals that they're deaccessioning because they're getting more modern things, but they're certainly still useful.

**The Tremontster:** How do these supplies get to Ukrainians?

**Andy:** So, MedWish, Maida, the Ukrainian Doctors Association—they've been assembling these and sending them to Ukraine through their already established [supply line] transportation hubs, mainly through Poland: the Polish port of Gdansk, and then sending it into Ukraine. We're a clearing house for information. There's Cleveland Maida, but there's also Fund to Support Ukraine, which is supported by United Ukrainian Organizations of Ohio. There are food kitchens in Ukraine, there are medical supplies that are going there to support civilians who are wounded and families. There's an enormous need, and I know a lot of people, personally, who are working hard to support Ukraine in its great time of need.

The Cleveland Maida, The Fund to Aid Ukraine, Cleveland Museum Archives... we're largely volunteer—virtually no overhead—so the money goes to where the need is. And also, people who know each other and trust each other, and are honest and dedicated and idealistic. There's others—UNICEF and others [doing good, trustworthy work]—I tend to focus my energies and energy on local...this is Cleveland. This is Cleveland.

**The Tremontster:** Are you able to get in contact with relatives?

**Andy:** This morning, I spent half an hour talking to my cousin in Lviv—he's my age—just to call and say, 'Hey, we're with you. How are you and your wife?' I said, when the bombs went off, 'How close?' 'About three miles from where we live.' And he talked about Mariupol—he said, 'We have about 200,000 people from Mariupol in Lviv now, who we have to take care of.' That's half a million meals a day, right? So, Chef José Andrés [his nonprofit organization World Central Kitchen] is on the ground to assist refugees at the Ukraine-Poland border. And so, the world has come together.

It's amazing to me how the Ukrainian-American community has rallied. Not just the Ukrainian-American community, but America as a whole. We've been working

with Global Cleveland, the Chagrin Valley Documentary Film Festival (they raised about \$10,000 to send to Ukraine)...and multiply this 50, 100-times around the world. What's happening?

My daughter, Alexa, was a Fulbright Fellow to Brazil. So, Alexa won a Fulbright fellowship and spent a year in Brazil. So, we follow what's going on in Brazil. In Brazil, the Ukrainian-Brazilian community is raising funds and humanitarian aid to send to Ukraine.

This is being replicated scores of times throughout America, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Australia, throughout Europe, and, of course, in Ukraine. So, it's tragic but it's also inspiring.

**The Tremontster:** It's refreshing to see such unified, collective action in such a divisive time.

**Andy:** There's a wonderful book called *The Uprooted* written by Oscar Handlin 50 years ago, and he said: 'Then I discovered the immigrants were American history.' The history of America is the history of immigration. Most Americans trace their heritage to somewhere else—whether Europe, Africa, Asia—that's the genius of our country: that we're able to take people from all over and have them all become Cleveland Guardian fans! [Andy laughs]



Photos courtesy of Cleveland Maida Association

"Here's Cleveland's Maida Association. Look what they've done: 14 pallets of medical aid [in one day]; five pallets [the next day]; five pallets [the next day]... This is what they're collecting. This is just Cleveland..."

## CIVILIZATION

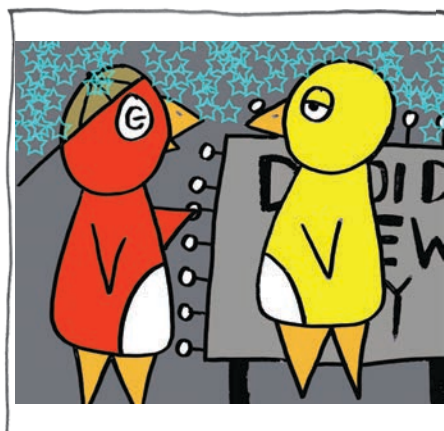
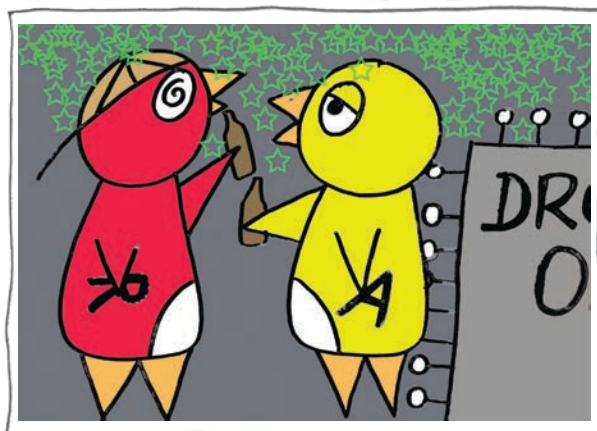
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## The Adventures of Tremont and His Friends

## "Greek Fest Part 2"

The Sighay/1972 *David Witzke*



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## Dyngus Day at Post 58



Photo courtesy of Post 58

by Tom Matia

Fabulous time at the Post for Dyngus Day. Place was literally packed at 12:15pm and didn't stop until 8pmish. Thank you everyone for making this a great Dyngus Day celebration. A special thanks to Commander Terry Zacharyj for putting this together. Marie, Chrissy and Michelle for being great bartenders.



Photo by Tom Matia

Cooks Michael Polichuk and Terry Mollett for serving awesome brats with sour kraut. Tom Matia for selling Dyngus Day t-shirts and taking great pictures. Donnie Ernst for clearing tables. And a special thanks to Marianne Green's group who showed up at noon with at least 15 people strong and provided food and fun. It's all about teamwork. Great times with great people. Thank you Ryan Dunn and Ray Williams for helping out.



Photo by Tom Matia

## Towpath Trilogy Half Marathon and 5-Miler Attracts Nearly 600 Runners



Photo courtesy of Canalway Partners

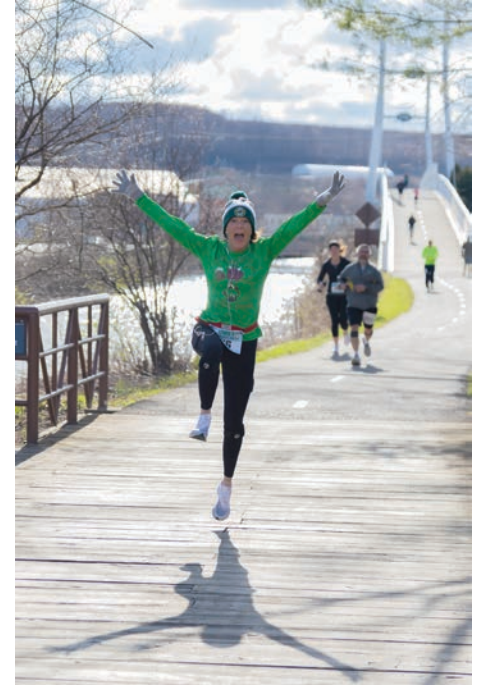


Photo by Nathan Stroempl

by The Tremontster Staff

Mera Cardenas, Executive Director of Canalway Partners, reported the 2022 Towpath Trilogy kickoff event was a big success. She said, "For decades, Cleveland runners have showed up to support the Towpath Trail and we're thrilled that they continue to join us in strong numbers. We kicked off the 2022 Towpath Trilogy with close to 600 runners in the Towpath Half-marathon and 5-miler races."

Between the great turnout and the beautiful blue skies, we are thrilled with the success of this race and we're looking forward to the second race in the series through the Tremont section of the Towpath Trail on June 17."

## Memories of Tremont Ave. Some Southside Memories of Spring



Play-Doh was created from wallpaper cleaner.

by Ken Scigulinsky

For me, there was never any doubt that spring had arrived when our front room coal stove was allowed to burn out and the ashes, previously saved to sprinkle on icy sidewalks, were thrown into the trash.

The stovepipes would be disconnected from the chimney and stove, wrapped in cloths, then stored in our one-quarter section of the basement. The stove was slid to a corner in the living room and covered with a cloth overlay that would shield it until the next winter. With the fire out, the coal stove no longer supported my quest to create a large silver ball. I had been collecting the inner foil wrapping of my father's Camel cigarette packages to generate a silver ball, competing with my friend Ralph who lived next door. To separate the foil from the paper backing, I would put the wrapping on the coal shovel, open the front of the stove, and let the paper burn off. It was relatively quick but had the disadvantage of discoloring the foil – and sometimes the turbulent air in the stove would lift the foil off the shovel and into the coals.

My clever mother suggested I soak the paper-backed foil in water until the two separated. It was actually a better method because the foil did not discolor, but it was slower. Ralph eventually won the contest since both of his parents smoked, giving him access to more cigarette foil papers.

Coal stoves created a lot of soot that traveled throughout the entire house, so when spring rolled around it was necessary to clean the wallpaper. Using soap and water was not possible because early wallpapers were made of paper, not vinyl, so wetted paper would tend to bubble or lift. Fortunately, there were a couple of wallpaper cleaners available: Absorene and Kutol. Absorene was pink and Kutol was white. Both were pliable kinds of putty sold in cans. When the putty was rubbed over wallpaper, the soot adhered to the putty leaving a clean streak. Since the putty was pliable, it could be shaped to fit little corners and niches that attract dust and dirt. Most of the dirty wallpaper was near the ceiling, where the rising air carried the soot. I learned that the most effective shape to form the putty into was that of a cucumber. Frequently, the wallpaper cleaner had to be kneaded to uncover a clean portion. It was easy to recruit me as wallpaper cleaner because it was a fun task, with satisfying results quickly observed. Interestingly, Play-Doh

was created as an outgrowth of Kutol wallpaper cleaner and debuted as a child's toy in 1956, selling for over four times the cost of Kutol.

We lived downstairs in the back of a four-family, two-story dwelling at 2464 Tremont Ave. It's interesting that we kids would specify where we lived by coupling an address with a specific locator: "Upstairs in the front/back" or "downstairs in the front/back." The small amount of soil below our windows along the south of our complex was understood to belong to our landlord (downstairs in the front) so we were prohibited from planting anything; however, my mom created her own unique spring garden of a few flowers. She had a small container, about 8 inches long, shaped and painted to look like a log with an oblong, oval opening. In the fall, she would buy a few tulip bulbs and some gravel, then place enough of the gravel in the container to hold the bulbs upright. She added a little bit of water then placed the container inside one of our dark kitchen cabinets. As

spring approached she regularly checked for shoots to emerge then would set the bowl on a sunny windowsill to await the tulip flowers. We always marveled at how those beautiful flowers could be grown without soil.

One miserable spring I was out of school with the measles, confined indoors with little to do. When the spots finally disappeared, I was allowed to go outside in the fresh air. Sitting on some steps with the sun on my face, I was happy that I would be returning to school. Tremont School had a nurse who had to confirm I was no longer contagious, so her office was the first place I visited. What an unpleasant surprise I had when she determined that I had the mumps and had to return to home isolation. My saved report card indicates that I missed 17 1/2 school days due to the double whammy sicknesses.

Fortunately, I recovered in time to celebrate Easter: dyeing Easter eggs, putting temporary tattoos on our arms, and dressing up for church in our finest clothes.

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# Roasted Tremont: a Lifelong Dream

## A special report by *The Tremont*

The first café to occupy 2275 Professor Ave. was named Beviamo Café. Beviamo Café had a good run but was eventually replaced by Café Social Latinoamericana. Although it was a perfectly busy Tremont café before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Café Social Latinoamericana did not survive the pandemic lockdown. “I say third time’s a charm with cafés,” said Sofia Syed, the owner-operator of a new and different café, Roasted Tremont, at 2275 Professor Ave., which opened its doors on March 25th. Every square inch of the space appears to have been rethought—from the books and boardgames available to the wall colors and tables. We checked in on Roasted Tremont to see how the new café is doing as we begin spring 2022.

***The Tremont*: [after sipping a Roasted Tremont Chai Masala]: It will be difficult not to order the chai masala every time. It’s delicious.**

**Sofia:** We don’t use a concentrate! We cook it traditional to the Indian culture... because I’ve been drinking it since I was a baby.

***The Tremont*: Is Roasted Tremont an independent café?**

**Sofia:** I’m the sole owner and creator—I have a lot of help from family and friends, but ever since I was a kid, I always wanted a coffee shop—I would say that when I was 16: ‘I want to own a coffee shop,’ but I didn’t know what that meant or what it entailed or any realm of how to make that possible.

My dad’s from India, and in his culture you spend a lot of time with family. Growing up, my aunt made naan and roti on the fire; I grew up eating this kind of stuff my whole life. I used to call samosas “triangles.” As a child, I was like, ‘Can we make triangles?’ I grew up eating Indian food and drinking chai.

Chai in itself is just a black tea made with milk, so it’s kind of comparable to coffee. And then, I remember my parents loved coffee, and I would always ask for a sip of theirs to try it—my mom hated that because she’s like, ‘You’re going to get addicted to caffeine and coffee.’ Look where we are!

***The Tremont*: Tell us a little about your homemade Masala.**

**Sofia:** A lot of coffee shops offer chai—you’ve heard of ‘dirty chai’ and other versions, but when you go to most other places and ask for a chai, they pull out a box. Those are usually concentrates, and they’ll mix the concentrate with your milk of choice. 1) I don’t know what’s in those concentrates, and 2) they’re a lot of sugar. With my shop, specifically, I try to be healthy organic, so the baked goods are from Victoria’s Craft Bakery. She is based in Chesterland, and all of her grains are sourced from the farms around her. The syrup I use, Monin, is an all-organic brand—they don’t use any artificial flavors or sweeteners.

For the chai, same thing. It’s just awesome black tea, it’s cardamom, it’s cloves, it’s cinnamon, it’s ginger. Essentially, it’s just spices. You boil water, you add your milk, you boil it all together, simmer it; once it’s done, you strain out all the spices and you’re left with just the tea. You know it’s real—like you see on our chai—it creates a skin layer...this nice skim on top. Yeah. That’s what we do.

***The Tremont*: Roasted Tremont has a very playful, creative feel—are you responsible for the interior design?**

**Sofia:** Yes!

I went to school for marketing at the University of Akron. I started in the art school, and I was going to be an art teacher. Wherever I worked after University of Akron, I also always had my own marketing company on the side, Sofia Syed Marketing. I specialized in helping small businesses because of my parents’ example. My dad immigrated here when he was 20. My mom grew up on Castle Ave., before it was gentrified. They had my sister, who was older than me, and then they had my twin brother and me, so my parents had three kids under the age of two. My mom had to quit her job and raise all three of us, but from there grew a lot of greatness. She was staying home with three kids, but she’s like, ‘I might as well watch more kids,’ and created an in-home daycare.

She had a bunch of kids there. Then, it expanded—they owned three real daycares; three physical buildings.

That’s my example, growing up—every week, I would go to Sam’s Club with them and buy 100 milks and all these cereals and snacks. Every week, my dad and I would go there, spend hours, buy all these milks, then go to each daycare to drop them off. As a kid, I hated it. I would be like, ‘Why do I have to carry 100 milks every week?’ I hated it.

***The Tremont*: Now that you’re a small business owner, have your views on bulk milk evolved?**

**Sofia:** It’s so funny...because now we run to Sam’s Club to get milk—for Roasted! It all comes back—I’m not kidding, I actually use my dad’s Sam’s Club card, still [Sofia laughed]. I was like, ‘Wow. I understand why they need so much help because I rely on Alex (my boyfriend) a lot. If we’re out of milk, he’ll run to Whole Foods or wherever we need to go. It’s amazing to have that support system. It’s great to have a partner that believes in Roasted and also is willing to run out and help in that regard, because I can’t leave. He even quit his job to help. It says a lot. He’s incredible.

And my parents have helped—I think they believe in this fully. My dad’s the one who helped me buy the sign outside with the big Roasted logo...because he’s like, ‘Are you going to buy a sign?’ I’m like, ‘Well, I’m kind of out of money.’ He’s like, ‘No, no, no—you need a sign.’

I think if I didn’t have them as an example, I don’t know if I’d be where I’m at. My sister owns a yoga studio in downtown Cleveland, The Studio Cleveland (1395 W 10th St Ste. 120, Historic Warehouse District), probably because of that same background. They’re amazing—she does aerial silk, she does yoga, hot yoga, sauna, massage, they have a little rock/crystal shop, other more



Photo by *The Tremont*

Sofia Syed, Owner-Operator of Roasted Tremont

spiritual retail, and they’ve become a little community space. It’s an amazing, incredible yoga studio. I’m not just saying that—even if she did not own it—it’s just an incredible space. It’s cool having a sister and parents who all are in the business realm. We’re all taking that leap.

I had moved out to California for a while for a marketing opportunity with a company in LA. I specifically moved back from LA to open a coffee shop.

I was in town from LA for a wedding over the summer, my sister lives in the area, we were walking around and we came across this location...I got into talks with the owners, and I was able to take over a former lease and renegotiate the space, and it all fell into place. I moved back November 27th, and I got the keys December 1st.

***The Tremont*: What did you think when you first saw this café space?**

**Sofia:** At first, I was like, ‘I don’t see a for lease/for sale sign,’ so I just sent them an email, and that’s how the conversation got started. It was summer: all the trees and the people and it was beautiful and walkable. It just gives you this feeling like, ‘I would love to be a part of this,’ you know?

***The Tremont*: How does it feel now?**

**Sofia:** It doesn’t feel real. It still doesn’t feel real. Even with people sitting in here, it doesn’t feel real.

***The Tremont*: How was the first day open—what was it like turning on the lights?**

**Sofia:** I cried. I seriously cried [Sofia laughed]. When I sold my first cup, it just was crazy to me. I’d been in this space by myself for three months, designing, and... you don’t know how people are going to react; it’s a gamble. I had no expectations coming into this. The way everything’s falling together—everything I envisioned is happening: the events, the music, we’re going to have comedy events...

***The Tremont*: Tell us about the time you spent studying coffee farming processes in Honduras.**

**Sofia:** I went to the Columbus Coffee Fest back in 2018-2019. There was a booth there by a woman named Alejandra Flores called Unataza Coffee. She was promoting her mobile coffee trailer/her Honduras trip. She’s from Honduras, lives in Cincinnati, and every year she takes a group of people—she says, ‘Honduras is beautiful, it’s underappreciated, it’s a huge coffee Mecca.’ That’s why she does this yearly trip: we got to go to different coffee shops—on the coffee farm. At Katia Duke’s San Isidro Farm, we got to see the plant, and then the cherry, and we watched the whole process.

When you pick the plant, you get a cherry, and then the cherry has a mucilage around

it, which contains the bean. You take that apart, and you’re left with this bean that needs to dry. They let it all dry, then you’re left with the bean with a casing on it—they put it in this [specially designed] machine that shakes the casings off; then you’re left with the green bean. Then, it has to be manually sorted...a bad bean can ruin a whole batch. We got to sit there and sort through the coffee beans. She did a pour-over coffee that was the most incredible coffee I’ve had in my life. It was insane.

My house drip and retail coffee is Katia’s (San Isidro Farm)—so, I get to support her.

***The Tremont*: Your café tables are bright and eclectic—where did they come from?**

**Sofia:** I thrifted all my own tables and painted them.

***The Tremont*: Do you get a sense there is a support network of Tremont businesses?**

**Sofia:** Very much so. I would say so, immensely.

Tremont West—they’ve been incredible at helping and answering any questions I have; Crust (the pizza place across the street)—they come in and get mochas and they’re super sweet. When people ask me where should I get sandwiches or pizza, I usually promote them...and vis-a-versa; same with Visible Voice Books. The Literary Tavern, too—their bartender’s been sending people here. Everyone’s been so supportive. It’s been nothing but support and good feedback. We’ve developed a ton of regulars, honestly. We’ve been trying to be good about remembering everything about everyone.

***The Tremont*: Do you live in Tremont?**

**Sofia:** I live by Lucky’s. I was living with my mom in Strongsville before taking over the café, but I knew I was going to be putting in long days and didn’t want the long commute.

***The Tremont*: Tell me about using your space as an event venue.**

**Sofia:** We’ve already had live guitarists and live singers here—behind you is our stage area. We partnered with the Tremont Brainerd club, and our first workshop is this Wednesday—mindful meditation—it’s taught by Jack Ricciuto (he always comes in and gets a decaf shot of espresso—that’s his drink). Then, I’m talking to Keri November (Jack Ricciuto’s Tremont Brainerd partner). We’re going to do American Sign Language workshops here. I’m really happy to be in this space, and I’m really happy that we’re growing. We’re having more community events—especially with everything being more open, and with spring and summer coming...I want to have regular music and comedy events. I always envisioned ‘Roasted’ as coffee and comedy—like comic roasts...it was always the joke aspect, for me. So, I’m talking with comedians, musicians, and then I want to have more art workshops. We’re doing a lot with the space, and, eventually, Thursdays through Sundays, every night, I want to have an event.





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