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NEWSLETTER
FROM YOUR FRIENDS
AT SMALL NATION



MAIN STREET

MARKETING NEWS

WHERE SMALL MARKETING IDEAS CAN ADD BIG
DOLLARS TO THE BOTTOM LINE

Q2 2021

WHAT'S INSIDE

*Innovative Office
Solutions* page **2**

*The Rise of Ghost
Kitchens* page **4**

*A Top Home and
Commercial Inspector* page **5**

*Urban Exodus and
small-town recruiting!* page **6**

*Meet Our Summer
Interns* page **7**

*Trusted Business
Partners* page **8**

From The Desk of Jason Duff

I've spent the last few weeks of spring getting out in the fresh air and visiting some new places I've never been to across our state. Like a lot of people, you sort of forget what's in your own backyard and take for granted all the unique experiences, businesses, and places our state has to offer. A few places you may (or may not) have thought of visiting (and why you should) are below:

- **Bryan, OH:** Bryan is the home of the Spangler Candy Company, one of the largest makers of candy canes in the world, and home to the famous Dum-Dum sucker. Their downtown features a town square with a beautiful courthouse, terrific architecture, and quaint small

businesses. Be sure to grab a cup of coffee (or something stronger) at Kora Brew House & Wine Bar.

- **Somerset, OH:** No town has surprised me more than Somerset. The boyhood home of Civil War general Philip Sheridan, Somerset is one of the oldest communities in Ohio, and feels like you're stepping back into an old New England town. The downtown features a dense collection of historical brick buildings with some charming and unique businesses, including an amazing western wear retailer and historical tavern with German fare. I highly recommend grabbing a meal at Strong & Co when you're in town.

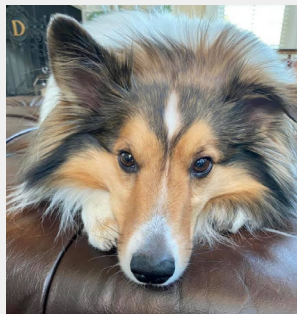
>> turn to page 2

A Few Things Bouncing Around My Brain

As an adult, essayist/poet Ralph Waldo Emerson famously observed, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

(Granted, as a **youngster**, Emerson implored his parents, "But the hobgoblin followed me home. Can't I keep it? Huh? Can I please?")

That's my roundabout way of saying I don't want to get tied down to a single topic



MAC'S BLOG

this month. Welcome to my **random thoughts extravaganza**.

For starters, did you history buffs ever wonder about the loyalties of Benedict Arnold's **dog**? Was he faithful to his master **or** to the American Revolution? (If Betsy Ross knitted him a nice little red, white, and blue sweater, I'm betting on the latter.)

>> turn to page 2



page **3**



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A little about MAC: Mac is Jason's 5-year old active Sheltie who loves veggies - green beans to be exact, but he eats all kinds of other vegetables too. He hangs out with Jason when he's working at Grandma Jackie's house with his other pal Zoe, who is a 76lb German shepherd. Mac thinks that he is just as big as Zoe, but he's actually a little dog with a lot of confidence. He loves to play soccer and run outside, especially if he can corral other dogs in the neighborhood. He also enjoys stealing and hiding socks. Mac wanted to write a blog post, and we didn't have the heart to say no. We take no responsibility for the goofy things he comes up with. He does love to receive letters, though.

Mac's Blog

I think those robot police dogs they're experimenting with in New York City are kind of creepy. This is like science fiction on steroids. I enjoy watching the robot Gort in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* on the late show, but this is more like *The Day the Earth Turned Around Three Times Before Lying Down*.

When I was a puppy, I got accustomed to the concept of a **pet carrier**. Then I overheard some veterans at the diner talking about an **aircraft carrier**! For the longest, I pictured Paul Bunyan having to tote the contraption around!

I'm intrigued by the way canines can be trained to sniff out Covid-19 or cancer in humans. Of course, some ungrateful humans will demand a **second opinion**. Well, if I were a symptom-sniffing dog, I'd respond with "Sure, let's just drop **Dr. Ferret** down your pants. I'll put in a good word with your insurance provider."

At one point in history, entrepreneurial humans thought it was a good idea to entertain the masses with dog-triggering **flea circuses**. Dogs should have turned the tables by sponsoring **deadbeat in-law carnivals**.

"No-kill" animal shelters could really bump up the **cool** factor if they rebranded themselves as "undead" animal shelters.

If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride – and dogs would announce, "We're reconfiguring this Arctic sled-pulling experience."

It sometimes seems that the only feedback pooches receive is "Good boy!" or "Bad boy!" Let me tell you a little about **nuance**, folks. The word is right here in the dictionary... Oops. I sort of chewed it up. Bad boy.

If humans want to invest in **cryptocurrency**, more power to 'em. But if somebody tries to invent **digital bones** for burying in the **cloud**, I'm calling for a summit between the Treasury Secretary and the CEO of PetSmart!

There's nothing quite as inspiring as gazing at the night sky and seeing Sirius, "the dog star." Yes, that component of the constellation Canis Major is the brightest star in the sky. There would probably be a **cat star**, but it would be less predictable. ("I'm going super-nova...no, I'm not...I'm going super-nova... no, I'm not...")

That reminds me: do kittens get their start getting stuck in the top of Bonsai trees?

Thanks for letting me ramble. Now I need some sleep. I'm starting to look like something the hobgoblin dragged in.

From the Desk of... from Page 1

- **Marysville, OH:** While I've been to Marysville before, the Uptown continues to evolve and become a destination for visitors to central Ohio. After a devastating collapse, the Avalon Theatre has begun its restoration and renovation, a new public pavilion recently opened adjacent to the city building, and new businesses continue to open there (including our next BUILD Cowork + Space location this summer). The Old Bag Of Nails Pub is a great place for lunch or dinner, and Walking Distance Brewing Co. will be opening shortly as well.

The viral nature of news and public relations can put your business in jeopardy if you don't tend to it like a garden. Protecting your brand and reputation is a 24/7 job.

Jason Duff

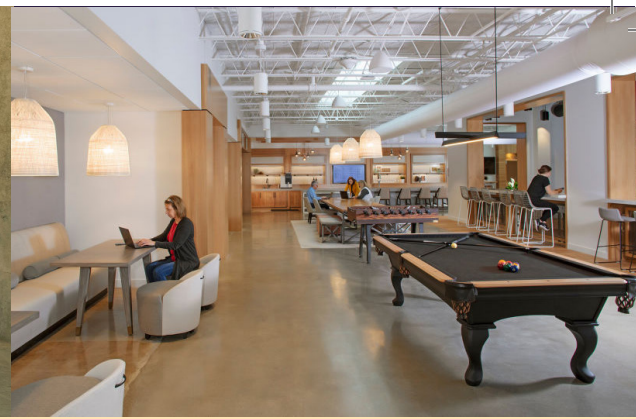
Innovative Office Solutions

Not too many years ago, then-trendy office designs often meant rather cavernous, open spaces dotted with endless rows of nondescript cubicles. Not anymore.

Walk into today's corporate office and you're apt to enter an inviting café with a coffee bar and power-equipped booths ... or a cozy parlor-like "huddle" space adorned with a stone fireplace, sofas and full wi-fi ... or even a sunny outdoor veranda where patio tables are powered up and ready for business.

"Technology changes everything, and companies are realizing employees don't have to be tethered to a traditional





desk," says Eric Eyink, president of Innovative Office Solutions in Mercer County. "Companies are starting to make a transformation, and giving employees choices of different work spaces, different meeting options. It doesn't always have to be an office desk or a conference room with eight chairs to inspire a productive workday."

That innovation extends beyond the corporate world, where healthcare offices and hotels, assisted living centers, restaurants, craft brewpubs, coffeeshops and more are all getting creative with their spaces.

The choices, Eyink says, are endless. And that's what he loves about the office/space planning business.

He launched his company, Innovative Office Solutions, in 2001, armed with experience gained growing up and helping out with his dad's office supply company. After college, he founded his own company focusing on interior space design and furnishings. Eyink started small, working out of his home for a couple of years. Now IOS has its headquarters and two showrooms in Maria Stein, and a staff that includes interior space designers, facilities planners, installation experts and customer service specialists.

"Our team of talented designers, our connection with suppliers across the country, and our state-of-the-art software programs let us bring our customers' spaces to life," Eyink says. "From exploring ideas to installing the finished products, we work with our clients every step of the way."

And that means designing their office and space solutions in "real time." Think of HGTV programs – like Property Brothers or Fixer



Upper – and you'll get an idea of how IOS helps clients reimagine their environments.

"We start with an electronic floor plan of the customer's building and come up with space planning solutions to meet their company culture and day-to-day needs," Eyink explains. "Then we sit down with the client and electronically draw in the indoor space elements, including furnishings and finishes, all to scale."

These electronic and realistic 3-D renderings give the client a virtual view of what the space will look like. IOS designers can make adjustments and changes in real time so the customer can explore their options.

"Every job is different, every customer has different needs and budgets," Eyink says, "and we personalize the plans to provide the best fit for them."

The company – though based in tiny Maria Stein – has worked with organizations in 27 states, and focuses their reach mostly in a 60-mile radius. In nearby Bellefontaine, the company has worked in tandem with Small Nation and the community of new businesses downtown, bringing some eclectic design ideas to BUILD Cowork and Space and the new Flying Pepper Cantina.

"It's a neat venture to partner with Small Nation and its local businesses," adds Jason Winner, account executive. "There's a lot of energy and creativity happening in that town, and they challenge us to bring new ideas and unique solutions to the mix."

All the creativity and innovation aside, though, Eyink says it's the small-town values that continue to set his company apart.

"We stay up on all the latest design trends in New York and Chicago, and partner with top manufacturers there," he says, "but it's our Midwestern friendliness that lets us shine. Our customer service and focus on personalization are second to none. We go out of our way to make our customers happy."

"To us, you're not a dollar figure, you're not a number. You're Bob and Cathy."



The Rise of Ghost Kitchens

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused major shifts in our everyday life. Businesses, doctor visits, and restaurants, among others, have had to drastically shift how they operate during the pandemic. This has caused new normalcies such as remote working, telemedicine, and ghost restaurants.

What is a Ghost Restaurant?

A ghost restaurant is also referred to as a virtual restaurant, cloud kitchen, or dark kitchen, but essentially means there is a restaurant but no seating and many times no actual "storefront". A ghost restaurant operates the kitchen and food prep just like normal, but instead of having the front of the house where hungry patrons would sit and wait to be served, the food is now made for pick-up or delivered to you, either by the restaurant themselves, or a food delivery service such as GrubHub, Uber Eats, or DoorDash.

Why are Ghost Restaurants gaining popularity?

As mentioned above, Covid-19 spearheaded the change. Although the concept is not new, Covid-19

did confirm that the demand for Ghost kitchens is sustainable. Since most consumers now have access to the internet, coupled with delivery services becoming more popular, it was the perfect recipe for ghost restaurants.

Captain Kraken's is born!

Adam Rammel loved the concept of a ghost kitchen. But he didn't have to find a kitchen to make his menu. He already owned it – The Syndicate.

There was no local restaurant providing seafood so why not try the concept. He already had the kitchen and the staff. All he needed to do was put up a website using his point of sale system and let his current customers know of the new take out/delivery option during the hours his main restaurant was closed

It soon became Logan County's go-to source for fresh fish, seafood, and lobster rolls. You can either have your food delivered to you or you can pick it up. Ordering is simple as you can reach their menu by going to www.captainkrakens.com, order online, and either have it delivered by DoorDash, or pick up your hot fresh food at a scheduled time.



A Top Home and Commercial Inspector

With over 5,000 home and commercial building inspections under his belt, it's no wonder that Chris Stout, owner and Lead Inspector of C.B.S. Home Inspection was independently picked by Expertise.com as one of the top 11 home inspection companies in the Columbus and Dayton areas.

A work injury in 2009 forced Chris to change careers. He could no longer continue as an electrical engineer. It was a natural transition with his experience with blueprints, engineering and his love of how things work and are built to start his own home inspection business.

Experience and knowledge vary widely from inspector to inspector. If you're buying or selling a house or commercial building – or just want to make sure you maintain your home/building in top condition by getting occasional inspections – it all comes down to the knowledge and experience of the inspector. Missed and overlooked problems could result in costly repairs or health issues later on.

Uncontrolled moisture is one of the most missed issues during an inspection. Moisture is the cause

of wood rot, mold, wood destroying insects, foundation bowing, plumbing leaks, HVAC condensation leakage, etc.

Ohio state licensed for radon, septic, wood destroying insects, and water quality, Chris and his team strive to exceed the minimum inspection standard set by the Ohio Department of Commerce.

Whether he's inspecting a historic home, a new home, office building, or apartments he knows the rules. Each type of structure has health codes, occupancy codes and structure codes.

"No surprises" is Chris's motto. He can't change what is, but he can make sure his clients know.

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Sept 5	1988
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Oct 1	Clark Manson
Oct 2	Still Standing: A Tribute to Elton John
Oct 8	Naked Karate Girls
Oct 15	Red Not Chili Peppers

Urban Exodus and small-town recruiting!

For years, talking heads have predicted mass exodus from large cities to cheaper, less taxed, states. Of course, discussions have escalated on this topic during the Covid-19 pandemic as remote working has exploded and finally proved to many businesses that working remotely was possible, while equaling, and even exceeding, work efficiency.

This has resulted in a shift in the millennial mentality, or at least the public perception of them. Often thought of as the generation that does not want to own a home, car, or consume personal responsibility, are now leading the urban exodus. However, they are not flooding to states that are warmer or cheaper to live in. USPS states that 84% that leave the big city life end up around 100 miles from the metropolitan areas.

The millennial shift

As millennials are getting their opportunity to shine at being productive while working remotely, they are opting

to settle down, buy a home and a car, and raise a family in small-town American verse the big city life. A prime example of this is smaller towns seeing a net inflow of growth this past year such as Bellefontaine, Ohio, located just 48 miles northwest of Columbus. Bellefontaine has seen a nearly 10% change in inflow during the pandemic compared to the prior year, which is the largest in the state of Ohio. With the millennial shift, is it time for the small towns to shift in their thinking as well?

Small towns, are you recruiting?

This is a great time for the smaller towns such as Bellefontaine, that would like to benefit from such growth opportunities, to start brainstorming on how they would like to attract this new millennial shift. Coming together to discuss what Bellefontaine has to offer, or could offer, to attract these new families could reap the benefits similarly to companies like Tractor Supply that have seen large sales increases in their more rural locations.

Meet Our Summer Interns



Addy Hankins

A native of Bellefontaine, **Addy Hankins** is helping out with our Excel spreadsheets, direct mail projects and writing blogs for the Downtown Bellefontaine Website. Happiest when she's traveling the world with friends and family, she's looking forward to starting college in the fall.



Derek Coy

Derek Coy will be graduating in December 2021 with a Bachelor degree in Construction Management at Ohio Northern University. He's getting hands-on experience working with our construction manager, Dale, collaborating with our subcontractors and learning how to schedule, quote, and order materials.



Grant Ward

Grant Ward is our Construction Project Management/Marketing Intern working on a Business Management degree. His ultimate goal is to be a General Manager of a professional sport organization.

Office Notes

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