

THE WHITE SQUIRREL

By John F. Hall

The plan called for my oldest granddaughter, Andrea to drive up from Nashville, Tennessee, with her boyfriend, Andrew Jansen and my niece, Gabby Hall, on Saturday, December 28, 2019. Gabby was visiting and she was scheduled to fly back to Washington DC the next day. She works in the Pentagon. The plan started to fall apart as my wife, Paula was ill and unable to come with me from Cadiz to Bowling Green. Andrea called me before I arrived in Bowling Green and said that they stayed out until the early hours of the morning and they were dog tired. I told Andrea that we would get together another time.

I called Heather and told her that Andrea, Andrew, and Gabby had stayed out too late and it would just be the three of us. Heather asked where did I want to go because it was



almost lunch time. I told her to pick the place. Heather lives in Bowling Green so I drove to her place. Her boyfriend, Samuel Mattingly was there and we went in Heather's car to a restaurant called The White Squirrel. She drove around to the back of the restaurant. We got out. It looked to me like it was a former car body shop. It still had the three large bay doors. As I walked in, I looked at the art hanging on the wall. The restaurant is a place that artists and musicians like to frequent and hang out. The artists painted squirrels to look like famous people: Elvis, Colonel Sanders, Tupac and others. Samuel told me that two days a week they removed all the tables and chairs, and wheeled in the cereal cookers and brewed a specialty beer. Samuel was raised by his

grandmother. I took some pictures, never knowing if I would use them in a story. I



ordered meat loaf and mashed potatoes. The cook spread the mashed potatoes to cover the plate and sliced the meat loaf into three slices that were put equally on top of the mashed potatoes. It was absolutely delicious. After spending some time at Heather's place, I hugged Heather good bye, said good bye to Samuel, and headed back home.

I stopped in Russellville to visit Jade Hakes. Her boyfriend, Hayden Blick was there. Her mother, Mary Ann and her stepdad, Bill Trembley had family company, so Jade, Hayden and I went down to their finished basement to play a lion game. Needless to say, they beat the socks off this ole writer. I like to listen to young people. They have a unique perspective on life. It was getting late and the weather was getting stormy. I gave Jade and Mary Ann a hug, said good bye to Hayden and the company and continued to drive home.

I felt that Don Sergent's article in the Bowling Green Daily News covered the end of the White Squirrel Restaurant better than I could. I put his article with this story and four

pictures from the White Squirrel. I took a picture of Jade and Hayden at her house. They are so “full of life and dreams.”

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*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at:
<http://www.ajlambert.com>

White Squirrel Brewery and Restaurant Closes

Owners cite coronavirus restrictions as reason for closure.

By Don sergent, The Bowling Green News

Mandy White already misses the jalapeño kolsch beer and hot jam burgers. Andee Rudloff knows she will miss her favorite spot to hang out with her niece and enjoy the artist-friendly ambiance.

White Squirrel Brewery and Restaurant, a local watering hole and eatery on Broadway Avenue that survived the perilous small-business startup five years ago to become a popular lunch and dinner destination, has become the latest victim of the coronavirus pandemic.

White Squirrel co-owner Sean Stevens announced Monday that the business he started in conjunction with 440 Main restaurant owner Tom Holmes in 2015 had closed for good – largely because of restrictions placed on restaurant reopenings by Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear.

“We held on a little while by doing to-go orders,” Stevens said. “But when they announced that restaurants could open at 33 percent of capacity, that just killed us.”

The smallish White Squirrel was limited to a seating capacity of 85 in cramped quarters, so the restrictions on capacity and social distancing were a death sentence.

“At this little place, that’s like three tables,” Stevens said. “This place is so small that it’s hard to get 6 feet between tables.”

Although the state mandates forced his hand, Stevens said he still agonized over the decision.

“There have been ups and downs over the five years, and it has been stressful at times, but I’ve met a lot of great people,” he said. “The community stepped up as far as coming out to support local businesses.

“I hope everybody knows how much I appreciate that. I’ve shed a few tears over the past 24 hours.”

Loyal White Squirrel customers like White and Rudloff may be choking back some tears as well.

“I’ve been going there since it opened,” said White, a Bowling Green Independent School District employee. “It was a very friendly environment, and the jalapeño kolsch beer was a game-changer for me. I’m gonna miss it a lot.”

Rudloff, a local artist who painted the white squirrel on the side of the restaurant, said she’s “super sad” to see it close, even if she understands the reason.

“I’m just devastated,” she said. “Many of the people who worked there were artists and musicians. It was a good group of people.

“I’ll miss it, but the way it’s set up there’s no way to set up the tables in a way that would allow them to meet the regulations.”

Even as he prepared Tuesday for the task of cleaning out the restaurant, Stevens kept an upbeat attitude and looked forward to opening a new business.

Stevens explained that he had been trying to separate the restaurant and brewery operations for a while and now may have his opportunity.

“I was already working on that before the coronavirus,” Stevens said. “We’ve been trying to expand the brewery side and move it out on its own, but that takes money to expand the equipment.”

Now may be the time to make that move, Stevens said.

“I’d like to start with just a brewery and tap room,” he said. “I have some places in mind. I’m confident that I’ll be in business again as White Squirrel Brewery.”

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