

Midwest Coffee continues to brew through COVID

By Sean Douglas

A neighborhood café producing high-quality coffee beans and espresso drinks in the heart of Marion — Midwest Coffee Roasting Company — is one of Marion's beloved local businesses.

Midwest Coffee is located in a beautiful 1920's Craftsman style bungalow on Spencer Ave., a street containing some of Marion's most prominent 20th century historical houses.

Midwest Coffee has won Historical Preservation awards for its restoration and conversion of the historical house into a local coffee-



Midwest Coffee Roasting Company is a Marion business staple. **Photo by Sean Douglas**

house. Today, the coffee-house entails a variety of cozy seating options for studying and socializing, and displays local art and news on local events.

Shari and Reid Boulbee opened Midwest Coffee in 2008, after spending

a week training under two Master Coffee Roasters in Clearwater, Fla. Over the years, Shari and Reid honed their skills and developed their unique roasting method: roast only organically grown coffee beans, use a slow roast method, and

only serve and sell freshly roasted coffee.

Midwest Coffee states a simple roasting philosophy: bring out the unique qualities of each individual origin and blend by stopping the roast at its own sweet spot. Shari is proud to tell her customers

that Midwest Coffee offers the largest collection of freshly roasted coffee beans in Indiana — and produces them all in Marion.

Shari works hard to educate community members on the complex and intricate art of coffee making such as terminology, roasting techniques, and information on the history, roasting process, and varying origins of coffee beans. She encourages questions from her customers; she even promises to research coffee-related questions if she doesn't know the answer. Midwest Coffee endeavors to provide the freshest cup of coffee to each

customer. When ordering through Midwest Coffee online, every order is roasted the day that it is shipped.

During these last few months, a time that has been trying for businesses across the nation, Midwest Coffee has been sustained by their loyal customer base. Midwest Coffee continues to roast high-quality coffee beans and espresso drinks, though with limited hours and increased cleaning procedures. Visit Midwest Coffee at 1321 W. Spencer Avenue or order their coffee beans online at <https://midwest-coffee-roasting-company.salesvu.com/>.

Protest

continued from page 1

said. "I feel like George Floyd's murder did that in a way that I haven't seen anything else do. Justice is a process. Reconciliation is a process, and we are beginning some of that today."

The protest began at around 7:30 at the Sender Wellness building by Riverside Federal Credit Union, as the group took the time to honor both Floyd and Breanna Taylor, who was killed by Louisville police after they conducted a search warrant on the wrong house in search of a suspect who was already in custody.

The group, numbering behind 300-400 people, marched down Washington Street, chanting phrases like "Black Lives Matters," "Hand Up Don't Shoot," "Whose City? Our City," and the names of the many who have been victims of police brutality over the last several years.

The march ended at the courthouse, and for the next hour, Williams and many others cried for change, unity, and a better world where no one is hated or discriminated against due to the color of their skin.

"We are trying to make a change in Marion so people no longer ignore us," Trinidad Alfaro, another protest organizer, said. "Soon, you

won't be able to ignore it and there will be a change. We are not starting a protest; we are starting a revolution to end racism. That's what we want. I see everybody out here. I see white people, black people, Asian people, people standing together as one, fighting for the same reasons because we want to see a change, and we want racism to end."

When looking around at the group of protestors surrounding the Marion Courthouse steps, diversity was the first thing that stood out.

There were African-American protestors, but there were also protestors of every shape, size, and nationality. There were white protestors. There were Asian protestors. There were Hispanic protestors, old protestors, and those in their teenage or early adult years.

Bailey Vest, a 14-year high school student, gave a powerful statement about how young people can change the world.

"If people think for one second that the youth has no clue, I'm here to say that they are wrong," Vest said. "As children, we are either taught to hate, or taught to love. We are taught to either be quiet and deal with it, or we are taught to speak up. As we stand here today,



These are five of the over 300 people who gathered for another protest in Marion. **Photo by Sean Douglas.**

know that you are part of a movement, a part of history."

Brittani Flowers, who was at every protest throughout the course of last week, echoed Vest's sentiments, stating that this is no longer just a black-and-white issue, but a human one.

"I have four African-American sons, and if you can imagine the heartbreak of an African-American mother every time they get a phone call that their son, their husband, or their brother has been pulled over," Flowers said. "We are not anti-police. We are not anti-government. We are just pro equality. This is no longer just a black movement or a white movement. This is a humanity movement."

Chris Doehla, a white man with five bi-racial sons, called out his white brethren, urging them to help bring the change that is needed.

"If you are not actively working to make this a better, safer place for your black friends, then you are not their friend to begin with," Doehla said. "If you're not striving to make

this a better place for all people, than you're really not that great of a human being. You have to actively work to make this a better place. When I say 'Black Lives Matter,' I mean that. My children's lives matter, my friends' lives matter, my wife's life matters, and people I don't know lives' matter."

Later, at City Hall, Tyson, the community, and several members of the Marion Police Department stood side-by-side, holding candles in the spirit of serenity and togetherness.

"We've got to start somewhere," Tyson said. "After we get through expressing our concerns and our feelings, somebody has to approach law enforcement to have a conversation to really affect some actual change. This is what it's all about. This is about creating that environment of peace. We are here for each other, and we are ready to make that change. The purpose is to stand here in silence and stand still so the Lord can do his work. We are gathered here today to show each other that we are willing to

work together to build a bridge between the community and law enforcement. This is not the end, this is only the beginning. We all have to realize that this is the first step."

Marion Police Chief Angela Haley was among the police officers in attendance. Rather than feeling threatened or offended by the protests throughout the week, Haley wholeheartedly supported them, and believes they will help in the long-term process of healing in the city of Marion.

"I think across the nation, we've seen a lot of divisiveness, and we didn't see that in this community," Haley said. "It wasn't just tonight, it's been all night. We've had protests all week. They have been peaceful, people have been supportive of each other, they have been respectful. That, I think, has been important to everybody in this community. I think we have seen the best of Marion in the last week, and I think that is important."

"This is a very diverse community. We've got white, black, Hispanic, Asian — it is a very diverse

community. People in this community care about each other. We've seen people driving by in support. We've seen people at the courthouse supporting each other. We weren't down there in the middle of it. We wanted people to feel free to exercise their constitutional right to protest. There was no need to stand down there like an occupying force because we are not an occupying force. We are part of this community, and we love this community. We love the people that we police, and we want this community to be safe — everybody in this community to be safe."

What we have seen in Marion over the past week is a strong, positive first step.

"This is something I have been consistently been processing over the last week and a half," Williams said. "For a place like Marion, where some people feel like racism isn't an issue, to see this sort of crowd full of white people of different ages, [along with] different races, we are one step further in the process of reconciliation."



Protesters gather at the largest protest in Marion to date.

Photo by Sean Douglas