

By BRENNA GRITEMAN brennagriteman@thecourier.com

For 40 years, Oler's Bar & Grill has been Findlay's go-to spot for Tex-Mex and margaritas, served in a "delightfully tacky" atmosphere.

And, after successfully steering the restaurant through a pandemic, its owners are prepared to take on the next 40 years — and counting.

Findlay native Neeli Oler and her business partner, Chris Keller, took over ownership of the restaurant in September 2019. Oler had always been close to the business: Her father, Bob, was the previous

longtime who then owner, sold the restaurant to her aunt. Debbie Cooper.

Oler said it was "always a dream to buy this," noting that she worked in the restaurant all through high school and college.

"Shoutout to my dad and Debbie for paving the way."

While excited to expand the food and drink menus and introduce the highly popular patio, the new owners were ever mindful to stay true to the foundations Oler's family had laid down.

"We tried to keep the almost, like, a Cheers-type situation here, where everyone knows you," Oler said. "That hasn't changed a bit.

"I think the tagline, slogan of 'delightfully tacky' has never gone away."

#### Continued on Page 3





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John 3:16

#### **FAMILY PAC PLUS**

Jumbo Pizza-1 topping,
1 Large order of
Cheesestix,
1 order of wings &
2 liter of pop



\*35°

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#### **JR FAMILY PAC**

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#### Continued from Page 1

Oler calls herself a "pretty hands-on owner," noting that you can find her just about every day in the kitchen at Oler's and her other eatery in town, Dark Horse Restaurant. She enjoys introducing new recipes, spicing up existing recipes, and keeping up with changing industry standards.

"I love to be in the kitchen. I love to cook. It's a passion."

But she's also loyal to the restaurant's fan favorites, such as the Tostizza and other signature items. And, of course, she wouldn't dare mess with the margaritas. "Obviously, if we ever changed our margarita, that would be our downfall," she said.

Oler's goes through 12 gallons of margaritas a day, with the most popular being the original. A new jalapeño margarita and a black eye (an original margarita with a drop of blackberry syrup) have both been well-received options this summer.







Customers enjoy a recent Happy Hour at Oler's.





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# **JUMBO BONELESS WINGS**

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August 2021

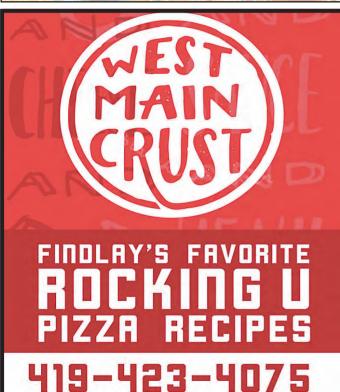
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#### What programs does Hope House offer?

**The Transitional Shelter:** Offers a home for women and children facing homelessness.

**Rental Assistance Programs:** Rapid Rehousing, Targeted Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention provide short term assistance for those who are homeless. The Able Program provides long term assistance for families that have a member who has a disability. Eviction Prevention Programs are designed to prevent homelessness before it occurs.

**Are Hope House programs just for women?** While the transitional shelter is just for women and children, Hope House rental assistance programs serve men, veterans, people with a disability in the home, women, the elderly, and women with children.

**Does Hope House offer emergency services?** No, all clients go through an assessment process prior to enrollment into a Hope House program.

What makes Hope House programs different? All programs require clients to work with a professional case manager. With their guidance, clients get a hand up, not a handout, as they transition back to a safe, stable home.

What else does Hope House do? Hope House also serves as the main access point for Fair housing assistance and has been designated by the state of Ohio to lead regional transitional housing and homelessness efforts through various partnerships for a six-county region, serving Hancock, Hardin, Wyandot, Putnam, Marion and Crawford Counties.

#### How can I find out more about Hope House?

Contact Laurie Poland, Development Director, 419-427-2848 or <a href="mailto:lpoland@findlayhopehouse.org">lpoland@findlayhopehouse.org</a> to arrange a presentation for your group, church or business.

We'd love to share the Hope House story with you!

Hope House is a United Way Agency.









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Donkey Races to benefit Flag City Honor Flight in the North Grandstand at 7pm

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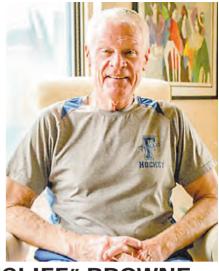
1100 E. Main Cross, Suite 123 Findlay, Ohio 45840

Phone: (419) 424-7036 hancockveterans.com

Office Hours: Mon. - Fri., 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (Closed every other Tuesday at 3:00 pm)







# CLIFFORD "CLIFF" BROWNE US Army, Vietnam, 1967-68

Clifford "Cliff" Browne is a quiet spoken, mild mannered man. He is not of large stature, but as he softly tells his story you begin to see the underlying courage this once young man had in the face of indescribable events in Vietnam.

Born on September 7, 1944 in St. Louis, Missouri, Cliff was educated in Catholic schools. It was this education and development of his faith that would give him strength later in life. Active in sports, he played basketball, baseball and developed a love for speed skating. He graduated from high school in 1962 and continued his education at the University of Dayton, majoring in business management. It was here Cliff joined the ROTC earning a 2nd Lieutenant commission upon graduation.

He began his service in the US Army at the age of 21, being sent to Ft. Eustis, Va., for training. Lt. Browne was assigned to the Transportation Corp, being tasked with training troops for eventual deployment to Vietnam. This included training truck drivers to fire the M-16 rifle and teaching search and survival in a mock Vietnamese village.

Cliff received his own orders in 1967 to Vietnam, assigned to the 3rd Platoon, 58th Transportation Company, located in Qui Nhon, northeast of Saigon. His first memory upon arriving in country was meeting his platoon sergeant, Master Sgt. Kilakoa, a large 6'2, 230-pound native of Hawaii. His trust in, and friendship with, this Korean veteran and Army lifer would be lifesaving for Lt. Browne

His platoon, consisting of approximately 24-30 men, were charged with driving "Duece and a half", fiveton and ten-ton trucks, resupplying units with food, munitions and supplies. With two officers, one in a jeep leading the convoy, one bringing up the rear, supported by several modified "gun trucks", the convoy of 35 plus trucks would venture out three to four times a week. This was through open terrain and often the Viet Cong would fire upon the trucks. This was usually one day out and back mission. They were out on convoy, in the city An Khe, when the TET offensive hit. They were trapped there for eleven days while the battle raged around them.

Cliff still has anger at the tactics and brutality of the Viet Cong.

"You could not tell the friendlies apart from the VC. The local Vietnamese women were always inside the compound doing laundry, shining boots and cleaning. I never learned to trust them. One morning, at 6 a.m., at a camp in the Phu Tai valley, when reveille rang out, bringing half-awake soldiers out of their bunkers,

they were met with VC who had snuck inside the compound, during the night. The Viet Cong had weapons and ammunition that had been snuggled inside the camp and hidden by the supposedly "safe" women. Numerous soldiers were wounded and killed before all the VC had been killed."

While Vietnam usually brought men together as brothers in arms, willing to fight to the death for each other, regardless of color, ethnicity or religion, in 1968, the racial civil unrest in the United State hit Vietnam. Men began to cluster in barracks based on color, tensions were high, and numerous conflicts brought jeopardy to the unit's cohesiveness. Now a Captain, Browne took a drastic step, bringing all officers and NCO's into the mess hall, where he, a 23 and small statured young man, screamed at the leaders, "What the hell is going on? What the hell are we allowing to happen?" He made it clear that this attitude could easily cost soldiers their lives and it had to stop. "Now!" His action helped re-solidify the unit somewhat.

In December of 1968, his tour up, Cliff was flown back to Ft. Louis, Washington. He, like many other returning servicemen, was met with people yelling obscenities, calling him "baby-killer."

(During his tour, Cliff sent every penny of his salary back home to his father for safe keeping. It was Cliff's dream to be able to purchase a yellow Camaro convertible when he returned home.)

When Captain Browne arrived back home in St. Louis, he was met by numerous friends and family members, and his father handed him the keys to his new 1968 bright yellow Camaro with hidden headlights!

Cliff would go on to hold down a number of upper management positions during his civilian years. First as a foreman at the Inland Manufacturing plant in Dayton. During this time, he completed his military obligation in 1970 and mustered out of the Army. He would return to St. Louis in 1971 assuming the oversite of Passport, a carwash company that would be eventually absorbed by Marathon Company. Over the years with Marathon Cliff would be transferred and promoted numerous times, retiring from Marathon in 2005 as the Operations Manager of the Brands Division in Findlay.

Cliff does not keep still after his retirement. His is the

local face and representative for the Charles Construction/ Hancock Steel company. He is also active at the YMCA gym.

As Cliff looks back on his time in Vietnam, he talks of what he was able to learn over there.

"During this tremendous experience I learned how to lead men in difficult situations. I learned how to communicate with young, uneducated, frightened men who were confused and scared." He is humble about it but was awarded the Bronze star for Valor for action against enemy troops.

He was never wounded but can still remember vividly what a bullet sounds like, whipping by one's ear. On one convoy a bullet went between he and his driver shattering the jeeps front windshield. The closest he came to serious injury was during an ambush on his convoy when he was thrown from his jeep. It was his good friend, Master Sgt. Killakoa, who would reach down and pull him back into the vehicle.

His personal life has had its ups and downs. He has been married twice and has a son from his first marriage. The highlight of his retirement years has been his work with youth and high school hockey. It began with his young sons' involvement in youth hockey nearly thirty years ago. His son was a natural on ice and became involved quickly with competitive hockey in Detroit and Ohio. Over the years Cliff would learn the game and certify at numerous levels in coaching. In 2005 he took over the ice hockey program at Findlay High School along with fellow coach Craig Perry, an ice-skating instructor. He has coached over 389 games notching 220 wins along the way.

Until 2016 Cliff was on the ice coaching, when at the young age of 72, doctors decided he required a knee replacement. Though he was relegated to the coach's box, he still actively coached a wonderful group of skaters which included 29 boys and one girl at the JV and Varsity levels. His players were taught about community service as part of their hockey experience and have completed hundreds of hours of service. Cliff and his team received "The Youth Volunteer" Habitat for Humanity award at their annual banquet.

Thank you for your service at home and in Vietnam, Captain Browne!









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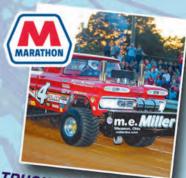
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