

DISCOVER 419

A feature publication of The Courier and Review Times



'Hope, harmony and understanding' at Black Heritage Library

By **BRENNA GRITEMAN**
LIFE EDITOR

From its exclusive Smithsonian exhibit to school outreach to the literal ground it stands on, Findlay's Black Heritage Library and Multicultural Center is a study on community connections. Tucked away at 817 Harmon St., the center seeks to educate and inspire children and adults

through art and artifacts from over 50 countries; an extensive lending library featuring reference materials, biographies, fiction, nonfiction and movies; community programming celebrating cultural holidays; and panel discussions on current topics such as immigration and #MeToo.

Board member Jerome Gray says the center is truly multicultural in its focus and seeks to engage and unite the minds and hearts of its audience.

"Awareness, appreciation and understanding of diversity. That's

our mission," Gray says. "And in doing that, we promote hope, harmony and understanding." The Black Heritage Library was founded in 1982 by Nina Parker and her mother, Stella Mae Sherard, as an outreach program through Findlay's Mason Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church. Within 10 years, the library had outgrown the church space and moved to its current location on Harmon Street. Within five years, the library had again outgrown its space. Leaders called on the carpentry class at

Continued on pg. 3



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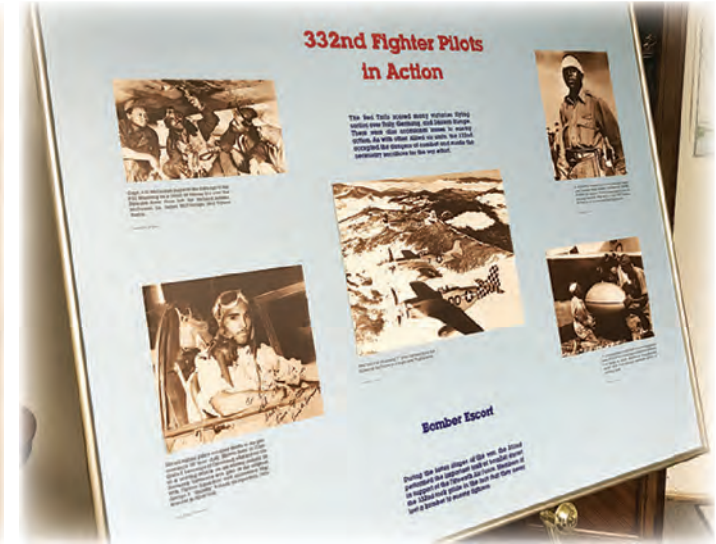
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Continued from pg. 1

Findlay High School to facilitate an expansion.

“Materials were supplied and they came up with the plans and the labor,” Gray says.

“Community at work.”

As the facility continued to grow and expand, it morphed into a true teaching center. Its displays celebrate traditional portrayals of African American, German, French, Hispanic, Japanese and Native American heritages, and its board of directors is comprised of members of various races and ethnicities. Collections include a lexicology of jazz, artists of the Harlem Renaissance

and aboriginal art of the Dogon.

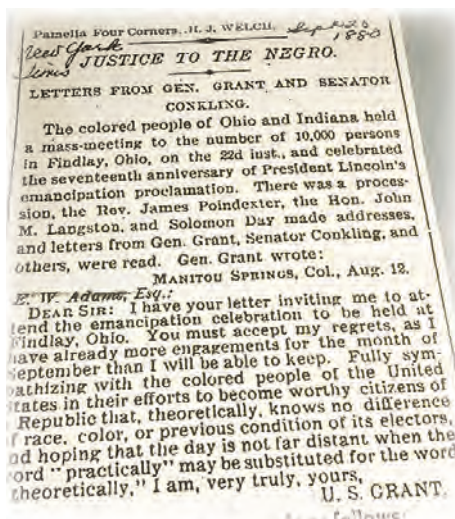
The newest exhibit, highlighting Japanese heritage, includes a wedding kimono, a rug, silk flowers, wall designs and more. Perhaps most notably, visitors can also trace the history of black aviation through “Black Wings,” a display of 71 digitally reproduced panels donated by the Smithsonian Institute.

“They chronicle pioneers, black men and women in aviation, from the pioneering days through the space shuttle,” Gray says.

The center is the only library or museum in the world awarded the exhibit, made possible

by Smithsonian curator Von Hardesty, who graduated from Bluffton University and was familiar with the library in Findlay.

“Again, community connection. And he thought of us,” Gray says. The library has a long tradition of presenting programs in local schools, and hosting students from elementary to college age. Annual programming includes a Unity Walk on Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday, along with a Kwanzaa workshop and a Juneteenth Celebration of Freedom. Cultural competency training is available to businesses and governmental agencies.



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CancerPatientServices.org



Humans of Findlay is a documentary project based on the blog “Humans of New York.” The project was created to introduce many of the unique people of Findlay, Ohio. The man behind the lens and the project is Dave Morrow. Morrow has interviewed over 700 people of Findlay, ranging from age 5 to 102 years old, with a wide range of diversity and backgrounds. Jenna Wilkins has joined Dave in continuing the Humans of Findlay project.

On April 4, 2018, a proclamation was signed by Mayor Lydia Mihalik designating the day as “Humans of Findlay Day.” Each of the stories have been read up to 30,000 times, and can be located on humansoffindlay.com, Humans of Findlay Facebook page, as well as in this monthly magazine. Know someone that you feel should be featured? Send a nomination on the Facebook page.

ABBY BLANKEMEYER



Being a single parent is an incredible juggling act and many moms and dads do it every single day.

Abby Blankemeyer is one of these single moms and deserves the spotlight. She attended college focusing on radiography, had her oldest child Cooper while in school, took a week off for his birth, then graduated as planned, on time. Abby ended up getting a great position as a radiographer at Blanchard Valley Hospital right after college, which she has been blessed to work at for 18 years now. She

loves working there with friends who feel like family.

Marriage and two more children, Reid and Grier would become part of Abby’s story as well as the start of her cupcake business, Abracadabra, in 2010. On her opening weekend she sold all 1,000 cupcakes! Life continued in it’s crazy chaos for Abby. Unfortunately, she and her husband divorced and thus she decided to put a hold on the cupcake business in order to focus on her three young children.

Life went on and Abby started to date

a man who had a beautiful daughter named Emmy. Emmy’s dad ended up moving to Texas and her mother is dealing with drug addiction, and getting back on her feet. While Emmy lives with her grandparents currently, Abby also treats her as one of her own, “she’s just one of our kids” Abby explains. High School senior night was a joint effort between grandparents and Abby, as are holidays and vacations. Between the children’s wrestling, football, basketball, track and volleyball schedules, Abby’s third shift full time job as a radiologist, and starting her cupcake business back up in 2019, she’s doing her very best to provide the necessities and a good life for her children. There are many times sacrifices have been made by the family in order to get by, and the kids feel those sacrifices, but know their mom is doing her very best. As a strong family they get by together.

Always remembering that “laughter is the best medicine” helps Abby and the kids through their tough times and when they’re able they love to enjoy the simple treats of going shopping, going out to eat, or going on trips as a family.



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FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 1 - FINDLAY

PURSE BINGO

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Join us for a fun and purposeful evening - Awakening Minds Art fundraiser, Designer Purse Bingo. Awakening Minds Art provides therapeutic, educational and developmental programs to all ages and abilities. Families, agencies and schools only pay a fraction of the cost for programming, the difference is made up in fundraisers like this. Tickets available at www.awakeningmindsart.org/pursebingo. Event held at The Elks 900 W. Melrose Ave. Findlay. 6-9:30PM

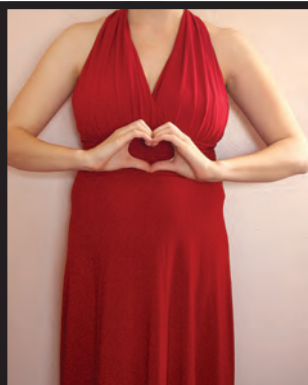


FEBRUARY 7 - FOSTORIA

RED DRESS LUNCHEON

STACY'S PLACE

Do Your Part, Take Care of Your Heart' and enjoy ProMedica Fostoria Community Hospital's 16th Annual Fostoria Red Dress luncheon. An educational segment on women and heart health will be presented. The event features community leaders as celebrity waiters, door prizes and more. The Fostoria Red Dress Luncheon celebrates the American Heart Association's (AHA) Go Red for Women movement that calls for women to assume responsibility of their heart health and live stronger, longer lives. To register or for more information, please call Fostoria Community Hospital's community outreach department at 419-436-6688. Stacy's Place, 625 Plaza Drive Fostoria - Event begins at noon



FEBRUARY 7 & 8 - BOWLING GREEN

WINTERFEST BG CHILLABRATION

BOWLING GREEN

An annual three-day community event with ice carvings, soup and chili cook-off, Frostbite Fun Run and FREE: "Snowflakes on Display" artwork scavenger hunt, art show, ice skating, indoor Winter Carnival, live music, horse-drawn carriage rides, Date-Night Challenge and more! Also, don't miss the United Way of Wood County Charity Chocolate Crawl - Feb. 7th on the streets of Bowling Green 4-8PM. Tickets are \$20 per person, which includes one sweet item from all your favorite restaurants, retail stores and nonprofits. Additionally, your ticket covers the admittance fee to enter Chillabration's wine and beer tent, a.k.a. "After Crawl," which will be located on Main Street. Adult beverages are not included. For more information visit www.winterfestbgohio.com.



FEBRUARY 8 - TIFFIN

2020 CASINO ROYALE

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Mark your calendars for The Seneca Regional Chamber's 2020 Casino Royale Fundraiser. Performing this year is Lee Alverson, Elton John & Billy Joel tribute musician! Join us for the reverse raffle, games, and food! Event held 6:30-10:30PM. Camden Falls 2460 S. State Route 231, Tiffin.



FEBRUARY 8 - FINDLAY

CHILI COOK OFF

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Come taste 20 different chili recipes and vote for your favorite. Kids Zone, raffle baskets and entertainment rounds out this event. This is the signature fundraiser to support the services provided by Cancer Patient Services – so bring your family out for a fun evening. UF, 1000 North Main Street, Findlay · 4:30-8:00PM
\$10 admission per person.

FEBRUARY 8 - FINDLAY

**AMERICAN GIRL VICTORIAN VALENTINE TEA
HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

This event is for children ages 5-12 with an accompanying adult. The tea will highlight the time period of American Girl, Samantha. Guests are encouraged to bring their American Girl doll and come dressed for a tea party! Learn about proper Victorian tea party etiquette, the history of valentine cards and even make one to take home. Tea and refreshments will be served by the Victorian Ladies. Preregistration is required, and limited space is available. Registration begins January 13, 2020 at hancockhistoricalmuseum.org. Event hours 11AM-1PM
422 W. Sandusky Street, Findlay

Cost: \$30 per pair for members, \$35 for nonmembers.



FEBRUARY 29 - FINDLAY

LEAP YEAR IN SPACE

OAKWOODS NATURE PRESERVE

Leap Year is something we only get to enjoy every four years. Some happenings in space only occur at certain cycles. Join us in the portable planetarium to learn about binary stars, what comet we'll see next, and when Pluto's closest approach to Earth will happen. Participants are required to sit on the floor. Ask about accommodations. Recommended for those ages 7 and up.

For more information visit

<https://hancockparks.com/event/leap-year-in-space/>

Free but register by 4 PM on Saturday, February 29.

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FEBRUARY 29 - FINDLAY

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Our next Humans of Findlay, George Bjorling Jr., began his earthly journey in Buffalo, New York in January of 1927. George's parents were George Sr. and Pauline. George has three siblings, Ed, Myrna and Sandra. George Sr. worked in the automobile industry his whole life, starting out with the Pierce Arrow company. He was a professional "striper", skillfully and carefully hand painting stripes on new automobiles just coming off the assembly lines. He would eventually change companies joining Chevrolet.

George Jr. recalls the family being transferred to St. Louis with Chevy, but a strike shut that plant down. George Sr. and his brother, plus families, were fortunate enough to be rehired in Buffalo, but the two families had no money for food or gas to return to New York. "We stopped at an old gas station, where my dad striped people's cars for a dollar a car. After he had finished eight cars, we had a total of 8 dollars, enough for food and gas back then to get us back to Buffalo!"

George Jr. attended school through the 8th grade in Buffalo before his dad accepted a promotion and transfer to Flint, Michigan. Shortly after this move the war broke out in 1941 and they moved again to Indianapolis. "I graduated in 1945 from Shortridge High School at the age of 17. I had already enlisted in the Army Air Corps during my senior year so one week after graduation I was in uniform."

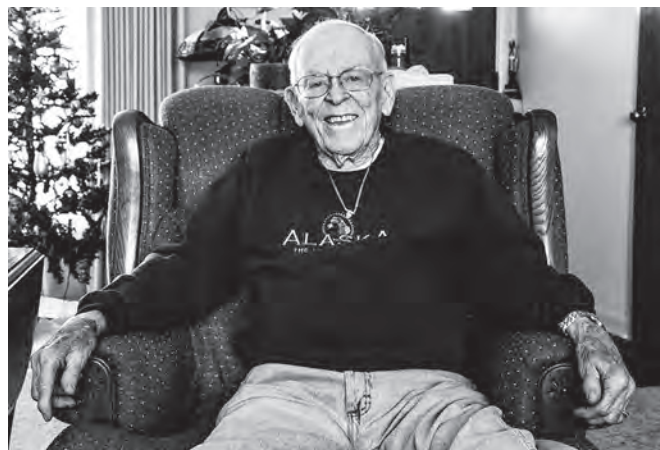
George would complete basic training at Keesler AFB, in Biloxi Mississippi. He had signed to go to

flight school and be a pilot. "I wanted to be a fighter pilot against the Japanese!" However, after basic training, all airmen scheduled to go to flight school were told there was no longer a need for pilots and instead were offered three optional assignments, cryptology, aircraft mechanic or meteorology. Choosing the latter George headed to Chanute AFB in Illinois for 18 weeks to learn about climate, winds, weather charting and more to assist the Air Force in predicting weather situations.

"After graduation 20 of us were given leave in New York. I met prize fighter Jack Dempsey in his bar! Big man with huge hands! He shook hands with me, and I got to drink beer at eighteen!"

George received orders to a "tough" duty station, St. Lucia in the Caribbean. It was the metacology station closest to where hurricanes developed, and he was the NCOIC put in charge of the station forecasting storms. The area was an active area for German U-boats and George would often join the shore patrol watching for signs of them. (When not working George and his crew spent time on the beautiful beaches, spearfishing lobsters, and occasionally hosting planes refueling carrying passengers such as Caesar Romero and Tyrone Powers.)

After a year on St. Lucia, the military began downsizing after the war and George was discharged, returning home to Fenton, Michigan where his parents lived. At the ripe old age of 20, George enrolled at Flint Junior College where he spent two years studying



business. During this time, he was also "studying" the young women riding in his carpool to college each day. One young lady caught his eye, who he enjoyed talking to and got along well with. He and Bonnie would marry in 1950.

George began working for Universal CIT financial company, first as a collector and repossession officer. He was quickly promoted to a collection manager, then a branch manager. He accepted a transfer to the Findlay office, then located on Tiffin avenue behind the Toyota dealership.

"I honestly wasn't thrilled coming to Ohio. But my Bonnie fell in love with Findlay right away. She loved the schools, the medical system and the shopping opportunities. We rented a house for a bit, three bedrooms for \$75 a month before moving into our current home over fifty years ago."

Bonnie and George brought three children born in Michigan with them to Ohio. George, Nora and Jeri, who were later joined by little sister Amy, an Ohio native. (This makes family get togethers interesting when TTUN and OH! compete!) George and Bonnie's

children have added "bunches of grand and great-grandchildren" according to George.

When George retired from Universal in 1997, he was encouraged by Stan Kajawa (and Bonnie) to join the Ford dealership here in Findlay overseeing Human Resources.

George has always been active, playing "12 handicap" golf all over the country and playing racquetball competitively for over 30 years. Now at the young age of 92 he has slowed just a tad. He drives himself to the YMCA every morning to work out for a couple of hours, then on to the Legion for coffee and cinnamon toast before he grabs a USA Today newspaper and heads back home.

George lost his daughter Jeri nine years ago, son George eight years ago and his wife Bonnie six years ago. But he feels blessed because his large family is close by and on Christmas Eve he expects 25-30 family members at his home to celebrate! Happy upcoming 93rd birthday Sir!

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Breakfast in Bed for Valentine's Day?

YES, Please!

Serving breakfast in bed on Valentine's Day is a romantic way to begin this day that has become synonymous with affection and romance. Of course, pouring a bowl of cereal and bringing it upstairs won't have the same impact as whipping up a homemade breakfast. Those who want to impress their sweethearts this Valentine's Day and start the day off right can prepare the following recipe.

Recipe courtesy of Betty Rosbottom's "Sunday Brunch" (Chronicle Books).



Strawberry-Glazed French Toast with Sweetened Sour Cream

Serves 4

- 8 1-inch-thick bread slices,
cut from a country or
peasant loaf (see note 1)
- 2 cups half-and-half
- 4 egg yolks
- 3 T light brown sugar
- 1 T vanilla extract, plus 1/2 tsp
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 3 T unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 T granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup strawberry jam
or preserves
(see note 2)

1. Arrange a rack at center position and preheat the oven to 400 F. Place the bread slices on a baking sheet and bake until dry and very lightly browned, about 8 minutes per side. Watch carefully so that the bread does not burn. Remove the bread from the oven and reduce the oven temperature to 200 F.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the half-and-half, egg yolks, brown sugar, 1 T vanilla and cinnamon. Pour the mixture into a shallow pan (a 9-by-13-inch glass baking dish works well). Add the toasted bread slices and soak them 4 minutes per side. Remove to a large plate or platter.
3. Place a large, heavy frying pan over low to medium heat. Add about 2 tsp. of the butter, or enough to coat the bottom of the pan lightly. When melted, add enough bread slices to fit comfortably in a single layer. Cook slowly until the slices are golden brown and crisp on both sides, about 4 minutes per side. Remove to a baking sheet and place in the warm oven. Repeat, adding more butter to the pan as needed until all the bread slices have been sautéed.
4. In a small bowl, stir together the sour cream, granulated sugar and remaining 1/2 tsp vanilla.
5. When ready to serve, spread each toast with a thin coating of strawberry jam and top with a dollop of sweetened sour cream.

Note 1: The best bread for this dish is an unsliced rectangular loaf of country or peasant bread, preferably one without an extra-hard crust. Cut off the ends of the loaf. Slice the bread into 1-inch thick slices.

Note 2: You can try other jams, preserves or marmalades. Cherry, raspberry or peach preserves and orange marmalade are other possibilities.



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 immediately following from 1-2:50 pm
 on Saturdays, and rental skates.

Hockey Skills & Drills

for Ages 16+ (Helmet & stick required)

Feb. 21, 28, March 6, 13, 20

(FRIDAYS 6:00-6:50 pm)

Register Now - Adult Hockey Drills & Skills: \$50

<https://cityoffindlay.maxglaxay.net/BrowseActivities.aspx>



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8-PIECE BONUS BOX

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Includes 8 pieces of mixed chicken and 1 large side

PLUS PACK
Add add'l. lg. side
& 6 Biscuits
for **\$3.99**



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Famous Recipe Chicken

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ORDER A LEE'S PARTY PLATTER TODAY. CALL FOR DETAILS.

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2-PIECE COMBO

\$4.99

Includes 1 side, Biscuit and a drink

JUMBO BONELESS WINGS CUP-TO-GO

Includes all white meat Jumbo Boneless Wings and a dipping sauce

\$3.89

Valid only at participating Lee's. Buy up to 6 at this price with this coupon. not valid with any other promotional offer or coupon. Expires 2/29/20

LEE'S
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LIVERS OR GIZZARDS MEAL

Includes livers or gizzards, coleslaw mashed potatoes & gravy and a biscuit

\$4.99

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LEE'S
Famous Recipe Chicken

3-PIECE BREAST STRIP MEAL

Includes 3 breast strips, 2 individual sides and a biscuit.

\$5.49

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LEE'S
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2-PIECE MEAL

Includes leg, thigh 2 individual sides and a biscuit

\$4.99

Valid only at participating Lee's. Buy up to 6 at this price with this coupon. not valid with any other promotional offer or coupon. Expires 2/29/20

LEE'S
Famous Recipe Chicken

LARGE SIDE

With purchase of any Family Box or Family Meal

\$1.99

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LEE'S
Famous Recipe Chicken

BREAST MEAL

Includes chicken breast, coleslaw, mashed potatoes & gravy and a biscuit

\$4.49

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LEE'S
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12-PIECE MEAL

Includes 12 pieces of mixed chicken, 3 large sides and 6 biscuits

\$24.99

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LEE'S
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2-PIECE SNACK

Includes 2 pieces of chicken and a biscuit.

\$2.99

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LEE'S
Famous Recipe Chicken

COUNTRY FRIED STEAK MEAL

Includes county fried steak, coleslaw, mashed potatoes, & gravy and a biscuit

\$4.99

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LEE'S
Famous Recipe Chicken

JUMBO BONELESS WINGS FAMILY MEAL

Includes 20, all white meat Jumbo Boneless Wings, 2 large sides and 4 biscuits

\$17.99

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LEE'S
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20-PIECE BOX

Includes 20 pieces of mixed chicken

\$24.99

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LEE'S
Famous Recipe Chicken

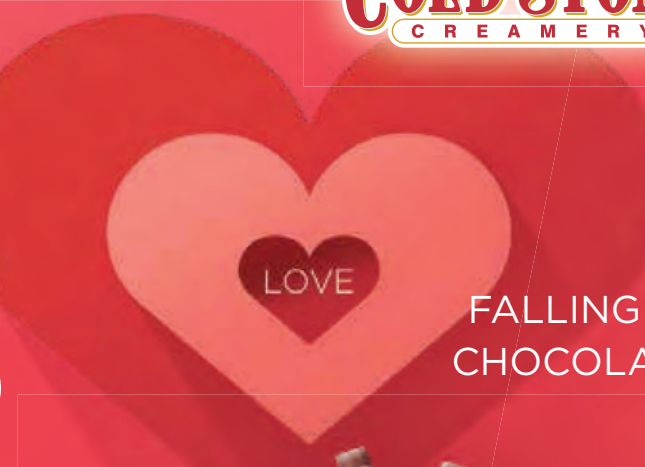
10% OFF ANY PARTY PLATTER

50 pc or larger, must be ordered 24 hours in advance

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FALLING IN
CHOCOLATE™



FUDGE
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\$3 OFF

Any Cake
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