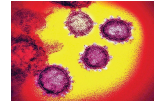




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"Even though I'm just an employee, I feel really loyal to this place and I care about all the customers," said Perry.

GILLIAN JONES - THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

Straight up with Bethany Perry of Knox Trail Inn

Knox Trail Inn gets new life, look

Posted Wednesday, August 7, 2019 4:12 pm

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By Nicolas Davidoff, The Berkshire Eagle

OTIS — Bethany Perry feels like the Knox Trail Inn is her second home. Her coworkers and regular customers have become a sort of a second family after eight years of working behind the bar.

"I care so much about this bar," she said. "Even though I'm just an employee, I feel really loyal to this place and I care about all the customers."

GETTING TO KNOW BETHANY PERRY

Bar: Knox Trail Inn, 1898 East Otis Rd, East Otis.

On the clock: Tuesday through Saturday (Knox Trail Inn is open noon to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday; noon to midnight Friday and Saturday)

Do: Order her favorite Raz Lemon Drop martini

Don't: Say her name too many times when it's busy and you're trying to get her attention.

Before working at the Knox Trail Inn, Perry served up cocktails at various restaurants in Sandisfield, including MJ Tucker's Pizza & Pub.

"I kind of fell into bartending, but I immediately liked it because I really like people and I talk a lot so it gives me a social outlet," she said.

Perry works Tuesday through Saturday at the Knox Trail Inn, which has been in business since 1820. The inn owes its name to General Henry Knox's passage through Otis on his way to Fort Ticonderoga during the Revolutionary War in 1776. The dark, wooden barroom's walls are decorated with taxidermy and antique signage that show the passage of time. The enormous head of an elk stares blankly toward a small black bear on the opposite side of the room, a wolf is perched on a lonely trunk high above the bar,

a few black and white pictures of previous customers hang next to the entrance. Yet these antique items are sharply contrasted by the recent renovations that have taken place. A projection screen displays SportsCenter in the dining area, TV screens show lottery numbers and the news around the bar, surround-sound speakers play '60s rock in the background.

But these are all recent changes. Perry has seen the spot through its lowest of lows — when it was closed and put on the auction block in the fall of 2016. She now works with the rest of the staff to restore the Knox Trail Inn to its former glory. The restaurant was purchased by a group of five local friends in 2017, who have since overhauled the decaying location with a new menu, extensive renovations, and a variety of activities and events to attract more customers.

"The new owners really wanted to shake up the place," Perry said. "We completely changed the menu, the birch room is brand new — it used to be where the bar was — and now it feels a lot more uplifting; there's a lot more lighting and there's a place that you can be that is not in the bar area."

The Knox Trail Inn now hosts weekly horseshoe leagues — on Wednesday evenings for men and on Thursday evenings for women — as well as live performances on Friday and Saturday nights.

"Also, on Thursday night we have trivia night, which has been really popular," Perry said. "Throughout the winter, we had indoor corn-hole, which got really competitive. We have a 'Paint and Sip' coming up too. It's really like a rotating door, you never know what is going to happen here today with all the events that we keep adding. But when it gets busy, it's great because we all work together and help each other out."

BARKEEP!

Q. What is the common drink order you get here?

A. Probably between the Raz Lemon Drop Martini and the margaritas — especially the Knox Trail Margarita. But we also serve a lot of beer. I would say that this is a Budweiser and Bud Light bar. It's the staple for a lot of the locals. If we run out of either of those two, it's a bad day.

Q. What is in your fridge at home?

A. I always usually drink vodka at home. That's why the Raz Lemon Drop martini is my favorite here — it's my favorite thing to make and to drink when I'm not working here. But I'm normally stocked up with a bottle of Ciroc or Tito's in my fridge.

Q. What is your favorite item on the menu?

ARTICLE CONTINUES AFTER THESE ADS

A. My favorite item on the menu is the prime-rib on the weekends. But during the weekdays, I have a Reuben most days.

Q. Is there anything that sets the Knox Trail Inn apart from other local bars and restaurants?

A. I think its our employees here just because we do try to know our customers as best as we can. For example, I know that when Chris walks in, he's going to need a Coors Lite. If he gets something different, then I know something is wrong today and I have to make sure he's OK. Or even if you haven't seen one of your regulars in a few days we just kind of ask others to check up on him to make sure nothing is wrong. I really feel that there is a big sense of community here. A lot of locals have been really happy that we've been working to change it and it's a nice place to come. They always want to help us out just as much as we want to help them out.

Q. What do people come in here and talk to you about the most?

A. People here talk a lot about work. A lot of them are self-employed, so they'll talk about this job or that job and what they have to do. The next biggest topic of conversation has to be sports. We have a lot people that love the Red Sox and hate the Yankees, so when there is a big game going on you hear a lot about what's going on. Even if you're not watching, you'll know the score.

Q. What do you like the most about your job?

A. I just like dealing with other people. I am a people person and this job allows me to meet a whole lot of people all at the same time. For example, we have families that have come here since the place was opened and so it's several generations of customers. At the same time, we get some new people due to the fluctuation in traffic because of it being such a big second-home owner's area. It's nice to get a good mix of people that you've never met before and customers who you know what they want as soon as they walk through the door. The type of people that come in here is really all over the place.

Q. What do you like to do when you are off the clock?

A. I have three children, so I'm not really ever off the clock. I'm basically a taxi for them when I'm not here. But we've been swimming a lot this summer. I also have baby ducks, which has been taking up a lot of time recently.

Q. What is your favorite bar story?

A. I have to admit the other day my coworker Kendra went to go tap the keg and it sprayed everyone at the bar. Everyone had a shocked look on their face at first and then burst out laughing. I'm happy it turned out that way, but it was definitely a good thing that it was a hot day. I don't know how people would have reacted if that had happened in the middle of winter.

Q. What should people know about bartending that, if they've never been a bartender, they might not know?

A. You definitely have to multitask, a lot. You have to have mommy ears at all times because the busier you get the more people are going to call your name if they know it. There have been plenty of times when I've wanted to change my name. I have a Fitbit and I always feel good at the end of the day with how much I've moved around while working. I look at the app and all of sudden I have 20 thousand steps and I'm just like 'Wow!'

Q. Have you ever wanted to own your own bar?

A. Oh, definitely. Especially after working here. It's a place that they can escape to and find a friendly face that is willing to listen to them and help them with whatever they're going through — kind of like a mini therapy session just for the price of a beer.

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