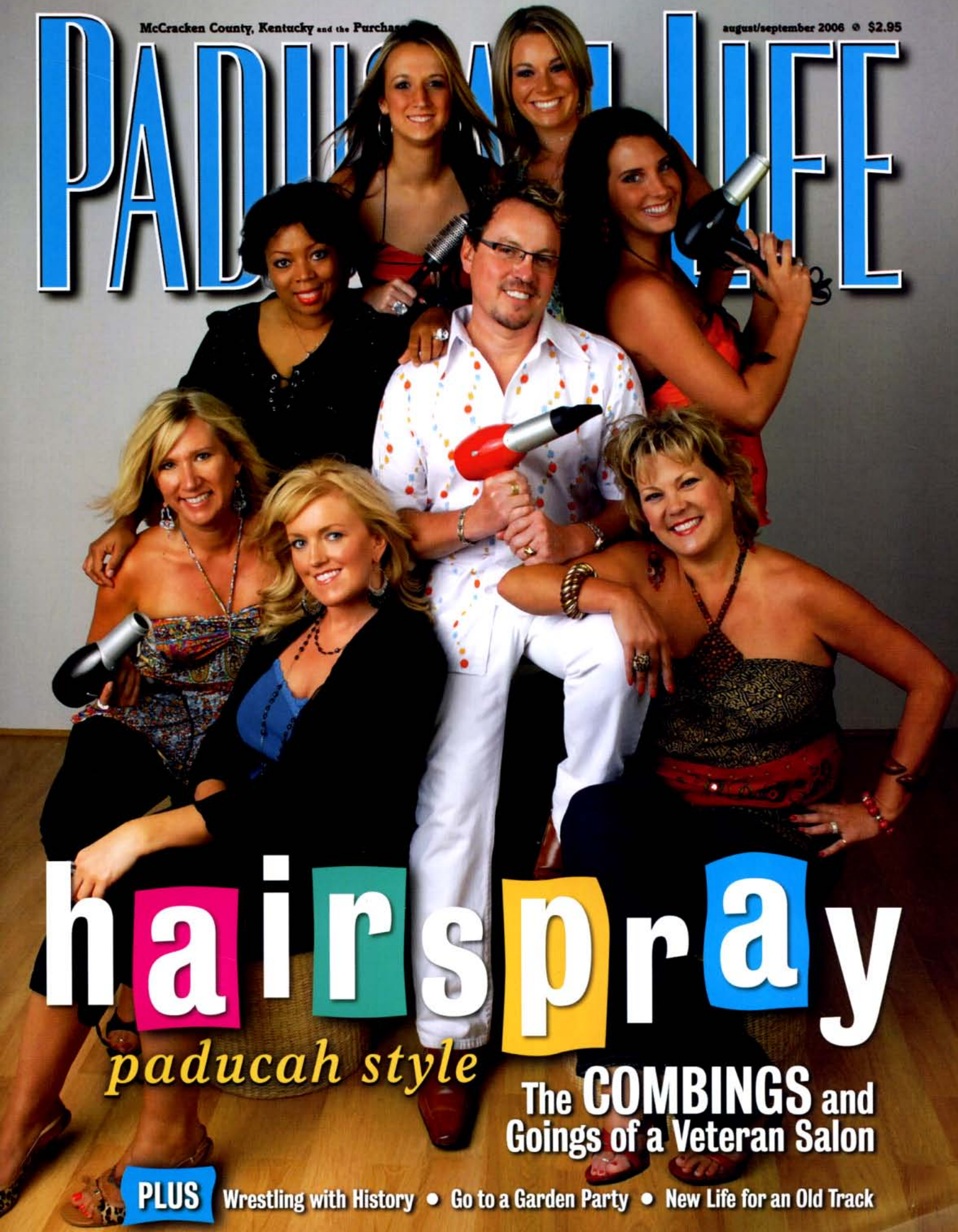


McCracken County, Kentucky and the Purchase

august/september 2006 • \$2.95

# PADUCAH LIFE



# hair spray

*paducah style*

The **COMBINGS** and  
Goings of a Veteran Salon

**PLUS**


Wrestling with History • Go to a Garden Party • New Life for an Old Track



## The Art of Inter-Net-Working ✨

A search on the internet brought Nikki May to Paducah and her work on the internet keeps her at home in Lower

Town while spanning the world of work and art ✨ Nikki May, contemporary artist, logo and website designer, and full-time IBM employee, is perhaps the busiest multi-tasker in Lower Town. When Nikki moved from Atlanta almost three years ago she brought a youthful infusion of energy to her adopted neighborhood. ✨ Through her company, Blue Frog Designs, Nikki has created logos, advertising, and websites for a variety of local and national businesses including the Lower Town Arts District, The Global Nomad, Café Minou, musician Kate Simpkins, the Susan B. Anthony Project in Connecticut, and Project AIDS Orphan. [BY VICKY CECIL]



**Woven Wall** is screen printed cotton fabric (discharge and overprinted) torn into strips and woven back together. *Woven Wall* is on display in the lobby gallery of the Paducah Bank across the street from Nikki's home in Lower Town.



### Cubicle or cubist

Nikki's first job after completing her graduate studies in Fibers at the Savannah College of Art and Design was as a t-shirt designer for the National Audubon Society and The Nature Conservancy. She started Blue Frog Designs as a way to promote the graphic design, illustration, and html skills that she had learned along the way. The new company was contacted by IBM for a 30-day temporary job developing their new intranet project. The temp job never ended and Nikki has been working for IBM for the last nine years, moving her office from corporate headquarters in Atlanta to her Paducah home in the heart of Lower Town in November of 2003.

As creative director of IBM's On Demand Community, Nikki works from home on her laptop computer, participates



in frequent conference calls, and travels to New York and Philadelphia several times a year to meet with her project team. The On Demand Community is part of IBM's

intranet and provides employees and retirees opportunities to volunteer in their communities and in their children's schools. It provides

[TOP] This piece, *Walls and Windows*, is from Nikki's MFA exhibition of the same name from the Savannah College of Art and Design. [BOTTOM] This untitled piece is from an encaustic workshop taken at R&F Paints in Kingston, NY last fall. It was Nikki's introduction to working with molten wax, a medium she has fallen in love with and is continuing to experiment with in the development of her new body of work entitled *Fragments*.

resources and tools for volunteers and grants and donations of technology for schools and other charities. The program began three years ago and has over 60,000 registered users. Harvard Business School has used the project as a case study on corporate philanthropy in their graduate school. Nikki is proud of her association with this project where the corporate giant gives back to its employees' communities.

Nikki tries to arrange her IBM work schedule to include four ten-hour days, leaving her three-day weekends to work on her own art. A series of prints from some of her ink drawings has been on exhibit at the Global Nomad since March.

## HomeWORK

"I call the show *Paid Vacation: Drawings from Conference Rooms*," Nikki says. "I thought I hadn't been doing a lot of my own art while working for IBM in Atlanta, but I sat in a lot of meetings and classes in conference rooms and while taking notes I'd doodle."

She had stacks of notebooks with very intricate ink drawings filling up and then overtaking the margins of the pages. When Monica Bilak at *The Global Nomad* saw the drawings she



[BOTTOM] Part of a developing body of work, *Fragments* is a beeswax collage. The mixed media (beeswax, personal photographs, found papers, drawings on paper) is a sampling of work currently in progress in Nikki's studio. [RIGHT] The title of this original pen and ink art is *Engage Strategic Initiatives* and is available in a limited edition print. The piece is from the exhibition *Paid Vacation: Drawings from conference rooms*, currently on display at The Global Nomad. Each title from the show was humorously created from three randomly computer generated "corporate-speak" words.

suggested that Nikki have a show at the coffee shop. So Nikki scanned the drawings into her computer, cleaned them up, and turned them into prints. Apparently Monica saw something in the drawings that appealed to others as well because the drawings have sold very well.

A show at the Mark Palmer Gallery in September will feature some of Nikki's new encaustic work. Encaustic is an old form of painting with pigmented wax. Wax is heated and fused to the surface of the painting. She can also transfer images on to the top of the wax. She has taken some of her drawings, photographs, and even pages from old books, printed them on her laser printer and imbedded them in the wax. The small paintings seem to stack a variety of old and new images in an interesting collage with a smooth translucent feel.

Nikki earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in drawing and painting from the University of Georgia and a Master's in fibers and has taught herself photography and graphic design. The pieces on the walls of her studio reflect the artist's wide range of interests and talents. One piece is made of fabric that she has transferred some of her photos on to, then screen printed, painted, torn apart and stitched back together. It may sound "busy" but the piece is very cohesive and intriguing. Over the mantle hangs a beautiful acrylic painting of various small leaf shapes in clear blues and greens. The shapes appear transparent and recall an abstract underwater scene, while hiding a female figure among the layers.

## ArtWORLD

Nikki plans to spend the winter in Mazatlan, Mexico taking a workshop in printmaking, working on her art, and taking care of her corporate responsibilities for IBM. She has found a rental just blocks from the beach with free internet. "I really have the best of both worlds," Nikki says. She has the salary and benefits from her corporate job and the freedom to do it



from anywhere with internet access.

Since Nikki does "everything" online it is not surprising that her introduction to Paducah came from an internet search for "small town art." The search led her to an article entitled "Small Town Big on Art" in *Art Calendar*. She also found the Lower Town artists' forum on what was going on in the community. Impressed with what she'd seen on the internet Nikki arranged for a weekend visit. She stayed with Freda Fairchild who threw a potluck to introduce her to all the artists. Craig Kittner and Denise Gordon spent the following day showing her around town and, by the end of the weekend, she had made a verbal commitment to buy a house and leave the big city traffic behind. Lower Town artists and many other locals who enjoy Nikki and her art are happy she chose to bring her high energy and unique talents to Paducah.

So are we! ❁

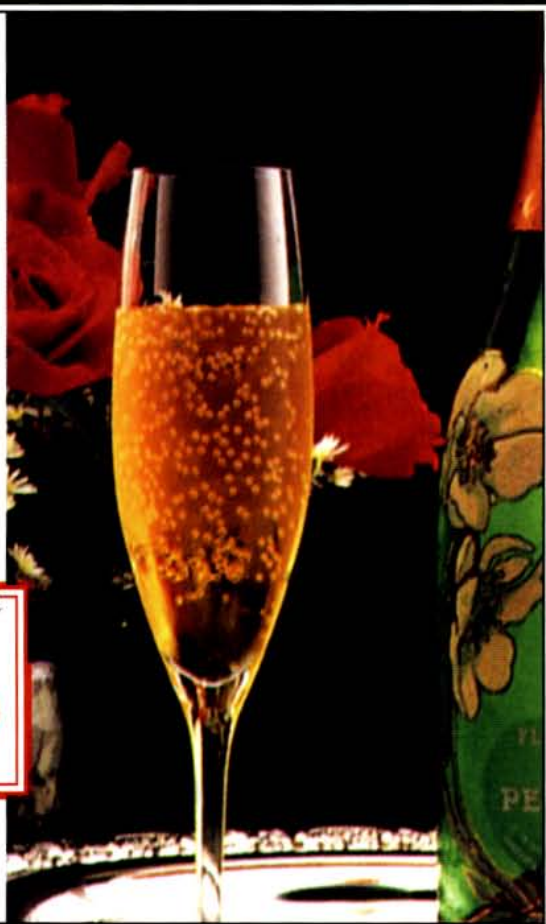
*Your celebration  
definitely deserves  
the finest...  
we can do that.*

- Cool Party Supplies
- Finest Wines & Liquors
- Gourmet Delights
- Godiva Chocolates
- Unique Gifts
- Fabulous Kitchen Items
- Wine Tasting



**The Party Mart**

509 Lone Oak Road  
Hannan Shopping Plaza  
270-442-0011



*Parties  
perfect  
for a  
princess!*

*Linden Plantation* is proud to host signature parties for girls of all ages in true southern style! Our event coordinators attend to the details to ensure it's a perfect party in every way.

*Happy Hatter's Tea Party Pretty in Pink Southern Sass and Class*

To reserve your date at the new Linden Plantation, call 270.554.9444 or go to [www.lindenplantation.com](http://www.lindenplantation.com)

*Linden  
Plantation*

**NOW Taking Reservations for November 2006!**