



How a local coffee business grew up from just a ‘hobby’

LOCAL&STATE, 1B

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WEEKEND

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‘I love my restaurant’



Owner Abdalrazziq Foqahaa seasons some kebabs on the grill at Jerusalem Restaurant, the eatery he founded ten years ago at 2027 W. Farmington Road in Peoria. PHOTOS BY MATT DAYHOFF/JOURNAL STAR

Middle Eastern eatery marks 10 years in Peoria

Cassidy Waigand
Peoria Journal Star | USA TODAY NETWORK

PEORIA – Abdalrazziq Foqahaa is grateful for every year, every month, every day Jerusalem Restaurant has been in business.

The Middle Eastern eatery opened at 2027 W. Farmington Road, Suite B, in September 2015 and has served the community for more than a decade now. Foqahaa, in turn, is thankful for all those who have supported the business.

“Thank you for 10 years,” he said. “Thank you for everybody (who has) come here. ... Thank you, thank you, thank you.”

Food and service keep people coming

When Foqahaa opened the eatery in 2015, he said some laughed at the location. Tucked away behind a separate business, the storefront is situated just off West Farmington Road.

Yet, Foqahaa said if the food is good, it “doesn’t matter where you open.” People will come, he said, and they have.

There are those who visit every once in a while, customers who come every week or two and people who patronize the establishment multiple times each week. Some customers, Foqahaa said, drive an hour or more to reach the restaurant.

Korin Klapp is one regularly returning customer who began visiting the restaurant roughly three or



Jerusalem Restaurant owner Abdalrazziq Foqahaa, center, and his sons Ibrahim, left, 13, and Omar, 23, pose in the dining room.

four years ago. She said the storefront is conveniently located and offers delicious dishes. Moreover, Klapp described staff members as “jovial” and polite people who take the time to talk to their customers.

She said, “all those things are appreciated when you’re a customer,” so she is glad to support the small, family-owned eatery.

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Note to readers

Due to the upcoming Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday, there will be no mail delivery on Monday, Jan. 19. Instead of receiving your Jan. 19 paper on Monday, you’ll receive it in the mail on Tuesday, Jan. 20.

New march planned in Peoria for MLK Day

JJ Bullock
Peoria Journal Star
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PEORIA — The city’s annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day march has been postponed for a year and a new event held on Monday will temporarily take its place.

Peoria Mayor Rita Ali told the Journal Star the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day march in the city has been paused for a year so the organizers can craft a plan to draw more people out to next year’s event after the 2025 march saw low turnout.

“It wasn’t a Rita Ali decision, it was a committee decision, a committee that’s been involved in this effort for decades,” Ali said. “... The numbers were dwindling, so this year we just decided we’re going to do some thinking, some planning, some regrouping and figure out what we’re going to do next year and do it really well.” The King Holiday Committee of Peoria has been organizing the march and annual awards for about four decades.

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The Rev. Alphonso Lyons Jr., holding the mic, and LaMar Anderson, holding the megaphone, lead the annual MLK Freedom March on Jan. 21, 2019 down Moss Avenue in Peoria. MATT DAYHOFF/JOURNAL STAR

How Postal Service changes may affect Illinois vote-by-mail

Zach Roth
Peoria Journal Star
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A group of Illinois county clerks, led by the Tazewell County clerk, warned voters Thursday that changes to Postal Service rules on vote-by-mail ballots may have a detrimental impact on their ability to get their vote counted before Election Day this year.

John Ackerman, clerk in Tazewell County, said during a news conference at a meeting of the Illinois Association of County Clerks and Recorders that

new rules handed down by the United States Postal Service will disrupt the well-trodden process of handling mail ballots in the state of Illinois.

Ackerman said that beginning with the primary election on March 17, mail ballots will not be given priority by USPS, no longer being given special treatment over other forms of mail going through its system. In addition, any postmarks will not be applied to ballots until they make it through a USPS distribution center, which can vary depending on a county’s location.

For instance, Ackerman noted that

ballots in Peoria would go through Peoria’s distribution center, but ballots in Tazewell County would be routed through Champaign. Also, postal workers will only be making a single trip to distribution centers each day, instead of the multiple trips that they had made in the past.

As a result, Ackerman says that any ballot put in a mailbox on Election Day will not be postmarked that day, but the day after. While he noted that every county will have their own standard, Ackerman is asking that voters in Tazewell County put their ballots in the mail

at least one week before Election Day, something they have never advertised to voters in the past.

“This is a dramatic change that will impact how they utilize vote by mail and how they plan to cast their vote,” Ackerman said. “We’ve utilized that specialized treatment successfully over the years to make sure those ballots not only are delivered, but that they are received in time. Changing that status dramatically impacts how that will impact us as well.”

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