

MONDAY, APRIL 26, 1993

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TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JONES

Chef glad to be home after New Orleans visit

Having just returned from an eating orgy in New Orleans while attending the International Association of Culinary Professionals conference, I'm delighted to be home again. Not that I didn't enjoy the many culinary Cajun treats that New Orleans has to offer, but as far as I'm concerned, I could care less if I ever see or taste another crawfish again.

I have been fortunate to have enjoyed the many tastes of traveling around this great country of ours. From the oysters of Washington to the maple syrups of Vermont, I'm getting quite a taste of America. I am amazed at the various culinary traditions that each region has to offer.

Crazy for crawfish

Take New Orleans (or should I say N'awlins) for example. These people eat crawfish for breakfast, lunch, brunch, snacks and dinner. Even with a personal lesson from native Louisianian Paul Prudhomme on the proper way to enjoy these cheap replicas of shrimp, I was not impressed.

Call me spoiled if you must, but eating crawfish is like sucking out those tiny bits of meat from a lobster leg, there's far more work involved for the tiny amount of pleasure received.

Instead of dwelling on negatives like that quasi-coffee watered down with chickory that everyone drinks down there, and those god-awful things called grits, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the great drum and catfish (blackened, of course) pralines and by far my favorite, powdered sugar chokin' belignets.

The jambalayas, Boudin sausage, dirty rice, sweat inducing etouffees and red beans are the mainstays about as much as a platter of smelts, kielbasa and mashed potatoes are up here.

International cuisine

But think about this. Isn't it great that we can hop on an airplane or, better yet drive, to an ethnic eatery and enjoy various ethnic treats like couscous, quessadillas, General Tao's chicken and corned beef?

Do you realize that the metropolitan Detroit area has some of the best ethnic food restaurants, many of which are a short hop, skip and a jump from the suburbs.

You haven't lived till you have enjoyed an authentic Mexican tamale from Evie's tamales located directly behind the old train depot just one block north of Mexican town.

The flavors of the Orient are as vast as the number of Oriental restaurants with places like Human Palace in Farmington Hills dishing up a whole fried fish and champagne glazed shrimp, and Sechuan Empire's lemon chicken in Livonia. Oceania Inn in Rochester dishes up some might fine dim sum all the while the Mongolian Barbecue brings stir-fry to a new self-serve light in downtown Royal Oak.

When it comes to enjoying Italian, I'm holding my breath for the reopening of Nino's, rumored soon to be happening in the northern burbs, but for the time, getting my pasta fill Giovanni's, and my calamari fix at De Palma's.

Old country Polish cuisine still beckons me to Zola's and the Polish Jewish Club in the big city limits all the while the thick steaks still entice me down to Grektown for lamb chops, Saganaki and avoulomongelo.

The belignets of New Orleans could barely stand up next to the decadent French pastries and baguettes from the French Epi in Livonia and Baking by the Avenir in Southfield.

Don Ricardo's in Redford has the Spanish cuisine served up with a paelia you could die for.

Ethnic grocers

If dining out isn't quite your cup of tea, and you would surely opt for a quiet evening at home with friends and family, the area offers a multitude of ethnic grocers which carry hard-to-find ingredients.

La Cantina is the newest Italian grocery on Telegraph in Dearborn. The Orientals are flocking to the Six Mile-Newburgh area otherwise known as Laurel Commons for lichee nuts and garlic pepper oils. The Honey Bee/La Colomana on Bagely reigns supreme for Mexican foods ranging from munedo to blue corn masa.

Hamtramck still is the place to go for Polish and Eastern European foods, but Wyandotte (mamma's home) still boasts a few small markets and bakeries. If you ever venture Down River, you must try the half and half bread from Oak Leaf bakery.

So while New Orleans might be home to Creoles and Cajun, our area with it's vast array of ethnic restaurants and stores continues to beckon me back saying, without a doubt "there's no place like home."

Look inside for a few of my favorite dishes from New Orleans!
To leave a Voice Mail message for Chef Larry, dial 953-2047 on a Touch-Tone phone, then mailbox number 1898.

EATERIES ENCOURAGE

Kidding Around

Restaurants roll out the welcome mat for busy, budget-conscious families that are looking for places to take their children out to eat.

By ARLENE FUNKE
SPECIAL WRITER



Say "dinner out" and Don Turner of Farmington Hills and his 5-year-old son Collin dream about pizza.

The Turners recently enjoyed an evening at the Shield's restaurant in Southfield, where pizza is king.

"This is one of our favorite places to come," said Turner, a technical analyst at Ford Motor Company. "We knew we wanted pizza."

On Tuesday evenings, Anita Harmon of Livonia takes her three daughters to a nearby Ground Round. On that weekday, kids aged 12 and under pay what they weigh for meals on the children's menu.

"We can eat for under \$8," said Harmon. "It's our night out."

Busy, budget-conscious families are looking for restaurants which cater to them. Myriad gimmicks are offered to build loyalty.

Jack and Kathy Maxwell of Livonia and their children have their own special spots for omelettes, chili dogs and burgers. They like the Sonate Coney Island and Ground Round, both in Livonia, and Old Country Buffet in Westland, where it's all-you-can-eat.

"I like an atmosphere that isn't too stuffy," said Kathy Maxwell, a full-time homemaker and PTA leader at Grant Elementary School, where three of her children are students.

"I look for value," Maxwell added. "We can't hit the Ritz."

Children greatly influence families. Choices in restaurants, said Lee

Moratis, vice president and corporate director of operations for Shield's, a local chain with outlets in Southfield, Novi, Sterling Heights and Troy.

Children love novelty, which helps keep the fidgets under control. They



PHOTO BY LINDA RABIN



Dinner out: The Ground Round in Livonia caters to kids. Eliza-beth Turbiak, 6, (top left) enjoys her hamburger. Colleen Papalardo, 2, (top) eats a french fry. Above, Anita Harmon and her daughters (left to right) Stephanie, 8, Lauren, 6, and Valerie, 10, enjoy dinner out together.

also prefer tried-and-true choices such as spaghetti, burgers and hot dogs, grilled cheese and pizza, chicken strips and nachos.

Some restaurants offer clowns, bal-

See EATERIES, 2B

Plan ahead for pleasant meal out

By ARLENE FUNKE
SPECIAL WRITER

Arriving at a crowded restaurant with hungry, restless kids can spoil an anticipated dinner out.

Common sense and planning can make a restaurant meal much more pleasant. Just ask Kathy Maxwell of Livonia.

Maxwell and her husband, Jack, a General Motors employee, have four children. Melanie, 12, attends Emerson Middle School in Livonia. Jeffrey, 9, Devin, 7, and Julianna, 6, are students at Grant Elementary School.

When they're going to popular restaurants, the family tries to arrive a little early.

"Otherwise you have to wait in line," Maxwell said.

Preparation eliminates unpleasant surprises. Let these tips help make dining out easier.

Patronize restaurants that are geared to families and offer children's menus. When in doubt, phone ahead. What kinds of foods do you like? Does the restaurant fit your budget? Do you need a booster chair?

Order quickly. Bring along crayons, puzzles or other small games to pass the time.

Don't be too rigid about what the child orders. Stick with foods the child enjoys.

Don't let your children wander around, distracting other diners.

If your child is disruptive, take him or her to a quiet place, such as a restroom, to calm down. Never make a scene.



Clowning around: Bingo the Clown weighs Courtney Gregson, 2 1/2, before dinner at the Ground Round in Livonia.

Youngster throws delicious dinner together



BETSEY BRETHEN

This week's Winner Dinner Winner is a regular action man. He studies; he fishes; he plays hockey; he plays baseball; he collects sports cards; and yes, he even cooks! A veritable "Boy Wonder," 11-year-old Jonathan Linton of Rochester Hills originally hails from London, Ontario.

The son of Dorothy and Bruce Linton, he has a younger sister and brother. He is a big help to his mom in the kitchen, thanks in part to a survival skills cooking class he took at Van Housen Middle School in Rochester Hills. Always having felt comfortable and capable in the kitchen, Linton has no fear of cooking and will often whip up a batch of cookies or even a complete dinner like the one featured today.

Although he enjoys cooking and considers it a very useful hobby, playing hockey is what really makes him happy. For the past nine months, he was the goalie for the Mighty Ducks, a squirt-level hockey team that played out of the Birmingham Ice Arena.

Now that spring is finally here and with his goalie equipment packed away until he goes to hockey camp this summer, Linton is getting his batting arm limbered up and ready for baseball season. Lucky for him, he can practice his pitches by tossing a salad, throwing dinner together or



JIM RUDEN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Winning combination: Jonathan Linton excels at hockey and cooking.

taking cookies out of the oven!

Submit recipes to be considered for publication in this column, or elsewhere, to: Winner Dinner, P.O. Box 3503, Birmingham, Mich. 48012. All winners receive an apron with the words "Winner Dinner Winner" printed on it. To leave a message, dial 953-2047 on a Touch-Tone phone, mailbox number 1851.

OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC

Winner Dinner Recipes



JONATHAN'S LEMON CHICKEN

Marinade:
1/2 cup oil
1/2 cup lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon seasoned salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
3 cloves garlic, minced
3 tablespoons soy sauce
3 split, boneless, skinless chicken breasts

Preheat the broiler or grill. In a small bowl, combine the marinade ingredients and mix well. Pound the chicken breasts with a meat mallet to make them more tender and place them in a baking dish. Pour the marinade over the chicken breasts. Grill or broil for about 4 minutes a side. Serves 6.

PARMESAN TOMATOES

3 fresh, firm tomatoes
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 garlic clove, minced
2 tablespoons chopped onion
1/4 cup fresh bread crumbs
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
Pinch of salt
Pinch of pepper
Pinch of dried or fresh chopped basil

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Cut the tomatoes in half and scoop out some of the pulp. Chop the pulp up. In a small frying pan,

sauté the garlic and onion in the olive oil for 2 minutes. Add the chopped tomato pulp and continue cooking for a few more minutes. Stir in the bread crumbs, Parmesan cheese and the seasonings. Fill each tomato cup with the filling. Sprinkle each filled tomato half with more Parmesan cheese. Place the tomato halves on a baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes.

JONATHAN'S FAVORITE BROCCOLI AND CHEESE SAUCE

2 heads broccoli, cut into florets

Sauce:
3 tablespoons margarine or butter
3 tablespoons flour
1 cup milk
1/4 cup Cheese Whiz
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
Pinch of salt
Pinch of pepper

Steam the broccoli until just tender and drain. In a saucepan, melt the margarine or butter. Add the flour and stir until the mixture becomes a paste, usually a couple of minutes. Add the milk and cook over medium heat until the mixture begins to thicken, adding more milk if it becomes too thick.

See WINNER, 2B