

Warm up with hearty soup, pot pie at Cozy Cafe

BY MARY DUBINLEY
CORRESPONDENT

When Mother Nature dishes out a nippy forecast, the Cozy Cafe in Plymouth offers a comfy reprieve for chilled and hungry souls.

"The Cozy Cafe is one of my favorite places," said Ellen Brockway of Livonia, who enjoys sitting near a window at the restaurant on a winter's afternoon and watching the snow fall.

"One year, during the Plymouth Ice Festival, a friend and I went to the festival and then stopped at the Cozy for soup and quiche," she said. Brockway has feasted at the eatery at least half a dozen times.

The Cozy, said Brockway, is a good mother-daughter place. She recently treated her mom, Mary Heitman of Livonia, to lunch at the eatery. "Mom likes to try new places and she enjoyed the Cozy."

Since February 1982 Tina Ristich and her husband Nick have owned the Cozy Cafe.

The previous owners had success with a menu that included crustless quiches, homemade pies, salads and the gooey Walnut Raisin Sweet Roll that some patrons refer to as a "sticky-bun."

The Ristichs decided to keep these popular items. However, they've added more sandwiches, desserts and lighter entrees.

The menu satisfies a variety of appetites - kids included. The spinach and the chicken-and-broccoli are the most popular "rustles" quiches.

Another customer favorite is the Harvest Salad, a bed of lettuce topped with chopped egg, turkey, mushrooms, mozzarella cheese, mandarin oranges, dried cranberries and walnuts.

An apple garnish, choice of salad dressing and a dinner roll are served with the salad.

Two soups are featured daily. During the winter months, Chicken Noodle is usually avail-



Your hosts at the Cozy Cafe are assistant managers Susan Larkins, left, and Leona Bargande, and owner Tina Ristich, center.

able. Turkey Chili is another favorite cold-weather "soup."

On a recent snowy, early evening visit to the Cozy, Bernadette Dieroff ordered a bowl of the chili.

"I loved the Turkey Chili so much that I took some home," said Dieroff of Westland, who was impressed with the friendly, helpful wait staff. For dessert, she enjoyed a slice of the Ozark Apple Pie.

"The pie was very good. The topping was the consistency of a cake," she said.

Pies and cakes are baked fresh every morning.

"The Carrot Cake and the Walnut Raisin Sweet Roll are our calling cards," said Tina Ristich.

However, the Caramel Apple

Bread Pudding, made with the dough of the sweet roll, is extremely popular with customers.

The coconut, lemon meringue and banana cream pies are "very tall," explained Ristich.

Pumpkin Paradise is a baked two-layer dessert. It consists of a creamy cheesecake-like mixture on the bottom, topped with pumpkin pie filling.

More than a dozen sandwiches, served on white, whole wheat, rye or oatmeal bread, can be ordered. The Cozy Club and the Grilled Chicken on a Roll are two frequently requested items.

The eatery introduced the Chicken Pot Pie - a combo of white and dark chicken, carrots, green peas and a thick cream sauce made in a double-baked piecrust shell - as a special.

"When we start to see that a 'special' is a real winner it becomes a permanent item," said Ristich.

The Chicken & Broccoli Casserole was added to the menu a year ago. This dish, prepared with a cream sauce, is topped with cheddar cheese and sliced almonds.

Crepes, croissant sandwiches and Meat Lasagna, Macaroni & Cheese, Chicken Dumplings and Fettuccini Alfredo are some of the other selections.

The Baked Spaghetti is Ristich's concoction. When she would make spaghetti at home, she would mix the sauce and noodles together the day after she prepared the dish. Then, she would add mozzarella cheese and bake it in the oven until the cheese melted.

"My family enjoyed it more

the second day," she said. The eatery seats 80-plus customers indoors. During warmer climes 24 seats are added to the outdoor patio.

Most of the tables are set up in close proximity to one another. "This (closeness) has forced people to say hello to each other and everyone ends up being friendly!" This has been a plus for our restaurant," said Ristich.

"We have some of the original waitresses who have seen all the customers and have grown with them," she said. Ristich credits the success of the restaurant to her staff.

Michael Dethloff, who has worked at the restaurant for 21 years, is the chef.

"This place couldn't run without Michael. He is like a son to us," Ristich said, affectionately.

She has high praises for her two managers, Susan Larkins and Leona Bargande.

COZY CAFE

Address/phone:
15 Forest Place, Plymouth,
(734) 455-3310

Hours: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Sunday

Menu: Breakfast, which is served all day, mainly consists of eggs, corned beef hash and omelets. Lunch and dinner features crepes, quiches, salads, soup, sandwiches and entrees of lasagna, baked spaghetti, fettuccini Alfredo, and several chicken dishes including a chicken potpie. More than a dozen desserts are available. Kids can order a hot dog, peanut butter-and-jelly sandwich or macaroni and cheese.

Cost: Prices range from \$6.95 for quiche to \$8.50 for the Chicken Pot Pie. Salads and sandwiches cost from \$2.95 to \$7.95. Desserts are in the \$2-\$4 range.

Credit cards:
No credit cards are accepted.

Reservations: Not required.

Smoking: Not allowed.

Baker Jon Burton, who has been employed at Cozy for more than ten years, prepares desserts.

"Cozy is more than a restaurant," said Ristich. She hopes that customers feel that Cozy has become "their home away from home."

Mary Dubinley is a Livonia resident and writes about food and travel for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. You can reach her at MDInfo@aol.com.

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- ♥ One-night stay at Fraser Inn of Northville
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Entries must be 100 words or less
Entries must include name, age, address, phone, e-mail
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