



## taste buds

chef Larry James

### Recycling needs our attention

I'm frightened, and you should be too.

In the United States, the per person per capita production of solid wastes (comprising of trash) increased from 2.75 pounds per day in 1920 to more than 9 pounds per day in 1988.

With the increased demands being placed on cities such as ours to locate landfills, where will our kids and their kids come to dispose of trash safely? Because of the tremendous pressures to purify our nation's air and water resources, and because of the lack of room at dumping sites, sludge and garbage are front page news as one city after another faces up to the crisis. Untreated and unrecycled, these wastes will haunt us for centuries to come by causing health and pest problems — a blight to our land, water, air and ourselves. They also will cost each and every one of us astronomical amounts of tax dollars.

And those of us who call ourselves "foodies" actually increase the problem by throwing away countless amounts of cans, bottles, plastics and papers which, by itself, account for more than 65 percent of the trash collected by the waste haulers.

Think for a minute about the number of cans alone that are generated in the kitchen. Now, multiply in the food pages from your newspaper. Don't forget to count the empty mayonnaise jars, jelly jars and mustard containers. If you purchase milk in those recyclable plastic containers, add that in too. Don't forget to count the juice jars/jugs, and by the way, means, get out the calculator to tally those baby food jars and condiment jars. My head is spinning already, and that's just from counting my kitchen refuse.

If you haven't guessed by now, I volunteered a few hours of time at Livonia's Community Recycling Center last Saturday and came away with a new outlook on how the James gang will treat household refuse in the future. I applauded each and every one of the more than 150 folks who dropped by with carloads of newspapers, cans, tin, jars and used motor oil. Many of the cars and vans were packed with kids who helped unload and sort the refuse. In the two short hours I was there, we stacked and collected more than a ton of newspapers (many of which consisted of O&E's Taste pages) and bags of jars, tin and aluminum cans. It did the old heart (and conscience) good to see folks just like you and I taking an active role in recycling.

You know what scared me though? I realized that this was less than 1 percent of the total population. That means that more than 99 percent of the community still tosses recyclable materials such as those mentioned above out with their weekly trash.

But then I hear about folks like the Jim Amick family who live in the Seven Mile and Merriman area who, after hearing about the opening of the recycling center, have actually reduced their curbside trash by more than 60 percent simply by recycling. The Amick family not only drops by the recycling center every three weeks or so with their recyclable trash but have also started a compost heap in their backyard and they turn their coffee grounds, egg shells and compostable wastes into fertilizer with a few shovels of dirt.

Like you and I could, the Amick family now requests paper bags at the grocery store and whenever possible, carry items from the store without the use of bags. They have even alerted their neighbors about their monthly trips to the recycling center, offering to transport their recyclable materials. Sounds like a back-breaking, dirty job? Hardly. Their neighbors, like you and I could, rinse out and flatten the cans and place the newspapers in paper shopping bags and help load the Amick car.

And if you're sitting there thinking that only Livonia has a recycling center, were you aware

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STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

Karen Breen of the L.A. Express carryout shows a customer the variety of food that can be ordered — a lot of healthy and moderately priced.

## Move over, fast food — there's a new way to eat

By Debbie Sklar  
special writer

**T**WO ALL-BEEF patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese... flame broiled.

Where's the beef? ... We do chicken right. ... Ah, the sweet sound of these fast-food jingles, but wait — there's a new way of eating.

In this day and age a growing number of Americans are spending more time at home relaxing by the television with one of the latest video movies (a recent study suggests that more than 78 percent of moviegoers would prefer watching a film for the first time on their own TV screens instead of at the theater) and a gourmet-delivered meal spread across their laps.

"Nationally, right now, food consumed off-premise is a \$40 billion industry, but only \$3.9 billion of that is being delivered. There is definitely a market for this type of service," says Kirk Scott, founder and president of Wabam Wabow, a computerized restaurant, food-delivery service that caters to homes in the major suburbs of Oakland County.

"It all comes down to the fact that people are getting sick of burgers and pizza. They want a change. They

still want fast service, but they're willing to wait a little longer and spend a little more money to get better food. Let's face it, this is going to be the trend of the '90s."

ACCORDING TO marketing trends, in USA Today, Americans are spending more money decorating their homes because they're entertaining in them more.

"They call it cocooning," says Scott, who began exploring his Clawson-based company more than two years ago after seeing a similar operation in Southern California. "Today people are having kids, they're both working, they have dual incomes, and now because their spare time is so limited, they want to spend it at home."

"No longer can the husband say, 'Honey, you go in the kitchen and I'll stand outside and drink a beer,'" he says. "Women don't want to be in the kitchen any more than the husband does."

It is at this point that gourmet delivery services or even individual restaurants step in to save the day and possibly a lover's spat.

"Rather than having a meal catered, where you have to order large quantities of things," Scott ex-

plains, "with our service, people can come in from work at seven o'clock, look at our menu and order appetizers and have those delivered. Maybe an hour later they decide that they want to order a meal and give us another jingle. It's pure convenience. We call ourselves the instant caterer."

AS PART OF its menu, Wabam Wabow offers lunch and dinner from 14 restaurants, ranging from Lebanese hommus with tahini from Phoenix in Birmingham to broccoli beef with straw mushrooms from Mon Jin Lau in Troy. Other offerings are from Keith Famie's L.A. Express in Royal Oak and from Alban's, Machus Sly Fox, Punchedello's and, for the sweet tooth, Marty's Cookies, all of Birmingham.

"What's nice about eating restaurant food at home is that you don't have to eat the whole meal right away or have dessert immediately after your meal," he says. "You can put half in the refrigerator and eat it at midnight if you want."

At Wabam Wabow there is a \$20 minimum for each lunch order. The delivery charge will remain the same as the dinner service; 10 percent or \$3.50 whichever is greater.

"You can't either call your order in by dialing 288-FOOD or fax it by calling 288-FACS. Orders are taken 24 hours in advance or up until 1 p.m. the following day of delivery. Dinner service is Monday-Saturday 5-10 p.m. and Sunday 4-9 p.m. Dinner minimum is \$10. Wabam Wabow has 12 drivers, who all arrive wearing uniforms.

Scott says in order to ensure hot, high-quality food with fast delivery, each restaurant has its own limited delivery area, which is approximately five miles. Surprisingly, Scott's service is not just limited to the yuppie crowd as many may believe. It appears that the average customer is 45 and older.

"I HAVE a 72-year-old lady that orders from us every night," he says. "She probably spends between \$10 and \$15 per night — not much more than a pizza."

Over in Royal Oak, famed chef Keith Famie says he actively uses Wabam Wabow's delivery service to deliver tempting delicacies from his quick carry-out service, L.A. Express, within his popular Les Auteurs restaurant.

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## Muffin company in full gear

By Ariene Funke  
special writer

**J**OYCE SHERMAN is no Jill-come-lately to the oat bran craze.

Sherman, of West Bloomfield, has been baking healthy, tasty oat bran muffins for years. Now her Livonia-based Motor City Muffin Co. is cashing in on the demand for muffins that are sweet, low-fat and high in fiber.

"I saw a niche," said Sherman, 31. "I love doughnuts, but I can't eat them anymore. I read that oat bran does lower cholesterol. In '87 we were using oat bran. We were ahead of the game."

Sherman, a former French teacher at Roper School in Bloomfield Hills, has always enjoyed baking. As time went on, she thought more and more about launching a business, centered on her time-tested, popular blueberry and poppy seed muffins.

Sherman teamed up with her sister-in-law, Susan Borin of Bloomfield Hills, a former flight attendant who also had modeled and acted. Motor City Muffin Co. was on its way.

"It was all just so exciting and new," Borin, 36, said of the company, which began in Sherman's home kitchen in March 1987. "We did everything together. I became interested in the baking as well."

ENTHUSIASM PROPELLED the partners, neither of whom had any commercial baking interest before starting their company. Sherman and Borin, both mothers of small children, decided that at least some of their muffin varieties would be what they call "heart-healthy," high in fiber but low in sodium, sugar and fat.

Both women were keenly interested in those health

aspects because Borin's husband Andrew — Sherman's brother — is a cardiologist.

"We continue to work on newer flavors that can also be heart-healthy," Borin said.

In addition, Motor City Muffin Co. products are kosher. That means they must adhere to rigid standards of cleanliness and purity of ingredients.

From the early days in Sherman's kitchen, the company moved into a pizzeria, then to the kitchen of an Oak Park synagogue. They outgrew those early quarters as new accounts mostly supermarkets, were acquired.

One year ago, Motor City Muffin Co. moved into its current facility on Stark Road in Livonia. The firm, which employs 10 people, produces 47,000 muffins per month.

"At the time, we were nervous about making such a big investment," Borin said. "To top it off, Joyce was pregnant."

CURRENTLY THE muffins are sold in about 50 upscale and specialty supermarkets, including Food Emporium of Livonia, Northville, Oak Park and West Bloomfield, 10 Great Scott's supermarkets, the Merchant of Vino and Shopping Center Markets.

Several muffin flavors contain oat bran, touted by medical specialists for its ability to lower cholesterol. A fatty substance linked to heart disease. It seems there is an insatiable demand for muffins, cookies, breads and pancakes which contain oat bran.

"We can't keep (oat bran muffins) in the store," Sherman said.

Some 50 muffin varieties are available on a rotating basis. The lineup includes raisin nut, carrot and chocolate.

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BILL BRESLER/staff photographer

Muffin makers Susan Borin and Joyce Sherman with a batch of their wholesome muffins.