

Restaurant displays patriotism

BY KEVIN BROWN
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Sam Sobh shows an American flag in the window of his Pine Land Midwestern cuisine restaurant to let people know he loves his country.

"When you put the flag up, you put the signs that you're against whoever did this terrorism to our people," said the Farmington Hills restaurateur.

Also displayed in the window is a hand-written sign reading, "Our prayers and thoughts go out to the friends and families of our fellow Americans."

Among those who have noticed Sobh's demonstration of patriotism was Gary Lichtman, a regular take-out customer. "He calls my wife Suzanne and I 'cousin,'" said Lichtman.

"He's passionate, he likes to talk. I've had a nice talk with him," said Lichtman, a media

director with University of Detroit Mercy Hospital.

"When I call him 'cousin' it's from my heart. Life is too short," Sobh said.

While some Americans of Middle Eastern descent have reported harassment following the terrorist attack, Sobh said he and his friends and family have not. "We don't have any problem here in Michigan."

Born in Lebanon, Sobh and his wife moved to metro Detroit 25 years ago.

"My feeling from the beginning is you have the freedom to do any business you want. You can have a good life and a good future. American people have a good heart."

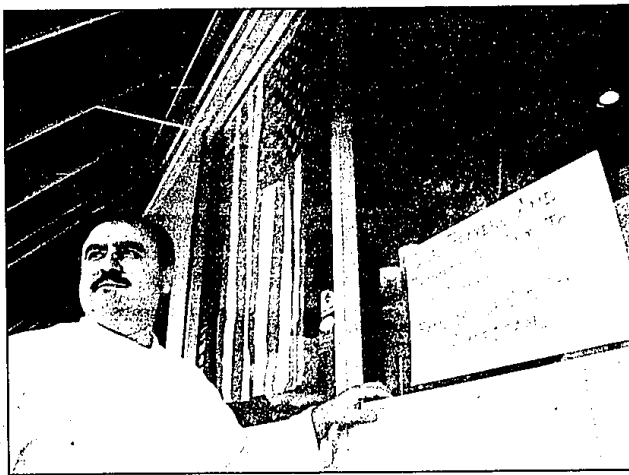
"These innocent people in New York, I'd like to see every citizen in the United States don't forget these innocent people, they died for the country," he said.

Sobh also owns a second restaurant on Middlebelt in Westland. He has no current plans to expand.

During a recent weekday lunch rush, the radio played James Taylor and Fleetwood Mac as customers took up most of the dark wood-grained tables and booths, accented in green. Framed photos of outdoor scenes from the Middle East are displayed along one wall.

Sobh took a break from his restaurant duties to read some thoughts he'd printed on paper: "No religion in the world gives permission or the OK to terrorists to do what happened on September 11."

"I am a citizen. I fight for America. I'm against any terrorism in the whole world. I pray for peace in the whole world," he said.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRUEHLER

Proud to be American: Sam Sobh, who owns Pineland Restaurant located at Twelve Mile and Farmington Road, has impressed customers with his patriotism. In addition to displaying an American flag, he has posted a hand-lettered sign expressing sympathy for the victims of the Sept. 11 bombings.

Civic earns city top MML award

BY SUE BUCK
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The Civic Theatre in Farmington graces the cover of the September/October issue of the Michigan Municipal Review.

And with good reason. The city of Farmington recently took first place in the general category of the 18th Annual Michigan Municipal Achievement Awards Competition. The award was presented at the MML's 103rd Annual Convention in Battle Creek.

"It was among 22 entries," said Farmington City Manager Frank Lauff. The application was prepared by Farmington Assistant City Manager Bill Richards.

Renovation of the Civic Theatre, a downtown landmark located on Grand River east of Farmington Road since 1940, was recently completed. Officials returned the building to its original "art-deco" design by preserving the Civic's architecture and decor, according to the materials presented.

The Farmington City Council authorized purchase of the

historic Civic Theatre citing three considerations: downtown economic development, historical preservation and maintaining an affordable, family-oriented entertainment venue.

A residents' committee aided the renovation, selecting theatre memorabilia and artifacts and created a permanent display, which includes vintage photographs, an original pay phone booth, and the theatre's original movie projector, among other things.

Lauff lauded the community's support of the purchase and noted the steady increase in patronage.

Farmington officials refer to it as the "community jewel."

The Civic stands out

The Civic Theatre surpassed a variety of entries in this category. In the newspaper's coverage area, the MML submissions included:

■ City of Farmington Hills Professional Traffic Stops Training Program, which incorporates several formats to reinforce the department's professional service philosophy

to its members.

■ City of Southfield, Heart Safe Southfield: The Public Access Automated External Defibrillator Program enables bystanders to provide treatment for victims of cardiac arrest, during the critical period of time from discovery of the situation until the arrival of the paramedic unit.

The AEDs were placed on all fire department pumper and in public accessible, wall-mounted cabinets in 10 city buildings. Paramedics trained more than 400 employees in CPR and the use of the AEDs.

■ City of Troy, Celebration of Freedom: The goal is to organize a high profile event for citizens to rally around in order to keep alive the spirit and memory of Martin Luther King Jr. and to provide understanding among the many cultural, religious and ethnic groups in Troy.

Through a collaborative effort with the City of Troy, the Troy School District, residents and local businesses, a strong sense of community is reinforced, according to the material submitted.

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