



Happy Anniversary, Poppy's!

By Ann Denison Hoskins
 It was 1985 all over again at Poppy's Cafe on Aug. 3 when patrons enjoyed breakfast specials priced the way they were when the place opened. Just for the day, customers could get two eggs with bacon or sausage, toast, home fries, coffee and orange juice for just \$2.95 instead of the usual \$7.50. Balloons, "Happy Anniversary" signs and favors for the kids added to the fun when customers helped one of Rye's most beloved institutions celebrate its 20th anniversary.



Mike Anecchiarico (in front) and John Carlin
 "Everybody who's anybody knows Poppy's," said John Carlin, 90, former commander of Post 128 of the American Legion in Rye, Carolin, who moved to Rye in 1947 but now lives in Connecticut, still

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attends daily Mass at the Church of the Resurrection, often stopping at Poppy's for breakfast afterwards.

Carolin and his breakfast companion, long-time resident Mike Anecchiarico, 84, took a moment on the Poppy's anniversary to reminisce with owner Gerri Piovesan - a former Resurrection catechism student of Carolin's wife, Dorothy - about the Rye haunts that have come and gone over the years while Poppy's survives.

Names that came up include the Sweet Shop, Woolworth's, and Harry Stein's Coffee Shop, not to mention the Baskin-Robbins that Piovesan ran with her mother, Hilda Chapderlane, and her aunt, Irmie Buxeder. Baskin-Robbins also had a 20-year run before the family closed it and Piovesan opened Poppy's Cafe with her father, Rye native Robert Chapderlane.

When asked for a photo of the cafe's namesake, Piovesan offered a snapshot that had been tacked up in the restaurant. This brings tears from Buxeder, who hadn't noticed it during the bustle of taking orders and serving the cafe's legendary comfort food. Chapderlane, who was Buxeder's brother-in-law, died of cancer in 1996.

The photo (shown on page 1) shows Chapderlane dressed to coach Piovesan's women's softball team, aptly named "the Ball Busters." Support for local athletic teams is a Poppy's tradition that Piovesan has kept alive, as evidenced by the many team photos and recognition plaques hanging amid signs with notices that include, "\$5 charge for whining," and "Prices subject to change according to customer's attitudes."

In addition to playing softball, Piovesan and Buxeder bowl in a league. Her longtime love of the sport brought Piovesan together with Betty Mustacato, whose daughter, Linda DeRencis, is a member of the Poppy's bowling team, a familiar face behind the Poppy's counter, and Piovesan's best friend.

Piovesan's son, Rye resident Steve Massinello, is one who called Chapderlane "Poppy." In small-town Rye, everyone knew the popular Rye police officer was grandfather to his sister, Cindy, and him, he said in a telephone interview.

"He was good to everybody. He never judged anybody. He took everyone as they were. That was it. I know people say that a lot about people, but I've never met anybody like him still," Massinello said.

"He was a great guy," echoed Valerie Shear, a regular customer who came in to Poppy's to celebrate with her grandson, Liam, 3. "That's the best thing about this place. It's like family," she said as Liam took turns hugging everyone behind the counter. "Rye needs family restaurants."

Nicholas Romanoff, 8, seemed to agree. "I always sit in the same spot," said Nicholas, who was perched on a red leather stool on the short end of the counter next to his grandmother, Carol Appel of Minnesota. The Rye resident always orders an adult-size portion of French toast with extra powdered sugar, no butter and no syrup.

Bernie Ball, 82, usually has scrambled eggs and an English muffin during his daily breakfast at Poppy's with friends Tom Fendler, Bob Sawyer and Colby Anglo. "It's like being at home," said Ball, who was "born on the living room floor" of 203 Purchase Street.

When asked if customers can count on Poppy's to be around for a while, Piovesan was characteristically forthright, offering the following promise: "As long as my landlord lets me have a reasonable rent, I'm here."



Breakfast at Poppy's



Irmie Buxeder - Photo/Ann Denison Hoskins



Bernie Ball after breakfast at Poppy's



Nicholas Romanoff



Gerri Piovesan