

Sunday, October 30, 2016 » MORE AT FACEBOOK.COM/MORNINGJOURNAL AND TWITE MORNING OUTPAIL.

AMHERST

A taste of the Windy City

Carryout handles big appetites with Chicago flavors

By Carol Harper

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An Amherst deli and carryout restaurant gathered inspiration from Chicago cuisine and appetites of Cleveland Gladiators arena football players.

Owned by Nate Zayed and Ali Mohammed, Nate's Marathon at Cooper Foster Park and Leavitt roads in Amherst also followed a customer service legacy of former owner Bob Qunin, Mohammed said

We took it over as a twobay service garage," said the 39-year-old Mohammed. "He was very well liked by everybody, very loveable guy. Everybody knew him. He had a great customer base already as a garage."

But Mohammed said they realized they had a problem — They did not know much about automotive

"So we turned it into a convenience store," Mohammed said. "We put in new ceilings and floors, and started selling groceries, gasoline and coffee. We have some of the best coffees out there. We use a premium roaster for our coffee beans. We have four different types of coffee: Regular Columbian; decaf Columbian; hyper-caffeinated, which has double caffeine; and a flavor of the month, which is now pumpkin spice."

Before moving to Lorain, Mohammed said, he lived in Chicago and developed a taste for distinct flavors of the region.

"I grew up in Chicago," Mohammed said. "That's said, he lived where I developed my taste in Chicago and palate for all the Chicago developed a foods. That's where I fell in love with gyros, corned beef Reubens, and Italian beef, flavors of the which is a Chicago sandwich. We're the only place in Ohio, that I know of, that serves this. It's thinly sliced aujus - it's like a gravy - and served on a hoagie with hot delicious pepper mix. We take the whole sandwich or give you a side so you can dunk it yourself. The three ways you can order it are hard to find around here, maybe in Chicago or New York City.'

wich, he engenders a hearty

INSIDE Alpha Dog Pet Center



Cook Kenny Menefee, 22, Amherst, left, and co-owner Ali Mohammed, 39, pose for a photograph at a carryout restaurant tucked in a corner of a deli and convenience store Oct. 21, in Nate's Marathon, 960 N. Leavitt Road, Amherst. Feature sandwiches made fresh to order include Italian beef, corned beef Reubens, giant gyros, and Gladiator gyros.

Before moving to Lorain, Mohammed taste for distinct region.

wich, you can get a regurack roasted beef, cooked in lar size, which is huge, or you can get a Chicago size corned beef Reuben, which or mild Giardiniera – it's a has corned beef, Thousand Island dressing, mustard, sauerkraut, and Swiss and either dunk it in aujus, cheese on the top, bottom and middle.

It's a holiday favorite.

"Last St. Patty's Day we wet, dry or soaked. That's sold about 300 pounds hard to find around here, of corned beef," Mohammed said. "All of our beef is cooked in house. We When Mohammed talks start off with a raw brisket, about a corned beef sand- cooked in house with our own seasoning. We can't hand chop it with a knife." slice it because it is so ten-



CAROL HARPER - THE MORNING JOURNAL

Kenny Menefee crafts a Chicago corned beef Reuben Oct. 21, at Nate's Marathon, 960 N.

Leavitt Road, Amherst.

for New Customer Specials &

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cream of potato, broccoli chicken noodle, he said, A different soup is fea- and cheese, vegetable beef adding soups are prepared

Nate's Marathon offers giant gyros for \$4.99 each.

'The gyro meat is cooked on a spigot," Mohammed said. "It's not the presliced, precooked kind. Ours

comes in raw." The challenges, he says, are "getting people to try it. A lot of people have misconceptions: 'Oh, it's a gas station. It's going to be microwave food, or hot dogs, or pizza.' Our food is cooked to order.'

The pitas arrive parbaked, he said. Then they're

browned on a panini grill. "It comes out as if it was fresh baked," Mohammed

They also offer a gyro salad, with a generous bed of lettuce, onions, tomatoes, Tzatziki sauce and five ounces of gyro meat.

"We can also add those Giardiniere peppers if they like," Mohammed said.

The gyros are created in two sizes: giant, and Gladiator.

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"It's so big we can't wrap TASTE » PAGE 4



AMHERST

In Hot Dog Heaven



ERIC BONZAR - THE MORNING JOURNAL

Hot dogs sizzle on the flat top grill as cook Ben Rubino, 22, of Amherst fills an order, Oct. 20.

Eatery is a staple in community

By Kaylee Remington kremington@morningjour-@ $MJ_KRemington\ on\ Twitter$

Hot Dog Heaven has been atmosphere. going strong for 40 years,

Trudy Hunt, operations bringing the ball park fa- manager for the eatery, said vorite in a family-friendly Jack O'Flanagan started up

the hot dog shop and re- the recipes are the same. still attended the 40th an- Jack still owned it." niversary in July.

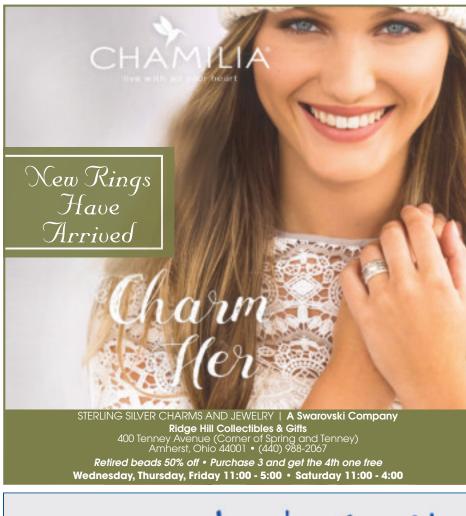
changed, all the employees gets crowded and still are the same," she said. "All brings sports teams in for in Amherst since 1998, the foods are the same, all food.

cently sold it in March but Everything is just like if

Hot Dog Heaven, located 'Not a whole lot has at 493 Cleveland Ave., still

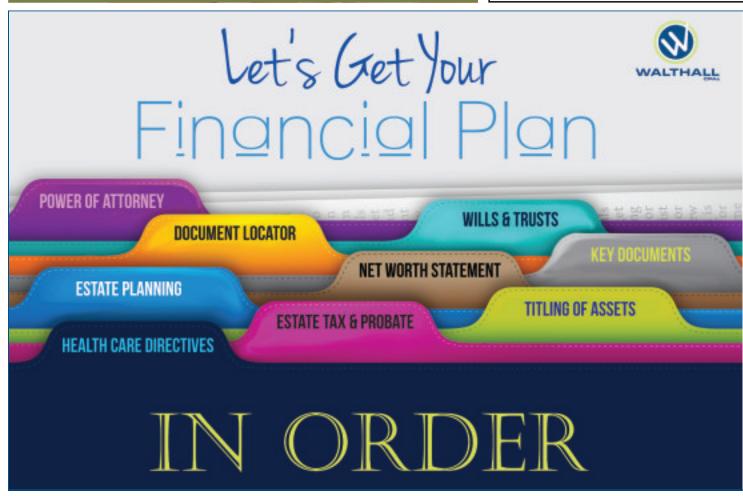
It once had a location in Avon Commons, but closed in 2010 due to the slow economy and tough competition after seven years.

Hunt, who has lived **HEAVEN** » PAGE 4









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AMHERST

Past is always present

Pizza house expands while staying true to its roots

By Kelsey Leyva

kleyva@morningjournal.com@MJ_KLeyva on Twitter

Olde Town Pizza House in Amherst has been serving up pizzas to Lorain County residents for the last 30 years, but owners Darrell and Denise McCarty, of Amherst, are still finding ways to keep things fresh while staying true to their

The restaurant, 195 Cleveland Ave., is located within Amherst's historic downtown district and started out as Danny Boy Pizza in 1986. Denise McCarty said her family owned the business before she and her husband took it over and eventually bought the building around 1990.

Darrel McCarty explained that the mural located on the east side of the building, which was created by local artist David Pavlak, fueled the name change in 1991. He explained that everything included in the mural is somehow related to him, his wife or their family.

For example, George's Sweet Shop, one of the businesses depicted in the mural, was once owned by Denise's family.

Since the early 1990s, Olde Town Pizza has continued to grow and expand its menu. After starting with serving just pizzas, the restaurant now offers salads, subs, pasta and other speciality items.

"We do a salad bar and we do a homemade soup every day," Darrell said. "We have over 65 different soups that we make. It's different all the time.



KELSEY LEYVA — THE MORNING JOURNAL

Cade Hodge, 20, of Amherst, creates a pizza at Olde Town Pizza House, 195 Cleveland Ave. in Amherst, on Oct. 21. In addition to pizza, the restaurant also offers homemade pasta, salads, soups, subs and more.

about two gallons of soup a day, but now on Paprikash Wednesday, they make about 20 gallons of soup.

an older-style oven that was pizza. Stay true to who you created in Avon. Everything are and where you started."

He said the restaurant made at the restaurant is soups, sauces and meatballs, Denise said.

"If you know what's working for you, what's All of the pizzas created good, why change it?" Deat Olde Town at baked on nise asked. "It's delicious

their foldover pizzas and woogie bears are among fresh toppings are added. customers' favorites.

the foldover pizza was developed by Denise's family.

When asked about what taco, Darrel said, describing the menu over the years to started out by making homemade, including the Olde Town is known for, how the meat and cheese Darrell and Denise agreed are folded in the dough and cooked in the oven before

> Woogie bears are similar at Olde Town. Darrell explained that to nut rolls, Darrell said, but

and subs are now offered In addition to the menu

accommodate customers'

needs, Denise said. For ex-

ample, gluten-free pizzas

with pizza toppings inside. expanding, the restaurant itself has also expanded. New items and seasonal They look somewhat like a items have been added to



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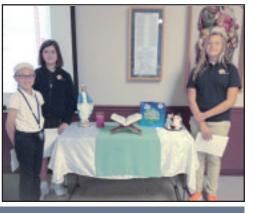
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Past

FROM PAGE 3

About two years ago, Darrell and Denise added on to the front of the building where an outdoor patio and indoor dining area are now located.

We tried to change it to a little more of a Tuscan look because there were old pictures and stuff before, but we still try to keep that olde town kind of look with some unique pieces, Darrell said, noting that pieces throughout the restaurant highlight Amherst's history as well. "We love art and I love Amherst history."

The restaurant has served wine and beer for at least the last 20 years, but Darrell said his latest project is to add a small bar to the restaurant so it can take advantage of the liquor license it has. Darrell explained that he and Denise recently purchased an old country counter top that was once in an Amherst business and he is turning it into a bar.

"We're working on it slowly so it'll be just right," he said, adding that he expects the bar to be functioning by the holidays. "We just want it to compliment what we're doing now."

Once open, customers will be able to order mixed drinks and have them brought to their table.

Looking back on their ness thrive. 30 years in business, Denise and Darrell said it without the support of the community. Denise said a great group of employees



KELSEY LEYVA — THE MORNING JOURNAL

Denise and Darrell McCarty, owners of Olde Town Pizza House, 195 Cleveland Ave. in Amherst, have grown and expanded their business since opening it in 1986. Four boys and 30 years later, the couple is still finding news ways to draw in new customers.

has also helped the busi- who haven't visited the busi- thing they like, so the menu ects they've already started

'We have really good people and they look out for us," wouldn't have bee possible she said. "We look out for each other. You become a

ness before to give it a try. He said the staff works hard to make sure each persons' experience is a good one.

to try," he said. "Everybody nise said they plan to con-

is pretty big, but we keep it and then focus more on the small enough that everything is high quality.

As far as what the fu-We have a lot of things ture holds, Darrell and De-year and a half ago when it Darrell encouraged those in a party can find some- tinue working on the proj- to do more with it to better warding work."

serve the community. Dairy Mary next door, 167 Cleveland Ave. The couple bought the business about a

"We're happy," Darrell said. "I seem to be the happiest when I'm working.

Even though we're really working hard, it's a different kind of work. It's a re-

Heaven

FROM PAGE 2

believes the atmosphere and the employees is what keeps the business going.

We treat everyone as if they are our family," she said. "A lot of our customers are regulars, they know exactly what they want. It's been a landmark here, some people started coming here as little kids when their parents brought them."

Hunt started working at Hot Dog Heaven 15 years ago and didn't understand why there was always a long line out of the door. Now, she knows why.

inviting, she said, and not a fare since 1976. lot of hot dog shops are in the area.

and our chili sauce, it's a speand the chili.

The chili sauce is some-



The homey atmosphere is Hot Dog Heaven, 493 Cleveland Ave., in Amherst, has been serving up hot dogs and other

"We use Sugardale hot goes through quickly and ting that Idaho potato cut dogs and of course our chili the chili with the beans is a fresh, still got the skin on it," little different. Patrons can Hunt said. "That's what peocial recipe," Hunt said. "We request taco salads and even ple really really rave about is make the sauce by scratch like the chili with beans on the fries." their hot dog.

thing that Hot Dog Heaven every morning so you're get-said.

Hot Dog Heaven has won "We cut our potatoes fresh contests for its fries, she

holidays the shop puts up a ally appreciates it. Christmas tree and angels

are put on the tree.

Hunt started working at Hot Dog Heaven 15 years ago and didn't understand why there was always a long line out of the door. Now, she knows why.

was about to close and hope

dren's names and what their clothing size is and toys they

"People take them off the tree, people shop for the kids and they bring it back," Hunt said. "I'm telling you the community here is fabulous. Last year I think we took care of around 100 children. The year before it was even more."

Hunt said it's good to help restaurant, Hot Dog Heaven out in the community bealso immerses itself in the cause the public takes care community. Around the of them, and she said she re-

On the angels are chil- to go to Amherst, Hunt said Fridays and Saturdays.

they also have a hot dog cart that goes to events. It can usually be seen at Dancing on Main Street in Amherst.

"We've done private parties, things like that," she said. "This is our first year, next year we will be out even more hopefully at the (Lorain County) fair."

Even though O'Flanagan, who worked seven days a week, no longer runs the store, Hunt said the ambiance and the food at Hot Dog Heaven will always remain the same.

He was a teacher and a coach and went into the business with his friend. she said, who was a teacher

"This building was abandoned for 30 years before being taken over," Hunt said. "His partner left after six months but he decided to continue and it's just been thriving. He just really made it great. He made it work."

Hot Dog Heaven is open Sundays through Thursdays If anyone was to crave Hot from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Dog Heaven and not be able and 10:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Taste

FROM PAGE 1

it," Mohammed said. "We plays it in the station. have to put it in a box. We big boys."

He said the Gladiators practice at Lost Nations Sports Park not far away from Nate's. They signed a helmet picture and he dis-

"I'm a huge fan," Monamed it after the Cleve- hammed said. "I go to all of land Gladiators. They're their games. I take my kids. They're an amazing group the big gas stations," Mo- at Nate's Marathon, then with Nate, but this busi- open something else."

of guys. They let the kids hammed said. "We count launch a new venture, he ness, it's hard to get away. kick field goals. It's a great

He says friendliness is a top quality of Nate's Marathon employees. And they post specials on their Facebook page to stay connected.

on friendliness, cleanliness and our amazing food. Our goal is to be one of the best up my own restaurant," Mogyros in America, once people find out about us."

"It's hard to compete with develop a thriving business to open this gas station really hard to get away and

hammed said.

"That's been a dream of The original intention mine, and I have a real pasabout 17 years ago was to sion for food. My goal was

You really have to be in it "I always wanted to open for it to be successful, just to meet every day customers and to build relationships with people. Really, all my friends are here. I spend so much time here. But it's



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4 Hot Dogs **Regular Fries**

Six Pak

6 Hot Dogs STE **Regular Fries** 3-16 oz. Drinks (Pepsi Products)

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6 Hot Dogs **Regular Fries**

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