

customers first

LAND OF THE MOOSE



Partnerships

The Indian Lake Moose Family Center sits on the wooded shore of Ohio's Indian Lake, a 5,200-acre lake about 70 miles northwest of Columbus. Walking into the Moose lodge, the lake view dominates. "We have glass on three of the walls that face the water, so it's a panoramic view," offers lodge administrator Denny Davenport.

The Indian Lake Moose Family Center is one of some 2,200 Moose lodges in the United States. These facilities are reserved for members of Moose International, a fraternal organization with more than 1.5 million members in four nations.

In addition to its dedication to charitable endeavors, the organization aims to provide wholesome family recreation at a modest cost. "We have a lot to offer," explains Davenport. Throughout the summer high season, the lodge schedule is packed with activities, including pool tournaments, shuffleboard tournaments and card games. "We started doing this Texas Hold'em poker tournament here about six months ago," says Davenport with a chuckle. "It's a packed house; people come not just to play, but to watch!"

The lodge kitchen produces an extensive menu of sandwiches, entrées, sides and appetizers, and daily specials. Wings, popcorn chicken, cheese-stuffed peppers and mozzarella sticks are everyday favorites, while steak, chili and pizza specials bring members in droves. Many of them even come by water. "We have 50 dock spots out there on the lake, so a lot of people come by the water instead of the road. As far as docking, though, they're on their own!" he laughs.

A Moose member for 17 years, Davenport began working at the lodge eight years ago. His experience as a factory union officer and as a volunteer officer at the Moose lodge made him a catch for the administrator position. Today he manages a staff of 24 full- and part-time employees, and the lodge has grown significantly in his time there. "The membership is the secret of our success," says Davenport. "If it wasn't for the members that come into this place and participate in the activities, and if the officers didn't offer these activities, we wouldn't be here." Successful they certainly are—the Indian Lake Moose Family Center is one of the largest Moose lodges in the United States!



Mark Brown

Marketing Associate

Abbott SYS defense Food Service

6-year service partner to the Indian Lake Moose Family Center

SYSCO Marketing Associate

Mark Brown has worked in the foodservice industry for more than 16 years. He began at a vending and catering company, working his way up from a high-school job as a dishwasher to eventually running the catering department. He joined SYSCO eight and a half years ago, and feels that his experience as a foodservice customer contributes to his ability to serve his customers. "I know the expectations that the customers have," he explains.

Brown looks forward to his calls at the Moose lodge. But, he admits, "I'm jealous watching all those people enjoying their boats and the water. I get there in the late morning or early afternoon, and look out on the lake—everyone seems to be relaxed and at home."

Brown's working relationship with lodge management is a good one. "They're always open to new ideas," says Brown. "They're always coming up with new ideas for specials, and they're enthusiastic about new items. What more could you ask for from a customer?"

Caring Cuisine

Southwestern Vermont Health Care | BENNINGTON, VT

The nutrition and dining staff at Southwestern Vermont Health Care (SVHC) in Bennington, Vermont, serves some 1,200 meals per day to a population requiring acute, subacute, long-term and outpatient care. In his nearly 20 years of hospital foodservice experience, Keith DeMars, director of nutrition and dining at SVHC, has seen quite a few changes since the old days of meatloaf-for-everyone.

Patients today, he explains, are consumers too, and they expect choices. "I remember when beverage was simply milk, coffee, juice and water, and you really didn't go beyond that," says DeMars. "Now it's everything under the sun."

And even though a hospital can seem like a restaurant populated by involuntary patrons, feedback is important to the staff. Unsolicited comments—favorable and otherwise—are recorded by the nutritional assistants who serve the waiter's role in taking down patients' food orders. "The comments are actually put in the kitchen where the cooks, production and management review and sign off on them," explains DeMars. "We're always aware of what our customer is saying. It's important to understand the needs of patients as individuals, almost intuitively, and respond to those needs."

DeMars isn't above going beyond simple need, however—the menus contain some surprises. "A lot of people are amazed when we say, 'Of course you can have lobster!'" he says with a grin.



Keith DeMars (front row, center) and the nutrition and dining staff at Southwestern Vermont Health Care

Fresh Seafood on the High Plains

Mid-South Restaurants | OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

Paul Seikel's first restaurant venture was an Oklahoma City sandwich shop, opened with a friend shortly after his graduation from college. The two scraped together \$5,000 in savings and loans and opened their doors. Seikel has since said that the experience taught him a lasting lesson—in the risks of undercapitalization!

Much has changed. Today, Seikel is the founder and president of Mid-South Restaurants, a thriving company operating six restaurants in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area (and with two additional franchises licensed). Mid-South Restaurants include Pearl's Oyster Bar, Trapper's Fishcamp and Grill, Pearl's Cajun Kitchen, and Crabtown, the last housed in a 20,000-square-foot renovated warehouse in the historic Bricktown district. Initially driven by Seikel's passion for Cajun and Creole cuisine, Mid-South's offerings have today broadened to an emphasis on contemporary seafood, with a Cajun accent for variety.

When asked if his 30-plus years in the industry reflect a love for the restaurant business, Seikel laughs. "I don't know how to do anything else!" he jokes. More seriously, he says of the restaurant business, "The good is probably the same as the bad; you never feel as if you've gotten anything complete, but you've always got a challenge as well. It's just always in flux—and it better be or you're going out of business!"



Founder and President
Paul Seikel

"... you've
always got a
challenge
as well."

Fine Dining on the Old Milwaukee Road

David's Milwaukee Diner | PERRY, IA

Perry, Iowa, is a town of 7,000 about 25 minutes northwest of Des Moines. A railroad town, its grand Hotel Pattee, built in 1913, presides over the city center; inside, David North and the staff of David's Milwaukee Diner present white-tablecloth service and world-class cuisine featuring local ingredients to Perryites, hotel guests, and even discerning out-of-town eaters.

It's a diverse crowd, and North has created a novel solution to the challenge of pleasing them all. At dinner, he has two menus—the Hometown Menu of updated classics and the main menu of edgier fare. No matter who the patron is, North explains, "When guests come in, they can look at either side of the menu, and it's very accessible." Interestingly, when serious out-of-town "foodies" come to eat there, they often end up ordering from the Hometown Menu. "They all come in, and they order pork chops with macaroni and cheese and homemade applesauce," he says with a laugh. "It's that nice comfort food."

Comfort is key. "People feel welcome here," says North. "They don't feel like they're out of place, even if they haven't been out to eat for a good meal in a long time. Everybody is treated equally. We appreciate their business; we appreciate their choosing to come here and celebrate their special moments."



"People feel welcome here; they don't feel like they're out of place."

Southern Cooking, Southern Hospitality

Lizard's Thicket Restaurants | COLUMBIA, SC

When residents of Columbia, South Carolina, want authentic Southern home cooking away from home, they head for Lizard's Thicket. From its first location—a converted five-room house opened in 1977—Lizard's Thicket has today grown to 11 locations, with another on the way this summer.

Lizard's Thicket began with an insight. Founders Bob and Anna Williams foresaw that as more mothers began working outside the home, demand for high-quality home meal replacement would skyrocket. So using many of the same recipes they had grown up eating—and that the family still ate at home—the couple opened Lizard's Thicket, serving a wide range of home-style Southern specialties including fried chicken, pork chops, collard greens, candied yams and more to a clientele that was just as varied. Bob's eldest



(left to right) Bobby, Jimmy, Mark and John Williams

son, Robert E. (Bobby) Williams Jr., now president of the company, explains, "We knew we had something—we'd walk out in the parking lot and it would be packed. There would be pickup trucks and Mercedes-Benzes. We were feeding everybody, from the president of the bank to the ditchdiggers."

Today, Lizard's Thicket is a Columbia institution, serving some 10,000 meals every day. "We just treat people the right way, the way we would like to be treated," says Williams. "We don't do any coupons, no gimmicks. It's just good food at reasonable prices—that's the bottom line."

Flatland Relief

Orlando's Italian Restaurant, Caprock Café | LUBBOCK, TX

Loyd Turner's first exposure to Orlando's Italian Restaurant came as a freshman at Texas Tech. "Me and a couple of guys from the dorm liked to go there and eat a small beef pizza," he explains. "I had no idea, of course, that I'd be involved."

Involved he certainly is. In 1978, six years after his first pizza there, Turner chanced into a partnership role at Orlando's. Building on his memories of family-owned restaurant institutions in his native Fort Worth, he and his wife, Karen, set out to continue and build on Orlando's existing reputation. With the addition of two other couples to the partnership—David Cea (son of Orlando's founder Mike Cea) and his wife, Cheryl, and Jerol and Heather Fanta—Orlando's has thrived and grown to two locations.

The Orlando's commitment to quality and service has translated to other ventures as well. Not long ago Turner and his partners opened the popular Caprock Café, a bar and grill with genuine local flavor—including the tail of an actual crop duster jutting from a wall—and a hamburger that brings even teetotalers to the bar in droves. "Sometimes you take something as prosaic as a place selling beer and hamburgers, and you just do it better," he says with a laugh. "We invested heavily in the food component, and it's paid off."



"Sometimes ... you just do it better."

Fine Dining Takes Center Stage

Stage Neck Inn | YORK HARBOR, ME

Located on a rocky point with a view of the Atlantic to one side and a view of the sailboat-dotted harbor to the other, the Stage Neck Inn has drawn visitors from New England and across the nation for decades. Gorgeous views, a historic setting and gracious hospitality aren't all the inn offers, however. Fine dining, in both the elegant Harbor Porches at Stage Neck Inn and the more casual Sandpiper Bar & Grille, brings hungry hotel guests and local townspeople to the hotel's breezy confines.

Executive Chef Lynn Pressey works with his staff to ensure that the offerings in both dining rooms remain distinctive and varied. "We change our Sandpiper menu a couple of times a year, just to bring in new ideas and keep abreast of trends," explains Pressey. And to keep the white-tablecloth crowd on its toes, he says, "we redo the Harbor Porches entrées every month."

The consistent high quality of the food at the Stage Neck Inn is the result of an abundance of excellent ingredients (including fresh local seafood) and a talented and loyal staff. "I've got a great staff," says Pressey. "I strive to keep people here; my chef de cuisine's been with me 18 years." And he's not even the longest-serving employee—Pressey himself joined the staff in 1978.



Executive Chef Lynn Pressey

What If ... The Possibilities Were Endless?

What If ... Of Hershey | **HERSHEY, PA**

Joanna Lembesis met her business partner Liz McQuade when she began dating McQuade's brother Mike (now Joanna's husband). Lembesis had plenty of experience in restaurant management, and McQuade was a passionate cook. So when Joanna mentioned wanting to open a restaurant in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, McQuade signed on. The result was What If ..., an exuberantly eclectic (Greek, Southwestern, Middle Eastern, Asian fusion) restaurant that opened in 1997 and quickly developed a devoted following.

Their second location opened downstairs at Spinner's Inn in Hershey in 2002. Approaching the two-year anniversary of the opening of What If ... of Hershey, Lembesis is finally able to discuss it with good humor. "We opened here right at the end of May, and June was tourist season. We got crushed," she says wryly. "It was like a bad dream; they landed and they took over!"

After this trial-by-fire, however, the restaurant is going strong, with an excellent local reputation and a lively banquet-and-reception business that keeps What If ... of Hershey's 100-seat banquet room occupied. Lembesis credits her success to a devotion to detail. "I'm here all the time, and I pay attention to the details," she says. "My partner's always in the kitchen cooking, my husband's on the grill, and I'm out front making sure everyone's happy!"



(left to right) Joanna Lembesis, Mike McQuade and Liz McQuade

Catching On

Catfish Barn | **BRYANT, AR**

Loyal SYSCO customer and veteran restaurateur Terry Hutcherson has opened restaurants all over Arkansas in the course of his 30-year career. Hutcherson and his wife Patti have owned and operated establishments ranging from burger joints to pizza parlors. Their latest endeavor, opened in July 2003, is the Catfish Barn, a family restaurant in Bryant, AR, southwest of Little Rock. "It was just time to try something new," Hutcherson explains.

The Catfish Barn features an all-you-can-eat buffet loaded with catfish fillets and steaks, fried or boiled shrimp, clam strips, hush puppies, frog's legs, fresh vegetables and other staples of country cooking. Naturally, the catfish fillets are the most popular item. "That's what everybody comes for," says Hutcherson. "Everybody likes catfish."



Owners Terry and Patti Hutcherson

The rustic dining room enjoys steady local business as well as drawing travelers from the nearby interstate. The Hutchersons know how to keep their customers satisfied. "They always tell us the food's good and keep it coming, and that's what we try to do."

Hutcherson owes the success of his long and varied career to a simple philosophy. "Just work hard," he confides. "Give people good service, like you want to be served when you go out somewhere. That's the only way to be."



A clean truck can make quite an impression on a customer. A *really* clean truck—box gleaming, chrome wheels flashing—is the signature of John Jackson, a 10-year veteran Delivery Associate at SYSCO Food Services of Dallas. His #303 is an eye-catching emblem of his commitment to SYSCO and to his customers. “At some restaurants I park right out front,” says Jackson. For his part, he explains, “When I’m sitting there and eating, I want to see something clean hauling my groceries.”

The shine takes time. Every Sunday after church, in fact, Jackson and his son John Jr. head to SYSCO Dallas to wash the truck. Dad works from the top down, while John Jr. works from the bottom. On a good week, it takes two hours—four or more if he’s been driving in the rain.

Jackson’s willingness to spend part of a day off cleaning his truck reflects his pride in his work—the kind of pride that inspired him to visit a customer who had fallen off his regular delivery route and ask what had happened. As SYSCO Dallas District Manager Brian Weale worked to regain the restaurant’s business, the manager explained to Brian that the delivery driver for their other supplier took much longer than Jackson to make the same deliveries.

DALLAS, TX

The secret of Jackson’s speed? He uses not one but five hand trucks for deliveries—staging goods on the hand trucks before he arrives saves precious minutes parked at the delivery location, and gets the delivery made with a minimum of disruption for the customer. Plus, it keeps him well on top of his route. “I like for my customers to say ‘You’re here already?’” says Jackson. “I love to hear that, instead of ‘Where’ve you been?’”

This commitment to meeting—and even anticipating—customers’ needs is central to the SYSCO partnership philosophy. Jackson understands the challenges that our customers face and works to make business just a bit easier for them every day.



John Jackson
SYSCO Delivery Associate,
SYSCO Food Services of Dallas

“I give my cell phone number to most of the customers on my route,” says Jackson. “I tell them to call me and let me know if they need something. I’m going to see the same people at least twice a week, so I want to keep them happy!”



Six New Appetizing Foods Feed Your Customer's Hunger for New and Unique Tastes



NEW!

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NEW!

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NEW!

Jade Mountain® Teriyaki Assorted Vegetables



NEW!

Jade Mountain® Teriyaki Green Beans

Jade Mountain® Thai Coconut Green Beans

SYSCO is tracking the hottest trends in foodservice to help you feed your customers' appetite for fun, flavorful meals. The result: six delicious new tastes that will satisfy patrons and build sales. Serve them as appetizers, toppers, kids' entrees or side dishes – and heat up your menu's appeal.

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