Louisiana flavor lives in New Albany

By RICHARD CLARK
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Cajun flavor and tradition has a home in New Albany.

Joe's OK Bayou in New Albany has been serving up the taste of the bayou for more than two years.

Owner Joe Wheatley opened the New Albany restaurant in 2005. The other Joe's OK Bayou restaurants are in Louisville and Lexington.

Wheatley's interest in Cajun cooking began while he was a chemistry major at the University of Kentucky.

"My roommate was from Louisiana and introduced me to Cajun food," Wheatley said.

Wheatley worked with a Cajun chef in a local restaurant in Lexington, before starting his first Joe's OK Bayou restaurant in Louisville 13 years ago.

"I saw a lot of Indiana customers coming to our Louisville restaurant," Wheatley said. "It seemed natural to open one in southern Indiana."

When asked about what makes Cajun food unique, Wheatley mentioned the holy trinity of Cajun cooking: chopped celery, green bell peppers and onions.

"People often confuse spicy food with hot food," Wheatley said. "But spicy food as most Cajun dishes are, really means seasoned food."

Wheatley smiled as he said some people have trouble pronouncing the word "étouffée."

"Étouffée is a large amount of vegetables, including onions, green bell peppers, green onions and celery that are smothered in a light thickening roux," Wheatley said.

"Then the mixture is cooked down with delicate spicing before the addition of crawfish."

"The biggest problem is just to get people to try the food," Wheatley said. "Once they try it, they like it."

That comment was seconded by customer Brandon Stiles from Bedford.

"I really love the catfish here," Stiles said.

Another secret to the food at Joe's OK Bayou is the batter.

"We only use batter that we get from Louisiana for that real Cajun flavor," Wheatley said.

Selections on the menu at Joe's OK Bayou include items such as frog legs, softshell crab, cocktail and butterfly shrimp and of course Cajun specialities of gumbo, jambalaya and red beans & rice.

For those who can't make up their minds, Joe's OK Bayou has Cajun and Bayou combo platters.

The restaurant also has daily dinner specials. Each day, patrons can get a selected dish for $3 less than the normal price.

Wheatley said the restaurant's busiest time is around Fat Tuesday, the English translation of Mardi Gras, which next year is on Feb. 5.

"We really celebrate the Mardi Gras spirit here at Joe's O.K. Bayou," Wheatley said. "You'll see and hear things here you would only see in New Orleans, beads and all."

Wheatley said the restaurant becomes a showcase for Bayou music around Mardi Gras as well.

"During that time we have live entertainment," Wheatley said. "Joe DeBow, a professional blues player, comes in to play."

In New Albany, Joe's OK Bayou is located at 4308 Charlestown Rd. Their hours of operation are Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. until 9 p.m., Fridays 11 a.m. until 10 p.m., Saturdays noon until 10 p.m., and Sundays noon until 9 p.m.

Prices at Joe's OK Bayou range from $5.50 to $18.95, with most dishes under ten dollars.

Photo by Richard Clark

Joe Wheatley, owner of Joe's O.K. Bayou, serves up various cajun dishes daily.

Series tells plight of women in India

by ZACH HESTER
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Two IUS professors presented the first installment of this semester's International Speaker Series on Wednesday, Oct. 3, about problems women in India face.

Jean Abshire, director of international programs and associate professor of political science, and Sara Hare, assistant professor of sociology, gave their presentation titled "Women in India – Tradition and Change" to a crowd of about 20.

"The issues that women face in India and in other cultures are very different from those that they face in the U.S.," Abshire said.

"Basically the goal is just to be more aware."

One issue discussed was dowry, which is the payment of money or valuables the family of a bride gives to the family of her groom.

Abshire said dowries create problems like widespread "bride burning."

"There are a lot of 'kitchen fires' where women are consumed in a kerosene fire while cooking," she said. "It's often known this is an intentional act of murder, but the family keeps the dowry and the son can be sent out to find another bride."

Hare said there are "dowry death laws" in India that require officials to investigate deaths in new marriages, but officials are often reluctant to do so.

A member of the audience, Ash Sridhar Ramachandran, psychology freshman, added insight throughout the presentation from her experiences in India.

Ramachandran said she lived in Bombay, India, for 19 years before she came to the United States last year.

Ramachandran said the laws can also be hard to enforce because many marriages in more rural areas of India are not officially recognized.

"They do not even have marriage certificates," she said.

Abshire and Hare also discussed female infanticide in India. They said families often kill their female babies because they consider males to be more valuable.

Hare said an imbalance in the sex ratio causes major problems.

"When there are no women around for your son to marry, you start trafficking women," she said.

According to the presentation, the infant sex ratio in India in 2001 was 933 females per 1,000 males. In Punjab, a prosperous area, the ratio was 876 females per 1,000 males.

Hare said the greater imbalance in Punjab reflects the cost of abortions.

She said that since ultrasound became available, sex-selective abortions became possible, but they are very expensive so they mainly occur in rich areas like Punjab.

Hare said there are laws prohibiting infanticide and sex-selective abortions, but they are easily circumvented.

"The doctor can say 'Oh, your baby is horribly deformed,' and his idea of deformed is that it doesn't have a penis," she said.

Abshire said there are many laws in India that call for improved conditions for women, but they are often not enforced.

"They're on the books," she said. "Ensuring implementation is another thing, but there's hope since they're on the books."

Abshire said another reason for hope is the growing number of women's advocacy groups in India like the Hope Project and the Prayas group.

She said education and economic development are major goals of the advocacy groups.

Ryon Keith, communications major, said he was glad to hear about the advocacy groups.

"It's encouraging," he said. "There are actually people doing something to help women instead of oppressing women."

Abshire said the events are first and foremost for the students, but anyone is welcome.

She said the goal of the series is to increase students' awareness of events and situations around the world.

"It's not realistic anymore to think that you can get by just knowing about your town or your state or even just the U.S.," she said.

"That's just not how it works anymore. The world is becoming increasingly small in a lot of respects… Citizens of the future are going to have to understand that they are not just US citizens but global citizens."

"If people are moved by the plight of the women in these situations, they can come and support them," Abshire said.

Safe Zone encourages harmony on campus

By CAROLINE BRYAN
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The Safe Zone held an orientation session Oct. 4 in the Student Organization Area. Attendees took part in training promoting increased awareness of the presence of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals, a willingness to assist individuals in accessing support and information resources and an understanding and commitment to confidentiality.

Participants were also given a chance to sign a pledge to become an ally. Wanda Lawhorn, adviser for the Gay Straight Alliance and coordinator of the Children's Center, said an ally is someone who will agree to serve as a resource person.

There was a concern among some participants that not enough students attended the orientation. Of the 14 members who attended the first orientation on Oct. 3, only five were students.

Greg Roberts, adviser for the School of Arts and Letters, was uncomfortable with where the orientation was held.

"I don't see how any student or staff member could be comfortable in this setting," he said.

Roberts said having it in the Student Organization Area took away from the whole idea of a commitment to confidentiality, a key goal of Safe Zone.

Kimberly Pelle, non-traditional student program coordinator, thought the choice for the setting was a good idea.

"We are a learning institution and we are supporting diversity," Pelle said. "I don't think having it behind closed doors is the right way."

At the beginning of the session Lawhorn asked everyone how they would respond if they heard someone make a derogatory remark.

Kimberly Clemens, director of campus life, said she had problems with students describing things as being gay.

"I would hear them say things like, 'That's so gay,' and I would ask them if they realized what they were saying," Clemens said. "I would tell them, the way in which you are using that word is derogatory in nature."

Roberts had everyone participate in an activity where each person drew a circle and made a pie chart of the things they do in a day or a week. Included on the chart was time spent working, sleeping, socializing, driving to and from work or school and time spent having sex.

When everyone finished, Roberts pointed out that homosexuals are judged by a very small part of that pie chart.

"You want people to judge you on your entire life," Roberts said. "But, when I say homosexual or gay, you automatically picture two men or two women having sex. They are judged on a very small fraction of their life."

Roberts said it was important for people to realize that homosexual people live their lives in the same way as heterosexuals. They go to work every day and spend time with their friends and families just as heterosexual people do.

Pelle said because of projects like Safe Zone the environment is much better for promoting awareness than it was when she was in school and AIDS was in the forefront of the news.

Pelle was part of a group that wanted to encourage safe sex. They set up tables and gave away free condoms during AIDS Awareness Week.

"We caught so much crap for that," she said. "People left notes on The Horizon door because I was the managing editor at the time, derogatory notes calling us gay lovers."

Lawhorn is pleased with how far Safe Zone has come and with the direction it is going in.

"Because of budgetary things, for a while it was put on the back burner," she said. "Hopefully, it will continue to be more training-oriented."

Lawhorn hopes to get personal accounts from students in the future. She thinks this will help students and staff members learn one-on-one what it is like for those who are discriminated against.

What's My Professor Reading?

James Kauffman
professor
communication studies

"Hungry For God: Practical Help in Personal Prayer" By Ralph Martin

'Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.'

– H. G. Wells