



Photo by Steve Winkler for Mt. Tully

Joe and Colleen Beasley sit in Lake Varsity Diner, a restaurant they opened in Uniontown. See story on Page 2.

Restaurant is dream come true

By STEVE WIANDT
Writer for Mr. Thrifty

Crediting God for helping him visualize his new venture, Joe Beasley didn't exactly open Lake Varsity Diner on blind faith.

Seated at a table in this eatery located at 13367 Cleveland Ave. N.W. in Uniontown, Beasley recalled having to come to terms with worsening rheumatoid arthritis. He decided he had to quit his job, take a vacation and with his wife, Colleen, pray for direction.

"We went to Florida and spent a lot of time praying," said Beasley. When he felt God leading him to open a restaurant, Beasley had worked as a grocery store manager, a construction worker, and finally a consultant for a fresh and frozen food business. But he never worked in a restaurant.

"I'm just like everyone else — I resisted," Beasley said. However, he felt God's continued urging to go into the restaurant business. So Beasley gave in. "I felt if He's in it, I can do it."

Beasley said his prayers were specific, and God answered them. He prayed for a building 2,500 square feet in size with a capacity for 75 people. God showed him a former surplus store that was for sale. It measured 2,480 square feet with a capacity for 75.

During the planning process, when Beasley went to sleep at night, he would dream of how the interior of his restaurant would look. The final result is a look that combines a 1950s malt shop, a high school cafeteria and a sports bar (without the alcohol). Decked out in blue and white, Lake High School's colors, the dining room has booths, tables and a counter lined with cushioned chrome stools.

A unique feature of the booths is the tabletops covered with pictures from newspapers and yearbooks from the 1950s to 2005. Everyone from the football team to the marching band is represented.

Beasley said he wanted to



ABOVE: Jean Schluppe of Akron, left, and Russ and Ruth Tritt of Springfield Township enjoy a late lunch at Lake Varsity Diner in Uniontown. **RIGHT:** Lake Varsity's L-shaped counter is reminiscent of the long counters found in train car diners.



make the restaurant a family affair. Colleen works there, as well as their three children, a niece and a nephew. In all there are 15 employees.

Beasley noted that if he gets to the point where he can no longer physically work in the restaurant, he will continue to use his mind in its operation. "My family can be my arms and legs," he said.

Wife Colleen said the restaurant, which opened last October, is a good job for her because she is a hard worker who enjoys talking to people. Colleen said in her other business as a house cleaner she works alone and misses the personal contact with others.

Although the menu does

not offer typical diner food (meatloaf, pork chops, etc.), it has a variety of hamburgers, side dishes and deserts, all presented in fun fashion stamped with Joe's sense of humor. A popular item is homemade potato

chips called "Spec-tators." The fresh-cut French fries, or "Couch Potatoes," are also a hot item, Colleen said.

Lake Varsity Diner is open from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and

Saturday; and closed Sunday. For carryout, (330) 699-DINE (3463).

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Photos by Steve Wiandt for Mr.