

Made Right

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Between the closure and the car crash at April's Diner — an SUV accelerated past a curb when trying to park and barreled head-first through the entrance — it was not a good news day for Newton restaurants. Hence why KCCI made its way to town to learn why people were upset their favorite Maid Rite had closed.

Of course the timing of the closure wasn't great either. To lock the doors just days before Newton alumni met for their all-class reunion meant that many folks would be without their favorite hometown meals. But then just as soon as the place closed, the marquee inside Sandwiches Made Right had a different message:



Christopher Braunschweig/Newton News

Lori Ganoe, manager of Sandwiches Made Right, has worked at the Newton restaurant for 40 years and will continue to manage it under new ownership.

toe-to-toe against any other.

Brown bought the restaurant because of the nostalgia he had for it, a feeling he shares with many customers who visit the place on a weekly — or daily — basis. He wanted to see the restaurant survive for years to come, and he was confident he could bring it to another level.

"And that's what I did," Brown said in an interview with Newton News.

COMMUNITY'S PRECONCEPTIONS ONLY FUEL THE DRAMA

However, the town was quick to turn on Brown when they learned one of their favorite restaurants had closed. Perhaps it was his personality and his high expectations that led people to bandwagon onto the customer's complaint, which was largely targeting Brown's behavior after a joke was made about food quality.

Staff still contend the complaint was exaggerated and claimed parts were just plain untrue. Other residents say they don't agree with the way Brown has talked to his employees. Brown admitted he does expect good or better from his workers, but he said the good ones understand him and adhere

to his standards.

Lori Ganoe, an employee of the restaurant for more than 40 years, said the culmination of Brown's health and him working close to 70 to 80 hours a week ultimately resulted in the restaurant's closure. "His body just couldn't take it anymore," Ganoe said to Newton News the day the restaurant reopened.

Newton residents may then argue the incident that sparked the complaint was the straw that broke the camel's back, so to speak. Many believe that. Brown rejects those claims, telling Newton News that the amount of hours per week far exceeded what he planned on, and his health was also a matter of concern.

In the past, Brown said he collapsed from the heat and from having to keep up with orders. Problems with his sciatic nerves only exacerbated the issue, and it is likely he will have surgery. Another year or two, he said, could have created even more problems. Especially for someone who says he'll sleep when he dies.

"I joke that I'm 59 but I have the body of a 72-year-old, and my doctors

agree," Brown said. "Ever since I've been 21, I've never had more than seven days off."

AMBITIOUS OWNER PROVED HIMSELF, BUT AT A PERSONAL COST

Looking back on his roughly two-year ownership, he is still proud of what he accomplished. Numbers don't lie, he said. Sales were up. Employees were paid more. Food was as popular as ever. But the decision to step away has given Brown greater clarity about what is really important to him.

"My wife deserves my time, and my family deserves my time," Brown said. "I've proven what I can do. That place needed oxygen and I brought it oxygen, along with my team. And I had some very good employees. Some came and went. But the key ones truly know and understand me."

So if it isn't Brown who reopened Sandwiches Made Right, who did? Well, the new owner remains anonymous for now, but Ganoe said they are a devoted community member who wanted to make sure the town kept its longtime Maid Rite open. Which also means Ganoe is to serve as manager from now on.

The day the restaurant reopened, Ganoe said she's never been given so many handshakes. The support from the community was overwhelming, and she hopes it stays that way. Ganoe expects a lot of the changes Brown made to the menu will stay, apart from the barbecued meats prevalent in daily specials.

Regardless, Ganoe is just happy to be working again. When she found out Brown had closed the restaurant, she was devastated. But as early as Monday she got a call from the new owner asking her if she would be willing to manage the restaurant. Just like that she got her job back. It's like it never happened.

"I'm excited," Ganoe said of being able to return back to the way things were. Then she grinned. "I don't know if we'll get the donuts back, but I'm going to try."

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Jail

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Jail officers found the indi-

vidual at approximately 12:25 a.m. June 8 and provided them with immediate medical care. Paramedics from Newton Fire Department responded to the jail where they treated the in-

mate, who was then flown to a hospital near Des Moines.

Jasper County Sheriff's Office has requested the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation to look into the cir-

cumstances that caused the inmate to become unresponsive. The investigation is ongoing and no other information is being released at this time.

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