

News

The Gondola restaurant a leaky ship on uneven course

By Lauren Taylor
Pilot editor in chief

The Gondola, the new Italian restaurant on Highway 74 across from Jack in the Box and Applebee's in Shelby, is a boat with a few holes to plug up.

There were so many "leaks" in the place that instead of floating gracefully down the waterway, the staff was frantically bailing to cover up the restaurant's shortcomings.

For instance, after five minutes of watching the wait staff stand around idly, our server finally took drink orders.

Had we not asked for plates and silverware, we would have been eating with our hands, off the table, but at least the waitress kept the sweet tea coming.

Being an Italian restaurant, I was expecting an interesting flavored tea, yet what we got had all the flair of the renowned BoJangle's iced tea.

My friend and I ran into some other GWU students while

there, and two of them said their dining experience was poor.

"Don't get the fettuccini Alfredo," one said. "It had an odd sweetness to it and was very bland."

The other said that his food was delicious because of the marinara. But when we asked the waitress to tell us about the sauces, all she knew was that they were homemade.

She knew very little else about the menu altogether—so little, in fact, that she suggested a fried rice ball appetizer.

Imagine eating a rice casserole made with cream of mushroom soup, rolled into a ball, and deep fried. That's what it was like. Weird. It came with crackers and marinara.

Thank goodness we also ordered the bruschetta appetizer.

The dish of big, fresh tomato chunks with herbs covered in olive oil was unlike any other I'd ever had—in a good way.

The bruschetta was over-oiled, but still good.

After picking appetizers, the task of wading through the rest of the menu was difficult. There were too many non-Mediterranean dishes cluttering up the options, such as cheeseburgers and chicken tenders.

While waiting for our salads, we realized how incredibly bright it was. The large crystal chandeliers were overkill when combined with the house lights, so for dinner time there was no ambience.

The hum of other patrons' conversations and clinking forks were maddening without music to drown it out.

To our dismay, the entrées were served before our salads arrived, so instead of taking them off our tab, the waitress apologetically brought them to us anyway.

Our friend was right about the marinara; it was absolutely delicious with the mozzarella. The mozzarella was fresh and the serving size hearty.

The combination lamb-and-

beef gyro had enough meat on it to make three more. It had the consistency and richness of sausage and would have been perfect with only two or three strips.

We were seated by the door on a cold, rainy night and our food cooled quickly.

Further dampening our experience was dessert. The German chocolate cake and strawberry cheesecake from the in-house bakery were true fiascos.

Soggy, under-baked layers made the chocolate frosting a chore to eat, and the tasteless, over-whipped cheesecake with a store-bought glaze was totally uneventful.

Overall, I give the Gondola a D+. The marinara sauce and bruschetta saved the night, giving the food a 75 percent rating. But the atmosphere and service were full of kinks and inexperience, chopping that grade down to 60 percent.

The good news is those are holes that will probably be

Gates urges Obama to invest in education, cutting poverty

By Emily Cahn
The GW Hatchet, George Washington U. / UWIRE

Bill Gates urged President-elect Barack Obama and his administration on Wednesday morning in George Washington University's Marvin Center to continue funding education reform projects and to reduce global poverty despite the economic downturn.

In his first public speech since September, the co-founder of Microsoft said the United States needs to be optimistic and must continue to fund long-term goals, even in a bleak economy.

"If you look at the stock market, business activity or budget deficits, things are dark," Gates said. "But if you consider our capacities and opportunities, our passion and vision, the outlook is bright. We can keep moving toward a world where every child grows up in good health, goes to a good school and has opportunities waiting—as long as we stay confident about the future and keep investing in it."

Gates is the co-chair and trustee of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the world's largest philanthropic foundation. He said he was impressed with GW students' commitment to two of his foundation's causes: the improvement of U.S. education and the reduction of global poverty.

He said he was especially impressed that GW ranks No. 1 in students who join the Peace Corps after graduation and that the largest employer of GW graduates is Teach for America, an organization that promotes a better education for minority and low-income students in public schools.

"If young people in America make the kind of choices that people make here at GW, we are going to have a great future," Gates said.

During his speech, he urged the

federal government to put more money toward recruiting better teachers and creating incentives for students to earn college degrees.

Gates said if the government puts education and the reduction of poverty on hold, there will be an even greater divide between rich and poor when the economy bounces back.

"If we don't make these people part of the investment now, when the economy comes back, they won't be coming back with it," Gates said.

After Gates' address, GW professor and CNN special correspondent Frank Sesno moderated a question and answer session with members of the audience.

One audience member, an Italian journalist, asked Gates if he supported increasing taxes on the rich to fund education and the reduction of poverty. Gates said he didn't mind having his taxes raised.

"Now people can say, 'You're so rich you don't mind.' That's true," Gates joked, drawing laughter from the crowd.

He added, "But overall, the pendulum will swing in the direction of taxation in this country being more progressive and I personally think that's fine."

Gates also offered advice to students who hope to create a better system of education in the U.S. and reduce global poverty. He said the key was taking an interest in these issues to form "a broader constituency" instead of depending on "a few enlightened leaders."

"I think, in your young years, to get out and get involved and being a strong voice in terms of your giving, your volunteering time and how to speak out politically will put these issues on a much sounder footing than they're on today," Gates said. "I'm thrilled that there is this interest, where GW is at the forefront of it, but it can become much more broader than that."

H2O Project trades caffeine for cash

By Micky Deming
Daily Eastern News, Eastern Illinois U. / UWIRE

Wyatt Waterkotte loves an orange Crush soda. He enjoys the taste of soda in general and his body is used to the caffeine.

For two weeks, he and 50 other Eastern Illinois University students didn't hear the pop of the tab on a soda can, or the sound of coffee brewing in the morning. The only liquid going into their bodies was available from their own faucets: boring water.

These students participated in the H2O Project, a nationwide challenge to drink only water. The money that would have been spent on other drinks is donated toward efforts to build wells in other parts of the world where clean water is not so accessible.

The money went to the Blood/Water organization and Convoy of Hope, as \$1,050 was collected at Eastern to build a well in Africa.

Christian Campus House brought this unique idea to Eastern.

The World Health Organization gives some eye-opening facts. More than one billion people in the world

don't have access to clean water and have to drink from polluted or infected water sources.

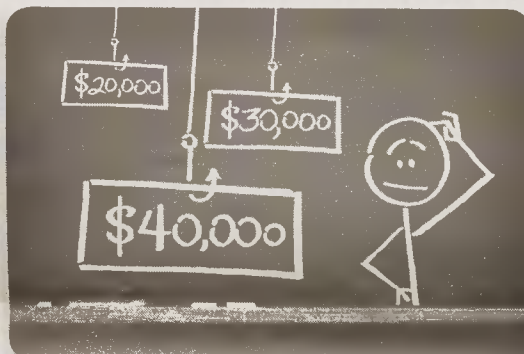
The WHO also said 1.8 million children worldwide die from water born diseases, which translates to 5,000 deaths a day. More than half of Africa's population doesn't have sanitary drinking water, according to the United Nations. Women and children often walk two hours each way to retrieve water, which is usually dirty, for their families.

Sacrifice is the intention of the H2O Project: for someone to give up something that seems like a necessity, but is truly just a luxury. Water is a necessity. In the U.S. we can have it whenever we want, and we often have to buy bottled. It is hard to fathom water bad enough to cause blindness, guinea worm or even death.

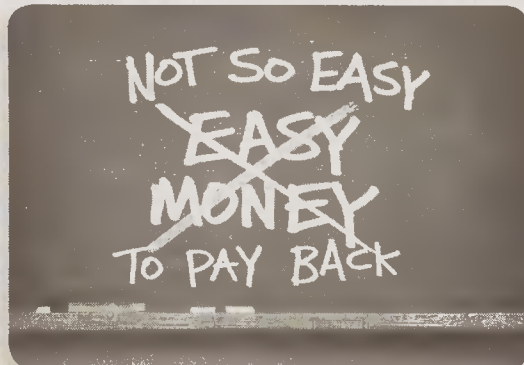
The official Web site of the H2O project says \$1 can give a person in Africa clean water for a year and \$10 would be enough for a lifetime.

So when Waterkotte went to McDonald's and had some water with his meal instead of his usual Dr. Pepper, he put the dollar saved aside and made a difference in the world.

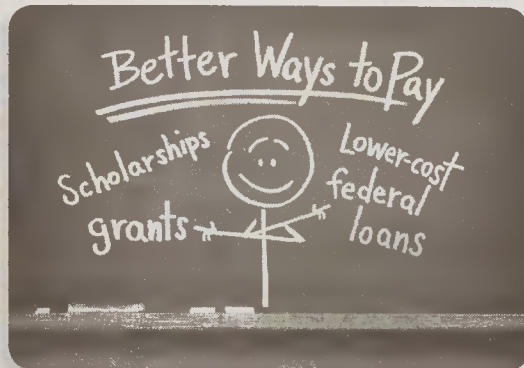
Paying for College 101



Seeing ads about how easy it is to get up to \$40,000 for college?



That "easy money" is probably a high-interest loan—which won't be easy when it's time to pay it back.



Visit CFNC.org and your college financial aid office for free information on better ways to pay for college.

CFNC.org or 866-866-CFNC

College Foundation
of North Carolina

Helping you plan, apply, and pay for college