

STATE & LOCAL

Local Beat: Sunflowers Cafe

Ashleigh Phillips, Staff Writer

"I read cookbooks like people read novels," Deborah Ferebee tells me as I bite into the vegetarian focaccia she just put in front of me. As I am trying to decide if it's the balsamic vinaigrette, crisp cucumbers, or havarti, Swiss, or provolone cheeses that makes me love this sandwich, it becomes evident that Ferebee really does read cookbooks like novels. She's got a handle on what makes food delicious.

Growing up near the coast, Ferebee learned from the beginning the importance of freshness. Her family would go to the beach for crabs and oysters and to the backyard for seasonal vegetables. It was a hands on experience of knowing where food comes from and where it goes. Much of it would go to Sunday lunch, which Ferebee remembers with a smile as "Thanksgiving every Sunday." Coming from a family that loves to cook and eat, it was inevitable for Ferebee to catch the passion.

After teaching high school English for two years, Ferebee did what she calls "some soul searching" and came across an ad in the paper for a fraternity cook. So she became a fraternity cook until her husband, Clay, suggested that they open their own restaurant. Twenty-seven years ago Sunflowers Café opened on Glenwood South and the rest is local culinary history.

Sunflowers features a variety

of excellent lunch sandwiches, including many vegetarian options. The chicken salad sandwich on sunflower bread is the most popular. The amazing desserts can definitely hold their own. Customers rave about the caramel cake saying, "It's just like what grandma used to make." Ferebee uses her mother's recipes for the chocolate layer cake and banana pudding. Dinner offerings are just as wonderful, for example, consider grilled sea scallops on top of cheese and pepper infused cornbread with honeydew avocado salsa or seared grouper fish tacos with pico de gallo. It can't be said that Sunflowers has a dull menu because Ferebee strives to deliver creative dishes to her customers.

And those customers are loyal. Even after moving Sunflowers to its current location on Peace Street, those customers who were there in the beginning still return. They return not only for obvious reasons of tasty treats, but because of the atmosphere that Sunflowers delivers. Considering just the look of the place, it is part art museum and part greenhouse. Local artwork is displayed on its pale yellow walls and natural sunlight filters in through the windows to flatter the pieces. There are fresh flower arrangements on every table. The delight extends out onto the patio that wraps around the side of the restaurant. Customers can dine under Carolina jasmine and hanging ferns that grow along lattice work that Clay designed. It's a lovely experience

and worlds away from the Hardees that occupied the building before.

The customers also return because of the friendly service. The fact that the open kitchen was designed so cooks can say hey to the customers as they walk in reveals where the priorities are. And I find that out as I sit in this charming restaurant, I being treated to

a sandwich that Ferebee just made for me. I thought I was the one who asked for an interview.

Visit Sunflowers at 8 West Peace Street and you'll be pleasantly drawn back again.

Apex High School Teens Stand Trial for Classmate's Murder

Caitlin Griffin, Staff Writer



Photo Credit: John Rottet, <http://www.news-observer.com>

On Monday, September 13, 2010, trial proceedings began for 19-year-old former Apex High School student Ryan Patrick Hare, who was accused of masterminding a bizarre murder plot that ended in the death of fellow Apex senior Matthew Silliman on November 30, 2008. In addition to Hare, three other teens, Hare's and Silliman's ex-girlfriend Allegra Dahlquist, 19, and classmates Drew Shaw, 18, and Aadil Khan, 19 were on trial this week, facing judgment for varying degrees of participation in the murder scheme. On the first day of the trial, Shaw continued to deny his involvement in the plot. Dahlquist and Khan, however, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, attempted first-degree murder, and conspiracy to commit murder. None of the teens has been sentenced, but Dahlquist and Khan have agreed to cooperate with the investigation in hopes of lessening their final sentences.

Reporter Anne Blythe, in the online version of Raleigh's News & Observer on Wednesday, September 15, 2010, details Dahlquist's public testimony. According to the article, Silliman was frequently described as a "troubled" Eagle Scout who suffered from bi-polar disorder. All of the teens "were into a dark side of life that included vampires, horror movies and talk of suicide, self-mutilation and alcohol and drug abuse." On the stand, Dahlquist explained that Hare had become jealous of her relationship with Silliman and had decided to kill him. Dahlquist agreed to assist with the murder plot in a radical attempt to restore Hare's trust.

The teens told Silliman a man named Roger was stalking him and took Silliman to Dahlquist's parents' horse farm in southwestern Wake County. She claims Silliman could leave, but Hare hit Silliman on the head with a hammer, saying Silliman "had to die." Silliman attempted suicide by taking prescription pills and horse tranquilizers. When Silliman finally passed out, Dahlquist and Hare bound his hands and feet with zip ties and put him in a windowless bathroom "so no one would see him." Khan put duct tape across Silliman's mouth. After Silliman vomited through the duct tape, the teens put a clear plastic bag over his head and a zip tie around his neck. They left the body inside a sleeping bag.

Prosecutors claim that Hare was the mastermind of the murder, although they point fingers at all four teens for Silliman's untimely death. Defense attorneys argue that Hare and his classmates assisted Silliman's suicide. The trial continues.

STAFF

herald@meredith.edu
heraldadvertising@
email.meredith.edu

Editor

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Mariamawit Tadesse

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