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Section

LIFE

Religion 8B

REVIEW

The divine Providence Cafe

By Angela Lindsay
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Located obscurely off of Providence Road is one of Myers Park's most established eateries, the Providence Café. To keep from driving right past it, you should keep an eye out for its purple awning which prominently protrudes from the front. Like its name suggests, the place definitely has a quaint, café-esque feel at first, but once you sit and take in its sophisticated atmosphere, you will find it has way more to offer than just soup and coffee.

The interior summons a bit of the old world through the Aztec-inspired design of colorful tiles embedded in smooth white brick and the large decorative plates lining shelves placed high on the wall at the far end of the restaurant. The furniture is simple. The tables are not covered with the crisp white tablecloths that you might expect, and the wood proudly shows signs of wear from many a good meal having been served there. The cloth cushioning of the chairs and booths are accented with blends of purple, green and blue, warming up the stark whiteness of the walls, and though a 1980s pop song greeted us at the door, jazz music plays softly in the background of the dining area. The atmosphere is the perfect dynamic between elegance and comfort. And it is reflected in the menu as well.

Its wide array of appetizers include lobster crab cakes, tomato-dill bisque, and an interesting combination called Chinese pastry sticks, which are spinach and asparagus wrapped in pastry, lightly fried, and served with Thai peanut vinaigrette. They are welcome diversions from usual first course fare such as calamari and shrimp cocktail.

For a meal of the lighter variety, there is a sizeable section of the menu dedicated to an assortment of salads which range from the simple-an iceberg lettuce salad, to the exotic-an Asian tuna salad, to the regional-a Southwestern black bean cake salad, which matches perfectly with the implicit theme of the décor. There are a couple of hearty sandwich selections from which to choose and any number of side items to accompany them, but your better bet is to indulge in one of the tempting entrees.

After much contemplation, I decided to spring for what was ultimately a most satisfying surf and turf combination. It consists of a petit filet with jumbo prawns, Yukon Gold whipped potatoes and seasoned vegetables in a red wine demi glace and lemon dill. And, yes-it tastes as good as it sounds. The steak was tender and perfectly cooked, as were the shrimp, while the potatoes and vegetables took on an extra layer of flavor by soaking up the glaze. The temperature of the food was not particularly hot, but warm enough to appreciate the bold but simple flavors of each item.

The chef's apparent creative knack for blending ingredients and cultures was highlighted by a peculiar offering of maple pecan glazed pan-seared trout-an unusual pairing one can only appreciate by actually tasting it. Another interesting combination involves salmon and vegetables tossed together in a stir-fry. But for something a little more familiar, try the classic southern dish of shrimp and grits, which is spruced up by the addition of spicy andouille sausage, savory applewood smoked bacon, scallions, and cheddar cheese.

It will be difficult, but you owe it to yourself to save room for dessert. The Cappuccino ice cream pie and twice-baked cin-

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PHOTO/THE STOCK MARKET

Conquering first date

Jitters

Going out for the first time? Don't sweat the details

By Cheri F. Hodges
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So, e-mails have been exchanged, calls have been taken and now it's time to meet.

When you're doing the online dating thing, you talk to someone on the phone for weeks before either of you get the nerve to say, "let's meet."

Well, after my misadventures with "Reggie," I was lucky enough to meet "Thomas."

Unlike Reggie, Thomas attended a historically black college, so we had that in common straight away.

And we like the same football team. So after about a week of long phone conversations about everything from high school reunions, the TV sitcom "Good Times," the Dallas Cowboys' glory days and what we

want out of life. We decided to meet.

It seems so much easier to connect with someone over the phone and over e-mails than in person sometimes. So, even before I met Thomas, I felt like we had a limited connection. In other words, we had some phone chemistry.

We met at an uptown eatery and it was so like a scene from "Sex and the City." There he was, sitting at an outdoor table reading the sports page of USA Today, eyes hidden behind mirrored sunglasses. And yes, he did look like his picture. (That's one of the perils of online dating: that just might not be his or her picture.)

Even though I knew it was him, I still had to ask, "Are you Thomas?"

It also didn't help that I was about

10 minutes late, (I know, I know, first impressions) but he was a good sport about it. We hugged, then sat down and after a few awkward minutes, we got in to the flow, talking as if we were on the phone. Laughing at each other's jokes, whether they were funny or not.

The conversation was very light. Maybe neither of us had the nerve to ask those piercing questions, like "Why are you single?" or "When was your last relationship?"

Possibly that was a good thing. Really, you can't expect to develop a relationship over one date. And maybe that's what a lot of women do.

A good friend of mine said he doesn't like dating in Charlotte, because

Please see CONQUERING2B

Alabama court hears sex toy case

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. — The law that bans the sale of sex toys, but not their possession, in the state of Alabama is again being challenged.

Michael Fees, a Huntsville attorney, represents a group of 10 people, all of whom have been fighting the state's ban on selling sex toys

since the law was enacted in 1998.

In a motion filed with a U.S. District Judge Lynwood Smith on Tuesday, Fees argued that a U.S. Supreme Court decision banning the criminalization of gay sex based on privacy issues also protects his clients' right to buy and sell sex toys.

He argued that the state law is an unwelcome intrusion into his clients' bedrooms.

If Smith decides to overturn the law, it will mark the third time he has done so.

In 1999, Smith ruled against the law only to have it reversed by the 11th Circuit Court after the state attorney gener-

al's office appealed his decision.

In 2002, Smith again ruled against the law, but a three-judge panel of the 11th Circuit overturned him. The judges, however, sent the case back to Smith to review some other issues, including whether states have the right to legislate morality.



PHOTO/THE STOCK MARKET

Students at genealogy camp trace roots

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW ORLEANS — Jameel Reese expected to spend his summer swimming, hanging out, goofing off with friends. Instead, he spent it finding family.

Jameel discovered his great, great grandfather by — of all things — going to camp. He and six other black children age 7 to 15 attended Youth Genealogy Camp, which seeks to nurture an appreciation for the struggles of those who came before them.

"He was trained to be a casket maker while he was still a slave," the soft-spoken 12-year-old said of his ancestor. "He was sold when he was 11. He must

have cried a lot then."

The monthlong day camp is the brainchild of Antoinette Harrell-Miller, founder of the nonprofit African American Genealogy Connection.

"So many kids have no idea of their own history," she said. "They don't stop and think about how their family got here or how they lived."

Harrell-Miller discussed the idea of the camp on her local cable-access TV show, "Knowing Your Family History." She and a group of parents financed the camp, spending about \$1,200 on this first year.

"Parents started calling me and saying they wanted their

kids to attend," she said.

The campers pored over records in the library and The Amistad Research Center at Tulane University. They also visited cemeteries and older family members and went to parish courthouses.

They dug through birth and death certificates, deeds, registrations and voting lists.

"We took them to federal and state offices so they could learn how to get records," Harrell-Miller said. "The thrust of the camp was to teach them how and where to get information."

Younger campers, who might have struggled with some of the

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Survey: black students smoke less

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DURHAM—Fewer black college students smoke compared to their white counterparts and they tend to light up for different reasons, according to preliminary results of a survey at historically black North Carolina Central University.

The survey released Monday found that 13 percent of black students smoked, compared to between 27 percent and 34 percent of college students in general. It also found that blacks are more likely to smoke because of the sensation of smoking or for no reason, rather than in social circumstances or out of boredom.

Michelle Cotton-Laws, the project evaluator for the study, said the information can help develop smoking-cessation programs focused on the needs and tendencies of students at historically black universities.

"Now we can better tailor intervention and prevention programs specifically for minority students, particularly African-American students," Cotton-Laws said. "Because in the past, the studies have focused on majority institutions, predominantly white institutions."

Researchers handed out 440 surveys last fall at the 7,700-student school and received 371 responses.

The survey, conducted by NCCU and the Historically Minority Colleges and Universities Consortium, was financed by the American Legacy Foundation, a national anti-smoking group financed by the settlement between states and tobacco companies.

NCCU was the first of 11 historically black and minority schools where researchers will study tobacco use through this program. The work is important because blacks suffer disproportionately from respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and smoking contributes to that, Cotton-Laws said.

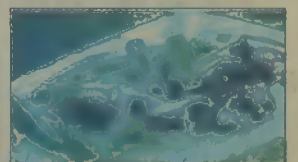
The next step is examining the reasons blacks smoke and understanding what makes tobacco use desirable to them, she said.

"I'm very interested in finding out about what is this, what is this sensation," she said. "We did not go that deep, certainly the next level of research will take us to asking that question."

Cotton-Laws also plans to examine the role parents play in a college student's decision whether to smoke. The study found no correlation between having a parent who is a smoker and deciding to smoke, which is contradictory to some past studies.

Gender, depression, and peer influences are other factors in whether a black student will smoke. The survey found that only 10 percent of women smoke, while 20 percent of men do.

It also found methods that black students identified as useful in smoking cessation programs, Cotton-Laws said. Self-help methods were the favored way to quit smoking, followed by peer support and school-based programs.



PHOTO/THE STOCK MARKET

