

Facing South

a syndicated column:
voices of tradition
in a changing region

"I come in singing."

ROANOKE RAPIDS, NC — Molly Incoe Wallace says it didn't take her long to learn the ropes of waiting tables. "I got broke right in. When I first started, a man said, 'I'm gonna give you a tough order. I want one scrambled egg and one over well.'"

"I said, 'That's no problem.' But when I brought him his breakfast, he told me I'd scrambled the wrong egg."

Molly responded in good humor, as she has to all her customers at Oscar's Grill for the past 19 years. She loves the work, says she can't imagine doing anything else, though she worked for nearly 20 years as a spooler in the Roanoke No. 2 mill.

"July 11, 1944, I went to work at age 23. It was during the war, and if you asked for a job, you got it," Molly recalls.

"When I started in the automatic spooling department," she continues, "I had 60 pockets. See, you take up a bobbin and you pull the end of the thread and you thread it up and it goes onto a cheese. Then the knottor would come by and tie a knot through the yarn on the drum and it would fill. And as it filled, you had to doff them off and put new starters on. When I quit work, I had

135 pockets."

Molly began working at Oscar's in 1964, shortly after leaving the mill. She still works first shift, from about 4:30 a.m. ("it all depends on how early I get up") to 1 p.m., as she always has. But she works part-time now — Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays — so that she and her husband George can travel in their Winnebago. "My middle name is 'Go,'" she says.

For the early risers, Oscar's is a lamp against the night. If you arrive at the grill still half asleep, rest assured you'll get a courtesy wake-up call included in the price of breakfast.

Molly's singing voice is legendary — or notorious, depending on your point of view. "I come in singing in the morning, and the regulars offer to pay me to hush a lot of times. They wonder how in the world can anyone get up that early and feel that good," she says, chuckling. "You know when I went to sleep this morning? When the clock rang to get up. I work a lot of days with no sleep. I don't know why. People talk about kids being hyperactive. Golly, they don't know nothing."

It's been said that Oscar's is really not a restaurant; it's a church, school, city hall



and courthouse, the reigning preacher, teacher, mayor and judge comments. "Everyone tells us the atmosphere here is different than anywhere else. We say what we want to the customers and they say what they want to us. It all amounts to good fellowship," Molly says.

Molly plans to retire in a few years to devote more time to church work and travel. In the meantime, she'll continue to sing and holler at, and yes, spoil her customers.

"We've had a good time working here," she says. "If I hadn't done this I'd have missed a lot in life. I think I'd have missed my calling."

—BILL ADLER
reporter, The People's Voice
Roanoke Rapids, NC

FACING SOUTH welcomes readers' comments and writers' contributions. Write P.O. Box 531, Durham, N.C. 27702.



Eagles Drop Second Loop Tilt In Row

Warren County's Eagles absorbed their second straight Roanoke River Conference loss Friday when they were downed, 6-4, by Northwest Halifax in a game played on the Vikings' home field.

Davis Capps went the distance for the Eagles, striking out eight and walking five. Pernell, who got the win, struck out seven and walked three.

Warren County collected nine hits and was charged with two errors. Leading hitters for Warren County were Marvin Harrison, who went two-for-four; Lester Henderson, who went two-for-three; and Ivory Foster, who went two-for-three.

The defeat followed on the heels of a home loss suffered by the Eagles on March 27 when they hosted North Edgecombe. The visitors took an early lead and went on to a 5-2 verdict.

Davis Capps went the distance for the Eagles, walking five and striking out 13. He also was the leader at the plate, going two-for-two, including a double. Troy Neal and Ivory Foster each had a hit in two trips.

Warren County, which travelled to Vance County yesterday, will host Weldon in a 4 p. m. conference match on Friday.

Does the thread keep breaking while sewing on the machine? Check the needle point. If it is rough, put in a new needle.

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These are the Los Angeles Magicians, billed as the world's biggest comedy basketball team, who will play an exhibition game Saturday night at 7:30 o'clock at Warren County High School. The Magicians boast four seven-footers who will display their basketball skills here. Boosters of the game said that an outstanding achievement award will be presented to Duke cager David Henderson, a WCHS graduate, at halftime. Tickets are \$3 for students and \$4 for adults, with children under eight admitted for \$2. Tickets are available at the high school.

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