

# Diner's down-home food, hospitality both delightful

Amy's Café is a home-cooking, breakfast-and-lunch production of Amy Davis, who took over a struggling eatery in downtown Monrovia on State Road 42 in May and turned it into a bustling workaday lunch spot and an enjoyable place for a leisurely breakfast.

The building is a long, somewhat narrow, high ceiling affair, with functional brown paneled walls and green carpeting and tables.

The dining room's windows are set high on the outer wall, allowing sunlight to pour in from above but leaving no tableside view of the outside world.

The dining room features a cuckoo clock with a working cuckoo.

Davis and her down-home friendly staff offer a full breakfast menu, revolving around pancakes, omelets, and biscuits and gravy.

The primary lunch attraction is the breaded pork grilled tenderloin, suitably massive in scope, seeming to overwhelm not just the bun but almost the plate.

Hamburgers, patty melts, grilled chicken and Philly cheese steaks vie for attention with the expertly breaded and fried pork tenderloin.

Despite the lure of the tenderloin, my eye was drawn to the blackboard listing the luncheon specials and the mom-tested featured attraction designed specifically for this day, chicken soup and grilled cheese sandwich (\$4.99).

The soup was clearly home-



## DINING WITH DUFFY

### Amy's Café

Address: 201 W. Main St., Monrovia  
Phone: 996-4192

Hours: 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday to Friday; 7 a.m. to noon Saturday

Credit cards: Major cards accepted  
Entrée price range: \$2.50 to \$5.50

made, well stocked with thick noodles, chicken breast chunks and carrot slices in a clear, lightly seasoned broth.

The grilled cheese was expertly done, with its well-buttered grilled bread in harmony with the melted American cheese, once again demonstrating the grilled cheese sandwich is an unsung American classic that far too many of us take for granted because of its deceptive simplicity.

In its own way, it merits mention in the same chew with the hamburger and the tenderloin for American sandwich supremacy.

I also noticed on the menu board the availability of the ultimate American retro dish, chipped beef in white cream sauce, usually served on toast.

My mom served this dish during my wonder years in the '50s, and I always enjoyed it when served in moderation.

A major appeal of Amy's Café is Amy's homemade dessert specials, with groans of disappointment emanating from some of the regulars on the premises upon learning her signature pumpkin cobbler was not on the dessert docket that day.

But there was no need to apologize for the smooth, creamy banana pudding (\$2) that was offered, endowed with slices of fresh banana and bits of dough that makes this dessert come together splendidly.

Also offered is a "fruit pizza," featuring assorted fresh fruit slices and cream cheese, and banana pudding with cherry on a fudge brownie, dubbed "Dungy's Delight" in tribute to the NFL's most recent Super Bowl-winning coach, who is one of the few people who could consume this dish without dietary guilt.

I think it would be worth his while to travel from the RCA Dome to Monrovia to give it a try or just satisfy a longing for solid Hoosier good eats.

*Veteran restaurant critic Reid Duffy writes a weekly review for the Daily Journal. Comments may be sent to letters@thejournalnet.com.*

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## AT THE MOVIES

### 'BECAUSE I SAID SO'

Diane Keaton overacts as an overbearing mother who wants to find a husband for one of her three daughters (Mandy Moore).

Hackneyed material and occasional lapses in taste make for a very lame comedy. Moore's character winds up juggling two suitors (Tom Everett Scott and Gabriel Macht) in a movie that lacks any real sweetness.

Rated: PG-13. Sexual content including dialogue, some mature thematic material and partial nudity

### 'HANNIBAL RISING'

This useless prequel tells us Hannibal the cannibal was born in the crucible of World War II.

Implicated in the adult Hannibal's murderous behavior: the Nazis, starving Lithuanian marauders who ate his younger sister and a general atmosphere of global violence.

A somber tone doesn't help; neither does a lackluster Gaspard Ulliel, who plays Hannibal. Same goes for the occasional bursts of gore.

Who needs any of it?

Rated: R. Strong violence, language, sexual references

### 'LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA'

The companion piece to Clint Eastwood's "Flags of Our Fathers" stands as the superior movie, telling the story of this historic battle through the sad, knowing eyes of the Japanese.

Filled with a powerful sense of impending doom, the film shows the devastation from the perspective of a small group of soldiers who never saw the bigger picture but saw plenty of shocking sights.

Rated: R

### 'LITTLE CHILDREN'

Kate Winslet does Oscar-worthy work as a frustrated housewife in this adaptation of a novel by Tom Perrotta.

The foray into suburban malaise features fine acting from Winslet and Jackie Earle Haley, who plays a child molester. Winslet's Sarah has an affair with a stay-at-home husband played by Patrick Wilson; that gets the movie off and running through incidents treated in overly literary fashion.

Rated: R. Strong sexuality and nudity, language and some disturbing content

### 'NORBIT'

If a photo of Eddie Murphy as the world's fattest woman makes you laugh, you've pretty much gotten what there is to get from "Norbit," a comedy in which Murphy plays three roles.

This alarmingly crass comedy has the feel of something composed from recycled Murphy bits. Murphy portrays Norbit, a dweeb orphan who grows up to marry Rasputia (also Murphy), a truculent woman who becomes the movie's running sight gag.

Murphy also plays Mr. Wong, who runs the orphanage where Norbit grew up.

Rated: PG-13. Crude and sexual humor, some nudity and language

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