

## AROUND TOWN

people and events and happenings



Brian Krista/Record staff

Noah Rhoades, left, makes Duck's Family Restaurant in Havre de Grace a regular stop during his daily truck route to and from Baltimore. Pictured with Rhoades is owner Barbara Craigen, center, and waitress Kasi Barr.

## The counter culture

By Kristen Melamed  
Record staff

Jeanne Hayes' iced tea is on the table before she sits down.

She and her recent lunch partner, Mary Lou Gallon, are familiar faces at the New Ideal Diner in Aberdeen, a spot they've been coming to for years. As a child, Gallon loved the diner's roast beef sandwiches, blueberry pie and French fries with gravy. In the '50s and '60s her aunt and uncle would stop by the diner late at night for a cup of coffee when they couldn't sleep.

When Hayes, who lives in Street, was done working for the day, she would stop by the diner.

New Ideal is one of a handful of diners along

Route 40 in the Aberdeen and Havre de Grace area that serve more than just breakfast all day and the standard slice of pie. Some are newer or sophisticated than others, but despite the differences these places foster friendships and create stories: something you couldn't buy or find on the menu.

The New Ideal Diner has been a regular spot in Aberdeen for decades (and it's been the "new" for an equally long time). Gallon has been coming to the New Ideal since she was about six.

Down the road, Fran and Ray Wood are regulars at Brady's Bridge Diner.

Three or four times each week, the Edgewood couple slides into a cream and red-colored booth at the Bridge Diner in Havre de Grace and

dives into a plate of spaghetti or chicken and dumplings.

"It's a good place," Fran Wood said on a recent weekday in between bites of pancakes and potatoes smothered in homemade chip beef gravy. "It feels like home when you come in."

Home is also how Jane Brady, the diner's owner, describes her business.

"I could write a book about what goes on here," Brady said. "It's better than a soap opera."

She sees people who are hurting, for example, but she also notices when people aren't there. And that's when some customers will visit one another.

Brady and her husband, Carl Brady, have

owned the diner since 1969. But its history dates to the 1930s, when the diner was an actual dining car.

The business was her father's before Jane Brady took over. The name was changed from the Bridge Diner to Brady's Bridge Diner when she married her husband.

And though her grown children have no desire to follow in her footsteps with the diner business, she hopes the Bridge Diner will stay in the family through her granddaughter, Sam, even though she's only four.

The Bridge Diner is a partial red brick building that sits at the corner of Route 40 and Otsego Street in Havre de Grace with a neon

Please see DINERS, 4B

## Shopping trip to Perryville's no bargain

From I-95, the Perryville Outlet Center looks promising. But if you stop in to shop, you'll soon realize there are more vacant stores than ones in business.

I went shopping in January and couldn't believe how many stores had closed since I'd last been there.

But apparently there is hope on the horizon for the outlet center, or "ghost town" as it was referred to in a recent article in *The Record*. And ghost town it certainly is.

Last March, Lancelotta Investment Group bought the outlet center after the previous owners encountered financial inadequacies, causing the bank to take over management, as previously reported in *The Record*.

But it's going to take a lot of work. Twenty-three of the center's 36 stores are open, as reported in January, but it felt like much less

when I was there.

Two of my Mom's favorite stores, Liz Claiborne and L.L. Bean, closed shop in Perryville. But two new stores have been added: Designers Only sells name brand purses and Duty Free specializes in high-end cosmetics and natural vitamins.

Apparently, those stores are drawing in bus groups to the center, as previously reported in *The Record*.

But I doubt the buses are full of local residents just itching to pick up the latest faux Prada bag.

How about adding a Jockey, Reebok or Izod? Or Gap, J. Crew or Tommy Hilfiger? How about adding a store I've heard of?

Outlets are a great place to grab some good deals, but you aren't going to attract thousands of shoppers with high-end cosmetics and natural vitamins.

## Take Five



BY KRISTEN MELAMED

Besides, I equate outlets with bargains and there's nothing inexpensive about the term "high end."

But it will take more than just a few good stores to boost the Perryville Outlet Center.

The \$5 toll on I-95 at the Perryville exit needs to go.

I know it's a state highway issue and not the Town of Perryville's, but no one in Harford County or the surrounding areas wants to pay \$5 just to hit the outlets and grab a good bargain.

It's an oxymoron.

I know you can buy a \$5 decal for the Route 40 bridge that's good for a year but you're still paying \$5 and only people in the immediate area really know about the decals.

So, if you want to shop at the Perryville Outlets, you can buy a \$5

decal at the Route 40 bridge that will last the entire year and you can take Route 40 every time you go to the outlets, even though I-95 may be more efficient.

I'm getting tired just thinking about it. And the \$5 toll or decal just doesn't seem worth it.

I don't shop too often at the outlets, but now that I know what's up there - or what isn't up there - I have even less of a reason to go.

I hope the new management brings some popular stores to the outlets that will not only attract customers, but also offer bargains.

For now, going to the outlets is an expensive hassle and, with very few stores to entice shoppers, it's no wonder the Perryville Outlet Center is a ghost town.