

IN SEASON



ILLUSTRATION BY PHIL BLANK

Changing times for coffee achievers

BY MARGOT C. LESTER
Staff Writer

At the end of last month, global coffee conglomerate Starbucks announced it was cutting 6,700 employees, closing stores and slowing expansion plans in the wake of big declines in revenue. One factor cited in the announcement was customers' changing buying patterns.

During its first round of closings in July, Starbucks shuttered the store at 141 Chatham Downs in north Chatham County. Right now, there's no indication any other local stores are on the chopping block.

It seems fair enough that people who had been spending \$5 or more on a fancy cup of joe (half-caf, skinny, soy latte or whatever) might decide they could do without the extra foam in order to save a few precious pennies. But what about local coffee drinkers of a

more independent ilk? Are they cutting back?

"Spending trends do vary," admits Scott Conary, owner of the Open Eye, Caffè Triade and Carrboro Coffee Company. "People say, 'I'll cut that out,' but it doesn't last. Our customers realize coffee's an affordable luxury. What we do see that's a positive overall is people being more careful to spend money on good coffee and in the day-to-day making of it," he says.

So instead of shelling out \$3.50 for a latte, customers may be opting for a \$1.25 espresso. Conary says sales of whole beans are up slightly, too, indicating that more people may be pulling a jolt of joe at home more often than they used to.

What does Conary make of Starbucks' announcement?

"It's sort of hand waving and hoping to get a market response," he says. "They're paying attention to Wall Street, so the things they



PHOTO BY AVA BARLOW

Chapel Hill resident Michele Natale enjoys a double latte at her favorite coffee shop, Caffè Triade, located off East Franklin Street.

aren't the real issues. For instance, what their CEO is willing to give up in salary isn't enough money to make a difference to their company. But as we've seen recently, Wall Street works on whim and ideas, not reality."

Conary thinks the bigger problem facing Starbucks is that the company did what it set out to do, get more people drinking more fancy coffee.

"The introduction to coffee is probably what Starbucks does best," Conary says. "Now people are moving on. There's been a shift in how people view coffee and what it can and should be."

That's good news for shops

like Conary's that focus on educating coffee consumers on quality, sourcing sustainably produced beans from fairly compensated growers and providing more than just a good cup of java. People are connecting with the coffee in a more personal way, prompting many to eschew cookie-cutter corporate outlets serving frilly joe. That's probably causing Starbucks to have a little bit of an identity crisis.

"Who're they going to be now?," Conary asks. "They're cutting out decaf after 12 p.m. and introducing oatmeal. They're trying a little bit of everything at this point."

FARMERS' MARKET



What's at Market?

Check out what's at the Year-Round Farmers' Market:

Lettuce, tomatoes, pac choy, flour, onions, garlic, arugula, beets, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, fresh herbs, kale, leeks, mustard greens, salad greens, spinach, sweet potatoes, turnips, turnip greens, winter squashes, pecans, NEW chicken-sausage, maple sausage, smoked ham, smoked ham hocks, liverwurst, lamb, bacon, chicken, eggs, cow's milk cheeses, breads, doughnuts, tortes, pies, cakes, jams, and relishes.

Recipe of the Week

Tuscan Kale with Raisins and Pine Nuts - serves 8

Recipe Provided by Sheri Castle

- 3 bunches (about 2 1/2 pounds) Tuscan kale (a.k.a. Cavolo Nero, Lacinato, or Dinosaur kale)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 small yellow onions, peeled and minced
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 4 tablespoons raisins, plumped in hot water and drained
- 4 tablespoons pignoli (pine nuts), toasted
- Salt and pepper

1. Remove and discard the stems and center ribs from the kale and shred leaves. Working in batches, blanch the kale in a large pot of boiling salted water for 2 minutes per batch. Transfer the blanched kale with tongs to a colander and drain well, pressing out as much water as possible.
2. Warm the olive oil in a large, heavy skillet over medium-high heat.
3. Add the onions and cook, stirring often, until tender, about 8 minutes.
4. Add the kale, vinegar, raisins and pine nuts and warm through.
5. Season with salt and pepper.
6. Serve warm or at room temperature.

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HELP WANTED

INSTRUCTORS NEEDED Carrboro Recreation is looking for an experienced baseball instructor to work with 4-6 year olds and parents one day a week on Saturdays from 9-10am April 18-May 16. Pay is \$450. Call 918-7376 for info.

CAMP INSTRUCTORS NEEDED

Carrboro Recreation and Parks Department is seeking experienced sport instructors to work the following half day camps. Pay is \$420 (head instructor) and \$360 (assistant instructor). All camps run from 8am-11am.
Field Hockey, July 13-17 (Asst)
Field Hockey, June 29-July 3 (Asst)
Taste of Sports, July 27-31 (Head & Asst)
Ultimate Frisbee, June 22-26 (Head & Asst)
Volleyball, July 20-24 (Head & Asst)
For more info call 918-7376.

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Learn how to: dig potatoes, pick peas, pull carrots and make lunch. Spend time with the ponies Buddy, Lulu and Romeo; feed, groom and ride them. Explore fields, woods and streams at Finnabar Farm Nature Camp. Open house Saturdays in March and April. (919) 929-6009 or greenponygarden.com for info.

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CRYPTOQUOTE ANSWER:

Love never loses sight of loneliness. Its halo rests upon its object. One marvels that a friend can ever seem less than beautiful. - Mary Baker Eddy

WORLD GEOGRAPHY

1. The east coast of Italy borders on what body of water?
2. When Germany was divided, what was the capital of West Germany?
3. In what country is the city Casablanca located?
4. What mountain range runs between France and Spain?
5. What is the capital of Turkey?
6. What country is plagued by ethnic conflict between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils?
7. In what African country is the city Timbuktu located?
8. The Galapagos Islands belong to what county?
9. What three countries are known as the Baltic states?
10. What is the name of the body of water between Alaska and Siberia?
11. What is the capital of Scotland?
12. In what Canadian province is Edmonton located?
13. The Golan Heights lie on the border between Israel and what other country?

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