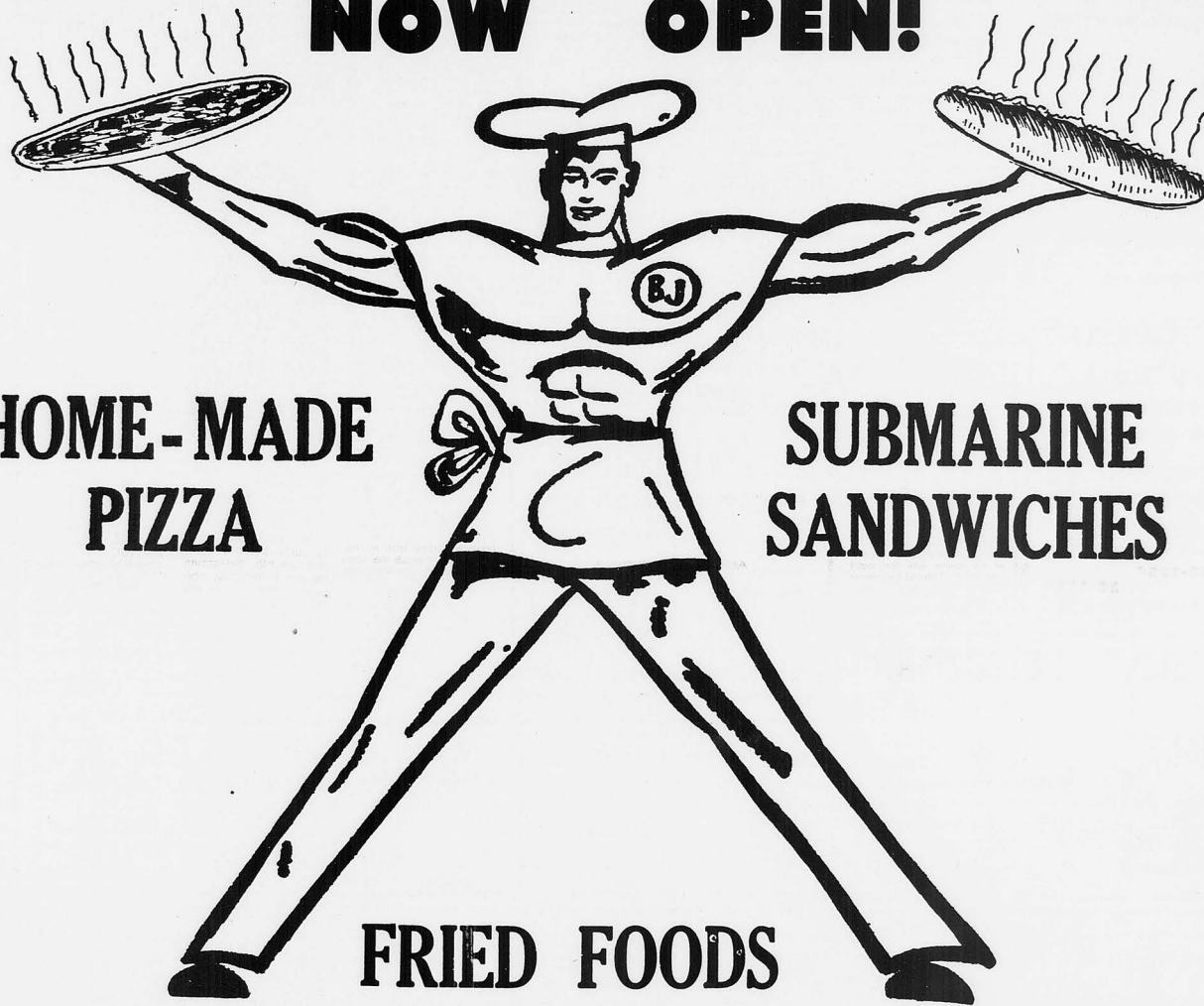


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FRIED FOODS

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Chelmsford Center

To the people of Chelmsford,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every person in Chelmsford who was instrumental in giving me an opportunity to open my Sandwich Shop. I will do everything in my power to be an asset to Chelmsford.

Thank you, Big Joe

Joe LaCreta — Myth, Legend or Reality?

by Ann Marie Kierce

CHELMSFORD — Myth, legend or reality? There is no myth about Joe LaCreta and he has not lived long enough to be a legend, though he well may be some day. Joe is a very real person whose accomplishments in life are a result of his motto "Work hard for something and it is yours."

Joe started working toward his goal 11 years ago when a friend came to him upset with the long hours he had to spend operating a restaurant he had opened six months previously. This friend asked Joe to buy him out. Joe had just finished four years as a marine in the Korean War and this seemed like a suitable place to begin his business career.

Until this time Joe had not found himself. He had attended the Wilmington Schools, joined the marines and upon discharge, became a police officer. While serving in the Police Dept. days, Joe went to Portia School of Law evenings.

Law is a good background for many fields but it was not the profession he felt he would like to pursue. Joe had been keeping his eyes open for just such an investment as his friend now offered.

Getting started was no easy matter. He tried all the local banks, etc., only to find he had not yet built up sufficient credit references. Joe was driven by the desire to be able to raise this money. He swallowed his pride and asked a few friends to assist him. Joe had been a good friend and now his real credit references paid off and money was loaned for a down payment.

Joe found the previous owner know what he was saying when he spoke about long hours. Joe himself was now working 18 to 20 hours a day. Today he feels that in his 11 years of owning businesses he has worked an equivalent of 30 years in work hours.

Being from a large Italian family, Joe called upon all the secrets of cooking that his

mother and father had taught him and as a result, this first sandwich shop in Wilmington

led to ten more such shops. The latest shop is located in Central Square, Chelmsford, and holds



MODELING for an advertising agency, Talent Unlimited, is another one of Joe LaCeta's "Side Interests." Joe has appeared in several local television commercials.

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Complete line of custom made drapes and slipcovers.

PARKING AT OUR FRONT DOOR

Joe's trademark, "Big Joe."

Joe LaCreta is proud of the fact that all of the cooking is done by his organization and none is "imported," so to speak. He does all the shopping himself. Joe's brother Conrad joined the organization three months ago and hopes to be able to give Joe a little free time.

To most men this would be enough. Not to Joe, for he is also a professional wrestler. The business has not allowed him to wrestle for five months but the excitement of the crowd and the test of physical ability keeps the desire in Joe's mind to go back to wrestling soon.

This man is not finished yet. While doing exercises on the "Captain Boston" show for children he met Rosemary Van Camp who asked Joe if he had considered professional modeling. Arrangements were made for appointments and a composite of Joe.

Making the first break through was not easy, claims Joe. He visited 20 agencies before Talented Unlimited finally accepted him as a client. Now he is one of their greatest assets. You may recognize Joe LaCreta as the fellow in Caines Mayonnaise and Carling Beer ads, to name but a few. If you haven't as yet had this pleasure, watch for the Consolidated Gas Company Commercial which will be released to T.V. in the near future. Joe will be featured in this commercial.

"Work hard for something and it is yours." Joe's ambition is to build enough shops that he may someday "go public." "Big Joe" would then be similar to Howard Johnson's, or a similar chain.

Who is it that Joe is working for? Joe's answer is his family. He states he lives for his family and wants the very best for them. The LaCreta family consists of his wife, the former Geraldine Gardner and two children, Joey 5 and Geraldine 4.

Joe speaks of Gerry as a fantastic person. She keeps his books, makes a home for the family and helps in the restaurants. "She is the best thing that ever happened to me," said Joe. "We've been married ten years and are closer today than we have ever been."

It is not all work and no play. Joe plays six different instruments and at one time had his own band. Guests at the LaCreta's home are the only ones who share this ability of Joe's for he does not play professionally any more.

If you do not speak English, chances are Joe may still be able to converse with you, for in addition to English, he also speaks Italian, French, Spanish and Arabic.

Joe has drive, ambition and a goal. What is most important, he has loved ones that makes meeting this goal a must. Joe LaCreta has so many things he wants to do. He feels if he works hard, he will succeed.



Town Hall and Big Joe's Sandwich Shop during the July 4, 1976, American Bicentennial parade
Kodachrome Slide by Fred Merriam