

Kydd's

FRIED CLAMS

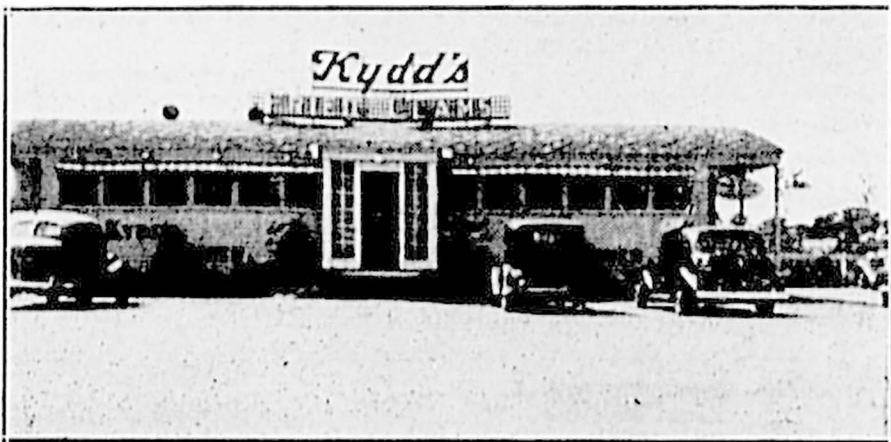
*South
of
the
island*
**KYDD'S
DINER**
*Specialty
Happy
Hours
Daily*

*Specialty
Happy
Hours
Daily*
**KYDD'S
DINER**
*South
of
the
island*

Skip's Diner Timeline

- 1934** - John Kydd purchased land on Chelmsford Street from Ted Emerson
- 1938** – Based on success of Kydd's Ice Cream Stand selling coffee, hot dogs, and sandwiches, a "lunch car" was purchased and placed on the property to the left of the stand. Although not confirmed, it was likely built by the Worcester Lunch Car Company that operated there from 1902 to 1957.
- Feb 1939** – David "Bert" Kydd opened for business as Kydd's Diner
- Jun 1941** – A second lunch car was purchased and spliced onto the left end of the existing diner providing 20 additional booths
- Dec 1946** – Gefteas Diner, Inc. was incorporated in Massachusetts on Dec 13
- Jan 1947** – John and Margaret Kydd sell the Kydd's Diner property to Gefteas Diner, Inc. with Peter Gefteas as president and Stephen Mpourles as treasurer. Note: Stephen changed his last name to Burliss
- Oct 1947** - Ted Emerson sold additional land to Gefteas Diner, Inc.
- Dec 1948** – Kydd's Diner was Renamed Skip's Diner after 4-year-old Charles "Skipper" Burliss
- Jul 1952** – Air conditioning is advertised in the diner for the first time
- Nov 1952** - Ted Emerson sold additional land to Gefteas Diner, Inc.
- Winter 1952-53** – The lunch car diners were demolished and replaced with a brick structure. (This timing is not confirmed yet, but was inferred from surrounding events)
- Jun 1953** – A pastry department was added, and Skip's pies became known far and wide
- Nov 1954** – Drive-up window service was added
- Jan 1956** – The name of Gefteas Diner, Inc. was legally changed to Skip's Diner, Inc. on January 12
- Dec 1956** – The B and G Realty Trust is declared on December 31st to hold, acquire, or improve both real and personal property. The Trustees under this agreement are Stephen C. Burliss, Fred L. Gefteas, and Peter L. Gefteas Note: Stephen's wife Ruby (Gefteas) lived in the same household as her first cousins Fred L. and Peter Gefteas from the 1920s onward
- Aug 1958** – The name of Skip's Diner, Inc was legally changed to Skip's, Inc. on August 15
- Jun 1963** – Charles "Skipper" Burliss tragically died at age 19 on June 9
- Oct 1975** – Skip's Restaurant advertised that they specialized in Roast Beef and Fresh Fish
- Oct 1983** – Skip's Family Restaurant advertised that they specialized in Steaks, Fresh Seafood, Hickory Smoked Barbequed Chicken, and Spareribs
- Dec 1988** – On January 1st Integrity Foods LTD acquired the business and restaurant equipment of Skip's Restaurant. Later that day Stephen Burliss died from an extended illness, and brother-in-law George Gefteas died two days later at Lowell General
- Jan 1989** - Integrity Foods partner Joe DiTillio owned several Burger King restaurants in Lowell, and rumors swirled that Skip's would become a Burger King. This rumor was put to rest, and assurances made that Skip's would continue unchanged
- May 1991** – The Board of Health shut down Skip's Restaurant based on several equipment violations plus failure to connect to the town sewer. Joe DiTillio decided not to re-open due to the cost of repairs and was evicted
- Oct 1991** - Fred G. Gefteas, as president of Skip's, Inc. And George Burliss, as treasurer, lease the business as S.O.N.S. Enterprises, Inc. They completed the needed repairs with loans from Enterprise Bank and reopened Skip's Restaurant on October 15, offering the same traditional family fare
- Spring 2008** – George Burliss and Fred G. Gefteas decide to retire from the restaurant business
- Sep 2008** - The last meal is served at Skip's
- Oct 2008** – Skip's Inc. sells the property to Ryan Development LLC on October 15
- Dec 2008** – Skip's Restaurant is demolished during Christmas week

You're Sure to Enjoy. . .



—the pleasant inviting atmosphere of Kydd's Diner—so restful
—so conducive to sparkling conversation, to vigorous appetite.
And the food—well, ask anyone who has dined at Kydd's!

*We Feature Nourishing and
Delicious Home Cooking*

KYDD'S DINER

Lowell Road

Chelmsford Centre



DAVID "BERT" KYDD

Best Of Food And Service At Kydd's

It is not a very difficult task to venture into the restaurant business but to establish a diner with a slogan, the "best of food and service" which is familiar to every one that dines at Kydd's and to stand by it for two years until your patrons exceed your seating capacity—You must enlarge your quarters. And that is just what David "Bert" Kydd of Kydd's Diner on Chelmsford st. is doing.

A new addition of 30 booths which is separate from the diner is almost complete. Its booths etc. is the latest in restaurant equipment and it is practically all electric. This new addition which will now seat 130 and will be open for special parties and occasions at the earlier part of next week. You can obtain the best of steaks, chickens, sea foods, sandwiches of all kinds, anything from a "full course dinner to a hot dog", at Kydd's.

David Kydd is the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Kydd and was born on July 15, 1908 on Chestnut St., Lowell, Mass. Before stepping into the restaurant business, at the age of 15 he went into the milk business with his father and brother Douglas, better known as J. Kydd & Sons, and was in it for 18 years. He then moved to Chelmsford and opened an ice cream stand which is now in its 6th year. In February, 1939 he opened Kydd's Diner.

You can purchase any of 42 flavors as well as sodas, milk shakes, orange, buttermilk, milk, cream and decorated cakes for any occasion at Kydd's ice cream stand located next to the diner and new addition.

David Kydd lives on Warren Ave. in Chelmsford where he has lived for the last four years with

(Continued On Page Four)

"Bert" Kydd

Continued from Page 1

his wife and two boys Melcon and David who attends the McFarlin school in Chelmsford. As a hobby, Mr. Kydd has turned to golf at times, as well as ice fishing, hunting and bowling. He is a member of the South Chelmsford Gunner and Rod Club. His greatest hazard in golf was the 19th hole.

Mr. Kydd has 50 people on his payroll including the diner, milk routes, ice cream stand and the new addition. Frank Chase is the night chef and George Mulusia is the day chef. Other capable assistants are Frank O'Mally, Olive Collins, Dorothy Russell, Myra McArdle, Daniel O'Connor and Raymond Richard.

Kydd's is famous for its frequent visits of celebrities as, movie stars Cab Callaway, Rudy Vallee, who stopped in on his way to Maine Bruce Cabot, Kitty Carlisle and her secretary, Jimmy Walsh and many other movie stars who pass through Chelmsford in the summer, dine at Kydd's where the food and service is the "Best."

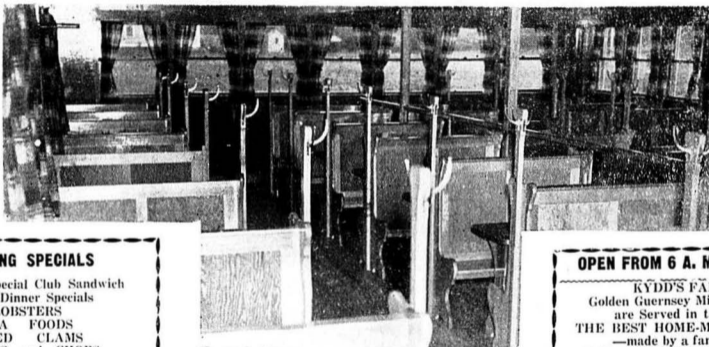
REMOVABLE
BOOTHES WITH
FLOOR SPACE
TO DANCE

Kydd's *Invites Your Inspection* Kydd's

OF THEIR NEW DINING ROOM

IDEAL
FOR STAGS
SHOWERS
PRIVATE
PARTIES
21 Permanent
Employees
To Serve You

This big, colored diner on KYDD'S familiar Chelmsford street location is entirely new...entirely modern. Beautifully decorated and lighted and with spacious comfortable booths, KYDD'S DINER offers you everything to make your lunch or dinner truly enjoyable.



To accommodate the steadily increasing business which has resulted from our policy of serving the finest foods, expertly cooked and reasonably priced KYDD'S has again been obliged to build an addition to its present diner.

OPENING SPECIALS

KYDD'S Special Club Sandwich
Daily Dinner Specials
LOBSTERS
SEA FOODS
FRIED CLAMS
STEAKS and CHOPS

KYDD'S BANANA ROYAL
ALL KINDS OF SUNDAES
Plenty of Parking Space

Berger Paper Company
Lawrence, Mass.
Lowell Fruit Company

INTERIOR VIEW OF KYDD'S NEW DINING ROOM

The Following Business Houses Extend Their
Best Wishes to KYDD'S and Hope for Conti-
nued Success to All the KYDD Enterprises.

Boston Fish Market
Lowell
Schulers Potato Chips

OPEN FROM 6 A. M. TO 2 A. M.

KYDD'S FAMOUS
Golden Guernsey Milk and Cream
are Served in the Diner
THE BEST HOME-MADE PASTRY
—made by a famous cook
Drive to KYDD'S Tonight!

Visit KYDD'S DINER for a sandwich or a dinner...
or stop at KYDD'S famous Ice Cream Stand for some
of that delicious home-made Guernsey Ice Cream.

KYDD'S Home-Made
Golden Guernsey Ice Cream

Compliments of a Friend
Radio Foods

SPECIALIZING IN THE FINEST FOODS COOKED AS YOU LIKE THEM!

Welcome Home VETERANS



BEST WISHES

from

Kydd's Diner

When better meals are served KYDD'S
will serve them.

— WE SERVE THE BEST —

Chelmsford St.

Chelmsford Center

SKIP'S

(FORMERLY KYDD'S)

Chelmsford St.

Chelmsford Center



When a new name was needed to replace the old name of Kydd's Diner it was unanimous that the name be SKIP'S. We will continue to serve the best meals in town in the future as we have in the past.

STEVE & FRED
Proprietors

Skip's

The Place To Go For Your
**THANKSGIVING
DINNER**
SPACIOUS DINING ROOM



SKIP'S DINER LOCATED 4 MILES SOUTH OF DOWNTOWN LOWELL,
IN CHELMSFORD — ON ROUTE 110

DRIVE OUT AND BRING THE FAMILY

• **MENU**

ENTREE:

CHOICE OF

TOMATO JUICE CREAM OF TURKEY SOUP GRAPEFRUIT JUICE FRUIT COCKTAIL

MAIN COURSE:

CHOICE OF

ROAST STUFFED VERMONT TURKEY with Chestnut Stuffing
½ SOUTHERN FRIED NATIVE CHICKEN with Cranberry Sauce
MINUTE SIRLOIN STEAK

• **CHOICE OF TWO VEGETABLES**

WHIPPED POTATOES CANDIED SWEET POTATOES FRENCH FRIED POTATOES
MASHED FRESH SQUASH GREEN PEAS WAX BEANS CREAMED CORN
HOT ROLLS and BUTTER MILK, TEA or COFFEE

DESSERT:

CHOICE OF PIES

APPLE, SQUASH, CUSTARD, MINCE, CHERRY, LEMON, PINEAPPLE
BANANA CREAM, CHOCOLATE CREAM
PLUM PUDDING with CLARET SAUCE ASSORTED NUTS OR MINTS

ABOVE DINNER \$2.00
CHILD'S DINNER ½ PRICE

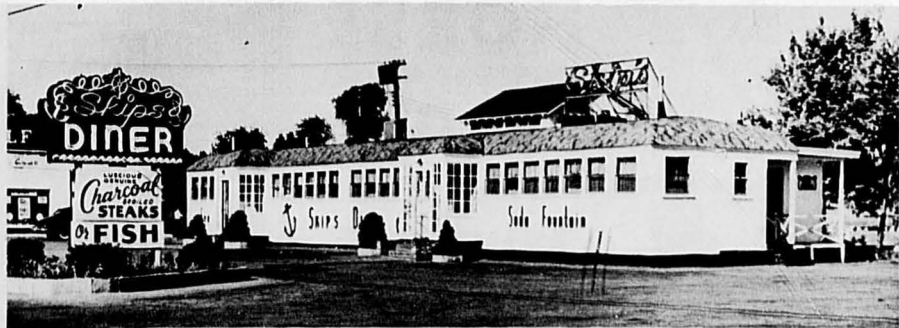


NOW YOU CAN ALL

KEEP

COOL!

at the Coolest Restaurant In Town



The management of Skip's takes pride in announcing an added service to the residents of Chelmsford and the surrounding area. We have now installed an Air Condition system which will make it more comfortable for you as you partake of our food of which we are so proud. We realize that even though we prepare the best possible food that isn't enough because a person must be comfortable in order to enjoy a meal no matter how good it may be. Our quality of food is guaranteed whether it be a sandwich, light lunch, or a dinner. Above everything else we insist that service rendered be of top quality. We wish at this time to express our appreciation to you all for your patronage in the past and we promise that we will continue the same service, food and comfort to you in the future.



Luscious Genuine
Charcoal Steaks
OR FISH

20% COOLER

HOME MADE PASTRIES

BAKED DAILY AT SKIPS DINER

The management of Skips Diner, at the request of its' many customers, have opened a Pastry Dept. at Skips Diner for customers who want to take home some of our famous pastries.

ROLLS - SEVERAL TYPES

ASSORTED MUFFINS

DANISH PASTRIES

PIES - CAKES - COOKIES

WEDDING CAKES --- BIRTHDAY CAKES



Skips

OPEN MONDAY TO THURSDAY

6:30 A.M. to 1:00 A.M.

OPEN FRIDAY AND SATURDAY

6:30 A.M. to 2:00 A.M.

Chelmsford Street,
Chelmsford Center

DRIVE-IN WINDOW SERVICE

Telephone
GL 3 0931

YOUR ORDER
will be
ready
when
you
arrive



WE NOW MAKE
OUR OWN
**hand cut
Home Made
DOUGHNUTS**

WRAPPED IN
CELLOPHANE BAGS

28¢ 1/2 Dozen

Individually
Wrapped in
Foil-Lined Bags
STAYS HOT!!!
'Till You Get Them Home

BAR-B-QUED CHICKENS



TO Delight YOUR TASTE...

WHOLE
BAR-B-QUED
NATIVE
CHICKEN

SKIP'S

CHELMSFORD STREET - CHELMSFORD

OPEN 6:30 A.M. TO 1:00 P.M. - FRIDAY AND SATURDAY 2:00 A.M.

We are Now Taking Orders For Homemade Pies

CUSTARD - SQUASH - MINCE - PUMPKIN

Two Crust Pies Family Size serves 8-10 95¢ plus deposit

Soft Pies Family Size serves 8-10 \$1.25 plus deposit

EXTRA

**Bar-B-Que
Sauce** 1/2 Pt. .25¢

French Fries
Med. 30¢ Large 55¢


Cole Slaw
Med. 15¢ Large 25¢

\$1.89

Why bother
To Cook

Ideal For Thanksgiving

Skip's



Route 110
Chelmsford

IF YOU ARE DINING AT HOME...
Treat the Family to a Famous
REAL HOME-MADE SKIP'S PIE



Assorted Large Pies.....	\$1.25
Custards or Squash Pies.....	\$1.40
Cream Pies.....	\$2.50

(made with pure 40% heavy cream)

PLUS 15c DEPOSIT — RETURNABLE
These Are Large Family Size Pies

PLEASE ORDER EARLY

Skip's Coffee Shop, Chelmsford Historical Society postcard 2021.10.2032



COFFEE SHOP



SKIP'S RESTAURANT

WISHES TO ALL

A Glowing Christmas

This is our wish for you as once again we come to the Season when we re-affirm the hope of Peace and Good Will among all men.

Our thanks to you for your past favors and our wish that this be the brightest Christmas ever.

merry christmas

116 Chelmsford Street
Chelmsford, Mass.
Ample Free Parking

Telephone
256-2631

Skip's Town Room, Chelmsford Historical Society postcard 2021.10.2032



TOWN ROOM

for a rare treat-visit

"The Embers" at Skip's

A Friendly Place to Meet Your Friends
For a cocktail, a snack, or a meal

SPECIALIZING IN

Shrimps - Lobsters - Steaks - Chops

Same Moderate Prices

Superb Facilities For
Engagement Parties - Bachelor Dinners
Ideal Surroundings For
Dinner Meetings ● Business Get-Togethers
Incomparable Atmosphere For
Birthday Parties ● Wedding Anniversaries
The Perfect Setting For
Office Parties ● Cocktail Gatherings
Air Conditioned For Your Comfort

SKIP'S RESTAURANT

116 Chelmsford St.
Chelmsford
Ample Free Parking

TEL.
256-2631

The Embers Lounge, Chelmsford Historical Society postcard 2021.10.2032



EMBERS LOUNGE

Skip's Restaurant remains unchanged

New owners: rumors of Burger King are untrue

By Ann Britton

Assistant Editor

Contrary to rumors, Skip's Restaurant, a long-standing Chelmsford Street landmark, will not be turned into a fast-food franchise, according to the attorney for the new owners.

Principals of Integrity Foods, LTD, the new owners of Skips, at least for now have no plans to change the restaurant into a Burger King, attorney Joseph B. Shanahan, Jr. told Selectmen Monday. His statement was made in response to Selectman Bradford O. Emerson's inquiry of rumors circulating about the fate of the landmark, which was sold to Integrity Dec. 1.

Skip's present menu and restaurant personnel will "stay pretty much the same," Shanahan said during a public hearing for transferral of the liquor license. "My clients have a great deal of respect for the clientel."

The building, land and restaurant equipment was purchased from former co-owners Steve Burliss and George Geftas, both of whom passed away within three days of signing the agreement in December. Rumors of a Chelmsford Street Burger King surfaced from Integrity partner Jack DiTillio's background with the Burger King Corporation and ownership of two Burger King restaurants on Bridge Street in Lowell and the on Merrimack Street downtown.

DiTillio, 36, of 25 Surrey Lane, Dracut, worked for Burger King while attending high school. He entered the company's Management Training Program and worked his way through the management ranks from assistant manager to area manager for all Burger King restaurants in New England, New York and Pennsylvania, according to his resume. He purchased the Bridge Street restaurant in 1983, and opened the Merrimack Street Burger King on May 6, 1987.

His Integrity partner, Gary K. Baker of 14 Queens Circle, Sharon, is sole proprietor of Gary K. Baker, C.P.A., P.C. of Stoughton and Centerville. He is a graduate of C.W. Post College in Long Island, N.Y.

Peter Victor Carbonaro, a 10 year veteran of Ground Round, Inc., will serve as executive/general manager of Skips.

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Staff photo by Marc Holland

SKIP'S RESTAURANT, a longtime landmark on Chelmsford Street.



SKIP'S RESTAURANT

A Chelmsford tradition for over 40 years, Skip's is now open under new ownership and management. Jack DiTillio and the entire team at Skip's would like to welcome you back for a family dining experience. We have all of your favorites as well as some new items. Skip's is the perfect place for your next party, meeting or function and our entire menu is available for take-out. Restaurant & Lounge now open 7 days 'till midnight. **256-2631**



Staff photo

The owner of Skip's, a 40-year dining spot on Route 110, says the restaurant will remain closed until renovated by a new owner.

Skip's calls it a day

After health board shutdown, 40-year diner landmark closes

By Rick Lombardi
Staff Writer

Teary-eyed employees of Skip's Restaurant sat quietly as they watched the Board of Health eliminate their jobs.

The board actually upheld an order to keep Skip's closed until necessary work was done to correct health violations. But owner John DiTillio said that work would not be done, thus ending a 40-year tradition in Chelmsford.

But there is a glimmer of hope for the 40 full- and part-time workers.

DiTillio says he is finalizing a deal with a major New England restaurant chain which could reopen Skip's and pump in about \$400,000 in renovations.

Skip's was closed April 19 for various health violations ranging from failure to enclose a grease pit outside the building to fixing seals around refrigeration units.

None of the violations involved the quality or preparation of food.

Skip's was closed down last Wednesday afternoon after a spot inspection by health inspector Richard Day.

Day listed several violations of the health code, most of which dealt with the restaurant's physical shape.

DiTillio reopened the restaurant last Thursday for a few hours after he said he was told by Day that sufficient work had been done in the previous 12 hours to rectify the situation.

Day said he would have to get approval from the Board of Health to allow Skip's to reopen permanently.

However, Day said his recommendation to keep the doors open was overruled by the board members, and he informed DiTillio to close shop again.

At Tuesday night's meeting, which

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Skip's diner plans to call it a day

SKIPS-FROM PAGE 1

was requested by Skip's, Day explained how he had visited the restaurant in February at the request of the board. At that time, Day outlined several violations including ill-working refrigeration systems, unclean work and storage areas, leaks in the roof, walls and floor in disrepair, and a broken temperature gauge on the dishwasher.

Day said he gave DiTillio 60 days to fix the problems.

Last week, Day said he closed the restaurant because the owner had only achieved one of three steps — which was to give the restaurant a good cleaning.

Repair of the refrigeration and of the walls, ceiling and floors was not done.

DiTillio said he would not remodel the restaurant because the new owners would come in and put \$400,000 worth of renovations in anyway.

The owner also said he thought

he had reached a compromise with Day to let him reopen the restaurant until the new buyer took over.

Board member Dr. Paul Canniff said he was "flabbergasted" that the restaurant had waited until the deadline to begin fixing some of the work.

"Without drastic action, nothing was going to be done about the violations," he said.

Board member Mark Gauthier said there was a "pattern of inactivity to repair blatant violations. Only when we turned the heat up pretty high, everybody got busy all of the sudden."

DiTillio said some issues were resolved and he thought he had worked out a compromise with Day to keep the restaurant open.

He said some of the repairs were too costly because the restaurant was too old.

DiTillio said he was "surprised and astounded" by the board's actions. "It was an incredible change of direction."

The board also reminded DiTillio

that he had been ordered a year ago to tie into the new sewer line on Chelmsford Street and gave him until April 30 to do so. No work has been done on the line, the board said.

DiTillio said he would need \$30,000 to \$40,000 to bring the restaurant up to the board's standards, but "that money is just not there to do it."

DiTillio, president of Integrity Foods Ltd., the corporation that owns Skip's, bought the restaurant two years ago. He had been a franchise owner of Burger King.

He said he bought Skip's for long-term investment, but the crumbling economy forced him to make the decision to sell. Since the restaurant was closed, he said he has lost \$20,000 in revenues.

The hearing was packed by now-former Skip's employees, some of whom wept after realizing that their jobs were eliminated.

Peter Hanscom of North Chelmsford, a 17-year employee, said he'll "play golf" for a while and wait to see what happens.

Reopened Skip's to keep it in family

By Sandi Copeland
Staff Writer

Perhaps it is out of a sense of nostalgia, or maybe blood does run thicker than water. No matter how you call it, the situation at Skip's Diner is definitely a family affair.

Last week, S.O.N.S. Enterprises, Inc., the newly-formed corporation of George Burless and Fred Gefteas Jr., filed restaurant and liquor applications to reopen their forefathers' establishment on Chelmsford Street, according to their attorney, Joseph Shanahan. A public hearing for the restaurant permit is scheduled for Sept. 16.

Burless and Gefteas are the sons of Fred Gefteas Sr. and Stephen Burless, who ran the restaurant along with Peter Gefteas for 40 years. Shanahan said the boys grew up and worked in the restaurant for nearly 20 years. They are cleaning up the place now in preparation for an October opening if the permits are granted.

"Their hope is to open up and give the same

good food and the same good service their family did for 40 years," he said.

They plan to keep the establishment a traditional, family restaurant with a pot roast and mashed potato menu. Patrons will be able to enjoy breakfast, lunch or dinner at the old fountain counter, as they have for nearly half a century.

Both men remained in the food service business when they left Skip's Diner. Burless, 39, of Dunstable, was working as a food service manager for Corporate Chef's in Haverhill. Gefteas, 41, of Sudbury was employed by J.P. Food Service in Everett.

They are leasing the building from Skips, Inc. which owns the land, restaurant, equipment and the ice cream parlor next door. Enterprise Bank & Trust is helping to finance the renovations, Shanahan said.

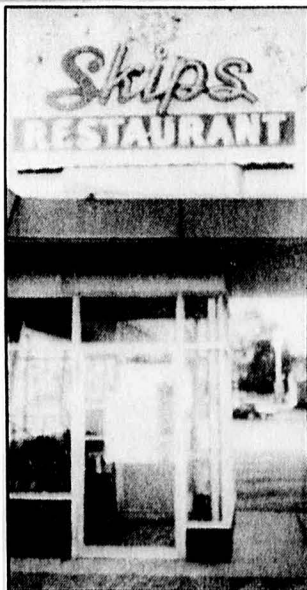
"I think its going to be good for the town. They have had the business in town for almost half a century. Anytime you have a business coming in to hire people and pay taxes, it has to be good," he said.

Shanahan admitted the sons may have a negative stigma to overcome due to the problems of the former leasees. The restaurant was closed down last spring by the Board of Health after being cited for health violations.

In 1989, Shanahan said the elders of the two families retired and leased the building to John DiTillio of Integrity Foods, Inc. DiTillio ran into financial problems, and then ran into trouble with the health board. The lease was terminated and the company left town.

The elders didn't want to go back into the business so the sons decided to reopen the family business, Shanahan said. Since most of the people who are familiar with Skip's Diner are familiar with the family, Shanahan said he doesn't think they will have trouble overcoming the reputation of the previous leasees.

Because the family has a 40-year track record in town and the "boys" have 20 years invested in the restaurant, Shanahan said the public will be less influenced by the period when the business was out of the family.



The familiar neon sign atop Skip's Restaurant on Chelmsford Street will be lit again soon.

Skip's cooks up same menu for reopening

By Independent Staff

Selectmen gave the green light Monday night to a proposal to reopen Skip's restaurant on Chelmsford Street.

The restaurant's two managers applied to the board for four different items: a common victualer's license, an alcoholic beverage license, a weekday and Sunday entertainment license, and permission to use stock in their company, S.O.N.S. Inc., as collateral in borrowing money.

Selectmen voted unanimously to grant all four requests. Selectman William Logan, who is general manager of the Courthouse, which includes restaurant and bar, left the room during the hearing and abstained from the vote.

Skip's will be run by S.O.N.S. En-

terprises Inc., the newly-formed corporation of George Burliss and Fred Gefteas Jr., the sons of the Fred Stephen Burliss and Fred Gefteas Sr., who ran the restaurant with Peter Gefteas for 40 years.

The two sons are leasing the restaurant from Skips Inc., which owns the land, restaurant, equipment and the ice cream stand next door. Skips Inc. is owned by the Burliss and Gefteas families, according to Joseph Shanahan, the attorney representing Burliss and Gefteas.

Since 1989, the restaurant had been leased to John DiTillio of Integrity Foods. It was under DiTillio's management that the Board of Health closed Skip's last spring for numerous health violations, said Shanahan. Health Director Richard

SKIP'S, Page 9

Skip's to reopen Oct. 15

■ SKIP'S, From Page 1

Day said the violations ranged from leaky ceilings, holes in the floor, stained walls, and run-down and barely functional freezers, refrigerators and food preparation equipment.

After evicting DiTillio, Shanahan said his clients spent \$50,000 on "very visible" renovations at the restaurant, including a new roof, new refrigeration units, a new floor, and carpentry and finish work on the walls. Shanahan pointed out that the Burliss and Gefteas families had never been cited by the Board of Health while they ran the restaurant.

Before Skip's can open, it must pass a health inspection to receive food service permits and a certificate of occupancy.

If all goes as planned, the restaurant will open on Oct. 15, said Shanahan. Skip's will be open from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Sundays and weekdays, and from 6 a.m. to midnight on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The liquor license will run from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. The former liquor license allowed the lounge to be open until 2 a.m.

Selectmen said they usually delay giving a liquor license to a new restaurant but made an exception in Skip's case.

"A track record of 45 years with the same family, I certainly think, is a lot different than a new applicant coming before us," said Selectman Rhodes Johnson.

Shanahan said Skip's will serve the "traditional family fare" from the old menu, and will also have the same floor plan. The restaurant and lounge, "The Embers" have a total of 300 seats, with 50 in the dining room.

The entertainment license is only for a television at the bar and pre-recorded music in the dining room. Live entertainment is not anticipated. The restaurant and lounge will cater to a "generally mature crowd," said Shanahan.

Shanahan said the Gefteas and Burliss families bought the restaurant and ice cream stand next door from Jack Kidd in 1946, when they were known as Kidd's Diner and Kidd's Ice Cream.

George Burliss and Steve Gefteas Jr. both worked in the restaurant while growing up in Chelmsford, said Shanahan. Both men pursued careers in the food service industry as adults. Burliss, 39, worked as a food service manager for Corporate Chefs in Haverhill, while Gefteas, 41, managed a territory for J.P. Food Service in Everett.

DINING OUT

Skip's is the place to go for American dining at its best

There really should be a plaque on the door of Skip's in Chelmsford. *Restaurant Americanus*, it would read; a designation clear enough for all to get the message that here is an eatery in the classic tradition of the American diner combined with the warmth of the long-established downtown restaurant.

I had despaired of finding another as authentic as the legendary Jad's of Brattleboro, Vermont, yet here it was, just a few yards from Route 495, in our own neighborhood. It has been around since 1947 and, for most of that time, under the ownership of the Burliss and Gef-teas families, who demonstrate that longevity may be a good teacher.

A lunch counter occupies one wing of the building and provides a crisply bright atmosphere for morning coffee gulpers. Equally bright and filled with amply scaled booths, the front of the second wing is a dining room likely to be busy from morning 'til night while the rear is given over to a more subdued and slightly more formal space occupied by bar, lounge and dining tables.

Desserts on display

Sharon and I absorbed all that atmosphere only after tearing our-

selves away from the pastry display which confronted us as we entered. Not one to ignore a mother-lode of calories, Sharon made a quick decision that here, among the tarts, huge cookies, hermits, et al, she would find her chosen dessert. Usually much more resistant to temptation, I could not claim to have been unaffected; it came close to arousing the kid in the candy store syndrome: "I can't decide so I'll take one of everything."

The dining room menu seemed to contain one of everything as well. From sandwiches to a vegetarian plate on the lower end of the price list to filet mignon and a fisherman's platter at the upper end, the menu offered a full spectrum of popular recipes for beef, seafood, chicken and the rest.

Worthy of special note, however, is the added printout of daily specials. It is likely to be filled with examples of comfort food certain to bring back memories of the American Monday night supper — those too often forgotten taste treats made with the leftovers from Sunday dinner. At prices as low as a gnat's knee we found old fashioned beef stew, chicken livers and bacon, baked meatloaf, turkey loaf, escal-

loped hamburger with macaroni and braised lamb egg noodles.

Excellent start

Our dinner began with two excellent soups. My bubbling crock of French onion soup had been prepared in the classic manner: a thin crouton and melted mozzarella over a rich stock complete with plenty of cooked-down onions. Sharon's choice, a tomato macaroni soup, was less familiar but equally tasty. It featured a thicker puree of tomato, enlivened with herbs in subtle balance and complimented by the chewy softness of macaroni. Very good, indeed.

Salad was served, in generous measure, in a deep glass bowl. Fresh and crispy, it held a broad assortment of vegetables enjoyed with a very presentable Thousand Island dressing — one of a number offered.

Entrees a success

Chunks and slices of white meat filled Sharon's entree choice of turkey pie. A down-home turkey gravy provided plenty of moisture and the lot was covered with a thick and golden pastry lid. Mashed potatoes, fluffy and light, were well suited to the dish.

Desserts presented a different sort of problem. How to avoid the temptations of the luscious looking home baked pies we saw passing our booth in favor of the cookies and tarts we had resolved to take with us. As might have been expected, we fared less well than Daniel Webster when tempted by the Devil.

Sharon devoured a huge slice of banana cream pie and I an equally humungous slice of chocolate cream. Each slice brought back memories of the fifties, before calories had been invented, and had us smack-ing our lips over each bite.

Still, we could not exit without packing a bag with a chewy hermit, huge sugar cookie and an innocent soft pastry round, sugar sprinkled, hiding a thin inner layer of fig filling. A flavor to die for and one to consign the traditional fig newton to a museum.

Thus does this simple and straight-forward restaurant qualify to be re-named (with apologies to "Cassablanca") Skip's *Cafe Americaine*, for it is the epitome of what most Americans wish their home town restaurant could become.

— PETER HUXLEY

SKIP'S RESTAURANT

Food: ★ ★ ★

Service: ★ ★ ★

Atmosphere: ★ ★

Fare: American Family

Location: 116 Chelmsford St. Route 110, Chelmsford, (at exit 34 from Route 495)

Telephone: (508) 256-2631

Hours: Sunday through Thursday, 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 6:30 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Parking: Ample lot

Handicapped: Three steps to entry

Smoking: Separate areas

Price range: Inexpensive. Appetizers & soups: \$1 - \$3.50; salads: \$2.95-\$4.95; sandwiches: \$4.55-\$5.95 (lobster roll \$9.95); entrees: \$4.25-\$13.95; desserts: \$.95 - \$2.50;

Credit Cards: All major

Rating system: ★ ★ ★ excellent, ★ ★ very good ★ good, ★ fair, no ★ poor

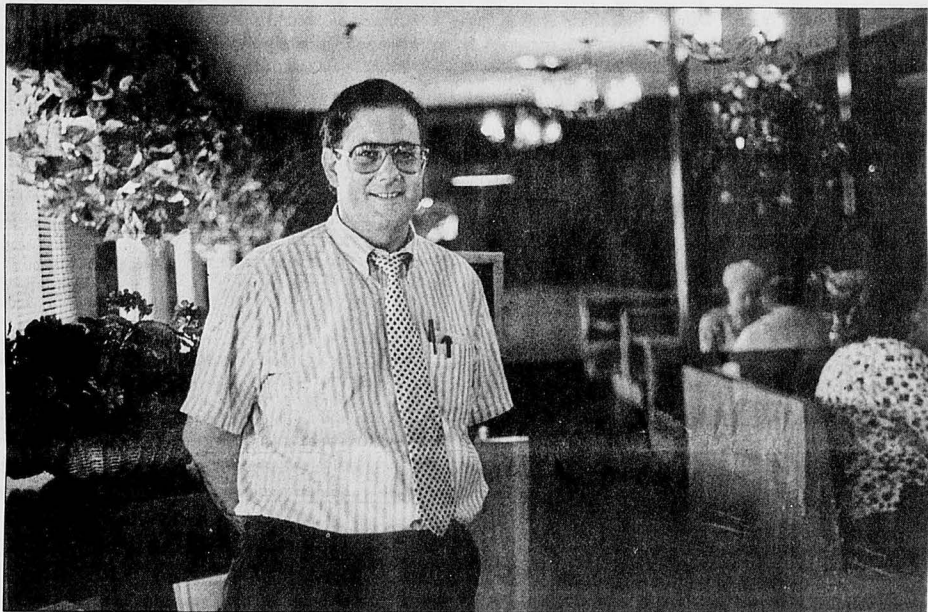
I, on the other hand, enjoyed a different sort of American classic: prime rib *au jus*. The large, thick untrimmed slice was fork tender and could hardly have been more flavorful sitting atop its pool of juices. A good quality steamed rice was just right as a side dish.

My partner and I shared a small order of onion rings along with our entrees. At Skip's they are huge egg battered specimens — large enough to win at a game of ring toss and tasty enough to pair with many din-

ner selections . . . or to enjoy alone for their own sake.

Krista, our super-competent server, looked puzzled when I asked for a wine list. She quickly recovered and offered to have the bartender write down the names of available wines. Obviously Skip's does not pretend to be a fern bar with a leather-bound wine list. Nevertheless, we did enjoy quaffing glasses of the house burgandy and blush wines.

Our just desserts



STAFF PHOTO BY BRENDA DONOGHUE

Fred G. Gefteas, co-owner of Skip's Restaurant on Chelmsford Street, is shown inside the eatery. He said he understands the need for more stringent smoking regulations but wishes they were being applied statewide.

Tobacco regulations draw mixed reactions from local restaurants

By Brenda Donoghue
Staff Writer

Some local restaurant owners and managers are worried Chelmsford's new tobacco regulations will encourage smoking customers to dine in other towns, while others feel the rules are no threat to business.

"I'm afraid the tobacco regulations will put a serious financial damper on us and other small restaurants," said Steven

Kittredge, general manager of Town Meeting Restaurant on Chelmsford Street.

The Board of Health approved new tobacco regulations on July 10 that require special ventilation for restaurants and workplaces where smoking is allowed. The businesses have one year to bring their establishments into compliance.

The new regulations also hold merchants and their employees responsible for

selling cigarettes and other tobacco products to anyone under 18, they outlaw cigarette vending machines and require hotels, motels and inns to reserve at least 75 percent of their rooms as non-smoking areas. These establishments have until October 8 to comply with the regulations.

The Board of Health is the enforcing agent and may issue fines for violations.

See **TOBACCO**, page 14

Tobacco regulations draw mixed reactions

TOBACCO, from page 1

Many restaurant managers and owners said they agree with the purpose of the new regulations regarding air ventilation and non-smoking guidelines, but are concerned about losing customers to other towns where the rules might not be as strict.

Kittredge was more concerned with a 1991 tobacco regulation than with the new rules. That regulation, still in effect, requires restaurants to reserve at least 75 percent of their seats, including lounge seats, as non-smoking areas.

"Right now our lounge seats make up the 25 percent smoking area," Kittredge said. "We get a lot of smoking customers and some have complained about dining in the lounge."

Fred G. Gefteas, co-owner of Skip's Restaurant on Chelmsford Street, said some of his customers have also complained about the smoking section.

"Personally speaking, I don't think anyone should smoke in a public place or while eating because it's annoying," Gefteas said. "But we're in

a business to please our customers — smokers and non-smokers alike."

"We have a tremendous weekend breakfast business and must open the bar for dining since it's most of our smoking section," Gefteas said. "Some people don't want to eat in the bar."

Gefteas said he would feel better if the tobacco regulations were applied statewide so local businesses would not be competing with other towns that have less restrictive regulations.

Augusto Gabriel, restaurant manager for the Radisson Heritage Hotel on Independence Drive, did not know about the new regulations until a *Chelmsford Independent* interview and said if the hotel cannot afford proper ventilation, owners may eliminate the four-table smoking section. That may turn customers away, he said.

However, Kiki Kalogerakos, owner of Evzon Restaurant on Parkhurst Road, said she has never seen a customer get upset about restricted smoking space and has no problem with the tobacco regula-

tion. Bertucci's Restaurant on Littleton Road became smoke-free last year, along with the rest of the restaurant chain.

"I don't think it's hurt business here at all," said general manager Mary Ann Eastman.

A lot of customers want to eat in a smoke-free restaurant, she added, and waiters are happy with the arrangement because they don't have to inhale secondhand smoke.

"I don't think the tobacco regulations will harm restaurant business," said Mark Boldt, assistant director of the Westford-Chelmsford Tobacco Control Program. Boldt drafted the regulations and presented them to the Board of Health for approval.

"Smokers are becoming more and more conditioned to the fact that there are places where they can't smoke," Boldt said. "I think if they're regulars at local restaurants, they won't be inclined to stop going because of these regulations."

Chelmsford Independent , July 17, 1997

Cruise Night

Spindle City Corvettes and Skip's Restaurant and Lounge sponsor Cruise Night every Wednesday through Sept. 10 at Skip's, 116 Chelmsford St. (Route 110). Corvettes, muscle cars, antiques, street rods, special interest. Trophies presented each week.

For information, call Bob at 475-6316 or Mike at 256-2631.

Skip's in 2007, posted on Chelmsford News Facebook Group by Dan Colucci





Staff photo by Ellen Bullock

End of an era

Helen Brasier, who has worked at Skip's for 15 years, serves Judy Comeau and her granddaughter, Hanna, 11, last Friday. After 60 years in business, Skip's closed yesterday. For more on the landmark's last day, check out Wickedlocalchelmsford.com.

Last meal served up at Skip's



The sign was lit one last time Wednesday afternoon during Skip's last day.



Staff photos by Matthew MODOONO

Keize Pires, who worked at Skip's for three years, gives Ralph Simpson a hug on her last day of work Wednesday, the restaurant's final day.

After more than 60 years, landmark shuts its doors

By Kevin Zimmerman
Staff Writer

It took two deeply personal losses for Annie Peterson to find a home.

In a short time, Peterson's husband died and the factory where she had worked for more than two decades was shuttered.

With few options available, she returned to the Chelmsford Street diner where she had spent time waiting tables in her youth.

Last Wednesday, and 30 years after her first return, Peterson came back to Skip's Restaurant for one last lunch during the landmark's final day of business. This past spring, owners George Burliss and Fred Gefteas announced they planned to close the diner and sell the land to a developer. "It's very, very sad because I'm losing



View the
SLIDE SHOW
www.wickedlocalchelmsford.com

my home like the rest of them," said Peterson. "It really was like a home. The people were pleasant; they were like family."

Skip's was always a family spot — operated by the Burliss and Gefteas families for more than 60 years — but regulars who popped in for one last meatloaf dinner or clam strip basket said at Skip's, family transcended bloodlines. "You get to know the waitresses like

family," said Bruce Foucar. "They know what I want before I do."

And while Skip's was a place to avoid his own self-proclaimed lousy cooking, the eatery soon became a place where he caught up on current events, Red Sox games and even a little work for the self-employed electrician.

"People would call here looking for you," said Foucar.

He said it was Skip's unique zigzagging counter — which allowed diners to face each other across open spaces — that helped spark conversations between strangers.

One of those regulars he kept running into at the counter, Diane Gibbons, eventually became his girlfriend.

"A lot of couples met here," said



Staff photos by Matthew Madoano

Owner George Burliss posts a sign thanking customers after Skip's closed for good Wednesday.

Skip's closes its doors

Skips, from Page 1

Foucar. "You come in sit down at the counter, see each other on a regular basis and it just grows."

The counter was also a big draw for customer Bill Gerber.

"It is a real gathering place for people and for regulars," Gerber said. "You would know people on both sides of the counter. It was an ad hoc family."

Gerber, who said he's been coming into Skip's a couple times a week for the last 30 years, said the community is going to miss the place.

"This town needs this caliber of restaurant," he said. "The food is fairly good and at reasonable prices. You can afford to eat out regularly."

Albert and Bernice Gregory from Littleton made sure they stopped in for one last meal.

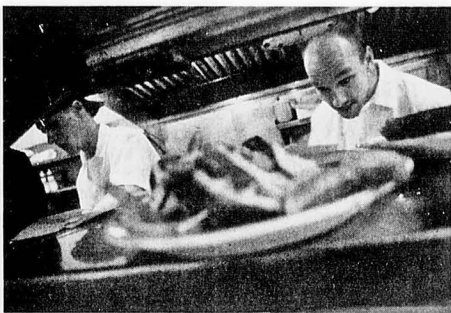
They've been coming to Skip's for about 20 years. It was sort of a regular date night with a movie first then a slice of pie and cup of coffee at Skip's.

"It's just a nice place to come to," said Bernice. "It's friendly and comfortable."

Its closing is unfortunately a sign of the times, said Albert.

"All good things are disappearing," said Albert. "It's the fast food pace of life."

As the lunch crowd thins out, a steady stream of diners, employees and well-wishers keep



Chris Boogaard, left, and Jeff Lang prepare food Wednesday during Skip's last day in business.

the glass doors swinging open and shut throughout most of Wednesday afternoon.

Some are there to snatch up the few homemade pastries and cookies left in the display case. Others hope to snag a menu complete with the print out of the Closing Day Specials. Plenty of people come armed with cameras and snap pictures of the dining room, each other and the owners.

Barbara Renison, who drops in with her husband Ralph Hickey, hangs onto a menu after ordering so she can get Gefteas and Burliss to autograph it for her.

The pair, like a lot of Skip's

regulars made the restaurant part of her weekly routine. They would come in after Mass on Sundays and usually once during the week for lunch.

"It's convenient and has a friendly atmosphere," said Hickey.

As if on cue, the couple's friends Linda and Tom Fall walk through the front door and make their way over to the booth.

Although the Falls both grew up in Billerica, as children they would come to Skip's with their families.

Tom was even there on Nov. 9, 1965, the evening the entire Northeastern U.S. was plunged into darkness during a massive blackout.

Her waitress was just coming out of the kitchen loaded down with plates when things went dark.

"As soon as the last plate hit the table, the lights went out," said Fall. "Ours was the last meal served before the power went out."

Back inside the darkened bar known as the Embers Lounge, bartender Dee Cymbura was busy writing a note on the back of a paper placemat.

The bar's been hopping most of the day so she hasn't really thought about yelling, "Last Call" for the final round.

Cymbura admits most of staff stayed on even after the closing was announced because most held out hope that the deal would fall through. Barring that, many assumed the general manager was going to take over running the show.

But on Wednesday, as current and former employees continue to pour into the lounge for an after-hours closing party, Cymbura realizes she's losing more than just a job.

"The people are so great. It's like one family," she said wiping tears away. "We would hang out with each other after work. That's what I'll miss the most. Well, and my customers. The customers have become part of our family."

Pre-demolition photo by Fred Merriam, November 17, 2008





Staff photo by Ann Ringwood

Goodbye Skip's

As a demolition crew tears down Skip's Restaurant Thursday, people gathered to watch and reminisce about the Chelmsford landmark. Pictured from left are Tracy Cole, George Burliss, Lynn Marcella and Helen Brasier.

Post-demolition photo by Fred Merriam, December 29, 2008



116 Chelmsford Street, on Google Earth in 2022

