

ROCHESTER

Democrat and Chronicle

DEMOCRATANDCHRONICLE.COM

first bite

REVIEW BASED ON A ONE-TIME ANONYMOUS VISIT BY OUR CRITIC, KAREN DEYLE



ONLINE EXTRA For full reviews or to search for a place to eat, click on "Food & Drink" at rochester.metromix.com.

Parkside features all the comforts

THE PLACE

While April teased us with temperatures in the 80s, May mocked us with morning frosts and fleeting snows. But Memorial Day is that magic starting line where we officially start thinking summer. What better place to start than at the brightly lit eastern portal of Durand-Eastman Park. The neon outside Parkside Diner calls us in to dinner, and the white lights of Whispering Pines Miniature Golf tell us to go back outside after supper and play.

The restaurant has been owned by the Papas family since 1990. First by Jim alone, then in partnership with brother, Greg. It has become a favorite dining spot for Irondequoit residents. The menu is as homey as it comes with roast beef, turkey, meatloaf, clam strips and fried chicken. Desserts include cream and fruit pies, cakes and parfait glasses of homemade tapioca or rice pudding.

FOOD

Dinners include a choice of salad or soup (all homemade), so there wasn't much need of an appetizer. My partner hails from a "Main Street USA" town in Pennsylvania. Comfort food is in his blood. The choice between hot roast beef sandwich and the sliced turkey was anguish.

Staff photographer Carlos Ortiz



The Parkside Diner in Irondequoit offers delicious diner fare such as fish fry. The restaurant is located next door to Whispering Pines Miniature Golf course.

When I assured him we could come back again, he went with the sliced turkey with gravy. Two or three generous thick slices were balanced atop a serving of savory stuffing made from Jim and Greg's father's time-tested recipe. As we

talked turkey, we realized that on the calendar, we were as far from Thanksgiving as you can get, and perhaps that added to the nostalgia.

For my dinner, I also stayed in the poultry family, choosing the fried chicken. I seldom make

or even order this, so it was a special treat. It reminds me of summer picnics on red checkered tablecloths. I imagine it packed in a hamper and auctioned off by Aunt Eller in Oklahoma! Four small pieces of chicken were fried with a per-

PARKSIDE DINER

Address: 4353 Culver Road, Irondequoit.
Phone: (585) 323-2730.
On the Web: www.parkside-diner.net.
Hours: 6 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. daily, with hours until 9 p.m. on Friday.
Accessibility: Handicapped parking, accessible dining and restrooms.
Parking: Private parking lot.
Prices: Breakfast, \$4 to \$5. Lunch, \$5 to \$7. Appetizers, \$4 to \$5. Dinners, \$8 to \$10.

fectly crisp crust. I elected to have mine with french fries.

We finished with an order of rice pudding, a sweet blast from the past that I have loved since childhood. This is the creamy variety made simply with milk, sugar and rice simmered till creamy then fortified with a splash of vanilla and thickened with whipped eggs. Owner Jim says Parkside's pudding is of the no-raisin school as many of their senior customers prefer it plain.

A favorite feature on weekends is the roast dinners. On Saturdays and Sundays diners can choose from roast pork, roast turkey or roast leg of lamb for \$8.99, which includes potato, vegetable, rolls and butter.

THE DRINKS

Beverages feature typi-

cal diner fare including sodas, iced tea and pink lemonade. Favorite fountain drinks also include milkshakes and root beer floats. A small selection of beer or wine is available.

THE ATMOSPHERE

The sleek white exterior is highlighted by bright neon in red, blue and orange that surrounds a clock boasting the classic message, "It's Time to Eat!" The interior is comfortable and functional with cream walls and mauve booths. In the corner a display of creamy confections turns slowing in the classic glass case.

NOTEWORTHY

Next door is the Whispering Pines Miniature Golf course, also owned by the Papas family. It was built in 1930, using cobblestones excavated from the construction of the Erie Canal.

This year marks its 80th summer, and it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the oldest continuously operating miniature golf course in the United States. Open 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily, it features all the traditional appointments including a windmill, a two-level hole and a chip shot.

Freelancer Karen Deyle of Rochester is our restaurant critic. E-mail deyledines@aol.com.

Parkside Diner
 Featured In: The Democrat and Chronicle
 May 27, 2010