

Lifestyles

Loretto meets a Croatian Pizza Man

By Emily Weathers Kennedy

Lawrence County just scored another milestone (rather Loretto did but we all get to enjoy it).

The opening of Nana's Pizzeria downtown is exciting indeed. Not only do locals get to experience the old Bank of Loretto building refurbished, but we get to see sidewalks adorned with benches and potted plants along Main Street and experience great food. With the restored R.D. Killen's Grocery (now The Mustang Café and Museum) and A.B. Hollander's Store (now The Palace), right around the corner on Second Avenue, folks now have fantastic choices for eating in downtown Loretto.



ANTE SEKELJA baking pizza in the open-fire oven.

With Nana's opening, we have another piece of our heritage preserved. I applaud people who embrace the challenge of restoring downtown buildings to their full luster. Lawrenceburg has also seen a resurgence of shops and restaurants, and there is work going on to refurbish more old buildings around the town square. Progress is infectious and I love seeing it every time I come to town to shop and dine.

There are three things I love to experience: the downtown areas of small towns, lovely old buildings, and restaurants that serve good food in those lovely old downtown buildings. Does anyone wonder why I enjoy living here so much?

Recently I sat down with Nancy Riddle Fleming and Ante Sekelja (pronounced On'ta She-ka'-lya) and talked to them about their new establishment named in honor of their own Nanas but in deference to Nanas everywhere.

What I learned caught me off guard. I was expecting to love the building and all its cherished features—the restored brick wall, the rich and lovely walnut millwork, the tall Romanesque windows, the uncovered and refinished tile and hardwood floors, and the spectacular stained glass skylights. But, I was not prepared to find yet another person from far away who discovered our little town and embraced it as his own.



LIVE ENTERTAINMENT by Curt Abercrombie, Will Riddle, & Hunter Abercrombie was featured in Nana's outdoor dining area for the grand opening.



ART GALLERY upstairs at Nana's.



NANA'S PIZZERIA - grand opening May 10.



NANA'S PIZZERIA (above) is in the former Bank of Loretto Building in downtown Loretto. This and all photos featured here (save the one at right) are by **Cara Walters Popp**. Find out more about her photography at <http://www.luluphotos.com> or write her at carapopp@hotmail.com.



BLESSING by Father Luckas and ribbon cutting at Nana's Pizzeria with owners Ante Sekelja and Nancy Riddle Fleming.

- Photo by Emily Weathers Kennedy

With powdery Italian Caputo flour dusting his apron, Ante (or Tony to locals) paused from attending to a few customers who arrived after the lunch crowd to tell me his story. His hands gesturing as he spoke, he told me that he came to America from his native Croatia (the former Yugoslavia) fifteen years ago. A former law student and soldier, he found life in America peaceful after years of experiencing civil war in his homeland.

America, he said, offered opportunities for hard work that paid off. When he arrived in Loretto with Nancy, he embraced the chance to do something he had always dreamed of doing—baking in an open fire oven in his own restaurant. Specifically, he wanted to bake pizzas.

Ante explained to me that most homes in Croatia have two kitchens. One is ordinary and much like our kitchens in America. They also have one in a building separated from the main house. Traditionally, people in his country cook with fire in a brick oven called a *krušna peć* (pronounced krush'na petch) in this outbuilding.

Ante, like his brothers and sister, grew up learning the delicate art of baking with fire from his grandmother. Baking bread this way, Ante said, is an essential part of daily living. Once he and Nancy are ready, they hope to add sandwiches made fresh and toasted on a hot grill in addition to pasta to the menu. I am so intrigued by the idea of sandwiches made this way that I wonder if I can wait until they are offered!

On May 10, Nana's Pizzeria officially opened. I spent the better part of that day with other Lawrence County folks touring the refurbished building and tasting Ante's pizza creations, my favorite being the alfredo sauce (white sauce) pizza cooked in the giant oven that really is the focal point of the restaurant. The oven, built in Baltimore by an Italian company called Marra Forni, was hoisted in through a hole knocked through four brick wall layers (now invisible to the eye after careful masonry restoration by Ante and his brother, Marco).

Nancy, who retired to her hometown after 35 years of teaching and educational administration, told me she had always had an interest in the

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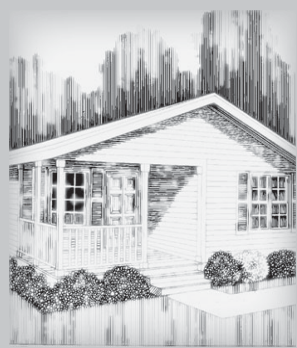

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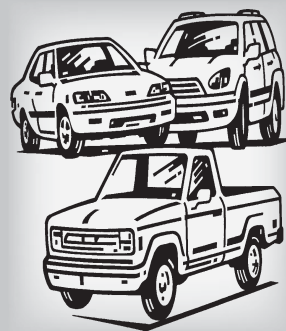
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IN CHANCERY COURT OF LAWRENCE COUNTY, TENNESSEE CASE NO. 13-16564 STATE OF TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PETITIONER V. Jenna Nixon, Mother And Nelson Rodriguez, Alleged Father of Levi And Juan Gomez, Alleged Father of Lettie And Leonardo Perez, Alleged Father of Christopher and Lettie RESPONDENTS IN THE MATTER OF: Corbin Levi Nixon, DOB: 10-09-07 Lettie Bella Nixon, DOB: 03-28-09

Christopher Edward Giovanni Nixon, DOB: 02-09-11 CHILDREN UNDER EIGHTEEN (18) YEARS OF AGE ORDER FOR SERVICE OF JUAN GOMEZ BY PUBLICATION
It appears to the Court from the allegations of the Petition for Termination of Parental Rights, Motion for Service by Publication, and the Affidavit of Diligent Search that the whereabouts of the Respondent, Juan Gomez, are unknown and cannot be ascertained by diligent search, and therefore, the ordinary process of law cannot be served upon him. IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED AND DECREED Respondent Juan

Gomez shall be served by publication of the following notice for four consecutive weeks in The Daily Herald (or another newspaper with distribution in Columbia, Tennessee), and in the Murfreesboro Post, a newspaper published in Rutherford County, Tennessee, (or in another newspaper with distribution in Laverne, Rutherford County, Tennessee). IT IS FURTHER ORDERED AND DECREED that if the Respondent Juan Gomez does not enter an appearance or otherwise Answer the Petition, further personal service or service by further publication shall be dispensed with and service of any future notices, motions, orders or other

legal documents in this matter may be made upon the Respondent Juan Gomez by filing the same with the Chancery Court Clerk and Master of Lawrence County, Tennessee. NOTICE JUAN GOMEZ The State of Tennessee, Department of Children's Services, has filed a petition against you seeking to terminate forever your parental rights to Lettie Bella Nixon. It appears that ordinary process of law cannot be served upon you because your whereabouts are unknown. You are hereby ORDERED to serve upon S. Craig Moore, Attorney for the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, 1400 College Park Drive, Ste.

A, Columbia, Tennessee 38401, (931) 247-0921, an Answer to the Petition for Termination of Parental Rights filed by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, within thirty (30) days of the last day of publication of this notice, and are ORDERED to appear in the

Chancery Court of Lawrence County, Tennessee on July 30-31, 2014. If you fail to do so, a default judgment will be taken against you pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann 36-1-117(n) and Tenn. R. Civ. P. 55 for the relief demanded in the Petition. You may view and obtain a copy of the Petition

and any other subsequently filed legal documents at the Lawrence County Chancery Court Clerk and Master's Office in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. Entered this 29th day of April, 2014. **Honorable Jim T. Hamilton Chancellor Approved for**

Entry: S. Craig Moore 014967 Assistant General Counsel Tennessee Department of Children's Services 1400 College Park Drive, Ste. A Columbia, TN 38401 931-247-0921 B/My25,Jn1,8,15

Loretto meets.....

Continued from page A-5

administration, told me she had always had an interest in the Bank of Loretto building because of its history. Built in 1925, the brick and limestone veneer structure was the center of hustle and bustle in Loretto. Both her grandfather and uncle had been presidents at one time. She said the massive Romanesque windows, bringing natural light flowing into the main room, drew her to the idea of a restaurant.

She also found space upstairs to turn into an art gallery for local artists, in addition to Ante and Marco. Besides being painters, both Sekelja brothers practice the age-old artistry of stained glass window design. Nancy champions artists and hopes to keep a rotating display of paintings, handmade crafts, and pottery on display.

Her eyes glistening, Nancy spoke of giving back to the town she so loves. Ante, too, smiled when she spoke of Loretto and their dreams here. Arms again gesturing widely to encompass the room, Ante explained with his heavy accent that they wanted families and people of all generations to come in and enjoy good food and good company. I followed Ante's arms and scanned the seating area. The atmosphere just seemed to encourage the many eclectic conversations coming from various lively patrons around the tables.

"Before long we will have a say!" Ante declared excitedly, changing the subject.

"A satch? What is a satch?" I asked, his excitement infective.

"Just say Croatian barbecue," he answered.

"That's what it is."

Nancy laughed as she explained the details of this Croatian barbecue, shaking her head as if wondering just when to add yet another dimension to the restaurant.

Actually, a Croatian barbecue sounds like a lot of fun.

Getting to know Ante and Nancy, I am reminded that you don't have to be in Eastern Europe or even Nashville to experience something new and inherently worth knowing. It can be right on the corner of Broad and Main in downtown Loretto, Tennessee. If

you take the time to talk to new people who venture to our small corner of the world, you might find that they not only broaden your horizons but open your eyes to the lovely and distinctive qualities that have been around you all along.

Emily Weathers Kennedy is a freelance writer, blogger, artist, photo stylist, and decorator. Her work is online and in product catalogs. Emily lives with her husband, 3 dogs, and 2 cats and writes from their farm in Loretto, where she was born and raised.

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