

It's not the Lion's Den By Barbara Roy

Hamlet says, "Though this be madness, there is method in't," which serves to show how ineffective all our present strategies are for treating human behavior. Besides, what would Descartes say?

If this is your stream of consciousness, then enough of the mind, it's time to feed the body. Here's a list of

places to go for a meal off campus where you can forget about those 5,000 pages of reading you must do.

You can drive to the following restaurants within ten minutes. None are fast-food burger, pizza or Chinese food joints, and all exude a certain sense of "Je ne sais pas quoi," which is French for "not the Lions Den."

Middletown

The Brownstone Cafe

1 N. Union St., 944-3301

Hours: Mon.-Sat. 6 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sun. 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

This is a distinguished looking building on the corner of Union and Emaus Streets. The decor is inviting and some interesting historical features are still present like the original vault and safety deposit boxes. I have tried the breakfast burrito, the grilled veggie sandwich with Brownstone sauce and the cream of crab soup (not all at the same time). "Yum!" Fixed daily specials are featured for lunch and dinner.

Kuppy's Diner

Brown and Poplar streets., 944-5122.

Hours: Mon.-Fri. 5 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 5 a.m. - 2 p.m. Closed Sun.

This diner has been in operation within the same family since 1933. The most popular dish is the oyster pie served every other Friday. And if you need "comfort" food, come here for stuffed peppers, chicken and waffles, pot pie, fried ham sandwiches and meatloaf.

The Lamp Post Inn

101 East Main St.

Hours: 7 days a week from 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

I like the way this building looks with its old "been here a while but still kickin'" feel to it. The features are the usual soup, sandwich, steak and seafood thing, but someone in the kitchen can cook. Are you saying to yourself, "Yo quiero tacos?" They're featured every Tuesday and Thursday nights starting at 4:30.

Mansion House

485 Swatara St., 944-9288

Despite the grand name, this place fondly reminds me of a coal-region dive with unpretentious, good food - especially steaks and seafood.

Guido McNeal's

Middletown Square, 930-0466

The owner is the same one that owns Alfred's Victorian down the street, which, incidentally, is open for a pricier but elegant lunch. This place, however, is only opens at 4 p.m. The best way to characterize it is to say it is billed as an Italian-Irish pub. Translation: pasta and beer.

Harry's Hot Wings and Things

Jamesway Plaza, 944-8300.

Hours: Mon.-Sat., 11 a.m.-10 p.m., Sun. 12-9 p.m.

Even though this is a franchise, it is just so darn hokey that I've got to mention it. It sits down the road from PSH in the Jamesway Plaza. The Jamesway store hasn't been open since the early 90s, but they leave it there as a local landmark to aide in directions (as in "You go past the Jamesway Plaza and turn left"). The first thing to catch your eye is a wooden chicken at the curb. Walk in the door and a clucking sound greets you. They've got chickens everywhere: stuffed, straw, taxidermied, ceramic. If you're here for pizza, too bad. What they've got are 19 sauces for their wings - BBQ to degrees of hell.

Hummelstown

Bill's Restaurant

8 W. Main St., 566-0502

Hours: 5:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

This is a small restaurant reminiscent of 50s style lunchrooms, including counter seating. The best dishes are the Greek salad and gyros. Even though the sign looks like it's been there forever, the waitress, who is from Greece, assured me that there is a "Bill" (The one I paid?). History-minded people, check out the painted punched-tin ceiling.

The Hummelstown House

(Sign in window says Cocoa Catering)

5 W. Main St., 566-4840

Hours: Thur. 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

This elegant restaurant will make you feel like you are in some Ivy League town, being a serious student of letters on a lunch break while you dwell on Emerson (OK, you can feed your mind, too). The interior is a lovely old house with book-lined walls and tables set invitingly. And the food? How do things like these sound: portabella crab melt, roasted eggplant florintini with tortellini salad, dilled shrimp salad, grilled smoked bratwurst with honey Dijon roasted peppers and other cool stuff (all served with pita crisps and melon) plus sweets of the day? The bumper? Hours are just 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Thursday. But the Rex, the owner, is hoping to open on Fridays in the near future.

The Station House Coffee and Creamery

24 W. Main St., 566-0554

Hours: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-9 p.m., Sat. 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

If you just want a snack, come to this genuine coffee house for fresh ground coffee, espresso, latte, cappuccino, etc., plus an interesting variety of iced teas (hot tea, too, but not loose teas). Also served are iced cream (27 flavors) and sweets to go with the drinks. The specialties are cinnamon buns and scones. There are some books and magazines on a shelf for your perusal while there, and Tarman's Used and Rare Books is conveniently next door. Coming in November, an expanded menu including soups and salads.

The Warwick Hotel

12 W. Main St., 566-9124

Hours: Daily 11 a.m.-midnight.

I was surprised to find out this is an actual hotel. The sage-green painted brick building dates back to 1800 and has always been a restaurant under seven different names. The interior features different rooms and the latest addition of a Garden Room, an airy screened in side porch that looks out onto a garden. A daily lunch pasta special is featured, as well as grilled and deli sandwiches. The dinner menu can be ordered for lunch and two menu features that caught my eye were Chicken Savannah (involves peaches), and Bleu Apple Chicken (made with apple schnapps).

The Tea Cozy

213 E. Main St., 566-9976.

This small and yes - cozy - tea room is in an attractive Federal-style brick building. Seating is available al fresco in nice weather in a side garden. The menu features soups, quiches and desserts of the day, as well as salads. A specialty is soup served in a sour dough bread bowl. Although it is a "girlfriend" kind of place, I've seen guys here, too. Now, say that you are really enjoying Hummelstown and you think to yourself, "If only there was a bed-and-breakfast here." Well, good news! This is one.

The Soda Jerk

566-7707

This, intentionally, is a "doo-whop Happy Days" 50s-style ice cream-burgers-fries-shakes joint. They just opened last month. Service was slow and erratic when I first went, but here's hoping the kinks are worked out by now.