

HUNGRY FOR HISTORY

Gregg Tripoli, executive director of the **Onondaga Historical Association**, is on a mission: to improve his corner of downtown in part by devising a decent place for a workday lunch. This includes strategically placing businesses to fill vacant buildings along Montgomery Street, where the OHA is headquartered. The newest addition is **Parisa's Restaurant**, a casual dining spot that offers a variety of homemade specialties.

filling

Originally wanting to open a beer and wine bar, **Peyman Pourpezeshk** couldn't turn down the offer by Tripoli to make the spot a restaurant instead. Named after his daughter, Parisa's opened March 7. "I think of it as upscale comfort food," Pourpezeshk says of the first restaurant he has owned. Favorites on the menu include homemade potato chips, curry chicken salad, a wedge salad featuring iceberg lettuce topped with tomato, bacon and blue cheese dressing, and a variety of desserts that change daily.

The brunch menu includes banana-stuffed French toast, blueberry almond pancakes, steak and eggs, brunch potatoes and fresh fruit.

"I knew these new owners were the right fit for the area," Tripoli says of Pourpezeshk. "Our goal was to make it a history-themed restaurant. You know, create a theme. History adds value."

That theme's presentation starts right at the door of 317 Montgomery St. Artifacts cover the entry's walls, anything from pieces Syracuse China to photos of lake steamers. More history greets you as you sit down: Tables hold placemats with "Did You Know?" trivia questions that provide guests with an advantage, educating them, and giving them something to think and talk about.

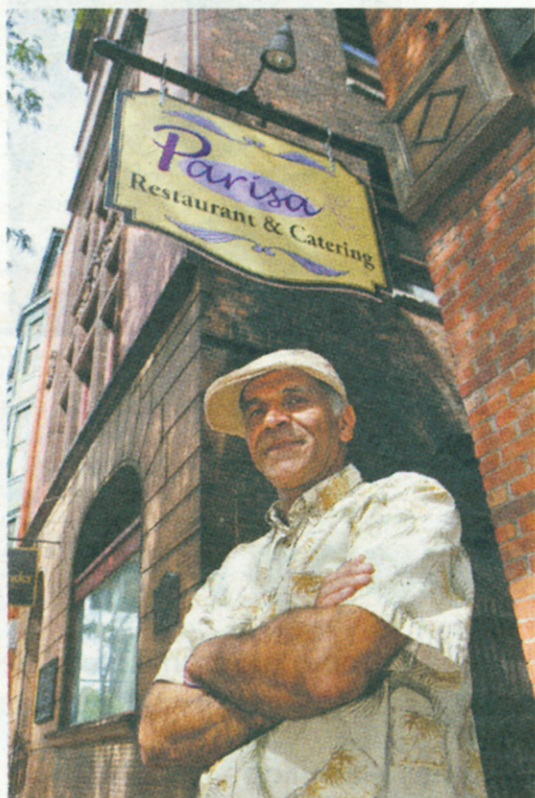
"It gives people something to do while they wait, and educates them about our history. And, if you're on a first date, it works as a conversation piece," Tripoli explains. "People love when they learn something new."

The upstairs dining area remains from when this spot was Brick Alley Grill, but the new owners have expanded the tight-quartered downstairs into a banquet room that can be used for small parties.

Parisa's has yet to obtain its liquor license, but guests are welcome to bring their own beer or wine with no corking fee. The spot is open Mondays through Fridays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Sundays from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. for brunch. Lunch deliveries are available within a three-block radius. When the liquor license arrives, so too will dinners.

For more information, call 565-5118 or visit www.parisarestaurant.com.

—Emily Longeretta



History in the making: Peyman Pourpezeshk teamed with the Onondaga Historical Association to open Parisa's Restaurant at 317 Montgomery St.