

Waitress takes over Lyncourt restaurant; owner of 33 years stays to help



By [Dick Case, Post-Standard columnist](#)

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Sharon Jackson is getting used to a mild change of life after 33 years. Until Dec. 27, she owned Carl's Kountry Kitchen, at the most northerly end of Teall Avenue, near Court Street and Lyncourt. She bought the diner in 1979.

Sharon says she used to pop out of bed at her

Navarino home well before dawn to make it to Carl's by 5:30 a.m. Now she's there an hour later because there's a new owner of the popular restaurant. That's Sona Barletta, an experienced restaurateur who started working at Carl's last February.

"It was job security," Sona explains about the [sale](#).

Sharon's staying on at Carl's, at least for a while. Her sister, [Tena](#), who was her partner at the restaurant 14 years, left the business. She plans to move to a warmer climate.

"(Sharon's) going to help in the transition," Sona explained. Sharon said she'll [continue](#) to cook for a while and teach the art to Sona. Customers – including me – rate Sharon a very good cook.

"Sure, I love to cook," Sharon said to me during a break in the morning routine at Carl's the other day. "I'm way behind," she said, taking [a window](#) seat across from my coffee. She and Sona were doing everything there was to do in the kitchen, including washing dishes.

Two regular waitress are staying on, too. Brenda Hayes has been on the wait staff 11 years. Likewise Stacy Lowery Renner, who's been at Carl's almost two years. Both said they love the job. The new owner's daughter, Patricia, has been hired on as a waitress.

Sharon Jackson worked for years as a waitress at [local restaurants](#). She made the transition to the kitchen when she bought Carl's from Al Casale. "I taught myself to cook," she says.

Sona Barletta (left), of Clay, the new owner of Carl's Kountry Kitchen, is seated with the former owner Sharon Jackson, of Navarino.

John Berry / The Post-Standard

She had a good teacher, her mother, Adeline Vincent, who, according to her daughter, "could take anything and made it taste good." Sharon said her mom "baked every day." The family had 12 children and lived in Mexico, in Oswego County. Pies were a specialty. Same for Sharon.

Sharon said she still makes her crusts by adding handfuls of "ice-cold" water to the mix the way Mom instructed. (She does four; her mother did three handfuls.)

At the restaurant, Sharon says everything is prepared from scratch. She loves making chicken noodle soup and a house favorite, chicken and biscuits.

Carl's is a classic "everybody knows your name" place. Conversation flows back and forth among the customers, many of them regulars. They range from men who own their own companies to retirees. Sharon said folks come in for both breakfast and lunch, sometimes every day. (Carl's closes at 2:30 p.m.)

"The elderly customers are the highlight of my day," according to Sharon. "They don't like to eat a lone. They sit at the counter and mingle."

Sharon explains she's happy, staying on.

"I'd miss it after all these years," she says.

She'd miss the regulars, especially, and the conversations between the kitchen and out-front. "There's one family that comes in – two young boys – that's in the fourth generation. They came in as brand new babies and now they're coming in on their own."

Sharon says she's doesn't mind the hard work and long hours.

"People shouldn't sit idle," according to Sharon.

She says her son, David, was there the day when the sales contract was signed.

"We were crying," Sharon says.

Sharon recalls one memorable encounter with my late colleague, Bob Haggart, who once wrote a column Sharon took as a criticism. Bob's sense of humor sometime was misunderstood. Sharon chewed him out pretty good.

Later, she related, Bob came to the restaurant but through the back door. He'd eat chicken and biscuit in the kitchen.

Dick Viau runs Viau Construction and is a regular. He figures he's been a customer 56 years, way before Sharon's took over. He and his father, the founder of the firm, were early diners.

"I admire Sharon," Dick says. "She's stuck to it for many years."

Dick knew the diner's namesake. Carl, but not his last name. (No one I asked did.) He explained Carl had a bad temper. Like another regular, Dick Bruns, superintendent of Woodlawn Cemetery, he recalls Carl's fits of anger when he ordered clients out the door. "Out, everybody, out," he'd bellow.

My friend and ace researcher, Pam Priest, archivist at Onondaga Historical Association, came to the rescue. She found Carl A. Wanner listed as the owner of Carl's in a suburban director under Town of Salina. It used to be called Harris Kountry Kitchen when it was owned by the Harris family.

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