

The Food Corner - with Allan Carter

Chinese New Year Banquet and Gerry's restaurant -
Culinary advice and opinion from one of UNB's
formost gourmands.

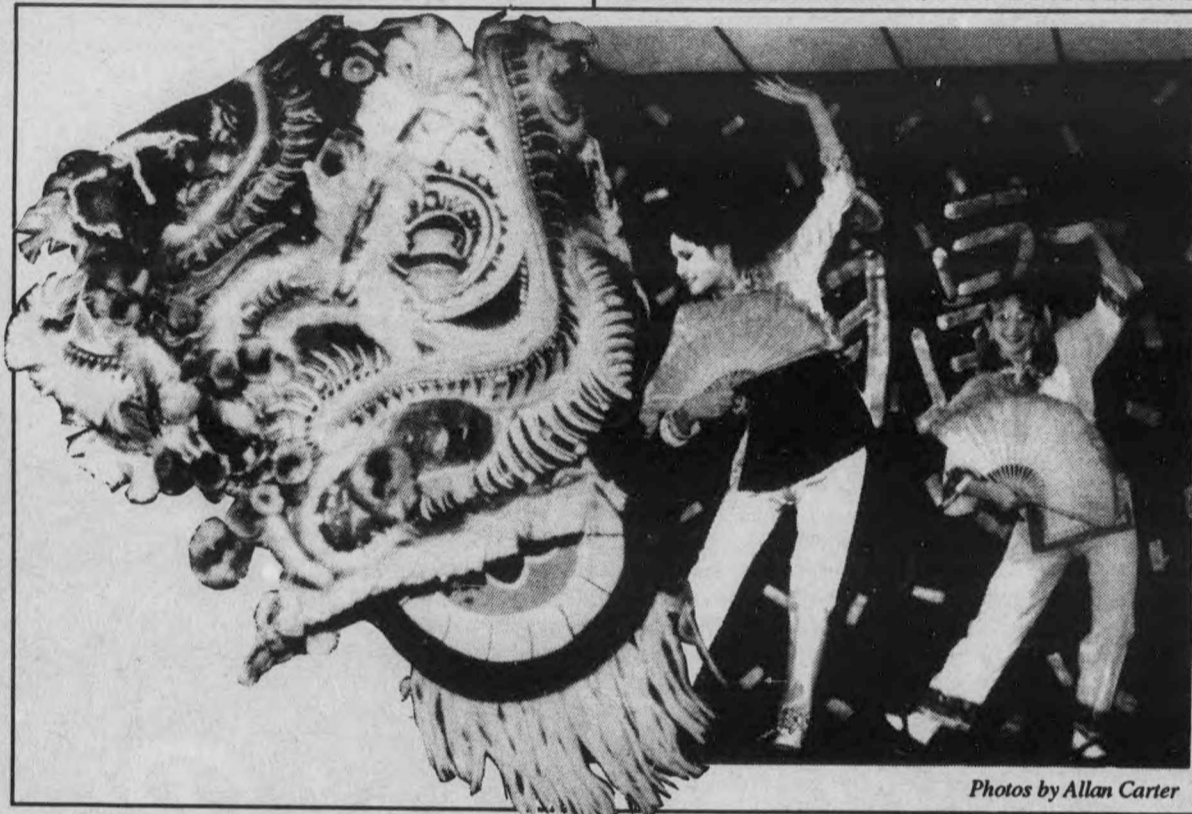
For the over 200 people who braved the snow packed roads and bad visibility, the Chinese New Year Banquet was well worth the effort. The banquet, which was organized by UNB's Overseas Chinese Students Association, was held in the SUB cafeteria last Saturday evening. Speeches were given by Kenny Luk, the OCCSA president; Dr. Robin Armstrong, UNB's president, and Kay Nandall, international student advisor. Prof. Anthony Lister gave a quick and amusing speech which explained some aspects of the Chinese New Year. This New Year is the year of the monkey. There are twelve different animals which are used in a twelve year plan. Some of these animals include the dragon, pig, mouse, and dog. It was explained that each person is described by using these animal terms and it depended on when they were born to determine their animal. Each animal has different traits and characters which are supposed to be shared with the person(s) who was born on that animal's year. Furthermore, Dr. Lister briefly described what the monkey's year would be like this year and what the other animals' years would be like in the upcoming years. I happen to be a dog. After the speeches, the crowd was treated to a buffet style Chinese dinner which aimed to please. Prepared by students, the generous menu consisted of sweet and sour meat ball, honey spareribs, fried wontons, fried rice,

mixed vegetables, roast pork, and curriebicken. The food was kept hot, it was not greasy and it was undoubtedly the best meal I think anyone has ever eaten in the SUB cafeteria and it was the best Chinese food I have ever eaten in Fredericton.

Apparently, Dr. Armstrong was in agreement, since he was one of the first to go for seconds and the rest of us quickly followed suit. Full and content, the crowd then sat back and relaxed as the association presented many different shows to give the audience, as Kay Nandall put it in her speech, "glimpses of their culture." The first new year's celebration was the Lion Dance.

As the drums were beaten, the large decorative lion was slowly and dramatically lured to the edge of the stage where it picked up some pieces of lettuce. To celebrate its accomplishment it danced around the stage some more and as the drum's beat slowed down, it laid down on the stage and rested quietly. Next came the gold hoop dance and then a solo by Grace Ng accompanied by Sunny Leung on the flute. The audience quickly quieted down as Ng's powerful yet gentle voice dominated the cafeteria. A dance

called Spring over the Yao Mountain was described by the master(s) of ceremony, Prof. Shyu and Joanna Wong, as a courtly dance which is done by farm boys and girls. This dance was performed by Xiaodan Zhang and Kim-Yi Lee. The two young talented and seemingly calm children charmed the audience as they performed this country ritual. The next performance was described by the master(s) of ceremony as "something very different." And it was. Graham Chang swiftly and quickly gave the audience a Martial Arts demonstration using a three section stick which was originally made famous by Bruce Lee. Unfortunately, as Prof. Shyu pointed out, Chang could only demonstrate about fifty percent of his talent since he was restricted by the low ceiling. But it was an impressive demonstration, nevertheless (especially when you are only a few feet from the stage trying to take pictures). A musical demonstration involving the Er-Wu was given by Sunny Leung. An almost 1000 year old instrument, the Er-Wu sounds something like a cross between a violin and the bagpipes. The fan dance followed, a traditional farm girl dance depicting a "coming of age." It concluded the cultural aspect of the show nicely as the young women danced in flawless unity. So, for all those who did not dare to leave their safe havens last Saturday, I can only say: That's too bad, but hey, there was more food for the rest of us (especially Dr. Armstrong!).



Photos by Allan Carter

Finding a restaurant to eat where the food is good and the prices are cheap is not easy. Most of us agree with the adage that we get what we pay for. And Gerry's restaurant only re-affirms that old saying. However, while food at Gerry's may not meet all our fussy standards, it nevertheless is not a disappointing restaurant when you consider the cost. If you enjoy turkey or fried seafood platters and are worried about prices, Gerry's is a good place to dine. However, if you like and always expect to be served an excellent meal with all the added frills, don't dine at Gerry's because they can't satisfy those needs and any reasonable person wouldn't expect them to - considering the prices.

And the prices are good. For only \$5.25 you can get a three course meal which includes soup or salad, vegetables, a choice between ribeye steak, turkey, ham and other meats, mash potatoes or fries, and dessert. It is certainly not a bad deal on a thin wallet. However, there are setbacks. Furthermore, the \$5.25 choices are

limited and so are some of the side dishes to these choices. For example, mash potatoes and fries are the only choices to these special platters. A larger selection is needed that should include rice or baked potato.

I dined at Gerry's on two consecutive evenings and found both of my meals to be satisfying. However, both evenings I took two different friends and I discovered that Gerry's is not always consistent in their meal preparation. For instance, the first evening I was there I had the chicken soup and ribeye steak. While the soup was a bit salty it was quite nice, but not hot enough for my liking. The thin ribeye steak was cooked well and the meat was tender. However, the next evening my friend ordered it and found it tough and with a lot of fat on it. That evening I

ordered the beef barley soup and turkey dinner. The beef barley soup is very good and has a touch of spice in it which makes it tasty. But once more, it was not hot enough. The turkey dinner which my friend had the evening before is a good meal with a generous helping of white and dark meat. It appears that the turkey dinner is always cooked consistently and proves to be more satisfying than the unreliable ribeye steak.

The dessert selection is also limited but not disappointing. Gerry's pies are probably the highlight of the \$5.25 special. Both the butterscotch and the graham wafer pies are deliciously rich and fresh. They are worth sampling. With two people, the dinner specials (plus soft drinks and tea or coffee) come to roughly \$15.00 with taxes.

Gerry's is a small place situated on 88 Regent St. The attractive, modest nine-table dining room is spotless. While the service is still rusty and a bit unreliable, the staff is both polite and obliging.

Cliffy's Little-Known Facts and Statistics

Eehhhh...it's a little-known fact that...

1. There is only one company that makes fire hydrants in North America. It is also illegal to park within 500 feet of the building where they are made.
2. There is a phobia of being lit on fire. Although few people suffer from this irrational condition, it has been reported that Richard Pryor and Michael Jackson are both afflicted with this disorder known as zippophobia.
3. Turkey pot pies, when cooked properly, reach an internal temperature of approximately 47,000 degrees celcius. This finding was reported by Circle Researcher Rory Tait in the New England Journal of Circle Science. Dr. Tait also reports that they never brown properly.
4. The Michelin Tire mascot used to be Ian Rounde, a precocious five year old from New Jersey who reportedly consumed 17 packets of "Pop Rocks" and ballooned out to six times his normal size. He currently spends his days doing photo shoots and avoiding sharp objects.
5. Salvador Dali actually saw things that way. Consequently he was quite fearful of clocks, giraffes, and ants.

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