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Catching a meal at one of their favorite Pittsburgh eateries—C.C.'s on Washington Road—are Lani Walker, Gail Nesbitt Jones and Marsha Dugan Kolbe. The threesome collaborated on the book "Where We Like To Eat n' At!", a listing of 57 great restaurants in and around Pittsburgh. It's available at local bookstores and Entertainment Tonight video on Banksville Road.



# Good Eats

Somewhere in Pittsburgh there is a restaurant that makes fabulous seafood-stuffed banana peppers. There's also an ice cream parlor that piles amaretto flavored whipped cream onto its confections and a diner featuring the kind of chicken dumpling soup a head cold demands. Where are these places?

Gail Nesbitt Jones, Dixon Avenue, knows and, luckily for the rest of us gourmands, isn't afraid to share. This spring, Jones and her friend/coworker Marsha Dugan Kolbe of Highland Park, published "Where We Like to Eat n' At"—the ultimate guide to good eats in Pittsburgh and a celebration of Pittsburgh's neighborhoods.

No Olive Gardens or fast food chains grace the pages of this diminutive book (Jones and Kolbe kept the book small enough to fit in a purse or glove compartment). Yes, there are a few well-known places (Gullifty's for desserts) but the majority are places that you might not know about or wouldn't have ventured into without a

recommendation—the ones Jones tactfully says "have character," but that less kindly souls would describe as holes in the wall. Of all the places mentioned, only Mt. Washington's Tin Angel is upscale and more than moderately priced.

In all, there are 57 restaurants featured—"We thought that was a good Pittsburgh number," says Jones—spread out over 43 neighborhoods in and around Pittsburgh with the furthest away being The Spring House in Eighty Four, and the Tomato Pie Café outside of North Park. Luckily for us, most are just a few minutes from Mt. Lebanon—Angkor and Mendoza Express in Green Tree, Beto's Pizza and My Brick Oven on Banksville Road, Hong Kong, Dor-Stop and Fredo's Deli in Dormont, Carhops on West Liberty in Beechview, and Mt. Lebanon's own C.C.'s Homemade Food on Washington Road (singled out for its potato pancakes and flu-soothing chicken dumpling soup).

"Every single restaurant was recom-

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mented by someone,” says Jones, “including my car dealer and the person who cuts my hair... We wanted it to be a grassroots-type thing.” Jones and Kolbe—who both work at Coalition for Christian Outreach in East Liberty—then had to research each suggestion. Jones estimates she ate at about 50 of the book’s 57 restaurants; Kolbe did the rest. But that’s not to say she ate at only 50, as there were several that didn’t make the cut, including one Jones dined at three times hoping to figure out why so many people had recommended it—she never did. Another restaurant didn’t make the cut because Jones heard the owner was rude to customers. “There had to be a lot right with the place for us to recommend it,” she says. That included the food, the service, the history and the ambience. “Some places the food was medium, but the location and history were so neat,” Jones says, singling out the Boston Waterfront in McKeesport on the Youghiogheny that has horse-drawn carriage rides. In all, the process took about two years, and some pounds. “I’m round to begin with,” says Jones with a laugh. “This probably made me rounder.”

The paragraph-sized reviews of each entry contain some history about the establishment (gleaned from owners and wait staff), a shout-out to each menu’s best items and informational items that could improve the dining experience—if the place is good for the family, has vegetarian entrees or a BYOB policy. Artist Lani Walker, a Park Entrance Drive resident, created the small, whimsical sketches that accompany every entry. An index of neighborhoods and a map will come in handy when you’re out and about and want to grab a bite.

We don’t want to give any secrets away but we will say the book offers locations for great butternut squash ravioli, turtle soup, hot dogs, pizza and pancakes—potato and the breakfast kind.

Self-published this spring, the book is \$10 at Borders, Barnes and Nobles and Entertainment Tonight on Banksville Road. It can also be ordered at [www.eatnat.com/](http://www.eatnat.com/).

Jones isn’t ruling out a sequel—maybe one covering Pittsburgh’s more upscale places. And she knows the book will encourage people to suggest other hidden Pittsburgh treasures, so she made sure her Web site had a page where others could post their favorite spots.

— M.A. JACKSON

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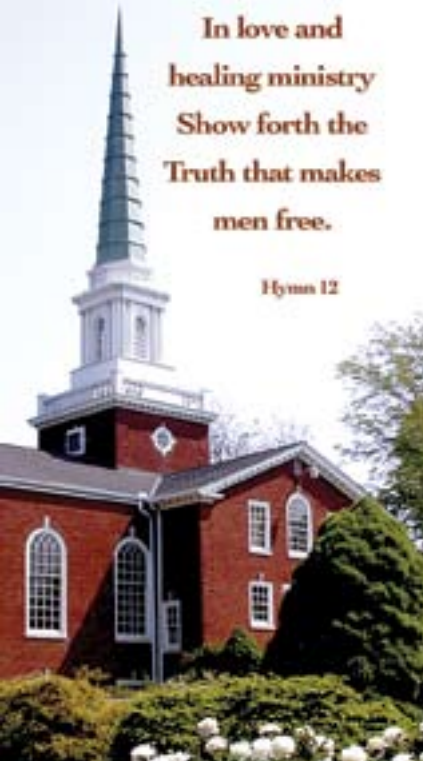
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