



# Around the Village, Around the Square

Roslindale Village Main Street's Quarterly Business Newsletter  
August 2010

**Dear Roslindale Merchant,**

The streets may be quieter for the summer, but it's been a busy season for Roslindale Village Main Street.

Our **Farmers' Market** is into the second half of the season, drawing 2,000+ people into the business district every week. More than 25 businesses have signed up for our **Market Day Pass**, a promotion designed to attract foot traffic from the market. (If you're interested in participating, please contact me!)

We've finally received approval from the City for a long-awaited **kiosk** at South and Poplar St, which will feature a business directory and a map of the neighborhood. We've made steps toward addressing **parking issues** in the neighborhood, working with the Board of Trade and city and state officials. We've initiated an outreach program to **new homeowners** to introduce them to their local business district. We've helped two businesses complete **storefront renovations** this summer, with two more underway, and we're preparing for some **great events** this fall.

All this work is done by volunteers who care about their neighborhood and want to help it thrive. **Twenty-nine** of our active volunteers are business owners.

You may know some of these folks on our Board: Lisa DiPietro of the Pet Cabaret; Sonia Garufi of Sophia's Grotto; Frank Guerrios of Citizens Bank; Luke Moran and Cathy McCarthy of the Cooperative Bank; Charlie McCarthy, whose wife Terry Fitzgerald owns Centre Cuts; John Pierce of the Boston Cheese Cellar; and Vernee Wilkinson of Colorwheel Collection.

Please share your thoughts with these colleagues when you see them around the neighborhood. **We welcome and encourage your involvement and input.**

Jody Burr  
Executive Director

## Ten Questions:

A Business to Business Interview with  
Joe Garufi of **Sophia's Grotto** and Steve Judge of **Delfino**

*Celebrating its 10th anniversary next year, Delfino has become one of the neighborhood's hottest destinations, attracting customers from all over greater Boston for its simple, outstanding Italian dishes. Around the corner, Sophia's Grotto has made a name for itself as well, winning Best of Boston in 2009 and sharing a courtyard with two other popular spots.*

*The Grotto's owner, Joe Garufi, sits down with his neighbor Steve Judge to talk about the restaurant business and life in Roslindale. (Both restaurants will be among the 24 eateries featured at this year's Taste of Roslindale. Read below for more about the Taste and how to get involved.)*



**Joe: When did you start in the restaurant industry? What was your first job?**

Steve: I was in the 7th grade and got a job as a dishwasher at Jenny's restaurant down in the North End. I started as a dishwasher and then they taught me to prep. And then I was a sous chef in the 8th grade -- it was crazy! That's how I started.

**Joe: When did you open Delfino and why did you choose Roslindale?**

Steve: I opened in 2001 and I chose Roslindale because I liked the Square. My wife was from Roslindale. I liked the configuration; the access to parking; there were some successful restaurants like Gusto and Fornax. I liked the direction Roslindale was going. The proximity to other neighborhoods was good.

**Joe: What do you think is the key to your longevity?**

Steve: Basically I have an excellent team. Joanne [LeBlanc, Delfino's executive chef] has been with me for 10 years. She was my first hire. We bring a lot of passion -- everyone that works here -- if you don't have passion, you really can't work here. I think the food is very consistent. We work very hard in putting out the best product we can night in and night out.

**Joe: What are the most noticeable changes in the business district from the time you opened to now?**

Steve: The Square is more developed and there is more competition which makes us stay focused and more consistent -- which is very important.

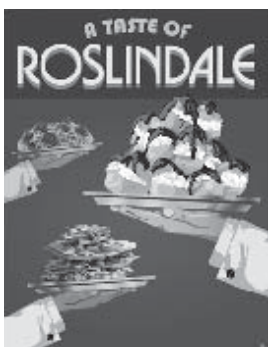
**Joe: What would you say is the hardest thing about the restaurant business?**

Steve: For me, it's very difficult when I'm working, when I'm very focused on the food. I'm very into what I'm doing and a lot of times I'll neglect talking, socializing with customers. Friends of mine will come in and want to talk. For me it's tough to socialize -- I'm here working.

**Joe: What's the best thing about the restaurant business?**

Steve: I love what I do. I make my own hours. I come in and work twice as many hours as anyone, but I get to choose my schedule. I do love to create. I do love the restaurant business. It's really a pleasure to be here.

*Continued on p. 2*



## 4th Annual Taste of Roslindale!

Thursday, September 23  
6:30-9 pm

24 Roslindale area eateries are gearing up for the 4th Annual Taste of Roslindale, which will be held on Thursday, September 23 at St. Nectarios Church in the heart of Roslindale Village. This popular event has been a bigger and bigger success every year, raising funds for the community and showcasing the restaurants, bakeries and food markets that have made Roslindale a citywide destination.

Last year 84 local and regional businesses contributed to the success of the Taste. Please join RVMS, the 24 participating restaurants, and our lead sponsor, The Cooperative Bank, in supporting this year's event through a **business sponsorship** or **auction donation**. Contact Jody Burr at 617-327-4065 for more information.

## Parking Solutions Around The Corner

The availability of parking in Roslindale Village is a top concern identified by business owners and shoppers alike, according to a study conducted by Tufts last spring. (The full report is available online at [www.roslindale.net](http://www.roslindale.net)). According to the report, parking capacity in Roslindale Village is not used or managed effectively. The MBTA lot is 75% empty, while commuters and employees take up valuable customer spots on the street and in the municipal lot.

On August 17, leaders from RVMS and the Roslindale Board of Trade met with city and state officials to review the study's findings and discuss ways to better manage parking. Among the potential solutions proposed were an alternative payment method at the MBTA lot that would allow parking for business owners and their employees; improvements to increase capacity at the Taft Hill lot; and more consistent enforcement of on-street parking to discourage commuters. The next business newsletter will bring a progress report on our efforts, and we welcome your input and support in this effort.

-over for more-

## Why Good Looking Buildings Are Good For Business

When you run a small business from behind a desk or a cash register, it's hard to see your business the way a customer sees it: from the outside looking in.

Many longstanding businesses rely on a base of loyal customers and ignore the outward appearance of their business on the street. Signage or awnings may be outdated. Paint above a doorway may be peeling. Windows might be so cluttered, a potential customer can't see anything inside. By ignoring appearances, the business loses a chance to make a positive first impression with new customers who represent tomorrow's sales.

When businesses renovate their storefronts and windows, they catch the attention of people who never noticed them before. (The Blue Star Restaurant is one recent example of how a quality renovation (inside and out) can increase customer volume.)

If you haven't invested in your street appeal in a while, invite a stranger to look at your business with you. Is your sign outdated? Is your space due for a paint job? Are your windows covered with faded posters, masking what is sold

inside? Is your storefront clean, open and welcoming to new customers?

Good looking buildings encourage foot traffic. More foot traffic generates more sales. Stronger sales volume attracts entrepreneurs with solid business plans to fill vacant storefronts when openings arise. Strong adjacent businesses attract more customers, and so on. In order to thrive in a metro area like Boston, where neighborhoods have to compete for business, we all depend on one another to make the location as a whole appealing to customers.

Roslindale Village Main Street's storefront improvement program has helped more than 45 businesses make changes large and small to attract new customers. From informal volunteer consultations to substantial grants, RVMS is here to help you build business by presenting your best side.

**Please join us on Wednesday, October 28 at 8 am** at the Roslindale Library for an exciting, free breakfast workshop on simple, inexpensive ways to make your storefront shine. Look for an invitation from us next month!

## BUSINESS news & updates

### Events, Opportunities, Resources

Planning is underway for the 2nd annual **Roslindale Village Holiday Wander**, a district-wide holiday stroll taking place on Thursday evenings in December. Join the fun! Look for more info coming your way soon, or contact us to learn more.

Maximize your retail space and draw in new customers with a sparkling storefront! Join us for a **business networking breakfast workshop** on "**Design as a Marketing Tool**" on Wednesday, October 28 at 8 am, featuring best practices and practical tips from fellow businesses and design professionals.

There's still space left for businesses interested in the **Market Day Pass**, a Farmers' Market promotion designed to draw new customers into your business. Contact us to learn more.

Small businesses are saving up to 25% on utility bills through **Boston Buying Power**, a citywide group purchasing program. [www.bostonbuyingpower.com](http://www.bostonbuyingpower.com) or 888.317-3923.

Many other **small business assistance resources**, from financing help to permitting questions, are available to you via RVMS. Please contact us or visit our website to learn more.

### Openings, Closings, Etc.

Welcome to **Olde Bostonian Realtors**, a husband-wife team who moved in earlier this summer at 4196 Washington St. above Tedeschi's. **Debt Solutions Team** is another newcomer at 4268 Washington St., specializing in debt reduction and financial training. **Unified Fitness** has opened on Poplar St. next to the Treasure Chest; owner Emmanuel Williams is a certified personal fitness trainer.

**Boston Mobile** closed its doors on Corinth St. last month, a result of franchise downsizing. **Segura & Co. Real Estate** also closed on South St. in July. Both vacancies are still seeking tenants.

**Colorwheel Collection** and **El Chavo Mexican Products**, both on Washington St., recently completed storefront improvements with the help of grants through our Storefront Improvement Program. **Derna's Diner** has remodeled and will be offering extended hours and a wider menu shortly. Two local businesses, **Geoffrey's Cafe** and **Lymneos Insurance**, have also expanded recently, with Geoffrey's opening a second location in the South End.

The **Boston Redevelopment Authority** has rejected the three development proposals presented in 2008 for the **vacant former substation** at Washington St. and Cummins Highway, citing financial viability as their main concern. The BRA recently held a public meeting proposing an interim designation to RVMS and Historic Boston Inc., a non-profit developer of historically valuable properties in Boston, giving the two groups 12 months to present a financially viable proposal that would enhance the district and meet the community's needs.



Some of the founding members of RVMS who celebrated the organization's 25th anniversary with Mayor Menino at the Farmers' Market this month. L to R: resident Diane Duggan; Joe Porteleki of Roslindale Hardware; Vinny Marino of Roslyn Associates; and Joe Beck of J.B. Edwards Uniforms.

Ten Questions continued from p.1

#### Joe: Advice to someone new opening up a restaurant business?

Steve: I would say if you're doing it for the money, forget about it. You can't open a business like this thinking "Hey, I can make some quick money!" If you love the business, love the food...then sure.

#### Joe: What's your favorite dish to prepare?

Steve: I personally love the Bolognese. I love the way it comes out. I think we do a great job. I have people tell me "We've been all over Italy -- you have the best Bolognese." Any of the pastas are great. The fish is great -- we pick it up every day, really anything. Meats, fish, pasta -- if we don't feel comfortable with it, then it's not on the menu.

#### Joe: What was your most memorable meal?

Steve: Eating meals at home -- the holidays. My grandmother making the homemade raviolis, the seven course meals. It doesn't get better than that. Those were the days -- they were great days.

#### Joe: What's your guilty food pleasure?

Steve: Ice-cream!!



2A Corinth St.  
617-327-4065  
director@roslindale.net  
www.roslindale.net

The mission of RVMS is to promote Roslindale Village as an appealing destination and the dynamic center of our community. As a nonprofit organization, we bring together local volunteers, businesses and public agencies to strengthen the Village's economic vitality, physical appearance and unique local character.

Thanks to our sponsors:



Thomas M. Menino  
Mayor of Boston