



Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

G's on Liberty owner Grainne Trainor in her new Bloomfield restaurant just before it opened in late October.

G IS FOR GUTS

By Dan Gigler
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Grainne Trainor emigrated from Northern Ireland after college and has built a wildly successful career over decades cooking at and managing elite restaurants at resorts and hotels across America before settling in Pittsburgh and opening two popular bygone spots here.

So why open a restaurant now, in the midst of a global pandemic that has brutalized a service industry?

The simplest reason of all: “I like what I do,” said the Ulster native who pronounces her first name gran-YA.

She is the “G” in G’s on Liberty, which opened at the tail-end of October at 5104 Liberty Ave. For 60 years, this was the home of Alexander’s Italian Bistro, which closed in early May 2020 at the pandemic’s outset.

Ms. Trainor opened and ran the Mighty Oak Barrel in Oakmont from 1998 to 2013, and then Blue North in McCandless from 2015 to 2019. Chef Eric Leiberling, who had been at the Elbow Room and 1947 Tavern in Shadyside, worked with her at the latter and made the kitchen at G’s.

“We describe it as ‘seasonal American,’

G’s on Liberty owner thrilled to rejoin ‘big, organized chaos’

but it definitely has a fusion twist. Our chef is from the United States and he’s classic Asian-trained and classic French-trained,” she said. “And the Irish kid over here, Grainne, is a classic American-trained. So it obviously speaks that we should have a little bit of all of that going on, but we just make really good food and we try to keep it simple. “Our dishes aren’t overwrought, it’s just — this is fresh, it’s good, let’s roll with it.”

Open for dinner Monday through Saturday at present, the restaurant’s menu features starters (\$9-14) including Kataifi lamb meatballs, a Vietnamese shrimp crepe and Mongolian chicken tacos; salads (\$8-9); and sandwiches (\$13-16), like a lobster grilled cheese and an Angus burger au poivre. Entrees (\$19-36) include a honey-brushed duck breast, house-made penne pasta and Mediterranean lamb meatloaf.

“We try to incorporate whatever produce is in season. In summer there’s a lot of grill-

ing and salsas and relishes and vinaigrette. In the fall and winter, there’s more braising and roasting and squash and your root vegetables,” Ms. Trainor said.

The bar boasts a 20-bottle “ginventory” of higher-end expressions of the juniper spirit, a slate of 20 classic cocktails (\$9-\$14), and a robust but mostly moderately priced wine list (glasses \$8-13.50, bottles \$32-90). To assist, pairing suggestions are made for each entree.

“That helps the guests, and they are why we all get out of bed in the morning. But it helps our staff, because they’re all at different levels of knowledge,” she said. “We’re constantly training but it just helps them a little bit in their learning curve.”

Regulars of Alexander’s might not recognize the space, which has transitioned from homey Italian restaurant to a brighter, more contemporary, sleeker bar and dining room.

“I’m so grateful. I’m so blessed,” Ms. Trainor said. “This has been an outrageous effort from my staff and my contractor. The community have been so supportive. It’s satisfying beyond belief. It’s a beautiful space. We truly took it down to the bare walls, and I had a concept of what it would look like to be

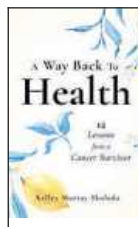
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Local books on dogs, frogs, relationships and cancer survival

By Thandi Weaver
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Western Pennsylvania has many authors who have recently published books. Here is a sampling of them, along with information on the authors and where the books can be purchased. This feature appears occasionally in the Magazine section of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

Kelley Murray Skoloda shares the story of her survival from colon cancer in her book, “A Way Back to Health: 12 Lessons From a Cancer Survivor.” The Greensburg resident shares the lessons she learned about staying motivated and managing her care. She is the founder and CEO of KS Consulting & Capital and co-chair of the investment committee for the Next Act Fund (She writes Press, \$15.99 at Amazon.com or bookshop.org).



Couples can tap into mindful tools to improve their relationship in “Creating Relationship Wellness: An Introduction to the Techniques of Mindfulness for Healthy Relationships” by Stephanie Wijkstrom. She is the founder of the Counseling and Wellness Center of Pittsburgh and lives in Sewickley (Universal Publishers, \$15.95 at whitewhalebookstore.com).



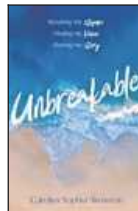
Annette Hostoffer and illustrator Felix Eddy have published her first children’s book, “Pittsburgh Dog & Frog.” In it, Heinz the dog and a giant yellow frog share adventures in Pittsburgh. The author is from Mount Washington and has a background in marketing, communications and fundraising development (Word Association Publishers, \$17.95 at Wildcard in Lawrenceville or Grandview Bakery on Mount Washington).



Michael J. Scott recalls memories that form his life journey in his book, “One of the Many.” Exploring significant life events such as family deaths, homelessness and more, this anthology covers the dilemmas Scott has faced throughout his life. The author works as a pastor at Mon Valley churches and does peer support for those in recovery (Page Publishing, \$16.99 at Target).



“Unbreakable: Breaking the Silence, Finding My Voice, Sharing My Story” by Carolyn Sophia Skowron tells the story of Skowron’s recovery from a life-changing car crash and struggle with mental health. In the book, the author attempts to break down the stigma around mental illness. Skowron is a Chatham University graduate with a degree in marketing and a presenter for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (New Degree Press, \$19.99 at riverstonebookstore.com).



Kevin Paul dives into Greene County’s ghosts, creatures and mysterious encounters in his book, “Haunted Hills and Hollows II: Still Lurking in Greene County, Pennsylvania.” Paul is a Greene County native who co-wrote the 2018 book, “Haunted Hills and Hollows: What Lurks in Greene County, Pennsylvania,” with Rosemary Ellen Guiley (Visionary Living, \$17.95 at Amazon.com).



Thandi Weaver is this fall’s City Charter High School intern at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. She can be reached at tweaver@post-gazette.com.

Bob Dylan more moody than rowdy in Moon concert

By Scott Mervis
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Say this about Bob Dylan: He might be the only 80-year-old performer in the world, of any note, who has a new album making up half of his concert set.

Since leaving Minnesota at 20, he’s done things his own way — and now that entails having the nerve to show up in a town and play whatever he wants.

Just kidding. What drew us to Dylan in the first place was that ornery, uncompromising quality that has never been shaken (well, maybe the disco song or “We Are the World”).

Anyway, at UPMC Events Center in Moon on Monday night, we got the “Rough and Rowdy Ways” Tour, centered on last year’s widely acclaimed release



Bob Dylan, center, and his band at UPMC Events Center in Moon on Monday.

that was more rough than rowdy.

It finds Dylan in the talkin’ blues mode that he embraced in like 1962, only now it’s dark and gruff and less funny, delivered Monday on a stage with the only light seeping up from the floor.

The early buzz on this tour, which is now 10 shows in, is that, having taken that pandemic year off, Dylan is once again singing in a manner in which you can hear the lyrics and make out what song he is doing.

That is true. The words were clear. Early on, the crowd even cheered him on during “I Contain Multitudes” when he sang, “I’m just like Anne Frank, like Indiana Jones/ And them British bad boys, The Rolling Stones.”

Just saw the Stones. Nope. Not now.

How should we say this? Dylan’s band — now with Charley Drayton on drums and Doug Lancio replacing Charlie Sexton on guitar — is a tightly wound, nuanced, almost dour unit that plays like it doesn’t want to make a mistake. The opposite of the Stones.

That was apparent right away on “Most Likely You Go Your Way and I’ll Go Mine” that had nothing resembling the wild swing of the original version.

Clearly, Dylan, singing in lower registers, wants everything to be

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Clare Sheedy/Post-Gazette

Tony Harris, left, and Rahmon Hart Sr. at the 27th annual Iota Phi Foundation Achievement Awards Dinner at Rivers Casino on the North Shore on Saturday. For video, go to **post-gazette.com**.

Iota Phi’s Achievement Awards Dinner

SEEN
PATRICIA SHERIDAN

The Iota Phi Foundation, in partnership with the Iota Phi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, held its 27th annual Achievement Awards Dinner at the Rivers Casino on Saturday night. Nearly 300 guests honored 17 awardees and five 2021 scholars.

“We are here to honor all of the community leaders who have done so much in the community,” said Rahmon Hart Sr., foundation chairman. “We are also honoring

the young scholars who have done well inside and outside the classroom.”

The scholars are Brent Jernigan, December Witherspoon, Samaree Perkins, Shawn Richardson Jr. and Malia Hays. Randy Brockington Sr. received the Chairman’s Award, while Noel Roach was recognized as the Omega Man of the Year. “I am extremely humbled and honored and I hope to be able to continue my services to the Pittsburgh community,” he said.

Esther Bush and Edward Van Stevenson each received Lifetime

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