

# Foodservice East

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PERIODICAL

**C**HARLESTOWN, MA – The oldest neighborhood in Boston, Charlestown has, for many years, been one of the most under-served when it comes to restaurants.

It's home to one of the country's first – the historic Warren Tavern (1780) - but over the ensuing centuries, saw far less restaurant development than other neighborhoods in Boston.

Asked why, the owners of one of the newest establishments to open here, Michael Cooney and John Paine of The Brewer's Fork, point to a dearth of commercial spaces in the neighborhood. Their restaurant,

which, during its past first year, received rave reviews and ratings, occupies a former dry cleaners space.

"The phone rang off the hook for two weeks or so before the opening," Chef John Paine recalls. The restaurant fulfilled a need and the neighborhood responded. The night of the opening the line out the door stretched down the block and beyond.

Since then, two meal periods, weekend brunch and daily lunch, have been added. "We have lots of families who come in with two or three kids," his partner and Head Bartender Michael Cooney observes.

## Welcome to the 'hood!

First in an ongoing look at what's happening in neighborhood restaurants in the Northeast

The two see the primary challenges as keeping up with business demand and trying to manage the flow without taking reservations.

The daily schedule allows little time for prep work, they point out, and accommodating the volume of business is challenging. "There's limited time for prep work," Paine notes. "We have the equivalent of a full time person just making meatballs."

The meatballs, available by themselves as a stand-alone menu item in the Small Plates section or on the Meatball Pizza are a major

**BREWER'S FORK**  
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## The Brewer's Fork brings a fresh perspective to Boston's Charlestown

Small plates, pizzas and craft brews draw repeat customers



# Lively retirement community connects with Scouts

## Numerous dining outlets give choices to everyone

**S**OUTHURY, CT – The Watermark at East Hill, an award-winning retirement community with a foodservice program described as “Food For The Soul” and a resort-style ambiance is linking its elderly residents with a Boy Scouts troop in a unique program created to form inter-generational bonds.

The effort came about from the “brainstorming” of Director of Food Services Jim Bain who’s held his post at Watermark for 24 years now, still going strong and continually coming up with new and creative ideas.

This year, for example, Bain won an Illuminating Excellence award in the Continuum of Care category for Premiere Food Services. He also received a Best Practices award from the Connecticut Assisted Living Association.

**From pub fare to fine dining to night clubbing, residents have options**

The words, ‘retirement community’ may generally draw yawns and ‘ho hum’ remarks. Not so with The Watermark at East Hill. It’s a lively facility offering a full continuum of care with Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Care and Rehabilitation and a creative dining

program.

Shared spaces provide a resort-style ambience with a lounge with fireplace, library, billiards room, theater, computer center and even a local bank branch.

Four dining options meet a variety of needs from The W Room, a place for evening culinary celebration and a meeting place for friends; The W Lounge, a cocktail lounge with a pub menu; The Mark, an upscale dinner option for special occasions or treating oneself, and the Gallery Café for breakfast and lunch.

A new direction evolved when Bain was driving to work one day and came up with the idea of teaming residents with Boy Scouts on trips and expeditions. “I wanted to set up a residents trip so I called the scoutmaster of my old troop about taking them camping



## "Fresh food becomes manageable," says Foodservice Director Bain



with the scouts."

The idea grew this year with a program with Connecticut Rivers Council, a group in charge of troops in the largest part of the state. Executive Director Steve Smith became a contact person who reached out to troops across the country, calling it "a spectacular idea."

The scouts, Bain points out, "learn so much and vice versa for the residents. They each really respect each other. We did a trip to Washington, DC this in May. One of the scouts was really interested in trains and one of our residents was a former conductor."

The two immediately bonded and began a conversation, learning from each other, Bain notes. The program "makes the residents feel young again. The scouts enjoyed meeting them and created the DC trip in the

format of a Boy Scout Jamboree. The residents learned about tying knots, cooking with fire, and more and were completely captivated." Another similar trip, he adds, is planned at the request of the Boy Scouts.

Bain's foodservice career began early on, he recalls. "I knew when I

was nine that I wanted to be a chef. Whenever my family would go out to dinner, I'd want to see what was in the kitchen and I got a lot of kitchen tours. The CIA was near my home and that's where I went to college."

At The Watermark, the patients, he points out, are "very well spoken, well to do and traveled. It's a partnership between us." Over his 24 years there, he's seen many changes. "I came from the restaurant industry and I kept the dining facilities here like a restaurant," he points out, "because I didn't know what 'healthcare foodservice' was."

Today, he's happy with his role and the fact that he is never bored thanks to continual change. Asked what the hardest thing is about what he does, he ponders, observing: "It's probably time management for myself. When my feet hit the ground,

I'm going! I like to be more giving than taking and help our residents solve problems. I really don't feel like what I do is work because I enjoy it so much. You've got to be a little crazy and creative."

In addition to everything else, Bain is involved in a national retirement community facilities' Watermark for Kids program created to help underserved youngsters. In one community where The Watermark is located, a child wanted to play a guitar, Bain says. "We awarded him one, along with lessons, and that gave him the ability to express himself and gain self-confidence. Coaches (Watermark residents) are paired with the kids."

Another Watermark program that makes a big difference for residents taking part is "Thrive Dining™," Bain explains. Designed for patients with

chewing, neuro-muscular or cognitive disorders, the program presents popular foods such as turkey to be ground up into finger food that the resident may pick up and eat without utensils. It's manageable finger food that tastes good and imparts the pleasure of dining to those who would otherwise struggle.

The program builds self-confidence. "Fresh food becomes manageable meals," Bain says. "Taste, texture and flavor remain the same but there's no need for the resident to have help. It's game changing and brings dignity back with scented napkins and a sorbet to stimulate the palate."

He characterizes the main dining program as one of "variety and change." Whether it's pub fare or more formal dining, the program "keeps the staff hopping."

**Thrive Dining™  
lets those with  
special issues eat  
a good meal**

