

BUSINESS

BEYOND THE LINE

A Little Cafe operator caters to clientele

In all my years of writing a column, I have never been prodded by readers to write about someone more than Kelle O'Connor and her hidden treasure, A Little Cafe on Connell Highway in Newport.

MIDGE KNERR

Maybe you have seen it while getting on or off the Pell Bridge — O'Connor has been running it for five years now, and it's one of Newport's best kept secrets for breakfast or lunch.

The charming spot boasts cheery bright lime green walls, little black tables with black caned chairs (they were once brown and turquoise — her sister painted them black for her, a labor of love) and blackboard specials. A "wall of fame" of muffins, still in their tins, added a homey touch — it is obvious all is made in house.

"I like experimenting with the muffins," O'Connor said. With flavors like carrot ginger, blueberry corn and apple cranberry nut, it is clear she likes to play around with different ingredients.

Her breakfasts are "commuter style" — fresh scrambled egg sandwiches built with bacon, country ham, sausage or tomato put into an oversized English muffin. She has her regulars, as they make the stop before crossing the bridge, and she prides herself in having "the usual" ready for them when they walk in.

Lunch is where O'Connor shines. Her sandwiches are

CAFE CHICKEN SALAD

From Kelle O'Connor, A Little Cafe

4 cooked chicken breasts. While still warm, toss chicken with salt, pepper, parsley, roasted garlic and a little oil. Let cool.

Combine:
 ½ cup cranberries
 ½ cup chopped celery
 ¾ cup mayonnaise
 (It helps to soften the cranberries in water then drain before adding to salad.)

Combine chicken with cranberry mixture, add additional mayonnaise if needed to taste.

Variations: walnuts or grapes.



A Little Cafe's chicken salad sandwich features chicken salad made from scratch with cranberries and celery and flavored with roasted garlic and parsley.

masterpieces made from the best-quality ingredients; she said she is looking forward to the Aquidneck Growers Market and fresh local produce. O'Connor also is working on participating at the market this year, as she has a dynamic pesto mayonnaise and is working on a vegan version.

Some of her best sellers are the warm roast beef and herb cheese with caramelized onions on a grinder roll and "our world famous pulled pork," finished with secret barbecue ingredients. Soups and salads round out her many lunch choices, along with the blackboard specials each day. And if you like smoothies, you have come to the right place!

Attention to detail and ability to meet the needs of her clientele are important to her. When I recently wrote about

my food allergy, many readers wrote to tell me that O'Connor offers gluten-free options. She even had a sandwich waiting for me on gluten-free bread — what a treat! No problem for vegetarians, either.

Lunch was winding down when I stopped by, so I asked her a few questions.

Q&A with Kelle O'Connor
How did A Little Cafe get started?

It's a funny story — I stopped in to get an iced coffee, it took 10 minutes and the man was miserable. I got in my car and called my mom and said I've got to put this guy out of his misery, call and see if it is for sale. It was too much money, but the owner said he'd consider renting it. We had a gentleman's agreement and that was almost five years ago.

What is your background? I know you were in the hospitality business — but cooking?

I have no formal training unless you consider cooking eggs at 15 counts.

What would you like locals to know about you and the cafe?

I'm local and have been in the Newport restaurant scene since 1985. I left the event and hospitality business (working at OceanCliff for many years as an event-bridal coordinator) because I wanted to work in the community I live in. I also enjoy being part of the community through different organizations.

How much catering do you do?

Not enough! However, what we do is quality and I typically get new business through word of mouth. (She plans to offer box lunches and provisions for boats this summer as well.)



David Hansen ♦ Daily News staff photos

Kelle O'Connor took over A Little Cafe on Connell Highway in Newport almost five years ago.

What is your favorite kitchen tool?

Does wine count? (I've never gotten that response!)

What do you do in your down time?

I read, go to the gym and, my favorite, go by myself or with my nephews to the beach — we love to bodysurf! I like to drive my 1994 Saab convertible; I waited a long time for it.

What is your favorite late-

night snack?

Must I choose one? Crackers and cheese — I've never met a cheese I didn't like.

How do you feel about the upcoming season?

Bring it on! Newport rocks!

Midge Knerr, a former executive chef in New York and Newport restaurants, is a Daily News columnist. Send her e-mail at midgelknerr@aol.com.

MEALS AND BEVERAGE TAX

This monthly chart shows the meal and beverage tax disbursed to local municipalities from the state, which collects an 8 percent tax and returns 1 percent to communities.

	MARCH	APRIL
Jamestown	\$2,740.31	\$3,064.93
Little Compton	\$1,175.98	\$2,289.86
Middletown	\$34,656.72	\$31,629.43
Newport	\$58,547.88	\$67,129.04
Portsmouth	\$8,560.97	\$10,737.60
Tiverton	\$9,719.14	\$8,250.65
STATE TOTAL	\$1,317,643.46	\$1,277,939.62

SOURCE: RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

HOTEL TAX

This monthly chart shows the hotel tax distributed to local municipalities from the state, which collects 6 percent tax and returns 1 percent to communities, except in the case of Newport, which collects and keeps its 1 percent tax.

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
Jamestown	\$16.89	\$73.17
Little Compton	\$3	\$653.50
Middletown	\$4,805.70	\$6,741.59
Newport	\$15,348.01	\$23,490.18
Portsmouth	0	\$6.32
Tiverton	0	0
STATE TOTAL	\$79,619.54	\$82,292.63

SOURCES: RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, CITY OF NEWPORT FINANCE DEPARTMENT

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Middletown - Island Farm
Light-filled 4 bedroom like new colonial. Open kitchen/dining/living areas overlooking stonewall-bordered yard. Convenient to beaches and town.
\$649,000 Michelle Kirby, 848-6714

Portsmouth - Sakonnet Views
Gambrel colonial in Glen Farm provides pretty views of Sakonnet Passage and short walk to Sandy Point. Country kitchen, three bedrooms, 2 baths.
\$529,000 Chris West, 848-6716

Middletown - Paradise Ave
Picture-perfect cape near beaches and Norman Bird Sanctuary. Two bedrooms, 1 ½ baths, recently renovated top to bottom. Nice yard and porch.
\$521,000 Kate Greenman, 848-6727

Newport - Wisteria House
Charming mansard-roofed Victorian with generously sized rooms. Four bedrooms including master suite, 3 baths, and spacious yard.
\$495,000 Michelle Drum, 848-6720

Portsmouth - Oakland Farm
One-level condo with high ceilings, skylights, walk-in pantry, and spacious master with access to private patio. Full basement for plenty of storage.
\$465,000 Bertie MacGowan, 848-6745

Newport - Dolphin Gates
Pleasant two bedroom first floor condo within walking to Rovensky Park. Ten foot ceilings, hardwoods, fireplace, and private deck.
\$325,000 Katie Ahearne, 848-6707

Middletown - Single Level
Well maintained 3 bedroom ranch. Fully appointed kitchen and cheerful 13 x 10' sunroom. Corner lot with fenced yard and garden shed.
\$319,000 Liz Mastin, 848-6722

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PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

The following property transactions were recently recorded in Newport County communities.

Date	Seller	Buyer	Address	Price
Middletown				
Mar. 31:	Zachary D. Burns to	Michaela S. Reynolds	Unit 4 Of 75 Green End Ave.	\$179,500
Apr. 1:	Welbourne and Lynda Bronaugh to	Sean Patrick and Monique Rooney	3 Ichabod Ln.	\$345,000
Apr. 6:	Joseph and Theresa Ashness to	Paul H. Ward	50 Miantonomi Ave.	\$292,500
Apr. 7:	Gary A. Mendoza to	Lynne M. Chevoya	Unit 254 Of 254 Purgatory Rd.	\$14,000
Apr. 8:	Anthony and Elaine Ruggiero to	William and Janet Wenzel	Unit 3 Of 60 Bayridge Dr.	\$330,000
Apr. 9:	Christopher and Mary Bertuti to	Patrick and Jane Geraghty	2 Casey Dr.	\$230,000
	Stuart M. and Donna J. Lee to	Gregory and Erika Adams	7 Debbie Rd.	\$355,500
Apr. 12:	Zalo 1 LLC to	Lyon Carter and Stuart A. Brown	31 Oceanview Dr.	\$660,000
Apr. 13:	Michael Edward Phelps to	Aimee Phelps Lee	17-21 Warren Ave.	\$495,000
Apr. 15:	Bank United to	Christopher and Barbara Rose	37 Massachusetts Ave.	\$145,000
	Todd and Ingeborg Wobig to	Kellie Divalma & Alexander C. Simeone	18 Pocahontas Dr.	\$299,000
	Gregory S. and Anne M. Shultz to	James and Kathryn Hamilton,	10 Sachuest Dr.	\$397,500
Apr. 16:	Jon B. Edwell to	Joseph A. Kunicki & Patricia A. Stonge	2 Ruth St.	\$261,000
Newport				
Apr. 13:	Jeffrey Hebert to	Ryan P. Tucker	Unit 2 Of 7 Everett St.	\$242,000
	122 Prop LLC to	Karen G. Cunningham & Michael E. Dimatteo	Unit 1 Of 122 J T Connell Rd.	\$182,000
Apr. 15:	Catherine Ryan to	Gary D. Murad	Unit T1 Of 99 Spring St.	\$130,000
Apr. 16:	Bert Quint to	Mark and Maureen Marosits	45 3rd St.	\$670,000
	450 Thames Street LLC to	William and Jane Rucci	Unit 3 Of 448-450 Thames St.	\$260,000
	Andrew J. McKay to	Mark and Maureen Marosits	Walnut St., \$101,000	
	Mary Constance Walsh & Stephen H. Nippert to	Bryan and Whitney Berdy	N/A	\$281,500
	Margaret C. Morrison to	Bryan David Berdy & Whitney Lockwood-Berdy	N/A	\$94,000