

Good 'Ole Uncle Bob's

by
Raymond E. Muth

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Merry millennium! You'll never guess where I celebrated New Year's last night. It was at the hottest spot in Western Pennsylvania. The locals call it Bob's. But I always playfully invoke it's official name, "Good `Ole Uncle Bob's".

Bob's is where I occasionally meet some of the best computer minds I know for lunch. It's where my best friend takes his kids for dinner. It's the first place my sister-in-law has to frequent when she comes back in to town from Chicago. It's the home of the big bird salad. It's funny. It's quirky. It's Martian. It's the world's greatest sit-down restaurant.

Sedona, Arizona lays claim to the mystical powers of the harmonic convergence within its fabled red rock canyons but that's nothing compared to the naturally recurring ambiance dancing around Mars, Pennsylvania's very own Good `Ole Uncle Bob's. You don't need to hang out in Shadyside to find a more eclectic cast of characters than the group that works and hangs out at Bob's. From prominent business people to people finding themselves, the price is the same and everyone gets treated the same. There's something good about that.

I don't really know why I fell in love with Good `Ole Uncle Bob's. It's not like I'm indigenous to Mars. It might go back to the first time I visited and the waitress asked if I was there for the Ostrich burger special. I said, "what the heck" and found that it was awesome. It might have been the time that half my hoagie was toasted and the other half wasn't. It might have been the time the waitress kept warning me that getting married was something I better carefully consider. (There's nothing better than getting motherly advice while you're eating). Maybe it's the fact that Good `Ole Uncle Bob's is owned by a guy named Bill. Or maybe it's the novelty of purchasing "Good `Ole Uncle Bob chips" to buy your honey a drink.

In the heat of the summer it's hard to tell whether there's more Harleys or pickup trucks in the parking lot but it's not a place you have to worry. It's just part of the fun. Everyone has a smile on their face at Bob's.

My computer guru friend Tony has a hysterical routine he goes through whenever he places an order. He sets his watch and times the waitress. He then takes bets on whether they'll remember to bring him his peppers. They always forget. It's a riot. He thinks it's a conspiracy. I say it's just Bob's. Anyhow, Tony has made a small fortune on dollar bets. He always gets his order within this predetermined time horizon and he always gets his peppers two minutes later.

I had to recently celebrate a rather festive occasion so I naturally picked Bob's. My parents were a little tentative about walking into this strange place. But as soon as they

took their seats, they couldn't wipe the smiles off their faces. A friend began acting like an idiot, introducing himself as me to everyone he didn't know. You get the picture. It's better than a good Cheer's rerun.

I was at Uncle Bob's one unforgettable night before Thanksgiving. The place was packed. We couldn't get a parking space anywhere. We had to park somewhere down the road. When we finally made our way into Bob's, my wife, a native Martian introduced me to half of Mars. Then the jukebox started playing this David Allen Coe song about his Mom getting out of prison but getting run over by a train in the rain before he could greet her. Everyone knew the words except me. I didn't get it. I still don't. What a great place.

Never been to Bob's? Don't for look a big advertisement in the yellow pages or even a big road sign. Places like that don't need to advertise. Just head for Mars and look for where the vehicles are stacked. Ask for the Ostrich burger or the big bird salad. As they say in Mars, it's out of this world. It's the new millennium. You owe it to yourself to start the new year right. Head over to Bob's and smile.



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