

Small Business Buzz

A newsletter for Des Moines Patrons who value their community.

This is it! Nothing is better than starting the morning early and hanging at your local coffee shop over a fresh cup of brew and something delicious to eat.

Coffee, like wine, takes on qualities from the soil and climate conditions where it's grown. Each cup you drink tells a story of earth, harvest, travel, and the final destination.

In this issue we learned—just as the regions for growing coffee will shade tastes—coffeehouses deliver



flavor as varied as their owners.

Each entrepreneur we met brings something unique to the mix of options available to the community.

And in turn, each individual echoed a dedication to community and their employees. These are the people who started the quality coffee movement here in Des Moines.

So hats off to the neighbors who have created warm gathering places and good smells that breeze through the air. **BZ**



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Friedrichs Alter Ego

www.friedrichscoffee.com

If you're going to explore the lands where coffee beans grow, then be prepared for an exciting voyage. Or, if travel is tough right now, take a quick-click tour of www.sirfriedrich.com, to read the tales of Friedrich the mythical mascot adventurer who looks for beans to make "liquid gold." The stories are meant to be fun but they do embody a true adventurer and authentic person, Gary Meyer, president of Friedrich's Coffee.

In an instant, you get the sense that Gary sees the world and people with genuine interest. He sits in his colorful

office this morning, smiling and relaxed... even though he's having phone and e-mail glitches. It's the kind of thing that would drive some people nuts, but Gary is laid back. He smiles and starts up the conversation as if we've been talking for hours.

His enthusiasm for the subject of coffee shows when he explains the details of roasting and sampling. It is the day-to-day operations of coffee roasting that propels him with such energy. With cup in

(Friedrich's continued on page 2)

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What's Inside?

Grounds of Passion • Java Joe's Ghost • Community starts with Z • Coffee shortages • A little spice

(Friedrich's Continued from page 1)

hand, we go to the tasting room where "cupping" of new roasted beans is done. Gary explains that this process of sampling assures the high quality and consistency required to meet Friedrich's coffee profile standards.

Behind the vibrant front, the door opens to the wholesale operation humming on its daily mission. Gary offers a cup of fresh brew and refills his own from a well-used *Mr. Coffee*. With a sly grin he points to the pot, "The coffee maker really doesn't matter. It's the quality of the coffee that counts."

Why Coffee?

"Well, I've always liked coffee," Gary explains, "but years back, before we had kids, my wife and I took a trip to Costa Rica. It was a great trip. We camped all over the country and had a great time. I had wanted to visit with a coffee grower while we were there and one day we met this young boy. It turned out that his family worked for a grower. I got to actually work with the coffee and help move it with a snow shovel from huge storage hoppers at the edge of coffee fields into the back of 2-ton trucks."

After the Costa Rican trip in 1991, Gary and his wife came home and opened their first coffee house location, at 1821-22nd St. They kept growth at a modest pace, but did keep growing. They opened several more shops and began to focus on the wholesale aspect in 2002—bumping up their roasting to supply their shops and the retail market as well.

It could be that coffee is in Gary's genes. On another trip, this one to Germany, Gary learned that his great grand-father, Friedrich, owned a hotel, restaurant, and coffeehouse that catered to King Friedrich of Germany during the mid to late 1800s.

Gary concedes to quite a bit of travel with a particular interest in the people and places where coffee is grown. Most of it comes from Central America, Indonesia, and East Africa. As compelling as these regions are for the crops that support his business, it is the people that live and work

there who have impacted him most. Some of the poorest people of the world can be found on coffee farms struggling to maintain a basic livelihood.

Gary's Goal

"I want to leave something that lasts." Gary explains. He is involved in programs that support evangelical and humanitarian missions in coffee growing areas, where much help is needed. Gary admits that the evangelical position can be an issue for some, "but if I have to own up to anything, I might as well confess I'm Christian."

Customer Comment

"I always prefer their products...convenient...they (often) have my drink ready by the time I've paid at the counter...I'm loyal to Friedrichs whenever possible."

Cecil VH of Des Moines

Gary is a strong supporter of the Coffee Kids organization (*see box at right*). He explains his commitment is to be responsible to those who help provide the commodity that supports his livelihood.

Gary is passionate about giving back something to the farmers from the areas where much of the world's coffee is grown. He also expresses his responsibility to give back to the community where he lives. "I really love Des Moines. It has such a nice small-town feel." He sees his community here as more extended family.

Even though his style is casual, his vision for growing his wholesale coffee business is aggressive. "Business is just business unless you have something driving you." Wherever his well of energy comes from, Gary seems reluctant to admit his accomplishments. Maybe his sense of enjoying the journey makes it difficult to ever be satisfied at having arrived. **SB**



Think as you drink...

It's easy to lose sight of just how much work it takes to get that delicious cup of coffee in your hands. Places like Guatemala, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua all seem far away. Yet there is a reality to consider.

There are people with hard-working hands in those countries that spend their days cultivating the beans that come to us (and generate annual industry revenues of \$60 billion). Unfortunately, the families that work coffee farms see only a small income from growing coffee, earning as little as 4 cents per pound.

In 1988, an organization was created to address the needs of coffee growers and their families. Bill Fishbein founded *Coffee Kids* after he witnessed the extent of the poverty on a trip to Guatemala.

Coffee Kids is a non-profit endeavor with the primary objective of helping families reach beyond the boundaries of coffee to pursue other income opportunities. The philosophy of providing a *hand up rather than a hand out* is pivotal to *Coffee Kids* success.

Programs include community based projects, small business development, healthcare, and education. *Coffee Kids* also reaches out to coffee roasters and consumers to provide awareness of the economic imbalance in coffee growing regions.

If you would like to help please visit www.coffeekids.org. Further information and opportunities to help are available. **SB**



SBB

Art
Writer
Photography

David Borzo
Sherry Borzo
Alexandra Borzo

Support Small —Returns Big

It's easy to understand that customers often shop with their mind focused on getting the lowest prices. But did you know that the short-sited return on a cheap price may in fact not be the best deal for you and your community?

In a study conducted in the Andersonville area of Chicago, Illinois, researchers looked at the return on investment by comparing 10 local retailers and their chain competitors.

The study found that for every \$100 the retailers brought in through sales, the local firms returned nearly \$70 to the Chicago economy through wages and benefits, purchase of goods and services, profits to local owners, and charitable giving. At the chain stores, just over \$40 of every \$100 in spending was re-circulated in the local economy. For more info on the study go to www.andersonvillestudy.com



Catch a "cup-of -joe" to go at the Windsor Heights location of Grounds for Celebration at 6601 University in Windsor Heights.

Other area locations include:

- 2709 Beaver Ave. DM
- 4800 Mills Civid Pkwy WDM
- 3801 Ingersoll DM

Grounded in Passion

www.groundsforcelebration.com

How does *your* passion translate? Most of us dabble in hobbies or collections. However, there are those who take their enthusiasm and become submerged in it. For Jan and George Davis, their interest in excellent coffee transformed into a production that they share with their neighbors every day.

It takes organization and confidence to operate several successful coffee shop locations and a wholesale operation. Then again, it takes high caffeine levels to become co-owners of a Panamanian coffee farm. *Grounds for Celebration* was just a bean of an idea that brewed more than a decade ago, and it began with some great tasting coffee.

They knew they were on to something special when they got their first roasted beans from Panama. Jan explains how they became interested, "We were huge coffee fans...nuts about coffee. This was really before there were any coffee shops

in town. We got some coffee that was grown at a high altitude in Panama and had been roasted there. George's mother, who was from Panama, brought it back from one of her visits. She would bring us samples and we were like 'this is so good!'

Jan and George started doing a lot of research. They read everything they could about coffee and even attended specialty coffee conventions. While they continued to gather information, they hoped that someone would open a shop in their Beaverdale neighborhood.

In the meantime, they developed and sold self-contained espresso carts which were purchased by stores like Younkers. Jan explains, "They would have an espresso machine, refrigerator, and waste tank...everything on it that you would need. We sold them to several people who

(Grounded continued on page 4)

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(Grounded Continued from page 3)
 started their businesses here in Des Moines.” During this time, they still waited for a coffee shop to open up in Beavertdale. “Then we thought ‘this is stupid, nobody’s going to do it so we’re going to do it.’” In 1991, a space became available in the



With their own hands. George picking coffee on the Panamanian farm. Photo courtesy of Grounds for Celebration. More available at www.groundsforcelebration.com

shopping area there and they opened their first *Grounds for Celebration* location.

“Really from there, after we opened that shop, we just learned as we went. Jan explains. “We both had full-time jobs...had other businesses and we did that for the next three years.”

“We opened up our store at 86th and Hickman down in Cobblestone about 2 ½ to 3 years after we opened the first store. After we were there for about four years, we moved it over to the West Side location. In the meantime, before we moved that store, we opened up Ingersoll at Boesens which is still there today, and then we opened the Windsor Heights location.”

They’ve learned it’s about listening to their customers

Recently they closed a location in the downtown historical building. Jan acknowledges a lesson learned, “We closed it about two months ago. It was too much food...too much catering. Really our focus is coffee—that’s what we do.”

Lessons about store placement and customer loyalty have evolved. “We have just been learning by trial and error,” Jan concedes. “We laugh about lots of things we did when we first started and now look back and think ‘What were we doing?

What were we thinking?’ We have probably learned more from our failures than our successes. And really listening to our customers, that has been a big learning lesson.”

The Farm in Panama

If putting their energies into opening coffee shop locations were not enough, Jan and George became deeply serious when they invested and participated in a coffee farm in Panama. They began two years ago by picking the plants, planting the seedlings and then going back to Panama to work along with George’s cousin who is co-owner of the farm. “They are learning right along with us. We are doing this all organically and it is all hand-picked. We have 5,000 plants which basically means that when they are mature each plant will yield a pound of coffee. This will supply

coffee. We picked out very good plants—several different varieties that we thought would do well there.” Jan and George will have an open house for the first tasting when the coffee is ready in July or August.

Jan and George have taken a hands-on approach to cultivating their business. The result has been great tasting coffee and inviting neighborhood spots to relax. Jan acknowledges that in addition to customer loyalty, their big support has been their employees. They are conscious that their people help make the difference. They plan to continue their focus on opening stores, but in a licensing capacity. “We have one that opened up in Norwalk about three weeks ago and we have another that will be opening up in a couple of weeks at Seventh and Grand.”

The interview concludes and Jan pops up to get back to taking orders and talking to customers. She places the head phone on her ear to take the next order at the drive-up window of the Windsor Heights location, and is once again on the move sharing what she and George have learned to do so well...provide great tasting coffee to the neighborhood. **sb**

Customer Comment

“I am a daily visitor to Grounds for Celebration, most often the Beavertdale location. It is the best cup of coffee in town. It has a rich, robust flavor that just gets you going. The atmosphere and general ‘coffee shop’ talk is wonderful and the baristas are friendly and happy and they want to serve you a great ‘cup-o-joe’. The tea is excellent as well.” Marcia W. of Des Moines

most of our Panamanian coffee at the stores.”

Their web site features photos and information on the process of cultivation of a crop of coffee. “It was very exciting watching it grow. We have excellent growing conditions there for really quality

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Sherry and David Borzo

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Java Joes at the heart of renewal in downtown

Beans of Dreams

www.javajoescoffeehouse.com

Their business ideas for Java Joes have been inspired...almost like being urged on by a phantom source. (How right this seems in a state where farmers exchange corn fields for baseball diamonds at a ghost's bidding.) Cyndy and Joe Coppola have a knack of building it with the result that customers enthusiastically appear.

Of course it hasn't been easy, and some people even scratched their heads initially. In hindsight though, Cyndy, seems able to laugh about the ups and downs of owning and operating a wholesale roaster and coffee house.

The first ghost-like nudge hit when Cyndy and Joe had two young daughters. At that time, Cyndy wanted to have more flexibility for their young family and started looking for part-time options. She couldn't find the perfect fit and so they considered opening a business. "Coffeehouses were hot on the West Coast," explains Cyndy, "and Des Moines didn't have a coffee house or small batch roaster at the time."

Cyndy acknowledges that they had one big advantage that many small businesses don't ...a unique and empty space. "Joe had actually shown this

building to a couple of different groups of people considering starting a coffeehouse, but they never could get the funding."

Even without signing a lease, Cyndy and Joe felt the stress of high overhead costs associated with restaurant startup. They had their own savings, a space, and a large collection of tables and chairs due to Joe's collecting, but they also needed capital for major things like leasing their first espresso machine. Cyndy laughs, "We went through our own money in the first month-and-a-half." They ended up taking on a loan. On July 17, 1992 Java Joe's officially opened its doors—becoming a significant piece of Des Moines' downtown revival.

Cyndy smiles at the thought that Java Joe's began as her need to have a part-time job. "What I thought would be a good part-time job ended up being more hours than I ever put in at any other job... working 17 days straight, 80-hour weeks. I

mean that first six months was probably the hardest because we started with only four people." At that point Java Joe's was open Monday through Saturday, morning, noon, and night.

Support for Java Joe's was almost immediate. In just a few months people were asking for the doors to open on Sunday as well. "The first Sunday we opened at 10, and when I got here at 9 a.m., I found people were already waiting for the doors to open. So the next Sunday I decided to open at 9 and got here at 8, and there were already people waiting outside. I decided that 9 would be the earliest I could open on Sundays!"

The coffee shop was a magnet for the diversity of the city. Cyndy recognizes that Java Joe's has been fortunate to have resources come their way through loyal patrons. In learning the roasting process,

(Beans continued on page 6)

Word Of Mouth



Okay...I'll take a decaf medium roast organic Sumatra mountain, extra grande, skinny, no whip, extra shot, hold the honey and make it to go...and uh...hold the coffee.

(Beans continued from page 5)

it was the “coffeehouse network” that brought them the talents of a master roaster from Chicago in the early days of operation. There was no printed material on the process, so the consultation of a master roaster was critical.

These days Java Joes is also a pivotal downtown spot to sample local live entertainment. The stage evolved out of a kind of mystic destiny. Cyndy admits that the stage had been built simply as a means

Customer Comment

“I start my day, everyday, with a Soy Chai from Java Joe’s in downtown Des Moines. Although Java Joe’s is known for its coffee, it also serves up the best tasting Chai in Des Moines. The thing I like the most is that no matter who is serving they remember my order and I never have long to wait! An extra bonus is that every 10 drinks, the 11th on is on the house. Now, come on, who can beat that?”

Martha D. of Des Moines.

to separate the back area for office space. Almost overnight Cyndy became a booking agent.

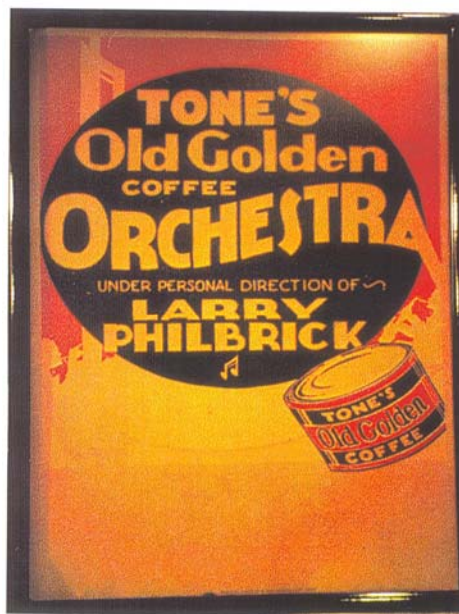
“It wasn’t long before I just bought a calendar and musicians would call...and I would say ‘When do you want to play? How do you want us to bill it and we’ll put you on.’” Cyndy admits that she didn’t spend many evenings in the store those days when their children were small. “Pretty soon we’d hear from our employees...I can’t believe you would let that guy come back.!”

Booking the stage had become a time-consuming effort. They received some much-needed help from right in the shop. It was a frequent patron who came forward and offered to help. During this time the standards were raised for performers and touring musicians. Eventually though, the cover charges and low attendance for these shows steered the format back to featuring local artists as much as traveling musicians.

6 Publication of In Mind Matters

Whether Cyndy and Joe had ethereal support for ideas, the one value that’s all their own is the high standard they have for providing quality products. “We’ve always tried to maintain high quality. Top quality coffee...we mark our jars with roast dates. And in our food we aim for the best quality that we can get. Since our quality in coffee is high we feel that our food should be consistent.”

Java Joe’s provides a heartbeat to downtown. For the Des Moines patron it means a place to grab a cup of great coffee on a Saturday while strolling the Farmers Market, a place to meet with friends on a crisp fall evening, or a venue to feel present in community and savor the artistic talents of neighbors and friends. With almost 14 years under their belt hopefully Cyndy and Joe will continue to listen to the great Coffee Spirit of Java Joe’s. **BZ**



Poster of Tone’s Sponsoring The Old Golden Coffee Orchestra Under Larry Philbrick 1950s Photo and timeline courtesy of Tones Brothers, Inc.

Brothers in Coffee

Tones Brothers, Inc. initially began as a spice and coffee business. They were the last of the locally owned roasting companies to quit the coffee business and move strictly into spices.

The Brothers not only produced coffee and spices, they were also inventors that

(Tones Brothers continued on page 7)



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(Tones Brothers continued from page 6)
 contributed to freshness and food quality during their entrepreneurship.

1873 Tone Brothers, Inc is founded by Jehiel and Isaac E. Tone, as a coffee and spice business at 207 Walnut Street in Des Moines.

1884 Tones is the first company west of the Mississippi to roast and sell coffee. At that time, coffee was packaged green in 132 lb. burlap bags, purchased by the pound at the local grocers, and then roasted in the wood stove at home.

1894 Tone's began packing ready roasted whole bean coffee.

1901 Tone's was grinding coffee by now. Special porcupine type machinery was installed to make oil paper liners for containers to prevent grease from coffee saturating the carton.

1940 Jay Tone, Sr. and his brother Fred pioneered "CO2 pressure packed" ground coffee - to extend the freshness and shelf life for ground coffee. This solved the industry challenge that ground coffee contained 12% fat and became rancid after prolonged exposure to air, just like butter and salad oils. (The process holds a US Patent which Tone's later sold to Chase & Sandborn-now **General Foods**)

1970 Tone's left the coffee business and became dependent solely on the the spice business. **BZ**

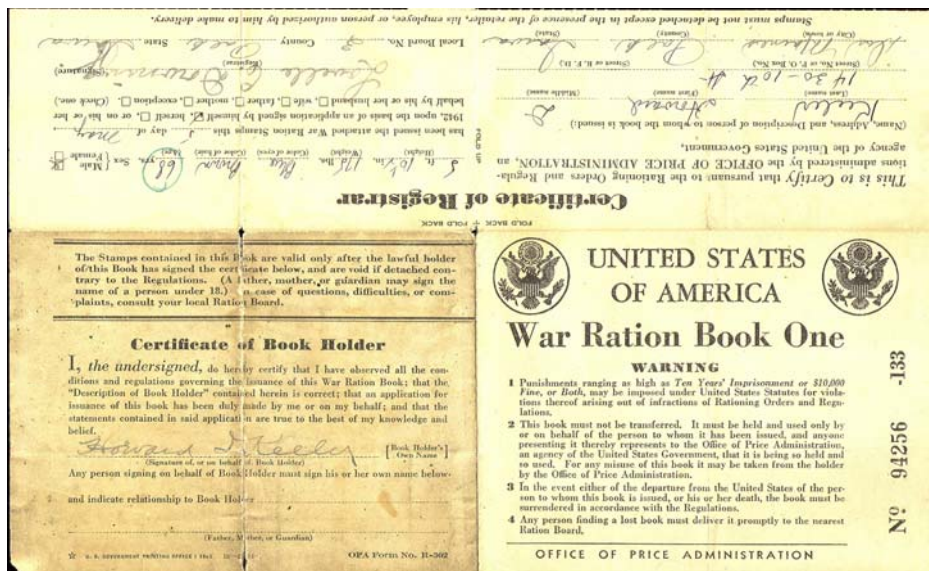
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Gather your coupons for sugar, gasoline, canned goods and meat. A War bond booklet from WWII. Coffee wasn't rationed but it was hard to come by. Artifact courtesy of Greg Borzo artifact collection.

Under Counter Coffee —Memories of WWII

What a difference 6 decades has made in our capacity to consume. Today we live like there is an abundance everything. During WWII, however, coffee—along with sugar, meat, canned goods, and gasoline were precious commodities given first to support the armed forces.

Don Lanhan graciously offers memories of those days over a cup of coffee at the Waveland Café. This retired history teacher now spends his days providing support to the Iowa Historical Society. He recalls how grocers handled the coffee shortage during the 1940s.

Don was in high school during much of the War and worked at a grocery store on the corner of Beaver and Franklin called Amends. Don explains, "It wasn't so much that you couldn't get coffee...but it was the fact that your main brands were hard to get. For instance, a couple of main brands at that time were Maxwell House and Folgers. Well, you could only get a couple of cans so we would keep the good brands under the counter. If you came in and asked if we had any Folgers for example, we would reach down under the counter

and put a Folgers in your sack. We would usually put it in your sack without other people even knowing it had gone in there because the minute they would see you put the coffee in we would hear 'oh, we'd like some too!'"

Most name brand food items, cigarettes and gas went overseas. Everyone sacrificed to focus on winning the war quickly.



Just before his coffee days. Don's high school graduation picture from Roosevelt 1945. He joined the army just seven days before the U.S. dropped the atomic bomb which ended the war. Photo Courtesy of Don Lanhan.

Still Iowans were puzzled by the shortages of coffee because they knew that most of it came from South America which was not involved in the War. Government agencies explained that submarine warfare had made shipping space more precious.

This meant less coffee being shipped and available in the U.S. Second cups of coffee were not offered at the restaurants and

(WWII continued on page 8)

As always thanks to our loyal readers... you keep us keeping on. May you grow and prosper in numbers!

(*WW II Continued from page 7*)

loyal customers got first call on name brands at their local grocer.

The pinch was felt the greatest by the Des Moines jail who had a drop in their coffee supply of 25%. C.E. Forbes, the city purchasing agent was quoted in the Des Moines Tribune as saying, "Prisoners will simply have to get used to drinking brew made by boiling the coffee grounds over.

BZ

Taste Bud Travels

www.zanzibarscoffee.com

There is true pleasure in traveling the world on your taste buds. That was the allure of coffee for Julie McGuire, owner of Zanzibar's Coffee Adventure. When we meet, she takes a break and removes her work gloves. As Julie considers answers to my questions she seems reflective. She phrases her responses as if her words have matter, weight, and substance—a person who thinks deeply about the impact of her thoughts and actions. In contrast to her deliberate manner of today, her venture into coffee as a vocation started out less planned.

"I grew up in Des Moines. I went to college and did some traveling and ended my traveling in Southern California. I took a job working for a coffee company there. At the time it was very much the same size as Zanzibar's Coffee Adventure. It was a family operation and they had a couple of stores. It was my intention to work there until I got a real job. I just decided that, in fact, it was a really great place to work".

Julie moved back to Des Moines to be near her family and began exploring the opportunity of a coffee shop here. At that time, there was nothing to compare with her coffee experience from the West Coast and she felt Des Moines was ready to have a place that offered great coffee and a coffee house atmosphere.

It's the coffee

Most important would be the coffee. Julie wanted others to savor the variety of tastes from all over the world. The flavor would be distinct based on bean varieties, growing climate, and soil conditions.



An Ingersoll oasis - coffee, tea, and atmosphere available at Zanzibar's Coffee Adventure, 2723 Ingersoll Ave.

Zanzibar's features coffees grown in places such as Central and South America, Indonesia, and Africa.

Gather in Zanzibar's Coffee Adventure on any given morning and the regular crowd is there. This is community at its best. Not only do they come in for coffee but they hang for awhile so that it is *the* place to start the day and catch up with neighbors.

Julie sees community as key to the values in how she operates the business. In 1991, she was convinced that Des

"I have more patience than anyone ever would have guessed...and I still don't have much."

Julie McGuire on what she's learned about herself in owning a business.

Moines was ready for a place that offered more in terms of food and coffee. She was pleased but not greatly surprised by the response when she opened.

"There was more diversity in Des Moines than initially meets the eye and people care about others." Julie points out. "In this neighborhood people are not insular. Upon coming back to Des Moines and getting a lot of skeptical and doubtful

responses to my interest, I was of the opinion that I couldn't be an anomaly. I could not be the only person to have grown up and lived in Des Moines and still desire more than what was being offered. And in fact that is true."

In the 15 years that Julie has been back the proof of her ideas has played out. She sees that the entire food industry has improved. Julie is convinced that she was right and did not underestimate the diversity and tastes of people in this community. "I wasn't crazy to think that just because you live in Des Moines you shouldn't have the opportunity to eat well, drink high quality coffee and wine, and have really delicious meals and freshly prepared foods. And yet that wasn't readily available in 1991."

If the coffee comes first at Zanzibar's, then a close second is the overall atmosphere. "In some ways," explains Julie, "equally as important was the experience of having a place where you could gather that was inviting, comfortable, not offensive, and not a bar, and really somewhere you could be part of the community. Whether you were alone... whether you walked in by yourself or you walked in with other people."

Ingersoll Competition

Developments along Ingersoll have included a new franchised coffee shop just up the street. Julie's philosophy of diligence carries over on this score too. "I can only affect my own environment and so it behooves me to pay attention to what I'm doing here in Zanzibar's Coffee Adventure and to not pay attention to what everyone else is doing. Obviously I can't have blinders on, but to worry doesn't add value to the experience that people have here. Competition is always nice for people so they can make their own choices, and if we were the only person on the block, then that doesn't say anything about the quality of my product."

It is just this kind of work-ethic that has made Zanzibar's Coffee Adventure not only a delicious and pleasant place to visit—Zanzibar's is also a good neighbor in the community and good neighbors can be hard to come by. **SB**