

# **The Last Days of the Stella's Charles-Ten Restaurant**

**by Mel Montemerlo**

The Charles-Ten was a fixture in Windsor Locks for 74 years, from 1942 to 2016. It was unique. No bar-restaurant in Windsor Locks ever had a loyal clientele that spanned five generations. A previous article covered the history of the Charles-Ten. This focusses on the last week of the restaurant, which closed on July 28, 1916.

The closing of the restaurant was long planned, except for the date. Ann Ten-erowicz came to work in the restaurant in 1983, when her mother was in poor health, and needed help with the restaurant. It was supposed to be temporary. Ann took over the restaurant in 1983. Jack Redmond interviewed her for a Cabbages and Kings article that appeared in the April 24, 1992 issue of the Windsor Locks Journal. In that article, Ann told Jack that she was different than her parents. She said: "Unlike my parents, I have learned one great lesson. No business is worth precious family time or personal health. The clientele will always be here, as we can now boast fourth generation customers. So my own retirement is planned far earlier than my parents, while I still have my own good health and to enjoy life's pleasures."

Ann put the restaurant up for sale years before it sold in 2016. She knew it would not be an easy property to sell. The restaurant had no off-street parking, a very small kitchen, and it needed updating. It finally sold in 2016. Ann made the announcement in July of 2016 that the closing date would be July 28, 2016. She did her best to make the last week a time to remember.

All of the regulars were there and many came who hadn't been there for a while. Ann let everyone know that there would be a silent auction of the memorabilia in the restaurant. It even included the two cash registers. The auction was successful.

Ann made a last batch of galumpkis. There was happiness and sadness. As the saying goes: "All good things must end some day". Here are two photos from the last two days of the restaurant. The first photo is of a party on day before the restaurant closed.



**JoAnne Roache, Anita Bates, Theresa McKeon, Heather Clem, Tracy Dargenio, Mary Ellen Paul, Terrie Becker**

The next photo is of Ann with her last batch of galumpkis.



**Ann with last batch of galumpkis**

The last week of the restaurant was a joyous party. It was a bittersweet celebration of people and a place that has meant a lot to Windsor Locks from its inception in 1942 to its closing in 2016.

Those of us who are from Windsor Locks owe a large debt of gratitude to Ann and to her parents, Charles and Stella, and to Brian for making the restaurant into a lasting, unique and wonderful Windsor Locks phenomenon.

There is no more fitting way to end this article than to re-use the sentence that Jack Redmond used to end his column on the history of the Charles-Ten Restaurant: "The Tenerowicz family has made their restaurant a town landmark, and have earned a special place in the history of Windsor Locks."

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