

300 YEARS AND A NEW BRIDGE

AUGUST 11TH, 2010

Putting yourself into a historical perspective can be a humbling thing. As Captain Ratty's celebrates its eleventh year in the restaurant business, we're reminded exactly how small we really are in the grand scheme of things. For starters, our building is in its 125th year of existence. And believe me, everyday it finds new ways to help remind us how old it really is. There's also some small deal being made about the 300th anniversary of the naming of this pleasant little plot of land at the intersection of two rivers. From Baron DeGraffenreid and George Washington to Babe Ruth and Bill Clinton, it's amazing to consider how many lives have been touched by this place we call New Bern. Although we've only been in existence for 3.67% of its history, we're proud to be part, albeit a tiny one, of the New Bern experience.

Over the past three years, the town has put extensive effort into preparing for its 300th anniversary celebration. While everything is shaping up beautifully, there have been some growing pains in the process. Or growing pain I should say. If you know me, you know that I'm referring to the Trent River Bridge, which reopened on March 19th 2010. I cannot speak for anyone else, but to me it is just about the most beautiful thing in the world. After six years of agony (three spent in fear of the impending closing of the bridge and three spent lamenting its absence), the last five months have seen a dramatic improvement in both overall business downtown as well as my general outlook on life. In all seriousness, with the economic downturn and the absence of the Trent River Bridge, times were extremely challenging for us and every other business downtown. It was only through the very loyal support of our customers, who continued to come in even though they had to spend extra time on the road to take the detour, who kept on dining with us even though they lost much of their retirement in the stock market, and who didn't mind braving the cold winter nights to come see us, even though it would have been easier to stay home and cook, that we are here today to celebrate another year. Thank you so much for your support through those lean times — we literally wouldn't be here without you.

P.S. You may have noticed the little fellow on the cover of the menu. His name is Sonny James Stewart, the first of the next generation of the Captain Ratty's family. If you see him crawling around the dining room, be sure to hide any Elmo-related toys or material you may be carrying with you, as he may attempt to make off with it. I don't know what it is, but that little red muppet has got some kind of spell over him.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Ballance". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke extending from the top of the "T".

Tom Ballance