

October comes, and  
thar she blows,  
A whale of a feast, as  
ocean fare goes,  
Live music and art, big  
boats and learnin',  
And tossin' a mullet if  
that's what yer yearnin'.

Come one, come all to the annual  
Outer Banks Seafood Festival ...

Yes indeed, the Outer Banks Seafood Festival, brought to you since 2012 by sponsors TowneBank and the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, returns for its sixth year on October 21 from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., and the festival's organizers and sponsors just can't wait to welcome all of you who wish to partake of the smorgasbord of food and fun that they have prepared. "This is truly a family event and one that people won't want to miss," says Mike Pringle, Chairman of the Outer Banks Seafood Festival's Executive Board.

The main attraction, of course, will be the feast. More than 15 local restaurants will battle it out to earn the People's Choice Award for Best Local Dish presented by TowneBank. In 2016, Stripers Bar & Grill took home the top prize, and there will be plenty of competitors looking to knock off the reigning champ. This year, voting cards will be distributed to the first 7,500 attendees through the Festival's ticket gates.

# ONE FISH, TWO FISH, TILEFISH, BLUEFISH

By Dave Holton

Voting will close at 4:30 p.m., and the award presentation will be at approximately 5:20 p.m. Local breweries and wineries will also be on hand to provide the adults with a bit of local flavor, and there will plenty of Pepsi products for the children. Budweiser products will also be available for brand-loyal consumers.

Thanks to entertainment sponsors OBX Chevrolet and Duck Thru, live music will fill the air from the stage where local favorites Out 'N the Cold, Old Enough to Know Better and The Crowd will complement feature acts The Jamie Pridgen Band and Kevin Mac. Be sure to check the festival website for more info on the program schedule and to keep up with any changes to the lineup.

To round out the festival for the whole family, there will be a Kid Zone and a Mullet Toss (it's pretty much exactly what it sounds like, and, yes, it's awesome). Local artists and craft artisans will have booths set up to display some of the works that the one-of-a-kind creative environment of the Outer Banks both inspires and nurtures. And the festival plans to provide something new this year, a boat and tackle show that should be a hit with attendees of all ages.

**Oh, there be FUN, there be  
no doubt, but that's not all  
this Fest's about ...**

The organizers of the festival represent a cross section of the greater community, with board members hailing from local businesses, the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce, Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, Outer Banks Catch and the Outer Banks Restaurant Association. Outer Banks Seafood Festival is a nonprofit organization, and all net proceeds are donated to various causes, grants and scholarships. With such a diversity of perspectives among the organization's leadership, you can be sure that the festival will consider all options when it comes to giving back after the festivities have concluded and all the \$5 entrance fees have been counted.

**SATURDAY** October **21** 10:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
(252)441-8144  
outerbanksseafoodfestival.org



In 2016, the festival was held on the heels of Hurricane Matthew, and despite the difficulties of organizing a festival during a time most vendors were mired in cleanup and repairs, the team managed to put together a memorable day for more than 6,000 attendees. With the devastation of Hurricane Matthew still fresh at the time, last year's choice was a no-brainer. "We were able to donate more than \$5,000 to Outer Banks Relief Fund," says Mike.

The collaborative team behind the festival aims to achieve some lofty goals, and so far has delivered year after year, providing visitors to the Outer Banks a delightful day of feasting (and mullet tossing) each October. And this year they expect to up their game. "Every year we get better at staging, working with the restaurants and making sure people have everything they need.

"We set out to provide visitors with something special during the shoulder season, something that enhances our community and highlights the seafood heritage of the Outer Banks," says Mike. "This is one of the premiere Outer Banks events, and it's grown bigger and stronger every year. We hope to see 9,000 to 10,000 people this year."

Come on out to the Outer Banks Seafood Festival this October. The team will be ready and waiting. For more information check out <http://outerbanksseafoodfestival.org>, where the team provides answers to questions people have about parking (there's no parking on-site, but there will be shuttles available), the schedule of events and much, much more.

**So mark your marks, to-do  
your to-dos,  
And set your date for yippees  
and wahoos,  
This festival promises oodles  
of fun,  
With seafood aplenty, served up  
by the ton!**





# A FAMILY TRADITION

By Dave Holton



**MY DAD ALWAYS STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING FOR THE COMMUNITY," SAYS STEVE KIOUSIS, OWNER OF STACK 'EM HIGH IN KITTY HAWK.**

In 1968, when Perry and Kiki Kiouisis brought their two boys, Steve and Nick, to vacation in Kill Devil Hills, Perry saw something in the quiet, empty beach town that many others might have missed – a thriving community in the making. Back then, you could check the surf from the main road (which, like the beach road, was only two lanes then) because there weren't many houses blocking your view.

But Perry Kiouisis saw the potential that this place held. He immediately walked into a real estate office and asked for a restaurant, and, in 1969, Perry and Kiki opened Point Harbor Restaurant at the foot of the Wright Memorial Bridge. As a family, Perry, Kiki, Steve and Nick ran Point Harbor from 1969 to 1980. After they sold the Point Harbor Restaurant, they opened the first Stack 'em High in KDH in 1981. Four years later, in 1985, they opened the second Stack 'em High in Kitty Hawk. Though Perry has since died, his sons have carried on his legacy not only in running their restaurants but also in giving back to the greater community of the Outer Banks. Both restaurants have remained busy to this day. Steve and his wife, Kristine, own and operate the Kitty Hawk location and Nick and his wife, Dawn, own and operate the KDH location.

"We have always believed in giving back, so we do a lot of events and fundraisers," says Steve. "I deal mainly with schools and churches, and my brother works with the YMCA, Kiwanis, Rotary Club as well as the OBX Marathon and Nags Head Wood Run. I do about 30 fundraisers each year."

Steve, a strong believer in Christian values and a dedicated family man, has four children ranging in ages from 20 months to 21 years. He speaks about them as most fathers do, with a mix of pride, humility and loving irritation. "My youngest has been testing us a bit lately," he says, grinning. "But, hey, that's part of the deal." Steve knows what it takes to raise a family on the Outer Banks, and just like his father before him, Steve wants to help build up an even stronger community for his children.

"I remember as a kid growing up here what it was like to not have much," he says. "Because it just wasn't here. A lot didn't exist. I believe in starting things, and I want this place to keep getting better, to be better for my children, for other people's children. I think of the restaurant as a base of operations for me to connect with the community."

Steve's restaurant offers full catering services, appropriately coined after Steve and Nick's mother. Catering by Kiki's Kitchen offers food ranging from Greek all the way to Mexican! They've been known to handle large events, including weddings. Since Steve's team has this capability, he uses it to support various groups in the community. Steve has catered events serving up to 500 people at churches

like the Duck United Methodist Church to help raise scholarship funds. He's helped with events to honor students excelling in athletics and academics at First Flight and events to honor the teachers as well. Every week he caters morning breakfasts for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He's always looking for more opportunities to give.

Steve likes to think of his restaurant as a hub for locals, transplants and tourists alike. "We stay open year-round, which is great because we really get to know the locals." But he appreciates newcomers to the community just as much. "There are a lot of people, especially retirees, moving into the community

every year. These people are a part of our community too. I believe we should make sure they feel welcome.

"Sure, people get upset about a little traffic in the summertime," he says, "but I like to remind them how truly blessed we all are to live here on the Outer Banks! I say go over there, sit on this beach, look out at the water and then tell me you're still upset."

Naturally, Steve believes in progress. He exhibits this belief in his own restaurant. Recently, he added a small breakfast counter area because he believed that the older individuals in the community, especially those who have been widowed, would benefit from having a place to hang out and meet other people. "There are lonely folks out there, and these aren't the type to sit around all day staring at their phones. They need a place to go and speak to people, a place where they can feel at home but have company. I'm trying to provide that." Like most entrepreneurs and visionaries, Steve made this move based on a hunch that it could provide something to a certain group of people, and since the counter's installation, he's already seen the impact.

In addition to

retirees, Stack 'em High gets a lot of other regulars in as well. "On any given day, we have everybody and their brother. When you own a pancake house and sell breakfast and lunch, and you've been doing it as long as we have, you tend to make a lot of friends.

As for the changes in the greater community, Steve does his best to keep it all in perspective and take the long view. He grew up in a visionary household, with parents who could look at a mostly empty Outer Banks and see an opportunity, a community in the making. While others might complain about noise and traffic and overcrowding, it should be no surprise that Steve sees the changes to the area and the growth as more than just an inconvenience.

"People are trying to protect the Outer Banks, to keep it from being ruined," he says. "I agree, but we have to balance progress with simplicity. I get people in my restaurant who work on the dredge barges or are building the water park. I tell them that they are welcome and that I support what they do because I don't know if they hear that from everyone."

Stack 'em High has quite the history, and making it work for 30 years has not been easy. But for the Kiouisis family, the rewards lay beyond successfully running a restaurant. "I've had opportunities to expand, to go into franchising, but I've turned them down. I want to stay here, to pour coffee, to shake hands and talk to people. It's not easy

to make a living here, but there's the ocean, there's the sound and there's a great community in between. It's a wonderful life."

When you go to Stack 'em High, you can fill up on great food. They are famous for their mouthwatering pancakes and waffles, and they also offer tasty omelet choices. They provide plenty of local flavor and of course Greek options, so everyone will find something to love as far as their stomachs are concerned. You can even come in for lunch!

Beyond the food, though, you'll also find yourself at a community centerpiece that was first conceived by two visionary parents and now continues to grow under the dedicated watch of two faithful sons and their families.

**The Outer Banks' Original Pancake House**



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**BREAKFAST & LUNCH**



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# Mozzarella AND Memories

By Dave Holton

**W**hy do we love pizza? Is it the dough? The sauce? The cheese or our choice of toppings? There's something more, isn't there? Something that goes deeper than the toppings and cheeses and crusts. And the owners of Tomato Patch Pizzeria and Bar in Corolla seem to know exactly what that something is.



Owners Linda & Lambros Vlahos

"On our honeymoon," says Linda Vlahos, "we went to Boston, and we got a pizza with garlic, pepperoni, and ricotta cheese." She laughs. "I can't remember the car we rented or where we stayed, but I remember that pizza." "Garlic, pepperoni, ricotta," agrees Lambros, grinning. "That was it." Three decades later, they still remember. Lambros Vlahos doesn't wax poetic like Linda. "You won't get much out of me," he says. But he does have a bit of poetry in him when it comes to pizza. "Pizza is like music," says Lambros. "It has memories attached to it." And Linda knows how to get him going. "Just ask him about his pet peeve." She laughs, ready for the reaction she knows this will provoke from a man who holds his heritage close to his heart.

Lambros crosses his arms over his chest,

his muscles flexing. "We make Greek pizza," he says. "Greek. Many New Yorkers come here thinking that if it isn't New York-style pizza, it isn't pizza." Linda laughs again. "Don't get us

wrong," she says. "We love all pizza. When we go to New York, we get New York-style pizza. And we love it. But it's not our pizza. Not the pizza we make."

"Greek pizza is crunchy, not chewy," says Lambros. "And the toppings go all the way to the outside."

As he speaks, his hands play out the act of creation – kneading the dough, spreading the sauce, applying the toppings – and his eyes focus with the intensity of something felt. Something remembered. To Lambros, Greek pizza is more than just another style of pizza. To Lambros, Greek pizza is family. Greek pizza is a legacy. Greek pizza is the foundation on which he and Linda have built their lives.

Like so many of this country's entrepreneurs, Lambros was not made in America. At 8 years old, Lambros immigrated to the Outer Banks with his family. Back in 1974, when the turmoil between Greece and Tur-

key was happening, America had a more open-door policy on refugees. "The whole family got green cards," Lambros says. "I guess that wouldn't happen these days." Lambros grew up working for his uncle at Van's Pizza and then for his father at Kitty Hawk Pizza.

When Linda joined the family, she also joined the family business. After the couple had secured a loan from Currituck Bank – something they are thankful for, or as Lambros puts it, "who finances a kid out of college?" – Linda and Lambros built Tomato Patch Pizzeria in Corolla and

opened in May 1993. They served recipes passed down by Lambros' father. And the menu has grown with the restaurant. Now, in addition to

pizza, customers can enjoy Gyros, Buffalo Chicken Wraps, Greek Salad, Corolla Seafood Pasta and even Linda's delicious crab cakes. Or there's that drink at the full-service bar.

And in keeping with the Vlahos tradition, Lambros and Linda still blend work and family within the walls of the Tomato Patch Pizzeria. "Most of my family members have now worked here at some point and so have our kids," says Linda. "We have three boys, ages 22, 18 and 16, and they have all worked here, starting with bussing and dishwashing." She laughs, "They either learned that they hate it or they learned

**"Pizza is like music. It has memories attached to it."**



**Every Tuesday is "Kids Day"**



they love it. Now our middle son, Yanni, is going to Johnson and Wales culinary school in Rhode Island." With regards to the other two sons... "At least they learned Greek cuisine," says Lambros.

Since the Vlahos way is to treat family like employees, it's no surprise that the reverse is also true. "Working in a pizza restaurant isn't a career for most people," explains Linda. "Most of our workers are college-aged. Many are on J-1 visas. It can be tough because you are always training new people. But it's a fun, eclectic group. We have Romanian kids, Polish kids. And over the years, people have returned, sent relatives. We've had whole families work for us."

"Twenty-five years is a long time. Some of our employees who met here have ended up married with kids and businesses of their own in other places," says Lambros, smiling. He seems especially fond of their entrepreneurial employees. "They see a life here that they can't obtain in their own country, so they work hard, start their own businesses."

"We had one young man who told us he wanted to manage," says Linda, "so we sent him to ECU bartending school. Now, he owns Basil's restaurant in Greenville, a place that we originally built and then sold to him outright."

One of their current entrepreneurs in the making is Elena Rotari, who originally came from Moldova. She has been waiting and managing at Tomato Patch for five years now. "I've been attending COA for business, and I'd love to open my own restaurant. Lambros has been helping me develop my plan, and he even helped me with questions I should ask when I negotiate for the location."

And, like any good parents, they do more than just advise their young employees. "We are like a family," says Elena.

"One Thanksgiving, we cooked a sweet potato casserole for the European kids," Lambros laughs, "They didn't know what it was, but they loved it."

"And we do a whole seafood party during the summer since most of these kids can't usually afford to go out and eat seafood around here. We want to make

sure they get an experience," says Linda.

Though their own children are now grown, Linda and Lambros regularly fill their lives with the laughter of childhood – every Tuesday, the restaurant hosts a Kids Day. Elena describes the event. "It's a crazy day, kids everywhere, like a big party. They get chefs hats and make little pizzas, and after they finish, we take the pizza back and cook it for them. It's so much fun." "We've been doing the Kids Day for 10 years now," says Lambros.

"Has it really been 10 years?" asks Linda.

Lambros laughs. "Years go by so fast. We judge a year by the end of the busy season, so it feels like a year is only a few months and then it's over and we're getting ready for next year."

Maybe that's why this couple can speak about their shared pizza nearly three decades later as though they just took their first bite together. Or maybe it's because it's not just about the dough and the sauce and the cheese and the toppings. Maybe it's about the hard work surrounded by family. Maybe it's about the many people who have come and gone and the experiences they've shared with employees and customers and each other. Maybe it's about the journey they've taken from there to here, then to now.

Or maybe it really is just about the pizza. "Hey. We love pizza, man," says Lambros. "That's it."



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# Good Ol' Uncle Ike



By Dave Holton

*If you're one of the lucky ones, you had a good ol' uncle to call on at some point in your life. Or maybe for you that good ol' uncle was an aunt, grandma or grandpa. Whoever it was, you knew you could go to them no matter what you needed. But if you didn't have such a person, you can experience what it's like to have one now, because good ol' Uncle Ike has got you covered.*



Tony Northrup, Owner

Since he moved to the area in 2009, owner Tony Northrup has run Uncle Ike's Sandbar and Grill, a bar and restaurant tucked into the Corolla Light Town Center, based on a principle of hospitality that he learned early in life. Says Tony, "My Italian mother always said, 'What?! You're only going to bring one friend to dinner? Why aren't you bringing five?!'"

His mama would be proud because Tony now welcomes in thousands of people a year. Uncle Ike's Sandbar and Grill invites you in from the moment

you hit the front steps. The bar and restaurant have a breezy, open feel with a surfer vibe. There are plenty of reminders on the walls that people come from near and far to visit Uncle Ike's. "I like that our visitors come from all over," says Tony. "Makes this feel like a small world." The other eye-catching feature is the dollar bills that hang from the ceiling. There's a story there, of course, but we'll come back to that one in a moment.

For the last eight years, Tony has continually added and changed and modified and tinkered, a restless approach that fits his personality. He's a bundle of energy, and as the sole owner, since he bought out his partner recently, he's a busy man. As we talk, Tony fields questions from repairmen and employees, handling one crisis after another. "I should have learned all the trades," he says with a laugh. "Forget going to college ... I should have learned how to be a plumber, how to do HVAC. It's like this every day."

But it's clear that Tony loves what he does. "The stress is ridiculous sometimes," he says, "but the customers keep you going. That's what this business is all about: the customers. I started out with a brief stint in the pizza business, and my boss told me 'Tony, anyone can make a good pizza, but what sets you apart is how you treat people.' I'll never forget that."

Corolla has changed over the years, and Tony has worked hard to keep up. "When Uncle Ike's first opened, we were the only full-liquor bar at this end of Corolla. Now Cosmo's Pizza [right next door] has a bar, and Corolla Cantina has a bar and there are a lot more businesses up here in general, so we have to find a niche that works." He points to the brand-new putt-putt golf course right next door to the deck of Uncle Ike's and laughs. "I tell people that we can be Ike's 19th Hole now."

Tony talks excitedly about how he's building up capacity for new visitors. "We increased the size of the kitchen, added two new fryers and a new char-grill so that all our burgers and chicken and steak can be flame-broiled. We added an outside beer cooler, and we will have 19 draft lines this season ... a huge step up. And I'm putting in a new bar on the deck."

Tony's energy extends to ideas to make Uncle Ike's something special for every individual who walks through the door. "I got the UFC fights for the whole year. And we do fun giveaways," says Tony. "Like every Thursday, we are going to give away a surfboard. You come in, get a raffle ticket and at 10 p.m. we will call somebody's name. We built our scene on karaoke, but we have also started doing live music now, too, with three bands a week. And we're brainstorming fun events, like a beer fest in October."

Tony's not worried about keeping only the visitors to Corolla happy; he cares deeply about the locals too. "This is the first year we didn't close in the off-season. We stayed open, and we started giving food away for happy hour. We had a free food buffet from Monday to Friday, and the locals responded." I asked him if he planned to keep doing that. "As much as it makes sense financially, we will keep changing it up, trying new things. Corolla is a quiet town during the winter, and there's not a lot to do at night in the off-season, so we wanted to give back to the community that gives so much to us."

Mark Twain once said that the best way to cheer yourself up is to cheer someone else up first. Tony Northrup seems to share the famous author's philosophy.

"It's tough to run a business in Corolla," says Tony. "We battle staffing issues due to lack of housing. And there's the seasonal aspect of our community. And northeasters and hurricanes can always mess up a great weekend."

"I do the charity stuff to stay sane. We do a lot of local events for the fire department and for the Lifesaving Association in Corolla and Carova. And I try to match whatever we raise at the events to double the amount. I appreciate

*Are you in need of a good ol' uncle in your life? Well, you've got one now in Uncle Ike!*



what they do for us in the community. This town is a unique place, and people do so much for each other here."

In addition to supporting his local community, Tony has found another community to be a good ol' uncle to – Helping Haitian Angels, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides complete care for the children of the Kay Anj D'ayiti (Angel House of Haiti) in Dekle, Haiti. The organization was founded by Bill and Debbie Harvey of Haymarket, Virginia, after they came across 35 homeless children living in an abandoned building while they were visiting Haiti on a mission trip. They now provide medical care, shelter, food and clean water for Haitian children. "But more than that," says Tony, "they want to raise a stronger generation of Haitians, teaching them in their native tongue and helping them learn skills, not just sending them away from Haiti through adoption, so that they can grow up in their own country and be prosperous."

Tony first learned about Helping Haitian Angels five years ago, and since then he's been helping the cause every year. "We decided to do something, so we put the dollars donated by customers on the ceiling. We take them all down once a year, and I match them from my own profits and send a donation to Helping Haitian Angels." Tony says he'd like to keep building on the effort, though, because there are more children in need, and his donation only puts a small dent in the real cost of helping even one child.

Are you in need of a good ol' uncle in your life? Well, you've got one now in Uncle Ike. Need to blow off some steam? Go to good ol' Uncle Ike. Need to find a few new friends? Hungry? Thirsty? Looking for a way to give back, to help someone out? Go to good ol' Uncle Ike's Sandbar and Grill. Get yourself a great meal, enjoy a night with friends and, while you're there, add a few dollar bills to that ceiling, won't you?

**Open: 7 Days a Week  
7:30 a.m. – 2 a.m.**

**(252) 597-1606**

**1159 Austin Street  
Corolla Light Town Center**

**[uncleikesobx.com](http://uncleikesobx.com)**