

GOODMAN'S ANSWERS CALL TO SAVE THE DELI



(above) Goodman's Deli owner Don Parkin.

(right) Many of the wait staff at Goodman's, like Laura, have been on board since the Elizabeth days.



(left) Rabian serving a Pastrami on Rye, Beef Brisket sandwich and a side of Cole Slaw.



Goodman's was once a premier Jewish Deli in Elizabeth, NJ. A landmark on Elmora Avenue since its opening in 1943. But like many communities the culture in the shopping district changed over the years and many of the shops along the avenue lost their Jewish traditions.

This is not unique to Elizabeth. The decimation of Delis in general is wide spread. There is just a handful of Jewish delicatessens left in Brooklyn, once the Jewish deli capital of the world. The plight inspired author David Sax to pen the book "Save the Deli." The book was the inspiration for Don Parkin to return Goodman's to its original tradition.

The one big difference in Goodman's revival is that the Deli is now located on Springfield Avenue in Berkeley Heights, a few towns west of Elizabeth, about 20 miles away. Goodman's moved to that location in 1999 when the Elizabeth Deli was bought by a Greek owner. Goodman's was then sold to owners who were Egyptian. In the course of the move and change of ownership the cuisine moved in a direction away from its roots.

Enter Don Parkin. Don grew up in a Jewish neighborhood in Chicago where there was a deli on every corner. He moved to Denver and suffered a culture shock when he couldn't find not even one Jewish deli in the three years he lived there. He grew homesick. He had the opportunity to move back east and was determined to find an area where he could find the diversity of cultures that he craved.

In 2005 he moved to New Jersey. His father was originally from Maplewood and his brother was living in Summit. He settled in New Providence and the first thing that caught his eye driving around his new surroundings was a sign that read "Goodman's Deli".

Don became a regular customer and though he liked the food it lacked the authenticity that he knew so well.

Parkin wasn't a cook nor did he ever own a restaurant he was in the computer software business. But a strange turn of events happened in a way that made him a deli owner seemed natural, almost destiny. In 2010 Goodman's was up for sale and he was at a point where he could switch gears in his career. He was on a mission to save the Deli.

Don knew he wasn't the only person who missed the Jewish Deli experience and his hunch was right. Goodman's is abuzz with customers raving over the new menu, Corned Beef, Pastrami, Brisket of Beef, Matzo Ball Soup, Chopped Liver, Potato pancakes, all the top dishes on the hit parade. Don ensures that only the best quality meats and food products are used and prepares his dishes using tried and true recipes.

Goodman's is now experiencing a revival of customers old and new from near and far. It is not uncommon for folks from Elizabeth to drive the twenty minutes for a taste of the past. 