

BUSINESS LIFE

C-Section

The Walton Sun

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BUSINESS

REAL ESTATE

CLASSIFIEDS



Pasha Carroll/The Sun

The Freeport Cafe is located in a building that started out 40 years ago as a donut shop. It is located on State Road 20, just east of U.S. Highway 331N.



Pasha Carroll/The Sun

Owner Allen Fannin is just one of the characters that socialize and dine at the Freeport Cafe.

Freeport Cafe Home of good old boys and burgers

BY PASHA CARROLL
SUN REPORTER

They have been coming for 12 years, boasting about burgers and gossiping about life.

The regulars at the Freeport Cafe each have a story. Some of them start out "in those days" and "the good old boys." Other stories are about raising kids at the café where children grow up eating the same breakfast everyday.

They talk about the burgers, so big the owner tells you not to order a double bacon cheeseburger as an amateur.

"We have the biggest hamburger in the state," owner Allen Fannin said. "They come from Atlanta for it."

"They have the biggest and best hamburgers in the world," Ralph Cooper agreed. Cooper is a regular customer and said he has been going to the Freeport Cafe "since it has been here."

One crew comes in every morning and eats at the same back corner table. Cooper calls the table of locals the "bull table" and Fannin calls it the "loyal liars table."

"They start all kinds gossip, that's where all the stories in Freeport come from," Fannin said seriously but with a twinkle in his eyes. "Lot of 'em is true and lot of 'em exaggerated, but they sure are loyal."

"They're in every morning telling hunting and fishing stories," Cooper said.

The locals come along side the construction crews. Fannin said the same crews come daily and they time it so one of the nine tables will be open.

Fannin opens the Freeport Cafe at 5:30 a.m., serving Carson Ann "cane" Syrup with pancakes. Country classics make the menu. The double sided menu offers grits, fried okra, collard greens and country-fried steak among other southern classics.

The breakfast, lunch and dinner specials change but the service doesn't.

"Never been in here and got bad service yet," Leonard W. Melvin said. "But some of 'em smile more than others."

Melvin used to live down the road from the cafe now he lives in Indiana. He still comes back about four times a year and always makes a point to swing by the Cafe to catch up on all the goings on.

The service and food is good because the employees rarely leave, Fannin said.

"Bill Gates (the cook) been here three and a half years,"

Business

The REAL Trend Report Walton Real Estate Sales Activity

Number of Sales	SEP 2004			SEP 2003		
	SEP 2004	SEP 2003	% Chg	YTD 2004	YTD 2003	% Chg
Single Family						
Total New Sales	99	98	1.02	973	746	30.43
Total ReSales	158	147	7.48	1,971	1,035	90.43
Total Single Family	257	245	4.90	2,944	1,781	65.30
Condominium/Townhomes						
Total New Sales	39	63	-38.10	444	446	-.45
Total ReSales	121	169	-28.40	1,502	1,173	28.05
Total Condo/Townhome	160	232	-31.03	1,946	1,619	20.20
Mobile/Manufactured Homes						
Total New Sales	25	32	-21.88	354	207	71.01
Residential Lots						
Total New Sales	616	361	70.64	5,587	3,271	70.80
Commercial & Other IMPRV						
Total New Sales	26	4	550.00	171	151	13.25
Commercial & Other VACNT						
Total New Sales	39	25	56.00	434	220	97.27
Total	1123	899	24.92	11,436	7,249	57.76
Total Foreclosures	0	4	-100.00	18	17	5.88

Dollar Volume of Sales	SEP 2004			SEP 2003		
	SEP 2004	SEP 2003	% Chg	YTD 2004	YTD 2003	% Chg
Single Family						
Total New Sales	31,475,199	26,169,179	20.28	314,054,691	190,436,065	64.91
Total ReSales	101,422,900	45,387,500	123.46	947,515,300	325,797,900	190.83
Total Single Family	132,898,099	71,556,679	85.72	1,261,569,991	516,233,965	144.38
Condominium/Townhomes						
Total New Sales	20,159,400	23,206,900	-13.13	220,077,800	234,751,500	-6.25
Total ReSales	70,122,200	62,484,200	12.22	674,293,400	377,863,600	78.45
Total Condo/Townhome	90,281,600	85,691,100	5.36	894,371,200	612,615,100	45.99
Mobile/Manufactured Homes						
Total New Sales	2,658,300	2,919,700	-8.95	35,761,800	11,771,100	203.81
Residential Lots						
Total New Sales	175,573,200	69,602,700	152.25	1,102,345,800	507,918,100	117.03
Commercial & Other IMPRV						
Total New Sales	22,283,500	6,168,300	261.26	152,895,500	48,709,124	213.89
Commercial & Other VACNT						
Total New Sales	22,139,100	1,773,000	1148.68	233,256,500	43,642,200	434.47
Total	445,833,799	237,711,479	87.55	3,680,200,791	1,740,889,589	111.40
Total Foreclosures						
Total New Sales		2,731,500	-100.00	1,030,300	4,704,800	-78.10

Freeport

Continued from Page C1

Fannin said. "I trained him for one whole month."

Fannin owned a local Freeport sub shop and the Brass Kettle before Freeport Cafe. However, he primarily worked in commercial fishing.

The restaurant has changed hands a few times since it was a donut shop some 40 years ago. Fannin said that the donut shop owner, "David Edge just disappeared for a long while."

Fannin leased the building on Oct. 4, 1992.

"When we first started,

they hadn't been open at night for 10 or 12 years," Fannin said. Some nights the restaurant only brought in \$30.

"It has grown tremendously since," he said.

"We stay busy, it's all by word of mouth, we don't do advertising," Fannin said.

A decade ago, Fannin caught all of the mullet, shrimp and oysters that he served.

"In '96 or '98 they stopped commercial fishing in Florida, then we had to start buying it," he said.

Today they serve 65 - 70

pounds of shrimp, 100 pounds of mullet and four gallons of oysters a week.

Since opening the Freeport Cafe, Fannin said his prices haven't increased too much.

"A regular dinner used to be \$3.50, now it is \$5.50, that includes entrée, three vegetables, coffee or tea and tax," he said.

Freeport Cafe was the first place to serve all-you-can-eat around Freeport, then other restaurants "all fell in line," Fannin said. Friday and Saturday nights are still all-you-can-

eat-shrimp, mullet or oysters.

He spoke proudly of the long way Freeport Cafe has evolved since he first ventured into the business.

When Fannin bought Freeport Cafe inside were plastic chairs, one refrigerator, freezer and fryer and an old stove from the thirties.

Now the chairs are metal and cushioned and the tablecloths are red checkered. The kitchen holds two fryers, four freezers, four big coolers, two ice machines, a six-

burner stove and a steam table.

Fannin said they usually have a Christmas lull, but that he expects the restaurant to stay busy this year because of the real estate growth in Freeport.

Fannin recently took down the blinds and tinted the windows at Freeport Cafe. He is remodeling with new shelves where he is going to put his Little League team's trophies, "old relics" and framed pictures of some "good old boys" who are gone now.

Betrothed? Married? Announcements are always free in The Sun.

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