

From: Kristen [mailto:cricket4360@charter.net]  
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2009 2:44 PM  
Subject: Al's Photos and Memories

A few things about my MANY years at Al's... How do you even put it into words?

- Inger teaching me how to get gum out of the carpet. Who needs Heloise when you work for the Johnsons. And people wonder where I get my anal retentiveness from when it comes to cleaning.

- One Spring Break in the early 2000's when Al's and Husby's were the only 2 restaurants open in Sister Bay (probably all of Northern Door) and we got slammed. We had over an hour wait with bare bones staff. We later heard that DJ was "in the weeds" so bad at Husby's that he just walked out. At least he had access to alcohol!

- One of my first evenings "on door" by myself, I sat a large Asian family without realizing their whole party wasn't in the building. We weren't busy yet but the clock was ticking and I was sweating. I remember going outside and in a panic pacing up and down the sidewalk searching for any Asian people I could find that might belong to that party.

- The way Al would go up to every child and visit with them, putting on their bibs and giving them candy. He sure has a way with kids!

- I met Chris (my husband) while waiting on him at the counter. It was the beginning of our romance!

- I'm so grateful for all the opportunities the Johnson Family has given me. The work ethic they instilled, the friendships I made, the financial support, and over-all positive influence they had on my life. I've always been so proud to say I work(ed) at Al Johnson's. It was a childhood dream come true. That's why I'm still on their "reserve list" after 18 years.

Love, Cricket (Kristen Falk Demarinis)

**From:** Kari Stjernholm [mailto:kstjernholm@wwdb.org]

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 19, 2009 11:24 PM

**Subject:** Al & Inger's Memory Book

Dear Al and Inger,

Congratulations on being in business for 60 years! You are known around the country and the world for your outstanding restaurant and boutique!

Thank you for hiring me during my college years as a waitress without any experience! Maybe it was the blonde hair and blue eyes that passed the test! There were a few people working at that time with the name of Carrie, so I went by Kari Joy. People soon thought that 'Joy' was my last name! Not so...I had the Polish last name of Sczepanski!

A few memories I recall are the following:

1) I got pretty good at balancing salads, lingonberries, and the bread tray. But right as I was serving an elderly gentleman, the lingonberry dish slipped out of my hand and now was firmly planted on the gentleman's back! I told him not to move! At this point, it was all contained in the dish on his back! I think the restaurant had to absorb that dry cleaning bill!

2) It was my 1<sup>st</sup> table of 10 people who probably came in at 8:55 p.m and all ordered dinners! I was really looking forward to the tip and figured since I didn't see it on the table, it must have been added to the bill. Then Al informed me that I had been 'skunked'! I didn't quite know the restaurant lingo all that well...it didn't take long to know that yes, cheapskates come into Al Johnson's!

3) Thank you for letting me stay in the sod roof hut behind your home while I was waiting for a room at the farmhouse. Even though there was no electricity or bathroom, the waves were a soothing background for sleep! Every morning Al had a bowl of fresh raspberries or strawberries waiting at their breakfast table! Thanks!

Thanks for providing a great work environment and a wad of cash for college!

Blessings on your health, your business, and your 'big' family!

Kari Joy Stjernholm

**From:** Tina Canadeo [mailto:tina\_canadeo@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 19, 2009 1:26 PM  
**Subject:** Al's party

Having worked at Al Johnson's during our summers as high school and college students, we have such an appreciation for Al, Inger, and the rest of management. This reunion is a true testament to the sense of family they have created amongst their staff over the years. This was by far one of the best work experiences we have ever had. We were so well taken care of and enjoyed going to work. For one thing, we were so well fed. Thank you for all the pancakes and pie (oh, and the French fries too!). Additionally we made so many friendships along the way (Kelly, Heidi, and Renee to name a few) that continue to evoke such fond memories to this day. Together we spent lots of energy dancing and laughing at Mullet Hunter performances. This job is an opportunity we are grateful for and will never forget. Wishing you a happy 60th anniversary and many wonderful years to come. Thank you for everything. It has been an honor.

Love,

The Canadeo sisters (Andrea and Tina)

Tina Canadeo  
1012 Winford Ave  
Green Bay, WI 54303  
(920) 883-5690

From: LINDA BIRMINGHAM [mailto:lbirmingham@charter.net]  
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2009 8:09 PM  
Subject: Al's celebration

My sister, Carol Franke, and I both worked from the mid-seventies into the early eighties at Al's and grew up down the street from Al & Inger, first babysitting their kids and later working in the restaurant.

Working at Al's was a true growing up experience!! The fun of working with a group of people and learning to work hard and laugh while doing it all was great. I became a waitress at age 15 and probably wasn't quite ready for it as I made lots of boo boos. Barb Jacobson was my teacher and lucky for me she had many hungry sons who would sit at the counter and happily eat my mistakes. Barb would say not to bring it back to the kitchen or I'd get in trouble, and just give Larry or Randy the extra mashed potato I'd mistakenly grabbed. She was always encouraging and soon it all made more sense and there weren't that many mistakes. Al would come around ask us if the rain was going to hurt the rhubarb and everything would be ok.

The craziest experience I had at Al's was one day when Eddy the dwarf salesman, under 4 feet tall, decided to go in the kitchen in the wrong door at exactly the moment when I, with a tray stacked high of dinners for a large table, was going out the Out door. I was moving fast to get the hot food out and with the tray held high could not see Eddy, who was then coming into the kitchen. We literally smacked into each other. His hard head hit me in the chest and he fell on the floor while the tray of food flew down, plates and hot food scattering onto the floor, and I, swaying from the impact, also fell down. We were both ok - quickly got up, brushed ourselves off after picking up the dishes. I ran back to the kitchen where the cooks who heard about the commotion had quickly made the exact order all over again. Within a few minutes I safely delivered the food to the table, who hadn't even seen the ugly mishap. The rest of the day went much smoother!!!

Thank you Al and Inger for always being supportive, taking care of us and teaching us much about life in the world while working at Al's. It was an experience I will always remember.

Linda Birmingham-waitress at Al's 1968, on & off summers & falls through 1979

## **Let's Go to Al's**

By Gretchen Maring

I was raised camping at Nicolet Bay in "Shanty Town" during the thirties. We would make a yearly excursion to Bunda's for rubber beach shoes, and where once my parents bought me a wool bathing suit with a handsome woven cotton belt. My Dad often said to Mother, "let's buy a cottage." And mother would reply, "I don't want to take care of two houses." Mother was definitely a better camper than Dad.

So the War years came, and we kids grew up, went on to school, married and started our own families.

Then in 1961, our parents announced that they had bought a farmhouse in Ephraim that they were going to fix up. It was on South Coral Hill Road and was owned by Evie and Carl Olson. Olsons kept an acre next door and we became fast friends. Mom and Dad spent summers from early spring into fall at Old Olson. When Carl died, Evie married Jack Zayak, Lori (Cisewski) Johnson's grandpa!

When we came to visit, Dad would say, "let's go to Al's." So all of us would pile into the car and go to Sister Bay.

We soon became fast friends with Ingert and Al. I remember the glass counter at check-out that Ingert filled with embroidery kits and small gifts from Scandinavia. Mother, Ingert and I spent a lot of time talking about the Arts of Scandinavia. One year Ingert brought a big bag full of parts of an unfinished Scandinavian sweater and asked me if I would finish it for her. The arms were giving her fits. "Sure," I said. I took it home, pulled it from its bag, and discovered the directions were in Swedish. Somehow I figured it all out and Ingert got her sweater.

Mother and Dad put up a Swedish Summer pole at Old Olson and Ingert would bring the Swedish girls who were working at Al's over for a summer party. Gunilla and Anita were two of the girls who came.

Since we brought the kids up a lot to ski at Wink and Audrey Larsen's Norski Ridge, it also meant we went to Al's to eat. Those were the great winter days. It was quiet up in Door County. We would drop the kids off at the hill with money for hot dogs, drinks and skiing, and then head out to Al's for lunch. One could spend the afternoon there talking with the rest of the eaters. In those days, everyone knew each other.

One October John asked me what I wanted to do for my birthday and I said, "go to Door County, of course". So we drove up with our friends the Lloyds. We sat at our table and gave our order. Time passed, and Al was running around the dining room wiping tables and spouting something in Swedish. Usually the food was so prompt and this time it was lagging, but we were talking and enjoying ourselves so we didn't mind. Suddenly, out of the kitchen door burst a crowd of people. Ten people! It seems that they arranged a surprise birthday for me, and drove up from Neenah, directed by Al to come in through the back door and kitchen! Then the fun began, and Al could push tables together and get the affair going! During the meal he marched out of the kitchen and put a quart jar of his own homemade herring in front of me. He knew how much I loved that herring!

When Mother and I went to Denmark and Norway in 1973 we saw the shell of the new log building that Ingert and Al were planning to wrap their restaurant in. The small building next door, where Ingert had expanded her Scandinavian gift shop, was moved from the lot and the following summer the

Norwegian builders arrived with the building. We had seen it all erected in Norway. They then numbered the logs, and took it down, loaded it into a container and shipped it to Door County. The summer was spent watching these craftsmen rebuild that beautiful building. And Al's continued to serve his famous pancakes without missing a beat!

John and I moved permanently to Door County in February 1989, and the first guests we took out to eat were the movers. Where did we go? Al Johnson's, of course.

One day I asked Gunilla if it would be possible to work in the Store. Yes, was the answer, and I was hired. What a wonderful environment to work in. We all had our dirndls and clogs, ready to serve the customer. Al always supported those who worked for them, and would not allow any abuse from customers. One time a woman in the dining room insulted a waitress so badly that she cried. Al marched in and told her that people were not treated like that in his restaurant and invited her to leave. We all silently applauded him with great admiration! In repayment I once answered the phone to the ranting of an irate customer, who didn't want to pay sales tax because she lived out of state, demanding to talk to Al. I knew he didn't suffer fools gladly, so I sweetly said, "just one moment", and held the receiver down for an appropriate amount of time, and then told her that I was sorry, Al wasn't in the office that day. Pay back for kind deeds. Sadly, after several years, slipped discs prevented me from bending into the "sweatshirt" boxes and I had to have surgery, thus ending my years as one of Al's girls.

We shall always treasure our friendship with Al and Inger and their family. Their vision and dedication helped make not only Sister Bay, but all of Door County, the epitome of what a vacation spot should be.

**From:** Ginny Zdenahlik [mailto:gmz.bay@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 17, 2009 6:40 AM  
**Subject:** Reminiscences of Al and Inger

...Of Al, I'll always remember fondly the time he dug out the geraniums that grow in the On The Bay window boxes at the end of the season, after I admired them. He dug them for me, to winter at my house, a task that took him more than a few minutes. I watched, thinking of the magnanimous and thoughtful act.

...Of Inger, her thoughtful attention to detail has always been appreciated; from the time she showed me the correct way to pin an apron bow, for the Austrian, cotton dirndls, to this day, 20 years later, and the best way to do things in a fashionable way. I thank both Al and Inger for the opportunity I've been given, to make these years more than delightful for me...

Ginny Zdenahlik

From: Dane & Cara Hartzell [mailto:hartzellfamily@comcast.net]  
Sent: Sunday, August 16, 2009 9:55 PM  
Subject: Al's stories

Here are a few stories.

The era when Jodi Woerful worked in the Salad Bar. Literally, every night just before close, this Swedish girl (Can't remember her name - spiky blonde hair - see attached photo) would walk by and say in her heavy accent, "Yodi! Save banana cream for me!" Meaning she wanted Jodi to save a piece of Banana Cream pie for her. Don't know why but still to this day, whenever I think about banana cream pie, I think of this Swedish girl demanding Jodi save her the last piece.

Helen Burress and June Kwaterski were the sweetest ladies. I loved playing little jokes on them. My favorite was when I would replace the milk boxes in the big dispensers in the salad bar. I would snip the end off as you were supposed to, but I would take the excess piece, flip it around and stick it back up into the dispenser so it would look like it was ready to pour. When Helen would lift up the handle to pour a glass of milk, the clipped off end of the tube would drop into the glass. It would take her a second to figure out what was going on. She would get so mad at me and then roll into that wonderful laugh that she had.

Rolf always teases me about me walking by the warming shelf in the kitchen at the beginning of my shift. Apparently I said the same thing every day... "Umm Pancakes, Umm meatballs." He can probably tell the story better.

I had a lot of jobs at Al's over the years. My first was putting lingonberry labels on the jars. I graduated to helping Lars and Rolf bring the goats up onto the roof. I babysat John and Dennis (and got fired). I dishwashed, and my favorite job was bussing, as I could flirt with all the girls that came in and usually get a date for the evening.

Living next door to the Johnsons', my earliest memory of the business was the Swedish girls that would come to town and sunbathe nude out on the their dock.

## Summers at Al's

Let's see... It was summer 1966, in the pre-goat and make-your-own dirndl era. Edith was smiling serenely as she made fruit soup, while we all hoped it would be done in time for us to have some warm over vanilla ice cream. Axel was sitting at the last seat at the counter with a kind word for all the "waitrons." Lars, Annika, and Rolf were little kids running around the dining room, Rolf in diapers.

Al, you were storming around the dining room with towel in hand, overseeing everything and letting us know "four-top here!" It took me a couple of weeks to understand that the yelling was nothing personal, and I admit to being in tears a couple of times. We did play a good game of "Name That Tune" with the Muzak, but I don't remember anymore who won more often. Yeah, yeah, you probably did.

Ingert, you were of course the aesthetic guiding light in the operation, and your taste set the tone for the new log building, sod roof, goats, and most of what makes Al Johnson's unique. How many times did Al say, "The Butik carries the place!"? I do remember your telling me I was a great B-S'er, and finally figuring out you meant it as a compliment.

Lunch for staff was upstairs, where I got to know the Svenska Flickas, and learned to say in Swedish "Thank you", "How are you?", and "Damned Flies!" Anita and Gunilla stayed, of course, but I also have fond memories of several others, including Birgitta, our own Playmate of the Month...

The cooks—Daubo was great unless he'd had a rough night, John O never lost his cool, and Helen and Evie were sweethearts. Never worked with Kirk, Al, but as his cousin I appreciate everything you did to try to help him.

There was the time Sid Harris asked me for a piranha bag and was amazed when I crossed out "Doggie" and wrote in "Piranha"; he told me my spelling was impeccable, and I told him I enjoyed his excerpt in *The New Yorker*. He looked at me as if thinking, "What? A literate waitress?"

I have fond memories of Bill Beckstrom, with his stories and knowledge of all things green and growing. Norb Blei, of course, was a counter institution and treated everyone as though they were important (still does). The morning crew of Al, Baldy, Winky, Eddie, etc., tried to outdo each other conversationally by seeing who could shout the loudest. I think, based on sheer volume per square inch, Eddie won. There was Max Fletcher of the du Nord, who used to leave a 50 cent tip for a 35 cent cup of hot chocolate; Spencer Gould, Sr., who would flirt harmlessly with all the waitresses; Elsie de Looey, who never quite got over Joe's death (or got her eyebrows on straight); Bob Brandriff, making tomato soup out of ketchup and water, and the proverbial host of others.

At Al's the staff and guests were, and I think still are, family. Like most families there can be family squabbles, but don't let an outsider try anything; for example, the guy who felt the full fury of Al's wrath after throwing an egg at a waitress, and was banned from the premises for eternity! Even the most overprotective father would never hesitate to let his daughter work at Al's, where he knew she'd be safe from drunks and latches.

Al and Ingert, thank you for your friendship, for teaching me the meaning of work, and for being such strong supporters of the Sister Bay community. You've made a big and positive difference in many lives.

Cindy Taubert

From: Lindsay Wilkinson [mailto:lindsay.e.wilkinson@gmail.com]  
Sent: Saturday, August 15, 2009 3:37 PM  
Subject: Al's Party

Hello!!

I just wanted to let you know that unfortunately I will not be able to attend the 60th anniversary party next weekend. I would absolutely

love to be there and I think it sounds like such a fantastic idea! I have to work in Green Bay 'til 7pm, but was thinking I might try and come up for the Mullet Hunters and the 'unofficial' events that night.

While it was only one season (2007) that I worked at Al's, I have held the position of a faithful patron for the past 25 years. Within those 6 short months of employment at Al's, I truly felt like I became a part of the 'family' and honestly feel privileged to have gotten the opportunity to wear the dirndl! The work ethic, lasting traditions, and relationships developed will always hold a fond memory of my summer in DC. One of my favorite memories is when a baby goat fell off the roof and I was holding him in the back kitchen while the appropriate action was taken and caretakers were found. My only regret is not following through on the girls' idea to jump off the Sister Bay Beach dock in our dirndls! Thank you for everything you do, Al and Inger!!

Lindsay Wilkinson  
Green Bay, WI  
920-265-3475

my memories of al's include the night a customer leaned on the hutch in section 5 and it tipped over with me under it. fortunately, john legrave was in the salad bar and caught it before it really pinned me to the counter. i did get a concussion out of it. my favorite times were when the girls would get off the school bus at al's. the bus would stop out front with red lights flashing and molly and dana would come down the steps with backpacks on their 6- and 8-year old shoulders. they would sit at the counter and al would be there immediately, asking "what do you girls want, huh, what do you girls want, pancakes, meatballs, meatballs, hot chocolate??" and he would serve them dinner. it really meant a lot because working nights was hard, missing family dinner time, and i know al knew that. he was also cultivating future waitresses! anyway, that's my story and i know all of us being part of one big family at al's meant a lot to all of us.

barb lundquist

From: Åsa lundqvist [mailto:asajenny.lundqvist@gmail.com]  
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2009 5:37 PM  
Subject: Swedish waitress at Al's restaurant

Hi -

Were just looking for Al's restaurant and saw that you have an anniversary. I worked in the restaurant in the summer 1973 as one of the Swedish waitresses. It was a great experience and a lot of fun. I remember Al as a hard working man and if we did something wrong he jaid at us. It was hard work but a lot of fun. Remember that we used to order in food and took it into the toilett and eat it. A lot of funny things always happened in the restaurant when we where serving. Onse I dropped a whole bootel of lingonberries over a customer, and a lot of other things. We stayed in the little house next to Al's family's house. Remember also the beautiful ocean and all the pubs we went to.

Wonder if you still have Swedish waitresses? Fantastic that the restaurant is still going. I know people from my hometown that wisited your restaurant some years ago. Then it's great to say, I worked there 36 years ago.

Happy anniversary.

From one of the Swedish girls, Annika Lundkvist  
(now Falt; also had a friend whith me, Yvonne Ahs)

The day I met The Colonel was probably my best experience at Al Johnson's. He told me of how he had hitchhiked from Ellison Bay because his car was in the shop. Seems a green beret had gotten stuck under the brake pedal and he ran his car off the road to his home. What, a green beret? Who was this man in an AC Tap hoodie who claimed to speak seven languages and undoubtedly, I would not be the only girl he called pretty that day. The following day, he brought in a briefcase full of harmonicas and at 8:30 a.m., on an October morning, after the coffee table had dispersed, he sat at the counter and began to play. He played beautifully. As the dining room filled up, the sound filled the dining room, and for a moment The Colonel bridged the dichotomies of Al Johnson's: an intimate place where locals meet up for a cup of morning coffee to discuss current events and the community, a place where Al occasionally holds court (and thankfully is a Democrat), to a place where absolute chaos strikes – lingonberries fly and you're lucky if you make it out alive. To me, The Colonel personified Frank Sinatra's "My Way." More importantly, he represented the quality of Al's friends. Equal to this memory, on my brief return to work in Fall '08, was seeing Al and Inger healthy and still working and enjoying their business nearly 60 years later! Congratulations-

Any of my worst experiences surely include the black bow or a dirndl chafe!

-KP  
(a.k.a. Kristin Pollock)

**Al Johnson's – A Special Place**  
**From: Lindsey Teetaert Jacobs**

Al Johnson's has been a fixture in my life for as long as I can remember. When I was five or six, I remember helping my parents clear brush from the area that is now our cabin and knowing that once we were done, I would get my meatball dinner at Al's. My mom would dress my brother, sister, and I up in matching outfits and we would walk through the doors and become overwhelmed with the familiar smells of meatballs, pancakes, and bacon and the hustle bustle of the busy waitresses clad in their dirndls and clogs.

I felt so special at Al's - not only because we knew nearly every hostess and waitress, but because Al would stop by our table every time we ate there. He would tease us and ask us when we would start working in the restaurant. Even at five years old, I knew that one day I would wear a dirndl and sling pancakes and meatballs with the best of them.

My sister started working at Al's first and a few years later, when I was fifteen years old, I finally started work as a hostess and then a waitress. A year later, my brother became a dishwasher and then a cook. I worked there for seven incredible summers – each unique in its own way. It is amazing to me that each time Al came into the restaurant, even when I was twenty-two years old, he still had the ability to make me feel as special as he did when I was a child.

Three years ago, Al and Inger and most of the Johnson family were at my wedding. It was such an honor to have the people who played such a huge role in my life sharing in such an important day.

I will always remember calling in orders, serving “the coffee guys” in the morning and in the evening, “turning and burning” tables as fast as possible even if it meant literally running down the center of the restaurant, answering the same questions over and over again (do the goats ever fall off the roof? What is a lingonberry? Are you from Sweden?) , sneaking a pancake (or two, or three) for lunch, and many other things that made my experience at Al's so incredibly special.

To Al and Inger, I say thank you for creating such a wonderful place - not only for me and the hundreds and hundreds of people who have worked for you, but also for the thousands of tourists who visit the restaurant every year. Al's is not just the restaurant with the “goats on the roof,” it is a place that people create memories and **that** is truly special.

**From:** Denise L. Bhirdo [mailto:dbhirdo@sisterbay.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 12, 2009 11:09 AM  
**Subject:** Al's reunion

My favorite memories:

I started working in the butik when I was 15, in 1980. As the new kid on the block I would usually get stuck waiting on customers for hours on end in the clog alcove. All the different style clogs had a code number, and there was no rhyme or reason to where each of the styles was placed. So on one of my night shifts, while it was slow, I reorganized all of the boxes of clogs, the code numbers being placed in numerical order. I thought I had done such a wonderful job, until the next morning when I arrived at work. Marlene, Gunilla, and Anita read me the riot act. Everyone working there was accustomed to the placement and knew where everything was. Needless to say, I was in the goat house for quite some time after that.

Because of the great work ethic that my parents, along with Al and Ingert, taught me, I became a very dedicated worker. On one of my split shifts, my parents needed me to work at the gas station, while they attended an auction. They promised they would return by 3:30, so I would have a chance to change my clothes, and clean up before my 4 o'clock shift started. The clock ticked past 3:30, quarter to four; soon it was almost 4 o'clock. I did not have my license yet, or a car. My parents were supposed to drive me back to work. The only vehicle available to me was the gas truck filled with hundreds of gallons of gasoline and or fuel oil. On top of that it was a stick shift. So I climbed in, and proceeded to hit the highway until I could get on the back roads (there was no way I was going down the Sister Bay hill). The noises that came from the engine scared me more than driving a truck full of explosive fuel, it was apparent I had no idea what I was doing. It was a rough two miles to drive. I arrived safely, sweating profusely, and only five minutes late. Thank god the police were nowhere to be found on my route back to work.

When Ingert would get upset, she would usually swear and say "Jesus Christ." Alicia Fletcher and I tried to impersonate her with her Swedish accent; by the end of the summer we had it down pretty good.

Shortly after arriving to work at 8 a.m. for one of my many split shifts, Al came into the butik and wanted to know who closed the night before. I said, "I did, why?" A package had been delivered to the butik for Tom Wilson; it was someone's dentures or partial, needless to say, something to do with his dentist practice. It was extremely important and expensive. Al interrogated me and accused me of throwing it away with the evening's trash. We retraced all of my steps from the night before, everything that I could remember that I did at closing. We ended up by the dumpster and I showed him where I dumped the garbage. As we both looked into that huge green bin, neither one of us could see anything resembling the package. Al then proceeded into the kitchen to find someone to help, and he grabbed Pooh-Bah. Little did Pooh-Bah know that Al was going to hoist him into the dumpster to start digging through the garbage. I was horrified watching Pooh-Bah dig as Al pointed here and then there as he tried to direct the rummaging. After a while, and to no avail, the small package was not found. Sometime later that day or the next, Anita Conlon decided to retrieve the gift she purchased the day before (which was a future gift that she stashed underneath her bed), and lo and behold, the package was discovered in her bag. I was off the hook, and Al apologized.

From: sdoersching5241@charter.net [mailto:sdoersching5241@charter.net]  
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2009 1:27 PM  
Subject: Al's Memory

## MEMORIES OF AL'S

I worked at Al's as a waitress for 7 years in the late 50's early 60's--high school and college years. We wore white polyester dresses and hairnets. The summer before I left for Vienna, Austria as an exchange student, Al announced that fact to every table he could when he breezed through the dining room--urging everyone to remember my foreign travel needs when it came to tip-time.

Al was single and slept upstairs of the restaurant. We would open at 6 a.m. and serve the first coffee customers. Al would not come down to cook until we banged on the pipes right next to his bed with the first pancake or grill order. We would bang the pipes and run!! Not pleasant to greet him in the morning after he was out all night.

One day a lady barged right into the kitchen when a tired Al was cooking up a storm over the hot grill and chirped brightly, "Oh, Mr. Johnson, what is the secret ingredient in your Swedish pancakes?" Growling, Al whirled around and snapped, "It's the sweat that drips off the end of my nose onto the grill when I'm cooking!" Thank you, Al, for the memories and the money!

He gave my brother, David, his first dishwashing job at age 12 because David would be at the beach and come asking me for a little ice cream money from my tip pocket. Al overheard him and said, "Stop begging from your sister. You can earn your own money washing dishes for me." Thirty-five years later David was still with Al, until he bought the Sister Bay Cafe.

Sharon Daubner Doersching

**From:** Lana Tencate [mailto:[lane10cate@gmail.com](mailto:lane10cate@gmail.com)]

**Sent:** Monday, August 10, 2009 9:29 AM

**Subject:** a picture for you Al Johnson's Reunion

Here is a picture of Anita Conlon, Kirsten Tencate and Britta Tencate the summer of 1998. Britta and Kirsten had a great time working at Al's during the summer. Working at Al's created many wonderful friendships and memories! They loved the pancakes and RASPBERRY CREAM PIE!

**From:** cedar court [mailto:cedarct@dcwis.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 06, 2009 9:02 AM  
**Subject:** bookkeeping

Started at Al's as a 13-year old in 1966; didn't know that a business keeps records of the daily take. As I was the cashier for the evening one of my jobs was to check for mistakes on the guest checks. Well... we got really busy as usual and I wanted to get out by 9:00 so I had a great idea. I took a stack of guest checks about twelve inches high, put them in a shoe box, walked out the kitchen door and threw them in the trash. Job done and out by 9:00.

We also had a group of four 13-year olds that would time ourselves in clearing and setting a table. With of course the noise level being very high. We could do it in 10 seconds. What a turn over in those days.

Al's is where work ethic was created. Thank you.

Teresa Champeau Martin  
Fish Creek

**From:** Shirley Hoag [mailto:shirleyppearl34@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 07, 2009 5:22 PM  
**Subject:** Al Johnson's Reunion

I worked for Al Johnson for one night - that's right - just for one night only. Here's the story:

Al's restaurant was not far from his present location - no grass roof - no goats. It was small with several tables up front, a counter on the left side with stools where the locals would come in for their morning coffee. The kitchen was on the right side in the back. Al cooked and Danny Peterson did the dishes, pots & pans, and occasionally helped Al with the cooking.

In the winter of 1954-5 and summer of 1955, I worked for Leland Thorp as a waitress in his hotel in St. Petersburg, Fl. and Fish Creek, respectively. I knew how to carry a tray and serve the customers. There was no menu to choose from; perhaps two entrees and a choice of dessert.

In the early 1960s, I came home to Baileys Harbor for a vacation from my secretarial job in Milwaukee. I don't know how Al knew I was in Baileys Harbor, but he drove to my parents' (we had no phone) to ask if I'd help him out for one night. All his staff, and most of Door County, was attending a Lion's Club function and he needed a waitress. I explained to him that it had been some time since I'd done that and I didn't know how to work off a menu. Al said he'd show me and not to worry - "we won't have many customers because they'll all be at the Lions Club dinner." I agreed and came early so Al could show me the ropes. About 5:00 p.m., a couple came in. I took their order, took it to the kitchen, brought back bread and water. I served the couple and then another couple came in - took their order to the kitchen and on my way back I noticed that two more tables were filled. And that's how it kept going. Panic set in - I forgot water, bread, steak knives, ketchup, you name it. More dinners were sitting on the kitchen shelf than were being served. Al decided he'd better help me serve. Danny did the bussing and made sundaes. Somehow we made it through the evening. The customers were understanding (most of them knew me) and Al and Danny were great.

I think it was one of Al's biggest grossing nights!!!!

Shirley Becker Fiedler

**From:** Ruth Stahl [mailto:kaffeebean@msn.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 22, 2009 8:10 AM  
**Subject:** Book for Al and Inger

Congratulations to Al and Inger on 60 years of success.

My favorite memory was one rainy summer day. There was an elderly couple that usually came into Al's for lunch. From what I remember they could not drive for some reason. Inger told us she would be gone for a few minutes. She went and picked up this couple, and brought them to their favorite restaurant for lunch. She knew this would cheer them up on a rainy day.

That is so typical of Inger and Al. Always thinking of nice things to do for others to cheer them up. I can think of a dozen more stories just like that one. Thanks for teaching us life lessons on how to live. I will never forget it.

My best experience at Al's: We were always busy. It makes the time pass quickly.

Worst experience: Leaving Al's for the real world.

Thanks for the memories. It was a privilege to work at Al's.

Ruth Stahl

**From:** rteskie@angelmedflight.com [<mailto:rteskie@angelmedflight.com>]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 20, 2009 12:58 PM  
**Subject:** Memories

My first day on the job was in 1994. I was a 14-year old hostess. I "double-batched" the coffee machine and had it spill all over the floor, broke 2 coffee cups, and threw Juli's [Anderson/Kordon] tip away. It was a great first day!!! I have too many good memories to even start to write all of them down. Rose

From: Kaitlin Jayne Koepke [mailto:kjkoepke@uwm.edu]  
Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2009 11:05 AM  
Subject: Best and Worst at Al's

I'm on a summer road trip with my daughter who just graduated from college, but should be back in Wisconsin by the end of August for the reunion.

The BEST thing didn't happen at Al's, but it certainly involved him. My daughter and I had just been in a really bad car accident. I had been in the hospital in Green Bay for a couple of days, unconscious. My sister, my parents, the man I was soon to marry, the doctors and nurses had all been trying to rouse me out of unconsciousness, with no success. Well, Al comes to see me, and right away he starts yelling! That woke me up fast! I guess when Al had something to say to me, I always listened.

The WORST thing about Al's were those really early opening shifts. I mean you had to be there at 5:45 am - quarter to 6 in the morning - the birds were hardly even up... Back in the early days, I figured, "Why even go home?" So a couple of us would put in some really late nights out and then just roll into our opening shift at Al's, without even making it home to change. Needless to say, that made for a very long day at work.

Look forward to seeing you at the reunion.

Best to all,  
Jill Harding

**From:** Ruth Mitchell [mailto:mvlc@swbell.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 21, 2009 9:16 PM  
**Subject:** what a great idea

I worked one summer at Al's and it was a fantastic, life changing experience. I was 17 years old, and I earned enough that one summer to take myself to Europe the following fall.

Al and Inger were wonderful to work for. I remember even though coming from a strong work-ethic guided family, I was astonished waitresses had work rotation duty like scrubbing the bathroom floor with a scrub brush.

There used to be a food critic from the Chicago Tribune, or maybe it was the Chicago Sun Times, who was a regular. I can't remember his name, but he was considered a tyrant. I was so nervous when I waited on him that as I was serving a man in the table next to him, one of those little plastic bowls slipped out of my hands and shot straight up into the air about four feet like a toy rocket. The red pickled beet juice came down on the sleeve of a man's light colored jacket, staining it forever. Needless to say the man I spilled the beet juice on was very gracious about it, but I don't think I impressed the food critic very much.

One of my favorite quotes from Al was one time at the end of a 9-hour shift he fussed at me, growling, "Peterson you're walking not running!" It shocked me so much that I actually picked up the pace! He grinned, and I think he respected me because I was a hard worker.

At the time that I was working at Al's, there was a woman that made the desserts. She made an incredible peach pie that we served with an ample serving of whipped cream. It was out of this world. So was the strawberry rhubarb pie.

We worked hard, partied hard and ate our weight in pancakes and all the other wonderful items on the menu. Back in those days we wore low-cut dirndls, and there was a corner of the restaurant that had a bar where young single men would come in and flirt with the girls.

I look very Swedish and although I have a Southern accent, I used to have fun sometimes with the tourists pretending I was Swedish by imitating the Swedish girls' accents. I think it might have helped my tips.

As I said, it was a wonderful experience that began with a bashful girl the summer before getting up her courage to confront Al to give her a job. He seemed so intimidating, but he hired her.

Thanks for this chance to reminisce and I hope the party is a roaring success!

Ruth (Peterson) Mitchell

**From:** Graf, Katie K [mailto:Katie.Graf@ministryhealth.org]

**Sent:** Thursday, July 30, 2009 10:00 AM

**Cc:** Dick Burress (rburress@co.door.wi.us); Jean Stephany (stephany@pdisplays.com);  
Marsha Mann (marsham@demco.com)

**Subject:** Al's stories

I worked at Al's from 1971 through my second year of college, which would have been 1978. One of my worst nightmares is still occurring. I still dream about the times in the fall when all of the waitresses went back to college, leaving me and a few others to waitress. We usually had anywhere from 2 to 6 waitresses on a fall shift, compared to 9 or 11 on in the summer. The dining room would fill up with "bus people" and we got swamped. I would come out with a tray of food and forget who it was for. My other nightmare was the time I was on break over at the park. My girdle was bulging with tips from the morning shift and Craig Bastian threw me off the dock into the water... Dollar bills floating everywhere in the water.

My fondest memory was "Girls Night Out" or "Appreciation Night." Girls Night out was always held at a fancy restaurant; all the girls would dress up and we danced the night away. Appreciation Night was always at AC Tap. We would dress up for this also but in Halloween type apparel. I was "Wonder Waitress", one year with roller skates and a mini skirt, another year I was one of "Al's Angels", wings and all. Fun times.

Katie Graf, CSW  
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**From:** Vojáček Vladimír [mailto:v.vojacek@mikroelektronika.cz]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 29, 2009 9:05 AM  
**Cc:** edita.vojackova  
**Subject:** Hi from CZ

This is Vladimir and Edita Vojacek from Czech republic. I received message from Mary Ann Blahnik from Fish Creek that there will be reunion of AI's ex-employees. It is wonderful! Nowadays we have two small children, so traveling is difficult (Natalie-2 years and Prokop-6months) – see photo.

We very often think about AI's. I work in internationally active company, but I must say I have learn a lot during our stay in US approx 6 years ago – mainly what is necessary for success in business:

- Perfect organization and rules
- Hard working management (example for others)
- Good team
- Friendly atmosphere and fair boss

I can use this simple rules today, so thanks AI!

We enjoyed working for you. Hard work but fun too – just do not drink “Red Dog” beer ever again! For good beer you must come to Czech republic (one beer = 1,2 USD in restaurant!!!!).

Please pass this message to AI's family (Rolf, John, Lars, Annika ....., cooks, Bryn, waiters and all other staff).

PS: I can see Mullet Hunters still alive – let's rock and roll!

Vladimír Vojáček  
Sales Director  
MIKROELEKTRONIKA – Systems For Easy Life

From: Stephany, Jean [mailto:jstephany@pdisplays.com]  
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2009 11:23 AM  
Subject: Al's reunion

See what happens when you send an email to a Burress, you get four responses for the price of one email. I did send a blurb on the website declining the invitation, but since have decided I cannot miss this event so my husband and I will be attending the Sat afternoon/evening party at the Beach. I could go into many many fun memories but I think they've all been covered by others. I will say when I worked at Al's (1968-1970), we had such a great time. We worked our butts off but playing later was so worth it. The girls that came for the summer from Sweden and Finland were so much fun.

Thank everyone involved in planning this party, what a great way to say thanks to such a wonderful family!!

Jeanne (Burress) Stephany

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**From:** Marsha Mann [mailto:marsham@demco.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, July 30, 2009 10:20 AM

**Cc:** Dick Burress (rburress@co.door.wi.us); Jean Stephany (stephany@pdisplays.com)

**Subject:** RE: Al's stories

I worked at Al's from 1975–1984.

**Worst Nightmare (had it for at least half my adult life):**

I called in a Jumbo order 3 times by mistake and Kirk made all three orders and then told me I had to eat every one of them at the counter in front of the customers! Al and Baldy and a couple others were laughing at me.

**Worst Memory:**

Rachel and I were pros at working the door together. But one nice October morning (FALL FEST WEEKEND), I messed up big-time on the wait times. Everyone who was supposed to be seated went to watch the parade. The restaurant was empty and Al was telling me to seat a 5 top, seat a 2 top, finally he came into the lobby and said, "Where the hell IS everybody?" Then an hour later we had people wishing they could eat on the roof (we got so busy). I felt like crawling in a hole.

**Worst Memory number II:**

Al had a habit of kind of getting people out the door; sometimes before they were done eating. I used to freak out when he'd bring up a high chair for the next big top when the other people were finishing up. I would think "that guy has balls" and he did!

**Best Memory:**

It was a late, late night. I agreed to take the last table and they were a bunch of our favorite Illinois guests. What did we call them...FIBS? Anyway it was late and I ran my butt off for these people and their snot-nosed kids. They were amused at how they had me running; and I was upset because I was missing double bubble night at the English Inn. At the end of the meal, the guy leaves me a five spot and the bill was huge. I rang them up, found the 5-dollar bill and followed him out to his Benz. I said, "Excuse me sir." He said, "Did I forget something?" I handed him back the five dollar bill and told him "yes you did; obviously you need this more than I do"... Just for one moment I was victorious. I skipped back into the restaurant.

**Best Memory II:**

Sometimes if worked late I would go swimming after work to cool off. I'd take off my uniform, but leave on my blouse and dive into the lake and swim under water until I couldn't hold my breath any longer. I remember that feeling of swimming late at night, the meatball smell going away, and everything being ok. My ashes are going to be tossed off that dock. I've never felt that free before in my life.

Then of course the Al's night out, Girl's night out, and so many more in between. Al Johnson taught me more about life than anyone I know.

**Marsha (Burress) Mann**

Exhibit Coordinator

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## **Memories of Al's**

### **Mariah Goode**

The number of people with whom I became friends – or with whom I became better friends – through working at Al's is astounding. I worked at Al's from 1989 to 2007, sometimes seasonally, sometimes year-round, sometimes part-time, and sometimes full-time. Mostly I waitressed, but I also worked in the salad bar a few seasons, and as a dining room manager/hostess for about 1½ years. Al and Inger were hard-working, fair, honest, and fun people to work for (once you got over your fear!). Waitressing at Al's was in many ways the best job I've ever had and Al was definitely the best boss I've ever had. My time at Al's strengthened my work ethic and taught me more about how to be a good worker/co-worker/boss than any other job I've ever had. The work was physically hard and not always pleasant – either because of scraps with your co-workers or the customers or the politics involved in a family business – but overall, my memories are very good.

So, congratulations, Al and Inger, and thank you! ☺ Here are my memories of Al's. (Sorry the list is so long, but I know you're both well aware of my tendency toward wordiness.)

- Trying my first summer in the county to get a waitressing job at Al's, with no success. Getting a waitressing job my third summer by name-dropping to Lars that I was very good friends with a former girlfriend of his, with whom he was still on good terms.
- Being trained by Bryn – alongside Katie Schendel – early in the summer of 1989. On one of the first days I had my own full section (before that, Katie and I shared a section), it rained all day, the restaurant was packed, there were 7 waitresses on (I was in the dreaded section 7, with four tables and half of counter), and I lived a waitress nightmare my entire 8-hour shift.
- Katie had a great fantasy which I wish she had fulfilled: she wanted to finish a busy summer daytime shift at Al's, run outside in her dirndl and hop on a bike, and bike across the street and go flying straight off the Sister Bay dock, screaming crazily all the while.
- Not being able to get my clogs on my feet one morning my first week because my feet were so swollen. (I had to buy and wear those ugly blue nursing-type shoes/slippers that were the only things Inger would let us wear besides clogs.)
- My first summer at Al's, Bryn saying to me, "Get a load of the pants on that guy at your table!" "That guy" was my grandpa. (He often wears pants embroidered with whales.) I thought it was hilarious; Bryn was mortified.
- Being scared to death of Kirk my first summer ("we've got a million dollar operation here, at a standstill because of you"). Within a year or two – once I proved I could call in orders correctly and get the food out of the kitchen when he wanted it out – we became very good friends. I think telling him a dirty joke my second summer loosened him up toward me. (Hope you're watching this party, Kirk. Make sure our sweet, funny Teresa is, too.)
- June folding and taping our bus tips into tiny little neatly labeled squares, back when we still got our bus tips in cash. (June-bug – I hope you're watching, too.)
- Turning 21 that first summer I worked at Al's, in celebration of which the cooks got me so drunk on Peach Schnapps that I've never touched the stuff again.
- Waking up a few workday mornings to the phone ringing because I'd overslept (by turning my alarm off in my sleep or because the power had gone out and I hadn't yet figured out to get a battery-operated clock). After a year or two, I convinced Lars I just couldn't do opening shifts anymore – I was always up half the night worrying I'd oversleep.
- Al racing around the dining room, clearing tables, seating people, watering/coffeeing them ("Coffee?!" he'd bark), and most of them wondering who the heck this gruff old man was.
- Inger coming in and waitresses scattering, fearful of (probably deserved) criticism about their appearance or of being assigned a neglected cleaning task of some sort.

- Going on a winter road trip to Minneapolis with Laura Richards and Lisa Michalson (now MacDonald) in December 1991 even though everyone said we shouldn't because snow was forecasted for the week. Sure enough, we got in an accident on the way home. We were all fine – other than my car (the Buick, not the 1970 Duster Eric Conlon had nicknamed Mariah's Heap) – but I almost wished I had been hurt because I had to call Al and tell him his entire afternoon and evening waitress and salad bar crew for the next day wouldn't be there. Lisa and Laura could hear him yelling at me through the phone, although he did interrupt himself at one point to make sure we were okay.
- Lars and Al kicking out of the restaurant a couple who were very rude to me in the fall of 1992. Al chased me into the women's employee bathroom, where I had run crying, and bellowed, "Jesus Christ! We got rid of them – they're gone! If *you're* crying, we're in trouble this fall!" (I have absolutely LOVED over the years telling friends about working at a restaurant where the customer is NOT always right. I saw Johnson family members kick customers out countless times when they were being rude to wait or host staff members.)
- Adamantly announcing in 1990 and in 1992 that I wasn't coming back to Al's, the next season or ever. Both of the following springs I sheepishly called Lars and Al asking for employment that summer. I never said "never" again, especially after Amy Olson's "I'll lick the kitchen floor before I return" promise, which I believe Randy made her live up to!
- Picking up Rolf, Lori, Annika, Bo, and Freddie on Grand Cayman a couple of times in the early '90s when their cruise stopped there and I was there on vacation with my family. I nearly drowned Bo and Freddie once snorkeling, not realizing how hungover they were!
- Too many good memories to count of living with good friends who were co-workers from Al's: Kit, Jennie, Annika, Ineke, Bridget, and, more than once, Maggie and "Graffer." ☺
- Many summer nights of skinny-dipping off the Sister Bay or Al's docks. The summer I lived at Annika's (1994) I think Rachael Hammersmith and I went nearly every night after work, and then headed to JJ's for several margaritas. (It felt great to clear the French fry and meatball grease layer off your body, and if you went swimming in the evening, we rationalized, you didn't need a shower in the morning before your next shift, which meant you could stay out later and sleep a little bit extra.) Rex Kahr and Amalia Vagts and I also skinny-dipped once on a late October evening, maybe in 1995 – THAT was cold.
- For many seasons/years, going out almost nightly after work, to either Husby's (I think Laura Richards and I practically lived there in the winter of 1991-1992!), JJ's, or the Tap.
- The day in the early '90s the sewer line started backing up into the kitchen through the floor drains. The plumber eventually discovered an enormous pair of women's nylon underwear blocking a pipe; someone had flushed them down a toilet. I think it cost Al like \$10,000.
- Road trips to Minneapolis with Lori, during one of which I was among the first to learn that she and Rolf would soon be eloping. (Rolf announced to Al that they had gotten married by calling him up at the restaurant and saying that they'd had to stop at the courthouse, as Lori needed to change her name. Al, next to me while he was talking on the phone, was completely befuddled, saying, "Why the hell did she need to change her name?")
- Putting myself through grad school largely by working at Al's.
- Being able to make my mortgage payments by picking up shifts at Al's, since my so-called "real" job didn't pay me enough. (This was true for many years, and for several "real" jobs.)
- Paying for innumerable vacations by working at Al's – multiple trips to Europe, various trips all over the U.S., and a lengthy trip to South America.
- The pride I always felt when Al told me I was "top dog" the day before. (Especially back in the days when we used to get gift certificates to the du Nord for dinner when you had the top sales for the week!)

- Sitting around the coffee table with Al and Frank Liptrot one winter night in I think 1991, while the two of them sifted through and told stories about a pile of old photos Frank had brought in. It seemed as if Al had a drink and a different girl with him in every photo.
- Sitting around the coffee table with Bill Bastian, our most faithful regular. While I'm sure there was one, I can't remember working a single shift without seeing Bill at least once. (Hope you're watching this, too, Bill.)
- Having nearly all of the Johnson family at my wedding. (In fact, I wouldn't let the ceremony start until we knew the notoriously late Rolf and Lori had arrived.) Al told me later it was the best wedding ceremony he'd ever been to.
- Nervously calling Lars and Al in May of 2004, asking to come back to work immediately and to *please* get onto health insurance coverage right away; I had just found out I was pregnant, and my self-insured policy didn't include maternity coverage. (They said "yes.")
- Waitressing the morning of the day I went into labor with Theo in January 2005. We had barely gotten the pool going as to his birth date. A male customer said to me that morning, "you haven't even dropped yet – you've got weeks to go."
- I frequently dreamt about work, especially in the fall when it was ridiculously busy and you were working extra and longer shifts. It made you feel like all you did for several months, waking and sleeping, was work. Sometimes the dreams were nightmares, same as everyone seems to have: the hostesses keep seating your endlessly large section, you can't get food out of the kitchen for some reason, etc. etc. I still have the nightmares. I had one a few weeks ago, actually, and I haven't worked a shift at Al's in over two years!
- Everyone on staff was always eating, constantly. (Juli Anderson Kordon would probably have starved years ago if it wasn't for Al's.) I've never heard of another restaurant that allows its staff members to eat as much as at Al's – everyone else charges you at least half-price for your shift meal. Whenever I worked at Al's full-time I barely had to buy any groceries (yet another way Al's has helped my bank account over the years!). While I love many things on the menu, my all-time favorite is probably the fresh raspberry pie.
- Tricking other staff members – usually busboys or dishwashers – into eating gross concoctions, like pancakes with strawberries and whipped cream and pickled herring juice. Also, putting pancakes or syrup bottle stickers on each others' backs. (Sorry, Inger – you probably hated seeing a waitress take an order with a big pancake stuck to her back!)
- Some of my favorites of Al's phrases: "Set the deuce!" "Watch that [*silverware, coffee, whatever*] like a hawk!" "Hambone!" "Stay out of those taverns, ladies!"

## From Amalia Vagts

I moved to Door County during the summer of 1992, following my sophomore year of college at Luther. I had lined up a job waitressing at the Cherrywood Inn, a new restaurant in Sister Bay, and a friend had found me a room to rent with famed Sister Bay octogenarian Phyllis Larsen (who has probably housed 50% of the Door County workers over the years).

I showed up on the day I told my new employers I would, only to find they had written the dates down wrong, had expected me a week earlier, and had given my job to someone else. Despondent, I started job hunting and ate soda crackers and hot chocolate for the next three days. During my search, I passed by Al's several times, but never went in. My friend with the Door County connections said it was impossible to get a job there. I walked in and met Jill, with whom I quickly established a Southeastern Minnesota connection. Soon after that, I interviewed with Lars and a day later was offered a full-time waitressing job. Over a game of Scrabble that night, I told Phyllis that I thought part of the reason I got the job was because I was living at her house. Phyllis snorted. "*Part of the reason?*" she asked. "I'm sure it was the *only* reason!"

With that vote of confidence, I started off the next morning for my training with Annika. I have to confess that I absolutely loved learning the menu and FAQs and still pride myself on knowing the answer to most of them ("What is limpa bread? It's a sweet rye bread, flavored with orange peel and anise"). I quickly became a bit of an Al's geek, I guess. During my first few weeks on the job I learned that Susan moved faster than anyone in the dining room, Juanita had my sense of humor, Al and Ingert had different preferences for lighting and temperature, Teresa was endlessly kind and helpful, Karen would make me laugh the hardest, Barb would become a dear friend, my days were smoother if I dropped money in the cook's tip bucket, and Kirk was to be avoided at all costs. This last lesson would over time prove to be false, as I learned how to call my orders in perfectly and found out that Kirk's biggest secret was his hidden gentle side. The first (and only) time I committed my worst waitress nightmare—forgetting to call in an order for chicken—Kirk was the person I had to confess to. I was terrified. He was completely professional about it, dropped the order in right away, told me it happens, no big deal and to try to not have it happen again. I grew to love working with Kirk, and the entire restaurant.

Some of my favorite memories at Al's involve the breakfast table conversations; Al clearing people's water glasses if they'd been sitting too long; Karen Hall—where do I start—Karen Hall saying, "Amalia... what's your last name? Oh never mind, just probably some other name I can't pronounce." And the time Daubo was cleaning the hot chocolate machine, to which Karen said, "Great, just what everyone wants to see... you're eating your pancakes, you look up and all you can see is Daubo's crack;" making up literary games with Barb to keep our minds active; anytime I shared a shift with Rachael, Katie or Mariah; the Infamous Stolen Sunglasses Incident; and, of course, the day Karen Hall and I swapped Michelle and Lyle's license plates so Lyle drove around the County all day with "Miss America" plates (for this I paid dearly, later on).

I loved working at Al's. I returned after graduation and had a wonderful six months taking a chunk out of my student loans and having a great time in Door County. Al and Ingert, you have created an

incredible community—for those who visit for one meal, those who work a season or two, and those who've made Al's their life's work. Congratulations on these first 60 years!