

Hope Breakfast Bar: Food Review

BY ERIKA SOUKUP

THE RESTAURANT LOCATED ON Leech Street in St. Paul, less than 10 minutes from campus is a quaint restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating. The prices for all the dishes were reasonable, ranging from \$12-\$16. Both times I ate there I was outside on the patio. You do need a reservation to eat there especially on the weekends, but if you book it ahead of time there's little problem getting a table. Since it was windy, the napkins and smaller items on the table tend to go on a little adventure, and the food gets a bit colder, but that's all to be expected. The staff was extremely



Photo Credit: Erika Soukup

friendly and welcoming and the ambiance, at least outside, was very nice. The food itself ranges from fine to delicious. If you're looking for something sweet, this is a great place for you. The German Chocolate pancakes genuinely taste like cake. The Banana Churro Waffles are also delicious. They have fresh bananas, walnuts that are coated with brown sugar, and a cream cheese syrup. While I did enjoy this one, the sugar coated walnuts added a lot of sweetness where I would have been perfectly satisfied with the dish without the nuts or even if they weren't sugar coated. Overall, if you have a dedicated sweet tooth, these dishes would be great for you, but if you don't, I'd look at the savory side of the menu.

On the flipside, they've got a great range of savory dishes ranging from avocado toast to biscuits and gravy to bacon taco to chicken fried steak and eggs. The dishes I tried were avocado toast and the biscuits and gravy. First, the avocado toast was fine, with fried avocado, pickles, tomatoes, and poached eggs. The toast and avocado itself was good, especially with the pickles, but the avocado was piled at least two inches high which made the dish a bit unbalanced with the flavors. The eggs on the side were not great, there was no seasoning and they were also a bit watery. The biscuits and gravy, however, were a smash. Again, there wasn't any outright salt or pepper with the dish, but the gravy was well-seasoned. It had a good spice flavor without being actually spicy if you're not a fan of spice. The hash browns were crunchy, and the over-easy eggs were a great complement to the biscuits and gravy.

In conclusion, I would recommend eating here. The staff and servers were extremely welcoming and it was in a good area (also really close to campus). I would recommend something sweeter on the menu, but keep in mind that if you're not a big sugar person, don't get the avocado toast. The biscuits and gravy, though, I would highly recommend.

Book Review: *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*

BY REBECCA BEASLEY

HAS A BOOK EVER changed your life? Maybe it inspired you to become a better person, or perhaps it gave you motivation to get through the day. *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows shows how one book can change everything. Set in 1946, the characters reflect on World War II, and how a book club and community kept them alive. Two things that can help us through any struggle are books and fellowship, the characters say.

Mary Ann Shaffer was an editor and librarian who first had her inspiration for this novel in 1980, but never finished it before her passing in 2008. Her niece, Annie Barrows, completed it for her. Barrows is also the author of *The Truth According to Us* and a children's series.

The title is a mouthful, but the writing style is unique too. The novel is made up of hundreds of letters between a dozen relatable, lovable characters. Through these letters, the reader gains an understanding of history on a personal level, as the letters describe day to day life on the beautiful English Channel island of Guernsey during the German occupation. The novel's main character, Juliet Ashton, is determined to write an article about the group of people connected to her by a single book. During the occupation, it was illegal for residents of Guernsey to have livestock. They grew potatoes and survived off of those. All hope of finding any happiness during the war was gone. Survival through the winter appeared impossible until a small group of regular people decided to break the rules. To avoid discovery, they created *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*. Books connected them and gave them something to be happy about during the occupation. As the novel progresses, Juliet slowly uncovers the mystery of the society's missing founder, Elizabeth, a forbidden love, and a daughter left behind. Stories told out of order combine to show all sides of the war, the grotesque cloud and the silver lining.

My favorite part of the book, however, is the founding family side-plot. Juliet Ashton is a vibrant character, and is also an orphan. The reader cannot help but feel the same excitement she feels as she finds the family she never had. Although the novel is written as a series of letters and telegrams, each letter is written to show not only plot, but also characters, their personalities, and their stories. Juliet finds more than a story on the island of Guernsey, proving even more that one book can change everything.

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society is more than a work of historical fiction. It tells a story of human nature, the power of books, and has a character every reader swears they have met before. I would recommend this book to readers who want a good laugh, who want to read desperate, side-plot romance, and who call themselves history buffs. The novel captures the little light that kept people going without erasing or glorifying the heavy war topics.

One of my favorite teachers recommended *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* to me before the pandemic hit. It quickly became the book I have read countless times, and the Netflix movie adaptation became my go-to for family movie nights.