

Chuck Guarino



What was it like, Papa?



MAMA & PAPA JOE'S GRILL **Grand Beach Road, Grand Marais, Mb.**

Grandchildren are very inquisitive. Mine are no different. They are familiar with my father "Papa Joe" being an early locomotive engineer on the Grand Beach run. They recently learned that he and my mother "Nanny Guarino" ran a very successful Italian restaurant in Grand Marais after his retirement.

Their restaurant was located on the North West corner of Grand Beach Road and Central Avenue. At that time, the only access to Grand Beach was through Grand Marais down Grand Beach Road.

Papa Joe and Nanny set up their restaurant to feature Italian cuisine. It immediately became a success, and people from the Grand Beach campsite and Grand Marais booked their "diners" well in advance.

Although "Nanny Guarino" was not Italian, she had learned how to prepare Italian dishes from paternal grandmother. They also prepared Ukrainian, Polish and French dishes. Papa Joe also added a soft ice cream outlet to their operations, and it became an instant success.

The CNR pier at Grand Beach broke up around 1955 and many of the large B.C. fir timbers had drifted onto the shore.

Papa Joe was able to obtain several of them. They were approximately 16 inches by 16 inches in width, and about 20 feet in length. He placed them at the front of "Mama & Papa Joe's Grill" to act as a buffer for automobiles that parked at the front.

When the road into Grand Beach was changed to follow the old CNR railway line, it also caused the character of Grand Beach Road to change.

The new road allowed people to drive directly into Grand Beach, thus the businesses along Grand Beach Road suffered badly with the diminished traffic.

Papa Joe and Nany Guarino sold their restaurant to their niece about 1964. She and her husband ran it for several years and then sold it, because it was unprofitable.

The new owners let the property deteriorate badly over the years. Then it sold again around 2002 and the present owners are trying to restore it. Hopefully they will be successful in restoring it.



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