
Restaurant offers armed forces their just desserts

Tom Moran of Albany was having dinner at an Albany restaurant one night about two weeks ago when a young man approached the counter.

The man asked if the restaurant had a discount for people in the armed forces. The person at the counter said it didn't.

Moran's younger son, James, is in the Air Force, working as loadmaster for C-5 transport planes in Dover, Del. His older son, Thomas, has been in and out of the Air Force, too.

Moran struck up a conversation and learned the young man was in the Army but was thinking about going into the Air Force.

The young man left a little later, and Moran was struck by a thought: "I should have bought that guy dinner."

Moran decided not to let that chance go by again. With the help of Joseph Novak, owner of Novak's Hungarian Restaurant, any man or woman currently serving in the armed forces will be treated to free dessert and coffee anytime they come to Novak's to purchase a meal.

Moran, who owns Mountain View Christmas Tree Farms, said he approached Novak because he wanted a family-run business and he liked the way Novak ran his race in 2002 against incumbent Betsy Close for House District 15.

His original idea was to pay Novak a set amount that would be used against dinner discounts to any serviceman who came in. Novak suggested dessert. The two finalized the plan just a few days ago, and it is now in effect.

Both say the idea is not to take sides politically but to show appreciation to the men and women who serve their country. They also hope others will come up with their own ways to say thanks.

"We're hoping this will catch fire and consume the hearts of the people," Novak said. "We're saying, God bless you, we love you and thank you for the sacrifice. We are so happy that you did it for us."