

# LEXGO! EAT

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A line forms out the door into the Arcade Shops of the Garden Springs Shopping Center, Friday, Feb. 14, 2025 at Dad's Favorites Deli in Lexington, Ky. The popular sandwich shop frequently has a line on Thursdays and Fridays for one its most popular daily sandwich specials, The Rushmore. Come early, they open at 11 a.m. and will run out.

## Lexington's best sandwich: Dad's Favorites Deli's hidden gem

BY BRIAN SIMMS  
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Everyone loves to find a hidden gem.

They especially love it when that gem is a local dining spot that offers unique, sought-after menu items.

Both can be found at Dad's Favorites Deli.

The Lexington deli, deep inside an unassuming Garden Springs strip mall surrounded by a laundromat and a barber shop, has a cult-like following thanks to its variety of toasted sandwiches.

This includes one-of-a-kind daily specials, but it's on Thursdays and Fridays that have everyone from lawyers to university students lining the corridor of the shops inside the arcade waiting for some of the best sandwiches in Lexington.

The highlight of these is the Rushmore (\$9.95), made with the deli's homemade chipotle



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The Rushmore sandwich at Dad's Favorites Deli, Thursday, June 26, 2025 in Lexington, Ky. The sandwich, available Thursday and Fridays only, is one of the most popular the sandwich shop has and frequently sells out. It has chipotle cheddar cheese spread, sliced roast beef, BBQ sauce, bacon, fried onion straws on toasted ciabatta and is served with beer cheese sauce for dipping.

cheddar cheese spread, sliced roast beef, BBQ sauce, bacon, fried onion straws on toasted ciabatta and served with beer

cheese sauce for dipping. Flavorwise, it's almost like getting two sandwiches in one. "I tell everybody, 'Take a bite

of it first, before you put it in the sauce, and you'll get all that flavor — the sweetness of the barbecue sauce, the salt from the bacon, the roast beef and then the cheese comes in," said owner James "Dad" Caudill. "But then once you dump it in the cheese sauce, it goes to another level."

That homemade beer cheese gives it an extra kick, while the barbecue sauce gives it a sweet release that helps make the Rushmore the most popular sandwich on Thursdays and Fridays, often selling out by 12:30 p.m.

A quick scan of the restaurant on a recent Thursday confirmed plenty of sandwiches were either getting dipped or covered in beer cheese.

"And if you're not wearing it, it's you're not eating it, right?" said Caudill.

But, if it's so good and so popular, then why not have it on the menu everyday?

Caudill said they simply can-

not make enough of the beer cheese sauce, and there's not enough kitchen and counter space.

But the beer cheese is also featured in another Friday-only sandwich, the Grip n' Dip. It features a traditional bun, their chipotle cheddar cheese spread and pulled pork barbecue topped with Grippio's chips and a side of beer cheese sauce for dipping.

### WHAT ARE DAD'S MOST POPULAR SANDWICHES?

Caudill said he likes having the variety to go with their menu of eight signature sandwiches each day.

"I like a different special every day, and we'll see the same people on those certain days, because we know they came in for a Reuben, or we know they came in for the barbecue or we know that they came in for the Farmhouse on Monday," said Caudill.

Caudill said two other sandwiches stack up in popularity to the Rushmore: another Thursday special, the Ruben, and the Asiago pot roast (\$8.95), which is available daily.

The Ruben (\$9.95) is topped with homemade sauerkraut and Dad's Signature Sauce (not thousand island) and served on seeded sourdough rye with Dad's Swiss cheese. The corned beef is brined and slow-roasted for 16 hours.

"It's the most tender corned beef you're gonna get," Caudill said.

The Asiago pot roast sandwich is made in house every day and served on a French roll with roasted red pepper sauce (\$8.95).

### WHAT ELSE ON THE MENU IS DAD'S KNOWN FOR?

Caudill and his sons Jay and Jeff started selling cheese spreads in 2008. Two years later, they opened the deli in Gardenside with one table out front. From there, they had seating for 20 in the hallway until they rented an open space in the arcade that can accommodate about 50.

Besides sandwiches and cheese spreads, Dad's is also known for its homemade soups. The tomato basil sells out every day Caudill said.

"Nothing comes out of a can. Nothing comes out of a bag. Everything is made fresh," Caudill said.

Caudill said Thursdays and Fridays are big draws for uni-

SEE SANDWICH, 6C

## Kentucky restaurants win top wine awards for 2025, including 2 in Lexington area

BY AARON MUDD  
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Wine Spectator, a long-standing magazine whose editors review thousands of wines each year, has announced the winners of the 2025 Restaurant Awards, and Kentuckians may recognize a few.

This year, Wine Spectator awarded nine Kentucky restaurants, including two in the Lexington area.

Launched in 1981, the magazine's Restaurant Awards are the world's only program exclusively focused on restaurant wine programs, a Wine Spectator press release said. Awards are assigned on three levels: the Award of Excellence, the Best of Award of Excellence and the Grand Award (the most exclusive).

This year's awards recognize more than 3,800 restaurants in all 50 U.S. states and more than 80 countries, Wine Spectator said.

Two Lexington-area restaurants won awards: Jeff Ruby's

Steakhouse at 101 West Vine St. and the Holly Hill Inn, at 426 North Winter St. in Midway of Woodford County.

"We're incredibly proud to be recognized by Wine Spectator with the Award of Excellence," Britney Ruby Miller, co-owner and CEO at Jeff Ruby Culinary Entertainment, wrote in an emailed statement. "This honor reflects the intentionality behind every bottle on our list and the passion our team pours into curating a wine program that elevates the entire dining experience. It's about more than just great wine—it's about creating meaningful moments that pair perfectly with our five-star cuisine and hospitality."

The Herald-Leader has also reached out to Holly Hill Inn via email for comment.

Other Kentucky restaurants honored by this year's awards include Repeal Oak-Fire Steakhouse, Cuvée Wine Table, Morton's The Steakhouse, Nouvelle Bar and Bottle, Ripple Wine Bar and Swizzle Dinner

SEE AWARDS, 6C



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People gather for lunch at Spark Community Cafe in Versailles, Ky., Sunday, June 23, 2019. Spark Community Cafe operates on a pay what you can scale and offers people an opportunity to volunteer time in exchange for their meal.

## Pay-what-you-can Spark Community Cafe in Versailles closing

BY JANET PATTON  
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A pay-what-you-can cafe that's been open for six years is shutting its doors.

Spark Community Cafe, 175 N. Main St. in Versailles, announced on social media it will close June 29.

"This is a really hard decision," Whitney Stepp-Gay,

chairwoman of the Spark board, said Friday.

Spark was often staffed with volunteers serving farm-to-table goodness, sometimes for free, and funded by contributions from diners and the community, including many Woodford County businesses.

It also led to a prestigious recognition: Former chef Isaiah Sreetch was named a semifinalist in the 2023 James

Beard Awards.

Stepp-Gay said rising food costs and other expenses were "taking away from our food-insecure mission. We explored other models but ... it just wasn't feasible any more."

In 2019, when the cafe opened, about 11.5% of Woodford County was facing food insecurity. "I can promise you it's grown now," Stepp-Gay said.

She posted the news of the closing on Facebook Thursday evening.

"Since opening our doors in March 2019, Spark Community Cafe has been honored to serve more than 90,500 meals — not just to those wondering, 'What should we eat tonight?' but more importantly, to those facing the far more urgent question: 'Will we eat tonight?'"

"Thanks to your generous support — whether as donors, customers, or volunteers — we have been able to answer that question with a resounding 'Yes,'" the restaurant posted.

Spark plans to continue direct delivery of home-made oven-ready meals for those facing food insecurity in Woodford County. Stepp-Gay said they are working with local churches to secure a commercial kitchen and plan to resume delivering meals to homes in September.

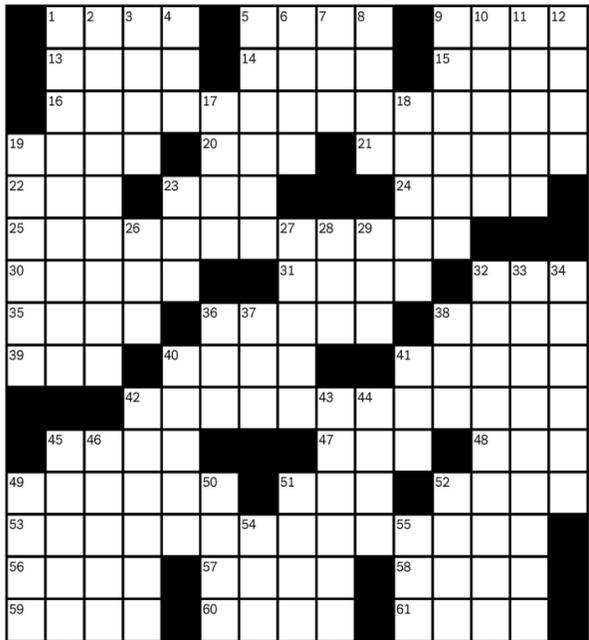
"Despite generous donations and grants, the financial reality remains clear: Maintaining the

SEE CAFE, 6C

**NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD**

No. 0526

- ACROSS**  
 1 Ran, as colors in the wash  
 5 One of four on most molars  
 9 Fee  
 13 Overhaul  
 14 Where India and Indonesia are  
 15 Choir member  
 16 1999 sports drama co-starring Al Pacino  
 19 Fiber-rich fruits  
 20 The "p" of rpm  
 21 Preps for a sports competition  
 22 Sinusitis doc  
 23 What the "E" stands for in 22-Across  
 24 Born and  
 25 1973 marital drama co-starring Elizabeth Taylor  
 30 T-bone or porterhouse  
 31 Unexpected blessing  
 32 Super Mario Bros. console  
 35 Take care of, as a bar  
 36 Firmly declares  
 38 "\_\_\_ we forget ..."  
 39 Texting tech, in brief  
 40 TLC or ZZ Top, e.g.  
 41 Around, as in dates  
 42 2003 fantasy comedy co-starring Lindsay Lohan  
 45 Not at home  
 47 \_\_\_ Raisman, six-time medalist in Olympic gymnastics  
 48 Mimic  
 49 Security devices  
 51 Point of no return?  
 52 Oft-used plaything on snow days  
 53 1970s-'80s TV staple ... or a hint to 16-, 25- and 42-Across  
 56 Subsequently  
 57 Locale of an arch and sole  
 58 Meanie  
 59 Actress Gilbert



Puzzle by Ari Halpern

6/30

- 60 The Venus de Milo's missing body parts  
 61 Like some fiber-rich cereals
- DOWN**  
 1 Body part connecting the cerebrum to the spinal cord  
 2 Stretches out  
 3 "Grand" ice cream brand  
 4 Hound, in two ways  
 5 Stalactite site  
 6 \_\_\_ experience  
 7 Topic for an evangelical preacher  
 8 History  
 9 Melodious yellow bird  
 10 Tune from way back  
 11 Counterpart of sit  
 12 Santa's bagful  
 17 Tablet debut of 2010  
 18 City-related  
 19 Thanksgiving or Easter spreads  
 23 "A mouse!"  
 26 Bunch of dollar bills, say  
 27 Kindle download, e.g.  
 28 Scatter, as seeds
- 29 MS-\_\_\_ (early PC platform)  
 32 "Look at this guy spouting useless trivia!"  
 33 Aid for getting out of a computer jam  
 34 Didn't go  
 36 "What \_\_\_ you up to these days?"  
 37 By way of  
 38 52, in old Rome  
 40 "Go ahead, ask"  
 41 Sob  
 42 Hot breakfast bowlful
- 43 Billionaires' boats  
 44 Get out of Dodge  
 45 "Hi," in Hilo  
 46 Show indecision  
 49 Quantities: Abbr.  
 50 Seat with cushions  
 51 Chemistry 101 topic  
 52 Gaming company that created Sonic the Hedgehog  
 54 Not against  
 55 Pursue romantically

**ANSWER TO SATURDAY'S PUZZLE:**



**CAROLYN HAX**

**Spouse blames violent outbursts on wife**



BY CAROLYN HAX  
 tellme@washpost.com

**Dear Carolyn:** My wife and I have been married 20 years, the past five full of anger and hostility. She is highly introverted. Her happy place is deep in a book, on a solo hike, or with her sisters or her few friends. She is very content.

I am not. I am lonely and feel overlooked. It has made me very angry and resentful, and I have exploded at her in anger in ways she apparently found terrifying and traumatic. I would never hurt her or our kids, but I have broken things, punched walls and screamed at her.

At her urging, I sought therapy, but reflecting on our marriage made me realize I have been unhappy, and resentful, for most of it.

I don't know if I want to be married to her. I try to do nice things for her, but I don't think she is capable of giving me the attention I need to feel loved. She cites her introversion, but also the angry behaviors I haven't been able to get under control. She isn't wrong — I do sometimes talk about harming myself or say she has ruined the marriage. But I no longer break or punch anything. I don't understand why my efforts don't count more.

**LEXIGO** 6-30

Start at the double hexagon. Spell solutions to the clues below by winding your way through the grid. You can backtrack to use letters more than once. Each new word starts with the last letter of the previous word.

1. Home of the Taj Mahal I \_ \_ \_ \_  
 2. Succeed in reaching \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 3. \_\_\_ decongestant N \_ \_ \_ \_  
 4. Funeral flowers \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 5. Endure S \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

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She notes she has remained present and engaged, encouraged therapy, and responded with patience and kindness, and I need to accept she cannot erase my loneliness or become an unreserved person. She spends time with me and has encouraged me to pursue friendships and hobbies.

But it isn't helping. I am still so angry and isolated. I know I have messed up in some ways, but I don't understand why she can't just work harder to make me feel like a priority.

— Lonely and Resentful

**Lonely and Resentful:** Threatening self-harm means you need more help than you're getting.

Back to therapy; tell the truth.

None of this "she apparently found" crap, either. No. Your violence "terrified and traumatized your family." That is abuse, not "messed up in some ways." Stop dodging responsibility for it.

And stop seeing therapy as a way to change your wife. Last time, you emerged resentful of HER for not "mak[ing]" YOU happy. That's not how it works.

Having needs is valid, but they're not invoices

to others — not even to spouses. If people don't meet our needs, then we can ask, yes, for X. But if they say no, we don't get to take them to emotional collection and extract X by force.

Your ability to change your marriage ends where your wife's autonomy begins. You can't make her be someone she isn't or do something she won't. You can't call it her fault and abuse her.

Your wife is modeling autonomy within a marriage: giving what she is willing and able to give you, remaining true to herself within the context of your union.

Whether it's what you want is up to her.

You expect her to "work harder," yet how successfully have you changed your core self?

Here's a metaphor: Therapy showed that you've craved steak your entire marriage. But your marriage is a tea shop. Is your wife asking, "Why can't he work to love tea?!" Seems not.

Find your own protein sources or embrace scones or leave. Don't terrorize tea shops for being tea shops. For help mid-fury, step away and call 800-799-SAFE or 988.



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The Ruben is one of three Thursday special sandwiches at Dad's Favorites Deli. The sandwich (\$9.95) is made with corned beef that is slow-roasted for 16 hours.

**FROM PAGE 1C**  
**SANDWICH**

versity students, and it's not unusual to see UK athletes diving into the beer cheese, especially the football team's offensive line.

A common sight is also Dad himself talking new diners through the menu as they wait in line.

"I don't recognize you, you have any questions?" he asks them on his way

back from delivering hot sandwiches.

"You're not a number, you're a name," said Caudill, who added that he loves talking to customers. "I do, and it's a lost art. I will tell you that you don't get that anymore."

**DAD'S FAVORITES DELI**  
**Where:** Located inside the Arcade Shops of the



BRIAN SIMMS bsimms@herald-leader.com

James "Dad" Caudill, owner of Dad's Favorites Deli, delivers lunch, Thursday, June 26, 2025, at the sandwich shop in Lexington, Ky. The deli opened in the 2010 in the Garden Springs Shopping Center.

Garden Springs Shopping Center, 820 Lane Allen Road

**Hours:** 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Mon.-Fri.  
**Call ahead orders:**

859-309-1930  
**Online:** dadsfavorites.com

**Brian Simms:** 859-379-9041

**FROM PAGE 1C**  
**CAFE**

restaurant is no longer viable," she wrote. "To be good stewards of our donors' money, we must transition, and while our café doors will close, our mission lives on."

All current catering commitments will be honored and Spark hopes to offer those again eventually.

The nonprofit cafe began in a 2014 capstone class at Woodford County High School, where Kyle Fannin was teaching. Seniors taking his social studies class wanted to have a real-world learning experience, so Fannin added a community activ-

ism course.

That launched a festival in downtown Versailles called "Spark," which led to a pop-up shop and eventually a real cafe. The Grace Cafe in Danville, another pay-it-forward community cafe, inspired those in Versailles to try it.

The diners varied from locals in need to those who came for the great food. Many patrons were out-of-towners.

"We will dearly miss the joy of welcoming you through our doors — chatting with you over lunch, sharing local stories, recommending nearby sights, and introducing visitors to



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Spark Community Cafe in Versailles, Ky., Sunday, June 23, 2019. Spark Community Cafe operates on a pay what you can scale and offers people an opportunity to volunteer time in exchange for their meal.

the rich hospitality of Woodford County," Spark said. "Being a 'front door' to this community has been one of the greatest

honors of our work."

**Janet Patton:** 859-379-5233, @janetpattonhl

**FROM PAGE 1C**  
**AWARDS**

and Drinks.

In the case of Jeff Ruby's Steakhouse, the restaurant's Louisville and Lexington locations were both recognized with awards. The Lexington location has been honored with an Award of Excellence since 2020.

The steakhouse and the Holly Hill Inn offer extensive wine selections, according to their respective Wine Spectator profiles. Jeff Ruby's of Lexington has 325 wines available to sample, and it's total inventory tops 2,100. Holly Hill Inn offers 200 wines, with 1,200 in its inventory.

The Holly Hill Inn won the same award, which it has held since 2002, Wine Spectator's website notes.

According to Wine Spectator, all award winners will be featured in the magazine's Aug. 31 issue.

**Aaron Mudd:** @NewsByAaron

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