

Owners of mEating Place sell, say thanks to patrons

By Tasha Eichenseher
For The Oregon Daily Emerald

After Saturday, The mEating Place, a popular campus restaurant located at 854 E. 13th Ave. between Kinko's Copies and Kaufman's, will be run by new owners.

Vahan and Joyce Assadourian, the current owners, have sold their restaurant to James Schultz and Juan and Carol Camacho, who are Eugene residents. The restaurant is scheduled to open for business Nov. 1 under new ownership and possibly under a new name.

Eight years ago the Assadourians bought the restaurant and changed its name from Provos to the mEating Place.

"When we started, it was too formal. Slowly our whole staff became students or recent graduates," Vahan Assadourian said.

Assadourian, originally from Jerusalem, and his wife, from Toronto, met each other in Los Angeles, where they married. They decided to move to Eugene and try their hand at the restaurant business.

Previously a chemist, Vahan said he likes the restaurant business better because it's "more people oriented." However, the work has become too much for the Assadourians, so they decided to sell.

The mEating Place, specializing now in omelettes, burgers, Middle Eastern food

and friendly atmosphere, is popular with students because of its cheap food and its social ambiance.

"I've met my best friends here," said Kahalid Al-Turk, a University student from Saudi Arabia who is studying business.

Vahan said the new owners perhaps will add some Mexican entrees to the menu but will keep the new restaurant similar to the old. They are interested in continuing the annual Wednesday night language group meetings, called Tertulia.

The Assadourians invited customers through personal ads "to celebrate the years of MP friendliness" on Wednesday night. Every chair and booth was occupied that night and Vahan offered everyone a piece of "thank you" cake.

"I love that guy. I'll miss him. He's like everybody's dad, everybody's friend. He never forgets a name," said Nicole Suito, a senior majoring in Spanish who has come to The mEating Place at least once a week for about a year.

Vahan plans to come and visit Wednesday nights during Tertulia, and with his free time, read, write and do volunteer work. He wants his customers to know: "I love them and thank them for all the years of patronage, for the mutual respect, for all the teaching and all the things I've learned from them."



NORMAN MESMAN/for the Emerald

The mEating Place has changed ownership, but customers and the new owners hope its tradition of good food and a friendly atmosphere will continue.

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AGATE

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in units that are meant to adapt to accessibility requirements if necessary may have the same problem.

Problems like these are usually addressed during design and are usually not a problem during construction, Tepfer said.

"It's not clear if the architect got it wrong or if the contractor got it wrong, but some of the problems are with both the carpentry and the electric work," Tepfer said, though that may not necessarily mean a flaw in

design.

Other problems include the height of circuit breakers and electrical outlets, Tepfer said.

"If you're in a wheelchair and you blow a fuse, you can't reach the circuit breaker to fix it," Tepfer said.

Tepfer said that the University was very clear about its requirements for handicapped access on the Agate project and that original specifications called for not only minimal compliance with the standards, but for construction to exceed the standards of barrier-free access currently required by law and various building codes.

"We've always tried to err on the side of exceeding the requirements in housing," said Nancy Wright, facilities director of University Housing.

"If that means we have to tear something up and redo it, then that's what we have to do," she said.

Tepfer's recommendations to the housing department do not include possible solutions, so he is unsure about how any changes will affect costs and scheduling of the project.

"I don't know what the ripple effect of all this might be. What I do know is that there are compliance problems," he said.

Alex Gordon, Agate's project manager, said he believed most of the questions surrounding accessibility were resolved over

the summer.

"We've been unpleasantly surprised by the remainder of the problems we've found," Gordon said.

By the time floor plans arrived in May, foundations for the building were already complete. This made the process of communicating needed changes to subcontractors difficult, Gordon said.

"That's why you hire an architect — to design a building before you build it," he said.

One possible explanation for the problems is the process by which the complex is being designed and built. The process is known as Construct Manage with a General Contractor, or CMGC for short. Basically, it means that many adjustments and refinements are made during the construction phase, rather than during the design phase.

Gary Fritz, an architect with the University Physical Plant, said that the architect and design team members probably anticipated that changes would be made during construction.

Both Fritz and Wright said that the CMGC method is often subject to various interpretations.

Gordon characterized the problem as a "long-standing" point of conflict between the University and the architectural firm of CES/T&E, and design team head Christopher Alexander.

Alexander had no comment when contacted by the Emerald.



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