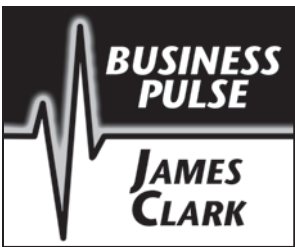


# Bojangles pulls vanishing act



The \$25,000 question of the week is what business will move into the old Bojangles location -- and will it be IHOP?

As a guy who loves fluffy, delicious pancakes, and once had a dream about eating pancakes, I hope it is an IHOP. However, I'm sorry to report nothing has been determined at this time.

The reason Bojangles was painted blue and all the signs were removed on Tuesday and Wednesday has nothing to do with another restaurant moving in. It was an effort to disguise the building as a Bojangles which miserably failed.

I stopped by Tuesday evening and talked to Amp Services, the company in charge of painting our former Bojangles and removing all signs. The owner told me they had a contract to paint and remove signs from 10 Bojangles which had all gone out of business in Tennessee and Alabama.

I was told Bojangles believes it looks bad on the company to have out-of-business restaurants scattered around the country. That doesn't present the image of a thriving chain. That's why the cover-up operation took place and all evidence of our Bojangles was washed away like a sand castle swallowed by the rising tide.

It all took place so swiftly and efficiently, I'm looking to enter Bojangles in our vocabulary as a verb, meaning to wipe away all evidence of its existence. If something disappears without a trace, we can say it bonjan-gled. If a superstar fails to produce in a clutch situation, we can say he bonjan-gled on his teammates.

Amp Services says it has a warehouse in Hickory, N.C., that's filled with Bojangles signs and that's where our signs are heading.

As for what may one day locate at our old Bojangles, Warren County property tax records show the land owner as Sang S. Yi of Gurley, Ala. My efforts to call a phone number associated with that name and address resulted in getting an answering machine that didn't provide the option of leaving a message.

A call to Bojangles corporate headquarters, my second of the week, did not result in a return phone call.

That means it's open to wild speculation about what may some day locate at our old Bojangles. My prediction is it will become Fiesta Ranchero No. 17.



**Amp Services of Hickory, N.C., changes the awning color of the former Bojangles from orange to blue. The company also removed all Bojangles signage in work done Tuesday and Wednesday.**

### AN APPLEBEE'S A DAY ...

For everyone who loves the great taste of Applebee's, I'm pleased to report our Applebee's just got even better. Apple Legacy, a company based in Wichita, Kan., bought our local restaurant along with seven other Applebee's in a deal that was finalized Wednesday, Aug. 15.

For those of you keeping track, Aug. 15 was also the day of my 20th wedding anniversary. It was a wonderful day and a magical night. I consider it an accomplishment to be married for 20 years and I know Cupcake must consider herself the luckiest woman in the world.

That side comment aside, new ownership at Applebee's promises to reap benefits.

"This is really positive news," said Applebee's general manager Gregory Robinson. "One question people commonly ask me is if we're going out of business. This move shows we're not going anywhere. Applebee's is staying in McMinnville. Our sales are great and we're excited to have new ownership. It's a completely different vibe. They are full of energy."

Gregory says Apple Legacy is a big-time company that operates a number of restaurants. He says it bought eight Applebee's in Missouri in May, giving it 16 new restaurants in the span of three months.

A new menu will make its debut Sept. 3. The popular quesadilla burger will remain, but there will be a number of new choices.

One feature will be a

three-course combo meal. This includes an appetizer of your choice, a salad of your choice, and an entrée of your choice.

There will be an all-new kids menu and making an appearance on the dessert menu will be a caramel apple fritter. If you're in the mood for a cocktail, a bacon bloody mary will be introduced. I'm not sure what this might do to your cholesterol.

### NEW BUSINESS BREWING AT WALMART

By this time next week, a Seattle's Best Coffee Shop could be open inside our Walmart.

Construction of the new store is projected to be done this coming Thursday with the store opening to follow ASAP. The store will be located at the front entrance on the grocery side.

Seattle's Best Coffee is a branch of the iconic Starbucks Corporation.

"I can't wait to get a white chocolate mocha," said Walmart manager Andrew Hampton, who said he thinks the relationship will benefit both Walmart and Seattle's Best. "It should create some traffic for us and we should create some traffic for them."

Seattle's Best says its coffee is currently available at more than 50,000 locations. This includes Burger King, Subway restaurants, AMC Theatres, and on board Delta Airlines flights and Royal Caribbean cruise ships.

Andrew says the company's decision to locate inside Walmarts is a relatively new undertaking. He says the Walmart stores in Lebanon



**Lauren Prater is opening a fitness studio in the lower level of Plaza Shopping Center next to Gary Steele Karate. Classes are offered on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights from 6 to 7 p.m.**

and McMinnville are both getting Seattle's Best chains at the same time. He says the company is simply renting space from Walmart and will be responsible for hiring employees and fully stocking and operating the business.

As for the self-checkout lanes which were displaced by Seattle's Best construction, Andrew says they have been reconfigured and are operational again without a loss in the number of self-checkout registers.

"Some people really

enjoy the self-checkout option and it hasn't resulted in the loss of one job," said Andrew. "In fact we have an opening for a cashier right now."

Andrew says the local Walmart has right at 300 employees and every employee in the store earns at least \$11 an hour. I'll provide more information about Seattle's Best Coffee Shop when it opens.

### DANCE YOUR WAY TO BETTER HEALTH

Lauren Prater is a dancing machine. She got her start as a child at Paula's Dance Academy, continued in high school with the Pioneerettes, and then went on to dance in college at Tennessee Tech.

With her love of dance, it makes sense for Lauren to open SMS Fitness Studio. SMS stands for Sweat,

Move, Shred. Her first day is this coming Monday with her first Zumba class from 6 to 7 p.m. The studio is located in the lower level of Plaza Shopping Center next to Gary Steele Karate.

"This has always been my fun job," said Lauren, who has been teaching Zumba classes for 10 years. "You don't have to have any dance experience to enjoy this workout. It can be modified for any level of fitness and for any age."

Lauren has taught Zumba all over Tennessee. She began teaching classes at McMinnville Civic Center a decade ago and has since taught classes in Knoxville and Chattanooga. She returned a few weeks ago from the Zumba convention in Orlando, Fla., where she attained an additional certification.

Continued on **6C**



**The friendly and energetic staff at Applebee's includes, from left, Alex Ontiveras, Peggy Hillis, Wesley Tillman, Cheyenne Bagley, general manager Gregory Robinson, Shelby Chele, kitchen manager Tiffany Martin, Tony Leichtfuss, and Robert Andrews.**



**Applebee's changed ownership from Woodland Group to Apple Legacy of Wichita, Kan., on Wednesday, Aug. 15. The move, it's been said, will make our Applebee's better than ever.**