

At this café, food flies and time stands still



Illustration by Tom Bachtel

"Rolls!" called out the slim teen in the white apron. He pushed the cart through the aisles as he waited for a raised hand.

I watched in amazement as he chucked a roll at some woman's face. The roll bounced off her cheek and landed in her plate.

I expected there to be a scene. I'm sure the teen's intention wasn't to use her face as a catcher's mitt. I assumed that she would call the manager over to have this young lad reprimanded for throwing food.

Instead she simply looked at the three other women at the table and laughed.

Coming back on Interstate Highway 57 from vacation recently, my family and I decided to pull off in Sikeston,

Mo., and grab a bite to eat at Lambert's Cafe, which is known as home of the "thrown" rolls. It was the equivalent of catching a foul ball at a baseball game while eating a family meal.

My kids loved the friendly staff walking from table to table with big bowls of fried okra, tomatoes and macaroni, sorghum and fried potatoes. All this while the bread flew to diners.

At Lambert's, where they throw rolls, I felt like a kid again. What kid doesn't love to see food fly? What kid doesn't want to be pelted by hot bread flung by a teen pushing a cart, yelling, "Rolls!"

—Mike Milnes

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