Clifton Inn

December 19, 2008 By Shawn Decker

Last night was great- Gwenn and I finally went to what has been described as the best place to eat in Charlottesville: The Clifton Inn. Here are some pics of our big night out.

I'm far from a restaurant critic. I eat cereal twice a day and make a mean grilled cheese sandwich. But I have been to some good places, and know the difference between good and great food. And the reputation of the Clifton Inn is totally warranted. Aside from the incredible delectables that satisfied carnavour (Me) and herbavour (Gwenn) alike for four scrumptuous courses, what made the outing extra special was the opportunity to see two of my buddies who work there.

Dean, the head chef, moved to Waynesboro when he was in elementary school and grew up on the same street as I did, Crompton Road. He is a year older, which was a huge difference back in the 5th and 6th grade. I remember him trying to tolerate me and my friends, an obnoxious crew hellbent on destruction. "Of all the streets to move to," he must have thought.

If you read my book, Dean was there the day my brother beat up one of his friends for tackling me too hard. We were just a couple of scraggly-haired kids then. Now we're a couple of scraggly-haired men.

It's funny to think back to those times, and part of the fun tonight was sitting back to admire the incredible accomplishments of a fellow Crompton Road alumni.

The other guy I know there is chef extraordinaire, Karma. He's one of the cool guys I've gotten to know through shooting pool at Rapture on the downtown mall over the last several years. We call him "Karma the Chameleon". Right now, we're on the #1 ranked 8-ball team in Charlottesville. Karma must strut around town, not only does he cook for the best restaurant, he also plays for the best 8-ball team, the Overlords of Kesmai. (Yes, that's our team name.)

Tonight was *great*. From the food to the folks I got to be with. Gwenn and I promised to make Clifton a holiday tradition, and it's the most fun we've had since we've been home, just a really relaxed night and some good eats. We celebrated a great semester of travelling and educating

together, and gave thanks for everything we have, including our health and happiness.

And speaking of happiness, I'm glad to have retained the youthful spirit that allows me to don a holiday sweater, even on pool league nights. Yet I am beyond grateful for the opportunity I've had to grow older. To have a night like this, to get dressed up and go out on the town for a nice meal with the love of my life.

What could be better than that?

Positively Yours,

Shawn

Looking for a Stocking Stuffer?

Nothing says holiday cheer like a humorous memoir about AIDS. Show the ones you love that you care, and get them a copy of *My Pet Virus*.

As a holiday treat, please feel free to download this song (co-written with Kyle Wiggins), Synthetic Division's "The Line of Fire", for free! (Synthetic Division is my synth duo.)

Be sure to visit ShawnandGwenn.com to learn about my educational work at colleges and universities.

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