

WHO'S UPTOWN

Paul DiCarlo

After a fluke fire in October destroyed his Lakewood deli, Paul DiCarlo, along with his brother Mike, quickly settled Jimmy's Food Store into a new location in the Quadrangle. Now, Uptown will get to enjoy what Lakewood residents have been raving about for nearly 40 years. In addition to their famous deli items and sausages, Mr. DiCarlo has just received his Christmas shipment from New York: from panettone to torrone and pandoro to panforte, Jimmy's has it all this season. And if you're not an expert on Italian food or wine, he won't hesitate to point you in the right direction. After all, he said, "we've always been the neighborhood mom-and-pop, and we always will be."

— Briana Barentine



STAFF PHOTO: SHANNA LOPEZ

CRAZY FOR SOME ITALIAN: Paul DiCarlo at the new Jimmy's inside Sigel's at the Quadrangle.

What was it about Uptown that appealed to you? We really like this new location. Tony Bandiera, the president of Sigel's, was really good to us. This was just so much better than starting from scratch. We started talking with them at the beginning of November, and we were in a pretty big hurry to get things open in time to sell our Christmas food. It's real popular, and so many people were asking if we were going to be back open in time for the holidays. That was a huge motivation that made us want to get right back on the horse. And, I hate to quote *The*

Godfather here, but Mr. Bandiera really gave us an offer we couldn't refuse.

Everyone in Lakewood looked forward to your mom's cooking. Can Uptown still expect her famous meatballs? Yeah, my mom is still going to come in and do some homemade food. And here we have a kitchen, where at the Lakewood store we didn't. So, that really gives us a lot more options. Now our mom will probably make some Christmas cookies, in addition to her meatballs.

Do you plan on rebuilding the old store in Lakewood? We

are planning on going back to the Lakewood store at some point and rebuilding. The fire was started by an electrical wire, they say. But the fire department is still looking at it. They are saying it can be rebuilt though, so we're happy about that. We definitely want to go back — that's the plan.

What about keeping this place going? Who knows. This is a great location, and we'd like to stay here too when we go back to Lakewood. We'll just have to see how things work out. It's still just so early to tell.

What was it like for your family to learn that the store was gone? It completely sucked. I mean, I wouldn't wish that kind of thing on anyone. We had that store for 38 years, and I remember going there even when I was a teenager. It was just such a huge part of our lives and of the neighborhood. It's just strange not being there every day like we used to.

What are you really going to miss about the old place? The neighborhood (Lakewood) is really changing so much. They are building so many things, like condos and

apartments. It will bring a lot more people into the area, and it's good for the neighborhood. The great thing about it is that it's always been such a diverse place, so we start-

ed offering things that weren't strictly Italian. You have so many different ethnic groups in one neighborhood — we were everyone's mom-and-pop store.

Jimmy's Food Store will be open from 10 a.m. - 7p.m. Monday-Saturday, at 2800 Routh St. in the Quadrangle.