



What's Cookin' on 3rd Street: Part Two

By Theresa Marino

Back in the summer of 2021, this newsletter featured an article I wrote about Popeye's Louisiana Style Chicken's move into the three storefronts near the 7-11 that were for lease for more than three years. However, at that time, none of us had any idea when the fast-food chicken spot would open.

After more than nine months of major construction, plumbing, electrical work, grease traps being installed, and exhaust systems being added to the roof, Popeye's officially opened on Friday, March 18, 2022, at the northwest corner of 3rd Street and Redondo Avenue along the eastern boundary of the Bluff Heights Historic Neighborhood.

The front doors were festooned with balloon columns, and the windows and parking lot had signs and banners announcing that they are "Now Open"! Customers received colorful Mardi Gras beads with their orders. A steady stream of local and nearby residents on foot and in cars are using 3rd Street to get to the new fast-food establishment, which operates from 10:00 am until 11:00 pm Monday through Sunday. People stopping in for items at 7-11 make their way to Popeye's, and customers seem to love the food.

For those of us who live on 3rd Street from Redondo on the east and Obispo on the west, Popeye's has presented some neighborhood challenges. The existing parking lot is not large enough for the cars that are now frequenting both convenience establishments day and night. Cars have been double parked or blocking driveways and also parking in red zones on 3rd Street, making it difficult for residents and drivers to navigate 3rd Street

safely. The restaurant serves fried fare, so the exhaust system on the roof starts up around 9:00 am and emits a constant whirring hum that continues after 11:00 pm daily. There is a fast-food smell that permeates the air in our homes and in our yards. We hope that Popeye's will be a responsible neighbor and change the exhaust filters regularly to cut down on the greasy smell and exhaust noise.

Judging from the first week, people are happy that Popeye's is located on the corner. Individuals, couples, families, friends, students, and neighbors are heading to Popeye's and returning a few minutes later with the familiar white paper sack with the orange logo.

I am vegetarian, but I did wander in out of curiosity on opening day to check it out. I bought three freshly baked biscuits, which were pretty good. I went in again a week later and business continues to be steady...and I did buy some more hot biscuits. I noticed that Popeye's is also serving beignets (New Orleans-style donuts).

For now, Popeye's is here to stay, and as Secretary of the Bluff Heights Neighborhood Association, I offer them a warm welcome to the Bluff Heights historic neighborhood, and hope that the noise, odors, and traffic issues can be monitored and mitigated.

Theresa Marino, Retired Bureau Manager, City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services, sits on the Marine Advisory Commission and is the Founding Executive Director of Conservation Corps of Long Beach where she is President of the Board. She was a community organizer from CSULB during the 1970s War on Poverty era. She lives in Bluff Heights with her house and gardening mate Mingo and their two cats.

