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# *The Celiac Express*

~ A Gluten Free Newsletter ~

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## **Celebrating 20 Years!**

The Oklahoma City Celiac Support Group is celebrating 20 years of providing support to Oklahomans. Founded in 1986, my Winnolia Porterfield, the Oklahoma Celiac Support Group was the fifth chapter of the Celiac Sprue Association ("CSA").

Our membership is currently around 200. The *Oklahoma Celiac Support Group* offers education, support and opportunities to interact with other Celiacs to the Oklahoma City metro community. Our support group has played a key role in promoting gluten-free menus in Oklahoma City area restaurants by working with and encouraging them to offer gluten-free options.

Our support group continually strives to make gluten free living in Oklahoma easier and offering friendships among Oklahoma Celiacs.

Being a part of the Oklahoma Celiac Support Group is a wonderful, life-changing opportunity.

### **March 14, 2006 Meeting**

Another great meeting is set for March.

Date: Tuesday, March 14

Where: Integris Baptist Hospital, Conference Rooms "F", "G" and "H"

Time: 6:30 p.m. - Meet and Greet  
7:00 p.m. - Meeting

Program: Round Table Discussions - features a variety of Gluten Free topics at different tables which members rotate through the topics of choice. Various professionals will be available to address topics ranging from medical issues to legal issues involving the recent McDonald's french fries lawsuits.

Refreshment Policy: Each family is expected to bring their favorite gluten-free snack (cookies, cake, crackers, dip; etc.). Be sure to verify its gluten-free status. All ingredients should be clearly displayed, keeping in mind that some of our members may have food allergies other than gluten, may be lactose intolerant or diabetic. Drinks will be provided.

### **May Meeting**

Happy Birthday!!! It's a gluten free birthday party celebrating 20 years of our Oklahoma Celiac Support Group, as well as each of our birthdays!

Each family is asked to bring a gluten free birthday cake and/or ice cream to help celebrate. This is the perfect time to share tips on celebrating life's special moments the gluten free way. Be sure to verify the gluten-free status of your products. All ingredients should be clearly displayed, keeping in mind that some of our members may have food allergies other than gluten, may be lactose intolerant or diabetic. Drinks will be provided.

### **New Allergy Labeling**

On January 1, 2006, new allergy labelling laws went into effect. Pursuant to the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (FALCPA), manufacturers are required to identify in plain English the presence of ingredients that contain protein derived from milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, or soybeans in the list of ingredients or to say "contains" followed by name of the source of the food allergen after or adjacent to the list of ingredients.

Companies are not required to relabel products already on the market prior to January 1, 2006. As important, companies

are not required to list barley, rye and oats as allergens.

Wheat free does not mean gluten free. Even though a product does not list wheat as one of the major 8 allergens, you must still carefully read the label for other gluten from barley, oats and rye.

Remember: Always read labels, ask questions, call the manufacturers, and if in doubt, do without.

## **Cheeseburger in Paradise A Gluten Free Dining Experience**

I could not wait to eat at Cheeseburger in Paradise. As soon as I found out they had a gluten free menu and were opening in Oklahoma City, I was beside myself. I looked forward to my gluten free dining experience.

Cheeseburgers in Paradise is a national chain owned by the same company that owns Outback and Carrabba's Italian Grill. (Outback Steakhouse, Inc. headquartered in Tampa, Florida was founded in 1988 by those who believe in hospitality, sharing, quality, being courageous and having fun! OSI is a company of restaurants that owns and operates Outback Steakhouse units throughout the U.S. as well as Carrabba's Italian Grill, Lee Roy Selmon's, Cheeseburger in Paradise, Bonefish Grill and Paul Lee's Chinese Kitchen.)

The first time we went, it was 7:00 p.m. The wait was too long and we decided to try another time. The second time, the wait was about 15 minutes. I presented my Restaurant Card to the waitress and told her I was ordering off the GF Menu. (She had not heard of it). I asked her to give my card to the manager. I ordered off the Gluten Free Menu: Son of Sam Salad, French Fries (in a

dedicated fryer) and a gluten free hamburger.

Overall, I would rate it a 7 out of 10. The food was delicious.

I ordered a Son of a Sailor Salad without wontons (as specified on GF menu), a GF hamburger and French Fries, which I have been dying for.

Everything was delicious!!! However, there was a little piece of wonton buried in my salad. I spit it out and quit eating. The waitress apologized. The manager came out and apologized. I told him, I understood mistakes happen, but that was unacceptable. It poses such a huge risks to Celiacs, it's not like simply mixing up an order--it has dire consequences. He told me he was formerly at Outback, completely familiar with the GF menu and issues, and would do everything within his power to ensure it doesn't happen in the future. I told him that was good (smile) and that there were a lot of us out here.

Second time: we were seated immediately. I gave my restaurant card to the waitress and asked her to give it to the manager. A few minutes later, a booming voice behind me said "no wontons". It was Wade, the manager. He promised to take care of me and threatened the kitchen staff if my meal were not prepared 100% gluten free. I ordered the salad and french fries and enjoyed an incredible gluten free meal.

For those who are interested, Cheeseburger in Paradise has an incredible drink menu, many of which are gluten free, if you are familiar with gluten free alcohols.

Cheeseburger in Paradise is my new favorite restaurant. If you go, just remember the Code words: "No Wontons" and you will be just fine. Enjoy!

Check out Cheeseburger in Paradise's Gluten Free Menu in this newsletter.

### **Celiacs vs. McDonald's**

The sad truth is out: McDonald's French Fries have been made with wheat ingredients for years and billed as "Gluten Free". A variety of lawsuits have been filed around the United States, including Oklahoma City.

As a result of the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (FALCPA), McDonald's was required to specify any food allergens used in their products. On February 13, McDonald's acknowledged that a seasoning agent containing beef, wheat and dairy ingredients, previously listed as "natural flavor" is added to the oil at the factory where the potatoes are precooked by the supplier.

"Gluten Free" is a conclusion. We have the right to know all ingredients food products and make a decision on whether we feel it is safe for consumption. It is a personal choice.

If you are interested in your legal rights, join us on March 14, 2006, to discuss this issue with William Stout, Oklahoma City Attorney at Law.

### **Gluten Free Restaurant Outing: PF Chang's**

Please join us on \*\*\*\*\*

## **Great Gluten Escape Camp**

When: June 18 - 23, 2006

Where: Camp Gilmont in Gilmer, Texas

What: A celiac camp for children ages 7-14  
Camp Fees: \$350 (\$100 Deposit due April 1, 2006)

Register online at [www.dallasrock.org/gge.htm](http://www.dallasrock.org/gge.htm) or by U.S. Mail. You can print a camp flyer with the registration information at the website.

The camp's facilities can be viewed at [www.campgilmont.org](http://www.campgilmont.org).

**CAMP MISSION:** The Great Gluten Escape will provide each camper with an opportunity to participate in all camp activities without concern for the gluten content of the food provided. The camp will provide an environment that encourages peer support and escape from the daily peer pressure of the "I can't have that" syndrome.

Please note, that a camper's spot is only reserved once the \$100 non-refundable deposit is received along with the registration information. Please refer to the website [www.dallasrock.org/gge.htm](http://www.dallasrock.org/gge.htm) for more information regarding registration guidelines.

Now get your suitcase and sunscreen ready! Camp is right around the corner! We look forward to another wonderful week at camp. It is such a wonderful experience for these special children.

Submitted by:  
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