

# Best Fish Fry 2020: Apple Granny wins 3rd title

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GM/Managing Editor

Everything about this year's Best Fish Fry contest was different – except the winner.

For the third year in a row, Apple Granny Restaurant battered, I mean bested, the competition. The Village of Lewiston restaurant once again garnered the most votes (and the most voters) to take the title.

Though paper ballots were more limited, and people had, well, bigger fish to fry during the voting period, more than 500 votes were cast, with the majority going to Apple Granny.

"We only could continue to say how proud and happy we are with everybody for this," co-owner Chuck Barber said. "I think there's many other businesses competing for it this year. And so we appreciate the continued support of our business. As competition continues to grow – especially people offering Friday fish fries who never used to offer it before – their loyalty, commitment and passion for it is more than appreciated – especially during this time."

Among the voter comments received:

√ Phyllis M. wrote, "Always done just right – so good, so good, so good."

√ Catherine B. noted, "The fish is tasty and moist. Very flavorful, with just the right amount of batter. A taste treat for the mouth."

√ Barbara J. exclaimed, "There is a reason why this restaurant is first place. Food is great; best fish fry ever; staff warm and friendly."

√ Nancy D. said, "Fish fresh tasting. Variety. Reasonably priced. Very friendly atmosphere and service."

√ Joseph K. summed it up, "Huge piece of fresh and tender haddock. Nice hot baked potatoes. Cool and creamy coleslaw in its own dish. Two slices of fresh Italian bread. Now that made a best fish fry."

Apple Granny is, of course, limited to takeout and delivery under the "New York State on PAUSE" executive order. Still, "We've had long lines and sellouts just about every Friday, based on our fish fry," Barber said.

Like many locally owned busi-



Apple Granny co-owners Chuck Barber and Michael Burke posed with their winning fish in 2019.



able to keep the kitchen going; running with a thinner crew. And it's because of their care, their commitment here, their loyalty here, that they've been here so long that they've been able to adapt with us and keep it going with less resources back there."

Apple Granny offers beer-battered haddock served with french fries and a side of coleslaw.

Barber said, "We take a lot of time and pride in our fish fry. We make sure we have the best quality. We work with local vendors to get fresh fish in, consistently brought in fresh. We take a lot of time to review it and prep it; and our crew is ensuring good sizes. Our crew's been cooking it for over the last 15 years, back there on Friday nights cooking out the best fish fry we have."

Apple Granny Restaurant is located at 433 Center St., Lewiston. To place an order, call 754-2028.



## Best of the Batch

• Second place went to another three-time Best Fish Fry winner, **The Beach House** on Grand Island.

√ Jamie S. said the restaurant's fish is, "Perfect every time. Very tasty and home cooking comfort food."

√ Ray P. noted, "Quality and quantity first rate; also friendly atmosphere."

√ Robert A. said, "Full fresh fish with nice golden crusted coating. Nice baked potato with coleslaw or apple sauce."

The Beach House is located at 5584 East River Road. Call 773-7119.

• Third place also came from Grand Island, and **The Village Inn**. Mary Ann F. said, "It is always fresh, warm; they change the oil regularly. I have never had a bad meal there!"

The Village Inn is located at 1488 Ferry Road. Call 773-5030.

nesses, Barber explained his restaurant has had inconsistent patronage since the pandemic began right around St. Patrick's Day. Fortunately, Lent led more people to purchase fish fries, and so, "I would say overall we were holding our own," he said.

"Some days better than others. One week on a Tuesday would be very slow, and then the following Tuesday would be very busy; so, no real rhyme or reason," Barber noted. "But overall, well. I will say our Friday fish fries were just as strong, almost as if the business was open."

One of the things Apple Granny is known for and is often mentioned by voters is exceptional customer service. Though patrons can't currently interact with their favorite waiters, Barber said

he and co-owner Michael Burke are working to ensure customers are satisfied with each order.

In March, as Gov. Andrew Cuomo set out to limit gatherings and slow the spread of COVID-19, "We very quickly went to a trimmed crew," Barber said. "So, customer service-wise, the person answering the phone and bringing the food out, I would say in most situations, is Mike or I. So, I think as owners, we've been able to reconnect or get a closer connection with our customers, and take that lead most of the time."

Barber said the key to Apple Granny's continued success in this competition is in the kitchen.

"It goes back to the tenure and the experience of our cooks," he said. "Our cooks, who have been with us for 15-20 years, have been

## Community giving spreads from California to Lewiston at Mount St. Mary's Hospital

From Mount St. Mary's:

"Community" spreads pretty far when you're from Western New York. Many of us have stories about traveling to other parts of the country, or even the world, and meeting someone from WNY. That is also the case with a special donation that was delivered this week to the health care workers at Mount St. Mary's Hospital.

After seeing a post on Facebook about a donation to Mount St. Mary's from Brickyard Pub & BBQ, Californian Rosemary Miklitsch reached out to the Lewiston restaurant to match the previous donation of 250 meals. As it turns out, Rosemary grew up in Lewiston, and her grandfather, Dr. George Berry, was a doctor at MSM many years ago. Rosemary's parents also received care at Mount St. Mary's.

"I will be forever grateful for the care they received," she said. Though Rosemary now lives in California, she still has family she visits in Lewiston and keeps the area close to her heart. She saw this as an opportunity to feed frontline workers while also helping a local business: "I feel a strong need to give back to the community that helped raise me."

On April 21, Mount St. Mary's health care workers enjoyed a delicious meal, courtesy of Rosemary, who made this incredible donation in memory of her grandfather with an appreciative heart for Mount St. Mary's and the Niagara County community.



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