



Scot Severson at Emigail's Roadhouse.

File photo

Fundraiser on the menu for local restaurant owner

By Michael Krenn
Special to the Reporter

For years, Scot Severson served up Cajun-inspired food at his restaurant, Emigail's Roadhouse, in Newville.

Severson might have been a lifelong Edgerton-area resident, but "he was passionate about his Cajun cooking, his restaurant. He was there every day, day and night," says Chico Pope, a friend since before both graduated from Edgerton High School in 1971. Severson took pride in his authentic jambalaya, gumbo, red beans and rice. He even conjured up a special Cajun-style margarita that would have been approved of even by native-born residents of the Cajun region of Louisiana.

But all of that ended abruptly this past May 22, when Severson suffered a major stroke that damaged his ability to speak and left him paralyzed on his right side, and in need of long-term therapy. After 18 years of Emigail's serving as a northerly Cajun outpost adjacent to Lake Koshkonong, Severson's family made the difficult decision to close the restaurant and focus on his rehabilitation.

Newville. The event will feature a live auction, a raffle of hundreds of items and services, and live music by several popular area bands.

But perhaps the biggest draw will be the menu. Organizers intend to feature some of Emigail's favorite menu options—including that special margarita Severson would mix up.

Information about the event and opportunities to support Severson are available on Facebook, at Scot Severson of Emigails Benefit Event. The site includes directions on how individuals can donate services or items for the auction and raffle. Persons also can donate money to a fund established at the Bank of Milton/Bank of Edgerton. In addition, the Scot Severson Health Fund has been established at the gofundme.com site as another option available to individuals looking to support Severson.

Before sustaining the stroke, Severson was an energetic and active individual. In pursuit of real Cajun food for his restaurant, he once took a four-day trip across Louisiana to track down authentic recipes.

Following a lengthy hospitalization, Severson, 65, was transferred to the Edgerton Care Center. There, physical and speech therapy over the past five months have improved his speech and his mobility. Once bed-ridden, he now is working to regain the ability to move himself from a bed to a wheelchair, and from a wheelchair to a car. His command of language is not what it once was, but he increasingly is able to piece together words and gestures to communicate ideas.

Christine Severson, his wife, said doctors expect additional therapy to produce further gains for Severson in the coming months.

Costs for the ongoing therapies, however, have far outpaced Severson's health and disability insurance coverage, so a local group—a pairing of the local restaurant community and the Edgerton High School class of 1971—is organizing a special fundraiser. His friend Pope is not only a fellow high school graduate of the same class, but, as owner of the Buckhorn supper club on Lake Koshkonong, also a member of the restaurant group. Joining in the effort is a growing number of people who were regular diners at Emigail's.

The fundraiser will be held on Saturday, Dec. 2, beginning at 2 p.m., at Pettitt's Countryview Bar and Restaurant, located at 1801 E. Highway 59, Milton, just east of

This was not an unexpected activity for someone who once had been an avid bicyclist, and who thought nothing of embarking on multi-day treks.

A devoted Jimmy Buffet fan, Severson for years organized bus trips to see the musician at Alpine Valley.

Earlier this year, he had gone snorkeling in the Caribbean, while on a trip to the Central American country of Belize—he called the tropical nation his favorite place on earth.

Some years back, Severson traveled to Rome, where he met the Pope . . . in this case not his friend Chico Pope, but the Catholic fellow with the fancy title, at the time John Paul II. This came about because the brother of Severson's wife is a Catholic bishop and he pulled a few strings at the Vatican on behalf of his sister and brother-in-law.

Closer to home, he was a member of the Edgerton Paddle Pals, which kayaked local waterways, including Lake Koshkonong and the Rock and Yahara rivers. His illness postponed a planned excursion this past summer that would have taken the kayakers along Saunders Creek as it winds through Edgerton.

But it only postponed that expedition. With more time, and more therapy—available in part through the success of this fundraiser—Severson intends to return to his adventurous habits.