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The Salt Lake Tribune

FRIDAY, November 14, 2008

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Rebecca Walsh: One World Cafe finds changing world isn't easy

By Rebecca Walsh
Tribune Columnist

Article Launched: 11/13/2008 12:10:15 AM MST

The smell of One World Cafe hits before you walk in - onion, garlic and curry waft in the air outside.

"What can I get you, dear?" asks Denise Cerreta.

She scoops up spicy broccoli pasta salad, garbanzo and black beans, a raw vegetable medley and curried apples. "What's a little to you?"

It's like going to dinner at your aunt's house - your crunchy, new age, slightly flighty aunt. Cerreta is all over the place at once - scooping food onto plates, checking the phone in the tiny office, gently reminding diners to make their donations when they leave.

She's trying to save her baby, the flagship of a movement she launched five years ago in Salt Lake City. Using organic and locally grown produce, One World chefs make soups, salads, entrees and desserts. Customers choose what they want to eat and pay what they think the food is worth or can afford.

Cerreta was so busy expanding - to Denver and Spokane - that her Salt Lake City cafe nearly collapsed under its own weight - too many employees, losses of \$8,000 to \$10,000 a month, bounced paychecks. Meal donations dropped from \$10 to \$7. Cerreta and her board fired the longtime manager. Staff walked off the job in solidarity - and criticized her management of the nonprofit in blogs.

Now, with a new restaurant manager, chef and sous chef, Cerreta hopes to steer One World back to solvency.

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Rebecca Walsh

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golden microphone, Cerreta represents Barack Obama.

"These are a bunch of liberals. These are liberals playing games with the reality known as life. These are liberals playing games with the reality known as business. And these same kinds of people we've just put in charge of much of the federal government," Limbaugh says.

Cerreta brushes off the blowhard. After all, he's free advertising. With a wink to the TV cameras, she offers to make Rush's favorite dish if he comes to Salt Lake City for lunch.

By his Wednesday show, Rush apparently had a change of heart, promising to drop by if he's ever in town and "they're still open."

"The world is a better place because of One World Cafe," Limbaugh says.

One World is different. A faint scent of incense washes through the restaurant's dining room. The bulletin

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board is full of business cards and brochures - for rawmelissa.com, worm bins, a "circus performer/fringe artist" and the Salt Lake Drum School. This isn't white linen dining.

But there's nothing wrong with breaking with orthodoxy. Cerreta's thinking about overnighting a box of her famous chocolate-chip cookies to Limbaugh.

walsh@sltrib.com

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