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PLUS:

HOLIDAY DILEMMA
RAVENS REFLECTIONS
PAGE 28

LOOKING BACK
REMEMBERING KATRINA
PAGE 32

Candle Lighting: 7:23 p.m.

SAFETY FIRST!

Baltimore Jewish community aims to expand
city's crime lab, supply of cameras

Story begins on page 22



CITRON COMING TO QUARRY LAKE

Local officials break ground on Levine's newest culinary endeavor

By Daniel Schere

ABOUT 150 PEOPLE, including several local elected officials, gathered last month at Quarry Lake at Green Spring to break ground for Charles Levine's first permanent venture in the restaurant industry, Citron, which is scheduled to open next summer.

Citron will feature contemporary American cuisine along with a full bar, outdoor patio and deck seating on the lake with a seating capacity of about 230.

Levine started his business 30 years ago and has catered for a number of notable guests including five presidents and the Rolling Stones. Levine

Levine said Citron will provide catering, in addition to operating as a full-service restaurant. He said he and head chef Daniel Benedix are in the process of creating a menu, which will be seasonal. Benedix has served as the executive chef at Green Spring Valley Hunt Club in addition to working at upscale hotel restaurants.

"He understands food, taste, presentation. We really are in synch," Levine said of Benedix.

Levine added that with the patio and deck spaces, the restaurant can hold as many as 300 people. The project is the culmination of a decade

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— Councilwoman Vicki Almond

began his remarks at the event with a story about meeting Mick Jagger when he was on tour with the Stones.

"I was there for about five days, and (Jagger) comes over to me and says, 'I really love your Chinese food,'" he said.

Levine praised the various doctors in attendance from Johns Hopkins University and current Quarry Lake tenant LifeBridge Health.

"Every day thousands of people come to Quarry Lake to see their doctors, wealth management advisers, stores, they come home to live," he said.

of work between Levine and developer Tom Obrecht, chairman of Obrecht Properties, LLC.

"This project started over a decade ago, and it wasn't an easy project to pull off because in this day and age, to get a community to come together with a developer and create something special is hard to do," Obrecht said.

Obrecht called Citron a "crown jewel," and said he was proud to be a part of Levine's vision and to see his dream of owning a restaurant become a reality.



From left: County Councilwoman Vicki Almond, Richie Blue, Tom Obrecht, Dan Benedix, Del. Dana Stein, owner Charles Levine, Del. Dan Morhaim, County Executive Kevin Kamenetz and Del. Shelley Hettleman break ground for Citron last month.

"Charles is the fabric of the community," he said. "He's very entrenched and knows all the people in the community. He's a first-class operator, and I think he'll deliver exceptional service. He has a passion for food, and he knows what he's doing."

Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz addressed the crowd and talked about about his 20-year friendship with Levine.

"I remember talking to Charles 20 years ago [when he] was new on the scene," he said. "Mr. Presentation really set the new standard for catering. I said, 'How's business,' and he said, 'Great, I really want to open a restaurant one day.'

Kamenetz said when Levine approached him again 10 years ago with the same dream, he wanted to ensure that it put quality first.

"We're talking about quality, and we're talking about presentation, so Mr. Presentation met Mr. Quality and found his location after 20 years. It really is going to be something special," he said.

Kamenetz said in the time he has been working for the county, it is rare that a project comes out better than he had hoped, but this is one such example.

County councilwoman Vicki Almond said she is excited for Citron to open since she comes to Quarry Lake frequently to do her shopping.

"Quarry Lake itself has a huge economic impact on the Second District, but [Levine] — a man who's been in the community forever — has a persona that everyone relates to, so I think he has all the ingredients to make it successful," she said.

Maryland District 11 Delegates Dana Stein, Dan Morhaim and Shelly Hettleman also attended the event. Hettleman said she too does a good bit of her shopping at Quarry Lake.

"I live two minutes away, I come here all the time," she told the crowd. To Levine she said, "I'm thrilled that you're going to be hiring people and adding jobs to the community, expanding the tax base, and I'm thrilled you're going to be providing us with wonderful food."

Stein said he thinks adding Citron will turn Quarry Lake into a place that is more than just a shopping center.

"It think it will really become a destination location, not just for where people want to go to dinner, but for receptions, weddings, etc. It will have a big impact," he said. Jr

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