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## FOOD & DRINK

June 13, 2007

### Short Order

by Deveron Timberlake

It will be a blow to the neighborhood to lose **Taqueria Loco**, if that's what's happened to the late-night taco and tequila stand draped in lights at 818 W. Broad St. A for-sale sign in the window, a "temporarily disconnected" message on the phone and darkened windows are telltale. And the glaring plastic signage of all those new fast-food franchises across the street is even more telling: In an area that once had a handful of food options, now there are several dozen dying to stay in business.

Blog-sniping about a new restaurant is becoming the fastest route to buzz-kill for owners and can make it hard to counteract negative perceptions. Within days of opening last week, a local Craigslist post mourned the loss of World Cup at 26 N. Morris St. and slung a few complaints about its replacement that were premature if not unfair.

But mostly, owners of **Crossroads Coffee & Ice Cream** are busier than expected at their new location near VCU and have lured many of their Dogtown fans across the river. Owners Will Herring, Olivia Patrick and Jeff Kroll have chosen the motto "Keeping the oral tradition alive through social intercourse" to decorate a side wall and give the adjacent park-dwellers something to ponder.

Prepared-to-order sandwiches, specials and ice cream are part of the daily menu that's bigger than the one at their Forest Hill spot. Garage-style windows, patio dining and the swirl of humanity give the space its enduring appeal — and its third set of owners. Now maybe the blogger can back off for a moment and let the new place get going. 355-3559.

Across the street, **Cuppa Tea Company** is building a base for its dim sum afternoon tea service in a room decorated with Asian accents and colors. Traditionalists can take English-style service with the requisite scones and Devonshire cream in an equally calm but more formal setting in another room.

Owners Lurline and Alan Wagner and their staff are well-drilled in tea preparations, including Gaiwan, Gongfu and Matcha service, and they host tea tastings and other opportunities to experiment with the shop's 60-some varieties.

Located in the former Garden Club storefront at 1 N. Morris, the business also offers dessert teas, children's teas and, in time for Father's Day, a "Real Men Drink Tea" party on June 16, with noon and 3 p.m. seatings. Call 254-8322 or visit [www.cuppateacompany.com](http://www.cuppateacompany.com) for details.

Box-lunch fans might remember **Karen's Homemades** from western Henrico. Now the business has moved closer in to 5714 Patterson Ave., next to **Bakery Art**, a Lebanese take-out spot with vegetable and grain salads, spinach pie and pastries.

Karen's includes the usual favorites — sandwiches, quiche, soups and desserts — to take out or eat at one of the cafe's dozen tables inside or on the patio. Boxed lunches include sandwich, salad and dessert for \$7-\$8 and delivery is offered. 740-6496. visits Raleigh and Cleveland.

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In its July issue, **Food & Wine** magazine gives a nod to Comfort for being a sort of indoor picnic and bastion of Southern cuisine.

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