

Hello, this is Luke Osteen, the editor of *The Laurel*.

For the last seven years, I've been reviewing and surveying the extraordinary restaurants that not only survive, but *thrive*, on the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau, the most Darwinian environment you can imagine.

I hope you've read my reviews and accepted my recommendations for those places that have stood out – the little Mom and Pop places where they serve up generous portions of comfort food and the server is happy to chat with you about any topic you wish; and the establishments that have earned a national, even an international, reputation for exemplary food and service.

Here's the astonishing truth about the entire Plateau Culinary Community – each one of these restaurants, from the humble to the gilded, is in danger of vanishing from our midst.

Gov. Roy Cooper's executive order closing restaurants and bars for dine-in customers amounts to a mortal threat to all of those on the Plateau.

Frankly, I cannot contemplate life here without our restaurants, each the product of some dreamer's shot at the Big Time.

But there's an avenue we can all take to ensure the survival of these restaurants.

We can all resolve to order takeout or seek out those places that offer home delivery.

Sure, it's not the same experience and you'll be missing out on the ambience that makes those places special in your heart, but you'll be keeping their kitchens going and you'll help keep them around until this current crisis has passed.

Then, on that glorious day, we can grab a table at one of these spots, and swap stories amongst ourselves, or with our server, or with the chef who'll amble out to see that we made it through.

That's the Plateau dining experience.

We hope that this listing makes the ordering process easy for you.

Thank you on behalf of all the restaurants and their wonderful workers, both in the kitchen and in the dining room.