

Bakery

Continued from Page C1

worked for a bakery that had really good advertise- ment and customer service and bad product. ... I wanted to open a place that offered the best of both.”

She put a call out to oth- ers to help her come up with a name. Raegamuffin’s is a combination of her nick- name, “Rae,” and other sug- gestions that eventually were pulled together. She began by observing different areas in Greater Bangor and doing car counts to see whether certain locations had a decent amount of traf- fic. After choosing a location in Veazie, renovations began.

“I was dumping my pay- check into a special ac- count,” Eugley said with a laugh. She dedicated most of what she earned to prepara- tions for the bakery to open and had the help of family and friends along the way.

Eugley’s demeanor doesn’t betray her youth. At only 23 years old, she has a mature, poised and profes- sional countenance but com- manding respect as a young businesswoman was diffi- cult, she said. Earning the trust of a local audience was key to the success of her business, and it took some time to build.

She has proven her mettle as she enters her third year and surrounds herself with

young and eager employees. “I’ve been getting them fresh out of school,” she said. Her bakery employs four people, all under the age of 26.

For Jessie Pike of Old Town, an employee at Raeg- amuffin’s for nearly two years, Eugley’s drive was something to be admired.

“I liked the fact that she was a small-town girl,” Pike said. For Pike and Eugley’s other employees, gluten-free baking was a new challenge they were happy to take on.

“She made learning fun,” Pike said of Eugley. The pro- cesses of gluten-free baking are different and usually aren’t taught in culinary programs. Pike attended cu- linary school at Eastern Maine Community College but learned her gluten-free baking techniques from Eugley.

For Cassandra Parent, a 20-year-old Bangor resident, and Staci Plog, a 21-year-old Orono resident, the learning experience was new as well.

“We have a bunch of dif- ferent starches that we have to mix for different prod- ucts,” Eugley said. “We do a lot of things differently just because it’s gluten-free.”

For each of Eugley’s em- ployees, culinary arts are deeply important in their lives.

Parent, who originally is from Danforth, began her journey as a baker when she was very young.

“My mom was paralyzed when I was younger, so I had to learn to bake and cook at



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Raegamuffin’s employees Cassandra Parent (from left), Staci Plog and Jessie Pike have a quick discussion about a reci- pe while working at the Veazie bakery recently.

a young age,” Parent said. “I have always loved to do it.”

When the opportunity came up for a position at a bakery, Parent never thought one of her dreams would come true.

“Rachel’s mother was best friends with my favor- ite teacher from high school. I was 17, and my teacher kept telling me about this bakery that her friend’s daughter was opening. She

wanted me to get a job there, and I was like, “That’s just a dream,” Parent said.

She has been working for Eugley for a year and a half.

For Eugley, changes to the bakery have been con- sistent, as she tries to offer more to her customers. She has started a lunch service, which operates out of a sec- ond kitchen. Eugley has served everything from pizza slices and sandwiches,

which are offered every day, to stuffed peppers and chick- en alfredo as featured items. All are gluten-free. She orig- inally had plans to use the second kitchen for products with nuts, but after con- cerns were voiced by several patrons she elected to keep her entire facility free of the product.

As far as business goes, Eugley said her busiest times are at 7:30 a.m. and

between 3:30 and 5 p.m. weekdays. On Saturdays, the stream of people coming through her doors is non- stop.

“Business is definitely growing,” she said.

Raegamuffin’s Gluten Free Bakery is open from 5:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and from 8 a.m. to noon Sunday.



Steve Lee of Portland pours several small Old Fashioneds.

Mixology

Continued from Page C1

toasty notes of these liquors, he reaches for bitters.

“Bitters makes everything bet- ter,” says Corman’s wife and busi- ness partner, Johanna, who in- vented many of Vena’s drinks and ingredients. Made of herbs and

roots, these natural digestives are the secret weapon to most cock- tails here. Vena’s stocks 170 of them.

“Bitters will round out rough edges [of bourbon, rye and whis- key],” says Corman, who goes on to explain the difference between a dash and a drop

On a sheet of paper participants take notes. Bitters such as Owl and Whale’s cherry and persimmon,



TROY R. BENNETT | BDN

Coastal Root’s aromatic and Dash- fire old fashioned are in columns. They scribble down which flavors caught their attention and how they enhanced the spirits.

At one point Tim Pulsoni, a 30 year-old Portlander declares,

“That’s a damn good Old Fash- ioned.”

Pulsoni, who makes drinks at home, admits he has never pulled one off this good. He wants to come back to learn more.

“People think I am a magician

back here,” says Corman, a former teacher who is clearly having fun with his experimentations. “I’m not. I am just playing around with bitters.”

The next mixology class is Feb. 1. To sign up, visit Vena’s Face- book page or call 207-747-4901.



SANDY OLIVER

Mexican Chicken Spaghetti.

Oliver

Continued from Page C1

en in a slow cooker while you are at work, then as- semble the Mexican spa- ghetti when you get home.

By the way, if you leave out the spaghetti, you’ll find this recipe make a fine chicken stew.

We ate our Mexican chick- en stew on a cold night, and the chili powder did its job or warming us from the inside out. I used a whole table- spoon and no additional hot stuff, and the dish was about

as spicy as I could stand. You can, of course, dial back the amount of chili or chipotle and red pepper to taste.

Send queries or answers to Sandy Oliver, 1061 Main Road, Islesboro 04848. Email sandyoliver47@gmail.com. For recipes, tell us where they came from, list ingredients, specify number of servings and do not abbreviate measure- ments. Include name, ad- dress and daytime phone number. And make sure to check out Sandy’s blog at tastebuds.bangordailynews.com.

Mexican Chicken Spaghetti

Serves 6-8

¾ cup or one medium onion, chopped
1 to 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 green bell pepper, chopped
1 rib celery, chopped
2½ cups canned diced tomatoes
½ teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon salt
1 or more tablespoons chili powder
Chipotle powder, to taste
Ground cumin to taste
3 cups cooked chicken,

chopped
8 ounces spaghetti

Saute onions, bell pepper and celery in oil until tender. Add tomatoes and season- ings and cook for five minutes or longer.

Add the chicken and heat until warmed through.

Cook spaghetti according to package directions, drain and add the cooked spaghetti to the chicken mixture, mix- ing well.

Scones

Continued from Page C1

I recently listened to Michael Pollen’s book “The Omnivore’s Dilem- ma” and have just started listening to Barbara King- solver’s “Animal, Vegeta- ble, Miracle,” and both have gotten me thinking more about our food sup- ply chain, the local food shed and eating in season — which, to be fair, is something I have done for years. They’ve also re- newed my interest in pay- ing attention to what’s re- ally in our food.

Convenience seems less convenient when you ac- count for the health implica- tions that can come with packaged foods and ready- to-use mixes and doughs. Are they tempting? Sure. But at what cost to our bod- ies?

When we scratch cook, we choose what goes into our food. We can skip the corn- based sweeteners and choose others — sugar or honey or maple, for in- stance. We can choose ingre- dients made close to home — flours milled here, for in- stance, and yogurt produced

Dried Cranberry Scones

Yields 16

1¾ cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons sugar
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon baking soda
¼ cup unsalted butter, plus 1 tablespoon, divided
2 large eggs
½ cup plain yogurt
1 cup dried cranberries
coarse sugar

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, sift together the flour, sugar, salt and baking soda — a wire whisk is great for this. Using a pastry cutter or two knives, cut the ¼ cup of cold butter into the flour mixture until it looks like coarse crumbs.

In a small bowl, whisk together the eggs and yogurt until well blended. Make a well in the center of the dry

ingredients and pour in the egg mixture. Fold the dry ingredients into the egg mixture until just moistened. The dough will be crumbly. Stir in the cranberries.

Turn out the dough onto a floured board and with floured hands, knead lightly to incorporate the dried cran- berries. Pat into a ¾-inch- thick circle. Cut into 16 wedges. Transfer the scones from the board to the baking sheet.

Melt 1 tablespoon of butter and brush onto each of the scones. Sprinkle liberally with coarse sugar.

Bake for 20 to 24 minutes, until golden brown and cooked through.

Enjoy immediately. These can be stored at room temper- ature in an airtight container for up to two days — if they last that long.

on a farm not too far away. Through these choices we can make better decisions about what goes into our bodies.

I like having that power. Somewhere over the years I fell in love with

scratch cooking and baking. There’s so much good that comes from choosing your own ingredients, and home- cooked foods often just taste better.

Take scones, for instance. Packaged scones can be dry,



SARAH WALKER CARON | BDN

Dried Cranberry Scones.

crumbly, spit-stealing mounds. But when you make them at home, they are tender, slightly moist baked goods with more flavor and nuance.

These particular scones are dotted with sweet-tart dried cranberries and topped with a sprinkling of coarse

sugar. Perfect with coffee, these are delightful to share — just ask my co-workers who devoured them.

Do you cook and bake from scratch?

Sarah Walker Caron is the senior features editor for the Bangor Daily News and

author of “Grains as Mains: Modern Recipes Using Ancient Grains,” available at bookstores everywhere in- cluding BAM and Bull Moose in Bangor. For more deli- cious recipes, check out Maine Course at maine- course.bangordailynews.com.