

Whoopie Pie Cafe in Brewer to close

BY EMILY BURNHAM
BDN STAFF

BREWER — Owner James Gallagher announced on Tuesday that Friday, Sept. 30, will be the last day in business for the Brewer location of the Whoopie Pie Cafe. Gallagher said in a news release that his cafe, specializing in multiple flavors of whoopie pies as well as sandwiches, soups and sal-

ads, would close after one year in business, but that the original Bangor location would remain open. Gallagher said that 347 Wilson St. soon would go up for auction and that he wasn't sure what would happen with the building after it changes ownership, as Gallagher rents and does not own it. Gallagher said he had invested in building improvements, but with the future uncertain,

he felt he had no reasonable option other than to close. He said he plans to absorb Brewer employees into his Bangor cafe at 621 Hammond St. "I'm very disappointed to have to close our Brewer location. We've loved being in Brewer and are very grateful to the Brewer community for their support and encouragement over the last year," said Gallagher. "Unfortunately, some

things are beyond the control of a business. In this case, as a lessee of the building, James did not have many options and was essentially forced to close the business for the short-term. We will continue to work with him to find a new home in Brewer for the Whoopie Pie Cafe," said D'arcy Main-Boyington, director of economic development for the city of Brewer.

Revamp

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For Roberts, it was time to move on. "I was diagnosed with Lyme disease earlier in the year after struggling with various symptoms for the year prior. It wasn't allowing me to be physically able to do what I needed to do and I needed to have time to focus on my own health," Roberts said. "I'm now following treatment for the disease and am about 80 percent of my 'normal' self."

"I really, really liked what he had started," said Dean. "It's good, healthy food. It's feel-good food, to me. But I decided I wasn't going to maintain it as strictly vegan and gluten-free."

Fresh-pressed juices and smoothies, made-to-order salads, daily soup specials and an array of sandwiches remain on the menu, along with a variety of animal product-free options like Chik'n, tempeh and jackfruit "pulled pork." But now, that fare is joined by grilled chicken on salads, cheese on sandwiches and lots and lots of fresh-baked and glutenous pastries.

The baked goods come thanks to Dean's new baker, Lee-Russel Dunn, who had a chance encounter with Dean just a few weeks after she purchased the business. Dunn had just moved to the Bangor area. He was looking to put his years of baking experience to use in Bangor. And the baker who previously worked at the James Beard Award-winning Fore Street and at Rosemont Bakery, both in Portland, was just what Dean wanted for Fork & Spoon.

"Lee and I just clicked



LINDA COAN O'KRESIK | BDN

Vegetarian panini at Fork & Spoon on Main Street in Bangor.

right away. He had all this experience at two places I very much respect. And his stuff is just so delicious. We're so lucky to have him," said Dean.

Fork & Spoon patrons can now enjoy Dunn's specialties like sweet potato biscuits, lemon-glazed shortbread, danishes, linzer bars and croissants made fresh daily, with or without fillings like ham and swiss, spinach and feta cheese, pepperoni, chocolate, almond or whatever else Dunn feels like making — if there are any left after 4 p.m., they are sold half price. He also bakes focaccia, ciabatta and fragrant loaves of white, wheat, sourdough and raisin bread.

Dean will soon offer more breakfast options, a selection of beer and wine and pop-up dinners in the restaurant on select evenings. She's also working with the Maine Discovery Museum next door to offer food that families can enjoy together.

"We need to have things

on the menu that kids like," said Dean. "I know PB&J and grilled cheese aren't the peak of cuisine, but if the kids have something they want, then mom and dad can come in and eat our delicious salads ... and we have Morton's Moo ice cream now, too."

Visually, Fork & Spoon looks very different from how it was when Roberts owned it, including shifting the location of the front counter, removing the center console, and painting over the large, colorful mural Bangor artist Kat Johnson painted when it first opened. Dean said that was a decision she had made early on in the transition process.

"I knew I wanted to gut the space. I wanted to change the feng shui of it," said Dean. "I know people were upset that we got rid of the mural, and that was a very hard decision to make, but it just spoke to me of a different restaurant. Not our restaurant. It was beautifully done, but we just wanted to do things differ-

ently. And we're still going to feature local artists on the walls," adding that Maine artist Peggy Clark Lumpkins will feature her paintings for the fall.

Dean calls Fork & Spoon a "quirky, conscious eatery" — quirky, because you never know what might come out of the kitchen, and conscious, because she and her staff are committed to offering ethically and locally sourced food.

"I love Bangor. I love the people, the streets, the feel of it," said Dean. "I knew I didn't want to be elsewhere in Maine. I wanted to be here, and I wanted to offer locally sourced food. I think there's also a lot of room for growth in the food scene here. There's room for experimentation ... there's room to try a lot of different things."

Fork & Spoon is located at 76 Main St. in downtown Bangor. It is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Fridays, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturdays and 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sundays.

No Tip

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coach neophytes for a sustained career in culinary arts.

"I want people to understand in order for me to take care of patrons, I need to take care of my staff," she said.

And because a large part of her business includes early hours, keeping employees local is key. Affording Portland's rising rents is not easy for those making minimum wage.

"We need our staff to live near where they work, since we have to get people in the door baking by 3 a.m. to get our fresh-baked goods in the ovens," Alward said. "To do that we need them to be able to support themselves."

The radical idea, which, according to Maine Restaurant Association president Steve Hewins, hasn't been attempted before in Maine, is gaining traction across the country.

Cities including Seattle, where the minimum wage rose to \$15 last year, has experimented with a tipless restaurant economy, and big-time New York restaurant owner Danny Meyer did the same in his estab-

lishments to level the playing field. In both cases, menu prices increased.

By encouraging customers to come in regularly, installing a self checkout, curbside pickup, a new ordering app and offering a rewards program, Alward intends to keep prices affordable, despite the tacked-on gratuity.

"It's a chance to explore a new model because it's a

new restaurant," said Hewins, who wishes her luck. "An existing restaurant might not be as bold. It's a tough business to be."

Will eaters vote with their wallets?

"I like the idea of thinking more innovative about the issue," Jacob Meade, a freelance finance writer in Portland who eats out several days per week, said. "You really need to know

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Caron

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we've worked overtime to keep the dishes clean, we've banned the fruit from the counter, banishing it to the fridge, and there's no spare juice to speak of. And from what I've heard in some of the groups I am active with on Facebook, I am not alone.

It's just that time of year, I guess. It's needs to be not that time of the year now. Seriously.

In the meantime, when I am not waging war on fruit flies, I am enjoying the fruits of this season — as quickly as we can. And among the deliciousness available right now: apples.

So while I try to avoid writing about the same main ingredient two weeks in a row ... sometimes I have to. This is simply what I'm cooking right now.

Applesauce. It's one of the first things I remember making, when I was barely old enough to stand on chairs at the counter myself. My aunt and I would stir together batches of cinnamon applesauce sweetened with sugar. It was a Sunday tradition, part of a brunch she and I would make for our whole family.

This version of applesauce reminds me of the one we made together when I was young. Tart apples are lightly sweetened with honey, and flavored with bright cinnamon. The smallest touch of salt brings out the apple's natu-

Honey Cinnamon Applesauce

Serves about 6

4 cups chopped apples (about 5-6 apples)
½ cup water
1 tbsp honey
½ tsp cinnamon
tiny pinch salt

Combine the apples, water, honey, cinnamon and a tiny pinch of salt in a medium saucepan set over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally and pressing on any larger pieces, until the apples break down — about 20-25 minutes.

Cool. This can be stored in airtight containers in the fridge for up to five days.

ral flavor.

All of this is mixed together on the stove with water and boiled until the apples break down, forming the irresistible sauce. It's easy and requires almost no hands-on work.

And, bonus: It helps me use my apples quickly at a time when I absolutely need to. So there's that, too.

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 including The Briar Patch and Bull Moose in Bangor. For more delicious recipes, check out Maine Course at mainecourse.bangordailynews.com.

Oliver

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Additionally, Margaret's recipe calls for a roux of butter and flour to thicken it. Given the likelihood of a gluten-avoider at my table, I decided that in my version of the recipe I would leave it as a last step while preparing a meal if I decided I wanted to add it, and so canned the soup without it. In some ways, I prefer the flavor without the thickening, and might rather just cook it down a little more, but you can decide what you want to do after you make and taste it.

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 measurements. Include name, address and daytime phone number. And make sure to check out her blog at tastebuds.bangordailynews.com.

Spicy Tomato Soup

Makes 2-3 quarts

3 to 4 quarts ripe tomatoes, cut up but not peeled
1 hot pepper, coarsely chopped
1 tablespoon salt
4 small onions, coarsely chopped
3 ribs celery, coarsely chopped
½ teaspoon ground cloves, or to taste
4 sprigs parsley
4 bay leaves
¼ cup dark brown sugar

Put all of the ingredients except the brown sugar together in a large cook pot.

Cook until everything is tender, about an hour and a half.

Put through a food mill or chinois (straining cone) and put back into the pot.

Add the brown sugar, stir to incorporate and bring to a boil.

Put into clean, hot quart-sized canning jars, seal and process for 20 minutes.

Help fight hunger!

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Quirk Auto Group & the Bangor Daily News have teamed up with Good Shepherd Food Bank to help fight food insecurity in our community! You can help by donating non-perishable food items Monday, Sept. 19-Wednesday, Sept. 21, 8am-4pm, at the Bangor Daily News front desk. Make sure to buy your tickets for NewsFEED -Wednesday Sept. 28, to learn more ways to help

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