

LOCAL

RETAIL NOTEBOOK

# J&J Bakery opens with made-from-scratch goodies

By MARGARET FISHER  
Staff Writer

The old Dairy Queen building on West Vernon Avenue is now open and selling made-from-scratch bakery goods. Mary and her daughter Jessica opened J&J Bakery on March 22.

The pair, who reside in Beulaville, bring a wealth of cooking and baking experience to the newly-renovated eatery.

"Most all my life — I guess I got it from my mother," Mary said. "We were always raised to show our love by our food."

That trait rubbed off on Jessica as well, who bakes lots of Christmas cookies every year. "They get a little bit more creative every year," the 32-year-old said about the cookies.

Jessica has worked for 10 years in the pizza business, but enjoys improving her skills in baking breads and rolls.

"The cinnamon roll is something that I've developed over a couple of years," she said.

Her mother, originally from Sacramento, Calif., moved to Virginia where her husband Walter Vlk is from. They visited family in Beulaville and liked it so much, they moved there in 1997.

Mary has managed deli-bakeries at Jackson's IGA, Richland's Piggly Wiggly and Kinston's Walmart for a number of years.

About a year ago, she started considering doing something "adventurous" with Jessica. The two began to work out a business plan.

"I've always liked the people in Kinston," Mary said. "I had good customers at Walmart."

When a friend saw a sign advertising restaurant equipment for sale outside the for-

Do you have a new retail business or one that's undergone a significant change? The Free Press would like to hear about it. Contact Margaret Fisher at 252-559-1082 or Margaret.Fisher@Kinston.com.



mer store at the BP gas station, she inquired. At first, the real estate company said the owner, Cherry Energy, wanted a convenience store. But Cherry was open to filling a need for a bakery in the community, Mary said.

Mother and daughter gave the a fresh look with paint, including sponge-painting the counters to give them a granite look. The bakery seats 32.

Instead of shelves of products, there are sleek wooden tables and chairs and bar seating. Behind the counter, a bright pink pay phone reminds visitors of days gone by, but it actually works.

One counter features a coffee bar with all the fixings, including 100 percent Colombian blend coffee and a couple of flavored syrups.

Behind glass doors are pans of donuts, rolls and other pastries, as well as an assortment of cupcakes, cakes and drinks.

The bacon maple cinnamon roll, brownies and glazed donuts are popular, Jessica said. Her chocolate cake is made from scratch.

"It is so good," she said, "It stays moist as long as it's there, and it never lasts more than a couple of days."

The bakery can also make special orders.

The Joneses have the original ice cream machine and are hoping to serve ice cream soon.

Jessica said she became concerned about chemicals in foods when she had a son, Michael McCormick, now 5.

"We want our bakery to be an old-fashioned bakery,"



Photos by Zach Fraley / The Free Press

Mother-daughter team Mary, left, and Jessica Jones operate J&J Bakery on West Vernon Avenue. Opening at 6 a.m., the bakery specializes in 100 percent Colombian blend coffee and a variety of baked goods.

she said, "where you can get quality home-baked foods with ingredients that you can pronounce."

The gas pumps are still operating with pay-at-the-pump or pay inside.

J&J Bakery, 3701 W. Vernon Ave., is open from 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Saturdays. Look for possible Sunday hours in the summer. For information, call 252-527-BAKE (or CAKE or 2253).

Tractor Supply Company and the National 4-H Council launched the spring 2014 Paper Clover Campaign.

Purchase a paper clover through May 4 for \$1 or more during checkout and the donations will be used to support 4-H youth development activities in the community.

More than \$3.2 million were raised for 4-H programs,



One of J&J Bakery's most popular items are cream puffs, made fresh.

such as local camps and after-school activities, nationwide over the last four years.

"We were so thrilled by the results of last year's Paper Clover Campaign," said John Wendler, the company's senior vice president of mar-

keting, "And with the help of our dedicated customers, we hope to meet and exceed that goal this year."

Tractor Supply Company is at 1030 W. New Bern Road. For information, call 252-208-0146.

## Sometimes this job requires vaccinations

THE FIRST time I ever had to get a tetanus shot, it was in Kinston.

It was 1999 and we were caught up in the aftermath of Hurricane Floyd. There was water everywhere and God knows what was in it. Someone in the office decided if the reporters were out in the field, we should at least have the protection of tetanus shots. Soon enough, the word came down, do not pass "Go," do not collect \$200, get thee straight to the health department and get a shot.

Our company (then Freedom Communications) paid

for them all. What a perk!

My second tetanus shot came exactly seven years later, which I thought was ironic since the shots are supposed to last seven years.

It was also work-related, which I also find ironic and, I think, says a lot about my life.

The town of Hogansville, Ga., had a truck stop the first few years I was there that was not exactly on AAA's list of desirable plac-

es to make a pit stop. In fact, the city actually shut the business down one year — on a holiday weekend, no less — because of trouble with its septic tank system.

And that is how I found myself walking through a septic tank field in front of the business a few days later with the city manager and the county health department inspector.

I admit, I was not wearing appropriate footwear.

But really, what IS appropriate footwear for an assignment like that?

Sure enough, when I got back to my car, I realized I'd

cut my foot on a stick somewhere in the middle of the field. I went immediately to the home of a friend who had two children under the age of 6 and was used to deep cleaning unexpected injuries. But I was still worried.

I called my doctor's office. "I think I need a tetanus shot," I told the nurse. "It's been seven years since my last one."

"Why do you think you need a tetanus shot?" the nurse asked, obviously bored by a hypochondriac's inquiry.

I gave her the brief run-

down of what happened.

"Let me talk to the doctor and call you back," the nurse said.

I swear to you right now, not more than a minute ticked off the clock before the nurse called me back.

"Yes, we need you to come in right away!" she said.

I guess the doctor's office isn't used to people actually wanting a tetanus shot.

Jennifer Shrader is the managing editor of The Free Press; her column appears in this space every Friday. You can reach her at 252-559-1079 or at Jennifer.Shrader@Kinston.com. Follow her on Twitter at jenishrader.



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