

Karen Nunley



TODD COOPER

Holy Revival

LOCAL DOUGHNUT MAKER GIVES THE DELECTABLE DUNKER A HEALTHY KICK

BY AMANDA BURHOP

In the wee hours of the morning when most people are asleep, Holy Donuts! founder Karen Nunley and her sister turn on the FM radio, get out their rolling pins and dance – as the saying goes – like no one is watching. They let their hair loose and the frosting fly, and it's all in an effort to turn out delicious, fresh doughnuts.

Nunley never set out to be a doughnut maker. She simply wanted a means to fund a nonprofit organization. A restaurant was her first option, but people kept telling her, "The town doesn't need another restaurant. It needs a doughnut shop." In winter 2008, her response to this suggestion was, "I don't do doughnuts." But in April, her outlook changed. "Finally I said yes, and everything happened for me."

What began as one account in April has now grown to 13 places that carry her doughnuts, and no matter where Nunley and her vegan treats go, they get attention. In a baker's dozen, frosting colors vary from mint green to orange to pink, swirls to chopped nuts, coco-

nut shavings to glaze. Wide-eyed onlookers can't help but comment on the delectable doughnuts. Nunley even gets the baker's version of a catcall: people yelling, "Hey, doughnut lady!"

Nunley always intended to produce vegan doughnuts. "I'm not vegan myself, but I eat a lot of vegan and vegetarian food." Her driving force was to simply create a healthy doughnut that wasn't high in fat and sugar content. Nunley's rule of thumb is: "Everything is good, except in excess." Holy Donuts! are made without any animal products and use fresh, natural flavors whenever possible. Many of her frostings and fillings contain real fruit that varies with the seasons. Blueberries are next on the menu. Currently, Nunley is running summer flavors like orange, piña colada and strawberry. "It's just in my nature to cook within the season."

Nunley's doughnuts are considered traditional in terms of cake density and baking technique. They are made from scratch and hand-cut. "It's very homemade and I like that," says Nunley, who wouldn't make her

doughnuts any other way. "It's a dunker made the old-fashioned way."

It's clear how much joy Nunley gets from sharing her doughnuts. "It's a beautiful gesture, the doughnut," says Nunley, who often gives doughnuts to the down-and-out and overworked people of Eugene. The seven-year resident began her charity work by giving doughnuts to nurses working in urgent care and people living on the streets. "I kept looking for where the need might be," she says. Eventually, Nunley wants to use her doughnut revenue to open a drug- and alcohol-recovery house where people can regain life skills. Nunley recently watched someone go through the process. "They don't know where to begin," she says. "They don't have anything to start off with." Nunley also wants to turn her wholesale business into a restaurant where she can further her nonprofit work. "Mostly, I want a place where people can come in to start their day over coffee and a doughnut."

Despite the stress of baking into the wee hours of the morning, Nunley is having a blast and is enjoying the success of her business, which is still technically in its baby stages. "I'm trying to be humble about it and honor it. I want to do this for a long time." ■

Holy Donuts! are available at the The Kiva, Sundance, New Frontier and other local markets and cafés. To order, call 510-6635 by 5 pm for morning delivery.

Hideaway Bakery,

behind Mazzi's, is known for its mouth-watering, artisan bread. But one day a week, the Hideaway crew makes something extra special for its customers. The potato doughnut (\$2.25) is only available on weekends, and its crunchy exterior and dense insides are well worth the wait. A mix between a bagel and an elephant ear (like you'd buy at the fair), the doughnut is made with Yukon Gold potatoes and topped with a thick mixture of cinnamon and sugar. Its crunch factor cannot be stressed enough. Fans of bread with texture? This doughnut will make your head spin.



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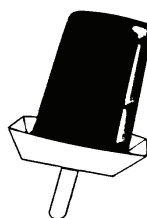
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