



**South County
SPOTLIGHT**

Coffee and Conversation
10-11 am Tuesdays @ Philo
Presbyterian Church

Coffee hour @ Philo
Library Thursdays at 10
am

Village of Philo Brush
Pickup is scheduled for the
1st and 15th of each month

Philo PT B @ Tourney
(Philo) 7/9-7/14

Philo Jr girls @ Urbana
(Ford Harris)
7/12 at 6 pm

VGH FB 7 on 7 @ GCMS
7/12 @ 6 pm

Sidney Christian Church,
Countryside Methodist
Church, Sidney United
Church Community Fun
Friday Gathering
7/13 from 5:30- 8 pm @
Sidney United Church

Canoeing for Beginners
7/14 from 9-11 or 1-3 @
Homer Lake

Sidney Library Board
Mtg 7/16 @ 6 pm

Sidney American Legion
Post monthly meeting
7/16 @ 7 pm

Villa Grove 40th Annual
AG Days
August 3rd, 4th & 5th

UHS Marching Band
Camp 7/30-8/3

Unity Schools
Registration 8/3

UJHS SB vs MS
8/6 @ 4:30 pm

UHS Football Practice
Begins 8/6 (tentative)

UJHS SB @ ST Joe
8/7 at 4 pm

UHS Boys and Girls CC
Practice begins
8/8

UHS VB practice begins
8/8

UHS Soccer practice
begins
8/8

UJHS SB @ Charleston
8/9 @ 4 pm

VGH Golf @ Okaw
Valley 8/16 at 4:15 pm

If you have an upcoming
event that you would like
to see featured in Spotlight,
email us at vgnews@mchsi.com
or call us at 832-4201

Sweet dreams come true at Vintage Bakery

By Tony Hooker
Staff Writer

Growing up and cooking with her grandmother, Crystal Allen dreamed of one day sharing those timeless recipes and great concoctions with the public.

With the opening of the Vintage Bakery in Homer, that dream has come true. I recently sat down with Allen, who's day job is as a lecturer in the Department of Animal Sciences at the University of Illinois, to discuss the bakery.

Crystal, you are the owner, manager, proprietor of the Vintage Bakery? What exactly is your title?

Yes. Everything. All the above! <laughs>

How long has Vintage Bakery been here?

We opened the first week of May, last year, so just over a year.

Are you a Homer native? Born and raised. I moved about three miles out into the country when I married my husband, 33 years ago.

How did this (the bakery) come about? Has this something that's always been on the burner for you?

Yes. I think it's something that's always been a dream. I started with my grandmother's recipes. I remember baking pies with her at age 4, standing on a chair and rolling out the pie dough. I love to bake. I started doing farmer's market here when it began about 5 years ago, but you're very limited as far as what you can bake. You can't do anything with eggs or cream, so I thought "I can build a little bakery," and the little bakery turned into this! <laughs> It's kind of a dream come true?

It's a really nice building. Was this your vision?

No, I actually just wanted a little building that I could bake in and sell cakes and pies and rolls, but when I got into it, I thought that I should have eating room, and I thought if I was going to have eating room, I decided that I should go ahead and make it so someone could turn it into a restaurant, if they decided to

take it over some day.

Is the bakery your only avocation?

No! <laughs> I teach Animal Sciences at the University of Illinois.

So this is just your hobby?

Yes, a very time consuming and expensive hobby! <chuckles>

Where do you see the bakery going from here? Are you satisfied with where you're at now?

People seem to think we need to bigger and better than what we are, but right now this is all I can do. I can't afford to pay two or three people when I'm gone, so I try to be here and then have maybe one other person on staff. When I go teach, I have to have someone to cover. At some point, if I ever retire from teaching or we start growing, we might start having restaurant food. At some point, I hope to grow, but we just don't know. Right now it's pretty much what I want.

Maybe a lunch service in the future?

We have a few sandwiches, chicken salad, ham salad, things like that.

So, are all of your staff members local?

All local. I actually didn't have to advertise, people came to me. I have one lady who's 70 and retired, I've known her my whole life, and she told me she's always wanted to work in a coffee shop. She works one morning a week for four hours and she just loves it. Another lady who's retired from the University of Illinois Police department and she works two mornings a week.

Abby, who just finished her first year at Parkland is another worker, and she is just an amazing cookie decorator, so that's what she does for me.

Is she studying Culinary Arts at Parkland?

No! It wasn't. She's in graphic design and she just changed to Hospitality. I think she's going to go on to Eastern next year. I'm trying to get her to come back and take over and manage when she's done, but we'll see.

<smiles> Then I have two other young ladies, Lindsey, who just graduated from High School, and Mary Rose, she's my dish washer and she just turned 16. I have a really great staff!

What about your family?

My husband Jim farms and works for another guy at a cattle farm. We farm our farm together. He comes in just about every day to check and sometimes chat with all the people.

My kids are both grown. They both graduated from Heritage and then went to the U of I. My daughter works at Pear Tree Estates as an event manager, and my son works for John Deere, in Moline.

What are your hours?

We're open 6 am until 1, Tuesday through Saturday.

Does that catch the Farmer's Market that is right next door?

No, it doesn't. They're open on Wednesday evenings. I tried to stay open on Wednesday evening a couple times, but it just wasn't worth it. In a three hour time slot, we had maybe two customers. In the fall, we're going to collaborate with Bud's Barbeque in Danville and he's going to come over on Fridays and barbeque. He'll have the meat and I'll do Cole slaw and baked beans and corn bread. We'll start that around the end of October, because he's busy with festivals through the summer and fall.

Did you build this building?

Yes, there are actually four lots here. When I was growing up, there were buildings all up and down the street, but there hasn't been anything here for twenty years. They tore the buildings down, so it was just an empty lot. I bought the lot three or four years ago with the intention of building on it.

Do you co-exist with your fellow businesses here in town?

Oh yes! Sure! I've gotten a lot of advice from the Deli and Charlie's. Miss Becky just ordered 5 dozen cookies for an open house she's hosting today.



Lifelong Homer resident Crystal Allen takes a moment from her busy day to pose with some of her delicious confections and pastries at the Vintage Bakery. Photo by Tony Hooker

So Homer is what it is? It's just like all small towns.

Everyone works in Champaign, shops in Champaign. That's why we open early, so people can stop on their way to work. They do that a lot. They stop and get things to take to work. I haven't gotten the farmer crowd yet, which is kind of what I was aiming for. I get a lot of workers who stop in.

Are you involved in the Soda Pop Festival?

I don't know. <laughs> We were closed for the last one, because it was right after we had opened and we just weren't prepared for a big thing like that. I don't know how it's going to go, this time! We'll try to have a lot of workers in here on that Saturday, but we'll see!

What can you tell me about the décor of your bakery?

Everything is Homer. I've got my husband's letter jacket, my mom's letter sweater.

The Homer lake pictures, the FFA coat. The Chevy Camaro jacket came from Brewer's Chevrolet, here in town. My grandfather got one of the first Camaros they sold, back in 1967, and the jacket came with it! Miss Becky gave me the vintage stove, and I thought it would make perfect coffee hut.

Is there anything I've missed? Anything you would like to add?

I wanted this place to be somewhere the community could just come in and hang out, and we do have that. At 8 o'clock, there's usually a group of men who come in and have biscuits and gravy every Friday morning. Then, at 9 o'clock, there will be a bunch of ladies who will come in and stay for two or three hours and just talk. I love when people do that. I've had people do bible studies in here. There've been home extension meet- **Cont. pg. 7**

Final drawing held at Philo Library; New Books and movies

7-6-18
We hope everyone had a safe and fun July 4th, it was definitely a hot one. And speaking of hot,

The final drawing for a Visa gift card for the middle/high school aged readers was held on Monday, July 2. All entries received from the beginning of June to July 2 were included in the drawing. Congratulations to Brooke Hewing, whose name was drawn.

The adult reading continues until August 11, so our adult readers have a little over a month to enter for a chance in the weekly drawings and the special drawings, including double entries if you choose a book from the Illinois Reads shelf. The latest winner was Karen Hollett, whose name was drawn Sunday, July 1. You can enter as many times as you read a book and the prizes have been good ones - Monicals, Savoy 16, Sidney

Dairy Bar to name a few.

DVDs for the past week were few - "Peter Pan" - Disney's classic has been re-released in an anniversary edition. All the Disney classics are fun to watch even if you're a grown up and they're something to share with your children and grandchildren. We have both DVD and Blu Ray available. The only other DVD picked up this week was "Death Wish" with Bruce Willis. This is a remake, with minor changes, of an old Charles Bronson movie. If you like action, this is one you should see.

For our Elementary and Middle School aged readers, don't forget we have Rebecca Caudill books and Bluestem books for the 2019 reading year. Many of our checkouts this summer have been to students wanting to get a step ahead of their classmates and maybe even get a chance to participate in the middle school pizza party held next spring for those who have read a lot of the Caudill nominated books. These books are on a separate shelf across from the circulation desk. If you're looking for a good read, and a chance to earn AR points, participate in the voting and maybe get invited for pizza, here's your chance!

Did you know we have two ways for you to have access to hundreds **Cont. pg. 7**

Family Movie Night returns to Sidney Community Library July 20

The Sidney Community Library is happy to announce the return of Family Movie Night. Join us on Friday, July 20th at 6pm to enjoy the Disney movie "A Wrinkle in Time", rated PG. This fantasy adventure film was written by Jennifer Lee and Jeff Stockwell and is based on the 1962 novel of the same name by Madeleine L'Engle. The film stars Oprah Winfrey, Reese Witherspoon, Mindy Kaling, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Michael Peña, Storm Reid, Zach Galifianakis, and Chris Pine. The story follows a young girl who, with the help of three astral travelers, sets off on a quest to find her missing father. Just bring a pillow and a blanket. The library will supply popcorn and drinks.

The next Sidney Community Library Board meeting will be Monday, July 16, 2018 at 6 pm. Board meetings are open to the public. Full meeting minutes are always available to read at the library.

Thanks so much to our community volunteers who spent many hours running the concession stand this summer at Witt Park! We hope everyone, from players

to spectators, enjoyed the wide variety of refreshments. It was a great season and we are very proud of our young ball players!

"Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle", rated PG-13, and the original "Jumanji", rated PG, are available for checkout. The original movie, released in 1995, tells the story of a magical board game that unleashes a world of adventure on siblings Peter (Bradley Pierce) and Judy Shepherd (Kirsten Dunst). While exploring an old mansion, the youngsters find a curious, jungle-themed game called Jumanji in the attic. When they start playing, they free Alan Parrish (Robin Williams), who's been stuck in the game's inner world for decades. If they win Jumanji, the kids can free Alan for good -- but that means braving giant bugs, ill-mannered monkeys and even stampeding rhinos! "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" revolves around four high school kids who discover an old video game console and are drawn into the game's jungle setting, literally becoming the adult avatars they chose. What they discover is that you don't **Cont. pg.**

What's Up With This?

By Jim Balmer



Big Tin Cup. Wake up coffee or after work drink? Photo by Jim Balmer.

