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LOADED BREAKFAST BOWL

MILK HOUSE

A NEW OLD THING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

BY SUNIL MALAPATI

The neighborhood bakery. In these times of uncertainty, the term connotes an old-fashioned sense of stability. We are used to having eateries in the bustling parts of the town, not right in the middle of a residential district. But then, South Grandview Avenue is a weird residential street that also serves as a major thoroughfare above the hill, and as a popular street for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists. There is plenty of foot traffic in addition to regular traffic, and the corner of South Grandview and Bryant Street with Bryant Elementary School nearby is a wonderful spot for a neighborhood bakery.

Milk House Artisan Bakery, Baked Goods & Catering. That is quite a mouthful and seems to suggest a multitude of entities. But neighborhood bakeries have always had a multiple purposes: a quick place to stop by and get some coffee and baked goods, sit around for a semi-leisurely brunch or lunch, take some goodies home for later in the day or even week. The current owners of Milk House, Ali Fuller and her husband, seem quite aware of this. As you enter the cozy place, there is a glass counter displaying many baked goodies: inviting pecan rolls, large muffins that look straight out of a storybook, breads, and English muffins. The walls are adorned with old-timey pictures and posters, reviving a bygone era and suggesting the rich history of South Grandview Avenue and its prominence in Dubuque lore. There is limited seating inside, but they have expanded outdoor seating with lovely wooden benches and artificial turf. I know the weather is turning colder, but we

may still get a warm day or two to enjoy the outdoor seating and people watch.

As befits a modern bakery, it also serves as a coffee house. There is drip coffee to serve yourself and a variety of lattes and cappuccinos. Local company Verena Street provides a couple of their signature coffees, and Milk House serves its own breakfast blend that is a good blend of light and medium roasts. I found it to be well balanced for any time of the day. The latte I ordered on another day had the right ratio of frothed milk and cappuccino, though not as hot as I would have liked. The location is great to pick up a caffeinated hot drink on your way to work, though I wished they opened earlier in the day than 7:30 a.m.!

Milk House offers a wide range of breakfast items throughout the day. There are a variety of breakfast sandwiches, a slice of quiche, a bowl of granola, parfaits, etc. They also offer weekly or weekend specials. I had one of their weekend breakfast bowls, and I did not need any lunch that day! Scrambled eggs that were soft and pillowy, hearty sausage, onions and green peppers, melted cheddar cheese, and queso all over some beautifully browned crispy skillet potatoes (I skipped the bacon, which was part of the special). There was a good balance of textures and tastes, with the right amount of queso and cheese to bring them all together. I did takeout and was pleased to see the crispness of potatoes last until I got them home.

The lunch sandwiches come with fries or a side salad—you can also get a cup of soup. The grilled cheese sandwich and

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GRANDVIEW GOBBLER

tomato basil soup sounded inviting on a cold weekday afternoon and it delivered. The tomato soup looked unusual with a marinara like texture and a dollop of walnut basil pesto on top. The tomato soup tasted like home—I can find no better way to describe it. I have had many tomato soups, from farms with tomatoes fresh off the field to fancy restaurants with roasted tomatoes and oodles of cream. The Milk House version looked simple, yet carried in it a depth of flavor reminiscent of a long simmering pot of soup in Grandmother’s kitchen. The pesto added the right amount of nutty texture, the oil providing richness.

The Grandview Gobbler is a turkey sandwich on multigrain bread with melted cheese, walnut pesto and cranberry chutney. I liked the taste profile of the sandwich though it landed just a tad dry (maybe some greens would have helped). The fries on the side were cut like steak fries, and the insides were soft and cooked through while the outsides were crispy. I appreciate an eatery that knows how to do fries right.

Milk House offers a variety of goods to take home. In addition to the baked goods, they also have a large selection of take home meals. They are family sized, and should be good for a family of four. I did not get to try them as they would be too much for a single person, but the

tomato soup did sound very inviting. The pulled pork that forms the mainstay of one of their lunch sandwiches can also be ordered in bulk, and I hear it is quite popular. The meals they offer are listed on a board and presumably change every week. You can also order online.

I did take some English muffins home. They are breadier than I expected. A classic English muffin has those lovely nooks and crannies, pockets of air that you can fill with butter or syrup. I suspect the Milk House ones were made in the oven and not on a hot stove-top where the rising steam makes those pockets. Dusted with cornmeal, they made a great base for home-made avocado toast. (If you are taking baked goods home, I have suggestions for storage and preparation. If you are eating them within a day or two, leave them outside and do not put them in the refrigerator. Breads stale faster in the refrigerator than at room temperature. If you do store them cold for longer periods, warm them in a toaster oven or an air fryer like I do. Using a microwave makes the texture rubbery and chewy in an unpleasant way.)

It is good to see neighborhood businesses crop up along the Grandview thoroughfare. Milk House offers a bit of everything and hopefully will continue to thrive, helping the community along the way. ■

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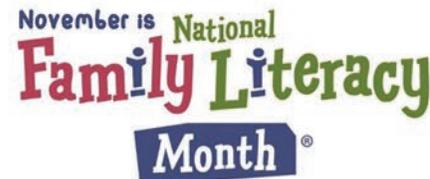
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Celebrate National Family Literacy Month with Carnegie-Stout Public Library! Families with preschool-age children can pick up a DIY Storytime Kit. The kit comes with an egg shaker, activity scarf, book, and tips to create your very own storytime. School-age families can pick up a FREE Read Aloud Chapter Book Kit featuring the 2020 All Iowa Reads selection *The Parker Inheritance* by Varian Johnson. Pick up kits at the Children’s Help Desk during the month of November while supplies last. Be sure to watch the C-SPL Facebook page for a chance to win a reading prize pack every week.

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