



Steve and Marla Gramling eat for the first time at Diner 54 on Wednesday evening. "We need more variety in town," Marla said. The restaurant opened Monday on the south side of Kirksville.

New diner opens

Diner 54 opened Monday in the old El Agave Azul building

BY TIM HOLMES
For the Index

An old-fashioned diner opened in Kirksville on Monday.

Diner 54, owned by Tony Alimi, is located on the south end of Kirksville in the building that formerly housed the Mexican restaurant El Agave Azul. The diner's namesake comes from the original Diner 54 in Fulton, Mo., which is located on Highway 54.

Alimi said his expanding diner business is family run.

"I'm a third generation, my grandfather started first," Alimi said. "They've all opened restaurants in the Chicago area and we moved to Missouri and this is our thing."

Alimi said he likes the town of Kirksville and said it doesn't have the type of restaurant he can provide. Alimi said he selected the location for his second restaurant be-

cause there was an open property in Kirksville and he knew he could compete with the other restaurants.

After purchasing the property a month ago, Alimi said there have been no real challenges in renovating it. Alimi said all he needed to do was move in the new equipment, clean the place and do some minor construction.

Because renovations were so minor, Alimi's biggest challenge is getting customers to his new restaurant, he said.

Junior Eric Terschak, said he is not impressed with the idea of Diner 54.

"Personally, El Agave Azul, which is the restaurant it is replacing in Kirksville, which was a fun place to go to and had an enjoyable environment and delicious food," Terschak said. "And I was extremely disappointed when it closed down. Diner 54 has a lot of expectations to live up to."

Terschak said Diner 54 might not have a lot of competition in that part of town and could prob-

ably grow and eventually succeed. However, Terschak said that many of his friends have not heard of Diner 54 yet or know its location.

Although only a few people might have heard of Diner 54, other family restaurants in Kirksville are aware of their business rivals.

Junior Natalie Green, a waitress at Rosie's Northtown Cafe, said she doesn't fear the competition Diner 54 offers.

"I feel like the environment at Rosie's is so homey and great that we might lose a few people," Green said. "But we have a clientele of regulars and people that come in all the time because of who we are and the environment."

Alimi said that although some see the restaurant as nothing special, job seekers have been eager to apply for positions at the new restaurant. Alimi said he has received more applications than he could count and has filled more than 30 positions at Diner 54.

Alimi said Diner 54 serves breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week.

ASG hosts market

Holiday market promotes local businesses

BY GRACE FREEMAN
Staff Reporter

The Holiday Market sponsored by Alpha Sigma Gamma on Saturday in Ryle Main Lounge offers a business opportunity for local artists and vendors to sell handmade goods, an industry that has been growing online during recent years.

This year's 20 vendors are from throughout the state, chosen by ASG members who visited craft fairs in Adair County this year. A registration fee of \$35 a vendor, totalling \$700, goes to Victim Support Services, a Kirksville resource for victims of violent crime, especially domestic abuse.

Homemade crafts are a growing trend online at Etsy.com, a marketplace where individual artist vendors make and sell one-of-a-kind items.

Etsy sales rose 62 percent from October 2010 to October 2011 and now is home to more than 800,000 vendors, according to eCommerce Bytes.com, a site for independent news for online retailers.

But Kirksville vendor Betty Slaughter said most people she knows who sell homemade crafts aren't aware of Etsy or other online marketplaces because they sell mostly to friends and family and don't get outside business, Slaughter said.

She said she found out about the event through an ASG member and will sell jewelry in the Holiday Market for the first time this year.

"I do farmers' markets all over, like in La Plata and such — I try to attend

all the markets I can," she said.

The economy has affected the sales of many homemade item sellers, but sales often rise around the holidays, she said.

For Truman students, the craft show will be an opportunity to do some holiday shopping, event coordinator Carrie Nelson said.

"We will have pottery, carved wooden items, books, chocolate, knitted items, I think maybe even some painting or photographs," she said.

For those who are looking for a family outing, Santa Clause will be at the fair to take pictures and crafts for children to make.

"We want to make it as community and family friendly as possible," Nelson said. "I think that's always a goal to bring people from the Kirksville community to your event."

In addition, Sweet Nothings will perform at noon and True Men will perform at 1 p.m.

ASG member junior Susan Burk will be selling her "beard-hats," which cover your chin and cheeks in the cold in the shape of a beard.

"I saw the idea online and learned the pattern from there," Burk said. "In ASG I've always been supportive of all of our causes, especially Victim Support Services because we are a group of women," Burk said.

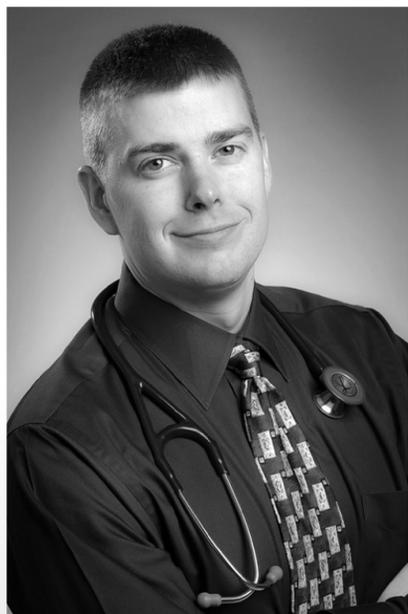
This year, a smaller group of vendors will be participating than years past.

This year there are 19 vendors against about 30 vendors from last year, which is a guess, Nelson said.

"I think [this] will really benefit the vendors themselves," Nelson said. "People are more likely to walk into Ryle Main Lounge than they are to walk over to Pershing arena on a Saturday."

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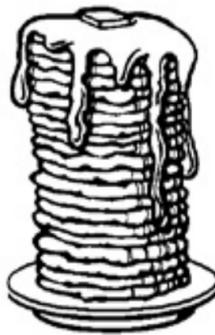
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