

# Alaska Dispatch News

Published on *Alaska Dispatch* (<http://www.adn.com>)

[Home](#) > The Bake Shop celebrates 40 years serving sweet rolls to skiers

Barry Piser

January 3, 2013

**Main Image Credit:**

Erik Hill

**Main Image Caption:**

In the kitchen of The Bake Shop in Girdwood is a piece of Alaska history, and owner Michael Flynn has instructed his staff that it must be protected.

"I tell the kids if the place is going up in flames, grab the starter," Flynn said of the shop's sourdough starter, which is more than 100 years old. "Let everything else burn. I can start my business over if I have the starter. Everything else is replaceable."

Flynn said that the shop's original owner, Werner Egloff, acquired some of the starter and a recipe for sourdough pancakes while on his way to Fairbanks from the owner of the Sourdough Lodge in 1964. The recipe had come from a miner who came north seeking gold at the turn of century.

The starter helped inspire Egloff to turn a space that had been a sporting goods store into The Bake Shop, which opened its doors in 1973. Egloff built the shop from humble beginnings (cramped quarters and no restrooms) into a year-round destination for hungry skiers, tourists, hikers and anglers now celebrating its 40th year in business.

In 1997, Egloff passed the shop and the starter to Flynn and his wife, Stefanie. The Flynn's were living in Reno, Nev., when Egloff called and told them he had picked them to take over the business.

For Michael Flynn, whose world travels after finishing culinary school in 1982 as a hotel and resort chef included a stint at Alyeska, it was a no-brainer to return to the town he calls his "little paradise" to do what he loves.

"I tell young kids, 'You have a choice: You can find a job or craft that will provide the income to do what it is that you love to do, or you can find what it is you love to do in life and turn it into your craft or job,'" he said. "I love cooking and especially baking, so I wake up every morning and do what I love."

Working with tasty baked goods daily might prove too tempting for some, but Flynn manages to hold off for the most part.

"I try not to turn into a sweet roll," he said. "I'll have a piece or a bite once or twice a week. When

you've made as many as I have, you can pretty much look at them and go 'That's a good batch.' "

The Flynns haven't made many changes over the years, instead focusing on minor tweaks to Egloff's original vision. Menu boards look similar to those from the '70s except for the effects of inflation: The price of a sweet roll has risen from 25 cents to \$4. All bread is baked fresh each day, while the meat for the shop's sandwiches is roasted on site.

"My philosophy has been, if its not broke, then we really don't want to fix it," Flynn said. "We just want to be the best. We take pride in what we serve. We make everything fresh right down to jams and marmalade on the table."

Stefanie expanded on Egloff's original planting of flowers each summer and turns the outdoor dining area into a stunning display of bright colors annually. The Flynns' teenage daughter, Annika, has been helping out at the shop since she was 5.

"It's a family affair," Michael Flynn said. "We kind of live and breathe it."

As do many of the shop's customers.

Flynn said seeing the same faces year after year is one of the highlights of running the shop.

"Alaskans are the business' foundation," he said. "It's kind of fun to see great-grandparent sitting there telling a story to their great-grandchildren about the shop and how they came here when they were younger."

By Barry Piser  
[bpiser@adn.com](mailto:bpiser@adn.com) <sup>[1]</sup>

**Source URL:** <http://www.adn.com/article/20130103/bake-shop-celebrates-40-years-serving-sweet-rolls-skiers>

**Links:**  
<sup>[1]</sup> <mailto:bpiser@adn.com>