

# Baking up a fresh idea

## *Bakery owners to sell goods in new library*

**By Beth Sneller**

*Daily Herald staff writer*

The inside of Naperville's third library near 95th street is starting to take shape, with workers hauling furniture in and finishing up special flooring in the front lobby.

Yet one important aspects of the facility remains untouched, and it is one of the things that will help separate the new building from most other libraries.

Napoleon Bakery owners David and Mahvash Harris are still waiting for permits to start building a cafe on the lower level of the library. They expect, however, to be open for business in time for the building's scheduled Sept. 21 opening.

"My customers can't wait for the new store to open," Mahvash Harris said. "They say it's a much easier drive for them."

Naperville Public library board members decided years ago they wanted to include a cafe in plans for their third library, Director Donna Dziedzic said.

"If you look at the way America lives, we have food every place," she said. "Why not inside a library?"

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### A new chapter

An occasional series on Naperville's 95th Street Library

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Yet only a few other libraries in the Chicago area — including Schaumburg and Gurnee — feature cafes.

That means the eyes of many librarians will follow the success of the 95th Street cafe.

"A lot of people in this area look at Naperville when they do these things," David Harris Said. "We know we're going to be in the spotlight. That's why it has to done right, it has to be perfect.

The pair say they have enough experience to ensure a smooth transition.

They opened their bakery on Aurora Avenue near Westfield Shoppingtown Fox Valley in 1997. Mahvash, an Iranian immigrant, had done well baking pastries and cakes for local hotels, and she and her husband thought they'd try out a storefront operation.

When they started, David worked full time as a mechanical engineer, helping manage the business aspect of the shop in his spare hours.

"It was a little bit more than a hobby, but it was mostly just that," David said.

The couple who live in downtown Naperville, decided not to advertise.

"We were afraid if we advertised too much, we would have

too many customers and would be working 20 hours a day," David said.

Although they were only moderately successful for the first couple of years, it really didn't matter much.

"From the beginning it paid for itself," Mahvash said. "Everybody said it would take five years, but it didn't."

David works full time at the business and Mahvash has a couple of pastry chefs churning out her recipes every morning. The bakery's namesake, a puff pastry called Napoleons, is a customer favorite, Mahvash said.

"In the morning, we make one or two trays of Napoleons, and they are gone by 2 p.m.," she said. "Customers know they have to get here early to get one."

There was one woman who craved the Napoleons so badly, she made her husband pick one up every day during her pregnancy, Mahvash said.

David Harris will be transporting freshly baked pastries from the bakery to the library every day after it opens., he said. Although he will oversee the opening of the new location, he will hire between 8-10 people to staff it during regular library hours.

Opening a location inside the library fulfills David's dream of expanding his small business, he said.

"When we first opened, I wrote a business plan, asking the

### If you go

If you want to visit Napoleon Bakery before it opens in the 95th Street library, stop by its location near Westfield Shoppingtown on the west side of Naperville.

**Where:** Napoleon Bakery, 566 Aurora Ave., Naperville

**Hours:** 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday; 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday; 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday

**Details:** (630-548-1044)

question, 'if we wanted to make it big, what would we have to do?'" he said. "I thought it would be great if we could find a really small location, baked everything here and then take the stuff to the second location and sell it. This library was exactly what we were looking for."

The Harrisese think library customers will appreciate their attention to quality and their pledge to use only the best ingredients.

"I grew up in a small town with a corner bakery," David said. "How many bakeries these days actually roll and mix in the back room? We try to do things like they were done when we were kids and we think that makes all the difference."