

5 million bulbs
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Ottawa Tulip Festival.
Travel, B6



Side dish

Entertaining

Weber Grill offers a book that not only includes recipes, but also includes information on entertaining outside for the summer.

"Entertaining in the Outdoor Room" is a booklet that lists how party hosts can set up an outdoor room (which is considered a backyard, brick patio, deck or balcony). The 40-page booklet gives tips on creat-



ing and decorating the room, setting up a sound system and coping with the weather. It also features 10 food recipes and several drink recipes and a CD from Bose with the music of Alison Krauss, the Squirrel Nut Zippers, Robert Cray, Martin Sexton and other artists.

The booklet is available for free for anyone who calls the Weber Grill-Line and asks for the booklet, while supplies last. The Grill-Line is 1-800-GRILL-OUT (1-800-474-5568). It is open for calls seven days a week until Labor Day from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Callers can receive grilling information, tips, recipes and meal-planning ideas.

Catfish are jumpin'

Catfish traditionally has been viewed as a traditional Southern delicacy, but that hasn't limited farm-raised catfish's popularity in restaurants across the country.

In fact, Michigan is ranked 10th in the nation in catfish consumption. Texas leads the U.S., followed by Illinois, Tennessee, California, Florida, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia and Michigan, according to the The Catfish Institute.

Catfish are light enough to adapt to a variety of seasonings, whether blackened, pan- or deep fried, baked or steamed.

The Catfish Institute is offering free seasoning blends and recipes to consumers. Spice blends include Fireworks Catfish Rub, Farmer's Market Herb and Blue Ribbon BBQ.

Consumers also can receive recipes, including Fireworks Catfish Fillet with Fireworks Catfish Tacos, Farmer's Market Herb Catfish with Farmer's Market Pasta Salad and Blue Ribbon BBQ Catfish Fillet with BBQ Catfish Wraps.

Consumers may request the free spices by mail, by sending name and mailing address to: Free Spice Offer c/o Fishman-Hillard Inc., 2405 Grand Boulevard, Suite 700, Kansas City, MO 64108. Spices are free while supplies last.

To download additional recipes, visit www.catfishinstitute.com.

Symbols of the season



Chocolate bunnies, eggs reign on Easter

BY LANA MENI
STAFF WRITER

Happy Easter. By now the kids have probably found the hidden eggs and basket and are enjoying a sugar jolt from chocolate bunny ears.

We visited Morley Candy factory in Clinton Township just before Easter to get a glimpse of production during one of the company's busiest times of year. The candy specialists hand-poured chocolate into huge and tiny candy bunny and egg molds.

'Milk chocolate is the biggest seller, hands down. Adults usually prefer solid bunnies, hollow are fun for kids because they're easier for them to eat.'

Diane Lynch
Morley Candy

Barbara Czarniak, a 20-year employee at Morley, knows how delicate chocolate can be — which is why she is an expert basket designer. She also knows that many ways that people eat chocolate bunnies. Ears first, tail first or the

bottom on up. Diane Lynch, of Morley, says the company will sell literally thousands of chocolate bunnies and eggs this year.

"Milk chocolate is the biggest seller, hands down," Lynch said. "Adults usually prefer solid bunnies, hollow are fun for kids because they're easier for them to eat."

And speaking of chocolate ... why not ask the family: Do they know why we color Easter eggs and why we eat chocolate bunnies?

The Easter bunny has its origin in pre-Christian lore. The hare was considered the most fertile animal and served as a symbol of life during spring. A Latin proverb indicates that all life comes from the egg.

In Egypt, Persia, Greece and Rome also in pre-Christian times, eggs were hung from trees as a symbol of a prosperous spring crop. Often the eggs were decorated at spring festivals before being hung.

PLEASE SEE EASTER, B2



PHOTOS BY JERRY TOLPESKY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Above, Barbara Czarniak, a 20-year veteran with Morley Candy, wraps a five pound hollow chocolate bunny. The first candy bunny originated in Germany in the early 18th century. Top, workers put together Easter baskets at Morley Chocolates in Clinton Township.

Ready-to-eat meals of war aren't all that bad

BY KEN ABRAMCZYK
STAFF WRITER

Photographer Jim Jagfeld summed up the Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) when we set up the food for the photos.

"The guys in the service call these Meals Rejected by Everyone," he quipped, citing something he heard on National Public Radio.

And that just might be the case with some of the meals, but actually there were some that weren't all that bad.

A group of Observer & Eccentric editors and staffers sampled some of the fare consumed by our troops. This taste

test was the idea of Sue Mason, the community editor of the Westland and Garden City Observer newspapers, whose neighbor happened to give a few to her husband for use during hunting season.

Out of respect to our troops in Iraq, we decided to experience the foods they consume — under, of course, much different circumstances.

We sampled similar food distributed to Michigan Marine reservists — jambalaya with ham and shrimp, apple slices in spiced sauce, beef strips in teriyaki sauce, boneless pork chop in Jamaican style sauce with noodles, beef with mushroom

rooms in sauce, and chicken in Thai style sauce.

The complete meals are enclosed in a solid plastic bag that can be cut open with a pair of scissors or a Swiss Army knife. Each MRE has a heating bag, foil packets of the main and side dishes, a bag of sugar packets and a small bottle of Tabasco sauce, a dessert, bread or crackers, cheese and candy.

The main dishes are stocked with sodium (47 percent for the beef strips in teriyaki sauce) and moderate to high on the fat level (ranging from 13 percent on the beef with mushrooms to 24 percent on the pork chop and the beef strips dishes).

The entrees have limited nutritional value: The teriyaki contains 30 percent of the minimum requirement of iron; the jambalaya has 20 percent Vitamin C and 15 percent iron, and the beef with mushrooms and pork chop also has a little iron and Vitamin C. Protein levels range from 20 to 30 grams. Calories range from 220 to 350.

The packages are easy to prepare — a simple tear of a clear plastic bag, then a small amount of water to activate a heating element inside the bag. Foil packets containing the entree and side rice dishes aside

PLEASE SEE WAR, B3



Meals ready-to-eat were sampled by a group of Observer & Eccentric Newspapers staffers.

Ballet Shoes or Wing Tips?



Makes no difference as long as you take time to put your feet up, get comfortable and spend some time with us.