

# Class to offer a taste of world-class wines

If the calls I got are any indication, shoppers like the new "self-checkout" at the renovated Farmer Jack supermarket on Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield.

"It's very simple. It's fast. I really enjoy it," said Ann Aldrich of Farmington Hills. "There's always someone there to help you."

Thanks to all the readers who called to tell me what they thought about the new system. I appreciate your input.

**OBSERVE & Eccentric wine connoisseurs.** Eleanor and Ray Head will offer a five-week wine appreciation course devoted to educating both the neophyte and experienced taster in the art of tasting world-class wines as a connoisseur would.

Six premium wines of the world will be discussed and tasted at each session. The five sessions (cost \$95/person) are held on Wednesday evenings from 7:30-9:30 p.m., May 6



**tidbits**  
**Keely Wygonik**

through June 3 at the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College. Call 471-7561 for more information and registration materials.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO** Akroyd's Scotch Bakery & Sausage in

Redford, named as a favorite for pastry in Michigan Living Magazine's second annual "Best of Michigan" Treasure Awards, announced in the April issue.

With them, "Stars Desserts" by Emily Luchetti, which includes a couple of recipes by Birmingham native Holly Snyder, was nominated in two categories for the annual International Association of Culinary Professionals cookbook awards.

The awards are the premier program for recognition of excellence in cookbook writing and publishing. The 346 books entered in this year's competition were judged by a jury of 30 food and beverage professionals. The winners will be announced May 2 at the association's annual conference in Miami, Florida.

**THE MACHUS** Red Fox Restaurant, 6676 Telegraph, West Bloom-

field, the last place Jimmy Hoffa was seen before his mysterious disappearance, will be the site of the "Jack Nicholson Look-alike, Sound-alike Contest" to celebrate Nicholson's appearance in the movie "Hoffa." The contest is 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 22. The winner gets dinner for four at Machus Red Fox, a "one way" limo ride and four tickets to the Star Theatre's premiere of "Hoffa," and a Star Theatre's one year VIP movie pass. For information, call 642-1550.

Betty Crocker tip of the week: Leftover sliced ham will keep in the refrigerator for three to four days. Freezing deteriorates quality of ham, but if you must freeze it, wrap tightly and use within three months.

For answers to questions about Taste, call Keely Wygonik, 953-2105.

## Batter up for perfect pancakes

A pancake should be more than a sponge to soak up butter and syrup. A pancake should be tender, slightly moist and moderately dense. A bad pancake tastes like raw dough or cardboard and has a texture that's gummy, tough and chewy.

Pancakes lend themselves to many occasions, as an hors d'oeuvre, for breakfast, lunch or dinner or to gluttonous leftovers. Pancakes are very versatile, you can stuff, roll or glaze them.

Making pancake batter yourself is just as easy as a mix, besides homemade tastes better. If you are interested in lower fat, calories, cholesterol and sodium, make your own batter and leave out the egg yolk, salt, sugar and some of the fat. Use buttermilk as the liquid.

Buttermilk gives the pancake a little tang and makes them extra tender. Making these changes will make the batter a little thinner but then you will be too.

No matter what name you use, blintzes, crepes, flapjacks, Johnny cake, griddlecakes or batter cakes, they are all made with a thin mixture called a "pour batter." This means that the liquid and dry ingredients are about equal and they are just wet enough to be pourable.

Four batters are usually classified as a quick bread because they do not use yeast as the leavening agent. The exception is the popular Russian blintz which is a yeast-risen buckwheat pancake. These are usually made in a smaller size and are topped with sour cream and chutney, sour cream and butter, smoked trout or with butter and caviar.

There are three very important things to have to make the perfect pancake. First, the consistency of the batter is important. Dry ingredients such as flour, baking powder or soda, salt, sugar and other spices are blended together, mix the liquid ingredients together, and quickly add into the dry ingredients. Then just give it a few quick strokes to moisten the dry ingredients. A batter bowl which is a large liquid measuring cup is a very convenient way to make pancake batter, as it can be easily poured from this on the griddle.

Forget about the lumps, do not overbeat. For just a basic pancake recipe, for best results mix the dough and then let it rest, covered and refrigerated the night before. If the batter gets too thick, dilute with a little water, if too thin add a little



**Lois Thieleke**

home economist, Cooperative Extension Service

flour. For a very light and delicate finished product separate the eggs. Add the yolk with other liquids and beat the egg whites to fold into the batter as the last step.

**THE SECOND** important item to remember is the surface of the griddle or pan you're using. If you have a new griddle or pan it may need to be seasoned before using. If the pan you are using isn't reserved just for pancakes and it isn't seasoned, you'll have to add a little oil during preheating.

The third important point is the evenness of the heat. Always preheat the griddle. Test the griddle by dropping a few drops of cold water. If the water sizzles there and boils the griddle is not hot enough. A pour batter will spread in a widening circle until set by heat. When the bubbles appear on the upper surface, the cake is ready to turn over. If it is bubbling only in one area of the pancake, the heat is not evenly distributed; check your heat source.

Pancakes are turned over once. Serve them at once but if this is not possible put a towel on a cookie sheet and make sure the pancakes are separated. Place in a 200 degree oven until ready to serve. Don't stack them on top of each other without a cloth between or the steam they produce will make them all floppy.

**FRENCH PANCAKES** or Crepes are served as a snack, for lunch, a supper dish or a dessert depending on the flavoring. Mixtures for crepes include chopped tomatoes and onions, sausage, and cheese, grated cheese and crumbled bacon, aspar-

agus or thin sliced smoked ham or turkey, or spread with just plain jelly and butter.

A crepe needs to be beaten until smooth, rest the batter for at least one hour, reblend batter and cook until set, turn over cook until done. Do not stack until completely cooled. After they are completely cooled, stack, wrap in foil refrigerator or freeze for later. Frozen crepes should be thawed in a cool oven.

Blintzes are a more lengthy process, however they can be made a day ahead and when you're ready to serve, brown quickly and serve hot. They are also higher in calories since they are browned on one side, filled and fried again to brown the outside.

The batter can be seasoned or add chopped nuts, candied fruits, wheat germ or flaked bran. Let the cereal or fruit rest in the liquid for about half an hour before cooking for best results. A lower calorie batter is very easy to do, and also cut down on the butter and syrup when eating. No matter, whenever you eat pancakes make sure they are perfect and a real taste treat, something different for dinner.

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## Potato topper no fuss

AP Creamy Vegetables Italiano is a no-fuss topper for baked potatoes that can be prepared in a conventional or microwave oven. All you need is a can of soup, some frozen vegetables and Parmesan cheese.

**CREAMY VEGETABLES ITALIANO**  
4 medium baking potatoes  
One 10 1/2-ounce can condensed cream of mushroom soup  
2 cups Italian-style frozen vegetable combination  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
Dash pepper  
Heat oven to 400 degrees F. Bake potatoes about 1 hour or until tender. Split potatoes open.

For conventional cooking: In a 1 1/2 quart saucepan, combine soup, vegetables, cheese and pepper. Over medium heat, simmer 5 minutes or until vegetables are done, stirring occasionally. Spoon over potatoes. Serve with additional cheese. If desired, Makes 2 cups of 3 servings.  
For the microwave oven: In a 1 1/2 quart, microwave-safe casserole, combine soup, vegetables, cheese and pepper. Cover with lid. Cook on high (100 percent power) for 6 minutes, or until vegetables are done, stirring twice during heating.  
Recipe from Campbell's Soup Co.

Keep your campsite clean.