

SPECIALTY FOODS



KEELY WYGONIK

Organic, gluten-free products fill niche

Most of us eat merrily along, swallowing whatever we choose, until the doctor says - your cholesterol is too high, you've got to lose weight or you're allergic to gluten.

Finding organic, low-fat, no-fat and gluten-free products can be a chore, but Vic's World Class Market, 42875 Grand River, Novi, is trying to fill this ever-growing niche.

"Our Natural Foods section is steadily increasing as people realize we have it," said Tom Brynn, Vic's grocery manager. Vic's carries organic milk, yogurt, pasta and a variety of canned products, such as Shari's Bistro Organic Soup, which is made in Dexter, Mich.

"The frozen food section is a big draw," said Brynn. "People are looking for convenience."

An ever-growing number of specialty products is making it easier to eat well. Vic's even stocks fat-free brownie mixes.

Gluten-Free Pantry

Trying to reduce the amount of fat in your diet can be a chore, but it's even harder to give up bagels, breads and other baked goods.

"There's nothing worse than the sense of deprivation when you long for those bagels or breads you once loved and know you'll never be able to eat them again without getting sick," said Beth Hillson, founder of The Gluten-Free Pantry.

Hillson, a food writer and cooking teacher, is one of three million Americans who suffer from celiac disease and allergies to wheat and other grains.

Celiac disease, the inability to digest wheat, rye, oats, or barley, affects more than 750,000 people in the United States. Wheat allergies are only second to milk allergies in frequency.

In 1993 Hillson started The Gluten-Free Pantry, a mail order business that specializes in baking mixes containing no wheat, rye, oats or barley. Today, her 16 gourmet gluten-free baking mixes including bagels, breads, French bread/pizza, brownies and muffins, are sold by mail-order catalog, web site, and in natural food stores and supermarkets. She also offers gluten-free pasta, nearly instant soups, condiments, cereals, and ready-to-eat pretzels, crackers and cookies, vitamins, and ingredients such as white rice flour and potato starch for baking from scratch.

Some of Hillson's customers suffer from other food allergies and require products that are also lactose and corn-free. She also addresses egg allergies by offering egg substitutes. Her mixes carry the "KvH Dairy" Kosher certification.

For more information call (860) 633-3826 or visit the web site, <http://www.glutenfree.com>

Locally, the Tri-County Celiac Sprue Support group holds monthly meetings at Southfield Presbyterian Church for persons who have been diagnosed with Celiac Sprue and Dermatitis Herpetiformis, their families, spouses and friends. Meetings include recipes, ideas for children and information from professionals. Call M. Campbell (248) 477-6953 or E. Lobbastig (313) 622-8522.

Enter your favorite recipe in the Second Gluten-Free Pantry Baking Contest - Main course, snacks and appetizers, yeast and quick breads, desserts, or low-fat recipes. The winner in each category will receive a \$50 gift certificate from the Gluten-Free Pantry.

Entries must be typed and include your name, address, phone number, and category, and must use a Gluten-Free Pantry baking mix.

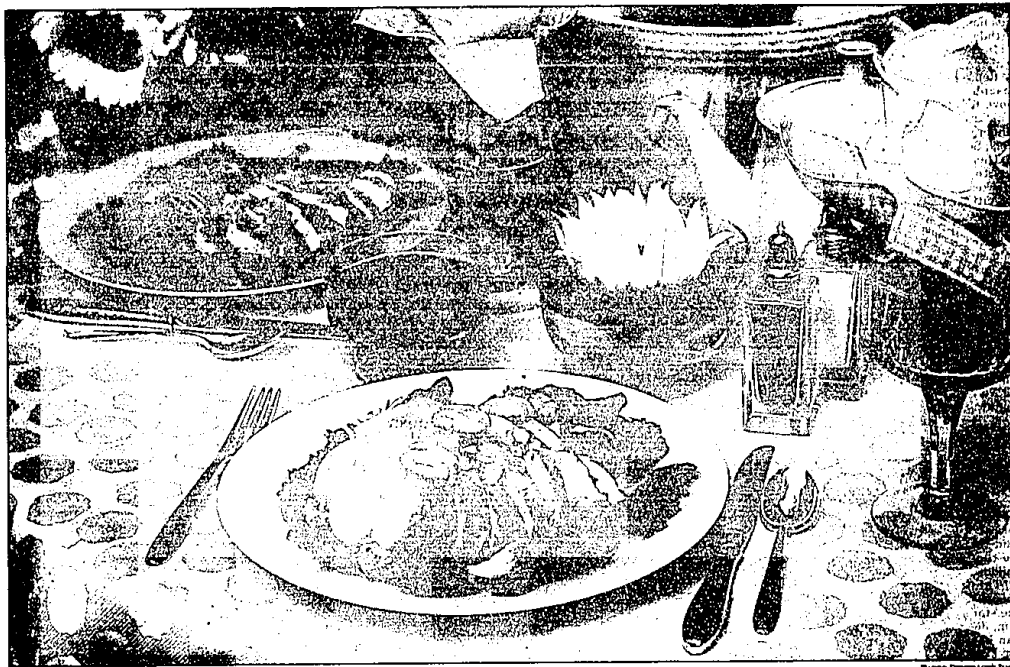
Send entries by Dec. 31, 1997 to: The Gluten-Free Pantry, Inc. P.O. Box 840, Glastonbury, CT 06033.

Send information about Specialty Food products to Keely Wygonik, Taste Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc., 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150. Look for her Specialty Foods column on the fourth Sunday of the month in Taste. Next month, Chef Zachary's spice blends.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on Wine
- Living Better Sensibly



Grand Prize Winner: Eleanor Froehlich of Rochester created this Chicken, Pear and Walnut Salad with Faygo Ginger Ale Dressing.

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BY KEELY WYGONIK • STAFF WRITER

or cooking, drinking or cleaning up, Faygo is metro Detroit's favorite elixir.

To celebrate its 90th anniversary, Faygo Beverages hosted a recipe contest, and created a recipe book with more than 90 mouth-watering recipes.

Eleanor Froehlich of Rochester was the grand prize winner, and received \$1,000, and a year's supply of Faygo pop. Her recipe - Chicken, pear and Walnut Salad with Faygo Ginger Ale Dressing is a mouth-watering combination of flavors and textures.

"I'm always surprised when I win," said Froehlich who has entered, and won many cooking contests since she retired from Groves High School in Birmingham where she taught English. "I knew the combination was very tasty."

She's been cooking since she was a youngster and started out with very simple recipes, progressing to more complicated ones. "I would try to produce something nice that looked like the picture in the cookbook or magazine," she said.

Although she cooks rather simply for herself, Froehlich enjoys cooking for friends, and goes to a lot of potlucks.

The next time you're making pancakes, try using club soda instead of water. "It makes them very light," she said. "Club soda also makes tempura batter light. Try ginger ale in place of the water in muffin recipes."

Richard Rizzio of Troy who placed first in the dessert category with Grandma's Cannoli Cake, has crossed paths with Froehlich in Frankenmuth at

Cooks pop Faygo into dishes for flavor

the Bavarian Inn where they competed in a cooking contest.

"It was a fun day," said Rizzio who is following in the footsteps of his parents Richard and Marie who also enjoy entering cooking contests. His mother was chosen to compete in the Pillsbury Cook-off twice.

Rizzio's wife Joanne is lucky. Richard does all the cooking at home. "I love to eat," he said. "She cleans up."

Most of his recipes are from his mother. "The original cake recipe called for rum syrup, I substituted Faygo Creme Soda. The flavor runs through

the cake, it was surprising, the creme soda works, it was just unbelievable."

Liko Froehlich, Rizzio started with simple recipes that required very few ingredients. "A lot of people are worried about making mistakes," he said. Growing up in Marquette, he ate a lot of his mother's mistakes, and thought everyone cooked the way she did. "My mother was always experimenting," he said.

He chose to enter the dessert competition because he loves sweets. "There's a satisfaction of making something and seeing people enjoy it," he said. Brooke Gerber of Farmington shared her unusual use for Faygo Redpop - food coloring for plaster. Gerber's an artist, and usually uses food coloring to color her plaster. One day she ran out and had her plaster mixed and ready to go. It was drying fast, and she had no time to run to the store, so Gerber took what was left in a bottle of Redpop and stirred it into the plaster.

Her emergency substitution worked - the color was a rose pink.

David Dennis of Brighton says Faygo Club Soda will take tomato juice stains out of carpeting. He adds a 20 ounce bottle of Faygo Diet Cola with his detergent to clean a load of greasy, dark-colored work clothes.

You can even take a bath in Faygo. Nanby Maniac of Royal Oak shared this recipe for "Faygo Soothing Bath Crystals" - 3 cups Epsom salts; 1/2 cup of your favorite Faygo flavor; 1/4 cup baby oil. Mix all the ingredients and enjoy your bath.

Please see FAYGO, B2

Chefs set stage for Gourmet Gala

BY KEELY WYGONIK

STAFF WRITER

Many people consider Crittenton Hospital's Gourmet Gala on Nov. 2 the start of the holiday season. The festive event features fine food, entertainment, and all for a good cause. Proceeds will go toward the purchase of an EKG Management System for the hospital's Special Diagnostics department.

Polly Paterek of Pampers by Polly Custom Catering in Rochester Hills, and Executive Chef Don Bauman of Scullions Gill & Grill in Rochester are among the 37 chefs, restaurateurs and vintners who will be offering tastes of their specialty dishes.

"It's a good chance for people to see restaurants in the area," said Bauman. "They come from all over. You get to see the restaurants at their best. We'll be cooking right there. People like to see how chefs cook and ask questions. The aroma draws them to our table."

Paterek, Bauman and other participating chefs are also competing for the Creative Presentation Award - an award for table and food presentation.

"Last year was the first year we offered the award," said Pamela Mitzelfeld who is co-chairing the event with Kathie Shollen-

Gourmet Gala

- When: 5-8 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 2.
- Where: Presented by Crittenton Hospital at the Troy Marriott, 200 W. Big Beaver Road, Troy.
- Tickets: \$75 (Friend); \$125 (Patron); and \$175 (Benefactor); call (248) 652-5345, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

barger. "Over the years the restaurants have gotten very creative with their table displays, they were putting in so much effort."

To recognize their work, Mitzelfeld who serves on the board of directors for the Paint Creek Center for the Arts, and her committee, came up with idea of a Creative Presentation Award, an original work created by a local artist. Merchant of Vino took home the prize last year.

Bob Diebold, an award-winning artist who specializes in salt-glazed pottery, created this year's award to be presented at the event at 5:30 p.m.

"Your table setting stages the event," said Paterek who worked as a nurse before starting her catering business in 1985. "It helps create the ambience."

Most of us are thinking about Thanksgiving, and busy planning our menus. "Make your table setting very easy," said Paterek. "Use lots of natural items - leaves, fresh grapes, apples, flowers - and greens from your garden, dried wood, little pumpkins, it all goes."

Different elevations, and fabric can add an interesting dimension to your buffet or

Please see GALLA, B2



STAFF PHOTO BY JOEN STOKERLAND