

Pumpkin from page B1

can range from \$1 to \$10.

Family outings

Plymouth Orchards and storyteller Debra Christian of Plymouth, in cooperation with the Plymouth Library Student Storytellers, are offering a family hayride with storytelling on Saturday, Oct. 24. The wagons go out at 7 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Along the trail there's a special location for storytelling complete with bonfire and sound system. On the way back you'll stop for cider and doughnuts. The cost is \$7 adults, and \$3 for children under 12. Reservations are required.

Spooky night at Plymouth Orchards is 7 p.m. Friday, Oct. 23. Spooky night is a family program of Halloween Storytelling inside the mill for school-aged children. Reservations are required. The program will last about two hours and include an intermission. The cost is \$4 per person. Call (734) 451-1128 for information, or to make reservations for the family hayride and storytelling, or spooky night.

On Spooky night, Christian, who just returned from the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tenn., will tell tall tales with Ron Lowe and Student Storytellers from the Plymouth Library Program. Christian works with the Plymouth Library Student Storytellers on the third Thursday of each month with librarian Donna Beaudreau. A donation will be made to the Plymouth Library Student Storytellers for these events to keep the groups thriving.

While your little ghosts and goblins anxiously await Halloween, here's a scary story you can tell them.

Jack-o'-lantern customs

"Jack" was an Irishman, and the term "jack-o'-lantern" can be traced to an 18th century Irish folk tale. According to legend, Jack tricked the devil into climbing a tree, then cut a cross symbol in trunk to trap him. When he died, Jack wasn't allowed to go to heaven because he was so mean. The devil wouldn't let him

into hell either, so Jack had no choice but to roam the earth. Feeling sorry for him, the devil gave Jack an ember to light his path. Jack put the ember inside a hollowed-out turnip to keep it glowing.

Another version says Jack made a deal with the devil and changed his mind. The devil got mad and threw a hot coal at Jack, and it landed inside the turnip he was eating.

Irish immigrants brought Halloween to America in the 1800s. Because pumpkins were so plentiful, they substituted them for the traditional turnip.

Halloween has become a frightfully fun holiday. Mom never called it trick-or-treating, she called it begging, and I always wondered why. Searching the internet for answers, I found one. Virginia Nathan, an extension technician for the Virginia Cooperative Extension, claims trick-or-treating is also an Irish custom. Farmers would go to houses in groups collecting food for poor villagers. These

who gave cheerfully were promised prosperity. Those less generous were threatened by the group.

Eating pumpkins

Pumpkins aren't just for carving, they're good to eat too.

There's more than three times the U.S. recommended daily amount of vitamin A in a half cup of canned pumpkin. Vitamin A can help you see better at night, improve weak eyesight, and build resistance to respiratory infections. It promotes growth, strong bones, healthy skin, hair, teeth and gums.

Canned pumpkin puree is available at grocery stores, but if you want to make your own for pie, soup, bread or other desserts, pick up a sugar pumpkin.

"They have less seeds, more meat, and they're less grainy," said Mary Hawk whose family has been farming in Canton since 1919. "They're smaller, fleshier, and not quite so watery," adds Emmett.



Great pumpkin: Trevor Gogola, 3 (left), and his cousin Marco Gogola 2, look for the perfect Halloween pumpkin at Plymouth Orchards.

Wine from page B1

of sunshine and cool nights yielding concentrated wines. But if this statement gets you thinking that all New Zealand sauvignon blancs are similar and that people can definitely say there's a "style for New Zealand sauvignon," there is no! Proof is in the taste of the following.

■ 1997 Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc Private Bin, Marlborough \$12 is a grassy, Sancerre-style with bright notes of grapefruit and lime.

■ 1997 Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc Cellar Selection, Marlborough \$18.50 is what Smith called "the epitome of the Villa Maria style" as a blend of the winery's top five vineyards showcasing grapefruit and lime, but complexed by partial barrel fermentation in French oak.

■ 1997 Sauvignon Blanc Reserve Clifford Bay, Marlborough \$26 is a single vineyard wine. Soils make a big impact on complexities. Additionally, Smith remarked that "sauvignon blanc flavors can be manipulated

in the vineyard, but these are always mitigated by soil and climate." Techy stuff is great, but we bet you peg this wine absolutely delicious.

Sauvignon blanc is not the only Villa Maria variety. Getting high marks from us are 1997 Riesling \$12, great with shellfish, grilled fish or any dish with Asian spices. The 1997 Private Bin Chardonnay \$16 is very tasty and a step up is 1997 Reserve Chardonnay \$31, a blockbuster with generosity and a dynamic lengthy finish. The 1996 Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot Reserve \$35 has big, ripe fruit complexities and soft, mellow finish.

Biggest producer

New Zealand's biggest producer is Brancott Vineyards. It calls Marlborough "home" and its Brancott Estate was one of the first vineyards in the Marlborough region. It was interesting to note that chief winemaker Jeff Clarke also said "We're about three years away from pinot noir

impact."

Speaking about sauvignon blanc, Clarke noted that from Marlborough, the wines show "intense varietal fruit purity, strong lemongrass, green olive, grapefruit and passion fruit characters. Hot climates destroy the heat and intensity of sauvignon blanc."

From Brancott there are two sauvignons, quite different from one another.

■ 1997 Brancott Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough \$19 that's crisp, bright and fresh with grapefruit notes.

■ 1996 Brancott Estate Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough \$27 representing a special selection of older vines. It's a kinder, gentler version of the Reserve showcasing finesse and more tropical fruit notes. Oak traces are perfectly balanced with all fruit elements.

From Brancott, we also like two 1996 vineyard-designated Chardonnays, Ormond and Renwick, both \$27.

Informative web site

Clicquot Inc. has developed an informative web site for imported wines. At the site for French Burgundy producer Bouchard Pere & Fils, www.bouchardpere.com, you can access the 1998 Bouchard Puzzler, a 12-question quiz designed to test your knowledge of the wines, history and culture of Burgundy.

Answers are located throughout the web site. If you're the lucky winner, you get a trip to Burgundy for two as guests of Bouchard. You can answer the Puzzler online or request your Puzzler via phone at (212) 888-7676, fax (212) 888-7661 or Email: clicquot@clicquot.com. Completed entries due at Clicquot by Monday, Nov. 2.

Look for Focus on Wine on the first and third Sunday of the month in Taste. To leave a voice mail message for the Healds, dial (734) 953-2047 or a touch-tone phone, mailbox 1864.

Conquests from page B1

4 medium parsnips peeled and roughly chopped

Salt and white pepper to taste

1 cup heavy cream

4 tablespoons of butter

Place potatoes and parsnips in separate pots of water enough to cover them. Bring to a boil and cook until tender. Remove and strain off water. Place both in a mixing bowl with heavy cream, mix until smooth. Add butter, salt and pepper. Adjust seasoning to Taste.

ORANGE-CRANBERRY RELISH

3 cups fresh cranberries

2 medium size oranges, sliced and seeded

2/3 cup honey

Place all ingredients in a food processor and chop coarsely. Keep refrigerated.

To assemble dish:

Place a scoop of potatoes in the center of your plate. Slice the pork 1/4-inch thick, place 5 or 6 slices fanned out on the plate. Drizzle the remainder of the maple glaze

all over the plate including the pork and potatoes. Garnish with the orange-cranberry relish and serve. Serves 4-6.

Chef's background

Chef Randy Smith, Executive Chef of Big Rock Chop & Brew House in Birmingham, is our newest Taste columnist. His cooking philosophy is "Live it. Learn it. Eat it."

Chef Randy became a Certified Working Chef through the American Culinary Federation in 1993. He has earned a reputation for culinary excellence as an active member of the Michigan Chefs de Cuisine Association where he has received numerous awards for his participation. His most prestigious honor was awarded at the World Culinary Salon (Culinary Olympics) in Frankfurt, Germany, where he won a gold medal as Sous Chef of the Michigan Culinary Team in 1992.

Big Rock Chop & Brew House, formerly Norman's Eton Street Station, is at 245 S. Eton in Birmingham. Call (248) 647-7774 for information.

Look for Chef Randy Smith's next "Cooking Conquests" column in Taste on Sunday, Dec. 20.

Share your holiday recipes

Everyone knows the best recipes are ones you share. Send us your favorite Thanksgiving recipes, don't forget leftovers, for publication on Sunday, Nov. 22.

Tell us why the recipe is your favorite. Was it passed down generation to generation?

We'd also like to hear about the first turkey you ever cooked, any holiday dinner mishaps, or stories about leftovers.

Be as specific as possible in your recipe, include can and package sizes.

If your recipe is chosen, you'll receive an apron, and newly published cookbook along with our thanks. Include a daytime phone number where you can be reached.

Send or e-mail recipes to Keely Wygonik, Taste Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc., 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, kwygonik@oe.homestead.com

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