

CHEERS FOR BEER

**CHEF JOSEPH STYKE**

Frau Blucher shares her soup recipe

It's getting a bit nippy out. You're outside pulling out, or cutting back, all the dead plants, or cleaning out gutters. Sounds like you could use a nice hot bowl of soup and piece of fresh bread as you unwind in front of the TV watching a late college or pro game.

The bread is my better half's favorite wheat bread that's easy to make, and the soup is Frau Blucher's. Yes, she's making a return in this column.

First, a little background on Mein Frau. She was born in 1902 in Schierling, Germany. Her mother was a farmer's daughter, and her father was a butcher's son.

Immigrant story

They came to the United States in 1920 where she met Otto. He had a job in iron works factory and she was a seamstress. They made it through the Great Depression, and when Otto was hired at Ford Motor Co., they started raising a family.

Many years, and nine children later, I got to meet and know her quite well. She was a great cook and told wonderful stories. She always had a beer with her dinner until the day she died.

She always made this soup from the end of October to the end of November. Don't ask me why, she would never tell me. About three years ago I found a beer that is made in Schierling that I know she would have loved to have here.

Schierlinger Brauerei is owned by one of Germany's largest established noble families, Thurn Und Taxis who devised the first postal service in 1490 to service the Holy Roman Empire, which was neither holy nor Roman, but that's another story.

Schierlinger Roggen Beer is made of malted rye as the bulk of the mash and malted barley and crystal malt. A wheat beer yeast is used so you get that spicy, clove aroma. It's a nice reddish brown with a big head (pour carefully) and a nice fruity spicy taste with a slightly bitter finish. The body is lighter than its appearance which makes it go great with this rich soup.

FRAU BLUCHER'S BACON, CARAWAY SOUP

- 4 ounces double smoked slab bacon, cut into cubes
- 2 large onions (medium dice)
- 3 1/2 cups crushed tomatoes
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon dry thyme
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons caraway seeds
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 4 ounces Muenster cheese, shredded

Fresh ground black pepper to taste

Sauté bacon in a medium size pot over medium heat until all the fat is rendered out and the bacon is brown and crisp.

Remove from pot and place on a paper towel. Add onions and thyme, bay leaf, salt and caraway seeds and sauté until onions are almost clear stirring so they don't burn, for about 5 minutes.

Turn off heat and cover and let onions sweat for 15 minutes. Add tomatoes, sugar, and raise heat and simmer 15 minutes while stirring. Add stock and simmer 10 minutes.

Fish out the bay leaf and throw it away. Turn off the heat and let soup cool. With a blender or food processor, puree soup in batches until smooth, and toss back into the pot.

Add the bacon. Raise the heat to simmer. In another small pot heat heavy cream to almost a simmer and add cheese, stirring until cheese melts and

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LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Cheers for Beer
- Vegetarian Holiday Tasting Extravaganza

HOMECOMING QUEEN IS A SMART COOKIE



Lean teen

LIBBY PRYSBY

LOSES THIRTY

POUNDS THE

HEALTHY WAY



STAFF PHOTO BY TON HOFFMEIER

Good advice: (Photo above) Sandra-Dalka Prsby, left, has passed on her successful weight-loss ideas to her daughter, Libby. (Top left photo) Libby (left), 17, Birmingham Groves High School 1998 Homecoming Queen, with her very proud sister, Emily Prsby, 15.

BY LIBBY PRYSBY
SPECIAL WRITER

I didn't like what I saw in the mirror. My hips were getting larger than I liked. My stomach wasn't flat. My size 12 jeans were getting tight.

As much as I didn't like the reflection in the mirror, I was agghast with the number on the scale. It showed I was definitely overweight. It was time for action.

That was a year ago. I was beginning my junior year in high school and decided I wanted to end my high school experience trim and fit. And I wanted to lose weight the right way - the healthy way.

Mom, Sandra Dalka-Prsby, had preached (something I sometimes didn't like) the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise as the only way to lose weight. And she should know! She has lost 170 pounds over the past four years.

Although I was proud of her success, it was also somewhat intimidating. It made me feel like a failure. During the time she was losing weight, I had gained weight. But that was about to change.

My mom offered to help me in my weight loss efforts. However, that's not what I wanted. I wanted

to do it myself, although I have to admit I did learn a great deal from her by observing her eating and exercise habits.

My initial efforts included eliminating sweets and high-fat foods from my diet. In addition, I began to exercise at a health club a few nights a week.

These small changes in my lifestyle weren't too difficult to follow. However, while I felt better, the numbers on the scale weren't going down very fast.

My mother reminded me that a "slow but sure" attitude was needed. That's what worked for her. Because this philosophy worked so well, "Slow But Sure" is the title of her book, which hits bookstores this January. However, I am not my mother. I did want sure results, but I wanted them faster.

In January, I upped my efforts. I began to work out at least one hour each day. I altered my diet to include more fruits and vegetables, and less red meat. I also reduced my food portions.

Every diet change I made I did with health in mind. Many of my peers have dieted and lost weight, but they have done it in drastic ways such as fasting. They don't look healthy and I don't think they are. I wanted to lose weight, but I

also wanted to remain healthy.

A few months into my accelerated program I began to accompany my mom on grocery shopping trips, and began to handle some of the cooking duties at home.

While grocery shopping I learned to read food labels. This helped me select foods lower in calories and fats. With mom's encouragement, I tried healthy foods that I hadn't eaten before. I've expanded my taste buds and found new favorite choices. I now love Brussels sprouts!

I am also proud of my efforts in the kitchen. I have become quite skilled in preparing healthy meals, and mom likes this.

Picking out healthy recipes in cookbooks, magazines and newspapers has added lots of new choices to my files. I've made some really good dishes.

All these efforts have paid off. I started this school year - my senior year - minus 30 pounds. My size 12 clothes have been replaced by a new wardrobe of size 6s and 8s. Now that's an added benefit of losing weight.

Another benefit of my weight loss is that Richard Simmons asked me to be in his new infomercial, which will be aired beginning in December. I got to spend some

time in New Orleans with Richard and was pampered by having my hair and makeup done. I felt like a really special teen.

Teenagers can lose weight in a healthy way. The way I did. What it takes is motivation and effort, and you have to be consistent.

You can't eat fruits, vegetables and lean meats one day, and then stuff yourself with pizza and other high fat foods for the next five days.

Also, teens need to participate in regular exercise. Each day I walk at least three miles, either outside or on a treadmill, or exercise 30-40 minutes on a machine that provides a cardiovascular workout. I also do weight training for toning at least three times a week.

While I don't plan to lose more weight, I am continuing the regular exercise and good eating habits. I like the way I look and feel, and I want to stay this way. I'm hooked on living healthy.

■ In Michigan 1 out of 3 children is overweight.

■ At any given time, 50 percent of teens are either on a diet or thinking of going on a diet.

■ Sixty percent of teens do not exercise regularly.

American Dietetic Association and the American Council on Exercise

Little goblins will love these pumpkin mini muffins

BY KEELY WYAGONIK
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When August rolls around, Kiersa Peerbolte of Canton starts itching for Pumpkin Mini Muffins.

"You want to turn on the oven again, and start baking," said the mother of three children ranging in age from 1 to 7. "I make them for church, and preschool. They're just so easy, and kids love 'em."

Peerbolte recently made Pumpkin Mini Muffins for Donna Prenzl, a family friend visiting from Australia.

"We were talking about Thanksgiving and pumpkin pie, and she said 'you really eat gourds for dessert?' She had never experienced pumpkin pie or Thanksgiving, and has only eaten pumpkin as a baked vegetable, similar to the way we serve squash," explained Peerbolte. "I served the muffins, and she said, 'oh they taste lovely.' I love that word, lovely."

Peerbolte's mom found the recipe years ago, and modified it by adding frosting. Kiersa modified it further by baking them in mini muffin tins instead of on

cookie sheets. Either way works fine.

When Peerbolte's in the kitchen cooking, her kids aren't far away. "All my kids are big helpers," she said.

PUMPKIN MINI MUFFINS (OR COOKIES)

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup cooked or canned pumpkin
- 1 egg
- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon each cinnamon, baking soda, baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts, optional
- 1 cup solid shortening
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cream sugar and shortening. Add pumpkin and mix well. Add egg and vanilla, beat until creamy. Combine all dry ingredients and gradually add, beating well after each addition. Stir in raisins and

nuts by hand.

For mini muffins: Grease mini muffin tins with spray (such as Pam) and fill 1/3 full with batter. Bake 14-15 minutes, allow to cool in tins. Do not over-fill muffin tins, as muffins will fall apart if allowed to "crown" and create a large muffin top.

Remove from pans when cool, and place on wax paper. Drizzle frosting on top. Frosting will thicken as it cools. Yield 6 dozen small muffins.

Frosting:

- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 3 tablespoons stick margarine
- 1 pound powdered sugar

Heat all ingredients except powdered sugar until dissolved and smooth. Add enough powdered sugar until spreading consistency. Frost while frosting is still warm, thinning with one teaspoon of milk if it cools and becomes too thick.

Send recipes for consideration to Keely Wygonik, Taste Editor, 30251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.