

## 2 UNIQUE



CHEF KELLI LEWTON

## Planning, theme, keys to graduation parties

It would seem this year we have had more than our normal amount of calls regarding graduation party information. Many people are planning on producing their own parties but are seeking a little help from catering companies and restaurants to supplement what they are doing.

This year, I am also in the ranks of hundreds of parents planning a graduation party. Even with all my experience in party planning, there is certainly an element of stress when you are planning one in your own backyard.

I mean how many really special days do you get to plan for in a lifetime? Graduation is certainly up there with the top five. Planning is the key to success with your very special graduation day!

Clearing times and dates with friends and family well ahead of time is a wise idea.

**Some fun ideas might include picnic foods to be served cold so that you can prep ahead and not be fussing over food instead of enjoying with your guests.**

You may find many of your guests may arrive at the same time if the time frame is too narrow. If space is an issue, you may want to break up the arrival of your guests by having a larger window of opportunity for your listed party hours.

You may even consider sending out two sets of invitations, perhaps family and close friends at the beginning and then school friends a couple hours later. Don't forget to get those invites out at minimum three weeks before your party date!

A graduation is a wonderful occasion to do something fun and creative. To achieve a good theme you do not have to be too clever. Take some time and talk to your graduate, if they like summer cookouts and being at the lake perhaps a beach party with some fun props like beach balls, inexpensive colored plastic sunglasses, fun tropical drinks in bright plastic cups with festive straws can accent the occasion.

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Of course it is important to have virgin varieties of beverages for your entire underage guest list. What are your child's interests? Theater, music, sports or accomplishments that your child has achieved can be a good starting point.

The theme could be as simple as playing off their high school or upcoming college colors. The first step is to pick an idea and build on it.

Food is certainly an important key factor in any event. Most menus will be influenced by other factors such as location, time of day, length of party and theme.

Often I will have a client tell me "Well it is just a drop by sort of thing and we don't need real food, just snack items." I don't know if I agree with all that.

Unless your are specifying on your invitation, snacks, or dessert, I believe most people make the natural assumption that you will be serving food of substance that they might call lunch or dinner.

The last thing you would want is someone leaving your party hungry, especially if you are serving alcohol.

Some fun ideas might include picnic foods to be served cold so that you can prep ahead and not be fussing over food instead of enjoying with your guests.

You can always supplement whatever you make with a few purchased items to help alleviate work as well as

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Too good: Crystal Corte (left) and Megan Garnham, Novi High School 17-year-olds, have some non-alcoholic drinks served by Tbo Chez bartender, Jeannette Burns.

## Alcohol not needed at these grads' parties

By LANA MINI  
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Fresh squeezed lemonade with real sugar is a perfect drink for Libby Parks — the president of Garden City High School's Students Against Drunk Driving.

Even easier, a fresh bottle of water with a twist of lime is fine too. The 17-year-old student said one thing is certain regarding the beverages that will be served at her graduation party next month — only adults will be permitted to sip on the wine coolers. Parks has been involved with SADD since her sophomore year and plans to major in special education and psychology. Her feelings against drinking and driving are strong.

Her boyfriend, Tim Varner, is vice president SADD at Garden City High and there will be no alcohol at all at his graduation party.

At their school last year, about 60 students participated in SADD. This year there's at least 160 teens who pledge not to drink alcohol at prom or graduation parties. Still, that doesn't mean they won't have interesting beverages.

Smoothies, Slurpees, juice and sherbet punches — all without alcohol — were suggested by local students and chefs.

A graduation party is a celebration of K-12 success, but it's also a kickoff into adulthood. Emily Darnbrook, of Livonia, has grand plans for her future and she won't let alcohol ruin them, she said. She plans to attend Albion College where she'll major in political science.

Darnbrook is SADD president at Farmington High School and said she and her family already discussed what they'll serve at her graduation party.

"We're sticking with the basics too," Darnbrook said. "Pop and water, but I love Shirley Temples with cherry grenadine and Sprite, so maybe we'll do something like that too."

Darnbrook said she believes many students will stay sober at prom and graduation because this year fourth- and fifth-graders wrote the Farmington High School seniors pleading with them to not drink and drive.

"The letters really work," Darnbrook said. "And, we can have a good time without alcohol."

Keeping it fun  
A refreshing strawberry daiquiri with real fruit — minus the booze — would please most students, said Redford Union High School senior Ashley Kinzel. She's not having a big graduation party, but an elegant dinner with family instead. A virgin daiquiri or soda suits her fine. Kinzel plans to major in secondary education and helping students say sober is an important issue for her, she said.

Linzi Roberts hopes her family will rent a Slurpee machine for her big party.

It's better than alcohol of course, the Farmington High School student said, and it would add a fun twist to the family bash. If she can't convince her parents on that, she'll still create a unique event by making cherry cola for her guests.

"Not the canned stuff," Roberts said. "I mean real cherry cola with cherry syrup."

The ambitious student is already a law clerk and has brainstormed fun ideas for her party. There won't be a

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## Putting a little pop in non-alcoholic drinks



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HOFFMEYER

**Creative flair:** Marco Conte, owner and chef of Marco's Fine Dining in Farmington and his daughter Linzi Roberts have several ideas for interesting alcohol-free drinks for high school graduation parties.

### LINZI'S FAVORITE - CHERRY COKE

crushed ice  
1 can (12 ounces) cola  
2 teaspoons maraschino cherry syrup

Divide ice between two tall glasses. Mix carbonated beverage and syrup. Pour over ice.

### ASHLEY'S FAVORITE - STRAWBERRY DAIQUIRI

Yield: 6 Servings  
1 small can limeade  
1 package frozen strawberries or fresh quart strawberries  
1 quart Seven-Up  
ice

Put 1 can limeade, 1 can Seven-Up, strawberries and ice into blender. Blend all ingredients together. Makes one batch.

For weaker drinks use 1/3 can limeade, 1 can Seven-Up, 2/3 box of strawberries and lots of ice. Again, blend in blender.

More drink recipes and how to make the watermelon punch bowl (left), Page B2

## The world is his dandelion

### Vegetarian author/forager has no problem finding food

By J.M. HIRSCH  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

The only time most people forage for food is when the cupboard is bare and they find themselves scrounging through the refrigerator, struggling to turn a cin of peas, moldy bread and ketchup into dinner.

"Wildman" Steve Brill prefers to do it the real way. This self-taught foraging expert heads back to nature daily to find his food. And when he goes out to eat, he isn't bringing back burgers and fries.

He's feasting on plants most people consider weeds.

Now he's ready to teach you to do it, too. His new book, *The Wild Vegetarian Cookbook* (Harvard Common Press, 2002, \$29.95), contains more than 500 recipes using plants you're not likely to find in a grocer's produce section. He lists more than 160 of such wild plants in detail.

Brill is talking about milkweed (toasting it with pasta), acorns (serving them refried, similar to beans), and purple-spore puffball (a type of mushroom served fried and baked with dairy-free

Parmesan). For Brill, the world is full of food. Most people don't realize that many of the plants they try so hard to rid their yards of are not only edible, but can be turned into delicacies with little effort.

Foraging for food may not be common in the United States, but Brill says people around the world rely on it for stocking their pantries with seasonal greens and other goodies.

"Anywhere but America," he said. Recently, talking by phone from his home in Mamaroneck, N.Y., "The Germans, the Italians, the Chinese, the

Indians. Any culture... where TV and entertainment aren't the only ways to live, foraging is still common."

Brill, who has been vegan since 1990, got turned on to foraging back in 1979.

"I was bicycling, riding past a park in Queens, New York, near where I lived, and there were these ethnic Greek women picking something in the park," he said. "I asked them what they were doing and it was all Greek to me. But I came home with grape leaves and I was excited to have something I could

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