

# Suburban Life

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(7)

## Best of Show Blue ribbon baker shares cake recipes

By Loraine McEllish  
staff writer

Helen Tabka has entered her family's favorite cakes, pies and special desserts into Michigan State Fair contests off and on since 1955. She never failed to win at least a couple of blue ribbons, and generally walked away with many more.

Somewhere along the line she says she just lost count of the culinary honors she's accumulated, but the 1984 competitions marked a banner year for the Farmington Hills baker.

Her blue ribbon winner, Macadamia Nut Cake, took Best of Show and the J. L. Hudson Award, which means it will be on the menu in all 15 Hudson restaurants for the year.

And more blue ribbons came for her poppy seed cake, her marble cake and her chocolate mousse pie, which was "just about everything I entered," she said.

"I grew up with a mother who wouldn't let me in the kitchen so I was on my own starting from scratch as a young bride," she said.

Confidence in her ability as a cook, and most particularly for her cakes and desserts came from her husband, who before his death, cajoled her into entering her first contest.

That State Fair entry brought her

first blue ribbon, which led to other culinary awards from Crowleys, from Fleischman's Yeast, and a number of her recipes selected to be printed in the Michigan State Fair Cookbook.

She selects her recipes with care and adheres to one rule.

"The first time I try any recipe I obey it to the letter," she said. "Only after that do I try any substitutes, eliminate something or add something, whether it is a cake or spaghetti salad or pierogie."

In the case of the macadamia nut cake she substituted the Hawaiian-grown nut for the black walnuts the recipe called for, and says that was not unusual. Other substitutes she's chosen have been just as successful, whether she was baking for a contest entry, or to please her husband, her seven children or 15 grandchildren.

MOST OF TABKA'S baking is confined to producing something special for family events, or special occasions for friends. And as a longtime member and now president of Botsford Garden Club, she's generally called on to make something for club affairs that call for special desserts.

She had one bad experience with mass production she would not like to repeat.

"I just promised to make too many

cookies and didn't know what I was getting into," she said. "My wrist was so strained from pressing them I had to get a wrist band to finish the job and I don't think I'll ever commit to something like that again."

But she enjoys sharing recipes and shares two with area readers. One is for the Best of Show Macadamia Nut Cake and the other for Red Devil's Food Cake, a blue ribbon winner from last year and what she called her family's "all-time all-time favorite."

### MACADAMIA NUT CAKE

1 cup butter, softened  
2 cups sugar  
3 eggs, separated  
1 cup buttermilk  
1 tsp baking soda  
2 cups flour  
1 tsp vanilla  
1 1/2 cup chopped macadamia nuts  
3 ounces flaked coconut  
1 tsp cream of tartar

In large bowl of electric mixer, cream butter; gradually add sugar and cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add egg yolks one at a time beating well after each addition.

In small bowl combine buttermilk and baking soda, stirring until soda dissolves. Beat buttermilk mixture into creamed mixture alternately with

flour. Add vanilla, nuts and coconut, stirring until well blended.

In separate large bowl beat egg whites and cream of tartar until stiff peaks form; fold into prepared batter. Pour into greased and floured nine-inch pans. Bake at 350 degrees 30 minutes or until cake tests done. Cool in pans on wire rack 10 minutes. Remove from pans and cool completely. Frost with Buttercream Frosting. Makes about 12 generous servings.

### BUTTERCREAM FROSTING

1 cup milk  
2 tbsp cornstarch  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup butter, softened  
2 tsp vanilla

In small saucepan combine milk and cornstarch stirring until cornstarch is dissolved. Cook over medium heat stirring constantly until mixture thickens. Remove from heat and scrape into small bowl of electric mixer. Add sugar, butter and vanilla. Beat at high speed until smooth and fluffy.

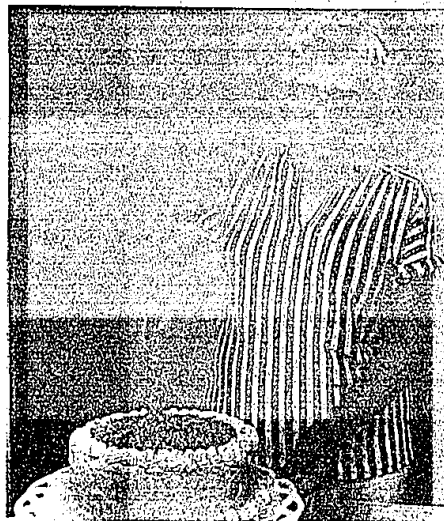
This makes about three cups frosting. This amount will barely cover the cake. If you like frosting, use 1 1/2 recipes.

### RED DEVIL'S FOOD CAKE

1/2 cup shortening  
1 cup sugar  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp vanilla  
1 1/2 cup cold water  
1 1/2 cup cocoa  
2 1/2 cups cake flour  
1 cup cold water  
3 egg whites  
1 1/2 cup sugar  
1 1/2 tsp soda  
1 1/2 cup cold water

Sift shortening to soften. Gradually add 1 cup sugar, creaming together until light and fluffy. Add salt and vanilla. Combine 1/2 cup cold water and the cocoa. Beat until creamed mixture. Add flour to creamed mixture alternately with 1 cup water, beating well after each addition.

Beat egg whites until soft peaks form. Fold meringue into batter. Combine soda and 1/4 cup cold water; stir well to dissolve soda. Stir into batter mixing thoroughly. Bake in two well-greased and floured paper-lined (wax) 9 inch round pans in moderate oven (350 degrees) for 30 minutes or until done.



Helen Tabka, Michigan State Fair's Best of Show winner in the culinary arts department, prepares to cut into her Red Devil's Food Cake, a blue ribbon winner last year, and her family's all-time favorite dessert.

## Restaurant initiates new kind of fund-raiser

Bill Knapp's Restaurants offers a chainwide program to benefit local nonprofit organizations and groups. Those eligible to participate in the Bill Knapp's Community Support Program include PTAs, booster clubs, church groups, service clubs and other civic organizations.

As an alternative to traditional fund-raising, the program allows groups to select any item as a goal, collect points when visiting a Bill Knapp's, then redeem these points for the item when the needed amount has been accumulated.

To enroll in the program, a group may complete a registration form identifying the organization and the

goal. Points are awarded on the amount spent on a visit; \$1 equals one point. Guests receive points when requested to participate in the Bill Knapp's Community Support Program by collecting points in any of the 54 Bill Knapp's located throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.

Popular items that have been selected as goals are audio-visual equipment, playground and exercise equipment, medical aides and computer software. Upon selecting a goal, each group will have one year from registration to reach its goal and redeem the points needed to receive the items.

For complete details, contact a local Bill Knapp's.



## It's U.S. Constitution Week

The first volume of the DAR Library Catalog was the gift this year to Farmington Community Library from Quakertown Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, in observance of U.S. Constitution Week. Tina Theeke (left), adult service librarian, said the fast-growing and well-used genealogy collection now housed in the li-

brary's Farmington Hills Branch is due in large part to the chapter. The volume was given on behalf of the chapter by Sandra Love who also prepared the U.S. Constitution display that will remain on display in the library through the week.

## Westside singles mark 2nd year

The singles who have been gathering for Friday night dance parties in Roma's of Livonia will mark the close of their second year with an anniversary dance Sept. 28.

Westside Singles is operated by Ed Stempelen, runner, racket ball player and swimmer, who doesn't think a quiet evening by the fire is a good way to spend a Friday night, at least for singles.

Friday evenings, he said, "Are for getting out and meeting other people." Stempelen is getting them out, about

600 of them now every other Friday, and from as far away as Jackson and Ulster, he said.

"All of the dances are in Roma's because there's plenty of room there. What we offer is a huge dance floor, good parking, low drink prices, good entertainment, good fun and no membership fee. Just come. Just have a good time," he said.

Admission is \$4. You can sit in the bar all night and eat popcorn if that suits you. The hard thing is getting people to get there in the first place

and most of them socialize on their own, but I still work at convincing some of them to just go at it and meet someone new," he said.

THE 36-YEAR-old bachelor is a former DJ and entertainer who works the night shift as an experimental technician. His experience in running a singles group, he said, came from eight years of being a member of other singles groups.

The first step was stamping out a dress code to attract "the right kind of crowd." The second was hiring local DJs from "most of the radio stations around town to run the music and the entertainment for the evening."

He's clearing anywhere from \$100 to \$150 on each dance party, after he's paid for the food, the stage effects, the hall and the flowers for each of the first 200 women who walk through the doors at each of the parties.

Westside Singles started out as a hobby for Stempelen, and it still is, he insists, even though the goal now is to own his own hall before the end of 1985.

For information about next season's schedule of dances or the anniversary dance, call 583-3129.

### Free from tyranny

The framers of the Constitution of the United States believed in the right to live and work — free from tyranny. Quakertown Daughters of the American Revolution remind citizens that we must be vigilant to protect these freedoms. Last rights may never be regained. Let us celebrate this Constitution Week by resolving to be better informed, more alert citizens. Read your Constitution.



LET US ARRANGE A BOUQUET FOR YOU  
THURSDAY OR FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 OR 21  
10 A.M. TO 3 P.M., IN OUR GIFT SHOP

Welcome autumn with romantic Paradise Flowers, garden-fresh blossoms of silken-soft polyester that retain their "just-picked" freshness throughout the year. Expert floral designers and arrangers will be here to assist you with your selections and to fashion a bouquet in your own vase, or one from our collection. We show one such arrangement to give you an idea of the extensive choices on hand, in a full range of colors. Flowers, each 2.50 to \$12.

## Jacobson's

We welcome Jacobson's Charge Card or The American Express® Card.  
We are now open until 6 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday.  
Thursday and Friday until 9.

The Farmington Players 1984-85 season is a combination of comedy, music and drama.

The season opens with the macabre thriller "Frankenstein" by Tim Kelley, which is scheduled to run weekends Oct. 5-7. The bawdy and zany British farce "Habeas Corpus" by Alan Bennett, will be given a limited showcase presentation from Nov. 30 to Dec. 8.

The classic comedy, "You Can't Take It With You" by Moss Hart, is set to open Feb. 1. The Broadway hit musical "Applause" by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, rounds out the season from April 26 to May 18.

Season tickets for either the three-play or four-play season are now available at prices that vary \$4 to \$50 per individual ticket, depending on the performance night and the play. To provide the best combination of available

dates for season ticket subscribers, no individual tickets will be sold until after Sept. 15.

The Farmington Players Barn Theatre, one of only two community theaters operating in a barn in Michigan, is located on 15 Mile Road between Orchard Lake Road and Farmington Road. It is a unique setting for all types of plays.

The players are always looking for new members who have an interest or background in theater. A special membership meeting begins at 8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 15, in the barn to acquaint any prospective members with the group.

Any interested persons may attend the meeting, as well as call Jodie Rosati, at 478-5632.

For information on season or individual tickets, call Emily McWhewey, 626-5091.