

Group names Leopold Schaeli chef of the year



NEELY WYGONIK

Congratulations to Leopold Schaeli, certified master chef, and former executive chef at the Machus Red Fox Restaurant. He was named Central Regional Chef of the Year by the American Culinary Federation, Inc. Schaeli is currently serving as a chef instructor at Schoolcraft College in Livonia.

The American Culinary Federation is the largest professional organization for cooks and chefs in the nation. It is comprised of

more than 20,000 members in 281 chapters throughout the United States and the Caribbean. Schaeli, one of four regional winners, will go to the American Culinary Federation National Convention and have a chance to become the national Chef of the Year. Tune in WKYZ-TV Channel 7 for Chef Keith Farnie's Adventures in Cooking, 2 p.m. Saturday, May 29. He'll take a behind the scenes look at Disney's Epcot Center with special guest Chef Keith Keogh. Hudson's Westland Chef Geno Vlar's Southwest Pan Barbecue was chosen a winner at a competition which challenged Hudson's chefs to create delicious recipes

using products from the gourmet foods department. Customers had a chance to sample the dishes and voted for their favorite recipe. More than 600 customers tasted the recipes and chose the winning dishes. Here's one of the winning recipes: Southwest Vegetarian Enchiladas, created by Kari Larson at Southland.

SOUTHWEST VEGETARIAN ENCHILADAS

- For sauce
- 3 tablespoons minced onion
- 3 tablespoons minced green bell pepper
- 3 tablespoons minced celery
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 ounces drained canned tomatoes
- One 16-ounce jar Lone Star Salsa

- For the filling
- ¼ cup thinly sliced onion
- 1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 green bell pepper, thinly sliced

- 3 tablespoons El Paso Chili Company — Cactus Salsa
- ¼ cup peanut oil
- 8 six-inch blue corn tortillas (substitute yellow if not available)
- ¼ pound Monterey jack cheese shredded
- ¼ pound cheddar cheese, shredded

To make the sauce, sauté vegetables in olive oil until soft. Add tomatoes and salsa and simmer for 20 minutes.

To make the filling, sauté the sliced vegetables in ¼ cup peanut oil until softened. Transfer with slotted spoon to paper towels to drain; when drained, place in bowl and mix with cactus salsa.

Add remaining oil to skillet, heat to moderate and cook tortillas one at a time for 5 seconds to soften them.

Fill with some of the vegetables and 3 tablespoons cheese. Roll and top with salsa — top with remaining cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Serves 8 as a first course or 4 as

an entrée. Here are some tips from Betty Crocker.

Improve a cover for a charcoal grill by placing heavy-duty aluminum foil over the food and the grill, slanting it to the side of the grill. Covering food while grilling helps to ensure even cooking, and meats will be more moist than if they had not been covered.

If honey has crystallized, warm it in a microwaveable glass or plastic container for ¼ to ½ minutes on high until honey is fluid and crystals have melted.

Keely Wygonik is Taste and Entertainment editor of The Observer & Economist Newspapers, 953-2105, fax 591-7279.

Dishes made with exotic produce uncommonly good

See related story "Aliens Land in Produce Section," on Taste front.

SUNCHOKES SALAD

- 1 pound sunchoke
 - 1 cup sliced celery
 - ½ cup thinly sliced green onions, including tops
 - 2 hard-cooked eggs, sliced
 - 5 slices crisp bacon, crumbled
 - ½ cup mayonnaise
 - 2 tablespoons sweet pickle relish
 - 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Peel sunchoke with a vegetable

peeler. Cut into ¼-inch slices and steam on a rack over hot water. Let cool.

In a large bowl, combine sunchoke, celery, onions, eggs and bacon. Stir together mayonnaise, relish and mustard. Pour over sunchoke mixture and mix well. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate for about 4 hours. Garnish with parsley.

TOMATILLO, DRIED CHILI, AND CILANTRO SAUCE

- 2 large, dried New Mexico chilies

(Note: You can substitute other dried chiles)

- 1 cup boiling water
- ¾ pound fresh tomatillos, husked and rinsed
- 2 very large garlic cloves, sliced
- 1 medium-large bunch cilantro (3-4 ounces)

Stem and seed chiles, break up pods. Combine in a blender with the boiling water. Let stand for 15 minutes.

Add tomatillos and garlic to saucepan. Separate cilantro stems and leaves. Chop stems and add to

pan. Bring to a simmer, then lower heat and cook covered, until tomatillos are soft, 10-20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Transfer contents of pan to blender or processor. Add cilantro leaves to container; whirl to a coarse puree. Cool completely. Refrigerate or freeze.

SAUTEED NOPALES, PEPPERS, AND CORN

- 2 large red bell peppers
- 1 medium onion
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 or 4 ears of small summer corn

½ pound fresh firm nopales, deponged, cut in ½-inch dice

Finely minced cilantro or parsley

Halve peppers, then remove seeds and stems. Cut into ½-inch squares. Cut onions the same size. Cook both vegetables in butter in a heavy pan over moderate heat until just softened.

Shuck corn and cut from cob (about 1½ cups). Add nopales and corn to peppers and onion. Stir over high heat until vegetables are cooked through, but firm-tender,

about 5 minutes. Sprinkle with herbs and serve at once.

All of the recipes are from "Uncommon Fruits and Vegetables, a Commonsense Guide," by Elizabeth Schneider. (Harper and Row Publishers, \$20).

Here's how to bake yellow-ripe plantains. Pierce with a fork in several places. Do not peel. Place on a baking sheet and bake in a 400 degree oven until tender when pierced, about 1½ hours. Pull back peel and season to taste with butter, salt and pepper. Eat from skin. (Note: You may grill plantains also.)

Don't crack up: here's how to properly store, freeze eggs

AP — True, eggs come naturally packaged in their own shells. But, like any meat, poultry or dairy product, fresh eggs must be stored properly to prevent spoilage.

Whole eggs in the shell: Purchase only refrigerated eggs and put them in your refrigerator promptly after getting home.

They should not be out at room temperature for longer than 30 minutes. Store them in their cartons because eggs absorb refrigerator odors easily. Put the carton

in the coolest part of your refrigerator, usually near the back. The door, which often has a special area for eggs, is not the coolest part and is not the best place to store eggs.

You can refrigerate fresh eggs for up to five weeks after the packing date, although they are freshest if used within a week. To find the packing date, look for a number from 1 to 365 stamped on the carton. Number 1 represents Jan. 1 and number 365 represents Dec. 31.

Shelled whites and yolks: Once out of their protective shell, the yolks and whites become more perishable. To store raw egg whites, refrigerate them in a tightly covered container for up to four days. Refrigerate raw egg yolks, covered with water, in a tightly covered container for up to two days.

Hard-cooked eggs: Refrigerate hard-cooked eggs in their shells in their cartons for up to seven days. The cooked eggs are more susceptible to spoilage than raw eggs be-

cause they have passed through the warm "danger zone" that bacteria thrive in. You can also freeze raw whole eggs, whites and yolks, but not in their shells.

To freeze whole eggs: Break them into a bowl and beat just until blended. Then freeze them in a tightly covered freezer container. If freezing several eggs in one container, indicate the number of eggs on the label.

To freeze raw egg yolks: Add ½ teaspoon salt or 1 ½ teaspoons

sugar or corn syrup to every four yolks. The salt or sugar will help prevent the yolks from gelling. Freeze them in a tightly covered freezer container.

When freezing raw egg whites: Place each one in a different compartment of a clean ice-cube tray. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and freeze until solid. Transfer the egg white cubes to a tightly covered freezer container and freeze.

Thaw frozen eggs in the refrigerator overnight. Use yolks or

whole eggs immediately after thawing. Egg whites can sit at room temperature for up to 30 minutes after thawing. Allow them to stand will give them better volume upon beating. Be sure to thoroughly cook any eggs that have been frozen.

- Raw egg (in shell): one week optimum, five weeks maximum.
- Raw yolks (unshelled): two days.
- Raw whites (unshelled): four days.
- Hard-cooked eggs: one week.

New ways to enjoy peanut butter

See Larry Janes' Taste Budz column on Taste front.

PEANUT BUTTER FRUIT DIP

- ½ cup yogurt
 - 1½ tablespoons peanut butter
 - 2 tablespoons orange juice
 - 2 tablespoons lime juice
 - ¼ teaspoon honey
 - 1 teaspoon freshly grated ginger
- assorted fresh fruit, sliced

Combine yogurt with peanut butter, orange juice, lime juice, honey and ginger and mix well. Serve with assorted mixed fruit. Makes 4-6 servings.

PEANUT BUTTER DRESSING FOR SALADS

- ½ cup plain yogurt
- ¼ cup chunky peanut butter
- ¼ cup orange juice
- 1 teaspoon fresh grated ginger
- dash ground cumin
- dash paprika
- 1 bunch fresh greens

Whisk yogurt with peanut butter, orange juice, ginger, cumin and paprika. Mix until smooth. Spoon dressing lightly over greens. Toss to serve.

SPICY CHINESE CHICKEN

- 2 cups chicken, cooked and shredded
- 1 cucumber, pared, seeded and sliced
- 1 scallion, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ¼ cup creamy peanut butter
- 3 tablespoons water
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1½ tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon peanut oil
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon hot pepper sauce

In a medium bowl, mix together the chicken, cucumber, scallion, ginger and the garlic. In a small bowl, mix together the peanut butter, water, soy sauce, vinegar, oil, sugar and hot pepper sauce. Pour sauce over chicken dish, toss gently. Serve hot or cold. Makes 4 servings.

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