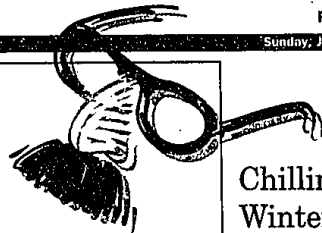


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HOME COOKING



KEELY WYGONIK

The best recipes are ones you share

The very best recipes are homemade and shared with family and friends. Some are holiday traditions such as Auntie Flo's Fruit Salad, which is a must on Peggy Peck's Thanksgiving dinner. Auntie Flo, who lives in Bedford, sent her treasured recipe in response to our request for a "dish to pass" on Thanksgiving, which appeared in the Nov. 23 issue of Taste.

Auntie Flo's Fruit Salad is delicious. So good that after reading the recipe in our paper, Jean McDonald of Livonia cut it out.

"I made it for Christmas," said McDonald who loves to cook. "Everyone makes cookies so I thought I would do something different."

She made Auntie Flo's Fruit Salad, divided it into 10 little, clear cocktail glasses, put them in bags, and took them to bingo to share with friends.

"Everyone loved it, and asked for the recipe," said McDonald.

Garlic Guru



Tom Reed has earned the reputation "Garlic Guru" for sharing his garlic recipes and tips. He will be at the Spring Home & Garden Show Thursday-Sunday, Jan. 29 to Feb. 1, at Novi Expo Center, (248) 737-4478. On Wednesday, Jan. 28, he'll teach a 7 p.m. cooking class at Vic's World Class Market, 42875 Grand River, Novi. The class costs \$25 per person, call (248) 305-7393, Ext. 150 for reservations and information.



Sniff this?

"Fresh garlic is nature's antibiotic," said Reed. "Start your day with a garlic shooter, 2 cloves of garlic, minced fine, put it in a small glass of grapefruit juice, and chug it all at one time. I don't get cold or flu."

Reed said he believes garlic can make this country healthier, and he's on a mission to prove it. "I really think I can have an impact," he said explaining studies have shown garlic is an effective weapon for fighting heart disease, many forms of cancer, lowering cholesterol, and strengthening your immune system.

Sharing a recipe is one of the nicest things you can do for someone. Reed said he enjoys sharing garlic recipes, because it's his way of helping people lead healthier lives.

"When was the last time someone asked you for a recipe? Will you share it with our readers?"

Please send your "Recipe to Share," along with your name, address, phone number, and best time to call. Be sure to tell us why this is your favorite recipe to share.

We're looking for every kind of recipe including salads, soups, snacks, sandwiches, casseroles, entrees and desserts. We'll interview some of the cooks who shared our favorites, and print their recipes, with tips for success, in the Sunday, Feb. 22, issue of Taste.

If your recipe uses canned goods, be sure to specify what size can in the ingredient list. Include sources for hard-to-find or unusual ingredients.

Send your recipes to me - Keely Wygonik, Taste Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36951 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or fax them by calling (734) 691-7279.

We're confident "Recipe to Share" will be a popular new feature that you'll look forward to reading every month in Taste. Don't be shy, we

Please see HOME COOKING, B2

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on Wine
- Living Better Sensibly

Have fun banishing winter blahs

SANDRA DALKA PRYSBY • SPECIAL WRITER



Dinner guests: Jim Uzelac joins guests (from left) Jack and Kathy Dawson of Rochester Hills and Debbie Friedman of Bingham Farms.

Guests never quite know what to expect when they get an invitation from Jim and Pauline Uzelac's Bloomfield Hills home for a party. What they do know - the Uzelacs always plan something that is sure to banish the winter blahs.

One recent gathering involved six couples, including the hosts, and an invitation for dinner. The guests knew this wasn't going to be just an ordinary evening when they were greeted by strangely and colorfully garbed Jim and Pauline, both teachers in the Waterford School District. They also knew something was amiss when they were shown to the dining table.

Each guest was handed a menu guaranteed - "to fill you up" - "to stagger your imagination" and "give you heartburn." Listed were 28 "fonda" and guests were asked to select four items for each of the four courses, no duplications were allowed.

There were however, a few problems. Careful inspection of the dining table revealed no eating utensils. Also, the "menu" gave guests no indication of what exactly they were ordering.

"What on earth is 'Lead Up Deluxe'?" asked Debbie Friedman of Bingham Farms. Her husband, Larry, asked the same question about "Sniffles Stopper."

Host Jim, serving as waiter, was mum. No help was given with selections. Nor was hostess Pauline in attendance. She was hidden behind curtains covering the opening to the kitchen.

"What the heck," said Jack Dawson of Rochester Hills as he and his wife, Kathy, dutifully filled in their course selections. Other guests followed their lead with chuckles and a sense of adventure.

One by one, each guest was served their first course choices. The "Sniffles Stopper" turned out to be chicken noodle soup, a great first choice, but only if the dinner selected was "Diggin Deep." That turned out to be a spoon. Another good first course choice was

"Greek Love." That was a feta cheese salad. However, it helped if guests who chose this also ordered the "Lead Up Deluxe." That was a fork.

Guests watched in wonder as each diner was served their selections. And each watched in awe as table mates found creative, and not so creative ways, of consuming their selections without needed utensils.

Soup bowls were picked up and the contents consumed by drinking; salads became finger food. This was acceptable for as stated on the menus, "Emily Post's rules of etiquette will not apply to any of the courses served tonight."

The merriment continued around the table as each course offered other surprises. "Chip off the Old Block," was a toothpick, a peanut and a "Box of Glory" (tauhi-flower) or "Midnight Special" (delbaso and sauerkraut) or "Squealer's Fright" (roast pork) was ordered. Utensil sharing was a must, and guests were accommodating for "Chop Chop" (Chinese salad) and "Water Wonders" (seafood salad).

While some guests ate heartily during the meal - unknowingly they made "good" selections - nobody was allowed to leave hungry. After the fourth course, the Uzelacs invited everyone into the kitchen to help themselves to a buffet of all the choices.

"We love having unusual events," said Pauline. "We want our guests to have evenings to remember, mixed with a lot of fun and good people."

According to Jim, they design their parties so all the guests are sure to get to know one another.

"You really got to know the person sitting next to you, couples are never allowed to sit next to each other, if you have to share eating utensils, washed, of course. Also, this dinner took almost three hours, enough time for the guests to become friends."

The Uzelacs are now planning their next extravaganza, but won't give a hint of the theme. "But it will be different, and hopefully, lots of fun. If it's anything like past events, guests won't be disappointed."

Jim and Pauline Uzelac share Entertaining Tips

- Always invite some new and interesting individuals to add zest to "the same old crowd."
- Pick a theme, such as "A Winter Picnic," "Mexican Night," "The Roaring '20s," or "A Croquet Party." Ask guests to dress accordingly, and plan the menu and decorations around the theme.
- Want an unusual theme? Use things as products of the season such as peaches or apples and have a peach or apple festival. In winter, consider hosting a soup or chili tasting. Follow through with appropriate decorations such as everything peach-colored for peach festivities, or a cowboy motif for the chili event.
- Plan a menu that can be prepared ahead of time so you can be with your guests. Although their most recent party, Banish Winter Blahs, required a variety of food offerings, some were served straight out of the container such as olives and cottage cheese, others were made ahead of time - gelatin dessert, tossed salad and chicken soup. The roast pork, fried rice and pierogi were prepared just before guests arrived.
- Start the evening, especially one with many guests, with a "mixer" game so that everyone mixes. At one of their parties guests were taken, individually, to a separate room where an object such as a paper clip, safety pin or rubber band was attached to them. The object of the game was for guests to discover which object was on which person and where it was located. "The evening was spent with everyone looking people over. In the process they got to know one another," said Jim.
- Stay within your budget. Whether formal or casual, the Uzelacs decide ahead of time how much they're going to spend and plan accordingly. "Otherwise you can go overboard on the food and/or decorations," said Pauline.
- Think "party" when visiting garage, estate and close-out sales. The Uzelacs found a wonderful deal on large sea shells, which, in turn, were used for an evening out for dinner at a restaurant.
- Have fun. Try something unusual. Once the Uzelacs supplied their friends with Groucho Marx glasses (plastic noses attached), which they wore for an evening out for dinner at a restaurant.
- Put as much planning and effort into a party for your friends as you would for a birthday party for one of your kids. In fact, according to Pauline, "A Kid's Party" is always fun for adults.

Chilling out at Winter Freeze Chili Cook-off

BY KEELY WYGONIK
STAFF WRITER

Competition at the fifth annual Winter Freeze Regional Chili Cook-off and Salsa Contest in Allen Park Jan. 18 was hotter than a habanero, which is the hottest chili, having 30 to 50 times the firepower of jalapenos.

Yet, the 38 cooks competing for \$650 and the chance to advance to the World Championship Chili Cook-off in Reno this October were cool.

Gary and Laura Ray of Livonia stirred a simmering pot of chili next to Diane Adamski of Bedford whose late husband, Jim Adamski, was the reason they started competing in chili cook-offs.

"We were friends for years, he could cook a pot of chili," said Gary remembering his friend.

The Rays have been competing for nine years. "It's fun, it's like a family reunion," said Gary. "We hug and kiss, we share ideas."

"There's a lot of good competition here today," said Laura. She wasn't kidding.

Of the 38 cooks competing in this International Chili Society sanctioned event, 23 have been to the World Cook-off, and six of the 23 placed in the top five in previous world competitions.

Georgia Weller of Bloomfield Hills, one of the six, won the 1996 World Cook-off, but didn't place in the top five at this event.

She cooked beside her husband, Jim, who placed third in the chili cook-off and second in the salsa contest. When the winners were announced, Georgia was among the first to congratulate him.

"We're happy for each other when one of us wins," said Jim who has also competed at the World. "We've cooked in 35 states. It's fun, that's the absolute only reason we do it. The people are great."

"This cook-off is respectable," said Gary Ray. "These people are big shooters, it's an honor to be here. I'm going to taste everyone's chili."

Marilyn Frederick of Farmington Hills was the head chili judge. Her brother Frank Klancnik, who has also competed in the World, was chairman.

"Frank has a good reputation," said Frederick explaining the success of the Winter Freeze Regional Cook-off. "A lot of the cooks know him. There aren't many cook-offs in early winter. A bunch of cooks are coming to cook, and want to compete early to quality for the World."

The participants came from Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, and as far away as Reno, California, and Colorado. Of the 38 competing, 13 were from out of state. Bob Hall of Illinois placed first.

"We had space for 41 cooks, but three didn't show up," said Klancnik who grew up in Farmington Hills.

"We turned 20 cooks away. It was heartbreak, we're looking for a bigger hall for next year. It's a regional cook-off, which qualifies you for the world championship and \$25,000 prize, and it's fun."

Please see COOK-OFF, B2



Prize-winning cook: Jim Weller of Bloomfield Hills placed third in the Winter Freeze Regional Chili Cook-off with his "Macktown Chili."