

TIDBITS

Bake-athon will lead to some happy birthdays



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Sweet Blessings is inviting the community to see what joy a little bit of flour, sugar and eggs can bring to a child.

The non-profit organization, which makes and delivers birthday cakes to deserving children, will celebrate its first anniversary with a bake-athon.

Beginning at 9 a.m. Feb. 28 and finishing at 9 a.m. Feb. 29, volunteers will bake 24 cakes in 24 hours at Maxwell Street Presbyterian Church, 180 East Maxwell Street. Employees from Mr. Taxi will help deliver the cakes to children.

Sweet Blessings creates specialty birthday cakes for children ages 5 to 14 who are facing a life-threatening illness or poverty. As of Jan. 31, Sweet Blessings has baked and decorated 200 cakes for children in Central Kentucky. The cakes are hand-crafted in a special shape or design especially for each child. Anyone interested in participating in the bake-athon or making a donation may email Ashley Gann at Ashley@sweetblessingscakes.org. Go to Sweetblessingscakes.org.

Send us your soups, stews

Winter soups and stews are one-pot meals that are so easy to prepare. We'd like to print some of your best recipes. Send your soup and stew creations to Sharon Thompson at swthompson@herald-leader.com, or at Lexington Herald-Leader, 100 Midland Avenue, Lexington, Ky. 40508.

Wine in Winchester

Winchester is having its annual Wine About Winter event from 5 to 8 p.m. Thursday. Wine tastings and appetizers will be offered by 15 merchants in the downtown area.

Participating wineries are Harkness Edwards, CCC Trail, McIntyre's, Chuckle Berry, Acres of Land, Lake Cumberland, Rose Hill, Best and Generation Hill. Call Winchester First at (859) 737-0923.

Think of spring crops

Three Springs Farm in Carlisle is getting ready for early-spring plantings and taking orders for Community Supported Agriculture, or CSA, shares.

Early-spring crops are available April 18 to May 9 for \$80. The main season runs 20 weeks, from May 16 to Sept. 24, and costs \$400. A summer half-share is every other week for \$220. Call (859) 289-2562 or go to Threespringsfarmky.com.

He takes the cake title

In January, Cameron Tinker of Tinker's Cake Shop won first place in a cake decorating challenge at The Art of The Cake in Cleveland. He competed with cake decorators from around the country before a live audience. The competitors were given two hours and could use only cake and buttercream icing for their creations.

Tinker's Cake Shop also has won the Best of Weddings 2012 title through TheKnot.com for the second time.

"This is a title awarded to wedding professionals by brides who used their services," co-owner Tracie Tinker said. The shop is at 317 West Maxwell Street. Call (859) 252-9636 or go to Tinkercakeshop.com.

More TIDBITS, C4



Check out Sharon Thompson's blog, *Flavors of Kentucky*, for recipes and lots of food talk.

LIFE + FOOD



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You can make cupcakes with ready-made mixes, but if you make the frosting from scratch, the recipient will taste the love.

SPREAD THE LOVE WITH FROSTING

Making it from scratch is worth the time and effort

By Sharon Thompson

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A heart-shaped cake or a dozen decorated cupcakes for Valentine's Day can be baked in minutes with ready-made mixes.

But if you really want to show your love, put a little extra time and effort into the project by making the frosting from scratch.

Opening a can of frosting and spreading it on a cupcake is fine if you're pressed for time, but it takes only a few more minutes to whip up a buttercream frosting or an old-fashioned boiled icing like grandma used to make.

For decorating, you'll want to use a vanilla or chocolate buttercream. Tracie Tinker, co-owner of Tinker's Cake Shop on West Maxwell Street, advises against skimping on ingredients.

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"We use unsalted sweet cream butter and the finest powdered sugar (12X) for a light and fluffy buttercream that's not too sweet and melts in your mouth."

The terms *frosting* and *icing* are often used interchangeably. Frosting usually is thick enough to spread on a cake, and icing is generally thin enough to be drizzled or poured over it, according to *Crazy About Cakes* by Krystina Castella. Both are made primarily with confectioners' sugar mixed with liquid and flavorings. Sometimes, eggs and butter are added; some are cooked, others are not.

Buttercream is made from butter, eggs and sugar, and it can be flavored with melted chocolate, extracts, liquor, zests and fruits. Glazes, which are similar to icings but thinner, are shiny toppings and fillings that are brushed, poured, drizzled or dripped onto cakes. Thin



Buttercream frosting requires only a few ingredients and isn't hard to make. You can adjust the consistency as needed.



Frosting may be dressed up with food coloring and sprinkles. The pros get fancy with fondant.

glazes soak into the cake for additional flavor.

Chocolate ganache is the ultimate cake or cupcake topping. It's made from melted chocolate and heated cream. It's poured over cakes to create a smooth surface and is always impressive.

Professional cake decorators add fancy touches with fondant, a pliable, moldable confection made from sugar, water and cream of tartar. After it's cooked to the soft-ball stage, it can be rolled out into sheets, cut into pieces and used to top and fill cakes.

To decorate your homemade cupcakes, you'll need a few supplies: Decorating bags, or throw-away parchment triangles,

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Peel, slice, squeeze and experiment with citrus fruit



PHOTOS BY GLENN KOENIG | LOS ANGELES TIMES

Lazy Mary's lemon tart is made with a single Meyer lemon that is puréed into the filling before it's baked.

By Russ Parsons

Los Angeles Times

Considering how much citrus there is this time of year, there aren't nearly enough ways to use it. Unlike oranges, tangerines and grapefruit, recipes don't grow on trees.

So once you've tired of peeling all that fruit and eating it out of hand, what do you do? Here are a few ideas.

One of my favorite ways to serve citrus is in a fruit salad. This isn't your grandma's mixture (or maybe it is, if she was a really good, slightly fussy cook), and it's really too simple to justify a full recipe.

Peel and slice the fruit into wheels — the more types the merrier, so you'll get a nice combination of colors and sizes. Then just dress them with a simple syrup made of sugar cooked with water until it's clear. Use

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Tangelo pudding is good with liquor-flavored whipped topping.