

Greatest Cocoa Cake Comes From Tioga County

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff
HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)

—“I came prepared for three fatalities,” said Sandy Johnson of Tioga County.

Instead, Sandy was proclaimed the first-place winner of the Greatest Cocoa Cake Contest at the Pennsylvania Farm Show on January 9, for which she won a weekend trip for four to her choice of the Hershey Resort and Conference Center of the Hershey Hotel.

“My kids say that I am a pessimist,” Sandy said. That was why she prepared two cakes and made a 9-inch three layer cake, which could be cut down to regular size in case it crumbled on the trip. Just in case, Sandy also brought two bowls of extra frosting and chocolate roses and leaves for decorating.

To her relief, the cake that Sandy decorated at 3 a.m. that morning survived the four and a half hour drive from their home. She arrived at the Farm Show within 15 minutes of the entry deadline.

Sandy and her husband Charles live on a 400-acre Pennsylvania dairy farm that borders New York.

Sandy taught herself the art of cake decorating after the birth of her first child. Now five children and one grandchild later, Sandy has a small cake decorating business that she operates from her home.

Sandy said that she has been using the chocolate cake recipe for years. For the visual appeal, Sandy said, “I just started decorating and this is what I ended up with.”

The cake had a mass of chocolate roses and chocolate covered leaves, which were real rose leaves brushed with a mixture of melted chocolate chips and chocolate candy wafers.

“My cake uses real dairy products,” Sandy stressed.

So, also does the cake of second-place winner Dolly Longenecker, who was grand prize winner of last year’s state contest. This year, Dolly baked a different cake than last year. Dolly, who also comes from a dairy farm,

baked a Chocolate Mint Cake that earned her a \$50 prize. It had been the winner at the Manheim Community Farm Show.

Third place and \$35 went to Julie Raup for her Cocoa-Nut Layer Cake. Entries in the competition needed to win a blue ribbon at the county level before they could qualify for state competition.

According to Beverly Gruber, secretary-treasurer of the Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs, there was a total of 1,118 cakes entered in 94 county and local fairs.

Judges for the state competition were Lynn Stallworth, New York culinary writer; Michael Schnader, Allentown; Martene Firestine, secretary for Penn Agri-woman; and Dianne Hassinger, cook from Millersburg.

Here is the first-prize cake recipe.

SANDY’S CHOCOLATE CAKE

1 cup butter
3 cups lightly packed brown sugar
4 eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla
¼ cup cocoa powder
3 teaspoons baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
3 cups minus 6 tablespoons flour

1½ cup sour cream
1½ cup boiling water
Cream butter, add brown sugar. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat on high speed until light and fluffy. Beat in Hershey’s cocoa, baking soda, and salt. Add flour alternately with sour cream. Blend on low speed until blended. Add water and stir again.

Pour into three greased 9-inch pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes. Cool in pans for 10 minutes before removing. Cool and frost with your favorite butter-cream frosting.



Sandy Johnson held this prize-winning cake on her lap during the 4½ hour trip from Tioga County.



Last year’s cake-baking champion Dolly Longenecker placed second this year.

Half-and-half contains between 10 and 12 percent milk fat — more than milk and less than cream. It can be substituted in recipes calling for light cream, which has at least 18 percent milk fat, but not for heavy cream, which contains at least 36 percent milk fat.



“In my job, I have to eat chocolate cake and apple pie. It’s a tough job,” said Sec. of Agriculture Boyd Wolff with obvious pleasure.

Second Try Earns Blue Ribbon Apple Pie Honors

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)

—“Nothing is as American as Mom and apple pie,” was the theme of the Blue Ribbon Apple Pie Contest held at the Farm Show on January 9.

Out of 54 entries, Pamela Paulsell’s All-American Green Apple Pie was pronounced the winner of the \$100 prize.

Pamela said that she got up at 4 a.m. to bake the pie. She traveled from her home in Chester County, holding her freshly baked pie, and reached the Farm Show Complex at 8:30 a.m. Judging began at 10 a.m.

“It’s the same recipe that I entered last year, but it didn’t even place then,” said Pamela, who advises others to keep trying even if they don’t succeed at first.

Since she did not win at the state level last year, Pamela admits to being tempted to change her recipe, but family members urged her to keep the same recipe, “because it tastes great and a different set of judges might like it.”

It was good advice as Jim Harvey, one of the judges, said that Pamela’s pie “was one of the finest

apple pies I’ve ever seen or eaten.”

Other judges were Betty Groff, cook book writer and owner of Groff’s Farm Restaurant, Lancaster; Brad Flich, operations manager for Z107; and Kirsten Miller of JDK Catering, Harrisburg.

Each of the judges chose three out of the 15 pies they tasted. Then the pies of the 12 finalists were again tasted and awarded points by each judge.

Judging was based on overall appearance, crust flavor, color, and texture, filling flavor and texture, and creativity.

To be eligible to enter the state apple pie contest, entries must first win a blue ribbon at a county fair. Pamela won hers at the Unionville Community Fair.

Second place and \$60 went to Charlotte Glenett of Middleburg for her Rhu-Cran-Apple Pie.

Third place and \$40 was earned by Debra Todd of Graysville. Pennsylvania Apple Marketing Program awarded the premiums.

Here is the recipe for the prize-winning pie, which is a Betty Crocker recipe with Pamela’s “touches.”

ALL-AMERICAN GREEN APPLE PIE

Select Crispin apples (a Pennsylvania hybrid apple that is green and sweetly tart, crisp, and outstanding for eating and baking). Pare and slice the apples, thinly.

Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons lemon juice

½ cup granulated sugar
½ cup brown sugar
¼ cup flour
1 teaspoon cinnamon
Dash salt

3 tablespoons butter
Mix the dry ingredients and blend in butter. Spread over apples while preparing the crust.

Pie Crust

Makes 2 9-inch crusts
2 cups unbleached flour
1 teaspoon salt
¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons vegetable shortening
1½ cups cold water

Blend dry ingredients and shortening. Slowly add a little water to mix dry ingredients, just enough for easy handling. Split the dough in half and roll out the bottom crust. Add the apple filling. Roll out the second crust and place over top. Crimp and seal. Brush lightly with milk and bake at 425 degrees in preheated oven for 50 to 60 minutes. Protect edges of pie crust with foil during the first 30 minutes of baking.



Sec. of Agriculture Boyd Wolff congratulates Pamela Paulsell, champion of the Blue Ribbon Apple Pie Contest.

Homestead Notes