

Sam Decorates Happy Cakes To Relieve Stress

JINNY WILT
Adams Co. Correspondent

If you're looking for a cake with a bit of whimsy you want to talk to Sue Ann "Sam" Seiple about her hobby.

"I can't do a serious cake," said Sue Ann, who says people won't know who she is unless she's referred to as Sam, as she stood by a table loaded with cake forms, instructions, catalogs, and cupcakes she had made as samples.

After all her marriage to Sterling Seiple — the couple lives in Red Lion — on Halloween prompted a wedding cake of black and orange.

Describing herself as "hyperactive" Sam explains that baking a cake is her way of dealing with life's stresses.

"Just give me my oven," she exclaims.

Sam got interested in decorating cakes about nine years ago after friends first became involved. Today she has 90 percent of the Wilton forms. A storage shed holds much of her collection.

Grabbing a box from a nearby table, she is delighted to tell all that she has just gotten a Winnie the Pooh cake form for which she waited 3½ months.

"My grandson, Darien Seiple, almost 5, is a Mickey baby, Grammy had to make everything Mickey Mouse. My granddaughter, Desiree McKensy, 2, is Winnie the Pooh," she said.

"Winnie the Pooh will be baked for my granddaughter for Christmas, but he'll be dressed as Santa Claus. Instead of holding his

honeypot, he's going to have a Christmas bag of presents."

In many cases the cake figures can be interchanged and decorated to fit whatever the event. Instructions often show the various cakes that can be made from one form, but the baker still has the option to be creative.

The oldest Wilton cake form Sam has is of a sneaker and dates back to 1967. She found it at a yard sale in Ocean City. The newest, of course, is Winnie the Pooh, a 1998 pan. Each pan is dated.

The pans are made either in the United States or Korea but all are licensed by Wilton Enterprises of Woodridge, Ill., she said, and most of hers come from yard sales.

"I collect them because they're just a pleasure. I buy them because I collect them. I don't know whatever got me liking a cake pan," she said, stroking an aluminum cake pan of a rabbit.

"I can't do serious cakes, 'cause I can't get serious enough to do them. If it's happy I can do it," she said.

She prefers baking her cakes for children because they're not as critical as adults. And children get to pick colors and flavors because it's their cake.

She's quick to point out that cakes made from "scratch" work best in the pans. While she does use pre-mixed cakes, she said they will often fall, where the ones from "scratch" don't.

The length of time it takes to decorate one of the cakes depends on the amount of detail, but because of her experience, Sam said,



Cake baking and decorating are a hobby that relaxes Sue Ann Seiple of Red Lion. The snowman, house and cupcakes are just a few of the desserts she makes using cake batter made from "scratch." Pre-mixed cakes tend to fall, she said.

she can finish a cake in about one-half hour.

"The secret to decorating a Wilton Cake is they use a star design and the closer you get the stars — the bigger the tip — the faster it goes, the smaller the tip, the longer it goes. I use all different sizes of tips to do every cake for a reason. It gives the cake dimension."

The cake most often requested from Sam is Hershey's Cocoa Cake. The recipe for it follows.

BANANA CAKE

1 box yellow cake mix
1 box instant banana pudding
4 eggs
½ cup vegetable oil
½ cup milk plus 1 teaspoon vinegar

1 teaspoon baking soda
3 large bananas mashed (use very ripe bananas)

Mix ingredients and pour into ungreased tube pan. Bake at 350 degrees. Test in about 40 minutes.

CARROT CAKE

2 cups sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
4 eggs

Combine sugar and oil. Add 1 egg at a time mixing well in between. Then add next ingredients one at a time to above mixture.

1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2¼ cups all-purpose flour
3 cups grated carrots

After mixing all ingredients bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

HERSHEY'S COCOA CAKE

1¼ cups all-purpose flour
2 cups sugar
¼ cup Hershey's cocoa — not Nestle

1½ teaspoons baking soda
1½ teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs
1 cup milk

½ cup vegetable oil
2 teaspoons vanilla (Watkins white double strength is the only vanilla Sam will use)

Mix all ingredients well. Then add 1 cup boiling water. Mix well again. Bake 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

*Test cupcakes after 20 minutes.

Following is the frosting recipe she uses on most cakes.

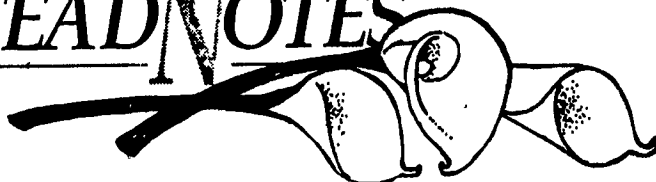
WILTON SNOW WHITE BUTTERCREAM ICING

¾ cup water
12 cups confectioners' sugar
1¼ cups white vegetable shortening
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon white vanilla
¼ teaspoon butter extract

*You can add 2 tablespoons meringue powder if you're planning to make icing flowers for decorations.

Following are some of her "scratch" cake recipes.

HOMESTEAD NOTES



Sue Ann Seiple of Red Lion displays her most recent cake form of Winnie the Pooh. She plans to bake the cake for her granddaughter for Christmas, dressing the bear as Santa Claus. She has about 90 percent of the cake forms available from Wilton Enterprises of Woodridge, Ill.



Sue Ann Seiple, a Wilton cake form collector, puts icing on a cake shaped like a house. It is one of the many cake designs she bakes. Baking cakes is a hobby she's been involved in for the past nine years.

