

What's Cookin' At Lebanon Area Fair?

LOU ANN GOOD
Food And Family
Features Editor

LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) — Some of the best bakers in Lebanon County and surrounding areas competed for top placings in the Lebanon Area Fair contests for apple pie, brownies, chocolate cake, and quick bread.

Only the first place in each category is eligible to advance to top competition at the state level, where substantial prizes are awarded. For this reason, many of the same contestants enter year after year in search of that elusive win.

Some contestants, such as Belinda Myers, Dallastown, and Dorothy Martin and her daughter Deb Martin of Conestoga, enter as many as seven fairs to qualify for state competition. It's their dream to sweep all categories.

Some people use the same recipe year after year, but not Belin-

da. She said, "You've got to come back with something different every year."

She and her daughter Katie have garnered numerous winnings from local fairs and have placed first at the state level several times. "I love to bake. And I'm going to keep entering until I hit it with the apple and shoo-fly pies," Belinda said.

The Martin mother-and-daughter team also change their recipes. Both have won numerous times at the state level.

At Monday's competition, Belinda took first place in the chocolate cake competition; Dorothy Martin, second; and Melissa Graeff, Palmyra, third.

American Honey Queen Renee Blatt, Lebanon, baked the best apple pie. This was her first time placing in the pie competition. Coming in second was Connie Knauss, Myerstown, and Dorothy Martin placed third.

Renee said that she called up Kelly Miller, a Manheim beekeeper, for advice on baking a prize-winning pie using honey. Kelly gave her several pointers that Renee adapted into her recipe. One of these was cutting leaf-shapes from the pie dough to decorate the top. Renee also used the recipe for her grandmother's crust.

"My grandmother watched me make it to make sure I did everything right, but she didn't help me," Renee said.

Neither did the two taste it, since it was the first time she tried the recipe.

The brownie and chocolate cookie category is reserved for youth. Rachel Siegel, Lebanon, placed first; Andrea Dice, Fredericksburg, second; and Katherine Hess, Myerstown, third.

New this year was the quick bread contest. Pennsylvania's Simply Delicious program sponsored this contest to show creative ways to use at least one cup of state-grown vegetables in the quick bread.

Belinda Myers also swept the quick bread recipe with her Korny Korn Bread. "I got up early, picked corn, cut it off the cob, and added this and that," Belinda said of her secret for success.

Deb Martin placed second with her bread that contained an unusual ingredient — lavender, a herb.

Third place went to Linda Siegel, Lebanon. Since the Siegels raise produce to sell and are members of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers, it's only natural that Linda continually incorporates the produce she raises into her recipes. She was especially proud that her 11-year-old daughter Rachel won the brownie contest her first try.

Lori Dice said that her sister had won at Lebanon County last year. Both entered this year's competition. It was the first time Lori entered and she was pleased to place above her sister.

Here are some of the recipes entered. First-place recipes are not printed until after state competition.

Heavenly Hash Brownies

- 1 cup butter
- ¼ cups unsweetened cocoa
- 4 eggs
- 1¼ cups sugar
- 1½ cups all purpose flour
- 2 cups chopped nuts (choice)
- 2 teaspoon vanilla

Creamy cocoa icing follows:
 10-ounce package marshmallows

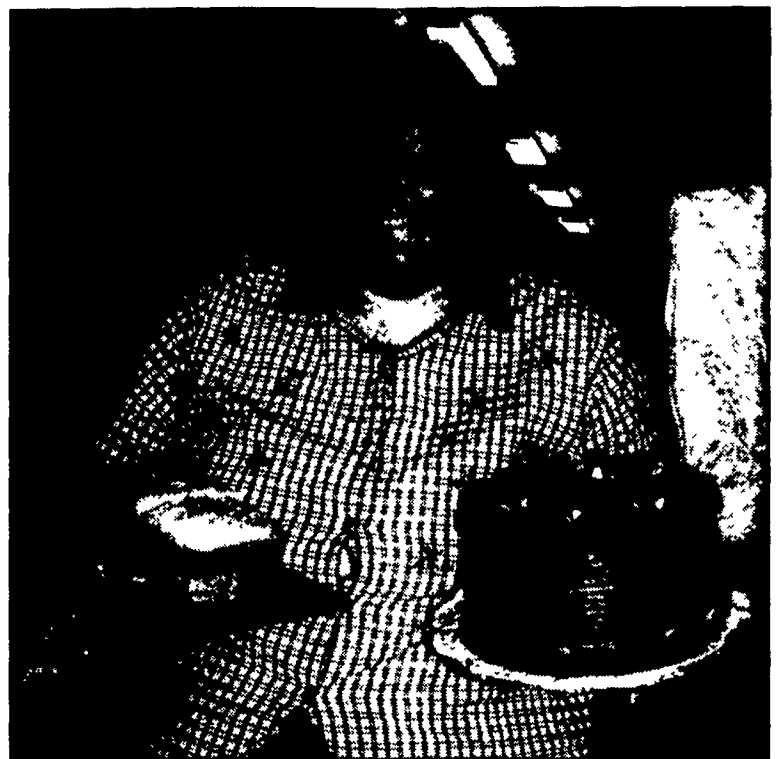
- Icing:**
- 6 tablespoons butter
 - ¾ cups evaporated milk
 - 6 cups powdered sugar
 - ¾ cups unsweetened cocoa

Preheat oven at 350 degrees. Grease 13 by 9 pan. Melt butter in sauce pan. Stir in cocoa. Remove from heat. Beat in eggs, sugar, add flour, nuts, vanilla. Spread even in pan. Bake 20-30 minutes. Do not over bake it. Prepare topping by adding all icing ingredients in medium sauce pan over medium heat. When brownies are done, pour marshmallows over brownies right away

and cover with hot top icing to your liking. Let cool completely and then cut.

Yield 16.

Andrea Dice



Belinda Myers hit the jackpot with her chocolate cake and quick bread entries. Lebanon was the first fair of seven that Belinda usually enters items.



American Honey Queen Renee Blatt holds the prize-winning apple pie that includes honey — of course. Renee also garnered ribbons for numerous other entries such as sweet and jalapeno peppers, sunflowers, and swine. She raises 30 varieties of sunflowers for extension research.



Incorporating creativity and good flavor into their baking projects paid off for Connie Knauss, Dorothy Martin and daughter Deb Martin.

Candy Apple Pie

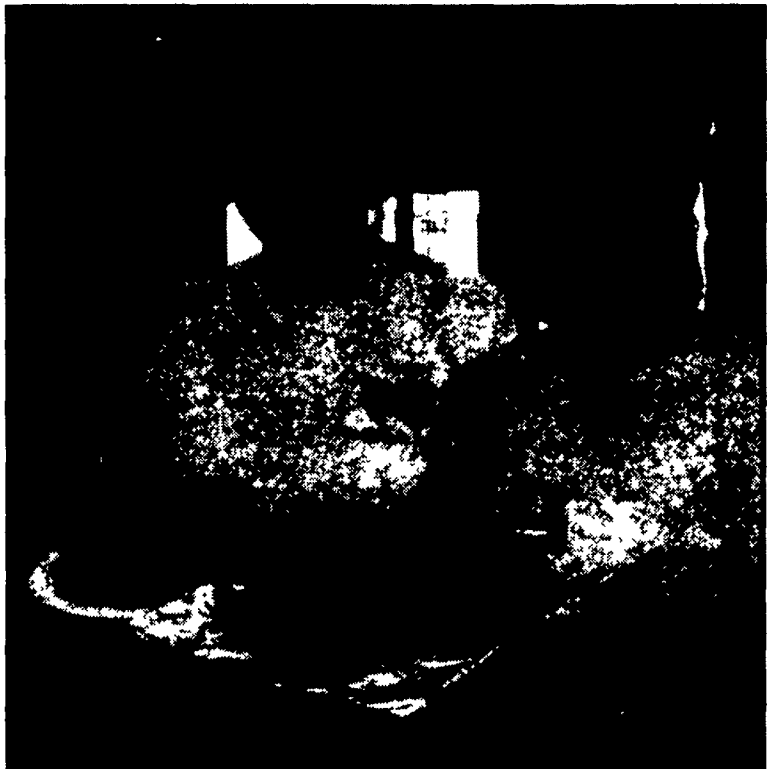
- 6 cups thinly sliced peeled baking apples
 - 2 tablespoons lime juice
 - ¼ cup sugar
 - ¼ cup all purpose flour
 - ½ teaspoon cinnamon or nutmeg
 - ¼ teaspoon salt
 - Pastry for double crust pie (9 inches)
 - 2 tablespoons butter
 - Topping:**
 - ¼ cup butter
 - ½ cup packed brown sugar
 - 2 tablespoons heavy cream
 - ½ cup chopped pecans
- In a large bowl, toss apples with lime juice. Combine dry in-

gredients, add to the apples and toss lightly. Place bottom pastry in a 9-inch pie plate and fill with apple mixture. Dot with butter.

Cover with top crust. Flute edges high and cut steam vents.

Bake at 400 degrees for 40-45 minutes or until golden brown and apples are tender. Meanwhile, for topping, melt butter in a small saucepan. Stir in brown sugar and cream. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat and stir in pecans. Pour over top crust. Return to the oven for 3-4 minutes or until bubbly. Serve warm. Yield: 8 servings.

Connie Knauss



Culinary expertise runs in the Siegel family. Linda and her daughter Rachel achieved first-place wins at Lebanon Area Fair, qualifying them to advance to state competition.



Lebanon Fair Queen Jennifer Watson shows off a quilted skirt she designed and entered in the fair. The 17-year-old is homeschooled and hopes to become an inner-city teacher for middle school students. "That's the age they are most influenced by others," Jennifer said of her desire to guide them into positive actions. The fair queen competition required a written essay, interview with judges, a speech, and answering the impromptu question of naming the biggest detriment to the U.S. and its greatest asset. She said the nation's greatest asset is its godly foundation, but its detriment is people's callous attitude toward each other.