

# Virginia Woman Wins \$25,000 In National Beef Cook-Off

**GAY BROWNLEE**  
Virginia Correspondent

FORT WORTH, Tex. — When Lori Welander's original recipe for "Grilled Steaks Balsamico" won the 25th National Beef Cook-Off recently, the Richmond woman was somewhat dazed.

"I cannot even fathom how I won the grand prize," Welander said. "I was absolutely in shock. At least in mind it was the easiest recipe."

Welander was delighted that Eric, her 15-year old son could join her in Texas for the cook-off event. His attendance was unplanned, but the result of Hurricane Isabel, which closed district schools.

Charles Welander, Lori's husband was unable to attend, but he had this to say about his wife's winning recipe, "It's a keeper."

The preparation time for the steaks was minimal. For two hours the steaks were marinating inside a zip-lock plastic food bag with a prepared balsamic vinaigrette to which, for a really unique flavor, Welander had added fig preserves.

Over ash-covered coals the steaks were grilled to a perfect doneness, accompanied by plump little red and yellow pear tomato kabobs that were grilled on the side.

Lori dressed up the entire works with rosemary leaves and served the steaks with a herb and garlic cheese sauce that she melted using a package of soft cheese.

"My garnish was rosemary leaves and red and yellow tomatoes. I love working with fresh ingredients," she said.

Actual preparation was 30-minutes.

Some time ago when Lori discovered flat iron steaks, a new cut of beef.

"It's an awesome cut," she said, describing the flat iron as lean and fast cooking. "It's a relatively new cut, second in tenderness to beef tenderloin."

Someone has dubbed the flat iron steak the "darling" of steak houses. Consumers frequenting supermarkets are also giving it a thumbs up.



Lori Welander, Richmond, Virginia, said her priority in developing her contest recipe entry was that it be tasty, nutritious, and fast and easy to prepare. A taste of Grilled Steaks Balsamico convinced judges that it was worthy of the \$25,000 prize.

Before she nailed down the recipe, Welander's homework was to experiment and analyze her ingredients. In the contest requirements, the limit was eight ingredients.

Instead of figs, she economized with fig preserves.

"I love figs as a component of the marinade," she said.

Her priority in developing the

recipe was that it be attractive to women who are caught up in fast-paced lifestyles. The recipe had to be tasty, nutritious, fast and easy — one she wouldn't hesitate to promote among her own circle of friends.

"I love to cook but I have a lot of friends who don't," she said. "Family dinners are so crucial. So many families are moving away from family dinner time."

Grilled Steaks Balsamico virtually invalidates excuses for "not having the time," to prepare a meal. While sharing notes about the day, family members can sit down to dinner and enjoy it in a convivial manner.

The steaks lend themselves to being served with crusty bread and a fresh green salad, for lighter fare. Give the family a more substantial meal by adding a hearty potato or rice entree, and top it off with dessert.

"I'm not in anyway a trained, formal cook," says Welander, who holds a part-time position with a consulting firm.

The simple recipe tingled the taste buds of connoisseurs who had convened to judge the competition in Cow Town, USA. They discovered that a serving of Grilled Steaks Balsamico was mighty succulent eating.

Because beef is their business, the Beef Cook-Off activities were popular with cowboys who had taken leave from their surrounding ranches in order to enjoy brief sojourns in town.

They were eager to know which of the 20 finalists would take home the \$50,000 contest grand prize. A General Electric Profile Oven with Trivection technology was amongst the gifts to Welander.

"The National Beef Cook-Off strength is that it gives an opportunity to meet real people," Welander said. "Every finalist has a hostess. It really puts a personal note into the contest. It is phenomenally organized."

About 3,000 entrants participated in four categories: One Dish Meals, Grilled Beef, Hand-held Kid Pleasers and Quick and Easy Beef. The recipes were judged on taste, ease of preparation, and appearance.

The primary sponsors were NBCO (fact sheet and history are on web site) and the Beef Check-Off program funded by beef producers through their \$1-per-head check-off and produced for the Cattlemen's Beef Board and state beef councils by the American National Cattle Women, Inc.,

and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association; Albertsons; General Electric Company; Weber-Stephen Products Company; Texas Beef Council; and the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo.

To learn more about the National Beef Cook-Off on the internet visit: [www.beefcookoff.org](http://www.beefcookoff.org).

Here is the winning recipe.

## GRILLED STEAKS BALSAMICO

4 beef shoulder top blade (flat iron) steaks (6-8 oz. each) or boneless beef chuck eye steaks, cut 1-inch thick

1 package (5.2 oz.) herb and garlic soft spreadable cheese

### Garnish:

1½ cups mixed red and yellow tomatoes

4 rosemary branches or bamboo skewers soaked in water

### Marinade:

⅓ cup prepared balsamic vinaigrette

¼ cup fig preserves (or chopped dried figs)

Place marinade ingredients in a blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade. Process until blended. Place steaks and marinade in a food-safe plastic bag; turn to coat. Close bag securely and marinate at least two hours.

Thread tomatoes on the four rosemary branches, removing leaves as necessary.

Remove steaks from marinade and discard marinade. Place steaks on grill over medium ash-covered coals. Grill steaks covered for 10-14 minutes for medium rare to medium doneness, turning occasionally. Season with salt and pepper as desired.

Five to seven minutes before steaks are done, place tomato kabobs on outer edge of grid and grill until heated through, turning once. Garnish with rosemary.

Heat cheese in small saucpan over medium low heat 2-4 minutes, until melted, stirring frequently. Serve steaks with sauce.

Makes 4 servings.



Books and magazines of interest to Lancaster Farming readers

**ANDY ANDREWS**  
Editor

**ANGUS ART: The American Angus Association, text by Keith Evans. American Angus Association, 2003, 70 pp., no price listed. No ISBN.**

Bold, black cattle. Eye-appealing, realistic art. Attention to detail. A smooth canvas.

The classics of good livestock art are all here in this big, bold book called "Angus Art," published by the American Angus Association from St. Joseph, Mo.

As the book notes, one man made a lot of people happy and influenced perhaps legions of generations.

The book notes: "The heart and soul of the Angus art collection, however, is Frank Murphy's paintings and drawings. Born in 1920 in Vinton, Iowa, Murphy grew up near Brownsville, Texas, founded in the 1850s by his maternal great-grandfather. Inspired by his artist mother, Lucile Champion Murphy, he developed an interest in art and drawing at

an early age. Some of his first models were the mounted display animals at Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History."

There's a great deal more about Murphy and how this art, collected and on display at the association headquarters in Missouri, came to be. Other artists are portrayed as well, including great work by Steve Zipp, Steve Van Dyke, Galen Struve, K.S. King, Gretchen C. Meyers, and others, in addition to sculptures by Jim Reno.

The beauty lies in the reproduction of the artwork on heavy, coated paper, of the individual, very colorful paintings. It is fascinating to watch the progression of the breed, from the big old fat animals in the middle of the previous century to a leaner, muscular, dominating type of beef from the 1980s to the present day.

Order from American Angus Association at 3201 Frederick Ave., St. Joseph, MO 64506, <http://www.angus.org>, or call (816) 383-5100.

**AMISH LANE: Poems From The Earth, by Thomas Irvin Maust. Brothersvalley Publishing, 2003, 79 pp., no price listed, no ISBN.**

Perhaps this collection of poetry was written out of homesickness for the hills of Pennsylvania. It was a journey away from his homeland taken as a 4-H'er, through an international farm exchange program, that Maust met his Norwegian wife, Kirsten. Twenty-one years ago, Maust went to Norway because Kirsten was homesick.

Many things happened since. Maust learned to speak Norwegian. He kept his English sharp by writing poems.

But he couldn't stop thinking about why he loved Pennsylvania so much.

As a result, we have "Amish Lane," a book written out of love for Thomas Maust's native Brothersvalley home in Berlin. Lane, what Maust calls "poems from the earth," recalls red currants, snapping turtles, catty-whompus, snakes in the lilac, listening to the corn grow, Christmas dinners, cracking hickory nuts, and countless other blessings.

These are light, beautiful poems that instill in us a sense of wonder about the place that, for many of us who live in Pennsylvania, sometimes take for granted.

Order from Brothersvalley Publishing 244 Stony Creek Rd., Berlin, PA 15530, (814) 267-5350. For more information, contact Charlene Murray in Berlin at the

same number, or [crc-41@yahoo.com](mailto:crc-41@yahoo.com).

**THE SLATE ROOF BIBLE: Understanding, Installing, and Restoring the World's Finest Roof, by Joseph Jenkins, 2nd ed. Jenkins Publishing, 2003, 318 pp., \$40.00. ISBN 0-9644258-1-5**

Jenkins has a hard time, sometimes.

He has a hard time understanding what people think and believe, especially about slate roofs.

A constant theme, especially early on in this book to end all books about slate roofs — why do people ignore slate roofs' critical value? Why do some, almost at a whim, want to remove perfectly good, absolutely long-lasting, home-value-improving, durable and lovely slate roofs, to replace them with cheap asphalt shingles, which have a maximum 20-year life?

And that look ugly and are costly besides?

Jenkins provides a lot of answers. He also provides more photos and more descriptions of the best slate roof designs throughout the world in this book than in any book previously.

"Slate Roof Bible" is exactly what the name implies: everything you could possibly care to know about the history, designs, colors, shapes, textures, maintenance, and sheer beauty of an enduring, aesthetically pleasing slate roof.

Jenkins has taken great pains to provide photos and descrip-

tions of types of slate, examples of roofs from all over the world, picking the right kind of slate, installing slate, and working on methods to improve and ensure the beauty of slate.

There are even ads for businesses in the slate roof industry. Along with an index of slate information, of course.

If you could earn a doctorate in slate roof, this is probably the only book you'd need.

Order from Jenkins Publishing, P.O. Box 607, 324 Old Beech Road, Grove City, PA 16127, (866) 641-7141, e-mail [mail@jenkinspublishing.com](mailto:mail@jenkinspublishing.com), or look at the Website, [www.jenkinspublishing.com](http://www.jenkinspublishing.com).

**MEETING WISDOM: Tap Into The Wisdom and Insight of Thousands of 12-Step Meetings In A Single Book, by Brian L. Meeting Wisdom Publishing, 2002, 181 pp., \$16.95, ISBN 0-9718779-1-2**

Without trust, Brian L. notes in "Meeting Wisdom," life isn't much worth living. And happiness, for the most part, has very little to do with circumstances — it is simply a state of mind.

The book has a lot of thoughtful, experience-laden sayings that can prove helpful through the stressful holidays.

Order from Wisdom Publishing, P.O. Box 320786, Los Gatos, CA 95032, (866) STEPS12, or e-mail [orders@meetingwisdom.com](mailto:orders@meetingwisdom.com).