

More cakes for rhubarb season

Gingerbread with rhubarb was what Stephen Bergey of Belfast remembered having for breakfast. He was pretty sure it was one of Brownie Schrumpf's recipes. So we asked here a couple of weeks ago, and sadly no one seems to have Brownie's recipe.

In the process, though, we collected a few other very good rhubarb cake recipes and a good idea for Stephen.

Ruth Thurston of Machias and Judy Boothby both sent along a recipe which Ruth thought might have been clipped from the Bangor Daily News, but which Judy found in Marjorie Standish's "Cooking Down East." Maybe that means it was published in the Maine Sunday Telegram first. Carol-Jean Forrest found and sent along a Walnut-Rhubarb Bread from "Brownies' Memories from Brownie's Kitchen." Both of these sounded delicious, but neither of them had even a whiff of ginger or molasses in them, so I doubted that they were what Stephen remembered.

Still, I decided to try the Standish rhubarb coffee cake. Judy observed, "It sounds to me like a lot of sugar early in the day! Sounds tasty, though."

Joette Fields in Frankfort also turned to Marjorie Standish, and wrote, "Here is blueberry gingerbread, but I'm sure rhubarb could be substituted." Lacking any other possibility at this point, I thought, what a fine idea. So I gave Joette's suggestion a try, and it yielded a lovely, moist, slightly gingery cake. Next time I make it, I will increase the ginger.

Since this will be the last word on rhubarb for this season, and we still have plenty of rhubarb to try these recipes out on, I thought I would double up on recipes this week.

Maybe between now and next spring someone will stumble on a recipe for what Stephen remembers, but until then, maybe the adapted blueberry gingerbread recipe will do. Joette said, "Hope this is close to Stephen Bergey's remembrance," and I hope so, too.

Send queries or answers to Sandy Oliver, 1061 Main Road, Islesboro 04848. Email sandyoliver47@gmail.com. For recipes, tell us where they came from, list ingredients, specify number of servings and do not abbreviate measurements. Include name, address and daytime phone number. And make sure to check out Sandy's blog at tastebuds.bangordailynews.com.

Rhubarb Gingerbread

Yields 1 gingerbread

½ cup butter or shortening
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup sugar
1 egg
3 tablespoons molasses
2 cups flour
½ teaspoon ginger
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon soda
1 cup sour milk or buttermilk
1 cup diced rhubarb dredged in flour
3 tablespoons additional sugar for sprinkling

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a bundt or tube pan. Cream butter or shortening and beat in salt and sugar gradually. Add unbeaten egg and beat until light and creamy. Add the molasses. Sift together the flour, ginger, cinnamon and soda and add to the egg mixture alternately with the sour milk.

Fold in the rhubarb and sprinkle the top of the batter with the additional sugar.

Bake for 50 to 60 minutes or until cake begins to pull away from the sides of the pan and a tester inserted comes out clean.

As I made the Rhubarb Coffee Cake, I have to say that I kept looking at the recipe to make sure I had it correct. It is a little different: The sugar is one of the dry ingredients and isn't mixed with the cooking oil. The batter is very stiff and I had to shove it into the corners of the pan. The topping is plentiful, so much so that I thought I had made too much, but it bakes into the cake and comes out fine.

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BIXBY AND CO.

Kate McAleer, owner of Rockland's Bixby and Co., received a \$100,000 grant from The Tory Burch Foundation.

Rockland chocolatier wins \$100,000 national grant

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

Kate McAleer of Bixby and Co. has received a considerable stimulus from New York designer Tory Burch for reinventing the candy bar. The Tory Burch Foundation announced Monday that McAleer, founder of Rockland's organic craft chocolate biz, is the company's inaugural pitch winner. The honor comes with a \$100,000 investment for product development.

McAleer was one of 500 female entrepreneurs from across the country who entered the competition — and the only from Maine. In March she was selected as a finalist, was voted to the top 10 and ultimately bested them all.

"I'm thrilled and excited. It's really changing the dialogue on women and their access to capital," said McAleer, reached by phone in Washington, D.C.

The Rockport resident presented her pitch before a panel of judges, from the head of the FDA,

to the managing editor of Glamour Magazine to fashion models in Burch's Manhattan headquarters last week.

"We were extremely impressed with the quality of Kate's product and her vision for growing her business. She has a big dream and bold ambitions," Burch said in a prepared statement. "We look forward to seeing how she will use this investment to build on her success so far."

The entrepreneur knows exactly
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KATHLEEN PIERCE | BDN

Chef Jamie Bell makes meatloaf at Avita of Stroudwater, an assisted living facility in Westbrook.

'Leave your ego at the door'

Former executive chef
departs restaurant scene
to combine compassion
with culinary pursuits

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

Chef Jamie Bell could be in the Old Port angling for a James Beard Award or teaming with a mixologist on a hot new food pairing, but he chose a different path.

Miles from the hubbub of Commercial Street, Bell walks the halls of Avita of Stroudwater, an assisted living facility in Westbrook, asking graying residents if their haddock is up to snuff. After serving plates of hot meatloaf, which he grinds by hand from sirloin in the kitchen, he asks a table of women digging into salads, "How is everything today, ladies?"

The former executive chef at Ri Ra Irish Pub in Portland needed a break from the punishing demands of the cutthroat restaurant scene. Bell found a place to alight that allows him to perfect his culinary skills while practicing compassion.

"You have to leave your ego at the door," said the 33-year-old, who sources from local farms and creates healthy, fresh meals for the 70 residents as though he were on Fore Street.

"They get a little bit of everything, al-



KATHLEEN PIERCE | BDN

Chef Jamie Bell talks to residents at Avita of Stroudwater last week.

though I know what they really want is just straight comfort food. I can put a certain twist on it while keeping it from scratch and local," said Bell, a graduate of the New England Culinary Institute in Vermont. He'll work in ramps, fiddleheads and cure bacon for farm-to-table lunches and dinners. "Ninety-eight percent of everything I make is from scratch."

Despite his effort, that doesn't mean everyone likes it. Betty Chamberlain, 81, said her haddock lunch was delightful, ex-

cept for the side of asparagus. Though fresh from a farm in fertile Unity, the roughage is moved to the side of her plate, indicating she could do without veggies.

Bell, Avita's resident dining director, knows eating healthy is not always what they want. "Many were cooking for themselves before they came here and got used to meals with lots of MSG," such as cans of Dinty Moore, he said. Now they get soup, salad, entrees and dessert that would plate

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What to do with strawberries this season

When Treworgy Family Orchard in Levant posted on Facebook on Saturday afternoon that it had a great opening day for strawberry season (it'll be reopening for picking this weekend), I couldn't help but get a little excited. Strawberries have been my very favorite fruit since childhood — the one I most look forward to, and relish eating. They also come with a bevy of happy memories — both from childhood and adulthood.

And though my kids and I haven't picked strawberries these last few years, this summer we won't miss it. I want my kids to have the happy memories of time spent plucking berries from bushes, stealing a few to munch and

taking them home to enjoy in so many ways.

Strawberry picking is a tradition that I've carried forward from my own childhood. As a little kid, I would inevitably be wearing all white when we'd arrive at the field near our Dutchess County, New York, home. We'd weave through the rows, past green-leaved plants teeming

with berries, in search of the plumpest, sweetest ones. By the time we left, with baskets of fresh, sweet, brilliant red berries, I'd be

stained pink from my head to my little (formerly white) Keds. It was messy and sticky and hot and so much fun.

My kids have been berry picking since they were old enough to crawl. When they were really little, learning from my own experiences as a child, I'd practically color-code them to the berries we were picking: Red clothes for strawberry season, blue for blueberry season. It wasn't intentional — at least not at first — but it helped stem the mess. So did the baby wipes I always made sure to pack for the trip to the fields.

When we pick, we aim to pick a lot. Strawberry season is short, so you have to take advantage while you can. Some berries will be plucked from the box and popped

into our mouths — a sweet snack. Others will be turned into jams and cooked into baked goods. And some will be frozen for winter. There's nothing better than adding that taste of summer to whatever you can on the coldest days of the year. It's hope in a bite.

Are you planning to go strawberry picking this season? Here are some ideas for what to do with your haul.

Freeze them: Storing fresh strawberries lets you enjoy them all year long. To do so, wash and hull the strawberries. Place in a flat layer on a baking sheet or in a freezer-safe container and freeze. Then transfer the frozen berries to a freezer container or bag for storage.

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