



Bangor's hottest to compete at Chef Challenge

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

BANGOR — Ever want to slip onto the set of “Chopped,” join the judges and hobnob with celebrity chefs? Sharpen your knives, epicureans, because Friday night you’ll have that chance at Maine Chef Challenge.

This live cooking competition will pit a handful of stovemieters from Greater Bangor against each other in a tasty showdown at The Gracie Theatre. Produced by the Bangor Daily News, the live event started in 2012 as a fundraiser for Eastern Maine Community College. After a hiatus last year, the

re-bolstered challenge returns with gusto.

Celebrity chef Sam Talbot, a Maine transplant who’s appeared on “The Chew ” and heads the Pig and Poet restaurant in Camden is one of several food experts to determine who sizzles under fire.

On the chopping block are a cross section of Greater Bangor’s top cooks, as selected by readers of Bangor Metro.

“It’s an opportunity for you to see your favorite chefs from your favorite restaurant in action. See how they think on their feet and respond to situations that come out of nowhere,” said Deandra Briggs, BDN’s director of market-

ing. “It’s exciting. Not the same old same old.”

Competing on stage are chefs Mark Horton and Johnny Thayer of Woodman’s Bar and Grill in Orono; Joseph Everett Smith and Tom Hashey of Bangor’s 11 Central, and Duncan Gunn and Justin Bard of Bar Harbor’s Blaze.



Horton

“Think ‘Chopped,’ except they won’t be chopped,” said Briggs.

Each chef will prepare an appetizer, entree and dessert from a basket filled with mystery items. Though some ingredients have been shared, the goal is to think fast and creative on deadline. They have 20 minutes to a half-hour for each course.



Smith

“I’ve never competed in anything like this before,” said Horton, co-owner of Orono’s popular American fusion joint. “We are expecting one kind of curveball but know most ingredients are locally sourced. We have a good idea what’s in season now ... it will be a fun surprise for us.”

Sponsored in part by Maine Shellfish, expect a few delights from the sea to surface. Horton suspects root vegetables and typical fall produce will dominate the dishes.

Judges Jay Demers, head of culinary arts at Eastern Maine Community College, and BDN senior

See Chefs, Page C5

Taking care of our world matters

Gazing out the window of a downtown Bangor restaurant recently, I watched as a couple in their late 20s or early 30s walked by. In almost a single motion, the man unwrapped a fun-size chocolate bar, dropped the wrapper to the sidewalk and offered the woman with him a bite before tucking the whole caramel-, nut- and nougat-filled confection into his mouth.



SARAH WALKER CARON

Let’s rewind for a moment. Dropping that wrapper was a deliberate act — one so simple, but conveying so much. It wasn’t an oops action, quickly rectified by stooping to pick it up. He did it on purpose.

This was the action of someone who — for whatever reason — doesn’t think it’s his responsibility to deal with his own trash. Someone who clearly doesn’t see the larger problem that littering causes for the world around us. Someone who doesn’t care that there are garbage cans all over downtown Bangor just waiting to be used.

Yes, it was one small candy bar wrapper. It was one person, one moment, one act of littering. But it was also more than that. In a city of about 32,000 people, what if just 10 percent of the population behaved like that every day? How quickly would the trash pile up in the streets? How would the city’s culture change?

We’ve all heard about litter again and again and again. It’s nothing new. In the 1980s, a classroom magazine ran a photo of a six-pack ring tangled around a seagull’s beak. The story talked about how littering at beaches was killing gulls, or something like that, but that photo stuck with me. If improperly discarding the plastic that holds together soda cans could do that to birds, how was other trash affecting animals and our environment?

That gave me pause, and any affinity for the ’80s culture of tossing things out the car window on the highway was severed. I didn’t want to be the person whose trash killed animals or contributed to the dirtying of our world.

I still don’t. Fortunately, for the few who completely disregard the role they play in keeping our world clean — or dirty — there are others whose attitude is heartening.

I have a dear friend who always stops to pick up trash, wherever he is. He’s the antithesis of the man I saw on the street. Where

See Caron, Page C2



ICED APPLE OATMEAL COOKIES

YIELDS ABOUT 3 DOZEN

INGREDIENTS FOR COOKIES

- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 apples, cored and shredded
- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 2 cups rolled oats
- 2 tsp baking soda

- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 cup hot water

INGREDIENTS FOR GLAZE

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tbsp milk
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, add the butter and sugars and cream together until smooth. Add the apples and mix well to combine.
3. In a large bowl, sift together the flour, oats, baking soda and salt. With the stand mixer running on its lowest speed, add the flour mixture a little at a time until fully incorporated.
4. Add the hot water to the stand mixer and mix on low until smooth.
5. Use a medium cookie scoop, or two tablespoons, to drop the cookie dough in mounds on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
6. Bake for 8–10 minutes until golden.
7. Transfer cookies to a cooling rack and let cool completely.
8. To make the glaze: Stir together the glaze ingredients. Drizzle on completely cooled cookies and let sit for at least 30 minutes to set. For easy cleanup, set the cooling rack on top of a parchment lined baking sheet before glazing.



RECIPE: SARAH WALKER CARON
ART: ERIC ZELZ

A new way to enjoy crabapples

What an apple year it is going to be! Trees are so loaded, and I am happily anticipating cider-making and buckets of apples stored down cellar for eating and cooking all winter. Best of all, the crabapple tree in front of the house is producing tons of lovely little rosy-cheeked apples, many more than I have ever seen that dear old tree produce in the 27 years I’ve lived here.



SANDY OLIVER
TASTE BUDS

I decided I wanted to do something with them that did not involve jelly-making. I simply can’t (don’t want to) eat as much jelly and jam as I can produce in a year here taking advantage of all the different wild and domestic fruits that thrive. Having discovered the virtues of sorbet-making, I have a whole new set of possibilities with fruits alone, or in combination with each other.

Crabapple Sorbet

Serves 6

2 cups stewed crabapple puree
2 cups sweet or hard cider or sweet wine
2 tablespoons Calvados, rum or fruity cordial
Simple syrup to taste

Run the stewed apples through a food mill to make a smooth and seedless puree, and put into a bowl. Stir in the cider or wine, plus the spirit, and mix thoroughly. Taste and add simple syrup to taste.

Chill thoroughly. Freeze in an ice cream freezer following the instructions for use.

Pack into a container and store in your freezer until serving time.

Hence crabapple sorbet. Claire, the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms volunteer, gathered as many as she could reach, then shook down a bunch more. We picked them over, discarded ones the size of marbles, or that were hopelessly scabby, and stewed the best. I did not core or peel them; they are too little for that treatment.

While I would love to imagine that I dreamed up something unique, I suspected right off that someone had already thought of crabapple sorbet and posted it on the Internet. Sure enough. And they suggested adding hard cider or white wine. I did two batches, one with cider made in Boston, but called “Down East,” and one batch with fairly sweet white wine. Both were good and both needed a little additional simple syrup to reduce the crabapple bite. Add spice if you want, though I didn’t; cinnamon or nutmeg would be good, and are traditional with apples.

I suspect each crabapple tree will have its own flavor, some more sour than another, some sweet enough even to make sauce mild enough to eat all by itself. Taste as you go along. My apples created a lovely pale peach colored sorbet that I topped with whipped cream to serve.

You will recognize in the fol-
See Oliver, Page C2

Coconut oil adds good fat to scones recipe

BY LAUREN CHATTMAN
NEWSDAY

Every baker loves a good redemption story, especially when it involves fat. I’ve raptly watched as coconut oil, a former enemy of the medical establishment because of its saturated fat content, has recently become the darling of the natural foods set because it contains fatty acids linked with a

rise in “good” HDL cholesterol.

The jury’s still out on its actual health benefits, but I found myself interested in how coconut oil might fit into my baking life.

There are a few different types of coconut oil on the market. Refined hydrogenated coconut oil, the least appealing choice, acquires unhealthy trans fats during chemical processing. This is the product, responsible for mak-

ing movie theater popcorn a dietitian’s nightmare, that gave coconut oil a bad name in the first place.

The healthier options are expeller-pressed and cold-pressed (also called “virgin” or “extra-virgin”) oils, which are processed without chemicals so they have no trans fats and retain some of the coco-nuts’ nutrients. Expeller-pressed coconut oil is refined to remove

its coconut scent and flavor. It is a good substitute for solid vegetable shortening in recipes that require a fat with a neutral flavor, one that gives baked goods a flaky texture. I usually make pie dough with a combination of butter and shortening, which is partially hydrogenated. This Thanksgiving I might use butter and coconut oil for a trans-fat-free crust.

See Oil, Page C2