

Holiday Baking Contest

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BY SHANNON OELRICH

If the 1,300 recipes submitted in the Texas Co-op Power Holiday Baking Contest are any indication, we have an amazing wealth of great cooks in this state! I read the recipes and narrowed them down to 50 semifinalists, then asked our staff to help bake, taste and vote on those. Four days of testing gave us 12 finalists, which were then baked by the students at the Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts at Travis High School (see page 29). We rated each of these using a scale that tested for taste, texture, aroma, appearance and holiday appropriateness, which gave us the wonderful winners you see below. The grand prizewinner won \$3,000 and the runners-up won \$500 each.

GRAND PRIZEWINNER: ANNA GINSBERG

Anna developed her **WHITE CHOCOLATE RIBBON PUMPKIN CAKE WITH MAPLE GLAZE** as a holiday blend of pound cake, pumpkin pie and cheesecake. Anna has a passion for cooking by experimentation and has entered many recipe contests. In the past two years, she's been a finalist in both *Southern Living* and *Cooking Light's* baking contests, the much-renowned Pillsbury Bake-Off, and other smaller contests. She insists, however, that she's not a "ringer." "I lose a lot," says Anna, "I've entered many contests. I've even sent recipes to Texas Co-op Power's monthly contest and have never won that." Anna lives in Austin with her husband and daughter. They are members of Peder-nales Electric Cooperative.

White Chocolate Ribbon Pumpkin Cake With Maple Glaze

Filling:

¾ cup white chocolate morsels or white chips
8 ounces cream cheese, softened
3 tablespoons granulated sugar
¾ teaspoon Adams Best™ Vanilla

Cake:

3 cups all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 sticks butter, softened
2 cups granulated sugar
1½ teaspoons Adams Best™ Vanilla
4 eggs

1 can (16 ounces) pumpkin

Glaze:

1 cup powdered sugar, sifted
1 tablespoon maple syrup
½ teaspoon Adams Maple™ Imitation Maple Flavor
2-3 tablespoons heavy cream
⅛ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour large bundt pan. To prepare filling, place white chips in microwave-safe bowl and microwave on high for 1½ minutes, stopping every 30 seconds to stir. Beat cream cheese, sugar and vanilla into melted chips. Set aside.

In medium bowl, combine flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda and cinnamon. Set aside. In large bowl, beat butter and sugar until fluffy. Beat in vanilla extract. Beat in eggs, one by one, and continue beating on high speed for 1 minute or until mixture is light. Stir in pumpkin. By hand or using low speed, stir in flour mixture. Pour about ⅓ of pumpkin batter into bundt pan. Pour filling over batter, keeping filling away from sides of pan. Pour remaining batter over filling. Bake 55 minutes or until cake begins to pull away from sides of pan. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes, then turn out of pan. Let cake cool completely before glazing.

To prepare glaze, stir together powdered sugar, maple syrup, maple flavor, 2 tablespoons cream and salt. Beat until smooth. If glaze is too thick, add remaining tablespoon of cream. Drizzle over cooled cake; store cake in refrigerator. Makes 12 servings.

RUNNER-UP: SUSAN RILEY

Susan's **DECADENT CHOCOLATE MINT TRUFFLE TORTE** began as a recipe that had raspberry liqueur in it. She's played with it for about 15 years, and this is her favorite incarnation. When-



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ever she serves the torte, people always rave. Many are surprised to find out how easy it is to make. She says, "You could put any flavor in it that goes with chocolate." Susan lives in Allen with her husband and three children. They are members of Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative.

Decadent Chocolate Mint Truffle Torte

6 tablespoons butter, softened
½ cup sugar
¾ cup flour
⅓ cup cocoa
½ teaspoon Adams Best™ Vanilla
3½ cups semisweet chocolate chips
2 teaspoons Adams Pure Peppermint Extract
1½ cups heavy cream, room temperature
Optional garnish ideas: mint-flavored whipped cream, mint leaves, chocolate mint candies



Beat butter and sugar until well blended. Add flour, cocoa and vanilla. Beat until crumbly. Press in bottom of 9-inch springform pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Cool. Place chocolate in large glass bowl. Melt chocolate in microwave on high 1 minute. Stir until completely melted and smooth. Add 30 seconds more if needed to melt chocolate completely. Add extract and cream and whisk until smooth. Pour chocolate mixture over crust. Chill at least 2 hours. Remove sides of pan (a hot towel wrapped around sides helps). Garnish as desired. Makes 8-10 servings.

RUNNER-UP: SHIRLEY CADDELL
Shirley has been making her **HOLIDAY CAKE SPECIAL** for 52 years, as long as she's been married. Her husband's

birthday is December 23, so she makes this festive cake for him to share with the rest of the family. Shirley lives in Otto with her husband. Her four children, nine grandchildren and two great-granddaughters all live nearby. The Caddells are members of Navasota Valley Electric Cooperative.

Holiday Cake Special

Cake:

- 3 1/4 cups sifted flour
- 3 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup butter or margarine
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon Adams Best™ Vanilla
- 1 cup milk
- 8 egg whites (reserve yolks for filling)

Filling:

- 8 egg yolks

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup finely chopped raisins
- 1 cup flaked coconut
- 1 cup finely chopped candied cherries
(1/2 red and 1/2 green)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup pineapple juice

Sift together flour, baking powder and salt; set aside. In large mixing bowl, cream butter; add sugar, then vanilla extract, beating until light and fluffy. Add dry ingredients alternately with milk, beating after each addition. In another mixing bowl, beat egg whites until stiff, but not dry. Carefully fold into batter just until incorporated. Pour batter into 4 well-greased round cake pans. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 minutes. Remove from oven. Let stand

5 minutes. Turn out on racks to cool. When cool, spread filling between layers and on top of cake.

For filling, in a saucepan, beat egg yolks slightly. Blend in butter; add sugar. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, 5-10 minutes until sugar is dissolved and mixture is slightly thickened and glossy. Remove from heat. Add pecans, raisins, coconut, cherries, salt and pineapple juice. Cool before spreading. (Cake tastes best when stored several days in air-tight container in cool place.) Serves 20.

RUNNER-UP: DANETTE CANTU

Danette entered a family recipe, passed down from her grandma, for **CREAM CHEESE ROLLS**. The dough proofs overnight in the refrigerator, making it perfect for baking Christmas morning. She says, "Food is a big center of attention in my German-Czech family. There's always something warming in the oven at the holidays." Danette lives in Alleyton with her husband and three children. They are members of San Bernard Electric Cooperative.

Cream Cheese Rolls

Dough:

- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 packages dry yeast
- 1/2 cup warm water
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 4 cups flour

Filling:

- 2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, softened
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 teaspoons Adams Best™ Vanilla

Glaze:

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon Adams Best™ Vanilla

In saucepan, heat sour cream and butter over medium-low heat. Stir in sugar and salt until butter is melted. Transfer to mixing bowl and cool to lukewarm. Dissolve yeast in warm water and add to lukewarm mixture, then add eggs and flour and mix well. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Next morning, make filling by beat-



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Left: Anna Ginsberg shows off her grand-prizewinning cake. Right: A slice of the winning cake.

ing cream cheese, sugar, egg and vanilla together until combined. Roll out dough into 4 long rectangles. Spread the cream cheese mixture down middle of each rectangle and roll up lengthwise. Seal along length and ends with fingers dipped in water. Place rolls on cookie sheets, 2 rolls per sheet. Let rise 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Bake at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes or until lightly browned. Mix together glaze ingredients and drizzle on warm rolls. Makes 4 rolls, about 8 servings per roll.

RUNNER-UP: HELEN FIELDS

Helen experimented with pumpkin, which her daughter loves, and bread pudding, one of her family's favorite things, and came up with this recipe for **MAPLE PUMPKIN BREAD PUDDING WITH MAPLE PECAN SAUCE**. She says, "I normally just throw stuff together and don't cook with a recipe, so making this into a recipe to send into the contest was a challenge." Helen lives with her husband in Springtown. They have two children and two grandchildren, and are members of Wise Electric Cooperative.

Maple Pumpkin Bread Pudding With Maple Pecan Sauce

Pudding:

- 12 ounces French bread
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 1 teaspoon Adams Best™ Vanilla

- 2 teaspoons Adams Imitation Butter Flavoring
- 2 teaspoons Adams Maple™ Imitation Maple Flavor
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1 can (12 ounces) evaporated milk
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream

Sauce:

- 1 cup butter (not margarine), melted
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup pecans, chopped
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon Adams Maple™ Imitation Maple Flavor

Fill 9x13-inch baking dish with hot water to half full and place in center of oven while preheating to 375 degrees. Spray the inside of a 2 1/2 quart baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Cut bread into 2-inch cubes. Place bread in sprayed baking dish and set aside.

Whisk eggs in large bowl until they are light and fluffy. Add corn syrup, pumpkin, vanilla, butter and maple flavorings, and salt. Whisk until well blended. Add brown sugar, evaporated milk and cream. Whisk until well mixed. Pour mixture over bread. With a spoon, lightly press bread down into liquid. Carefully set baking dish in oven inside hot water bath. Bake 45 minutes.

Prepare sauce during last 10 minutes of baking time. Melt butter in small saucepan over low-medium heat. Add sugar and pecans and cook 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Add cream and maple flavoring, cooking and stirring for 3-4 minutes more. Serve pudding warm. Top each serving with warm sauce. Makes 12 servings.