

# Father, son build boat in Hutto

Continued from 1B

finally build a boat for themselves, so they pooled their money together and purchased the designs for a catamaran from yacht architect John Shuttleworth.

"He's probably one of the most brilliant naval architects," Willie said. "Every curve on the boat has a reason. The way it's built it can sail around the world."

The fiberglass and foam catamaran is 22 feet wide with a 49-foot tall metal mast. The boat weighs about 5,000 pounds, but only sits 16 inches deep into the water rather than several feet, Willie said. This allows the boat to coast through shallow water and park on the beach.

The boat is built with multiple layers of fiberglass and some carbon fiber, so it should stand strong on the seas, Willie said. Its light weight should also help the craft cut through the waves at more than 14 mph, more than twice a catamaran's normal speed.

The project should be ready to move to the coast via trailer within a month. The boat's parts will be assembled in Clear Lake and should be finished in time

to race in the Harvest Moon Regatta between Galveston and Port Aransas in October.

"We're hoping to win it," Willie said. "This boat is going to be one of the fastest, for sure."

It's also going to be cheaper than it could've been. If the two had hired someone to build the watercraft for them, it would've run around \$350,000. The Packs will build the boat, which they plan to name in honor of Tom's late aunt, Josephine, for a little more than half that cost.

"I think it's been worth it every minute," Willie said.

"It's going to be worth it," Tom retorted.

The two have been working on the boat since November 2011. Only about a half dozen catamarans with this specific design exist in the world.

Willie hopes to build more boats to sell. He lives in The Woodlands, but has been visiting his dad, who resides in Georgetown, to help build the boat nearly every day.

Willie plans to take his family on trips around the world while Tom wants to glide along the East Coast and in the Bahamas.

# Vegetarian options offer fun tastes

This week, I have four new recipes, all of which just happen to be vegetarian (if you omit the bacon from one recipe).

They include two sides, one snack and one dessert, all of which I think you'll enjoy! This first salad is just a nice mix of ingredients that may be a little different from your favorite spinach salad.

## Warm Spinach Salad

- 3 slices bacon
- 1 small shallot, diced
- 1 t. Dijon mustard
- 3 T. white wine vinegar
- 2 T. water
- 1 (5 oz.) bag baby spinach
- 1 cup halved seedless red grapes
- 1/2 cup pistachios
- 1/4 cup crumbled blue cheese

Fry bacon crisp and drain on paper towels. Crumble and set aside. Whisk 2 T. of bacon drippings with shallot, mustard, vinegar and water. Toss with spinach, grapes and pistachios. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Top with blue cheese and bacon.

I'm a big fan of toasted,



## COOK'S CORNER

Laurie Locke

flavored nuts for snacking. Good for you as long as you don't overdo it. These are a little sweet with a great barbecue flavor.

## Barbecue Roasted Nuts

- 2 egg whites
- 2 lb. assorted whole, raw nuts, shelled
- 1 T. kosher salt
- 1 T. light brown sugar
- 2 t. smoked paprika
- 1 1/2 t. sugar
- 1/2 t. garlic powder
- 1/2 t. dry mustard
- 1/4 t. ground cumin
- 1/4 t. ground ginger

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Whisk egg whites in large bowl until foamy. Toss nuts with whites. Stir together salt and remaining ingredients; sprinkle over nuts, and toss to coat. Bake in single layer in a 17x11-inch jelly-roll pan 25-30 minutes or until toasted and fragrant, stirring occasionally. Cool on wire rack about 1 hour. Store in airtight containers up to one week. Makes 6 cups.

Okay, I know this sounds a little weird but if you love green bean casserole, give this a try for a little richer, more substantial version. Lots of fun for your next potluck supper!

## Green Bean Lasagna

- 2 (14.4 oz.) packages frozen French-cut green beans, thawed (or canned, drained)
- 12 uncooked lasagna noodles
- 1/4 cup butter, divided
- 2 large sweet onions, halved and sliced
- 8 oz. assorted fresh mushrooms, trimmed and sliced
- 1/4 cup white wine
- 1 (15 oz.) container ricotta cheese
- 5 cups (20 oz.) shredded Italian cheese blend, divided
- Parmesan cream sauce (recipe follows)
- 1 1/2 cups crushed Ritz crackers
- 1 (6 oz.) container French fried onions (yum!)
- 3 t. butter, melted

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Drain green beans; pat dry with paper towels. Prepare noodles according to package directions. Rinse with cold water once cooked and drained.

Meanwhile, melt 2 T. butter in skillet. Add onions and sauté 15 minutes or until golden brown. Transfer to large bowl and wipe skillet clean.

Melt remaining 2 T. butter in skillet. Add mushrooms and sauté 4-5 minutes or until tender. Add wine and sauté 3 minutes or until liquid is absorbed. Add mushrooms and green beans to caramelized onions in bowl. Toss.

Stir together the ricotta and 1 cup Italian cheese blend. Layer 1 cup Parmesan cream sauce, 3 lasagna noodles, half the green bean mixture and 1 cup cheese blend in a lightly greased 15x10-inch baking dish.

Top with 1 cup Parmesan cream sauce, 3 noodles and all of ricotta cheese mixture. Top with 3 noodles, remaining green bean mixture, 1 cup cheese blend and 1 cup Parmesan cream sauce. Top sauce with remaining 3 noodles, 1 cup Parmesan cream sauce and 2 cups cheese blend.

Bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes or until bubbly and golden brown. Toss together crackers, French fried onions and melted butter. Remove lasagna from oven and sprinkle cracker mixture over top. Bake 10 more minutes. Let stand on wire rack 20 minutes before serving. Serves 8.

## Parmesan cream sauce:

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/3 cup flour
- 4 cups milk, warmed
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 t. salt
- 1/4 t. pepper

Melt butter in large saucepan. Whisk in flour and cook, whisking, 1 minute until smooth. Gradually whisk in warmed milk. Bring to a boil, whisking constantly, 1 to 2 minutes or until thickened. Remove from heat and add cheese, salt and pepper to taste. Makes 4 cups.

These little individual cakes actually serve about 2 each, and are made in little Bundt "brownie" pans, or a pan with several little Bundt-shaped muffin-like cups. You've seen them, right? Fun for giving as gifts or favors, too.

## Rum-Glazed Sweet Potato Cakes

- 3/4 cup golden raisins

- 1/3 cup dark rum
- 4 large eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 2 t. vanilla extract
- 2 cups pureed roasted sweet potatoes (see note below)
- 3 cups flour
- 1 1/2 t. ground cinnamon
- 1 t. baking powder
- 1 t. baking soda
- 1/2 t. fine sea salt
- 1/2 t. ground nutmeg
- 3/4 cup buttermilk
- 1/2 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
- 1/4 cup butter
- 3 T. whipping cream
- 1/2 cup finely chopped toasted pecans

Stir raisins and rum together and let stand 30 minutes. Meanwhile, beat eggs and sugar at high speed for 2-4 minutes or until thick and pale. Add oil and vanilla and beat and low speed just until blended. Add sweet potato puree, beating just until blended and scraping down sides as needed.

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Add flour, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, salt and nutmeg to egg mixture alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture. Beat on low after each addition.

Drain raisins, reserving rum. Fold raisins into batter. Spoon into 3 lightly greased 12-cup Bundt brownie pans, filling each 3/4 full (making 36 little cakes in all).

Bake at 350 degrees for 14-16 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool in pans on wire racks 5 minutes.

Remove from pans to wire racks. While cakes are baking, bring brown sugar, butter and cream to a boil in heavy saucepan. Boil, stirring constantly, for 3 minutes or until mixture begins to thicken to syrup-like consistency. Remove from heat and stir in reserved rum.

Pierce tops of cakes multiple times with a toothpick. Tip top halves of cakes in glaze, and hold 1-2 seconds to allow glaze to soak into cakes. Place glazed sides up on lightly greased wire racks. Sprinkle each with pecans.

Note: To puree roasted sweet potatoes, peel potatoes as soon as they are slightly cooled (after baking in oven on baking sheet at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes).

Press pulp through a wire-mesh strainer with the back of a spoon. You'll need to toast about 1 1/2 lbs. potatoes for 2 cups puree. Makes 3 dozen little cakes.

Fun new tastes for a new, and hopefully lovely, month of May. Enjoy!

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### LEVEL 1

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### LEVEL 3

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