

Who's Who In The Kitchen

Oldest Chef Hard-Pressed To Name What He Most Enjoyed "Cooking"

By Audrey C. Lodato
Post Staff Writer

Born on February 26, 1894 in Brownsville, Tn., Leon Stanford Oppenheimer is the oldest member of the Professional Chefs of the Carolinas. Although retired from the active practice of his profession, Oppenheimer continues to publish "The Cutting Board," a 25-plus page newsletter which he created for the Professional Chefs of the Carolinas.

Oppenheimer explains how he became a chef. "When I was a young fellow, I was a jack-of-all-trades. But I found I was better at cooking than anything else." He notes that he first began cooking when he was 18, but he worked in other professions, including decorating, in his earlier years.

Oppenheimer owned restaurants in Arkansas and Indiana in the 1930s and 40s. He has been executive chef

in a number of hotels and clubs in Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, and Tennessee. After moving to Charlotte in 1970 to be near his daughter after the death of his wife, he was executive chef and dietary consultant at Green Acres Retirement Center until 1976.

This oldest chef in the Carolinas was hard-pressed to say what he most enjoyed cooking throughout his career. Some of his favorites follow. One recipe calls for wild boar, but other game meats can be substituted. Says Oppenheimer, "Most of the people in my area liked racoon."

As a chef, Oppenheimer has done "a little bit of everything" of a culinary nature. "When you're a chef," he explains, "you have to know how everything is done because, even if you don't do it, you have to show someone else how to do it."

In the past, Oppenheimer presented culinary shows, but he is no longer able to do that. He keeps busy with work for his professional organizations and cookbook sales. One of his present projects is a T-shirt promotion for the Professional Chefs of the Carolinas.

Oppenheimer has been nominated for the National Culinary Federation's National Chef of the Year by the Epicurean Club of Greater Charlotte. Club president, Joseph Deas, in his letter of nomination, cited Oppenheimer for his "passionate dedication toward the development of Professional Chefs Chapters throughout the Southeast." The national organization will name the Chef of the Year in July.

Oppenheimer has a son in Indiana and a daughter (Tillie Smith) in Charlotte; six grandchildren; and seven great grandchildren.



Leon Oppenheimer demonstrates how to make horseradish sauce.

WILD GAME FOR A CROWD

- 1 Tbsp. peppercorns
- 2 bay leaves
- 20 lb. boar stew meat (or other wild game)
- 1 c. oil
- 1 c. flour
- 2 qt. dry red wine
- 3 qt. meat stock
- 2 c. vinegar

Make a sachet bag of peppercorns and bay leaves in cheese cloth. Brown meat in oil. When brown, sprinkle with flour, stirring to brown. Add wine, stock, vinegar, spices, and jelly. Bring to a boil and simmer for 2 hours or until soft. Remove fat and

- 1/2 tsp. thyme
- 1/4 tsp. garlic, crushed
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 c. red currant jelly
- 3 c. diced mushrooms
- 2 c. butter
- 2 c. pearl onions, diced
- 2 c. white bread, diced
- 2 Tbsp. parsley, diced

adjust seasoning. If sauce is too thin, thicken with cornstarch. Sauté mushrooms in 1/2 c. butter. Add onion. Sauté bread in rest of butter. Serve meat sprinkled with onion, mushrooms, croutons, and parsley. Makes 25 portions.

OLD FASHIONED BEAN SOUP

- (For a crowd, or freeze portions)
- 3 lb. Great Northern beans
- 5 lb. smoked ham hock
- 4 green peppers, chopped medium fine
- 1 (No. 10) can crushed tomatoes
- Bring 3 gal. water to boil and add all ingredients except tomatoes. When beans are tender add tomatoes. Simmer 1 hour. Makes 3 gallons.

SAUERBRATEN OF BEEF

- (Serves 40)
- 6 qt. cold water
- 2 qt. red wine vinegar
- 2 lb. onion, sliced thin
- 1 lb. carrots, sliced thin
- 1/2 lb. celery, sliced thin
- 1/2 lb. brown sugar
- 8 garlic cloves, chopped
- Salt to taste
- 6 bay leaves
- 1 tsp. crushed peppercorns
- 18 lb. bottom round
- Marinate beef with remaining ingredients in refrigerator at least 72 hours. Heat 8 oz. salad oil. Remove meat from marinade and wipe dry. Brown meat in hot oil. Place in oven roasting pan. Add vegetables. In separate pot, bring marinade to a boil and simmer half hour. Add to meat. Cover and roast for 3 hours. Remove meat and cover with damp cloth to keep warm. Strain the marinade and puree the vegetables to make gingersnap gravy. Crumble 1 lb. gingersnaps; crush very fine and add to marinade. If gravy is too thick, add equal amounts of vinegar and water.

COUNTRY CLUB SANDWICH

- 2 slices white bread
- Sliced ham and turkey to cover
- 2 strips bacon
- 2 slices tomato
- Sliced sharp cheddar to cover
- Layer ham, turkey, bacon, tomato, and cheese on bread slices. Place in hot oven 'til cheese melts. Serve piping hot. Note: For a party of any size, this sandwich can be prepared ahead of time; do not heat until ready to serve.

HORSERADISH SAUCE

- Whip together:
- 2 eggs
- 1 pint heavy cream
- 1 Tbsp. horseradish
- Add enough beef stock to achieve desired consistency. Serve with meats or vegetables.

WINE TURKEY BAKE

- 12-15 lb. turkey
- Bacon fat
- Salt and pepper
- 1 c. chopped onion
- 2 c. chopped celery
- 1 1/2 c. white wine
- 1 muslin cloth, 16 inches square

Wash and dry turkey thoroughly. Brush with bacon fat. Salt and pepper inside and out. Mix onion, celery and one c. of white wine. Stuff bird with this mixture. Place turkey in shallow pan. Dip muslin cloth in bacon fat and cover turkey with it. Roast in 300 degree oven three hours, basting often with drippings in pan and the remaining wine. If turkey varies in size from recipe, allow at least 20-25 minutes per pound roasting time. Before serving, discard onion and celery stuffing. Serves 8-10.

BRANDIED DUCK

- 2 mallard ducks
- 1/2 lb. mushrooms
- 3 jiggers brandy
- 3 large onions
- 1 tsp. parsley, chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/4 tsp. thyme
- 1/4 c. olive oil
- 2 c. claret
- 1 clove garlic
- Salt and pepper

Clean ducks well and cut into serving pieces. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Marinate in deep dish for four hours with onions, parsley, bay leaf, thyme, garlic, brandy, and claret. Place oil in casserole and heat. Brown duck in casserole, then add marinating liquid and mushrooms. Cover casserole and cook over low flame until duck is tender. Serves four, hungry persons.

Orange Fruit Salad

- 4 large oranges
- 2/3 cup freshly squeezed orange juice
- Rind of 1 orange, thinly pared
- 5 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- Butter to grease cookie sheet
- 2 heaped tablespoons blanched and slivered almonds
- 4 sprigs fresh mint
- 2 tsp. Cointreau or Triple Sec (optional)

Peel the oranges, removing as much of the pith as possible. Cut into very thin rounds. Arrange the orange slices, no more than 3 deep, in a shallow dish. Pour the orange juice over them and set aside to macerate. Cut the orange rind into julienne strips. Put in a small saucepan with cold water to cover and bring to a boil. Drain, and add the strips to the oranges. Put the sugar in an ungreased frying pan and dissolve over low heat. Lightly grease a cookie sheet and set aside. When the sugar has melted, raise the flame and cook, stirring, until the sugar turns a dark caramel color. Stir in the almonds. Pour onto the greased tray and allow to cool. As soon as it is cool and brittle, cover with an old cloth

and crush roughly with hammer-do not process or blend. Reserve until ready to serve the oranges. Then sprinkle the almond brittle over the oranges and decorate with the mint sprigs. Add Cointreau or Triple Sec to taste, if you wish.

VARIATIONS

Use half tangerine juice and tangerine peel. Instead of using the almond brittle and roasted almonds, combine fresh fruit and baking magic, Banana Clafouti is one of two recipes reproduced from "Lee Bailey's City Food" (Clarkston N. Potter), a book which is as much a visual celebration of elegance, style and the joys of entertaining friends and family, as it is a compendium of recipes. Also reproduced from "Lee Bailey's City Food" is the recipe for Warm Gingerbread with Vanilla Ice Cream, a dessert which is as simple, satisfying and traditional as they come, the ideal embodiment of a Sunday dessert.

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Here's an exciting springtime menu that can put the entire family in the mood to think spring!



Chicken Kiev is buttery good!

CHICKEN KIEV

- 4 whole chicken breasts, split (+)
- 1/4 lb. chilled butter or margarine
- 1 Tbsp. minced parsley
- 1 Tbsp. minced chives or scallions
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 egg
- 1 Tbsp. water
- 1 envelope Shake 'N Bake seasoned coating mix for chicken—original or crispy country mild flavor

Remove skin, bone and cartilage from chicken breasts. Place between sheets of waxed paper and pound until very thin, about 1/4 inch thick, taking care not to make any holes in chicken. Cut chilled butter into 8 finger-shaped pieces; place one on each piece of chicken near one end. Sprinkle with parsley, chives and lemon juice. Roll up each piece, folding in ends to completely enclose butter. Secure with wooden picks or skewers. Beat egg slightly with water. Dip chicken rolls, one at a time, into egg mixture; then coat with seasoned coating mix as directed on package. Place in ungreased shallow pan, sealed side up. Bake at 450 degrees for about 20 minutes or until well browned. Drain on absorbent paper. Makes 6 to 8 servings. Note: Recipe may be doubled or tripled.

(+) Or use 8 chicken or turkey cutlets (about 1 1/4 lb.); pound very thin.

GRASSHOPPER CHIFFON PARFAIT

- 1 package (3 oz.) Jell-O brand lime flavor gelatin
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1/2 cup cold water
- 3 tablespoons green creme de menthe liqueur++
- 3 tablespoons white creme de cacao liqueur++
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 egg white
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 cup Cool Whip whipped topping, thawed
- ++Or use 1/4 cup green creme de menthe liqueur, or 1/2 teaspoon each mint and brandy extract.

Dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Add cold water, liqueurs and vanilla. Chill until slightly thickened; measure 1/2 cup and set aside. Beat egg white until foamy throughout. Gradually beat in sugar and continue beating until mixture will form stiff shiny peaks. Thoroughly blend egg white mixture and whipped topping into remaining gelatin mixture. Layer creamy gelatin mixture in parfait glasses with reserved clear gelatin. Chill until set, about 1 hour. Garnish with additional whipped topping and chocolate sauce, if desired. Makes about 5 cups or 8 to 10 servings.

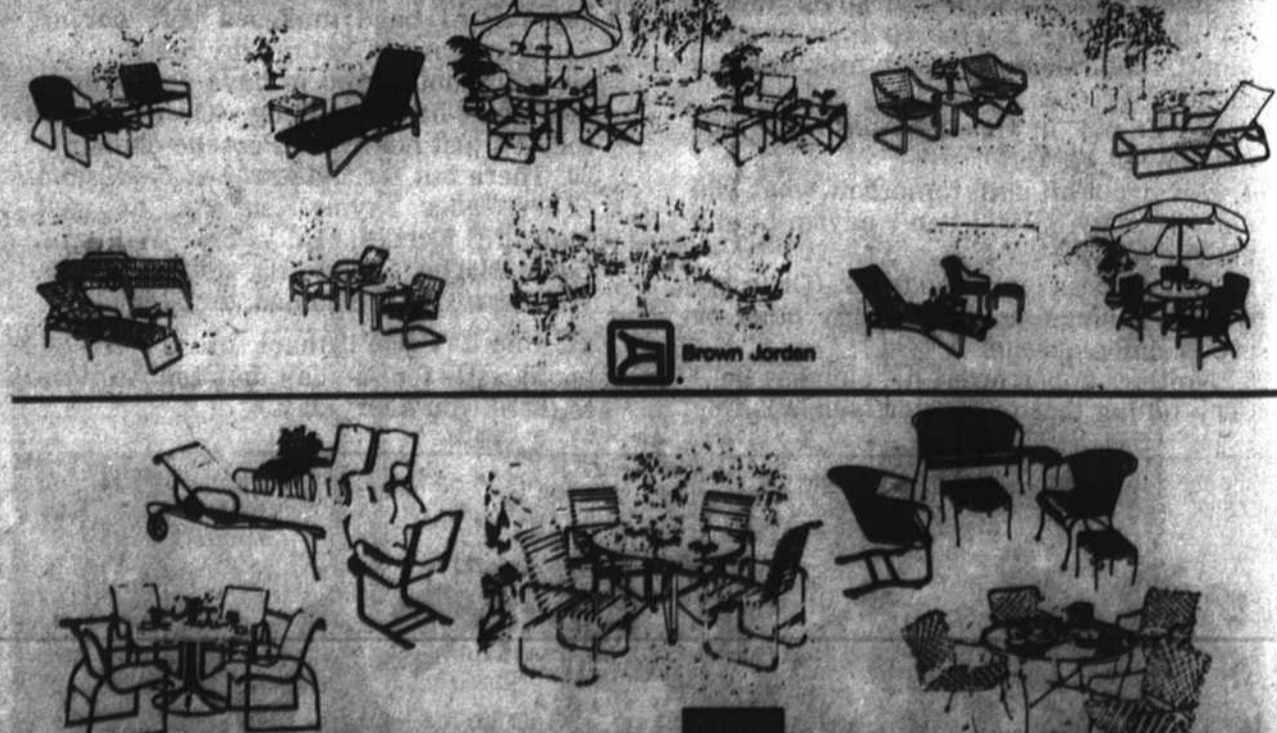
PASTA WITH BROCCOLI

- 8 oz. Ronzoni curly spaghetti or other pasta
- 1 package (10 oz.) Birds Eye deluxe broccoli florets
- 1/4 c. butter or margarine
- 1/4 c. chopped parsley
- 1/2 tsp. marjoram leaves
- 1/4 tsp. lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1/2 c. grated Parmesan cheese

Cook spaghetti and broccoli separately as directed on packages; drain. Meanwhile, place butter, parsley, marjoram, lemon juice and pepper in heated serving bowl. Add spaghetti and broccoli and mix lightly. Add eggs and cheese; toss lightly and serve at once. Makes 3 cups or 6 servings. Note: Use clean eggs with no cracks in shells.

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