

B

Section

LIFE

See what's cooking at the CIAA

'Home Plate' chef here for tournament

By Cheri F. Hodges
cheri.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

"Home Plate" chef Marvin Woods is cooking his way to the CIAA.

On March 3-4, the Turner South star is bringing his down home way and recipes to the Charlotte Convention Center where he'll be cooking on Friday with Mayor Pat McCrory and Saturday with CIAA Commissioner Leon Kerry.

"Friday I'm going to be doing a chipotle rubbed sirloin steak with Gorgonzola cheese and on Saturday, I'll be doing benne (black sesame seeds) crusted catfish fingers," he said.

As good as it may sound, only about 30 people are going to get to sample Woods' culinary skills. But everyone will be able to take the recipes home. Woods said it is easy to recreate anything he cooks whether it is on his highly-rated show "Home Plate" or at a live demonstration.

"I speak directly to people. I don't get into the mystique of me being a chef," Woods said. Other cooking shows that he'd seen didn't give viewers something they could walk away with and everything was so regimented and precise, Woods said.

"But if you don't like thyme, you should be able to substitute it for rosemary or something else because you're the one who has to eat the food," he said.

Another thing that Woods offers is healthier soul food recipes. He said by no means is he calling the food he does low-fat or low-calorie, but it's healthier when you use herbs and oil to season collard greens than hamhocks.

"It's a hard sell," he admitted. "People automatically think if something is good for you that it doesn't taste good."

That was proven by slow sales of Woods' "Home Plate Cookbook," which he said was marketed to the health conscious.

"When you read those recipes, you can't tell that they are different," he said. "It's just common sense. Some people cook collards for eight hours and after cooking them for that long they can't have any nutrients in them as opposed to cooking them for 45 minutes."

Woods, whose parents live in Salisbury, said he's familiar with the CIAA tournament. He'll be cheering on the Blue Bears of Livingstone College and meeting new people.

"Charlotte is one of the places where I definitely want to put a restaurant," Woods said.

In January, Woods closed his south Florida restaurant to tackle the real South: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and the Carolinas.

"That's my market."

What to go? "The Taste of Food Lion Stage" Featuring Chef Marvin Woods and Mayor Pat McCrory and CIAA Commissioner Leon Kerry

When: Friday and Saturday at 4-5:45 p.m.

WEDDINGS

May and December romance

Chronological differences doesn't cramp love or style



PHOTO/CURT PETERS

Left: Gene and Hattie Anthony were married on September 19, 1993 with the desire for a small wedding. Right: Pete and Carla Cunningham's huge wedding, with over one hundred in attendance, took place on March 25, 2005.

By Fran Farrer-Nash
THE CHARLOTTE POST

"May and December Romance" means there's a major age difference between the couple involved, at least 10 years but more likely 15 or more.

Most often this means the man is older than the woman, but it could also be that the woman is older than. The term refers to a romantic pairing, from the younger person being in the spring of his or her life (i.e., May), while the older partner is in his or her winter (i.e., December). Today, it is more politically correct to say "age-gap relationships."

Believe it or not, there is even a website called www.maydecember.net for couples seeking "Age Gap Relationships."

Older woman, younger man

Married September 19, 1993, Hattie and Gene Anthony planned a simple ceremony that they intended to take place in the pastor's study immediately following the Sunday service. Hattie's pastor, the Rev. Dr. Don Steger, had another vision. Following the benediction he announced the union and invited the congregation.



Mr. & Mrs. Anthony

Gene's senior, Hattie recalls their first meeting at the Gold Room, a popular spot located in uptown Charlotte. "He was different, he gave off a special aura, and was a perfect gentleman," she said. She admits flirting with him, which allowed him to make the first move by sending her a drink. To acknowledge his presence, she sent one back prior to

her leaving. Gallantry was alive and well. He not only escorted her to her car, but also followed to make sure she got home safely. Three



The Anthonys

days later he placed his number on her windshield and asked her to call. She did. In the early days of dating Hattie found Gene to not only be different, but spirited - very much into his church, a man of principal, and that's what truly attracted her to him. Even though Gene's a member of the Church of God and Saints of Christ, they pray to the same God.

Initially did the age difference ever bother her? No. She's been A-typical most of her life, and her own individual. They dated for several years. When Gene proposed, Hattie said yes. She acknowledges that communication is key. They talked about the potential impact of the relationship. "It's tough being different. The outside world wants you to operate in the norm as defined by society. There have been times when I've had to make a non-verbal statement that this is my husband. Therefore, you have to be tough," she said.

There have been times recently since her retirement, and since she's not as active that she does think about it. But even with the challenges, she's a very secure person.

What does Gene have to say? "I have no regrets. Hattie's a great lady, and I know she loves me. I was attracted to her first, then her cooking."

Suggestions to others facing the age difference dilemma: "First, be



PHOTO/WADE NASH

honest and true to yourself. Define for yourself what your needs are when it comes to your mate. Then go after that. Open communication is the key. Have healthy discussions of the past, and your future. You have to ask yourself what would I do if this person could one day no longer make love, or if I couldn't. Do I feel this person valued the relationship enough to hang in there with me? Take the time to pull the skin back and see who's there - who's this person really?" Hattie Anthony

Older man, younger woman

Carla and Pete Cunningham were united in holy matrimony March 26, 2005 in a more traditional setting in the chapel at Johnson C. Smith University. The wedding party consisted of their children, Kamesha and Kyle Rorie (Carla's), Ronnie, Garry and



Carla bringing given away by her uncle

Christina (three of Pete's five children. Kenneth and Peter were unable to attend), grand-children, family and friends. Over 100 guests were in awe as Carla graced the aisle to wed her soul mate.

After nine years of dating, Pete broke his age-old conviction of never re-marrying. Why? When they met at the Excelsior Club, which he owned at that time, Pete was first attracted to Carla's physical features.

"She was very attractive, had a sense of humor and after a bit of conversation we found we shared similar ideas about what a relationship should be based on. We had a lot in

common," said Pete.

"Yes, I had some reservations about our age difference. But, I'd already accepted that the good Lord had brought me this far; I just asked Him to keep me around at least until I'm about 80. I know some people talk about the age difference, but I'd rather smell perfume than liniment any day," he said.

Did the children have a problem with his marrying a younger woman? "No. If they did they said nothing, maybe because they realized it wouldn't make a difference," Pete said as he smiled.

Carla confesses that she was first attracted to Pete's eyes. Learning she had knowledge of body lifts, he began asking her questions that may assist E.C.H.O. (Excelsior Club Humanity Organization) provide one for Bingo Smith. Bingo was paralyzed as the result of an automobile accident his last year at N.C. Central University. The lift would enable him to be mobile with the assistance of only one caregiver. And, one thing led to the next.

Did age difference ever bother you? "No. He's just more traditional-old school, and I've adjusted better than he has," says Carla. "I'd been alone for 17 years, and he had also for many years. After nine years it was time, it was marry or go our separate ways. Plus, spiritual-



Cunningham wedding was high fashion affair

ly we wanted to do what God's will was. Knowing he's my husband makes a significant difference in our relationship."

See WEDDINGS 2B

Your big day on a dime

ARTICLE RESOURCE ASSOCIATION

A wedding to treasure doesn't have to break the bank. In fact, with smart planning and a little research, you can have a beautiful and memorable wedding with money left over for the honeymoon.

According to experts at The Art Institutes, the best way to begin planning your wedding is to start with a ballpark budget in mind. Determine your high and low price and then head online to do research. By using the Internet, experts say, you can find prices for everything from wedding gowns to photography to reception halls. This gives you a great starting point.

Once you know what you can spend, Suzanne Morrison-Williams, Academic Department director of interactive media design at The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale, suggests involving friends and family to help offset costs. For example, she says, you may have friends who are DJs or amateur photographers and are willing to donate their talents for your big day.

"Friends can also help with decorations and flowers," she says. "Flowers can take up a big part of your budget. While roses are beautiful, they can be expensive. Instead, look for flowers that are in season and usually cost less." If your heart is set on expensive blooms, she says, use fewer for more dramatic impact.

Experts all agree, though, the biggest cost of almost any wedding is the reception, including the location and food. But with a little imagination, there are inexpensive and creative alternatives to the traditional reception hall. Alison Paster, academic director of the Fashion Merchandising/Visual Merchandising programs at The Art Institute of Philadelphia, recently attended a lovely and quaint wedding on the beach.

"The venue was free, and it was a stunning backdrop," she says. The bride purchased a dress on sale from David's Bridal for \$99, and the reception included simple covered dishes and grills for barbecue.

Other ideas to borrow from a simple beach wedding, says Paster, include table centerpieces of beach glass in fish bowls, white M&Ms in netting with a silver bow for favors, and wedding invites and programs done on the computer using decorative paper and hand-made accents. Paster recommends finding inspiration from your setting, and shopping at local craft stores for table setting and wedding favor ideas.

If a beach wedding isn't your style, you can still find a bargain. As the Academic Department director, Culinary & Pastry Arts for The Art Institute of New York City, Robynne Maii wanted a restaurant wedding reception, and with a little negotiation, she got just what she wanted, at a good price. "When we originally started asking about renting a restaurant for our reception, the prices were very high," says Maii. "However, when you speak directly with the owners, prices go down significantly especially if you want a lunch or brunch."

More tips for weddings on a budget from experts at The Art Institutes include:

- If you have your heart set on the \$1,200 dress, find a dressmaker and you can get it made for \$500.

- For elegant food, simpler is better. Guests do not need a large variety of hors d'oeuvres or entree choices. It is better to be specific with what the couple wants and have it executed well. Don't try to please everyone. You always have better quality with less quantity.

- For the location, try something offbeat like a park with a

Please see YOUR/2B