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TWENTY SIXTH YEAR

JULY, 2009

NEWS LETTER

#108

GOURMET COUPLES SCHEDULE FOR 2009

June 28 – Restaurant visit – Et Voila! DC 5:pm (Belgium)
July 12 – Planning Party – 6:00 – 8:00 PM
July 25 – Dinner Party
August 1 – Alternate Dinner Party
August 22 – Minor League Baseball & Tailgate Party (tentative)
September 11 – Army-Navy Country Club, 6:300 PM – Ann and Dick, host
October 3 – Crab Feast, Paula and Joe, host
October 18 – Planning Party, 4:00 – 6:00 PM
October 24 – Halloween Party, Mitzi and Bob, host
November 7 – Dinner Party
November 14 – Alternate Dinner Party
December 6 – Restaurant Brunch, 12 noon
January 9 – 12th Night Party

Welcome to our new members.

Elaine and Markus Olin-Fahle

Summer Dinners

The planning party for the summer dinners will be on Sunday, July 12, at 6:00 p.m. at the home of Ann and Dick'S. The dinner will be on July 25 with an alternative date of August 1.

Remember to bring your cook books and ideas for the Dinner Sets.

Sunshine and Strawberries and Champagne Too

After many days of rain, we were fortunate to have sunshine for our annual Strawberry Brunch, on Sunday, June 7, 2009. Fifteen couples enjoyed the sunshine and the mimosas and strawberries, as well as delicious entres, side dishes and desserts, in Shelly and Linda'S lovely yard. Special thanks to Linda and Shelly for once again hosting one of the highlights of our Gourmet Couples year. They did this after having just returned on the previous Thursday from a trip to Spain. We were happy to see Sally and Tom join us. They have been members for about a year, but because they spend a large part of each year in Florida, we don't get to see them often. Please come back as often as you can Sally and Tom!

Buttery Herb-Cheese Muffins

(Prepared by Linda and Shelly)

Strawberries and Champagne Brunch, Sunday, June 7, 2009

2 Cups self-rising flour
1 Cup butter, melted
1 (6.5 ounce) package garlic-and-herb spreadable cheese, softened
1/2 Cup sour cream
Stir together all ingredients just until blended.
Spoon muffin batter into lightly greased miniature muffin pans, filling to the top.
Bake at 350 degrees F. for 25 minutes or until lightly browned. Makes 2-1/2 dozen
Note: For testing purposes only, we used Alouette Garlic et Herbes Gourmet Spreadable Cheese.

Strawberry Pecan Quick Bread

(Prepared by Linda and Shelly)

Strawberries and Champagne Brunch, Sunday, June 7, 2009

1-1/2 Cup All-purpose flour
1-1/2 Teaspoons baking Powder
1/2 tsp salt
1 Cup sugar
2 Tablespoons sugar
1 Teaspoon Cinnamon
1 Stick unsalted Butter (at room temperature)
2 Eggs
1 Teaspoon vanilla
1/2 Cup milk
3/4 Cup dried Strawberries (or mixed dried berries), coarsely chopped
1/2 Cup pecans, coarsely chopped
Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9 x 5 inch loaf pan with vegetable oil. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour with the baking powder and salt. In a small bowl, mix 2 table-spoons sugar with the cinnamon. In a large bowl, beat the butter with the remaining 1 cup sugar until pale and fluffy. At medium speed, add the eggs one at a time; beat until each one is fully incorporated before adding the next. Add the vanilla. At low speed, working in two batches, beat in the dry ingredients and milk. Using a spatula, fold in the dried berries and pecans.

Scrape batter into the prepared pan and sprinkle evenly with the cinnamon sugar. Bake for one hour and 5 minutes or until a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Let the bread cool in the pan for 15 minutes, then turn it out onto a rack. Let cool completely before slicing.

Watergate Salad

(Prepared by Sally and Tom)

Strawberries and Champagne Brunch, Sunday, June 7, 2009

1 9 ounce carton Cool Whip
1 4 ounce package pistachio instant pudding (use dry from package).
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1 4 ounce package pistachio instant pudding (use dry from package).
1 20 ounce can crushed pineapple, drained
1/2 Cup chopped pecans
1 Cup miniature marshmallows
Mix Cool Whip and pudding mix until pudding is completely dissolved. Add pineapple, pecans and marshmallows. Mix the above and chill in refrigerator.

American Picnic Potato Salad

(Prepared by Paula and Joe)

Strawberries and Champagne Brunch, Sunday, June 7, 2009

4 Pounds boiling potatoes
1/2 Cup white wine vinegar
1/2 Cup extra virgin olive oil
1 Teaspoon salt
1/4 Teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 Cup thinly sliced red onions
1 Cup celery strips (1 inch long, 1/4 inch wide)
3 Medium cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and sliced
2 Cups mayonnaise, plus sour cream if more needed
5 Tablespoons Dijon or herb mustard (dill, tarragon, or basil)
20 Hard-cooked eggs, peeled and quartered
1 Cup chopped fresh Italian (flat-leaf) parsley
Sun dried tomatoes
Garlic if desired

Peel the potatoes, dropping them into a kettle of cold salted water as you work. Then bring the water to a boil, and cook until the potatoes are tender but still firm, about 20 minutes.

Drain the potatoes and drop them into a mixing bowl; roughly slice them. Sprinkle the still-hot potatoes with the vinegar, olive oil, salt, and pepper.

Add the red onions, celery, cucumbers, mayonnaise, and mustard; toss gently to combine.

Add the eggs and parsley, and toss again. Cool to room temperature, cover, and refrigerate over night. Before serving, toss again, correct the seasoning add more mayonnaise or sour cream if needed. Serves 20

Layered Cobb Salad

(Prepared by Fran and Jerry)

Strawberries and Champagne Brunch, Sunday, June 7, 2009

Ingredients

6 Cups sliced romaine lettuce, washed
1/2 Pound grape tomatoes, halved
4 Cups shredded cooked chicken
2 Ripe avocados, peeled and diced
1 Large red onion, peeled and sliced

1 Pound cooked medium-size shrimp, peeled (3/4 pound peeled)
1 Cup chunky blue cheese dressing
6 Slices cooked bacon, crumbled

Directions

1. Place sliced lettuce in the bottom of a 14-cup glass salad bowl or trifle dish. Pack down slightly.
2. On top of lettuce, neatly layer tomatoes, chicken, avocados, red onion and shrimp. Press down lightly to compress.
3. Spread with dressing. Refrigerate at least 1 hour; sprinkle with bacon just before serving.

Chill: 1 hour Serves 8

Southern Seven Layer Salad

(Prepared by Barbara and Ron)

Strawberries and Champagne Brunch, Sunday, June 7, 2009

1/2 Head of lettuce (Iceberg is traditional, but other salad greens can be used)
1 10 ounce package of frozen peas (cooked and drained)
1/2 Cup onions (red or purple add color but white is fine)
1/2 Cup celery
1/2 Cup green pepper
2 Cups Miracle Whip (some families use mayonnaise instead)
2 Teaspoon sugar
4 Slices crisp fried bacon (or bacon bits)
4 Ounces shredded cheese (usually cheddar)

A large clear glass bowl or punch bowl is ideal for this pea salad, because it's possible to see all the various ingredients. They look very colorful and festive.

First, break the lettuce into bite sized pieces and line the bottom of the bowl.

Next, sprinkle the peas over the lettuce. Be sure to cook the peas and drain them first. You can, alternately, use fresh garden peas. Little garden peas do not have to be cooked, but most people do cook or steam them a bit.

Cut the onions, celery, and green pepper up into small pieces. You can make rings with the onions and pepper, but it's harder to serve the dish if the pieces are that large.

In a small bowl, mix the sugar and Miracle Whip. Spread the Miracle Whip over the salad. Go all the way to the edges to create a seal. Depending on the width of the bowl used, you may need more or less Miracle Whip. Adjust as needed. The idea is to have a thin layer over the top.

Crumble the bacon and sprinkle over the top of the Miracle Whip.

Sprinkle cheese over the top of the Seven Layer Salad.

The bacon and cheese can be added right before serving. The bacon, in particular is crisper if added later. But, it's fine to do it either way. Some people prefer a more blended texture. Cover the bowl and chill overnight.

Amish Breakfast Casserole

(Prepared by Cheryl and Dick)

Strawberries and Champagne Brunch, Sunday, June 7, 2009

- 1 Pound sliced bacon, diced
- 1 Medium Sweet onion
- 6 Eggs, lightly beaten
- 4 Cups frozen shredded hash brown potatoes
- 2 Cups shredded mild cheddar cheese
- 1-1/2 Cups small curd cottage cheese
- 1-1/4 Cups shredded swiss cheese

In large skillet, cook bacon and onion until bacon is crisp, drain. Mix together the remaining ingredients, stir in bacon mixture. Transfer to a greased 9 x 13 pan.

Bake, uncovered at 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes or until eggs are set and bubbly. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. Serves 8 - 10

Pasta With Roasted Peppers and Basil

(Prepared by Barbara and Jim)

Strawberries and Champagne Brunch, Sunday, June 7, 2009

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 2 Cups chopped onion
- 1/2 Teaspoon fennel seeds crushed
- 2 Clove garlic, minced
- 2 14-1/2 ounce cans no-salt added whole tomatoes, undrained and chopped
- 1 Pound green peppers, roasted and peeled (about 2 large)
- 1 Pound sweet red peppers, roasted and peeled (about 2 large)
- 1 Pound sweet yellow peppers roasted and peeled (about 2 large)
- 1/2 Teaspoon salt
- 1/4 Teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 8 Cups cooked penne cooked without salt or fat
- 1/2 Cup thinly sliced fresh basil
- 1/2 Cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-low heat. Add chopped onion, fennel seeds, and garlic; cover mixture, and cook 10 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally. Add Chopped tomatoes to onion mixture, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cut roasted green, red and yellow peppers into julienne strips, Add roasted pepper strips, salt, and freshly ground pepper to tomato mixture; cook 3 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Combine tomato mixture, cooked pasta, and basil in a large bowl, and toss mixture well. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Spinach Lasagna

(Prepared by Sandy and Chuck)

Strawberries and Champagne Brunch, Sunday, June 7, 2009

- 1 Pound lasagna noodles
- 2 Eggs
- 2 Pounds cottage cheese
- 1/2 Pound shredded mozzarella
- 1 Quart Marinara sauce
- 2 Packages thawed chopped spinach with liquid
- Shredded parmesan cheese

Place thin layer of sauce in pan, then place uncooked noodles for the next layer. Mix together spinach (with its liquid), eggs and cottage cheese. Place 1/3 of mixture over noodles, then 1/3 of the mozzarella. Repeat with 1/3 sauce, noodles, 1/3 mixture and 1/3 mozzarella and repeat for the third layer. Sprinkle shredded parmesan cheese on top.

Place in refrigerator over night,
Bake at 350 degrees F. for 1 hour

Old Fashioned Bread Pudding

(Prepared by Mitzi and Bob)

Strawberries and Champagne Brunch, Sunday, June 7, 2009

- 4 Slices day-old bread- or use coffee cake or sweet rolls, cubed
- 3 Cups scalded milk
- 1 Tablespoon butter
- 1/4 Teaspoon salt
- 1/3 Cup white sugar - less if using coffee cake or sweet rolls
- 1/3 Cup brown sugar - coffee cake or sweet rolls
- 4 Eggs beaten
- 1 Teaspoon vanilla
- * Raisons, optional

Soak bread in milk if a smooth pudding is preferred. Add remaining ingredients. mix gently. Pour into buttered 1 quart baking dish. Set in a pan of warm water. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 1 hour or until an inserted knife comes out clean. Serve warm or cold with the following sauce:

Lemon Spice Sauce

- 1/2 Cup sugar
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 Cup boiling water
- 2 Tablespoons butter
- 1/8 Teaspoon salt
- 1/4 Teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 Teaspoon ginger

Mix sugar and corn starch. Blind with water. Cook over low heat, stirring as it becomes thick and clear. remove from heat and add the rest of the ingredients.

* Cranberries and mixed fruit were used for this recipe.

Chunky Pecan Bars

(Prepared by Jerry and Barbara)

Strawberries and Champagne Brunch, Sunday, June 7, 2009

- 1-1/2 Cups all purpose flour
- 1/2 Cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/2 Cup butter
- 3 Large eggs
- 3/4 Cup dark corn syrup
- 2 Tablespoons melted butter
- 1 Teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1-3/4 Cups semisweet chocolate chunks
- 1-1/2 Cups chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Spray a 13x9 baking pan with nonstick cooking spray.

In a small bowl, combine flour and brown sugar. Using a pastry blender, cut in butter until mixture is crumbly. Press into prepared pan. Bake for 15 minutes.

In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, sugar, syrup, melted butter and vanilla. Stir in chocolate and pecans. Pour over crust. Bake for 25 minutes. Let cool for ten minutes on a wire rack. Cut into bars. Store in the refrigerator.

Savory Apple Strata

(Prepared by Ann and Dick)

Strawberries and Champagne Brunch, Sunday, June 7, 2009

Ingredients:

- 12 Ounces kielbasa cut into half moons
- 4 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and chopped
- 1 Medium size onion chopped
- 12 Eggs
- 3 Cups of milk
- 4 Tablespoons honey mustard
- 1 Teaspoon dried sage
- 1/2 Teaspoon black pepper
- 2 Loaves French Bread baguettes cut into 1 inch cubes
- 2 Cups shredded cheddar cheese

Coat a 13 by 9 inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray.

In a 10 inch nonstick skillet, sauté the kielbasa, apples and onion for about 5 minutes over medium heat. If sticking to skillet, add 1 tablespoon water. Cool mixture slightly.

In medium size bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, honey mustard, sage and pepper; set aside.

Place the bread cubes in a large bowl. Gently stir in the kielbasa mixture and one cup of the shredded cheese. Spoon into the prepared baking dish and then pour the egg mixture evenly over it. Compress lightly with hands until all ingredients are moistened. Sprinkle with remaining cup of shredded cheese.

Cover with foil and bake at 375 degrees for 20 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 20 minutes.

Cool slightly before serving.

Makes 12 – 16 servings.