

# In mom's memory

Cookbook winner prepared entries to honor mother

By **GARY DEMUTH**  
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Winning grand prize in the 2007 Salina Journal Holiday Cookbook Contest had special meaning for Salinan Eileen Thibault.

She entered this year's contest in tribute to her mother, Irene Curran, a Nebraska resident who died the day before Thanksgiving 2006.

"She taught me how to cook," said Thibault, 1822 Valley View. "I was one of 13 kids, seven of them daughters, but cooking was the one thing she and I shared uniquely. It was our special time together."

Thibault had placed in several food categories in previous years, but she said her specific goal this year was to win the grand prize.

"I thought, if I ever was going to win grand prize, it had to be this year, for my mom," she said.

Thibault's mother would be proud of her. Not only did she win grand prize for her main dish entry, Hot Pepper Peach Preserves Wraps, she also placed in three other categories: first in Cookies, Breads and Rolls for her Candy Cane Coffee Cake; second in Appetizers and Salads for Stuffed Penguins; and third in Vegetables and Soups for Butter Squash Soup with Popcorn and Cinnamon Butter.

Thibault had a feeling her wraps — made with cream cheese, jalapeño peach preserves, carrots, onions,

cucumbers, bean sprouts and spinach leaves wrapped in spinach and wheat tortillas — could be a winner.

"It's been a family favorite for a long time," she said.

Her wraps are both cool and hot — the coolness of cream cheese with the hot bite of jalapeños. They're also loaded with healthy ingredients such as spinach, carrots, cranberries and cucumbers.

And though the recipe calls for the addition of turkey or chicken, these meats easily can be left out to appeal to the vegetarian palette.

"It's a very versatile dish," Thibault said. "You can put just about anything you want in it. The only staple is the cream cheese and hot preserves."

The wraps certainly were the favorite of contest judge Ron Kramer.

"They were pleasing to all the senses," he said. "They're very nutritional, and they surprised you with their explosion of flavor."

Judge Dorothy Oldham thought the dish might be too spicy for some people, but that it could be adapted to just about any taste.

"My family would like it," she said.

Thibault said her mother would be glad to know that when it came to cooking, she taught her daughter well.

She suspects her mother might even have had a hand in her win.

"I know I was thinking of her when I made these dishes," Thibault said.

## ON THE COVER

**Winning recipes** (clockwise from left):

**Grand prize** — *Hot Pepper Peach Preserves Wraps*

**Main dishes & casseroles** — *Green Chili Chicken Enchiladas*

**Appetizers & salads** — *Swiss and Ham Pastry Squares*

**Vegetables & soups** — *Yummy Turkey or Chicken Enchilada Soup*

**Kids' dishes** — *Banana Split Cake*

**Candies & desserts** — *Pumpkin Pie Cheesecake*

**Cookies, breads & rolls** — *Candy Cane Coffee Cake*

### Judges

- **Dorothy Oldham**, owner of The Enchanted Cottage in downtown Salina
- **Rhonda McIntire**, part-time employee at The Enchanted Cottage
- **Kay Kindall**, co-owner/operator of the Trader's Lodge, a bed and breakfast near Wells
- **Jane Kramer**, volunteer, retired from the Salina Journal
- **Ron Kramer**, safety operations director of Blue Beacon International

Photos by **TOM DORSEY** / Salina Journal



## Smore KaBOBS

**YOUR FAVORITE CAMPFIRE TREATS TURNED TO HOLIDAY SWEETS**

- 16 regular marshmallows**
- 8 bamboo skewers (broken in half)**
- 4 honey graham crackers**
- 4 Hershey's milk chocolate bars (broken up)**

### Directions

**Finely crush graham crackers and place in a shallow bowl. In a 1 cup liquid measuring cup, melt chocolate in microwave or on stovetop. Push each skewer 3/4 of the way through each marshmallow. Holding the stick, dip marshmallow into the chocolate, allow excess to drip off then roll in the crushed crackers. Serve (or store in airtight container)**

(This recipe is stolen property of Bob's Brother Ken)