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Indulge in Chocolate March

Sweeten mud season with chocolate treats

By Kelly Michaud, Editor

The words milk, dark, white, semi-sweet and bittersweet are music to the ears of chocolate lovers. chocolate fans will have a reason to rejoice this March when the inaugural Chocolate March is held in Rockland.

Saturday and Sunday, March 11 and 12, several of the city's downtown businesses will join the local historic inns to celebrate all things chocolate. The event, which is being organized by the innkeepers of The Berry Manor Inn, LimeRock Inn, and Captain Lindsey House Inn, will benefit United Mid-Coast Charities and the group hopes to make a minimum donation of \$1,000 to the group. UMCC donates funds to groups including Area Interfaith Outreach, Coastal Workshop, Make-A-Wish Foundation of Maine, and many others. Organizers say they hope this year's event will be the first of many and take on a life of its own.

"You can't say 'chocolate' and not smile," said Frank Isganitis of the LimeRock Inn. "Rockland is going to be Chocolate Fest in March and Lobster Fest in August."

The innkeepers, who are behind the popular Annual Pie Tour, have been working to create destination events in the area to foster business in the off-season and to offer the community things to do.

"People are just dying for something to do in March," said Ellen Barnes of the Captain Lindsey House Inn.



The innkeepers of Rockland's historic inns have organized the Chocolate March weekend. Enjoying some chocolate treats a from left, Frank Isganitis of the LimeRock Inn, Cheryl Michaelsen of The Berry Manor Inn, PJ Walter of the LimeRock Inn and Ellen and Capt. Ken Barnes of the Captain Lindsey House Inn. KELLY MICHAUD PHOTO

Her husband Capt. Ken Barnes agrees. "It's mud season, so sweeten up mud season with chocolate," he said.

The event kicks off at the beginning of National Chocolate Week and a limited number of tickets, total, are being sold. The event is expected to sellout and advance tickets are encouraged. Tickets were on sale at the inns Feb. 15, and are \$15 in advance, with \$5 from every ticket benefiting United Mid-Coast Charities. Only a limited number of tickets may be available on the day of the event and cost \$20 on the day available (be sure to call ahead of time). There will be no rain or snow date, since the organizers have a chocolate waits for no one.

Weekend packages also are available at the inns, which offer more possibilities. In addition to all the perks of the regular tickets, the packages include overnight stays at the inns with a chocolate breakfast, a chocolate gift basket, plus other treats and more discounts.

All ticket and package sales are available at the three inns and also by calling 596-7950.

Saturday's festivities begin when the downtown businesses open and ticket holders can work their way up and down Main Street to different participating businesses. Those who are participating will have a Chocolate March poster (the image on the cover of this issue) in their storefront.

Ticket holders will enjoy special sales, demonstrations, chocolate treats and more.



Pastry chef and owner Carol Thompson of the Pastry Garden at 313 Main St., Rockland, will demonstrate the art of making homemade chocolate truffles during Chocolate March on Saturday, March 11.

KELLY MICHAUD PHOTO

"What you'll see is so creative because people who don't have any other ideas to do with chocolate in their business have approached this to be part of the event - whether it's silver jewelry that looks like a kiss or a brown tag salted caramel chocolate or just come in and shop and we'll give you chocolate," Cheryl Michaelsen of The Berry Manor Inn. "Who doesn't love chocolate?"

Sunday's focus will be on the three inns, where ticket holders can enjoy more chocolate delights and unique demonstrations.

All participants in the event will have a chance to win gift baskets by visiting businesses and all three inns and having their tickets stamped. If a person has 20 stamps from downtown businesses, plus all three inns, he or she will be entered to win the grand prize basket, valued at \$400. If a ticket holder visits any of the businesses, plus all three inns, he or she will be eligible for one of two smaller gift baskets valued at \$100 each. Prizes include an overnight at one of the inns, a bike tune-up from Bikesnja, a make-over from Harbor Beauty Bar, a facial from nordström, a piece of jewelry from G.M. Pollack & Sons, and more. Stamped tickets can be turned in at any of the three inns on Sunday.

The contributions from businesses for the event have been "phenomenal," Isganitis said, adding, "It's blown me away."

"We love our town; we love working with the businesses and we love the idea of doing things that are mutually beneficial," Isganitis said.

Demonstrations

The demonstrations begin Saturday at noon at Second Read Books & Coffee at 328 Main St. Here, ticket holders can sample a rich and creamy sipping chocolate and try Rock City Roaster's limited edition Chocolate March coffee, which has been blended just for the event, through 1 p.m.

From 2 p.m.-4 p.m., pastry chef and owner Carol Thompson of the Pastry Garden at 313 Main St., demonstrate the art of making homemade chocolate truffles.

Then, from 3 p.m.-5 p.m., visit the Wine Seller at 315 Main St., where ticket holders will learn how to pair chocolate with wine.

Sunday, March 12, The Berry Manor Inn, LimeRock Inn, and Captain Lindsey House Inn will each offer chocolate delights and feature demonstrations, which all will take place at 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30 p.m.

At The Berry Manor, at 81 Talbot Ave., indulge in a chocolate fountain. The four-foot fountain, which comes from Rockport Chocolates, can hold 20 pounds of mouth-watering liquid chocolate. Dip fresh fruit, nuts, fruit, pretzels and other delights in the chocolate fountain -- there may even be a few bizarre items.

Patty Hyland of Treasures from the Heart, who is known as the soap lady, will show how she makes scented soaps when she visits the LimeRock Inn, located at 96 Limerock St. To tie in with the theme, Hyland will make chocolate, chocolate cake and hot fudge brownie soaps. Hyland has been making her own soaps for eight years and it has become her passion, she said.

The soaps make a great gift and are a project that children can do with supervision, she said.

Hyland starts with one pound of glycerine soap, which you can find at craft stores or online, she said, then to that she adds one tablespoon of distilled water.

Next, she melts the soap and water in the microwave (you also could use a double-boiler) until it is completely melted. Gently stir the glycerine to make sure it is completely melted and be careful not to create any bubbles. To the mixture, add your scent -- Hyland encourages using scents that are specifically for soaps only.

Pour the mixture into a mold -- use bar shapes or other fun molds that you can find at craft stores -- and let the soap sit. It takes about an hour to harden before you can remove the soap from the molds and wrap them in plastic. To decorate the bars, Hyland wraps them in decorative art papers, like wallpaper or scrapbook paper. You also could use a brown bag and tie a piece of raffia around it. When you're done, you will have a sweet-smelling gift to give or keep. At her demonstration, Hyland will show more tricks and will answer questions.

At the Captain Lindsey House Inn, on Lindsey Street, Evelyn Donnelly of Cafe Miranda will offer a chocolate twist on an Italian favorite by making chocolate pasta.

Downtown treats

On Saturday, these Main Street businesses will offer the following to



Patty Hyland of Treasures from the Heart on Main Street will lead demonstrations on how to make scented soaps at the LimeRock Inn Sunday, March 12. She will make chocolate, chocolate cake and hot fudge brownie soaps. Hyland has been making her

ticket holders:

* Amalfi, 421 Main St.: Chef and owner David Cooke will feature his delicious chocolate soup and other chocolate desserts;

own soap for eight years and has become her passion, she said. **KELLY MICHAUD PHOTO**

* Atlantic Baking Company, 351 Main St.: The bakery will offer two chocolate treats (for the price of one) for ticket holders. Included are mudslide cookies, flourless brownies, chocolate croissants and chocolate-almond bearclaws;

* Bikesnjava, 481 Main St.: Get a German Chocolate latte for half price;

* The Black Bull Tavern, 420 Main St.: Save 20 percent on the restaurant's Black Forest Cake unwind with a specially- priced chocolate beverage;

* Camden National Bank, 25 Park St.: Visitors can sample a featured chocolate confection during business hours;

* Critter Outfitters, 474 Main St.: There will be special treats for pets and their owners;

* G.M. Pollack & Sons, 377 Main St.: Most rings in the store are half off. While you browse, enjoy a chocolate treat and a complimentary jewelry cleaning.

* Grasshopper Shop, 400 Main St.: Ticket holders can take 20 percent off non-sale items;

* Handle It, 403 Main St.: Guess how many chocolate kisses are in a jar and you can win it. Plus, enjoy savings on the Chocolate Lounge Music jazz CD;

* Harbor Beauty Bar, 395 Main St.: Call ahead and make an appointment for a make over featuring chocolate colors. Ticket holders will save 50 percent. Call 596-9913;



Ticket holders can get 50 cents off chocolate ice cream creations at Thorndike Creamery on Main Street, Saturday, March 11. Carrie Gray of the ice cream shop created this brownie sundae. The treat features triple chocolate,

* House of Cards, 409 Main St.: Indulge in complimentary chocolates as you peruse the card rack; gifts;

* In Good Company, 415 Main St.: Chef Me Wolfertz will create special chocolate delights and the proceeds will be donated to United Mid-Coast Charities;

* Nordström Skin Care Studio, 389 B Main St.: Enjoy at home a two-ounce Chocolate Body Scrub for \$5 (a value) and treat yourself at home;

* Pastry Garden, 313 Main St.: All chocolate items including tarts, cakes and truffles, will be 10 percent off for ticket holders;

* Pinnacle Creative Team, 475 Main St.: Purchase a custom photo mug for \$16.95 and 50 percent of the proceeds will be donated to United Mid-Coast Charities;

chocolate chip and mint summer's night dream ice cream topped with hot fudge, whipped cream, toffee pieces, chocolate sprinkles and a pair of cherries. KELLY MICHAUD PHOTO

* Puffin's Nest, 464 Main St.: Chocolate Marchers receive free samples of the owner's creation called An Moose Chunk Cookie;

* Rock City Roasters, 254 Main St.: Stop b purchase a bag of their limited edition Chocolate M blend;

* Rockland Cafe, 441 Main St.: Enjoy a slice of chocolate rush cake with the purchase of any lun dinner entree;

* Rustica Cucina Italiano, 315 Main St.: Experience the new restaurant and enjoy a slice of choc layer cake with raspberry and white chocolate filling at 50 percent off;

* Sanctuary Day Spa, 336 Main St.: Schedule an appointment to unwind with a special "hot choco oil massage and hot rock treatment. Call 594-8403;

* Second Read Books & Coffee, 328 Main St.: Try a chocolate drink at a 10 percent discount;

* Sunfire Mexican Grille, 488 B Main St.: Spice up your meal with a free cup of Mexican hot choc with the purchase of any lunch or dinner entree;

* The Strand Theatre, 345 Main St.: The theater will screen the film "Chocolat" at 1:30 p.m. and t holders will get in for \$3. Regular matinee admission is \$6.

* The Store, 435 Main St.: Help The Store celebrate 25 years in business with a chance to win a reef blue artisan Kitchen-Aid mixer. Tickets are \$10 and are two for one for Chocolate Marchers;

* TD Banknorth, 34 School St.: Enjoy complimentary hot chocolate from 9 a.m. to noon;

* Thorndike Creamery, 385 Main St.: Ticket holders can get 50 cents off chocolate ice cream creations;

* Treasures from the Heart, 485 Main St.: Treat yourself to hugs and kisses while you check out specialty items from Maine and beyond;

* Waterworks Restaurant, 5 Lindsey St.: Enjoy a 50 percent savings on a fried chocolate cheesecake for dessert. Plus, you also can enjoy \$1 glasses of Rocky Bay Foghorn Brown Ale;

* Wine Seller, 315 Main St.: Receive a 10 percent discount on the purchase of a case of wine.

With so many ways to enjoy chocolate, make sure you mark your calendar and get your tickets early for the inaugural Chocolate March. ◆



On Saturday, March 11, Atlantic Baking Company at 351 Main St. will offer two chocolate treats (for the price of one) for ticket holders. Included are mudslide cook flourless brownies, chocolate croissants and chocolate almond bearclaws.

KELLY MICHAUD PHOTO

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