



Everything New Orleans

Musicians Clinic celebrates Wardelle Quezergue with a diabetic-friendly menu on his 80th

By Judy Walker, The Times-Picayune

March 11, 2010, 5:00AM

Meringue letters perched atop the sugar-free cupcakes sitting on the buffet spelled out "Mr. Big Stuff" and "Happy B-Day."



Eliot Kamenitz

Friend and collaborator Dr. John, birthday guy Wardelle Quezergue and president Bethany Bultman of the New Orleans Musicians Assistance Foundation

Nearby sat Wardelle Quezergue, the legendary producer/arranger/band leader and composer behind that hit song and thousands of others, ranging from The Dixie Cups' "Chapel of Love" to "Groove Me" by King Floyd and "Barefootin'" by Robert Parker, to name only a few. The man Allen Toussaint dubbed "The Creole Beethoven" worked with Professor Longhair, Fats Domino, Paul Simon, Aaron Neville, BB King, The Supremes, Willie Nelson, Robbie Robertson ... shall we go on?

Friday, Quezergue turns 80. Saturday, his friends and the New Orleans Musicians Clinic, the New Orleans Musicians Assistance Foundation and the Xavier Wellness Center are throwing him a big birthday luncheon that serves as a primer for how to have a delicious celebration that balances New Orleans' love of food with a medically restricted diet.

Quezergue is a diabetic; he lost his sight to the disease some years ago. His friends are contributing party finger food that meets Quezergue's dietary challenges head-on. The dishes are diabetes-friendly and neat and tidy to eat. His friend Dr. John, Mac Rebennack, one of countless musicians who has worked with Quezergue, accompanied him to a pre-party lunch with foundation president Bethany Bultman and friends.

Drew Young contributed oyster patties, since oysters are Quezergue's favorite food.

"I omitted the parmesan and put a tiny bit more dried mustard and Creole seasoning, " said Young, a devoted cook as well as Putumayo's World Music's strategic marketing manager.

"I love Wardell. He's such a sweet man. I'm doing a new record and Wardell will be doing the arrangement for me. I do more roots music, and he's completely into it."

Quezergue still composes music with the assistance of his son, Brian Quezergue, a music teacher. He also attends mass every day.

Quezergue lists "good roast beef" among his favorite foods, and his attorney and close friend, Ashlye Keaton, is making roast beef finger sandwiches on



Eliot Kamenitz/The Times-Picayune

Drew Young made a favorite recipe, oyster patties, lower in sodium.

thin slices of pumpernickle, with a light flavored cream cheese spread instead of mayonnaise.

The man she calls her "Creole grandfather" is learning how to eat healthy and actually enjoying it, Keaton said.

"He's found some foods he'd ever eaten before, " she said. He eats much less salt, chooses not to have fried foods, and makes common sense choices tailored to his visual impairment.

"What Wardell generally prefers are foods that are easy to eat, basically something he can pick up, " Keaton said. "He doesn't want to spill on himself so he stays away from messy foods."



Eliot Kamenitz, The Times-Picayune

Trays of finger food include Surrey's house-made lox with herb salad rolled inside and their marinated cucumbers stuffed with house-smoked salmon, plus marinated grilled asparagus and Diane Ireland's deviled eggs made with no-sugar-added sweet relish.

"I just watch what I eat, " Quezeregue said of his regular diet. "There are a lot of things I can eat. I can eat the vegetables, you know, things like that, as long as it's not leafy stuff" which may interfere with his medication. "I do take a spoonful of spinach, cabbage, and that kind of jazz, but never too much of it."

Dietician and diabetic educator Pam Lyons, who consults with the musicians' clinic, said that most diabetic education "really has to do with portion control.

"The specific challenges for musicians are meal consistency, eating at about the same time and the same amount of food every day. With their schedules, it's difficult to do that, plus sleep deprivation, plus the food choices. They're usually in a bar, or eating on the go, " Lyons said.

Bultman said the Musicians Clinic partners with the Xavier Wellness Center for lifestyle training and diabetic coaching for musician patients who have diabetes and/or hypertension. Diabetes is one of the three principle diagnoses seen in the musician's clinic; hypertension and depression are the other two, and 87 percent of patients have multiple chronic conditions.

"Mental well-being is the number one priority, " Bultman said. "If somebody's depressed, they're disinclined to even take their blood pressure.

"We are taking care of one of New Orleans' greatest natural resources, " Bultman said.

For Quezergue's party, she is making an old family recipe for oyster filé broth, and serving it in demitasse cups so it will be simple for

Quezergue to sip. Don't use washed or pasteurized oysters for the oyster water, she warns.

Sweet options include a fruit tart, a chocolate cake and mini cupcakes from KC's Babycakes, KC Dinhofer's six-month-old cupcake business in Mandeville. Some of the cupcakes were sweetened with Swerve, a new sugar replacement developed by Catherine Wilbert, a north shore naturopath whose office is across the street from KC's Babycakes. "My mother's diabetic, and I've been baking sugar-free for years, since I was 17, " Dinhofer said.

She bakes carrot, red velvet, vanilla and chocolate sugar-free babycakes by special order.

And when she does have them in the shop, "we cannot keep them in." The bakery also does gluten-free and vegan/lactose-free cupcakes by request.

Quezergue said oh yes, he had quite the sweet tooth back in the day.

"I was a doughnut man, " he said. "When I was younger I worked in a doughnut bakery shop. I never baked, but worked around the shop. And I love those cream pies, strawberry pie. Oh God, thinking about it is already making my sugar go up."

These days, he gets along well with sugar-free yogurt, Quezergue said.

"I love that. But every now and then I might steal a doughnut and limit myself to one."

As for reaching the big round-number birthday: "I feel like I'm 80!" Quezergue said, then laughed. "I'm glad I reached it. I have the usual aches and pains and all that kind of jazz but I still have the capacity. I'm still blind but I have the capacity of thinking what I have to do and someone I can dictate to. All in all, the age factor is not bothering me anymore. It never did."

.....

Bethany Bultman's recipe comes from her grandmother's family in St. Mary Parish. "As a child we always had it as a first course at Sunday dinner during Lent, " she wrote.

In batches, Bultman toasts whole-wheat flour to a light caramel color, using a cast-iron skillet in the oven at 350 degrees while she cooks something else. She keeps an eye on the flour and stirs it occasionally, and knows it's done when it has a nice aroma. She keeps it in a jar in the freezer to add a nutty taste to all sauces; the flavor allows for the amount of fat to be reduced.

Bethany's Oyster File Broth

Makes 6 to 8 cups

3 green onions

1 rib celery

1 shallot

1 clove garlic

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons browned whole-wheat flour



Eliot Kamenitz, The Times-Picayune

KC's Babycakes in Mandeville makes custom meringue lettering toppers, such as these spelling out Mr. Big Stuff, as well as cupcakes for special diets.

4 cups oyster liquor

Hot sauce to taste

1 dozen oysters

Juice of 1/2 lemon

Dash file' powder

Finely chop the green onions, celery, shallot and garlic by hand or in a food processor. Sauté until soft in olive oil.

Add in browned flour* and mix well.

In a saucepan, poach the oysters in oyster liquor, heating gently until the the edges curl. Chop the oysters in pea-sized morsels.

In a separate pan, warm the oyster liquor and slowly add it into the vegetable mixture until it thickens. Heat gently. Add hot sauce to taste. Serve right away; sprinkle with file' powder just before serving. Be careful not to cook the file' as it will become slimy.

Calories per 1-cup serving: 28. Fat grams: 1. Carb grams: 3.

*Browned flour directions are above the recipe.

.....



**Eliot Kamenitz,
The Times-
Picayune**

**Roast beef finger
sandwiches**

Ashley Keaton's "Mr. Big Stuff" Roast Beef Finger Sandwiches

Makes 18 thin finger sandwiches

1 medium ripe avocado (preferably Hass)

1/2 cup diced tomatoes (or strained chunky salsa)

1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

1 tablespoon minced cilantro

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

12 very thin slices pumpernickle bread

2 tablespoons light cream cheese spread*

1/2 pound thinly sliced rare roast beef

In small bowl, mash avocado with fork. Stir in tomatoes, lime juice, cilantro, salt, and pepper. Spread avocado mixture evenly over 6 slices bread.

Spread other 6 slices with about 1 teaspoon each of the cream cheese spread. Top with roast beef, dividing evenly. Gently press avocado-topped bread slices, avocado sides down, onto each sandwich.

With a long serrated knife, gently trim off crusts and cut each sandwich lengthwise into thirds.

*Mix light cream cheese and lots of Tabasco until it's salmon pink, add a hint of lime juice, cumin, fresh black pepper and a pinch of salt.

Calories per serving: 66. Fat grams: 4.5. Carb grams: 9.

.....

Drew Young of Putumayo World Music modified a favorite recipe to come up with a reduced-sodium version.

Drew's Oyster Cakes

Makes 12 appetizer-size cakes

1 dozen oysters, chopped

1 egg

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 teaspoon seafood seasoning

1 teaspoon parsley flakes

1/4 teaspoon dry mustard

1 tablespoon mayonnaise

1 teaspoon prepared mustard

1/4 cup whole wheat bread or cracker crumbs

4 tablespoons olive oil

Place oysters in a large mixing bowl. In another bowl, beat egg, Worcestershire, lemon juice, seafood seasoning, parsley flakes, dry mustard, mayonnaise, prepared mustard, cracker or bread crumbs and 2 tablespoons olive oil. Mix well.

Fold this dressing into oysters. Shape mixture into slightly flattened patties, place on a platter or plate and chill.

To cook: Sauté the cakes in 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil on both sides until they are golden brown, or broil until golden brown on each side.

.....

Diane Ireland, a donor and volunteer at the Assistance Foundation, has become particularly fond and supportive of Quezergue. She said she recently discovered no-sugar-added sweet relish in supermarkets, right next to the regular kind.

Diane's Diabetic-Conscious Deviled Eggs

Makes 24 halves

1 dozen eggs

3 tablespoons Hellmann's Canola Mayonnaise

1 tablespoon yellow mustard

1 tablespoon no-sugar-added sweet pickle relish

Salt and pepper

Paprika or cayenne pepper

Place eggs in pot of cold water over high heat until water boils. Place lid on pot and turn off heat. Leave standing for 16 minutes and drain. Place ice on eggs until cool enough to peel.

Slice eggs lengthwise. Yolks should pop out with gentle pressure but a little help with a spoon isn't cheating...if my grandmother doesn't see you do it. Arrange egg whites on serving or storage tray.

In a medium bowl combine yolks, mayonnaise, mustard, salt and pepper by mashing together with a fork. When you get the consistency you want, add relish and stir to distribute evenly.

With a small spoon add a dollop of mixture into each egg white half, using a second spoon to scrape ingredients out of the first. Sprinkle lightly with paprika or cayenne.

Per two halves: Calories, 85. Fat grams: 6. Carb grams. 6.2.

.....

KC Dinhofer shared this recipe that uses Swerve sweetener, which is available at Whole Foods, Dorignac's and health food stores.

KC's BabyCakes Sugar-Free Vanilla Cupcakes

Makes 10 cupcakes

1 stick unsalted butter, room temperature

1/2 cup Swerve sweetener

2 eggs, beaten

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 1/2 cups cake flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

2/3 cup milk, room temperature

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Prepare a cupcake pan with 10 liners.

In large mixing bowl, beat butter and sugar substitute until fluffy. Lower speed and add eggs, one at a time, and vanilla. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt onto a piece of parchment or wax paper. Add to butter mixture alternating with milk, starting and ending with dry ingredients.

Divide batter evenly among cupcake liners. Bake for 18 to 22 minutes.

Calories per cupcake: 180. Fat grams: 11. Carb grams: 16.

.....

Food editor Judy Walker can be reached at jwalker@timespicayune.com. Comment and read more at NOLA.com/food.

MORE RECIPES ONLINE at NOLA.com/food: Grilled Asparagus Spears; Diabetic Friendly Coleslaw; Rose's Decadent Sin-Less Devil's Food Cake; Easy Heart-Healthier Yellow Cake Fruit Tart; Bethany's Herbal Iced Tea

© 2010 NOLA.com. All rights reserved.