



## TRASH TALK

ANN MEHAFFY

## Group promotes recycling

I have the pleasure of introducing readers to a new group and a new column for the Home & Living section of the Baker City Herald and The Observer. Baker City Trash Talk formed a year ago and with today's column we begin bringing you information, tips and (we hope) inspiration to reduce the waste we put into our local landfill, water and air.

In addition to me, the Trash Talk organizing committee includes Cynthia Roberts, Gretchen Stadler, Susan Triplett, Kellie Trone, Barbara Meyer, Barbara O'Neal and Judith Baker. We will take turns researching and writing monthly articles and we will let you know about events and opportunities. You can find out what we are up to on Facebook at BCTrashtalk and contact us from that page or via email at bakercitytrashtalk@gmail.com if you would like to join the committee. Everyone is welcome to follow us on Facebook.

I acquired my penchant for recycling quite honestly from my mother. I was never sure if Mom's interest in recycling was a holdover from her childhood during the Great Depression era or if she was a visionary ahead of her time! At any rate, she started a "recycling center" of sorts at our church's storage building, collecting mostly newspapers and metal coat hangers for scrap resale. This project was very successful at fundraising and recycling, and gave me important lessons in community service, frugality, and repurposing.

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## DORY'S DIARY

DOROTHY SWART FLESHMAN

## Ode to the man who picks up after us all

The man who drives the Waste Pro truck is a kind person and needs to be acknowledged by my thanks as a veteran in his own kind of war.

After a day of downpour rain and streets were still wet, he was making his usual rounds of putting up, I'm sure, with his war zone of green or gray bins stretching down the length of each street.

It must be a boring run, if nothing more, seeing the town gradually coming to life as he sees to the trash. Surely all the bins are not placed exactly as they should be and often overfilled so that some trash comes popping out the top in a brisk wind.

Or, perhaps big black birds have flown in and pulled garbage apart. I've seen it happen.

Does he ever wonder about the folks who live inside the houses, who they are, what they do for a living, why they have so much or so little to rid themselves of useless waste and paper recycle?

Does he keep a book on irritable moments and pleasures attached? Sunny days when it's too hot? Cold days with the window being necessarily open as he drives along?

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## Perfect Pie Crusts



Grace Dickinson/Philadelphia Inquirer-TNS

Magpie owner Holly Riccardi with a piecrust ready for the oven. Riccardi says once the filling hits the crust, it's important to put the pie in the oven immediately.

# FLAKY IS FINE

By Grace Dickinson  
The Philadelphia Inquirer

No holiday gathering is complete without a little something sweet to round out the meal.

Whether you opt for apple, pumpkin, or pecan, any pastry chef will tell you the key to a memorable pie starts at the base — a flaky, flavorful crust. But crust can be intimidating, even for experienced home cooks. We asked Philadelphia pie experts to weigh in with their best crust-making tips.

### THE EXPERTS

- Holly Riccardi, owner of Magpie Artisan Pies
- Tova du Plessis, owner of Essen Bakery
- Elizabeth Halen, owner of Flying Monkey Bakery
- Jarrett O'Hara, head chef at the Rooster
- Raina Beresniewicz, head pastry chef at Cake Life

### PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Before the big holiday, consider churning out a few practice pies to see what works for you. "It's really the best advice I could give — the more you do it, the better you're going to get at it," O'Hara said. "And don't be too hard on yourself. You're probably going mess up a couple of crusts, but that's just part of the process. Plus, it's pie — even if it doesn't

come out flawless, it'll likely still taste good."

### INGREDIENT TIPS

Don't psych yourself out at the start: pie crust is just three simple ingredients. "People have a lot of pie crust anxiety, but it's really just three components — the flour, the fat, and the liquid," Halen said. "What really matters is how you put it all together."

Go all in on all-purpose flour. "It's all about the protein percentage of a flour. So bread flour has a higher percentage of protein, around 13 percent, while pastry and cake flour have a lower percentage, around 9 or 10 percent," Riccardi said. "Using all-purpose flour is really important because it's the best of both worlds — it has about 11 percent protein, the right amount to give you the tenderness but also the strength that a good pie crust needs."

Magpie uses Gold Medal All-Purpose flour. Butter is a must. Using Crisco is your call. "I'm all for butter, and I only want butter," Plessis said. "I will not put shortening in anything, 100 percent for flavor reasons. Butter has milk solids, which help to brown the crust in the oven and give you that rich, caramelized flavor. Nothing else can replace that, and if you treat your ingredients properly in regard to temperature and method, you should still end up with a flaky texture."

Others, like Riccardi, agree that butter

can yield flaky results, but believe that just a little Crisco can do magic.

"Crisco, like lard, has a bigger fat crystal than butter, and so it has a higher melting point temperature," Riccardi said. "When you use both, you create these pockets of butter and pockets of Crisco between the gluten that, when put in the oven, create the flakiness. Crisco will hold out a little longer before melting, creating a pocket in the dough. We use four tablespoons of Crisco for every 12 tablespoons of butter."

"Nothing beats butter for flavor, but we do 80 percent butter and 20 percent Crisco to create that perfect pie look," O'Hara said. "Crisco's higher melting point helps the crust keep its shape in the oven, so you end up with a super-beautiful crimped crust vs. a pie where the edges fall flat."

Add flavor by swapping buttermilk for water. "Pie dough is essentially flour, salt, butter, and liquid — and a lot of people just do water for the liquid. Water will do the job, but why waste an opportunity to add flavor?" Plessis said. "We use whey, the by-product of making cheese — we ask a cheesemaker from Merion Park Cheese if we can have his whey. It adds an additional layer of flavor, a cheesy richness, and a touch of acid. Buttermilk is a great substitution if you can't find whey."

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## The magical qualities of a water garden

Pools, creeks, ponds, lakes, and waterfalls add another dimension to your garden. The reflective quality of the water, the musicality of moving water, and the way water attracts insects, butterflies, and birds adds more zest to the life of your garden.

I have longed for a water feature in my garden since childhood neighbors next door had a fishpond complete with goldfish. On top of the pond was a cute young girl and boy huddled under an umbrella (statue) with a fountain spouting from the top of the umbrella. The pond was teardrop shape.

From that time on, my dream house always had a fish pond. The pond became more exotic as time went on, having experienced visits to public gardens where there were creeks and



## BETWEEN THE ROWS

WENDY SCHMIDT

waterfalls.

In some gardens the water features actually looked like real creeks and waterfalls but some were obviously just water features with recirculating water pumps. Clearly, I wanted any water feature I built to look real and not fake.

One man took a gardening class with me and invited the class to see his garden. He had a contract business installing landscape water features. His backyard was a very peaceful place with several small ponds. The edges of the ponds and in some areas the bottoms or beach/sides of the ponds were visible,

as were plants and some fishes. What you couldn't see hidden in areas between the ponds were several large (new) septic tanks he had buried deep and used as large reservoirs for extra water to recirculate. He had a pond system that a person could dream for.

Now my dream house has far bigger expectations as far as the water feature is concerned.

What brought about all these thoughts about water gardens and water features was seeing fish in a tank at a local retailer. There were goldfish, which add color to a garden, but the koi really caught my eye, reminding me of the koi in the 50-gallon basement tank in Missouri. They had their own custom castles and were just waiting until the water feature was built for them in the garden so they could have a big pond.

I am sure every koi dreams of being 36 inches long like the koi in the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis. The koi I saw last week were probably not quite 3 inches long, but big dreams still fit in their little bodies.

Water features require a little more care in climates with four seasons. If it gets well below freezing, the fish may have to spend the winter in a tank in the house. If your pond is more than 8 or 10 feet deep the fish may be able to winter in the outdoor pond, depending on the size of the pond. This has to do with cubic feet of water and oxygen content to support the life of the fish.

There are many reference books available to help you build waterfalls and creeks and set up the recirculating pumps.

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