

Friday Follies

Hey!

February 14, 2003

Happy Valentine's Day!

Well, I walked into my office Tuesday morning and rolled up on my desk was a

beautiful poster of Blackstreet promoting their new album. What made it even neater was that it was autographed by Teddy Riley to the FBW "Fly Girls" in Baltimore. These ladies work with my husband's company, Ferris Baker, Watts, and even though we have never met them, they email and talk



My Jessica (in red) and friends with Teddy.



on the phone all of the time. They discovered that Teddy and Donna Riley are friends of mine, and they asked if we could get an autographed photo for them. Teddy has been away since before Christmas producing his new album, (look up their website at www.blackstreetmusic.com) and Donna is many months pregnant, (actually due

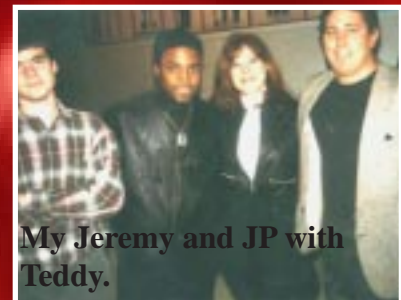
next week!) So, naturally, I thought they would just forget about this. NO DIGGITY! These two are always so very thoughtful.

Thanks 'T' and Donna! The "Fly Girls" of FBW are going to cherish it!

If you do not recognize Teddy Riley by name, I am sure you would recognize his music and his work. He is a Grammy Award winning producer who set up his studio, Future Records, here in Virginia Beach years ago. (He said as a young kid he took a field trip here once and fell in love with it. So, when he started his company, he moved everyone, lock ,stock, and barrel to the "Beach.") Teddy not only has won a Grammy, but has had #1 and top 10 hits with singles like "No Diggity," (which was deemed one of the 100 greatest pop songs ever by *Rolling Stone* and MTV), "Don't Leave Me" and "Joy" among others, and also has produced albums for Whitney Houston, Michael Jackson, Profyle, Joe, Janet Jackson and NSYNC to name a few.

We LOVE you, Teddy, and wish you great success with your new album. As soon as it is available, I'm buying several!

Next, I wanted to share this photo with you of my co-worker's daughter (and one of my favorite former students) taken with Evan Marriott, "Joe Millionaire," a few years back at James Madison University. Even cute back then, wasn't he? (Also, Susan, welcome home from Kuwait, and now you can see Evan's last episode on US soil!)



My Jeremy and JP with Teddy.



O.K. February 14 is important for another reason - - not just giving and getting roses, but pruning them as well. Since many of you are “rose growers,” I thought I would include this tid-bit from a gardening newsletter we get.

ROSES: After February 14h (Valentines Day) but before mid March, you need to prune your roses. Remove all dead and old canes. Small twiggy growth should be removed from the center of the shrub. If there are many canes, they should be reduced to 5 or 6 of the strongest and newest canes. If you have only 3 or 4 health canes, that is sufficient to get a bush off to a new start for the new season. Canes should be shortened to 15 to 24 inches. The larger the diameter of the cane the longer you can leave the cane. Make sure the pith (interior) if the cane is white or a greenish white. If on the first cut, you find the pith of the cane to be dark or tan continue to cut back to the next node. Cut just above a node and at a 30 to 45 degree angle pointing outward. Don't let the bush intimidate you and don't be afraid you will harm it if you cut it back aggressively. Rose bushes thrive on being pruned and this process stimulates new growth. Around mid March, you will need to start applying a high nitrogen (36-6-6) water-soluble solution. Spring blooming climbers should not be pruned until they have finished blooming.



OK, besides Valentine's Day and time to prune your roses bushes, do you know what else this weekend is? It is the Great American Backyard Bird Count! Don't laugh. It truly is! From February 14 through February 17 everyone is asked to count the species of birds and the number of each in your backyard for at least 15 minutes on one or all four days. Then you are asked to report your findings online at www.birdsource.org. This is the sixth year they have done the GBBC, and it really is very cool. You see, the research helps scientists track the migration of all the different species throughout North and South America.

And in that same vein, if you like birds, here is another neat website. A friend sent this to me. It surprised me because he is a real computer whiz. I never thought he would be touched by this as well.

WINGED MIGRATION

<http://www.sonyclassics.com/wingedmigration/home.html>



This film is going to be incredible! Look up the website and check it out.

I have copied one small bit of the text here. Very inspirational. You gotta admit, this world is an amazing place...

“Earthbound, watching the birds fly across the sky, we undertook this film. We had to go higher, nearer the birds, within striking distance of the stars. How could we manage it? Man has dreamt of birds since the beginning of time. How to imagine being among the first to transform this dream into reality? I will always treasure the memory of the first time we achieved this. The cameraman was following the movements of the geese, with one hand the assistant pushed away those who came too near the camera: the whole spool of film ran out. Radiant, tears in their eyes, they looked at me, speechless, motionless. Their mastery and the technical result were of minor importance, they had been in the confidence of the birds in flight. What if, for the space of a year, we no longer waited for the seasons, what if we embarked on the most fabulous of journeys, what if, abandoning our towns and our countryside, we went on a tour of the planet? What if we understood that our borders did not exist, that the earth is a one and only space and what if we learned to be free as birds?” —Jacques Perrin

Yes! I know the joke. He is French. Ha, Ha! But it is still amazing . . .

I know this week's Follies makes me sound like a “budding Martha Stewart,” but rest assured...that is not the case....I did, however, find this recipe for Homemade Birdseed Suet in the paper this past weekend, and tried it. The birds (and squirrels) went NUTS over it. It really was a lot of fun, and now we have enough for weeks to come. Try it and then count your birds for fifteen minutes one or two days this weekend!

Homemade Birdseed Suet Recipe

4 cups cornmeal
1 cup Crisco or lard
1 cup peanut butter, crunchy or smooth
1 cup flour
1 cup bird seed
Add raisins or oatmeal as desired.

Mix all together and store in old jars. Does not need refrigeration.

OK, besides Valentine's Day, pruning your roses, and counting your birds, (I know my husband has been waiting with baited breath on this one) there is something else MAJOR going on this weekend. All I will say is, - -“Go, Rusty!”

I hope you have a marvelous weekend!



I will end with a few new Romantic and Sexy Valentine's Recipes. The Romantic ones are here and in the second PDF will be the Sexy Foods! Print them out and make one of them for someone you love this weekend! They include: *Tenderloin of Beef St. Valentine, Hearts of Beets Salad, Broiled Lamb Chops in Minted Cucumber Sauce, Red Grits, Beef Filet with Merlot Glaze, Red Pepper Tomato Soup, Avacado and Lobster Salad, Lobster Salad, Fresh Scrambled Eggs with Truffle Oil, Chilled Asparagus with Crab Vinaigrette, Penne with Asparagus and Artichokes, and Steamed Oysters and Oyster Broth.* **Don't forget my International Cook Book Encyclopedias when they come out...all 12 volumes! (They are almost finished, but I haven't a clue when I will have time to finish them. I even have a publisher lined up!)**



To all of you on my Friday Follies List, whether you are in Manila, Singapore, Kuwait, Bermuda, Virginia Beach, Mississippi, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Minnesota, Indiana, Philadelphia, Key West, New Jersey, Washington D.C., Maryland, West (By-God) Virginia, Nashville, New York, or Europe, have a wonderful, wonderful weekend, and . . .

God bless.

Remember, life is short...we need to make it a good one.

Grow in peace and wisdom.

Your Friday Friend,



P.S. NOTE OF CAUTION... 20 employees were fired from The New York Times here in Norfolk for sending lewd and indecent e-mails. (To my knowledge, none of the 20 were on our list - even though some of the attorneys who represent the company were!) I have asked each and every one of you on this list to tell me if these "Follies" place you in jeopardy, or even if they offend you. Please understand that they are intended to be light-hearted and are not mean-spirited in any way. If you are ever offended, do not hesitate to ask to be taken off the Friday list.

PSS. If you send a joke and I don't use it, it is because it has been used before, and I try not to repeat. Remember, I have been sending these since August of 1997. One tends to go through huge numbers of jokes that way.

Disclaimer: When anyone asks if I type all of these jokes, the answer is, "No!" I cut and paste one evening during the week (30 minutes, TOPS). Obviously I don't have time to sit, read, and retype jokes all day!

Valentine Truffles



- 12 ounces semisweet chocolate, cut up
- 1/4 cup whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon orange, raspberry, cherry, or coffee liqueur or whipping cream
- 36 hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, unblanched whole almonds, pecan halves, and/or walnut halves (optional)
- Chopped nuts, powdered sugar, and/or unsweetened cocoa powder (optional)
- 8 ounces chocolate- or vanilla-flavored candy coating, cut up (optional)
- 2 ounces chocolate- or pink vanilla-flavored candy coating (optional)

In heavy medium saucepan combine chocolate and the 1/4 cup whipping cream. Cook over low heat for 4 to 5 minutes or until chocolate melts, stirring frequently. Remove from heat. Transfer to a mixing bowl. Refrigerate about 30 minutes or until mixture is slightly cool to the touch. Stir in liqueur or the 1 tablespoon whipping cream. Beat with an electric mixer on low speed for 3 to 4 minutes or until stiff. Line a baking sheet with waxed paper. Shape chocolate mixture into 1-inch balls. If desired, press a whole or half nut into center of each ball; reroll until smooth. Place on prepared baking sheet. Freeze about 15 minutes or until firm. If desired, roll balls in chopped nuts, powdered sugar, and/or cocoa powder. Or, in heavy small saucepan heat and stir the 8 ounces candy coating over low heat until melted and smooth. Quickly coat truffles, one at a time, with coating; let excess coating drip off. Place truffles on prepared baking sheet. Let stand about 30 minutes or until set. If desired, in small heavy saucepan heat and stir the 2 ounces candy coating over low heat until melted and smooth. Cool slightly. Transfer to a small freezer bag; snip a tiny piece off one corner. Pipe coating onto truffles. Makes about 36 truffles

Valentine Chocolate Torte

- 14 ounces bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/4 cup milk
- 5 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup seedless red raspberry jam
- 1-1/2 to 2 cups fresh raspberries
- Sifted powdered sugar (optional)



Grease the bottom of an 8-inch heart-shape cake pan with a removable bottom or an 8-inch round springform pan; set pan aside. In a heavy medium saucepan combine chocolate, butter, and milk. Cook and stir over low heat until chocolate is melted. Remove from heat; cool mixture for 20 minutes. In a mixing bowl beat eggs and vanilla with an electric mixer on low speed until combined. Add granulated sugar and flour; beat on high speed for 10 minutes. Stir chocolate mixture into egg mixture. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake in a 325 ° oven for 30 minutes (35 minutes for springform pan) or until outer one-third of top is slightly puffed. (Because this torte is so dense, you're unable to use a traditional cake doneness test.

The torte should be done after 30 minutes, even though the center will still appear to be underbaked.) Cool torte on a wire rack for 20 minutes. Use a knife dipped in warm water to loosen torte from sides of pan. Cool torte thoroughly. Remove sides of pan. Wrap torte in foil; chill overnight or up to 2 days. To serve, bring torte to room temperature. In a small saucepan melt jam; cool. Spread jam on top of torte. Cover jam with raspberries, stem sides down. If desired, before serving, dust with powdered sugar. Makes 16 servings

Lollipop Hearts

2-1/2- to 3-1/2-inch round or heart-shaped metal cookie cutters
8 ounces assorted red, pink, and/or clear hard candies
35 to 60 (2 to 3 ounces) assorted small decorative candies, such as red cinnamon candies, small nonpareils, colored candy hearts, spice drops, and gumdrops
Edible rose petals or other flower petals (optional)
Lollipop sticks

Place unwrapped hard candies in a heavy plastic bag, then place bag on top of folded towel and crush candies into small chunks with meat mallet or small hammer. Make only three or four lollipops at one time. Line a baking sheet with foil. Place desired cookie cutters on foil, at least 2 inches apart. Divide crushed candies evenly among cutters, approximately 1 1/2 to 2 tablespoons per lollipop. Candy layer should be 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick. Add small decorative candies or edible rose or other flower petals to crushed candies. (If using flower petals, make sure they are covered with a layer of the crushed candy.) Bake in a 350 ° oven for 6 to 8 minutes or until candies are completely melted. Cool 30 seconds. Remove cookie cutters with tongs, allowing melted candy to spread slightly. Quickly attach a stick to base of each lollipop, twisting the stick to cover lollipop end with melted candy. If desired, press more small candies or flower petals into hot lollipops. Cool. Peel foil from lollipops. Makes 8.



Marshmallow-Popcorn Hearts

10 cups popped popcorn
3 tablespoons margarine or butter
1 10-ounce package regular marshmallows
Red food coloring
Red colored sugar

Place popped popcorn in a greased 13x9x2-inch baking pan and keep warm in a 300 ° oven while making marshmallow mixture (remove unpopped kernels). In a large saucepan melt margarine or butter over low heat. Add marshmallows and stir until completely melted. Remove from heat. (Or, in a microwave-safe bowl, micro-cook margarine and marshmallows on high for 1-1/2 to 2 minutes or until margarine or butter is melted and marshmallows are softened, carefully stirring once.) Stir until smooth. Stir in red food coloring. Stir in popped pop-



corn, half at a time. Cool until easy to handle (10 to 15 minutes). Press mixture into greased individual heart-shaped pans. Cool. Remove from pans. Sprinkle with red colored sugar. Wrap each heart in plastic wrap. Makes 9 hearts.

Marbled Nut Clusters

- 1 12-ounce package semisweet chocolate pieces
- 1-1/2 cups coarsely chopped mixed nuts, peanuts, or cashews
- 1 1-ounce white chocolate baking square



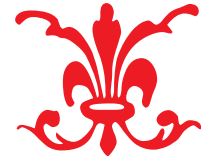
Place semisweet chocolate pieces in a heavy medium saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly just until melted. Stir in nuts. Spoon mixture by rounded teaspoons into 1-3/4-inch muffin cups lined with paper bake cups. Place white chocolate in a heavy small saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly just until melted. Drizzle a small amount of the white chocolate atop each cluster; swirl gently with a toothpick to create a marbled effect. Chill until firm (about 30 minutes in refrigerator or 10 minutes in freezer). Makes about 24 pieces.

Chocolate Truffle Dessert

- 6 ounces bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, chopped, or 6 ounces semisweet chocolate pieces
- 1 cup whipping cream
- 1/4 cup Irish cream liqueur, Kahlua, Amaretto, or milk
- 2 egg yolks, slightly beaten
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- Melted white and/or dark chocolate (optional)
- White chocolate shavings (optional)



Chill a small mixing bowl and the beaters of an electric mixer. Meanwhile, line an 8x8x2-inch pan with plastic wrap, extending the plastic wrap over the edges of the pan; set aside. In a heavy medium saucepan melt chopped chocolate or chocolate pieces over very low heat, stirring constantly until the chocolate begins to melt. Immediately remove from the heat; stir until smooth. Set aside. In the chilled mixing bowl combine whipping cream and 1 tablespoon of the liqueur or milk. Beat with the chilled beaters on low speed until soft peaks form (tips curl). Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 hours or until needed. In a heavy small saucepan stir together egg yolks, remaining liqueur or milk, and sugar. Cook and stir with a wire whisk over medium-low heat until mixture is very thick (about 8 minutes). Remove from heat; pour mixture into a medium mixing bowl. Add the melted chocolate, 2 tablespoons at a time, to the hot mixture, beating on medium speed until combined (the mixture will be thick). Add 1/2 cup of the whipped cream mixture; beat on low speed until smooth. Gently fold in remaining whipped cream mixture. Spoon the mixture into the prepared pan, spreading as necessary to make an even layer. Cover and freeze about 4 hours or until firm enough to cut. Invert the frozen mixture onto a waxed-paper-lined baking sheet. Carefully remove plastic wrap. Using 1-, 2-, and 3-inch cookie cutters, cut shapes from chocolate, dipping cutters into warm water between cuts to prevent sticking, if necessary. Cover and return shapes to freezer until serving time. To serve, drizzle plates with melted white and/or dark chocolate, if desired. Top with chocolate cutouts. If desired, garnish with shaved white chocolate. Store any leftovers, covered, in the freezer. Makes about 6 servings.



Dark Chocolate Fudge

About 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
1 1/2 cups half-and-half (light cream)
3 1/2 cups sugar
1/4 cup light corn syrup
1/2 teaspoon salt
8 ounces bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, chopped
4 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 1/2 cups walnuts or pecans

Smoothly line an 8- or 9-inch square pan with foil. Lightly butter foil. In a 3- to 4-quart pan, mix half-and-half, sugar, corn syrup, and salt. Stir occasionally over high heat until simmering, about 3 minutes. With a brush dipped in water, frequently wipe off beads of syrup that form on the sides of the pan. Reduce heat to medium. Add bittersweet and unsweetened chocolate; gently stir until chocolate melts and mixture begins to simmer, 3 to 6 minutes. Insert a candy thermometer into mixture. Boil, occasionally stirring and washing sides of pan with wet brush, until mixture reaches 235° (or a drop of candy spooned into cold water forms a soft ball that flattens when removed from water), 30 to 40 minutes longer. Immediately pour fudge mixture into a 10- by 15-inch rimmed pan. Dot with 2 tablespoons butter and vanilla. Let stand undisturbed until a thermometer inserted in center of candy registers 115° (pan is warm to touch), 20 to 30 minutes. With a wide metal spatula, scrape mixture back and forth in pan until it becomes smooth and glossy and starts to thicken and mound but is still soft and malleable, 4 to 10 minutes. Add nuts and mix just enough to distribute. Scrape fudge into foil-lined pan. Let stand until firm to touch, at least 2 hours. Invert pan to release candy. Peel off foil. With a sharp knife, cut fudge into 1-inch squares and serve. Or wrap the uncut fudge airtight and store at room temperature up to 1 week



Friday Follies

Chocolate Covered Strawberries

12 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped
1 pint strawberries

Place all of the chocolate, except for one small piece, in a double boiler and melt over medium-high heat. It essential that the chocolate not be allowed to burn. Stir the chocolate constantly as it melts and then remove the chocolate from the heat when it reaches a temperature of 105 - 110 degrees F. Use a candy thermometer for accuracy. Add the remaining chocolate and stir until the mixture reaches a temperature of 87 — 92 degrees F. This process, 'tempering,' will create a smooth coating. Insert a skewer into each strawberry. Dip the strawberries into the melted chocolate and rotate to evenly coat. Maintain the temperature of the chocolate by repeating the 'tempering' process if needed. Fill a large bowl with sugar and cover the top tightly with plastic wrap. Insert the skewers upside down through the plastic and into the sugar. This will force the skewers to remain up-right. Transfer the bowl to the refrigerator and allow the strawberries to chill. Serve the strawberries on the skewers, or remove the skewers and serve the strawberries in a bowl.

Vanilla Bean Cheesecake with Walnut Crust

1 1/2 cups walnut pieces
1 3/4 cups sugar
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
2 cups sour cream
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
2 pounds cream cheese, softened
1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise, seeds scraped
4 large eggs, at room temperature
1/4 teaspoon pure almond extract
1/2 cup heavy cream



Preheat the oven to 350°. Butter a 10-inch springform pan. In a food processor, pulse the walnuts with 1/4 cup of the sugar until finely ground. Add the butter; pulse until the mixture resembles moist sand. Press the crumbs into the bottom of the pan. Bake for 12 minutes, or until browned around the edges. In a small bowl, mix the sour cream with 1/4 cup of the sugar and 1 teaspoon of the vanilla. Reduce the oven temperature to 300°. In a standing electric mixer fitted with a paddle or using a handheld electric mixer, beat the cream cheese at low speed with the remaining 1 1/4 cups of sugar and the vanilla seeds just until combined. Beat in the eggs, 1 at a time, scraping down the bowl between additions. Add the remaining 2 teaspoons of vanilla and the almond extract. **Slowly beat in the cream until smooth. Pour the cheesecake batter into the pan and bake for 65 to 70 minutes, until lightly golden and slightly jiggly in the center. Immediately pour the sour cream topping over the cheesecake and smooth the surface. Return the cheesecake to the oven and bake for 5 minutes longer. Transfer to a rack and let cool to room temperature. Run a sharp, thin-bladed knife around the cake and remove the ring. Refrigerate the cake for 3 hours, then cover loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight before serving. Makes one 10-inch cheesecake.**