

LWTC's Janet Shaffer named State Chef of the Year

by Deborah Stone
Staff Writer

Janet Shaffer loves to bake, as desserts are her favorite part of any meal.

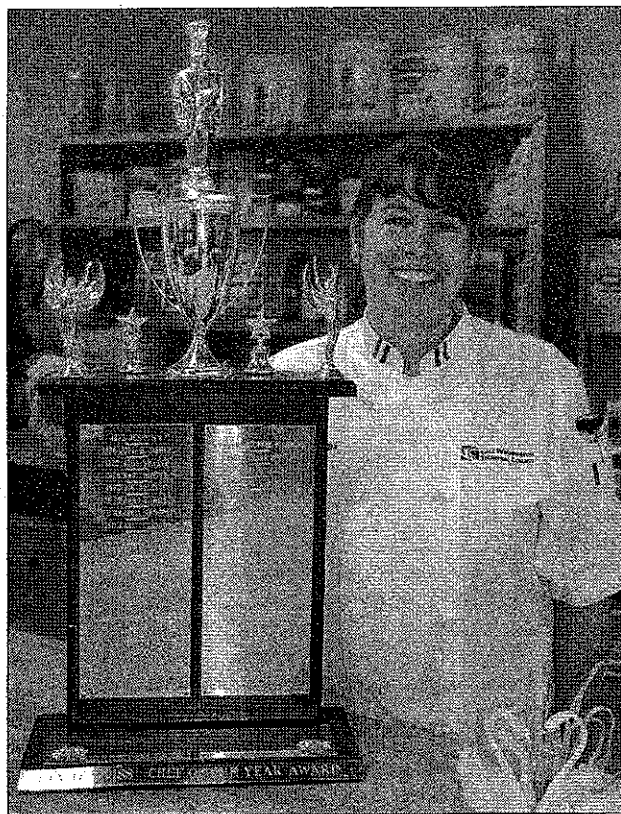
She says, "I think everyone remembers when they've had a particularly wonderful dessert, as that's usually the last thing they've eaten. There's joy in ending a meal with something really special. I like to be able to bring that joy to others."

Shaffer began her love affair with baking as a child when she used to help her mother in the kitchen. Years later, she pursued formal training in the field at Lake Washington Technical College's Baking Arts Program and subsequently received her national certification as a Working Pastry Chef.

After graduating, she stayed on at the college, handling the school's catering services, as well as working as a technical aid in the culinary program. In 2003, she became a baking and pastry arts instructor in the Baking Arts Program.

Recently, Shaffer was named the 2007 Chef of the Year by the Washington State Chefs Association (WSCA).

"I was completely blown away and rendered speechless by this award," comments Shaffer. "I'm deeply honored by this recognition and proud



Courtesy photo

Janet Shaffer was named the 2007 Chef of the Year by the Washington State Chefs Association.

to be a member of such a wonderful organization. I really respect the group of people involved in this association."

Every year the WSCA honors a fellow culinarian with the WSCA Chef of the Year Award. The award recognizes

industry professionalism, contributions to craft and community and the advancement of culinary education. Recipients have received this annual award since its inception in 1973. Shaffer, a resident of Lynnwood, serves as the secretary of the WSCA

and participates annually as a judge in the Bite of Seattle.

She has also won three silver medals and two bronze medals at several American Culinary Federation baking competitions.

She says, "I specialize in wedding and sculpted cakes and I also like competing with showpiece work using sugar and chocolate. It's very creative, as it's an art form."

Shaffer also enjoys teaching. She views her students as customers and consumers of her product and provides them with the necessary tools and information to be successful in the industry. It's rewarding for her to watch them grow and learn and then go off and get jobs.

She adds, "I try and stay in touch with my students and it's fun hearing about their experiences working all over the world."

Shaffer explains that bakers are differently wired than chefs, as bakers work with specific formulas and techniques. "You really have to follow these formulas and there's a high level of craft involved."

As for her own specialty, Shaffer admits that she does plated desserts well. But, her favorite sweet treats to eat are cream puffs, made from scratch, of course!