

**A Little Taste of Heaven Since 1857: The Morehead City Heritage Cookbook**, the Morehead City Sesquicentennial Celebration cookbook, was awarded the national first-place winner of the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Tabasco Community Cookbook Awards. The cookbooks are being presold for a second printing.

# A Little Taste of First Place

*Morehead City cookbook takes top prize in national contest*

BY JENNIFER ALLEN  
NEWS-TIMES

Trying to cull recipes, stories and photos about Morehead City was just a step of many in getting *A Little Taste of Heaven Since 1857: The Morehead City Heritage Cookbook* published to coincide with the 150<sup>th</sup> celebration of Morehead City, held in May 2007.

Done is six weeks from start to finish including graphic design and editing, the cookbook committee didn't know that all that work would pay off almost two years later when the book, a collection of recipes, stories and photos of Morehead City, would take first place in the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Tabasco Community Cookbook Awards. This national award recognizes community cookbooks and the volunteers who use it effectively to benefit charitable causes.

In the press release announcing the award, it said the "wonderful photos and illustrations" only added to the judges unanimous opinion that a book like this is "what we yearn for — a true piece of local book-making."

The cookbook committee chairman was Morehead City resident D.J. Femia Leeuwenburg; editors were Karen Willis Amspacher and Connie Mason; Rodney Kemp and others con-

tributed to the research and history included.

"We want to celebrate the town and its people. Morehead City won the award, it's our heritage and history," Mrs. Leeuwenburg said, which they plan to do with an April celebration at the Crystal Coast Civic Center in Morehead City.

Mrs. Leeuwenburg said that while she's proud that the book itself is receiving the honor, this is a national award and the town and the county will be in the spotlight.

"What this can do for Morehead City and beyond is that the national press and recognition will spark interest and promote tourism," she said.

Copyright for the book has been gifted to Downtown Morehead City Revitalization Association and preorders for the second printing, with the award's gold seal on the cover, are being taken at the book's Web site, [www.mhc150cookbooks.com](http://www.mhc150cookbooks.com).

The inspiration behind *A Little Taste of Heaven since 1857* was a neighboring community's cookbook.

Mrs. Leeuwenburg said after spending a few decades in the triangle area, she moved back home and saw the cookbook, *Harkers Island Born and Bred*. She recognized the sesquicentennial celebration provided the opportunity for Morehead City

to publish a cookbook to honor Morehead City.

"It was Jan. 27, 2007, and knowing the first date of the sesquicentennial celebration was in May, I asked the committee if we were going to proceed with the cookbook," she said. "Not only did we get it done in six weeks, we got it done by the time the event started, with thanks to Karen and Connie."

Mrs. Leeuwenburg said she decided to submit the book to the Tabasco Community Cookbook Awards after the dust had settled with the 150<sup>th</sup> celebration, hoping for at least an honorable mention.

"I looked at the criteria and felt the book met the requirements," she said. "So I submitted it and forgot about it."

She got a voicemail message about the contest in late December 2008 hoping for the best but not expecting the top honor.

While she was the force behind the book, she said the book would not have been completed without the support and time of several people who believed in the project, among those are the cookbook committee "who not only went in search of recipes, stories and photographs but presold many books so that the book would become a reality because without presales, there would have been no book."

She also extended a thank you to Doris Carlin who typed the recipes, Mrs. Amspacher who "weaved the recipes, stories, poetry, photographs, etc. into our award-winning community treasure and Connie Mason ... (with) her stories, wit and determination to make this project a reality."

Mrs. Leeuwenburg also mentioned Nancy Toothman, owner of Conk Point Graphix and who designed the cover, Web site and official poster.

But, she said, most importantly she wanted to thank the citizens — whether full-time, second homeowners or tourists — who shared their recipes, memories, poetry, pictures and enthusiasm.

"They are the reasons those of us who often worked between midnight and 6 a.m., kept going with passion and determination Morehead City would have her community cookbook."

Coming in second place to the Morehead City cookbook is *Peeling the Wild Onion* from the Junior League of Chicago.

The name Chicago means "wild onion" in local Indian culture, and this "beautifully produced book," divided into seasonal menus, features "handsome pen and ink drawings" that make it a must-have for any fan

# Cookbook

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

of The Windy City.

*A Thyme to Entertain: Menus & Traditions of Annapolis* by the Junior League of Annapolis in Maryland is the third-place national winner.

This book "makes you feel like you've visited" the city by the bay, with seasonal recipes highlighting the best in food and culture in this historic and quaint seaport village.

"During these past two decades, McIlhenny Co. is proud to have played a role in honoring these wonderfully unique cookbooks and the local culinary traditions they celebrate," said Paul

McIlhenny, president and CEO of McIlhenny Co.

"This year's winners are more-than-worthy additions to the ever-expanding Tabasco Community Cookbook Library."

Twenty years ago, McIlhenny Co. established the Tabasco Community Cookbook Awards to recognize the role these unique books play in chronicling and preserving local culinary traditions.

Over the years, the awards have honored more than 250 exceptional cookbooks. The dedicated organizations that created these treasured volumes have been granted nearly \$100,000 to benefit local causes and charitable programs.