



Competitive Eating

People often ask me how I think of something to write about each week. Some weeks are easier than others. Often an event will happen that interests me and I want to further investigate. After the busy Fourth of July celebration at my house, I served several family members brunch on the following Sunday. The conversation at the table turned to the annual 4th of July Hot Dog Eating Contest. As soon as we had eaten, everyone assembled in the den to watch this momentous occasion.

I have seen the catfish eating contest in Belzoni at the Catfish Festival, but that was the extent of my experience concerning competitive eating. There is an International Confederation of Competitive Eating that is the governing body for the MLE (Major League Eating). The MLE oversees about 80 events every year. Many are televised and have generated hours of original programming. ESPN broadcasts the 4th of July hot dog eating contests every year. This is what we were watching and I had no idea what I had been missing. The broadcast has more viewers than any Major League baseball game in the United States.

Steve confessed during watching the competition that he had participated in a hot dog eating contest when he played football at Mississippi State. It was not timed, just who could eat the most. At that time, all athletes lived in the athletic dorm and were fed quite well in the dining room. Each night they were served a late- night snack. On this one occasion it turned into a hot dog eating contest. His roommate won with a grand total of 15!

After looking into this "sport" I could not believe what people eat for competition. I wanted to include some of my favorites.

- *65 hard boiled eggs – 6 minutes 40 seconds
- *68 hot dogs – 10 minutes
- *8.1 lbs Vienna sausage – 10 minutes
- *47 grilled cheese sandwiches – 10 minutes
- *103 Krystal hamburgers – 8 minutes
- *13.23 lbs jellied cranberry sauce – 8 minutes
- *48 glazed doughnuts – 8 minutes
- *2.76 lbs. bologna – 6 min-

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- *1 ½ gallons chili – 10 minutes
- *6.5 lbs. crawfish – 10 minutes
- *6 lbs. Spam – 12 minutes
- *46 dozen oysters – 10 minutes
- *11 lbs. cheesecake – 9 minutes

- *42 peanut butter & jelly sandwiches – 10 minutes
 - *7 quarter pound sticks unsalted butter – 5 minutes
 - *6 lbs. 9 oz. cabbage – 9 minutes
 - *46 ears of corn – 12 minutes
 - *4 (32 oz.) bowls mayonnaise – 8 minutes
 - *17 peeled bananas – 2 minutes
 - *13 raw eggs – 1 second
 - *3 whole lemons (seeds & peel) – 15.3 seconds
 - *100 yards of spaghetti – 12.2 seconds
- There are "big names" in the world of competitive eating. When you see these names – Joey Chestnut, Sonya Thomas, Patrick Bertolotti, Eater X Tim and Bob Shoudt - you know they are the ones to

beat. Sponsors for these events are quite a broad range. Everyone from Heinz Ketchup to Old Navy wants to get in on the action. My favorite sponsor was Pepto-Bismol.

This week's recipes don't have to so with speed, but the slow cooker and no more than 5 ingredients. Hope you enjoy them and save yourself some time in the kitchen. Thanks for reading.

- CROCKPOT SOUR CREAM BACON CHICKEN**
- 8 slices bacon
- 8 chicken breasts
- 2 cans Roasted Garlic Cream of Chicken Soup
- ½ cup flour

1 cup sour cream
Wrap a slice of bacon around each chicken breasts - place in slow cooker. Mix the other ingredients and pour over chicken. Cover and cook on Low for 8 hours. Makes delicious gravy to serve over rice.

- CROCKPOT CAJUN POT ROAST**
- 2 lb. boneless chuck roast
- 1 Tbsp. Cajun seasoning
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 (14 oz.) can diced tomatoes with garlic
- 1 tsp. Tabasco
- Sprinkle Cajun seasoning on roast and rub to coat well. Place in crockpot and top with onion. Add tomatoes, Tabasco, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook on Low for 8 hours.

- CROCKPOT WILD RICE PILAF**
 - 2 cups uncooked wild rice
 - 1 small onion, chopped
 - 2 (14 oz.) cans chicken broth
 - 2 (4 oz.) cans sliced mushrooms, undrained
 - 1 small jar diced pimiento, undrained
 - Spray inside of slow cooker with Pam. Combine all ingredients plus ½ cup water and salt and pepper to taste; mix well. Cover and cook on High for 4 hours or Low for 8 hours.
- *Lee Ann Fleming is a Holmes County native, food columnist and has garnered fame for her recipes featured in the film, The Help. Fleming can be reached at lafkitchen@hughes.net.*

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Lilly wrote and won the Personal Essay entry in The Tall Tales and True Stories category that was published in the 2021 edition of the *Stuck in the Middle* school magazine.

A Heart that's Broken

By Lilly Jones

Running up and down the court at my 4 th grade basketball game, I could feel my heart pounding through my chest. Slowly, I began to gasp for air and my eyes were blanking. I lost sense of where I was and started crying. I felt helpless. On the court, my head began to pound because I could not get oxygen in or out of me. Pulled immediately out of the game, I tried to explain what was wrong, but I could barely breathe. This was one of the first times my heart had affected me in sports and sadly, it would not be my last. Once I could breathe again, I explained that I did not know what happened but that I had a heart condition called Tetralogy of Fallot that has been with me my entire life, which would stay with me forever.

After my incident, my mom decided it was time to pay a visit to my heart doctor. My head began to pound and I felt as if something bad was going to happen. It was an early weekday morning. Once we arrived, we checked in and I put on the hospital gown for the MRI, which hospitals use to check inside of people. Inching inside the machine, I watched my sight recede from the world and it made me think about what was about to happen, which worried me. I calmed myself in the machine and decided to take a nap. Scared after the MRI, I was bracing myself to meet with the doctor. He stated, "Sadly, the valve is not holding as long as we would have liked it to. We might have to look into not playing basketball and other sports

because your heart will not be able to handle it." My heart figuratively sank. Tears began to flood my pale blue eyes and I could not hold them back. Then, I heard him say, "There might be a surgery we can do to temporarily fix this problem."

Returning to school, I quickly wiped away the salty tears dripping down my face and tried my best to hold myself together. As I was sitting in class, the moment from the doctor's office came back into my head and made me tear up. Worried by the sight of my tears, my friend asked me what was wrong. I wiped away my tears and said, "At my appointment, my doctor told me I might have to quit basketball because my heart is not doing well." She asked me to explain my heart story and I said, "I was born with a murmur and hole in my heart. The condition is called Tetralogy of Fallot and I have two components of it. When I was 6 months old they repaired the hole; when I was 6, they put in a pig valve, and now the valve is not working as well because I have grown. I have had tons of tiny surgeries to help my heart, but I think my heart is going to need a new valve soon." My friend, May, who gave me a hug, told me everything was going to work out in the end. She walked me to class. Finally, I arrived home and my mom told me we were doing the surgery.

Finally, it was time for my procedure. I woke up bright and early and headed to the hospital. On the way, I looked at the empty streets to try and keep my mind off of it

because I was nervous it would not work. Once we arrived, I suddenly became calm and was excited to get my heart fixed. I walked in the room and they handed me a gown and socks to change into. As I took off my shoes, my feet froze from the cold hospital floor and I could smell the bleach cleaner that wafted throughout the hospital as they sanitized rooms. Terrified for the surgery, I walked back into the preparation room and picked out the laughing gas smell I would fall asleep to. There was purple plum, exotic berry, bubbly bubble gum, and mint chocolate chip. I chose bubbly bubble gum. Starting to get tired from the laughing gas, I fell into a long doze, which lasted 7 hours.

As I woke up, I felt water rise up through my body and about to spew from my mouth. My body was aching in pain and my head was pounding harder than my heart. I spent the next three days in the hospital recovering and the doctor told me I would have a couple years before the valve needed replacing. Finally, it was time to go home. I was thrilled. On the way home, I thought about how I would be able play sports without getting tired as quickly. I then remembered that this condition may make me have to stop doing the things I love, but it teaches me that I have to make life-changing decisions that have made me more responsible. It also taught me to stay strong no matter what because being strong in adversity inspires others who are facing difficult times.