

INSIDE

MAY 2017

Greenville

A Social Publication For The
Residents Of Greenville



MEET
Nan Marcus
GREENVILLE'S GLUTEN-FREE GURU

YOUR STORIES. YOUR PHOTOS. YOUR COMMUNITY.



Sweetopia

Get Your Sweet On!



Making Life Sweet *with Nan Marcus*

Michele Madinabeitia Foster & Jen Yanczak

They say you can never go home again; Nan Marcus says, "Watch me." After 37 years in the corporate world, Nan has decided to trade in her suits for sweets at her very own gluten-free bakery, Sweetopia, which will be based out of her childhood home in Newport.

Turning her one-time home into a commercial bakery is quite a turn of events for the woman who couldn't even boil water when she got married! Growing up in that home, her mother never let her touch any of the major appliances, so Nan learned on the fly after she was married. "I made pork chops for a year straight," Nan recalled, trying to master at least one dish. When William, her husband of

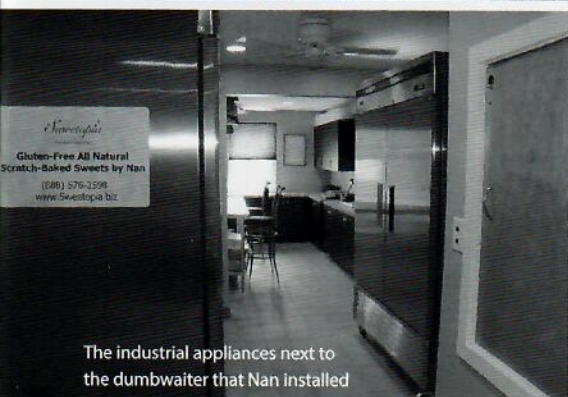
46 years, left the Navy, they moved into the Manchester Apartments on DuPont Rd., and Nan joined a cookbook club to learn how to cook. Since then, she hasn't looked back (nor has she ever bought another pork chop!).

Unlike some people, Nan doesn't force herself to choose between cooking and baking; although she's making baking her career now, she still enjoys cooking as well. If you ask her for her favorite recipe, though, you'll be out of luck: "I don't have a favorite recipe because I like trying something new. That's why I chose gluten-free baking; I like the challenge."

Of course, it wasn't just the challenge that brought gluten-free into Nan's focus. While she was working at DuPont, she worked with an employment attorney who was deathly allergic to gluten. Nan decided to see if she could create something that the attorney

could eat and the rest of the office would enjoy as well. "My goal is to reach the unbeliever, the people who can eat gluten, by creating things that are flavorful, have the right texture, pique the person's eye and interest so that they feel this was a good investment, and they now have a different view of gluten-free." Imagination and presentation play a huge part in this, naturally, but taste and texture are truly critical to achieving her goal.

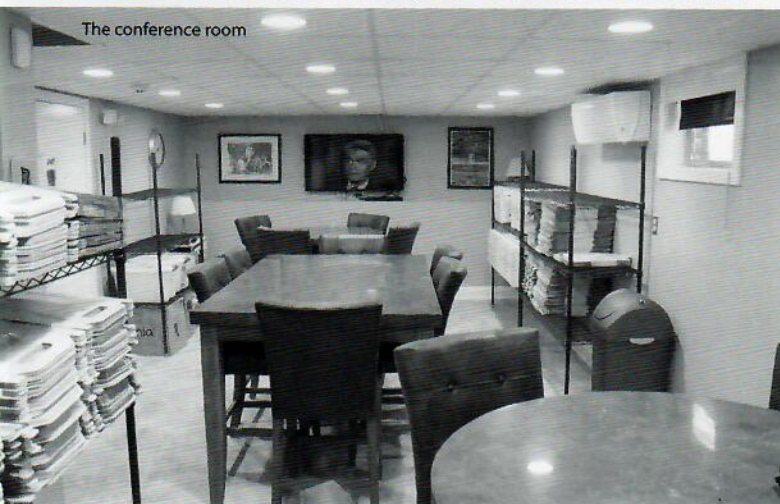
Although Nan doesn't have a dietary reason to be gluten-free herself, she hasn't baked with gluten since 2013. Her reasoning is simple: "Practice makes perfect." Nan feels that there should be imagination out there in the



The industrial appliances next to the dumbwaiter that Nan installed



meet the neighbors



The conference room



freezer or the glass case and that you *shouldn't* be able to tell the difference. "You have to use your mind more and work at it with gluten-free," Nan believes, but "I've always gone for the most difficult." Nan has studied piano and opera and can sing in French, Italian, Spanish, and Czech. Her love of music informed her bakery's logo, and the proof that she has passed that love onto her son can be found in the framed musical posters that he selected to adorn the walls of Sweetopia's new home in Newport.

Transforming her old home into the new home of her business was a labor of love for Nan and William, and a huge undertaking. It was one they both saw as worth it, of course; as Nan states, "if you're in it to win it, you have to go for it. There's risk involved in everything." The risk was *slightly* smaller for the Marcuses; as they had already built several homes together. However, taking a residential home and transforming it into a business—a true "cottage to commercial" transformation—was a horse of a different color. The process took over 15 months, starting with the permit process in January 2016. They were finally able to start the ren-

ovations in June 2016, but the process of getting everything up to commercial code was a lengthy one. Still, Nan is confident that all the attention to detail and painstaking effort they've put in is worth it. After all, "you take the time you need to do it right," whether you're talking about construction or baking.

Today, Sweetopia's new home is a shiny, updated gem in Nan's old residential neighborhood. Gleaming appliances have replaced former bedrooms, staircases have been moved, and residential comfort has given way to the elegant efficiency of the new production home of Nan's online business (www.sweetopia.biz). Nan has big dreams for Sweetopia, and she's thrilled to be able to use her past to launch her into her future, a future that she sees as being filled with a wonderful variety of gluten-free baked goods as imaginative and colorful as the wild socks she favors. After all, "if you can make a product like that, you have an obligation to do so."



Get to know your neighbors better by having your family featured in the next available issue, or nominate a neighbor you've always wanted to know! Just email jennifer.yanczak@n2pub.com to get the ball rolling.