

## Daily Dish

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON FOOD IN LOS ANGELES

### Want to enter a “?!”, “;?!”, “?!:” or “?!” baking contest?

September 15, 2009



We’re sure you’ve already planned what to bake for National Punctuation Day. No? Well get ready: The man behind the celebration of the proper use of the semicolon is organizing a baking contest.

Sept. 24 is the sixth annual National Punctuation Day, but the first baking contest. Makes sense, right? Ply kids with cookies and they’ll be eager to punctuate properly. Or should there be a comma somewhere in that question?

Former newspaperman Jeff Rubin founded the holiday in 2004. “Every year, we try to do something fun that engages the public, so this year we decided to do the baking contest,” he says.

The idea for the contest is not to write a grammatically correct recipe. It’s to bake something in the shape of a

punctuation mark. (I don’t know, but I bet the prize doesn’t go to something baked in a cake tin and called a period.)

To enter, people must send a recipe and a sample of their cookie, cake, pastry, doughnut or bread baked in the shape of a punctuation mark to National Punctuation Day, 1517 Buckeye Court, Pinole, CA 94564. They must also send two photos: One of the item being put in an oven before baking and the other of it being taken out when done.

First-, second-, and third-place winners get a box of non-edible Punctuation Day goodies; all entrants’ photos and recipes will be published on the National Punctuation Day website. Entries must be received by Sept. 30.

“There’s an epidemic of poor punctuation in the United States, much like the swine flu. It’s too bad there’s no vaccine to prevent it,” Rubin says. His website is intended as a resource for good punctuation as well as a place for noting the bad.

— Mary MacVean

*Photo: Jeff Rubin bakes an oatmeal-raisin question mark. Photo courtesy Jeff Rubin.*