

THE

# ART OF PANCAKES

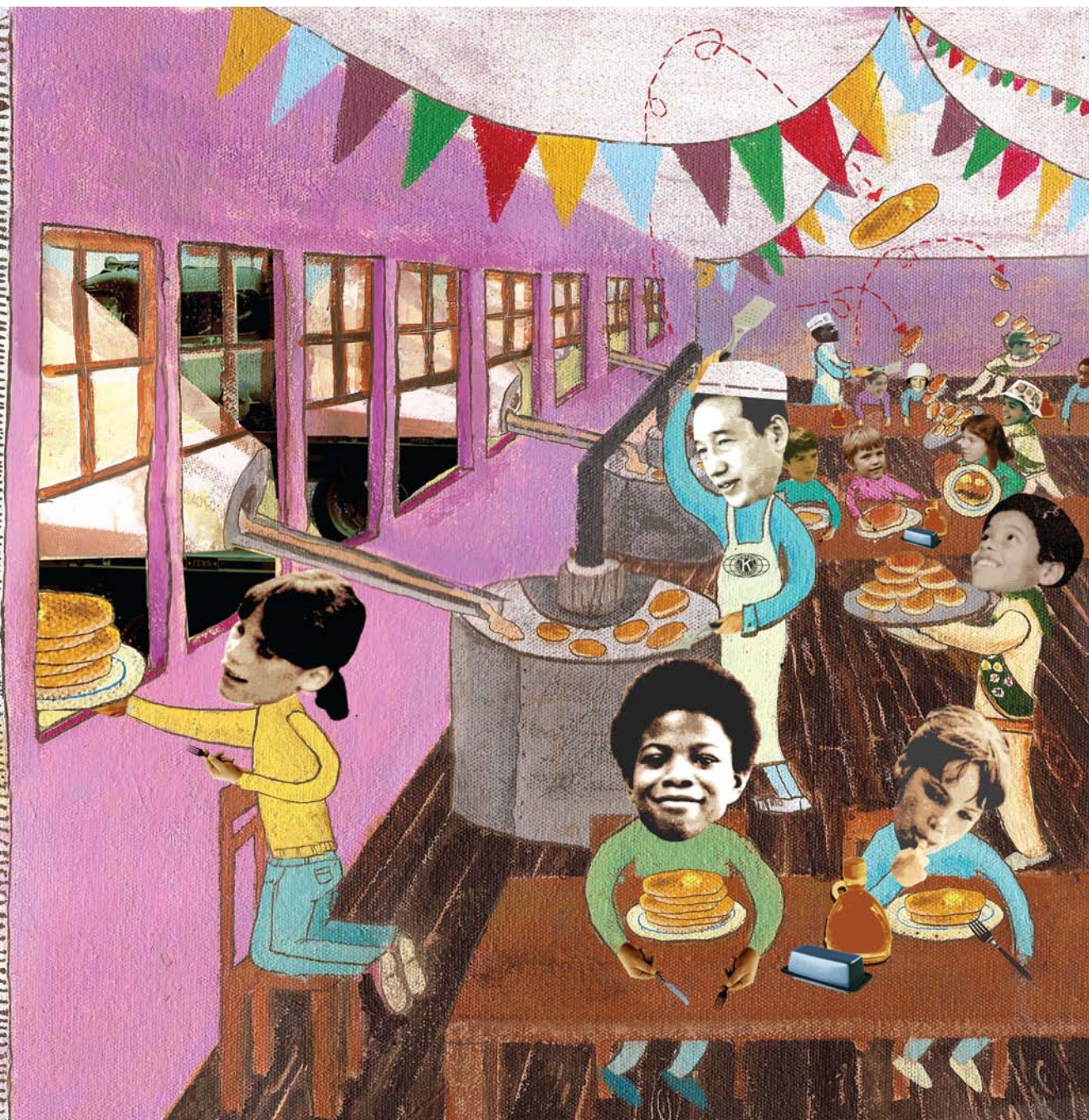
**K**iwanis pancakes are legendary. Butter-melting, syrup-coated golden cakes served with sides of bacon and sausage. But what separates a pancake breakfast from a *pancake breakfast*? A flop from a blockbuster? The answer's not in the recipe but in the way a club cooks up one of its community's most anticipated events.

We talked to five clubs that have *pancake breakfast* down to a science. Their breakfasts have set world records, perfected aerial flipping stunts and even welcomed Aunt Jemima herself. Here's how they do it and how they impact their community.



# Kiwanis cooks know how to transform a common breakfast into a fundraising masterpiece

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## COLLABORATE

Jim Powe isn't too proud to beg. His club counts on heavy publicity from local newspapers and radio stations to promote the Winchester, Virginia, Kiwanis Club's Pancake Day, a 12-hour biannual event that raised \$60,000 in 2009.

Service Leadership Program members volunteer and area businesses also pitch in, buying tickets in quantities and distributing them to employees, customers and charity organizations. The University Kiwanis Club of Wichita Falls, Texas, gives corporate-sponsored tickets to special-needs groups to be redeemed during the off-peak times.

## CHANNEL YOUR CLUB'S BUSINESS SAVVY

In 1958, the official icon of all things pancake, Aunt Jemima, attended the Fargo, North Dakota, Kiwanis Club's first annual Pancake Karnival. The breakfast has since set world records. Club President Burley Barnett chalks it up to smart business sense.

When the breakfast switched venues to the FargoDome the date happened to fall on Valentine's Day, so

the club convinced four couples to commit to onsite weddings, stirring interest and drawing crowds. The club trains chefs on pancake efficiency targets, plays PowerPoint shows of club events and books major touring acts to donate performances.

## MAKE 'EM LAUGH (YOU WILL TOO)

Pancake masters have learned that a little bit of entertainment sweetens any Kiwanis breakfast. At Fargo's big feed, for example, children's eyes light up at the sight of 12 massive inflatable games. In Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Pancake Day wins big cheers for its *Andy Griffith Show* impersonators and University of Alabama "Big Al" mascot.

The practical joking Cheyenne, Wyoming, Kiwanis Club gets guffaws and giggles from the 30,000 guests as they line up for its three-day breakfast. A gag menu lists elk milk pancakes and buffalo chip coffee. Batter pours from a churning cement mixer (but never makes it to the griddle). Chefs flip pancakes over their shoulders with Boy Scouts standing by to catch the flying hotcakes on trays.

"When the kids see volunteers joking and having fun, they want to get involved," says Jim O'Connor of the Cheyenne Kiwanis Club. "It's amazing how many of those Boy Scouts join Kiwanis when they grow up."

## KEEP IT CHEAP OR FREE

The Tuscaloosa club offsets ticket costs with income from ads displayed in the cafeteria. The Cheyenne club's breakfast coincides with Cheyenne Frontier Days and is completely free to the public. Frontier Days covers all expenses and helps promote the breakfast among the 400,000 rodeo and festival attendees. (Can I get a *yee-haw?*) Breakfast-goers can't believe it's free, and many are so impressed they become Kiwanians.

## PIGGYBACK ANOTHER EVENT

Timing is everything. The Cheyenne club maximizes its exposure at a big festival. The Tuscaloosa club boosts traffic by choosing a weekend when other community events are happening.

"Some of the best pancake breakfasts occur as a celebration of a town's birthday, a holiday, the Kiwanis club birthday, kicking off an event or capping off a race," says Elizabeth Warren, Kiwanis International branded programs manager.

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Every year, Kiwanis clubs generously pour pancake breakfast revenues back into their communities. They build picnic shelters and rest rooms in parks. They donate to youth organizations, Special Olympics and Ronald McDonald House. They award university scholarships and sponsor five-kilometer runs that benefit pre-kindergarten initiatives.

"Believe you can support your community and you know they'll be there for you too," says Bev Vining, chairwoman of the 2010 Fargo Kiwanis Pancake Karnival. **km**



# HOW GOOD ARE YOUR PANCAKES?

Just because a pancake breakfast—or any fundraiser—is a 50-year tradition doesn't mean it's meaningful and productive. Take this quiz to help figure out if it's time to pull the plug, revise your recipe or keep on flipping.

For each question, score two points for “yes,” one point for “somewhat,” and zero points for “no.”

## 1. Did your attendance increase?

- A. Yes. Someone even spotted Elvis.
- B. Somewhat. If you count four-legged friends.
- C. No. But we had some great batter-splatter duels.

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Did club member participation increase?

- A. Yes. And we wore goofy hats too.
- B. Somewhat. But we had to bribe a few.
- C. No. Maybe we should've bribed them all.

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Did your expenses decrease?

- A. Yes. We had a mountain of food and drink donations.
- B. Somewhat. Finding that stash of last year's napkins really helped.
- C. No. Guess we shouldn't have blown the budget on a Beyoncé look-alike.

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Did you work with new organizations to expand the scope of your event?

- A. Yes. Those brawny football players really tackled trash removal.
- B. Somewhat. It's not our fault the ventriloquist society sent only two volunteers.
- C. No. We'd have to change our ways!

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Did you take time to promote your club?

- A. Yes. We handed out invitations to our next service project.
- B. Somewhat. We had a few kinks in our PowerPoint presentation.
- C. No. But don't we get points for putting the Kiwanis logo on the menu?

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Did you invite members from your sponsored Service Leadership Programs?

- A. Yes. We never would've survived without them.
- B. Somewhat. We should've tried text messaging.
- C. No. We're afraid of teenagers.

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Did you promote your event?

- A. Yes. Next year's goal: *Oprah*.
- B. Somewhat. A little local TV and newspaper publicity goes a long way.
- C. No. Apparently, word of mouth doesn't cut it anymore.

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. Was it so successful that you could and should plan for two annual breakfasts?

- A. Yes. Bring on the syrup!
- B. Somewhat. But put that double order of syrup on hold.
- C. No. Though we usually have leftovers.

Score \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_

10–16 points  
7–9 points  
0–6 points

Keep on flipping  
Rewrite the recipe  
Sell the griddles

ON THE WEB

### Are your projects effective?

Put them to the test at [www.kiwanismagazine.org](http://www.kiwanismagazine.org).

