

# Lifestyle



Thursday  
Sept. 16, 1999

Coffee Break  
Comics  
Today's TV

## Cajun cuisine to flavor Emerald Mountain fund-raiser

By Nick Lackeos  
Montgomery Advertiser

### THINGS TO DO

EMERALD MOUNTAIN — Monica Bowman doesn't care how much spice the chef uses at Saturday's New Orleans-style fund-raising dinner, she will pass on the alligator.

"I like Cajun food, but I would be kind of shy about eating alligator," said Bowman, a west Wetumpka resident.

Anyone who enjoys New Orleans cuisine can find all they want Saturday at the Emerald Mountain \$10,000 Draw Down.

The fund-raising event to benefit the Emerald Mountain Volunteer Fire Department will include prizes for lucky ticketholders and a New Orleans-style dinner at

the Emerald Mountain Community Clubhouse, said Ralph Holmes, an Emerald Mountain spokesman.

Parker Johnston, a fire department spokesman, said the dozen or so firefighters hope to raise about \$10,000 to upgrade equipment in hopes of improving the department's Insurance Services Office rating. This would result in a substantial decrease in insurance premiums for Emerald Mountain homeowners, Johnston said.

The Draw Down meal will be prepared by New Orleans chef Emil Stieffel.

Stieffel said the alligator is only a small part of the Cajun-Creole feast he will pre-

pare at Emerald Mountain.

"I make shrimp etouffee, which has more of a butter sauce than a cream sauce," said Stieffel, 47. "I use a lot of garlic. And I use onions and celery and stewed tomatoes. It's served over rice.

"I grew up in New Orleans not far from the French Quarter, and I learned to cook by watching my mother in the kitchen," said Stieffel, who has a cooking show titled "Gallery New Orleans" on the Public Broadcasting System.

"Our food in New Orleans and south Louisiana is a cultural montage of several ethnic groups," he said. Those ethnic groups include French, Spanish, African and Indian. The dishes he will

prepare at Emerald Mountain will include these ethnic groups.

One of the dishes will be crawfish rotini — crawfish sauteed in butter, onions, celery and roux, which is a blend of flour and oil, he said. The dish is served over rotini pasta. Another favorite will be red beans and rice, he said, which will include ham and sausage. "And we'll have shrimp and pasta salad, which is made with Creole mustard and a Creole ranch dressing," he said.

He said he was still in grade school when he learned many cooking secrets from his mother, who specialized in Cajun and Creole dishes. And one of the secrets is to not overpower the food by us-

ing too much spice, he said.

"My food is not hot and spicy," he said. "It's seasoned. You don't want to overpower the dish with too much spice. You want to be able to taste what you're cooking."

The secret to cooking alligator meat is "when you clean an alligator, take away all the fat, because the fat has a musky flavor," he said.

"My supplier grinds up lean alligator meat and mixes it with pork fat" to add a juicy quality to the sausage, he said. And for the diners who don't want alligator sausage, he will have smoked pork sausage, he said.

The dessert will be Bananas Foster, which he said is "bananas and brown sugar, flaming on top of ice cream."

### WANT TO GO?

**What:** 5th annual Emerald Mountain \$10,000 Draw Down

**When:** 5 p.m. Saturday

**Where:** Emerald Mountain Community Clubhouse on Emerald Mountain Parkway

**Prizes:** \$7,000 grand prize, \$2,000 second prize and \$1,000 third prize

**Admission:** \$100 donation to the Emerald Mountain Fire Department includes dinner for two and a chance at prize. Only 400 tickets are available.

**Information:** Call Sonni Behrens at (334) 514-200 or Teri Magdon at (334) 514-1521



Starting her own business let Linda Lock



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