

3,000 pieces of chocolate ready for you in Bisbee

Copper Queen Library's 25th annual Chocolate Tasting will be artful and delicious

By Christine Steele
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Volunteer Jane Davenport serves various chocolate treats to AJ Hammons, 11, and his mother Shay at last year's Chocolate Tasting soiree in Bisbee. The event helps to sponsor the Copper Queen Library's Children's Summer Reading Program and the Preschooler's Story Hour.

If You Go

What: 25th annual Bisbee Chocolate Tasting sponsored by The Friends of the Copper Queen Library

When: Saturday, Feb. 13.
Doors open at 5:30 p.m.
Chocolates served from 6 to 9 p.m.

Where: Central School Project, 43 Howell Ave. Old Bisbee

Cost: \$10 entitles ticket holders to six pieces of chocolate of their choice. Available at the Copper Queen Library, the Friends of the Library Bookstore, Finders Keepers and High Desert Market.

BISBEE — You won't need find a coveted golden ticket for entrance to this chocolate experience. Tickets are on sale now for this weekend's chocolate extravaganza, and Bisbee's 25th Annual Chocolate Tasting promises to be one of the most exciting yet.

James Coull has been organizing the event for the past five years and said the event, which is put on by the Friends of the Copper Queen Library, just keeps growing.

"It's our biggest fundraiser for the library," he said. "It raises between \$6,000 and \$8,000 for it every year."

Every year, dozens of home and commercial bakers concoct their best chocolate confections for the event which features 3,000 different pieces of chocolate spread out over three tasting areas on both floors of the Central School Project. A \$10 ticket gives the purchaser their choice of six pieces of chocolate.

This year, 80 home bakers and nearly a dozen commercial bakers are cooking up confections for the event. Many are regulars, like Carole Beauchamp, who has been making delectable treats for the event for 10 of its 25 years.



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“One treat that people seem to like is the peanut butter Buckeyes,” Beauchamp said. “And I make a dark fudge with white chocolate on top and then top it with peppermint sticks so it looks festive for Valentine’s Day. I make about four or five different things each year.”

This year Beauchamp is making both of those treats along with white chocolate peanut clusters — peanut butter, rice krispie treats, baby marshmallows, and peanuts dipped in white chocolate — and if the weather stays cool enough, she’ll make anise seed almond meringue cookies.

“It doesn’t do well if it is too warm,” she explained.

She also has a mini red velvet cupcake planned.

“They are made with red beets and they are so tasty people can never tell the difference that they are gluten free. All of mine gluten free.”



A father and daughter participate in the annual Bisbee Chocolate Tasting event in 2013.

While it's a lot of work baking and getting ready for the event, Beauchamp says she enjoys it.

"I love to bake and to cook and it is such a good cause," she said. "The Friends of the Library Board are just amazing people, given the time they put into this and all of the things they do for the library and I think our library is such a precious resource,

those of who can should help raise money for it."

Some special features will mark this 25th anniversary event, Coull said. In addition to being held at Central School again this year, which has more room than the library for the event to spread out, the paintings from the last 15 years will also be on display there this year.

"In 2005 we started having a local artist doing a painting and turned it into a poster for the event," Coull explained. "Normally those paintings are at the library so people wouldn't get a chance to see them unless they went there but this year all the paintings will be on display at Central School, including this year's painting, titled "Sweet Prospects," by Bisbee artist Sam Woolcott, of the Sam Poe Gallery."

In addition to sweets, there will be a raffle and a silent auction, where bidders can vye for items donated by Bisbee's finest restaurants, shops and galleries. The raffle is a "pick your own prize" so you can be sure to get that special something that you covet.

Doors open at 5:30 for browsing and a glass of wine (\$5 suggested donation). Free coffee will be available courtesy of the Page brothers, and free water. Chocolates will be handed out beginning at 6 p.m. KBRP will streaming soft jazz and the The High Strung Desert Ukesters will help keeps things festive playing out front for those waiting in line to get in.

A free shuttle will take folks from the Convention Center Parking lot and the Bisbee Grand parking lot, and transport them up the hill to Central School starting at 5:30 p.m. A handicapped entrance is also available for those who can't climb stairs, just let the driver know.

Tickets are available now at the Friends of the Library bookstore, the Copper Queen Library, Finders Keepers and High Desert Market and will be available on the day of the event at Central School Project.

The event also falls on the Second Saturday, the same day as Bisbee After 5, when galleries stay open late, so make it date night in Old Bisbee this Valentine's weekend. Start with dinner at a local restaurant, then dessert at the chocolate tasting before taking in some art and music at galleries around Old Bisbee.

Howard Kline Gallery will be featuring lots of prints and original heart watercolor paintings for your sweetheart and you and your sweetie can dance to smooth "Blue Moon Jazz" with Lamont Arthur on piano, Holly Whitman on flute and Howard Kline on drums from 5 to 8 p.m. This is a free event and everyone is welcome. Refreshments will be served.

"It's such a great community event," Beauchamp said. "Central School is just alive with energy and people come visit the galleries after having been to the tasting and they are just in a good mood and ready for a good time. It's a great weekend for Bisbee."

For more information and some great chocolate recipes, visit: www.bisbeechocolatetasting.com.