

Chocolate lovers binge on delicacies

Gluttony triumphs over guilt for festival participants

By BRIAN CARLSON
Senior Reporter

Moderation in the pursuit of indulgence at Sunday night's Chocolate Lover's Fantasy was, without a doubt, no virtue.

If Barry Goldwater had attended the chocolate festival in the Ramada Plaza Hotel's Grand Ballroom, he certainly would have been irked by any lily-livered health-conscious types who didn't fill their plates at least two or three times with chocolate truffle cookies, chocolate creme, chocolate-covered strawberries, even chocolate-dipped Cheetos — and then wash it all down with a cup of moto mocha made of chocolate, cinnamon and a shot of espresso.

"People are saying 'There's too much chocolate! There's too much

chocolate!'" exclaimed Pam Prater, chairwoman of the planning committee for the event, which benefited the Historic Haymarket and Special Olympics Nebraska.

But judging by the reactions of the chortling chocophiles who shelled out \$15 to attend, gluttony prevailed over guilt.

"No, I don't feel guilty at all," said Mike Fitzgerald of Lincoln, laughing. "This is long overdue."

The event showcased an impressive array of creative uses of chocolate, as sponsoring organizations strived to offer the most memorable cocoa cuisines.

Richard Conrard and Rich Rodenburg, co-owners and "co-partners" of the Walton Trail Company, showed off their chocolate-dipped Cheetos — the result of "divine inspiration," Conrard said.

Conrard's culinary creation found a fan in 10-year-old Jaclyn Michelsen of Lincoln, who stressed the need to be open to such gourmet innovations.

"It looks weird at first," she said. "And a lot of people, the reason they don't taste it, is they think it looks gross."

"But when you try it, it tastes really good."

Carli Brown, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln sophomore psychology major, and Cindy Warnes, a UML sophomore veterinary science major, said they had never experienced anything quite like the Chocolate Lover's Fantasy.

"It's just really weird to see people saying, 'Here, have some chocolate, eat as much as you want,'" Brown said, clutching her stomach. "You don't hear that very much."

Warnes, a chocolate mousse lover,

"I don't feel guilty at all. This is long overdue."

MIKE FITZGERALD
Lincoln resident

said "I got real full, real fast."

Other notable attractions were Floyd the Penguin, which was made of 63 pounds of solid white chocolate and a layer of dark chocolate; Chocolate Stout Ice Cream with stout beer; and chocolate-covered strawberries and dates.

Kelly Tillotson, 10, of Omaha, who said she liked the chocolate-and-peanut-butter "camel droppings," was nevertheless unsure she would have any room left for Valentine's candy this week.

That may be just fine with her moth-

er, Marla Tillotson.

"This is just great," she said. "I'm sick of chocolate, though. I didn't think I'd ever say that."

Ah, the perils of excess. Conrard grinned and shook his head as he pondered the repercussions of too much chocolate and espresso.

"A lot of people won't be sleeping much tonight," he said.

But amid Sunday night's seemingly endless array of goodies, it seemed that a pound of moderation was worth much less than an ounce of chocolate truffles.

Go Greek!

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