



the Sweet Tooth solution

***Megan Faulkner Brown creates
bakeshop havens and wins
honors—one cupcake at a time.***



By Charlene Renberg Winters (BA '73, MA '96)

When Megan Faulkner Brown ('02), of Lehi, Utah, walked into her local bank in April 2012, the teller began insisting he knew her from somewhere.

"I didn't know him, but I finally asked whether he ever watched the TV show *Cupcake Wars*," Faulkner Brown says. Instantly recognizing her as a contestant on the show, the teller popped from behind the counter and asked to have his photo taken with her.

Cupcake Wars had aired the previous night and Faulkner Brown had walked off with the \$10,000 first-place honor for creating cupcakes using ingredients that ranged from

Brie cheese and cranberries to sweet potatoes and hazelnut cocoa spread.

"I guess it was my first noncelebrity 'celebrity moment,'" she laughs. Faulkner Brown founded the Sweet Tooth Fairy, a chain of 11 bakeries in Utah, Arizona, and Texas that sells cake bites, brownies, cookies, and cakes in addition to cupcakes. Each store is designed with nostalgic charm and could easily be a store on Disneyland's Main Street. "I'm all about making memories," she says. "What's really important in life is relationships and the memories and associations you have

with your loved ones. We try to create an atmosphere in our shops to facilitate just that. We call the bakeshops a haven for people who share a common belief in the magic of sweets.”

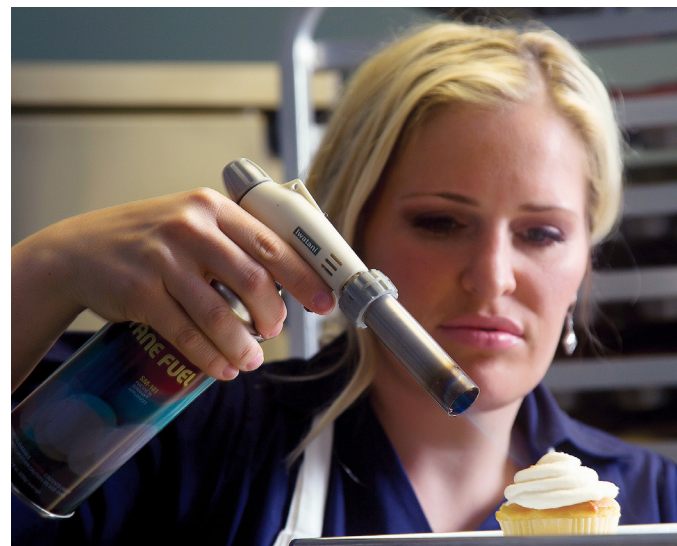
Faulkner Brown began learning her skills in the kitchens of her mother and grandmother and often shared her treats with school friends, her brothers’ sports teams, and other families on special occasions. “I loved to give my creations away and remember my sister teasing me one year that we were not going to drive around Christmas Eve delivering treats to every single person I knew.”

She learned fundamental skills by working for a bakery during high school, and she participated in a small family business where they made cookie dough, scooped it into balls, and froze them for delivery to hotels and schools that wanted to offer freshly baked goodies. At BYU she toyed with the idea of majoring in political science—but opted for a home and family life major because, as she explains, “I wanted to do something that related to family togetherness.”

However, she actually worked in politics for several years in Washington, D.C., for then-Utah Rep. Christopher B. Cannon (BS ‘75, JD ‘80). As a federal employee, she did field and case work, but she also became a technical expert for the staff. “I made a website and met computer-related needs,” she explains. “There was a great need for such services, so I taught myself graphic and web programs. I learned the importance of social media and a strong web presence, something I have incorporated into my own business.”

Additionally, although baking was not her job, she volunteered whenever gift baskets were needed. “This was a no-brainer,” Faulkner Brown says. “The Cannon team bought the ingredients, and I baked and assembled the baskets.”

Faulkner Brown continued working for Cannon two political cycles after she got married, until he lost his 2008 reelection bid. “I decided to pursue a career in baking. I always thought my vocation might someday be larger than just me, so I obtained a cottage food license and converted the basement into a bakery.”



Faulkner Brown creating one of her signature cupcakes.

She considers herself a “foodie” and sought others interested in food through the blogosphere. An especially fortunate blog connection came through a popular site called CakeSpy.com. She sent a selection of her cake bites to Jessie Moore Oleson of CakeSpy, who then listed them among her 25 top treats that year.

Employees from the Rachael Ray television show saw the list and contacted Faulkner Brown in 2009. She was invited to participate in a segment of the show called “Snack of the Day” and prepared 900 cake bites for the audience.

It was hectic timing because she and her husband, Ethan, were within three weeks of opening their first Sweet Tooth Fairy

shop. More than a thousand cupcake fans visited the store the first day.

Many other orders followed, including a 2011 debut appearance on the QVC shopping network promoting Valentine’s Day with a package called “Love at First Bite.” More than 36,000 of her cake bites sold in seven minutes. Faulkner Brown appeared again on Rachael Ray in spring 2012 to highlight how being on the famous cook’s show has

changed her life. And word continues to spread about the Sweet Tooth Fairy.

“We’ve reached out beyond our stores and cater for other groups,” she says, “including Disney in Anaheim. One of our great customers—Sumner Redstone, a majority owner of Paramount Pictures [among other media corporations]—likes our coconut cake bites and even flew his private plane to one of our store openings.”

“We’re in the business of making memories.”

“This is such a wonderful opportunity for me and my family,” Faulkner Brown says. “We’re in the business of making memories. People come to us to celebrate birthdays, weddings, and other special occasions. They come to us for funerals. I learned the art of hospitality from my sweet dad, who passed away in 2004, and that spirit is reflected in every aspect of the Sweet Tooth Fairy. I kept my maiden name in addition to my married name as a way to honor him.”

She adds, “Baking was magic to me as a child. It still is.”



Try Faulkner Brown’s cupcake recipe, featured on the right.

Black & White Chocolate Cupcakes

- * 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- * 1 cup granulated sugar
- * 1 cup & 2 tbs dark chocolate cocoa
- * 1½ tsp baking soda
- * 1 tsp salt
- * ½ cup sour cream
- * 3 eggs
- * ¾ cup ready-to-eat chocolate pudding
- * ½ cup butter, melted
- * 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 24 cupcake pan cups with paper liners.

In a large bowl, mix the dry ingredients together with an electric mixer on low speed for 30 seconds until well combined.

Add wet ingredients and mix on medium speed for 1 minute. Stop and scrape the sides of the bowl and resume mixing on medium speed for an additional minute. Stop mixer and fold in chocolate chips.

Fill the prepared cupcake liners with batter ¾ full. Bake about 15–18 minutes in the preheated oven, until a toothpick inserted in the center of a cupcake comes out clean. Let the cupcakes cool completely before frosting.

White Chocolate Frosting

- * 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- * ¼ cup butter, softened
- * 1 cup white chocolate chips or 6 oz white chocolate, melted
- * 1 tsp vanilla
- * 2½ cups powdered sugar

To make the frosting, beat cream cheese and butter in a large bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed for 1 minute. Add melted chocolate and vanilla; mix for an additional minute. Add powdered sugar gradually, beating until light and fluffy after each addition.

Spread the frosting on the chocolate cupcakes. Garnish with fresh raspberries, mini chocolate chips, or chocolate sprinkles.