"Don't let me die. I've got a baby on the way."

As medics rushed Frank Elam of Eupora to the hospital following a car crash, the paralyzed 22-year-old was determined not to miss his firstborn's birth. Ditto for the dad duties he now accomplishes from the seat of his custom wheelchair.

Elam and his wife, Heavenly, relied on the spinal cord injury team at Methodist Rehabilitation Center in Jackson to teach them how to adapt to their new reality. And Heavenly says MRC's expertise helped make the most of Elam's hard work.

"They took us in like we were kids," she said. "People at MRC care about patients and what they are going through.

"Now that I'm in a wheelchair, I'm going to be best man in a wheelchair I can be," Elam said. "At the end of the day, it's all about making the best life for our son."
Around the U

Everything that’s going on at UMMC

photos courtesy of UMMC Public Affairs
One of the keys to treating COVID-19 could be in the blood on those who have already recovered from the potentially deadly viral infection.

The University of Mississippi Medical Center is leading a clinical trial where hospitalized patients with moderate to severe COVID-19 will receive plasma from people that have recovered.

Dr. Gailen Marshall, R. Faser Triplett Sr. M.D. Chair of Allergy and Immunology at UMMC, is leading the study.

During an infection, the human body makes antibodies that work to neutralize the effect of the invading bacteria or virus, he said. These antibodies stay in the person’s blood plasma after they have beat the infection.

“The majority of people infected with this novel coronavirus recover fully, and these individuals will almost always possess a robust antibody response,” he said. “Our trial seeks to learn if people with severe COVID-19 could benefit from an infusion of these antibodies.”

UMMC needs two kinds of research volunteers for this study: current hospitalized COVID-19 patients and people who have recovered. For the latter group, Marshall and his colleagues will screen volunteers with a documented COVID-19 diagnosis – “people who received a nasal swab test and tested positive for the virus,” he said.

To screen potential plasma donors, a research nurse will draw a small blood sample in order to measure COVID-19 specific antibodies and determine if they are present at a high enough concentration. If a volunteer meets all of the study participation requirements, they will be asked to donate plasma at Mississippi Blood Services for the study.

Plasma can be banked for one year, Marshall said, which is good news because there will likely be new COVID-19 infections in Mississippi for several months.

UMMC’s trial is one of dozens worldwide testing the safety and efficacy of plasma in treating COVID-19. Physicians have used convalescent plasma and its antibodies for more than a century to prevent and treat infectious diseases including influenza, diphtheria and measles before vaccines were available. This technique, which passes passive immunity to the patient, can cause a positive immune response relatively quickly, Marshall said.

Marshall notes that the current COVID-19 patients who receive the plasma will also continue to receive the standard of care for the disease. This includes hospitalization and, if needed, supplemental oxygen or ventilation to manage severe disease. However, there are no Food and Drug Administration-approved treatments or vaccines for COVID-19. Clinical research is necessary to remedy this, Marshall said.

UMMC has started a new clinical trial to test whether antibodies in blood plasma from people who have recovered from COVID-19 can help treat patients still dealing with severe forms of the disease. Photo copyright Getty Images.

UMMC’s trial is one of dozens worldwide testing the safety and efficacy of plasma in treating COVID-19. Physicians have used convalescent plasma and its antibodies for more than a century to prevent and treat infectious diseases including influenza, diphtheria and measles before vaccines were available. This technique, which passes passive immunity to the patient, can cause a positive immune response relatively quickly, Marshall said.

Marshall notes that the current COVID-19 patients who receive the plasma will also continue to receive the standard of care for the disease. This includes hospitalization and, if needed, supplemental oxygen or ventilation to manage severe disease. However, there are no Food and Drug Administration-approved treatments or vaccines for COVID-19. Clinical research is necessary to remedy this, Marshall said.

UMMC’s trial is one of dozens worldwide testing the safety and efficacy of plasma in treating COVID-19. Physicians have used convalescent plasma and its antibodies for more than a century to prevent and treat infectious diseases including influenza, diphtheria and measles before vaccines were available. This technique, which passes passive immunity to the patient, can cause a positive immune response relatively quickly, Marshall said.

Marshall notes that the current COVID-19 patients who receive the plasma will also continue to receive the standard of care for the disease. This includes hospitalization and, if needed, supplemental oxygen or ventilation to manage severe disease. However, there are no Food and Drug Administration-approved treatments or vaccines for COVID-19. Clinical research is necessary to remedy this, Marshall said.

UMMC’s trial is one of dozens worldwide testing the safety and efficacy of plasma in treating COVID-19. Physicians have used convalescent plasma and its antibodies for more than a century to prevent and treat infectious diseases including influenza, diphtheria and measles before vaccines were available. This technique, which passes passive immunity to the patient, can cause a positive immune response relatively quickly, Marshall said.

Marshall notes that the current COVID-19 patients who receive the plasma will also continue to receive the standard of care for the disease. This includes hospitalization and, if needed, supplemental oxygen or ventilation to manage severe disease. However, there are no Food and Drug Administration-approved treatments or vaccines for COVID-19. Clinical research is necessary to remedy this, Marshall said.

UMMC’s trial is one of dozens worldwide testing the safety and efficacy of plasma in treating COVID-19. Physicians have used convalescent plasma and its antibodies for more than a century to prevent and treat infectious diseases including influenza, diphtheria and measles before vaccines were available. This technique, which passes passive immunity to the patient, can cause a positive immune response relatively quickly, Marshall said.

Marshall notes that the current COVID-19 patients who receive the plasma will also continue to receive the standard of care for the disease. This includes hospitalization and, if needed, supplemental oxygen or ventilation to manage severe disease. However, there are no Food and Drug Administration-approved treatments or vaccines for COVID-19. Clinical research is necessary to remedy this, Marshall said.
“We know that COVID-19 is likely to return in some form or another,” he said. “The purpose of clinical trials like this one is to help us prepare so that we can have more knowledge, treat people more quickly, prevent severe disease and decrease the number of deaths during a future outbreak.”

For more information about this clinical trial, contact Lynn Oakes at (601) 496-7837 or loakes1@umc.edu. To learn more about other COVID-19-related clinical trials at UMMC, visit https://umc.edu/clinicaltrials/.
Brent’s Drug Store

The secret passage into The Apothecary, a local speakeasy-themed joint you need to try. Yes they are open! Thurs-Sat 5-10pm
My mom reminded me recently that red velvet cake wasn’t always this ubiquitous thing. There weren’t red velvet cake mixes or Duff Goldman Red Carpet Red Velvet Cake Ice Cream for Blue Bunny® readily available when she was growing up, so red velvet cake had to be made from scratch or sought out at a special place. In other words, the presence of red velvet cake meant that something special was going on. I want to bring that special status back.

The first red velvet cake I had was at this BBQ restaurant in New Albany, Mississippi. This was (is) a family-run place with BBQ that’s quite pedestrian but homemade cakes and pies that are very special. My favorite growing up was always the red velvet cake. It was sold by the slice and served on a small white Styrofoam plate with a small white plastic fork sticking straight into it. The serving mechanism is not at all eco-friendly, but the cake is otherworldly. The three layers are bright red, subtly chocolatey, tender, and moist. The frosting is vanilla-flavored and very light. This isn’t a cream cheese frosting that we’ve become to associate with red velvet cake. It’s not rich, thick, and slightly sour like cream cheese frosting. It’s subtle and airy and lets the cake be the star. When you’ve got a cake with the complex flavors of buttermilk, chocolate, and coffee, why not let it steer the ship? I’ve done some research and found that this lighter frosting is an old fashioned one that used to always accompany red velvet cake back in the day. I’ve found a recipe for it, and that’s what you see here.

These cupcakes are perfect for a Christmas party or just a Tuesday when you’re feeling indulgent, but don’t take my word for it. Ask Hannah Roberts Badon. She had three of them at an engagement party last week.

Red Velvet Cupcakes

with Old Fashioned Frosting

Ingredients

12 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
2 cups granulated sugar
1 cup canola or vegetable oil
2 extra-large eggs
1 cup buttermilk (I always use whole buttermilk)
1 oz red food coloring
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Frosting

1 cup whole milk
5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 sticks butter, softened (I break all the rules of baking
and always use salted butter, and you can’t stop me)
1 cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Instructions

For the cupcakes, preheat oven to 325º. Line a standard
muffin/cupcake tin with paper liners and set aside.

For the frosting, combine the milk and sugar in a small
saucepan over medium heat and whisk constantly until thick.
For the cupcakes, combine the milk and sugar in a small
saucepan over medium heat and whisk constantly until thick.
Remove from heat, cover, and let cool to room temperature.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, cream the butter and sugar until
light and fluffy. Add the cooled milk mixture, crank the mixer
up medium-high, and let it go for a few minutes. Stop to as-
sess after two minutes or so, and if it looks separated, keep
mixing until it’s light and smooth and almost like whipped
cream. Finally, add the vanilla and whip the frosting until
the color is uniform, scraping down the sides and bottom
of the bowl to ensure full incorporation.

Frost the cupcakes with a butter knife like your mom always
did for school birthday parties. That works better than a
piping bag for this icing.

Share with friends and enjoy!
**Talk of the Town**

We pick a topic and ask two readers to make a case for why their pick is the best. Read their piece and decide for yourself.

**Zack Watson**

4th year, Medicine

**Frozen Greek Yogurt + Baklava at Aplos**

I am a creature of habit. Sure, I enjoy trying new things, especially when it comes to food, but once I’ve done my due diligence, and I find my favorite menu items from a restaurant, you better believe those are the things I’m going to order 99% of the time. Lately, I’ve been working my way through the menu at Aplos—Jackson’s newest Mediterranean restaurant that promises fast, fine, and simple cuisine inspired by eateries of Italy, Greece, and the Middle East. While I still have several things to try, I can officially announce my go-to dessert is the frozen Greek yogurt with baklava crumbles and honey, and full disclosure, I am very passionate about it. This dessert isn’t just my favorite at Aplos…it’s my latest food obsession in all of Jackson. For real, I crave this yogurt-baklava combo daily. When I first saw it on the menu, my immediate thought was “duh, gotta try that,” which was closely followed by my second thought of “WHY IN THE WORLD HAVE I NEVER THOUGHT OF THIS?!” I mean, this dessert just makes sense. Both Greek yogurt and baklava are quintessential Mediterranean fare, so why not combine the two, freeze the yogurt, and drizzle with all-natural, raw honey. Seriously, this dessert has it all—it’s sweet but tangy, soft but crunchy, smooth but gooey. With each spoonful, you get the tartness of the yogurt followed by the crispness of the phyllo finished off with the sticky sweetness of the pistachios and honey. Seriously, this dessert is all—it’s sweet but tangy, soft but crunchy, smooth but gooey. With each spoonful, you get the tartness of the yogurt followed by the crispness of the phyllo finished off with the sticky sweetness of the pistachios and honey. This is about the closest thing to the nectar of the gods we mere mortals can get here in Jackson. Even better, this dessert is easy on your diet and your wallet. Coming in at only $5, this Mediterranean frozen-yo is packed full of protein and probiotics, not to mention, the myriad of evidence-based health benefits of pistachios and raw honey. So seriously people, do yourself a solid and run on over to Aplos in Highland Village to try this guilt-free, frozen Greek delight—like me, it may just become your next obsession.

**Sydney West**

4th year, Medicine

**Turtle Tank Shake at Fine and Dandy**

I am a big fan of desserts. Probably the biggest fan. I’m never too full to eat something sweet. And while cookies and cakes and bread puddings are all good, sometimes what you really need is a milkshake. This sweet, cold beverage can comfort you after, say, a week’s worth of tests or, perhaps, a 7-hour surgery that left your feet screaming for mercy. And if said milkshake comes infused with alcohol? ALL THE BETTER. “Enter Fine and Dandy” The almost-1-year-old restaurant has curated a menu that is unique, creative, and delicious, and the milkshake selections are no exception. In full disclosure, I was planning to write about the James Beard Incident because It. Is. Amazing. However, in an effort to keep things fresh and interesting, the chef creates an entirely different menu each season, milkshakes included. While I was initially distraught over this, my waiter assured me that he had the low-down on the best shake for the fall season. He suggested the Turtle Tank Shake, complete with chocolate, salted caramel, cheesecake, pecan pieces, and graham crumbs (Pro Tip: ask them to add Kahlua, a coffee-flavored liqueur), and it did not disappoint. Initially, I was worried that the shake might be too rich, as milkshakes can often be. This shake, however, is smooth and not at all overwhelming. With each sip, you are introduced to a flurry of flavors—never knowing whether you’ll get a chocolate chip, cheesecake or graham crumb. The Kahlua adds an enticing hint of black coffee and sweet butter, and the salted caramel and pecan pieces bring just the right amount of salty to cut the sweet. Truly, it was the best shake I’ve had in a while (and I’ve had a lot). If the Turtle Tank Shake doesn’t sound appealing, 1) you’re crazy but 2) you’re in luck. Other options include: Cap’n Crunk, 80’s Kid Throwback Shake, #basic, and The “Yes We Can Make You A Plain Vanilla Shake.” There’s a milkshake for every taste palate at Fine and Dandy. So, head over there to experience the best dessert in Jackson!
The best eats for your quarantine
with some quality recs and a good number for ordering

**Pig and Pint**
the bacon melt (omg it’s the bomb), disco fries, ribs
601 326 6070

**Elvie’s**
Duck fat french fries are a must. Chef Hunter Evans was featured in the latest issue of Garden & Gun. (@elviesrestaurant) 601 863 8828

**Saltine**
their po boys are fire, catch their monday ramen or their weekend brunch
601 982 2899

**Green Ghost Tacos**
tacos tacos tacos! $2 tacos on tues, (p.s. ask for verdita salsa if that’s your thing) 601 487 6082

**Babalu**
roasted chicken tacos, the baba burger, $4 babarita mix (just add tequila) 601 366 5757

**Crawdad Hole**
crawfish duh 601 982 9299

**Aladdin**
hummus and lamb plate, aladdin sampler for 2 (or 1, no judge) 601 366 6033

**Wingstop on State Street**
raise your classic cajuns (with fries) in the air for no-contact delivery! 601 969 6408

**Picantes**
there’s a thing called “pollo carley” and it was sent from heaven, also curbside margs! 601 398 1344

**Krilakis**
“lamb + chicken gyro, any of the salads, burger, badass fries” -Dr. Matthew Alias 601 790 9463

**Thai Tasty**
“chickens pad thai (thai hot), chicken fried rice (thai hot)” -Katie Brown, MD 601 540 2534

**EDO**
“volcano roll is dank” -Dr. Will Dungan 601 899 8518

**Apolos**
“mezza sampler: try the grape leaves, cheese rolls, and cauliflower” -Dr. MM Hitt 601 714 8989

**Amerigo**
“goat cheese + penne w/ chicken + extra goat cheese is “kisses fingers”” -Katie “cheese fritters are a must” -Dr. Kelsey Berry, pediatrician to the stars 601 977 0563

**Fine & Dandy**
their grandma chick sandwich made the list for best chicken sandwich in america by the daily meal... remember when chicken sandwich wars were a pressing national issue? [sigh] 601 202 5050

**Sophomore Spanish Club**
drive thru hot meal pick up with a menu that changes daily, drive thru grocery store for all your pantry and household needs (seriously, their online grocery will blow your mind) 601 203 3333
Jackson’s favorite restaurant located in Highland Village is the brain child of Chef Alex Eaton and Steven O’Neill of The Manship. Nothing on the menu is more than $10 and it is chock full of great things to eat. Here are my top 5.

1. **The Hummus.** There’s always been a battle for “best hummus” in town. Chef Alex Eaton took a culinary sabbatical to the middle east to reconnect to his roots. It has paid off. The aplos hummus is lemon-garlic perfection topped with a delicious schug sauce (think spicy pesto without the cheese). Where other hummus can have the texture of mashed potatoes, this one is irresistibly smooth.

2. **Anything with the roasted chicken on it.** I know, I know, chicken is rarely the pick when you want something new, exciting, and delicious. But this chicken is incredible. You can see them slow roasting on a spit behind the bar, taunting you, as soon as you walk in. Get it on a wrap, get it on a salad, get it on a pizza, get it on an ice cream cone, I DON’T CARE just get it. Trust me.

3. **The Falafel.** These mediterranean hushpuppies have the perfect spice profile, avoiding the standard pitfall of so many dry bland falafel before it. Dressed up with some marinated cabbage and schug tahini dressing, these are great to share with a friend or eat on your drive home straight out of the bag buckled safely in your passenger seat.

4. **The Frozen Greek Yogurt with Baklava.** It is such a solid dessert creation. Tart, sweet, cold, and crunchy. I could go on about this but Zack makes an excellent case for it on page 52.

5. **Frosé.** When I think frosé, I think an overly sweet slush that kind of tastes like it might have been wine in a past life. This is a very different, and very good, dry rosé frozen and slurred into a flavorful icee. Exactly what you need when the Mississippi fall still thinks it’s summer.
Need to Know

Advice, Recs, and Fun Stuff from the Outside

WHAT?
The Half Of It

“This is not a love story. Nobody gets what they want at the end.”

Why don’t people handwrite letters anymore? If you’re Paul Munsky, you still believe in the beauty of handwritten letters…except you also know when you need help. Enter Ellie Chu. Paul, a talented athlete, recognizes that eloquence is not his specialty. So he approaches Ellie, a wallflower student who runs a side hustle of writing English papers. When Ellie is forced to accept Paul’s request of writing a love letter for a quiet girl named Aster Flores whom he’s never even spoken to, a game of words and wit ensues between Paul and Aster…and Ellie? Paul and Ellie realize that “people don’t see what they’re not looking for” when Aster reverses the popular girl stereotype by acknowledging the reality of “pretty people power” while also sharing her disapproval of the perks of the influence.

CRITIC’S CORNER

A REVIEW BY SHANU

This is not a love triangle. This unique and quirky film is distinct for being a story of an unlikely friendship triangle. One teaches the others to question their (and society’s) beliefs. One teaches the others that love is not necessarily about finding your other half. One teaches the others the importance of taking bold risks because “if you never do the bold stroke, you’ll never know if you could’ve had a great painting.” They finally begin to be seen for whom they really are. In the end, all their lives change.

No startling gimmicks. No flabbergasting plot-twists. No flashy cinematography. No A-list cast. Get ready for all the feels and a lot of adorable laughs in this emotional, sensitive, and quirky “romantic-comedy” that sets out to challenge clichés.

SHANU MOORTHY AND JOYCE

4th year | Medicine

THE LOST BOOK OF ADANA MOREAU | BY MICHAEL ZAPATA

This book is ENORMOUS. In just a few short pages, this book spans interconnected galaxies and universes yet tackles a similar magnitude in how families and generations forget, remember, but always influence each other across time. Adana Moreau writes a famous science fiction novel, then starts a highly anticipated sequel, but dies before publication. Decades and generations later, a young man finds a copy of the sequel and must find out where it came from. Time has never felt more like a graspable dimension, rather than just a timeline we trudge along, than in this novel. I recommend you buckle in for a brainy read for this one, but don’t let that distract you from the beautiful bursts of poetry throughout the book.

For recommended reading about alternate universes, I recommend Exhalation by Ted Chiang. For more in depth exploration of the effects of Katrina on family and community, read Salvage the Bones by Jesmyn Ward and The Yellow House by Sarah Broom.

A message from the author Michael Zapata to the staff of UMMC:

“So much of this novel centers on the exiled and the displaced over the 20th and still young 21st centuries. During times of crisis, first responders thread awareness, safety, concern, and love through our lives. We are less exiled for it. From the bottom of my corazon, thank you to all the doctors, nurses, and medical professionals who remain there for us during our most difficult times. It means the universe to us.”

READS

by JOHN CALEB GRENN, MD

Med/Peds PGY 3

THE MURMUR

ISSUE TEN 2019-2020

22
Need to Know
MURMUR
BOOK
REVIEW
BY ROSEMARY MOAK

PETER HELLER
"Celine"

When we think secret investigations, classified information, private eyes, and the unraveling of a mystery, our minds drift toward cryptic words that we see on the news during criminal investigations and counter terrorism efforts such as “FBI… CIA… NSA.” Nobody imagines Celine. Oh Celine... the enchanting and magnetic protagonist, born into a life of deep rooted east coast wealth, urged at a young age to study art, literature, and may I daresay… the art of entertaining, since these were sensible things someone of her status assumed. Yet, the life of summering in Nantucket, elite boarding schools, and aristocratic secrecy creates an inner restlessness, especially when an unexpected teenage pregnancy leaves her with a leviathan of guilt and sends her searching for the things in life that people lost or simply let go of. As the story begins, she finds herself living in Brooklyn with her dedicated husband Pete (who happens to be an excellent chef- just wait for the food descriptions this book entails- my mouth waters), with a lifetime of highly sought after private investigative work (even the FBI can’t execute with Celine’s precision- don’t worry, they know and want her expertise), either because nothing quite suited her sense of living outside the lines, or perhaps reconciling the loss she bears following the events of her teenage dalliance. Her life as a PI has primarily been dedicated to reuniting adopted children with their biological parents. Today at 68 years old, she is faced with a unique investigation: the search for a missing National Geographic photographer, the father of Gabriela, who comes to Celine looking for answers 20 years after his “assumed death” while working on a project assignment at Yellowstone National Park. No one really knows what happened to him. While various reports say different things, Gabriella wants truth and Celine has a soft spot for such matters.

Celine is not the stereotypical private eye that we all imagine from the movies- she’s no Starsky and Hutch zipping around in a 1975 Ford Grand Torino, with guns blazing searching for an eventual détente. Celine doesn’t even have a gun (yet, make no mistake, a sharpshooter when need be). She’s the odd combination of a 60-year-old wispy J Crew model mixed with your favorite college professor. The one who breezed into lecture hall 9 minutes late sporting horn-rimmed glasses and white washed blue jeans, whose oratory alone made you question even the most concrete yet abstract ideas such as String Theory, Galileo’s universe, and the Declaration of Independence.

Not exactly your typical private eye, but a force of nature and by no means “soft, or weak.” It’s her subtleties that have allowed her to infiltrate the diversity of life looking for stories whether at a cocktail party or on a shooting range. While on one hand, it’s almost more convincing to imagine this lady to be on the cover of Architectural Digest, old fashioned in hand, talking about her newest design on the French Riviera. Instead, she’s solving the impossible mysteries with an oxygen tank in hand (cigarettes may have gotten the best of her, but neither are we perfect) somehow making emphysema look chic. Maybe it’s not the most realistic thing- but Peter Heller certainly has a way of convincing even the most pessimistic of audiences.

Peter Heller invites us into Celine’s world and allows us to explore her sense of loss, redemption, and family, and even slight dolor when you least expect it. As she and Pete make their journey to solve this cold case investigation at Yellowstone, they quickly realize someone doesn’t want this story told. Stay tuned for the excitement and the humor lying beneath. However, if you pay attention, the mystification and complexity behind Celine begins to unfold half way between Montana and Wyoming state lines.

Peter Heller creates a delicate balance of maintaining Celine’s enigmatic overtones yet dives deep enough to allow us to gain a sense that we’ve known her our entire lives.

Peter Heller creates
a delicate balance of
maintaining Celine’s
enigmatic overtones
yet dives deep enough
to allow us to gain
a sense that we’ve
known her our entire
lives

by Rosemary Moak
We need to talk about Pop Tarts. They’re bad and you know it.

I lived in a Toaster Strudel household. My three sisters, brother and I would nearly tump the grocery cart over when we passed the frozen foods section of the Clarksdale Kroger. Strawberry? Blueberry? Those ones with cream cheese in them! We made a fuss. And the icing! Just the thought of those plump plastic bubbles of frosting gets my dopamine firing to this day. We’d cut them with our teeth, and if mom wasn’t looking, drag them between our clenched jaws for a 3 ounce shot of pure sucrose. Although the literature is mixed, the pediatric endocrinology guidelines don’t exactly endorse this practice.

And if our box didn’t have the appropriate amount of icing packets, or ya know, someone sucked a few down after soccer practice, one of us would have to fairly allocate the remaining icing so everyone had the appropriate strudel to icing ratio. In such a circumstance, you better believe we metered out that icing with the precision of a cocaine dealer at the end of his fiscal year.

On occasion, mom would come home with a different kind of box. This box wasn’t cold. It was dry and cube-ish and it hurt my heart a little. She got the Pop Tarts.

I don’t mean to be dramatic. My family survived that incident, aside from some mild emotional trauma on my part. But on that day I drew the line and knew the P-Tart was not for me. This has nothing to do with snobbery, and everything to do with the horrible corruption of the pastry sciences, an alchemy that has been in practice for thousands of years—giving us flaky croissants, ethereal cakes, and airy chocolate chip cookies. All of this joyful chemistry is lost on the dead-inside Pop-Tart that tastes like a mixture of ground up horse hooves and chalk, filled with toothpaste. How many orphan foals are wandering alone in the wilderness because their poor mother was sold to Kellogg for a nickel? (An expose for the next issue of The Murmur, coming to a newsstand near you!)

So I set out to make a better P-Tart. Why go to the trouble you ask? Well, when your grandma asks if you want some of her homemade cookies, do you respond, “no thanks grandma! These brick hard Chips Ahoy’s not only are good for paving the driveway! They also are my favorite for eating”?

I didn’t think so.

Not only has this recipe redeemed a terrible thing—they were freaking amazing. I got the recipe from Food52.com and modified as I went. Also I filled half of them with Nutella because it was the right thing to do. Don’t be scared of making your own dough. It’s a simple pie crust that doesn’t require any rising, or praying to the sun, or other time consuming baking rituals. Your efforts will give you a flaky and buttery crust that simultaneously has texture and melts in your mouth. If you don’t have a food processor or really don’t want to fool with homemade dough, buy those sheets of frozen Pillsbury pie crust. Either way these are a relatively easy way to look like a baking pro. Share them with your friends, and keep a few in your freezer for a rainy day.

Enjoy.
Homemade Pop Tarts

1 Place the flour, butter, sugar, and salt in a food processor and pulse a couple of times until the butter is pea-sized. Add the egg and pulse again until the dough starts to come together; if necessary, add a little ice water so that the dough coheres. Bring the dough together with your hands and knead it a couple of times until it’s smooth. Wrap it in plastic and chill it for half an hour.

2 Once it has chilled, divide the dough in two balls and roll out each part out as thinly as possible. Cut each piece of dough into eight rectangles, about 3 x 4 inches in size. You may have to re-roll the scraps to get the eight, but it should work. Place eight of the rectangles on a baking sheet and add a heaping teaspoon of jam or the filling of your choice to the center of each. Place one of the other rectangles over each filling-topped pastry and press down to seal the edges. Use a fork to get a pretty pattern on the sides, then prick a few holes in each pastry so that the steam can escape.

3 Place the pastries in the freezer until they’re firm. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 350° F. When you’re ready to bake, brush the pastries with a little beaten egg or milk and put them in the oven for 20 to 25 minutes, until golden brown.

4 Remove to a wire rack to cool. If you want to eat them like a real Pop Tart, enjoy them straight from the oven, while the filling is so hot that it burns your mouth. Or, leave them to cool a little while you make the glaze by mixing together the powdered sugar and a little hot water or milk until you have a dollop-able consistency. Spread the pastries with the glaze and top with colorful sprinkles.

Makes 8

For the Pastries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>all-purpose flour</td>
<td>1 1/2 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sugar</td>
<td>1 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salt</td>
<td>1 pinch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unsalted butter, cold and cubed</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cold egg beaten</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cold water (optional)</td>
<td>1 TBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jam or Nutella</td>
<td>8 TBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>milk or beaten egg, for brushing top of pastries</td>
<td>2 TBS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Topping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>powdered sugar</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hot water or milk</td>
<td>2 tsp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recipe from Food52.com