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## Van Hoose three-peats in Fair food

### Her pies set pace

By VICTOR CALDERON  
The Salinas Californian

MONTEREY - For the past five years, Hilary Van Hoose of Monterey has baked traditional apple pies for the Best Homemade Apple Pie Contest at the Monterey County Fair.

But no matter how many hours Van Hoose, 21, spent perfecting her recipes, she said

she never finished better than third place or "people's choice" awards.

So this year, Van Hoose changed things up - enough to score first place in Friday night's contest at the 70th annual Monterey County Fair.

Her winning entry: an "apple" meringue pie created by taking the traditional recipe for a lemon meringue pie and replacing lemon juice with fresh apple puree.

"This year, I thought I would do something creative, and I guess it worked," said Van Hoose, a student at Monterey Peninsula College.

It was her third baking event win at this year's fair. On Wednesday, Van Hoose took first place in the cookie contest for her entry of chocolate marshmallow cookies and finikia, or Greek honey-dipped walnut cookies. Thursday, she won the fudge contest for her fudge with cocoa nibs.

Van Hoose's win in the apple pie contest was a close call over second place winner Madalene Rose of Carmel Valley, said contest judge Clyde Schafer. Piper Ward, 9, of Salinas, took third place.

"It was a very close decision," said Schafer, a retired baker. "The top two pies got perfect scores, but we had to go with (Van Hoose) for stepping out of the box."

Schafer said the judges compared the pies to each other, considered how the pies were prepared, and judged them on taste and flavor.

Van Hoose received a trophy for her prize. All three entrants received ribbons and free admission to the fair.

The Adult Home Arts building will host two more cooking clashes this year: A cake contest at 7 tonight and a berry pie contest at 5 p.m. Sunday. After winners are announced, people attending the contests can try a free slice of the entries.

 

RICHARD GREEN/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

Heather Mendoza, of Salinas, holds up her daughter, Elizabeth, 3, for a better look at Alfie the clown and Deloris the DoDo bird Friday at the Monterey County Fair in Monterey.

#### IF YOU GO

- **WHAT:** Monterey County Fair
- **WHEN:** Today through Sunday.
- **WHERE:** Monterey County Fairgrounds, 2004 Fairground Road, Monterey.
- **TICKETS:** \$8 adults/\$7 seniors (over 65)/\$4 kids 6-12 years (younger than age 5 free)
- **PARKING:** \$8 at fairgrounds.
- **INFORMATION:** [www.montereycountyfair.com](http://www.montereycountyfair.com) or call 372-5863.

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