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**SAND TARTS** from Ashley's Pastry Shop in Oakwood have become popular on the set of 'The West Wing' since introduced by the Miami Valley natives who star in the NBC series.

# COOKIE of the STARS

: Oakwood bakery's famous Sand Tarts have fans on the set of 'The West Wing'

BY ANN HELLER  
aheller@DaytonDailyNews.com

**W**hen celebrities born in the Miami Valley indulge in food memories, they think of Sand Tarts — at least if they were raised in or near Oakwood. That's the truth if the celebs are Allison Janney, Rob Lowe and Martin Sheen, who shared the stage for years on TV's *The West Wing*. All have Dayton-area roots, and for the past two years the cast of that show has regularly been on the receiving end of 10 dozen of the cookies, shipped to the set by Oakwood's Ashley's Pastry Shop, at 21 Park Ave.

The cookies go back 60 years, says Theresa Hammons, who has owned the shop with her husband Greg for two decades.

The Sand Tart turned out to be — and still is — the signature cookie for the store, regularly ordered for class reunions when graduates from the nearby high school come home.

► The Sand Tart cookies sell for \$5.45 a dozen. They are already bagged, ready for a quick purchase. The bake shop is open 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and until 5 p.m. Saturday. Call 293-1719.

Tart is a brown sugar cookie topped with a dollop of meringue and a sprinkle of cinnamon sugar — a whole different kind of cookie; a little chewy, a little crisp and quite sweet.

When the Hammons bought the bakery, the recipe wasn't included in the purchase. Disappointed regular customers kept asking for the cookie, and the new owners couldn't get the recipe. But the previous owner had opened another location and was selling Sand Tarts.

"I went there and bought a dozen cookies, and my husband sent them to a lab in Wisconsin to have the ingredients broken down," Mrs. Hammons says. "Then he reformulated the recipe."

Despite the name, the cookie is no traditional sand tart, which is an old-fashioned butter cookie simply sprinkled with granulated sugar. But the Oakwood Sand



**THERESA AND GREG HAMMONS** didn't get the recipe for Sand Tarts as part of the deal when they purchased Ashley's 20 years ago, so they had the cookies analyzed in a laboratory in order to re-create them.

The cookie remains so popular that Mrs. Hammons makes 25 to 30 dozen every day and is often sold out by noon.

Several years ago, Mrs. Hammons read a *Dayton Daily News* story about a new cafeteria set on *The West Wing* outfitted with Hobart kitchen products from Troy. Knowing the connection of the show's stars with the Dayton area, she came up with the idea of sending the signature cookies to the players on the show. First she queried Macy Janney, a regular customer and Allison Janney's mother, about the propriety of the gift and got the OK.

Janney, Lowe and Sheen sent messages that the cookies brought back memories, and the Emmy-winning actress has been ordering them three or four times a year since then. Most recently 10 dozen cookies were shipped overnight express to the Los Angeles set for Valentine's Day.

When Allison Janney came to Dayton for the opening of the Schuster Performing Arts Center last year, she came to the bake shop to meet the Sammons — and pick up another 10 dozen cookies.

Contact Ann Heller at 225-2402.