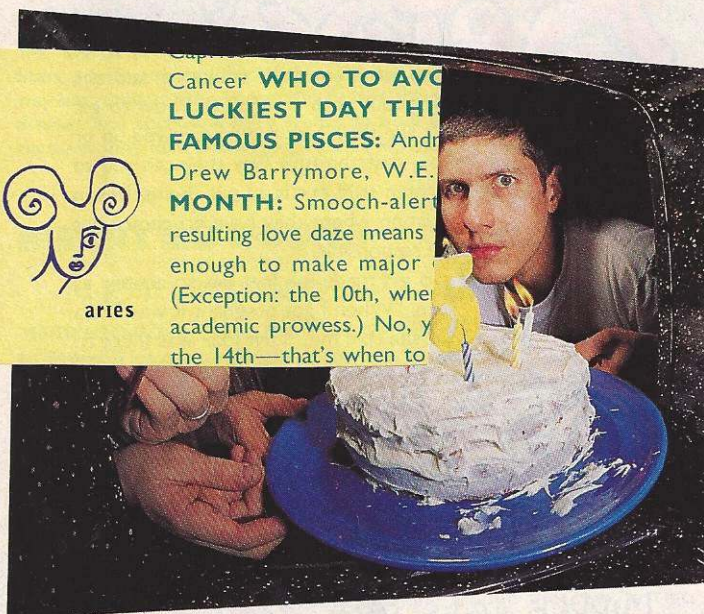


the carrotiest, cakiest thing on wheels*



aries

Cancer **WHO TO AVOID**
LUCKIEST DAY THIS YEAR
FAMOUS PISCES: Andrew
 Drew Barrymore, W.E. **THE**
MONTH: Smooch-alert! The
 resulting love daze means
 enough to make major
 (Exception: the 10th, when
 academic prowess.) No, yep
 the 14th—that's when to



Spike, Wag and Mike D.

Rocking the stove were Beastie Boy drummer Mike Diamond (who loaned us his kitchen), Wag (as in Wag, the bass player from Mary's Danish), Spike (one third of *Dirt*'s Master Cluster) and me. Hum the *Mission Impossible* theme as you read along and be sure to study the bold type carefully; it's important.

Spike, Mike and I went shopping. We bought **eggs, juice concentrate** (pineapple and reduced-acid orange), a bunch of **carrots, Popsicles** (any flavor), **baking soda**, all-purpose **flour**, two **pans** to hold the batter, Pillsbury brand vanilla **frosting** and various **candles**. The only other two ingredients called for were **cinnamon** and **vegetable oil**, which Mike already owned. After the store we went and got Italian food in an effort to kill time waiting for Wag to show up. **Pitfall #1: Bass players are prone to tardiness.**

After **preheating the oven to 325°** for 45

etable oil while we waited for Spike to get back. **Pitfall #3: Never let Spike shop for you. He takes forever.**

About an hour later, Spike returned with the **concentrate**, which we **added to the bowl** in the amounts specified. We then hooked Mike up with a beater, as he insisted on supplying the beats. One minute lapsed and the foamy mess in the bowl was ready for the next step: **2 tsps. of cinnamon, the carrots and 2½ cups "lightly tapped" flour.** Mike **beat** this for **two minutes** more, at which time I added **2½ tsps. baking soda**. The instructions called for **20 to 30 more beats**. We did this precisely, then **poured the mixture**, which now resembled cement and vomit, **into the baking pans**. Nobody volunteered to lick the bowl.

Wag showed up just in time to help remove a tick from Rufus, Mike's dog. While the home veterinary clinic was being conducted on the front porch, Spike had a Popsicle, which was contributed to the baking process: **After 22 to 25 minutes** had elapsed, one needs to **check to see if it's cakey**, which is what Popsicle sticks are good for. The stick came out clean when inserted, so the cake was removed immediately and placed on wire racks to cool. **Pitfall #4: Turn the oven off immediately if your photographer has the idea to insert his camera in the oven to get that perfect shot.**

By this time it was nearly midnight, so rather than letting the cake **cool for 30 minutes**, Mike put on an oven mitt and began gently applying the frosting while Wag helped himself to some of the surplus juice. (You may notice that Pillsbury vanilla smells suspiciously like Play-Doh, but don't be alarmed.)

"We wanted to make Sassy a fifth birthday cake. We didn't know it would take five hours."

minutes and exchanging food war stories (Mike revealed he can cook a grand total of two things: any kind of juice and turkey), we took the initiative to start, minus Wag. I read the instructions without really paying attention while Mike **grated 1 to 1½ cups worth of carrots**. I then made the juice (two full pitchers) and began diligently measuring out what we needed for the cake (**1 cup of pineapple and ¼ cup of orange**), only

The final step was, of course, slipping away without helping to clean up the mess. Wag, Spike and I successfully completed this one after sampling our work, leaving Chef-B-Boy-Ardee amid a carnage-strewn kitchen. But we also left the remains of the cake behind as a consolation prize, which is the proper sort of thing to do in these situations.

You can stop humming the *Mission Impossible* theme now.

Abridged version: Grated carrots and Philadelphia Cream Cheese on Wonder Bread, topped with a sprinkling of cinnamon and powdered sugar.

* Recipe adapted from the book *I Can't Believe It Has No Sugar*.