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The Cream of the Cream

It is nice to be appreciated, no matter what the line of work. "You just keep grinding out the stuff and you think you have something good," Stuart Feldschuh said.

Mr. Feldschuh was recently rewarded in his line of work, making ice cream. As owner of the Snowflake Ice Cream Shoppe in Riverhead, Mr. Feldschuh makes lots of ice cream, about 20 to 30 different flavors a week. Last month one of his ice creams took national honors. His vanilla received a blue ribbon as the best vanilla ice cream in the country.

"I'm very proud of that," he said. He has the ribbon hanging on his wall right over the low-calorie ice creams.

Only vanilla and chocolate are judged at the International Dairy Show and Convention of the National Association of Ice Cream and Yogurt Retailers. "If you can make good vanilla, you can make good anything," Mr. Feldschuh said.

His prize-winning vanilla uses the best ingredients, he said. "It has high butterfat," Mr. Feldschuh said. "It's a French vanilla ice cream, a little bit creamier, a little bit richer, and I add vanilla bean flakes to it so it looks nicer."

Mr. Feldschuh has been making ice cream at Snowflake for three years. He uses the recipes of the original owner, who had the shop for 35 years, and has done some research on his own. He went to Rutgers University for ice-cream seminars. "All the ice-cream experts were there," he said, "the consultants to Haagen-Dazs and Ben and Jerry's."

It is nice to win for his vanilla, he said, but it is the special flavors that make ice-cream making fun. "Every week I come up with a new flavor," he said. "My best seller is Peconic swamp thing. It's made of dark chocolate, brownies and raspberry swirl. I named it after the Peconic River."

Although most of his special flavors are big hits, one was not. When his wife, Carolyn, was pregnant in the spring, he made pickles and cream ice cream. It did not go over well with the public, Mr. Feldschuh said. His wife, however, loved it.