



Cook's Corner

Holiday favorites

"On this Christmas day, may the good Lord bless you as your dear ones gather 'round. May your laughter be hearty, love and joy abound."

— An Irish Christmas Blessing

BY BETTY KAISER
For the Sentinel

It's two days before Christmas, and I'm running behind. That means I've made my lists and checked them twice, but there's still a lot more to do before the big day arrives. Will I get it all done? Probably.

Every year it is more difficult to get the basics checked off. Things like getting the house decorated take longer. Trimming the tree doesn't happen (no tree this year). Less is more when entertaining. Writing our annual family Christmas newsletter happens at New Year's. But the biggest job of all is choosing, wrapping and mailing gifts.

Christmas gift buying was easier when our children were at home. And it was a lot of fun when the grandsons came along. Now, it's a different story. As our grandsons get older (can you say college age?) gifting is more of a challenge than a joy. What do you buy teenagers that doesn't cost a zillion dollars? Gift cards to the rescue. Of course, then I have to make the decision of who gets what, address and put them in their proper envelope and mail them on time.

One thing that's always on time is Christmas dinner. The menu choices are predictable and everyone is happy with the meal: shrimp cocktails, baked ham (not a spiral cut), a potato dish, a vegetable, yeast rolls and cranberry sauce. Dessert is almost always pumpkin pie unless we're having the Sweet Potato Casserole below. Then it's likely to be cherry-topped cheesecake.

One thing that is never, ever on the menu is Campbell's green bean casserole. Unlike some of my friends none of us like it. However, I am thinking of changing things up this year with Paula Deene's fresh green bean, onion and mushroom version. After all, the others mostly ignore vegetables on holidays and I love mushrooms.

Christmas morning always begins with Pat Huff's delicious sweet rolls. They are put together the night before and left to rise on the counter. Christmas morning they are baked and served with some protein-laden scrambled eggs. We start the day on a sugar high.

On this last column of the year 2015, please know that I count the readers of my columns among my blessings and I wish each of you a very merry Christmas! Shalom.

PAT HUFF'S PULL-APART-ROLLS

- 3/4 cup chopped nuts
- 1 package frozen yeast rolls
- 1 3 ounce package butterscotch pudding
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Butter bundt pan well. Sprinkle with chopped nuts. Arrange 18-24 frozen Parker House rolls on top of nuts. Sprinkle package of butterscotch pudding(cooked type) dry over rolls.

Melt butter with brown sugar and cinnamon. Pour over top of rolls.

Leave out on counter overnight — uncovered. Bake the next morning at 350° for 30 minutes. Allow to cool for 5 minutes. Invert on serving dish. Topping will ooze over the top. Scrumptious! Serves 8 generously

SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE

(Jennifer Mullins, CG Sentinel, 1999)

- 3 cups mashed sweet potatoes (I use yams)
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Brown sugar topping (see recipe below)

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Mix all ingredients together and pour into a greased 9x12" casserole dish. Cover with brown sugar topping. Sprinkle with reserved chopped pecans and bake 30 minutes or until hot and bubbly. Serves 8.

BROWN SUGAR TOPPING

- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 1/2 cup pecans, chopped (reserve)

Mix brown sugar, flour and butter with fork until medium crumbly. Add more flour if still not crumbling well (about 1 tablespoon at a time).

PAULA DEEN'S GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE

- 1/3 stick butter
- 1/2 cup diced onions
- 1/2 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 2 cups sliced green beans
- 3 cups chicken broth

- 1 (10 3/4-ounce) can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 (2.8-ounce) can French-fried onion rings
- Pinch House Seasoning, recipe follows
- 1 cup grated Cheddar

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Melt the butter in a large skillet. Sauté the onions and mushrooms in the butter. Boil green beans in chicken broth for 10 minutes and drain. Add the green beans, mushroom soup, onion rings, and House Seasoning to the onion mixture. Stir well. Pour into a greased 1 1/2-quart baking dish. Bake for 20 minutes, then top the casserole with the Cheddar and bake for 10 minutes longer, or until the casserole is hot and cheese is melted.

- House Seasoning
- 1 cup salt
- 1/4 cup black pepper
- 1/4 cup garlic powder
- Mix ingredients together and store in an airtight container for up to 6 months.

LIBBY'S PUMPKIN PIE

- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg (original recipe calls for ginger)
- 1/4 teaspoon cloves
- 2 large eggs
- 1 can (15 oz.) Libby's Pure Pumpkin
- 1 can (12 fl. Oz.) Carnation Evaporated Milk
- 1 unbaked 9-inch (4 cup volume) deep dish pie shell
- Whipped Cream

Preheat oven to 425° F.

Mix sugar with spices in small bowl. Beat eggs in large bowl. Stir in pumpkin and sugar-spice mix. Gradually beat in evaporated milk.

Pour into pie shell. Bake in preheated oven for 15 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350° F. Bake 40-50 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. Cool on wire rack 2 hours. Serve immediately or refrigerated. Top each serving with whipped cream.

Note: This is the best and quickest recipe for pumpkin pie. Use Libby's pumpkin and Carnation milk for best results.

Keep it simple and keep it seasonal! Betty Kaiser's Cook's Corner is dedicated to sharing a variety of recipes that are delicious, family oriented and easy to prepare. Contact her at 942-1317 or email bchatty@bettykaiser.com

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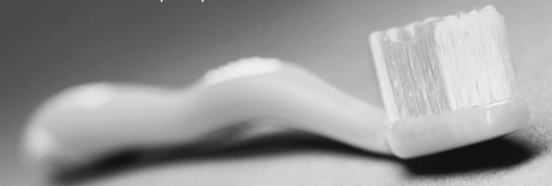
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Cottage Grove Sentinel - Santa Contest

Try to figure out which Santa belongs to which business. They won't have their Santa hats on or be wearing a beard, but they will be in the businesses and could be helping you.

This entry form must be received by Monday, December 28 at 12 Noon, mail or bring in to:
Cottage Grove Sentinel, 116 N. 6th • P.O. Box 35, Cottage Grove, OR 97424.

The Winner will be the one who correctly identifies the most Santas. If more than one person has the most correct answers, the winner will be randomly drawn from those entries.



- | Santa # | Business |
|---------|--------------------------|
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| _____ | Dave's Place |
| _____ | Remax |
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