

**RANDOM THOUGHTS
AND
REALLY GOOD
RECIPIES**

By Billie Mae Walker

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I want to acknowledge Laura Taber for hours of typing Lois Smyces with Lifescapes for making this book possible. Billie Walker

(Note: I want to acknowledge Billie Mae Walker for writing down all of her stories and adding her great sense of humor and being the dear heart that we have all come to Love!) Laura Taber

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SWEET 18	6
IF I WERE IN CHARGE.....	7
A BEAUTIFUL DAY.....	8
BATHROOM FIXATION.....	8
HOW TO UN COOK.....	9
FALSE ALARM.....	10
FISHING TRIP.....	11
WHAT HAPPENED TO FULL SERVICE.....	12
THE ALABASTER LAMP.....	13
THE ANATOMICAL GIFT PROGRAM.....	14
BLACKBERRY WINE.....	15
THE BIRD LADY.....	16
THE BRA BIBLE.....	17
OUR FIRST HOUSE.....	18
THE CLEAN OVEN.....	19
A COMMERCIAL FOR AT&T.....	19
DOMINOES OR ELSE!.....	20
Dr. OZ, I'M IN A DILEMMA.....	21
EARTHQUAKES.....	22
THE HAIRCUT.....	22
JARBIDGE.....	23
THE LITTLE LIZARD.....	23
MINK STINK.....	24
MY TWENTY YEARS IN GREAT BASIN BASKETMAKERS.....	25
NICK.....	27
NICK GROWS UP.....	28
NO NEED FOR A TAILOR.....	29
NO PETS.....	29
SCRUBS, ETC.....	30
SIXTEEN GOING ON FORTY.....	31
STOP ALREADY.....	31
STUFF.....	32
SURPRISE.....	32
TAKING ORDERS.....	33
TAYLOR STORIES.....	33
THAT'S A LOT OF BULL.....	34
THE SAUNA.....	35
THANKSGIVING AT AUNT GERTS.....	36

WORRY.....	37
YOGA.....	38

BILLIE’S RECIPES

SWEET POTATO PECAN PIE.....	40
THE COOKIE CONTEST.....	41
DATE NUT SQUARES.....	42
DORA TAYLOR.....	43
MANGO CHUTNEY.....	45
WILD & BROWN RICE.....	46
VEGETARIAN CHILI.....	47
RUM CAKE.....	48
TRIPLE CHOCOLATE FUDGE RUM CAKE.....	49
SURPRISE CHEF.....	50
SWEET & SOUR PORK.....	50
STIR FRIED CHICKEN & CASHEWS.....	51
CHOW MEIN.....	51
ORIENTAL CHICKEN SALAD.....	52
SEAFOOD CHOWDER.....	53
RED CABBAGE.....	54
QUICK CHIOPPINO.....	55
INSIDE OUT RAVIOLI.....	56
HOT TURKEY SALAD.....	57
CHILI RELLENO BAKE.....	58
CHICKEN SALAD WITH POMEGRANATES & ALMONDS.....	59
CHICKEN AND SOUR CREAM.....	60
BEER HOTCAKES.....	61
BILLIE CHILI.....	62
CORN BREAD.....	63
BBQ BEANS.....	64
SEAFOOD LASAGNE.....	64
ZUCCCHINI SOUP.....	65

SWEET 18

When I was 13 my folks bought 166 acres in a clearing of redwoods in northern California and moved there from Oakland.

The house was not well built and didn't have insulation. It was cold and damp. There was no indoor plumbing and the outhouse was a good distance from the house. There wasn't any electricity and we used kerosene lamps at night. We had a wood stove in the kitchen for heating and cooking.

God bless my mother! It was all new to her and she had to learn how to build a fire, clean lamp chimneys, milk a cow, kill and dress chickens, etc., etc. My nine year old sister and I also learned. I don't know if my mother was an alcoholic before that, but it didn't take her long to become one.

My father got a job away from home and returned on weekends. My mother would haul water to the copper boiler for his bath and build a fire in the wood stove. She waited on him and he let her.

After I graduated from high school, I was accepted to Santa Rosa Junior College School of Nursing. I moved into the most wonderful nurses' residence! It had hot and cold running water, washers and dryers in the laundry room, wonderful meals in a beautiful dining room. I was in heaven and never got home sick.

IF I WERE IN CHARGE

1. All voting would be by mail. One envelope would be sent containing the sample ballot and the voting ballot. On voting day, people who depend on income for working would be hired to count votes. No one would be concerned about transportation and no one would worry about voting day itself. The two stamps it would take to mail the ballot would be cheaper than the gas to get to your polling place.

What about mail box theft? That could be a problem. I wonder what Oregon does about that possibility? They have voting by mail.

You could send it registered, receipt requested, but then you are defeating your purpose. This will take more thought.

2. All junk food would be taxed just like cigarettes and liquor is now. Junk food is anything that doesn't grow or appear naturally. Not only would this be healthier, it would help prevent obesity and a lot of illnesses. Junk foods cost more than fruits and vegetables.

3. "Boom Boxes" would be illegal. Those who insist on having them would have a fine and the money would be held in an account that would be used to pay for hearing aids when they become hard of hearing.

4. Emergency room admitting personnel would have to take a 6 week course in "Filling out papers is not as important as preventing a heart attack." My neighbor had chest pain. When her husband took her to the ER, the person at the desk said they were busy and it would be 6 hours before they could see a doctor. My neighbor said "Goodbye. I'll go somewhere else". The admitting nurse said, "You will have to sign a release before you go."

5. Crying babies would not be allowed on airplanes. Get an Rx for a sedative from the Pediatrician before leaving.

6. All dogs would be on leashes and owners would be fined if they didn't carry a plastic bag to clean up after Fido.

7. All erratic drivers would have a sign on top of their car, "STUDENT DRIVER".

A BEAUTIFUL DAY

I woke up with a thankful heart this morning.

It was cold and cloudy, but I have a warm house, indoor plumbing, a dishwasher, gas stove, washing machine and dryer, self cleaning oven, two microwaves, attached garage, a thermostat controlled furnace, air conditioner in the summer, a freezer full of food and an extra bedroom for my niece who is going to UNR and unable to find affordable housing for herself and her dog.

I thought of the days from age 13 to 18 when my folks had a house without insulation with a wood stove, outhouse, cold water piped to the kitchen and no electricity.

Thank you, LORD!

BATHROOM FIXATION

My folks moved from Oakland, California to 166 acres in a redwood forest when I was 13 years old. The house was built without insulation or indoor plumbing. We had an outhouse with a door that didn't latch, but faced away from the county road and house. It had a wonderful view of the redwoods, wild pink rhododendrons and purple iris.

The odor is something I still can recall from nearly 70 years ago. It was a lot less offensive with the door open. Toilet paper was a luxury and we saved the Sears and Montgomery Ward catalogs. With proper preparation of taking one sheet of the catalog in each hand and rubbing them together, the slickness of the paper disappeared and a wiping was accomplished.

In the 1940's and 50's I had a crush on Van Johnson, a famous movie star of the time. I tacked up pictures of him on the two side walls.

When you have an outhouse you must practice outhouse etiquette. As you approach it you yell "Hoo hoo". If it's occupied the occupant yells back and you know to wait your turn.

My home now - my final home, has 4 bathrooms and I love every one of them!

HOW TO UN COOK

I was married 54 years before becoming a widow. When returning to our mink ranch in northern California after getting married in Reno and taking a two day honeymoon, I began cooking.

Breakfast wasn't a problem; we had cold cereal and fruit.

Lunch would consist of lunchmeat and two slices of bread, mayonnaise for me and butter for Bob.

Dinner was a problem. All I cooked growing up were cookies, cake and pies. My mother wasn't an exceptional cook and Daddy had bad teeth so everything was soup or stew. I did make a killer stew. It was my favorite thing to eat. I was proud of the first stew I made but very upset when Bob said he hated stew and said not to make it anymore. So, I didn't for three more years.

Once I made stew for myself when he was on a hunting trip. He came home early just as I was ready to eat. He sat down at the table and I handed him a plate of stew. He said, "Is this all you know how to cook?" The second time in three years!

The first month we were married I solved the situation with Martinis. I had two sherbet glasses of Czechoslovakian crystal. I put two ice cubes in the bottom and added 1 ½ oz. of gin. It didn't look right, so I added another 1 ½ oz. It looked a little better, but when I added another 1 ½ oz. shot and two olives, it looked perfect.

I had found the solution - after a triple martini every evening it took three months for him to realize I couldn't cook!

FALSE ALARM

My husband died in April 2009. We have a big house and I was apprehensive to live alone in case I fell. Some friends my age have fallen or had strokes and were unable to get assistance. I noticed an ad in the AARP Magazine for Medic Alert. You wear it around your neck and press the button if you need help.

I occasionally have a drink. My choice is scotch and I keep a bottle in the kitchen. On this particular day, I pulled out the bottle and it was empty. I went to the wet bar in the den to get the bottle from there. Since I had stored a stool and some suitcases in back of the bar, I had to twist my body around to the back and reach as far as I could. All of a sudden I heard an alarm and “Emergency! Emergency! Are you OK, Mrs. Walker?” I said, “Yes, I’m fine.”

I pushed the button accidentally while I leaned around the bar. Now I was really ready for a drink!

FISHING TRIP

We were living in northern California near Ft. Bragg. I told my husband I'd like to go salmon fishing. He thought that would be a fun thing to do. He hadn't been "on the water" since he left the aircraft carrier he was on in the Navy.

We went to Noyo Harbor and stopped at each party boat anchored in the river so we could pick out the one we wanted to use to go fishing. We decided on the best looking one and went to the office to get information and make reservations.

The next morning we got up early, had a nice breakfast and left for our boat. It was a windy day with a lot gray clouds. We arrived at the boat, boarded, was offered coffee while waiting for stragglers to arrive. Then we put on our life vests and checked out the poles and spinners we'd be using. The deckhands were busy getting everything ready and finally everyone boarded and we were underway.

The water was quite rough. I expressed concern and asked one of the good looking deck hands if boats ever sank. He assured me they wouldn't be going out if it was too rough. My husband said, "It's good to be out to sea again."

The water gradually got rougher. There were two other boats close to us. The swells were so high we couldn't see the other boats when we were at the bottom of the swell. I was scared to death!

All of a sudden a fishing pole was put into my hands and I forgot to be afraid because I was going to get a BIG salmon!

After a short period of time I noticed a couple of people with their heads over the rail losing their breakfast. One was my sailorman, Bob!

All of a sudden I had a bite. I yanked the pole and had him hooked. How exciting! He jumped out of the water and almost pulled the pole out of my hands. I yelled for help. Bob turned his head away and lost more of his breakfast. The good looking deck hand came to my rescue. He helped me land a beautiful 30 pound salmon.

That was one of the most exciting things I've ever done! Poor Bob, he never got a bite.

WHAT HAPPENED TO FULL SERVICE?

Today I learned how to put gas in my car. My husband does it all the time, so I never gave it any thought until recently when we discussed plans to celebrate his 80th birthday come January 20. If anything happened to him I would have to rely on strangers at the pump to do it for me. In the past I've always had trouble. I fight that hose like I'm wrestling a boa constrictor.

Well, today we decided I would learn how it's done. We drove to the station. I drove the car, which I never do when he's around to drive, unless it's after he's had one - day surgery and is still too groggy to tell me how to go.

It's interesting how we both have our favorite streets to get to any location. I feel like having a false steering wheel and brake pedal installed for his use. I don't know why I had to drive to the station that day. I've been driving for 61 years, but I got in the driver's seat and we got there. He really did give me good advice so as not to scratch paint off the door when hitting the orange goal posts. I guess they are there to keep poor drivers from knocking down the gas pumps.

I parked in the shade and removed my sun glasses, as instructed, so I could read the teletype message on the pump. I unscrewed the gas cap, inserted the credit card, and pushed the proper buttons. Now the hard part... put the nozzle in the hole! For some reason I thought it needed a hard push.

Today he emphasized ***GENTLE***, and by golly, it went in and stayed just like it is supposed to.

I flipped the little do-hicky over the fill thing and the gas started pumping. When finished, I disconnected the nozzle, screwed on the cap, closed the gas door and retrieved my receipt.

Many years ago when you drove into a gas station a person came to the driver side window and asked how much gas you wanted. The driver remained sitting and watched the attendant wash all the windows and then raise the hood and check the oil and water. I don't know how to open the hood and I haven't seen anyone check their oil and water in any of our self service stations.

A couple of years ago we drove to Oregon and all of the stations were full service. I asked an attendant why and he said it was a law in Oregon. And, "No", I'm not moving there for the service, I go to a lube shop and they do a very good job of checking and changing the fluids.

THE ALABASTER LAMP

When my husband and I were married we lived in a small cabin with his parents and ten year old sister while their “dream home” was being built.

My mother-in-law, Dora, had a baby grand piano with two antique alabaster lamps on top. She treasured those lamps and wouldn't let anyone touch them. One time she had to attend a teaching seminar and was gone three days. The first afternoon the 10 year old was playing in the piano room and accidentally knocked one of the lamps off the piano and it shattered! She yelled for her father and he was in a state of shock.

He called Bob and I to help put it back together. The men went to town and bought glue used to build model airplanes. We each worked on separate sections and after two full days had the lamp glued together and did a beautiful job.

When Dora returned, no one told her about the lamp and we thought we committed the perfect crime.

Many years later I told her how pretty the lamps were and she said she knew one had been broken, but she also knew how much work it was to glue it back together so she never said anything.

That was 54 years ago and the same lamps still sit on the same piano in my sister-in-laws music room.

THE ANATOMICAL GIFT PROGRAM

About 20 years ago my husband and I heard about the Anatomical Gift Program at University of Nevada, Reno Medical School. We decided to contribute our bodies when we died.

We called the lady in charge of the program and she sent us the papers to fill out. After a few days we each received a card to carry next to our driver license in our wallet.

April 8, 2009 my husband died. When asked what mortuary to call, I gave them his card and I never had to give any more information. It never cost a penny. Two months ago I received a lovely invitation to a group Memorial Service put on by the Medical School, class of 2013. Poems were read and two played the piano and one a flute. They all expressed their gratitude for our gift. After the program we went into another room for punch and cookies. Our family attended and a few neighbors. There were many other families there. We all remarked what a wonderful service the Anatomical Gift Program is.

Three weeks later I received a call from a funeral home. They had Bob's ashes ready for me to pick up. They came in a nice brown box – no urn is needed. Our daughter wanted her Daddy's ashes and has them in her home in front of his prayer quilt.

BLACKBERRY WINE

My father was a person who could do anything. If he didn't know how, he would find an instruction book and go at it.

He was a city boy and moved from Oakland to northern California, 20 miles from Fort Bragg onto an old 166 acre homestead. As time went by he acquired a cow, 2 pigs, a goat and a horse plus 100 chickens. He intended to have a garden, but had never planted anything before. He soon decided his philosophy of "grow enough for the insects to share with us" didn't work. Also, it was too much work. Someone told him Himalaya blackberries grew well in that area so he planted quite a few all around the chicken house. As time went by he had a large crop every year and decided to make blackberry wine. He got a book and a large crock. We all picked berries. He mashed them with a potato masher, added the other ingredients and put the crock behind the wood stove so the warmth would hasten the fermentation. Time went by and soon he decided the time was right to strain the juice and bottle the wine. He thought the birds would enjoy the mash so he dumped it out in the pasture.

The next morning when we went to bring the cow in to be milked she was wobbly and swaying. The goat was leaning on the fence and one pig was on its back, feet up in the air. They were all inebriated! There weren't any permanent problems, but after that Daddy threw the mash over the bluff.

THE BIRD LADY

When my sister was a little girl she had three pet chickens named Jeanie, Furcoat, and Pretty. They had a happy life and died of old age and had a proper funeral and burial.

A couple of years ago she decided to get a few baby chicks. A friend helped her build a first class chicken house when she first got them. She had a large box in her kitchen with a light in it with blankets, feeder and water container.

She went to the feed store and picked out 8 baby chicks. She thought they were roosters and gave them boy names. Two Rhode Island Red: Charlie and Le Roy; Two Plymouth Rock: Rocky and Ollie; Two Golden Wyandotte: Brother and Pee Wee; and two Silver Laced Wyandotte: Penny and Sister. I thought a chicken was a chicken, I didn't realize they had specific breeds.

When they got old enough to escape from the box they were moved to the chicken coop. None ever crowed and they all started to lay eggs. The roosters all turned out to be hens.

Penny was smaller than the rest and they picked on her and she failed to thrive. My sister put her in a sandwich bag and took her to the Vet. The Vet said there wasn't anything she could do, so it would be best to "put her down." Penny was left and my sister said, "the Vet was so nice, she never charged me to put her down."

My sister talks to her chickens and they talk to her. She feeds them mashed hard boiled eggs. I told her that was like eating your own kids, but it's cheaper than putting them through college. They also eat chicken pellets, grass (she cuts it for them), vegetable soup, oatmeal, ground carrots, and cabbage. Basically anything she is eating.

There are three nest boxes in the chicken coop but they only like one. They love to lay an egg in the outside bar-b-que. If one is in the bar-b-que, the others stand in line waiting for their turn. If the wait is too long, the next in line flies up and sits on top of the chicken inside who doesn't approve of this and jumps out!

Rocky is a trouble maker and enjoys coming into the kitchen. When my sister is in, the hen pecks on the patio door until it is opened, investigates everything in the room, then sits down and makes herself at home. My sister and I do not own computers and enjoy writing letters to each other. She writes about twice a week and has more stories about what her babies are doing.

Now she has pet seagulls! The leader is Mrs. Seagull. She comes outside to the patio doors and calls to my sister. My sister has cubed bread for them. She throws it out in the yard and twelve more seagulls come and eat. Then they leave until the next day.

I look forward to her letters. She has two great grandsons and one great granddaughter. She never has anything to say about them. She says they don't keep in touch.

THE BRA BIBLE

In 1984, I decided to take a trip to the Soviet Union with a friend of mine. At that time it was an atheist country. They didn't allow anyone to bring Bibles into the country.

A friend of mine gave me a small Bible about 3 x 4 inches to "smuggle" into the country – for myself. I had no intentions of selling it or giving it away. It was mine to keep me safe. I put it in my bra next to my heart. It gave me peace.

I was thinking of this the other day and I wondered what I did with it?

OUR FIRST HOUSE

My husband and I moved to Reno in 1959. We had a small apartment on 7th Street. We started to look for a house to buy. A new development of low cost flat-top houses was being built behind the fairgrounds close to Sutro Street.

We visited a 3 bedroom, 1 bath model and decided we could afford it on my nurses' pay and his job as a musical instrument repairman. He used his G.I. bill and we didn't need a down payment. For \$73 a month, which included taxes and insurance, we had a comfortable home and lots of space compared to living in 1 bedroom apartments.

We met our next door neighbors, Cap and Mary, the day we moved in. We only had the basic essentials because we had been living in furnished apartments. They asked if we needed to borrow anything until our furnishing and appliances would arrive the following week. I told them we didn't have anything except dishes and linens.

A few hours later they came over with a toaster oven, electric coffee pot, and electric frying pan. We had camp stools; they had cots and sleeping bags. We were good to go.

A week later our furniture, stove and refrigerator arrived. We returned the borrowed items.

THE CLEAN OVEN

In 1961 we adopted twins, a boy and a girl. Mary and Cap had two boys, one a year older than our twins and one a year younger. We exchanged babysitting. Once a week they would take our kids for 24 hours and on a different day we would take theirs.

Frequently, we would share dinner on the weekends. Mary made a mean daiquiri and we would start sipping about 4 p.m., dinner planned for 6 p.m. By that time, we were not too responsible. The husbands made a rule that we were not allowed to drink until dinner was ready. We made a rule, whoever cooked didn't have to take care of the kids. We could make a casserole and put it in the oven on low heat at 4 p.m. and – daiquiri time!

Our stove did not have a self-cleaning oven. When it needed cleaning, we put an open can of cleaner inside and turned the oven on for a couple of hours. It smelled awful so we would tell the kids to go over to Aunt Mary's house. Of course we Ok'd it with her first.

From then on whenever we wanted to make love in the afternoon, we'd tell the kids we were cleaning the oven and send them to Mary. ☺

A COMMERCIAL FOR AT & T

Today is special. It was my day to call Deanie, my college roommate from 1948-1951. We call each other once a month and reminisce about the good old days in the dormitory. We haven't seen each other for about 10 years. We've certainly changed physically in 57 years, but each time we talk we laugh and giggle like we did all those years ago.

Deanie became a diabetic and had to quit nursing school six months before graduation. Now she is nearly blind from diabetic retinopathy. She says her husband of 56 years sees to it that her hair is combed and no food is dribbled down her clothing when she goes out. I told her I always buy prints so food spots don't show.

We both forgot to mark our calendars to call and it's been a couple of months. Since she can't see, I'll mark mine. Our moments are too precious any more, to let the months slip by.

I told Deanie today that we should do a commercial for AT&T because we enjoy our calls so much.

DOMINOES OR ELSE!

My granddaughter, Taylor, is 13 now. Her family moved to Elko last spring. I missed her a lot. We baby sat her frequently since she was born. She and I did a lot together. One of my favorite things to do with her was to play dominoes. She frequently beat me.

A few weeks ago she came to Reno when her father had a meeting to attend. She was to spend a couple of hours with me. I got the dominoes out and fixed her favorite lunch.

She arrived with her hair looking like it was combed with an egg beater, false eye lashes, lots of make-up, black finger nail polish and a skirt much too short. She had her cell phone on her ear and came through the door, waved to me and went down to the basement!

I yelled down to her that lunch was on the table and she said, "No thanks, I'm good."

I was shocked! I went down to the basement and asked her to put the phone down so we could talk. She excused herself and asked what I wanted. I told her I wanted her time and to play dominoes. She said she didn't want to play. I said, "Okay, then we will weed the yard."

She had a look of shock on her face, put her phone in her pocket and followed me upstairs. She pulled weeds and I held the bucket. All the while I asked questions and she answered. Now the yard is free of weeds and I have a new dominoes partner.

DR. OZ, I'M IN A DILEMMA

I take seven prescription medications and eight vitamin or mineral supplements per day. If some genius hadn't invented the daily pill dispensers, I would have no idea of what to take and when. It was fairly simple before the TV program "Dr. Oz" aired.

I tape his show and play it as time permits. I don't know who is responsible for what, but I took notes and replayed segments as necessary. This is what I came up with:

- 1) You can't take vitamin D without Calcium. You should take it twice a day.
- 2) You can't take calcium when you take prescription drugs, it prevents absorption.
- 3) You take CoQ10 with a fatty meal (I'm on a low fat diet).
- 4) Make sure your fish oil capsules are made from sardines and have 600 iu of DHA. (Try to find this information on the bottle).
- 5) Magnesium interferes with prescription medications.
- 6) Thyroid has to be taken on an empty stomach with a full glass of water first thing in the morning. So I take it at 4a.m. when I get up for the third time to go to the bathroom. I put it in its own little pill dispenser.
- 7) Benicar is a diuretic so it should be taken with breakfast.

I refill the seven day dispensers every Tuesday. For now, I keep notes. I hope Dr. Oz doesn't change his mind.

Let's not forget alcohol. It reacts to almost anything, so I'm drinking low sodium V-8 juice and that is like taking medicine.

I really can't complain, I'm 80 years old and in pretty good condition.

EARTHQUAKES

We discussed a story about “The Big Earthquake in California” in 1906. So far I’ve been blessed a life without earthquake, flood, lightning strik, or other act of God. One time we were eating and the chandelier started moving back and forth but only a few inches.

I have witnessed some nasty winds. Recently we had some 80 mph gusts and I prayed for the homeless and those in mobile homes and RV’s.

We moved to Reno in 1960. I went to work at Washoe Medical Center as a Registered Nurse. I took care of a young woman on life support who had something fall on her head at work during the earthquake. She was kept alive for many years and never recovered.

THE HAIRCUT

The light of my life, my wonderful, adorable granddaughter, Taylor, who from birth has been a smiling delight, loved to cook and sew with me, play games, and tell stores.

Well! She’s now in 7th grade and going on 13, and too busy for Grandma time, however, she calls when I’m needed. Yesterday I got the call, “Grandma, can you take me to Tai-Kwan-Do? My Daddy is going to be late coming home.”

I jumped at the chance to spend some quality time with her and to find out what she is doing in school, etc. Two weeks ago her neighbor and his family went on a week vacation and hired her to baby sit their two Alaskan Husky dogs. She said one threw up on the carpet and she couldn’t get the stain out so she called her dad to come with the carpet cleaner. She said they paid her \$20 extra for doing a great job.

I noticed she had her hair in a ponytail and a scarf tied around it.(It looked better than long and straight.) I told her how nice it looked. She took the scarf off and bangs fell down and over her eyes. The sides looked awful! She said she cut it herself with the kitchen shears. Not wanting to destroy “Grandma time,” I told her it was nice.

Today, a few minutes before leaving for Lifescapes, I got a call from my daughter from work. She said she was able to get an emergency haircut appointment for Taylor at 4 p.m., could we take her since she doesn’t get home from work until 6 p.m. She said to make sure Taylor takes her own money to pay for it.

It’s a good thing she had the dog sitting job!

JARBIDGE

One fall my husband and I went fishing at Wildhorse Reservoir with two other couples. After a couple of days of not catching fish we decided to take a trip to Jarbidge. Don't ask me why.

The entire road is dirt and it had been a long time since it was graded, if ever.

We finally arrived. We knew we had arrived because there was a general store, gas pump, sort of a restaurant and a bar displaying a sign saying, "Jarbidge Bar and Grub."

We were hungry and dry so we went in, sat down, and ordered hamburgers. There was one older lady waiting the table and cooking. We asked if there was a bar tender because we all wanted a drink. She replied she was the bartender and she was busy. If we wanted a drink we could fix it and we did!

The town wasn't much, but that was one of the best hamburgers I've ever eaten.

THE LITTLE LIZARD

I was sitting at my desk paying bills. I saw something in my side vision and turned to see a little lizard. I screamed because he startled me. I ran into the pantry and got a fly swatter and beat him unmercifully. Then I ran down the hall to get my husband to dispose of the poor creature.

We got to the kitchen and the little lizard was standing upright moving his upper body back and forth. My husband picked him up and flushed him down to the dead gold fish territory.

That night I had a dream. I was walking by a river when a giant lizard appeared in front of me. He said, "Why?" and disappeared.

Every time I sit at my desk, I periodically look over my right shoulder expecting to see him again. Our house is quite critter-proof. We can't figure out how he got in or how he survived my attack.

I'm sorry I killed him. We could have put him outside and let him do his thing – whatever that is....

MINK STINK

My husband, Bob, worked on his parent's mink ranch in Mendocino, California. After his discharge from the Navy in 1953, they purchased 30 acres in the redwoods and had approximately 1 ½ acres fenced with solid wood nearly 8 feet high with a very solid gate with two latches. This was necessary to prevent any of the animals from escaping the yard if they chewed a hole in the wood part of their cage.

One cold winter night, it was raining, windy and all of a sudden our “watch-duck”, Mack, began quacking loudly. We had been sleeping soundly and were not fully awake when we grabbed a flashlight and put on boots and a jacket over our pajamas. Bob picked up a pair of heavy leather gloves used to keep from getting bit in case he was lucky enough to catch the little bugger.

The duck had the mink in a corner of the yard and we were in hot pursuit. I had never handled a mink and I wasn't about to start then, so I became the spotlight bearer. Bob put his light on the ground, put his glove on and made a grab. As he grabbed his feet slipped and he fell in the mud. The mink turned around and sprayed us! Their musk is similar to a skunk.

Bob lunged again and was lucky enough to grab him and put him in an empty cage. The rain continued and we went into the house, put stinky clothes in the washer and showered before returning to bed.

You may wonder why we didn't wait until the next day to capture the mink...the duck would have kept us awake all night!

MY TWENTY YEARS IN GREAT BBASIN BASKETMAKERS

As I think back on how I became a basket maker I realize I've forgotten a lot of the details, but I am writing what I can remember. If any of you remember more, or differently, write it and send it to the newsletter editor.

I used to tell my friends that I was going to take up basket making and weaving when I retired in June, 1987. My friend Nancy Diehl called and said she saw an article in the paper written by Mary Lee Fulkerson telling about a six week course in baskets she was going to teach in Reno. I called and signed up. During each class she had a short slide show and then taught us how to make a simple basket. I never finished mine in class, but worked on it during the week and had it done by the next class.

Mary Lee told the class she was getting a group of interested people to meet each month to make baskets, and anyone who was interested could join. She named the group the Great Basin Basketmakers. I think two in our class joined.

We met at McKinley School by the Truckee River. When I joined there were twelve founding members and an occasional drop-in. The school charged \$12 to use the room and each person contributed \$1. If less than twelve people came, we put in more money. If we had more, we saved the extra money. We elected Kathy Ralston as our Treasurer. Some said she kept the money in an envelope under her mattress and always worried someone would break into her home and steal it.

We were not organized enough to have meetings, so we had no officers. We just sat around and made baskets. Mary Lee usually taught us, but if anyone in the group had a basket they made, they would teach everyone "how to do it."

In 1987, there were not many "how to" books or places to buy supplies. Dora Taylor and Jeanie McClard were probably the most experienced and gave lots of classes. One time they bought a bunch of gourds and experimented with them and gave a class outside on the lawn at McKinley. We had a hose and towels and scrubbed the gourds and then used drywall saws to cut them open. We scraped the seeds and pulp out with grapefruit spoons.

One by one, new people joined the group. Most were beginners. Mary Lee got books and experimented and then gave workshops.

As I am trying to remember the early people, I thought of Diane Schaub. She was one who tried everything and was very good at it. She bought a pattern for a pine needle basket, made it, and entered it in a contest at Disneyland and won first place! It was the first pine needle basket she made.

I called Dora Taylor and Kathy Ralston. As far as we can remember, the following were the early members: Frances Reynolds, Jean May, Diane Schaub, Mary Lee Fulkerson, Cynthia Fednick, Jeannie McClard, Kathy Ralston, Alice Johnson, Dora Taylor, Billie Walker, Nadine Tuttle, and Eileen Jacobs.

Mary Lee thought it would be nice to get an outside teacher to give a workshop. We needed to raise money, so Jean May had a garage sale at her home and Dora Taylor helped her. Diane Schaub made a basket and gave it as a raffle present. Kathy Ralston won it and still has it. I can't remember who our outside teacher was.

Mary Lee wanted us to be a non-profit organization and Patricia Winnie volunteered her services as our attorney. This meant we had to have by-laws, a slate of officers, and regular meetings. Dora Taylor reminded me the group met at Idlewild Park before moving to McKinley School. Later we moved to Sierra Arts.

Kathy Ralston says she has donated all of her newsletters to the Nevada Historical society, so anyone who cares to know more, can read them there.

Cherlyn Bennett and Molly Gardner gave workshops out in the community and brought a lot of people into the Guild.

Jan Olson found a gourd teacher and had our first gourd class at her home. Every summer we used to go to Belden. Dora Taylor and Jeannie McClard made all the arrangements. We would gather wild grapevine and make baskets on the lawn. We spent the night in cabins and had a great time. Once, I was trying to pull a grapevine and Mary Lee came to help. All of a sudden it came loose and she fell hard and broke her ankle. We used magazines from a cabin to use for a splint and belts from pants to secure them. I offered to make cordage, but someone said that by the time I got it done, the ankle would be healed. Mary Lee was taken to the hospital and had surgery.

It's been a great twenty years and we have some fabulous artists in our Guild. I am honored to have been a member all these years.

NICK

My husband was a would-be hunter. He joined a hunting club, had hunting guns, and hunting books, but wanted a hunting dog. He *really* wanted a hunting dog.

Our twins were about 2 years old and I worked full time plus overtime. I told him if he got a dog, he was responsible for it.

He started studying hunting dogs and decided to purchase a German Shorthair. He found a reputable breeder in town and made arrangements to get a male pup when the next litter was born.

Two weeks later he got a call. The litter arrived and he could have first choice. Boy was he excited! He went over every day after work and played with the pups and picked out his dog.

The big day came and Bob brought the dog home. He named him Nick. He made a nice bed for him in our bedroom. The breeder told Bob if he wrapped a towel around an alarm clock and laid it next to the dog, the ticking sound would make him think he was sleeping with his mother. No one told Nick!

Nick was placed in his bed, Bob told him good night, turned out the light and got into bed. Nick started whining, got out of his bed and tried to get in bed with Bob. Being a puppy he couldn't jump that high so he started whining louder. I asked Bob what his plan was. He turned on the light, put the dog back in his bed, patted him and told him it was time to go to sleep.

Bob turned out the light, climbed back in bed and Nick started whining. I had to get up and go to work in a couple of hours. I told Bob to take "THAT DOG" out to the camper so I could get some sleep. He said poor little Nick would be afraid out there all by himself.

I told him it was either the dog or me! He asked me, "Do you mind going?!"

NICK GROWS UP

Time went by and Nick gradually became an important part of the family.

He slept in our bedroom on the floor next to Bob. I don't recall how long they spent nights in the camper, but it seems like it wasn't very long and Nick outgrew whining.

When our daughter, Karen, was age 3 to about 5, she loved to dress Nick up in large doll clothes. As he grew she dressed him in her "dress-up" costumes. He tolerated it, knowing pretty soon she would move on to something else.

One day she decided to take him for a ride in the wagon, all dressed up. She got him as far as the sidewalk and he jumped out of the wagon and started running down the street. She had him dressed in a red "tu-tu"; she was wearing a princess outfit; and I was in pajamas. Karen and I kept calling him but he felt freedom and was going to keep it. I said something not worth repeating, turned around, and went back to the house. Karen sat on the sidewalk crying and the dog in the red "tu-tu" finally came back.

One time we went on a one week trip and had Nick boarded at the vet. When we came home and went to get him he was so glad to see us! He followed us around continually. From that time on, every time we took him to the vet, he dragged his body and cried. It was all Bob could do to carry him in.

After that, whenever we left, we hired a friend to come stay with him. Tom lived in a rooming house and enjoyed our home and dog. Nick loved Tom, too. One time we came home and Tom was feeding Nick watermelon. He said Nick needed something soothing because the radishes he ate were very hot.

Whenever we went camping and started carrying stuff to the camper, Nick would run back and forth in front of the door and whine. We decided to put him in the camper first and then put supplies in. Once he knew he was going he was fine.

Nick lived 14 years. When he had increasing difficulty walking and couldn't eat, Bob took him to the vet and he went to sleep. We all cried but knew it was best for him.

NO NEED FOR A TAILOR

I went to a neighbor's garage sale looking for a sport coat for my husband. Both men were portly gentlemen but the neighbor was much taller than Bob. There were five western cut sport coats selling for \$10 each. I picked out three.

When I got home I told him to try them on. He was anxious to see if they fit because they were very nice looking. They were large enough around the middle, but the sleeves were too long. I told him we would go to a tailor to have them shortened. He said that would cost too much money and asked if I could do it? I said it wouldn't look as good.

He said, "I won't zip my fly and no one will pay attention to the sleeves!"

NO PETS

I have a niece, Kimie, attending U.N.R. majoring in Nursing with a minor in Psychology. She's been there 2 years. She was renting a house and had two friends renting with her. Last spring the other girls left town and she had to give up the house and find another place to live.

I told her she could come live with me if necessary. It became necessary. I gave two house rules: 1) No pets, 2) Be in by 10pm because that's my bed time.

She said she would try to be in by 10, but she had a late study group. Kimie also works 20 hours a weeks at a convenience store, but never works after 9 p.m. Also, she's had her little Shitzoo dog for 6 years and couldn't give her up. She promised she would keep her in a cage when she wasn't home and I wouldn't even know she was even there.

Week one, day one: Kimie goes to school and puts Zoie the dog into her cage. As she drives off, the dog starts howling, barking, and whining. I put up with it for an hour then let her out of the cage and she kissed me! I started petting her and we became fast friends. It didn't take long for me to love that dog! Because I was home most of the time and Kimie wasn't, she followed me everywhere. When I watched TV she would jump up on the couch and put her chin on my thigh.

Kimie and Zoie moved to the state of Washington where she is living with her mom. The tuition there is a lot less than U.N.R.

I haven't heard from her but my sister said Kimie wasn't working because she had a lot of studying to do. I called her the other day and she said she was doing fine and liked school. Zoie is doing fine and has a doggie friend, Kimie's Mom's dog, to play with.

SCRUBS, ETC.

When I was in nursing school in 1948-1951, “scrubs” were only worn by medical personnel working in labor, delivery, nursery and surgery. The hospital provided them.

When arriving at work you went to the dressing room, took your street clothes off and put clean scrubs on. When your shift was over, scrubs were removed and sent to the laundry. You put your street clothes on and left the unit. Scrubs were not worn home. Also, when leaving the unit, a cover gown was worn.

The hospital was thought to be clean. Visitors were limited; children and pets were not allowed; fingernails were kept short and no polish was allowed.

Fingernails harbor bacteria. Hair was covered in a “scrub cap” in clean areas and was never allowed to be longer than shoulder length. Shoes were covered when in the delivery and operating room.

There weren't many infections and if a patient got an infection they were transferred to an isolation unit in a separate building or away from other patients where strict isolation technique was carried out.

It is a shame, with all of the advanced medical knowledge available, so many patients die of infection.

SIXTEEN GOING ON FORTY

Last weekend I went to Elko for Cowboy Poetry. My daughter, Karen lives in Spring Creek which is 30 minutes from Elko and 5 minutes from Lamoile. She wanted me to stay with her, but she already had four houseguests, so I asked her to get Motel reservations for me – I don't like bathroom sharing.

She told me she reserved a room at the Lamoile Hotel, it has 3 rooms. We were running late, so I called Karen and told her to let the Hhtel know we would check in late. The owner said that would be fine, the key would be under the mat.

The phone was in the parlor. You could call out, but no one could call in.

The next day Karen drove to our hotel and led us to her house. We had lunch and visited. She said my granddaughter, Taylor, was doing babysitting and one of her customers had reserved her for Valentine's Day. Taylor told Karen she wasn't going to charge them because their dad just got back from Afghanistan. I was so proud of her.

Friday night Taylor cooked dinner and told us eight adults that she didn't want to go to Cowboy Poetry and she would stay home, clean up the dishes and do her homework.

If all 16 year olds were as dependable as Taylor, what a wonderful world this would be.

STOP ALREADY!

A couple of months ago I made the mistake of subscribing to Prevention Magazine published by Rhodale Press. Since then, every day, my mailbox is full of advertisements and catalogs, wonderful trip and cruise offers, home improvements, help for hemorrhoids, and secrets for successful weight loss. I do believe Prevention Magazine gave out my name and address to all of their contacts. Along with the above information were advertisements for 3 Rhodale Books: 400 Calorie fix; Walk off the Weight; The Flat Belly Diet. You can't have one without the others, so I bought all three. \$120 well spent? It all comes down to: you are fat if you have more calories ingested and not enough exercise to burn up the calories.

Arthritis and plantar fasciitis make it very painful to walk and I'm supposed to stay out of the sun so the next best thing is a treadmill. So I bought a second hand one. It runs 30 seconds and stops for 3 seconds which is just fine with me. I do this for 5 to 10 minutes a couple of times a day.

So far I'm waiting for the pounds to disappear; no luck so far, but I haven't gained any, so that is encouraging.

STUFF

I have a large house with many rooms and a basement and lots of stuff.

The problem is I never throw anything away. I worked as a Registered Nurse for 45 years, 40-60 hours a week. I never had time for hobbies.

When I retired 1987, the first thing I did was go on a fishing trip. The first hobby I took up was photography. I bought the best of equipment and joined the Reno Photo Club. My favorite pictures were flower portraiture. With my macro lens I would get just the center of the flower. One time I took 50 pictures of a Goats Beard flower to get one perfect picture.

Next I decided I wanted to learn to make baskets, not traditional Native American style, but modern contemporary. I joined Great Basin Basket Makers in 1987 when there were 12 members. We now have over 200 members. I can't weave anymore because I have arthritis in my hands but I go to the meetings and look forward to the yearly retreat at Lake Tahoe.

One time I learned to make seed bead jewelry. I have enough of a tremor in my hands I can hardly thread the needle. Recently I gave all of my beading paraphernalia away.

Now I enjoy looking at my creations with a nostalgic feeling. I don't mourn not being able to do these things any more, but I'm glad I was able to do what I did.

A few months ago I had a basement sale and sold \$400 worth of basket goods, photography equipment and beads.

SURPRISE!

I'm 81 years old and have placed my rollers in my hair for as long as I remember.

One day a year ago, I got out of the shower and was running late for a meeting so I had no time for rollers. I poured about one teaspoon of hair gel into my palm and applied it to my hair and left for my meeting.

When I arrived for the meeting a friend asked if I got a perm. I said "No, I didn't have time for rollers."

She said my hair looked real "cute."

As soon as I got home I went into the bathroom to see what I looked like. I guess, as my hair dried it formed little curls all over. What pleasant surprise! I didn't know I had curly hair, and I haven't used rollers since.

TAKING ORDERS

My neighbor was busy wrapping Christmas gifts and was hungry for Trader Joes jerky. She asked her husband if he would go get her some. He asked where it was located and she gave him explicit instructions: “Enter the door, go down two rows and it’s on the left side in a red package.”

An hour later he called her and said he couldn’t find it. She was upset at him and yelled, “Ask someone!”

He asked the first salesperson he saw. She said, “First you have to go to Trader Joe’s, they’re next door.”

TAYLOR STORIES

She was barely 5 and not able to read. Her favorite card game was Go Fish. The first card had the directions for playing. I read it to her. We played until all the cards were used and counted our discards. We both had the same amount. I told her that was called a TIE, but I didn’t know what to do about it.

She picked up the instruction card and said, “It says here, Grandma, in case of a tie, the 5 year old wins.”

Another....

Still about 5....I was cooking dinner and she was sitting at my desk scribbling. She said, “I’m writing a prayer, Grandma.”

I said, “That’s nice, Honey. Can I read it?”

She said, “I don’t think so – it’s in Chinese.”

THAT'S A LOT OF BULL!

My in-laws bought 30 acres in Mendocino, California. They fenced off about two acres to make a milk ranch.

They decided to get a cow to use the milk in the milk feed. People in small towns know everything so they asked Mendosa, the grocer if he knew of any cows for sale. He didn't, but would inquire.

Two days later the phone rang and Jake the hay cutter called and said he had a cow for sale. He could deliver her for an extra \$10. The price for the cow was \$50.

The cow was delivered and a small structure that was referred to as "the barn" was built. My father-in-law, Stan called Jake and asked when the cow should give milk. Jake said they don't give, you have to take and she won't have any milk until she's bred and has a calf and she's never been bred.

Well, Stan asked Jake if he knew of any bulls for hire and Jake said he just happened to have a traveling breeding bull. It seems Jake would back his truck into the gate where the bull was fenced in and let the tailgate down and the bull, knowing it was party time, walked right up into the truck.

Jake and his bull arrived and as luck would have it, the heifer was in heat and the bull knew what to do.

When it was all over, Jake called the bull and he walked right up the tailgate ready to go again.

Months went by and in due time, the cow had her calf. Now the milking began. Stan and his son, Bob, (my future husband) took turns pulling teats and ducking the hind legs as the cow was trying to kick them. They managed to get about a cup of milk between the two of them.

Bob was choir director at the Mendocino Presbyterian Church and very good looking, so I joined the choir. On practice night he told the choir what a difficult time they were having. I told him I knew how to milk a cow.

The next afternoon he took me to the ranch and introduced me to his father. Stan asked me if I would try to milk the cow. I said I would. He had her in the barn and secured in the stanchion.

I put the stool under her belly, tied her tail to her leg so she wouldn't hit me with it, sat on the stool with the pail between my legs and my back against her flank and started pulling. The milk was filling the pail and covered with foam. The two men looked at each other, eyes wide. Stan told Bob, "Marry that girl." And he did!

THE SAUNA

The year is 1946. The place is Fort Bragg, California. My parents took my sister, brother and I into “town” to visit Finnish friends, Gus and Marta. I noticed a small building in their back yard and asked why they had such a large outhouse. Gus said, “This is our sauna”

I had never heard the word before and asked him what it was. He explained it was a steam bath and told me I could use it if I wanted to. He opened the door and there were three levels of benches. They looked like very large stairs. In one corner was a stove of sorts with rocks all around it. Next to the stove was a bucket of water and a water dipper (a cup on the end of a long handle).

The room was very cozy and warm. In a corner there were some short branches with leaves attached. Gus explained that you scoop water on the rocks and that causes steam. When you start to sweat you take the branches and swat yourself. This increases circulation.

There was a room next to the sauna that was a dressing room and shower. Gus said in Finland they finish off a sauna by jumping in the snow.

He said there were extra towels and I was welcome to take a sauna if I wanted to. My parents were visiting with Gus and Marta and my siblings were playing with their children. It seemed like a good time for me to have a sauna.

Gus left and I locked the door, undressed and went into the lovely warm room. Instead of dipping the water from the bucket onto the rocks, I picked it up and poured it all on at once, then walked over to the benches and sat on the top one. In about 2 minutes it was very hot. I moved down to the next lower bench for about 30 seconds and then to the lowest bench. It just got hotter and hotter.

I had trouble breathing and was sweating profusely. I lay down on the floor and that didn't help. If I could just get into the shower room! After resting on the floor a few more minutes I was able to get up, open the shower door and close the one to the steam room. I sat on a bench that held towels and recovered.

After showering and dressing, I must admit, I felt great! I told Gus I had poured water from the bucket and he said that was wrong...it would get too hot! YEAH!!!

THANKSGIVING AT AUNT GERTS

I was brought up in a house with second hand furniture and hand-me-down dishes and clothes and a lot of Love. Most often the couch was turned over and covered with a blanket to make a fort.

We didn't have a big enough table for company and my Aunt Gert lived nearby, so every year she invited us to her house for Thanksgiving dinner. She had a nice house and furniture with a dining room table big enough for 12 of us cousins, Aunts and Uncles.

Her dishes were all the same pattern and she had shiny silverware. I asked her why each place had 3 forks and 2 spoons. She told me we needed one spoon for soup and another for jello salad. One fork was for salad and another for turkey and the third for pie. I said I couldn't remember all that and she gave me some good advice: Watch what the hostess was using. I think I was about 10 then and used that advice the rest of my life.

Aunt Gert was a good cook, too, and I still have a lot of her recipes.

Her daughter, Lucille, my cousin, was 4 years older than me. She taught me how to lift up the couch and chair cushions and look for coins. I never found any because she got to go first!

When we moved to Northern California we never had thanksgiving at Aunt Gerts again.

When I was 16 I wanted to get a job to save money for college. Aunt Gert invited me to stay at her house in Albany for the 3 months of summer vacation.

The first thing I noticed was the beautiful dining room table was covered with papers and magazines. She said since the kids moved out they didn't use the beautiful table anymore.

I got a job at Edy's restaurant in Oakland. I think I took a bus from her house to Oakland, close to Lake Merrit. I do remember I made a lot of mistakes with orders and now when I get upset at someone in sales or doctors' offices, I recite to myself, "There but for the Grace of God go I".

Aunt Gert always wanted to go to Hawaii. She worked as a telephone operator all her life but never saved enough money to go. I learned from her experience to do everything you want to do while you are young enough to do it. I did.

WORRY

Since I don't have anything personally to worry about, I frequently worry about friends and acquaintances. Not only do I worry for them, but I also try to solve their problems, which probably they don't know they have.

I belong to RSVP, a volunteer program where seniors help seniors. My present senior companion has so many health problems, it's hard to believe. Thankfully, her daughter lives in Stead and can help some.

She used a walker or wheelchair to move about her apartment and doesn't go out because of her immobility. I thought to myself she would probably do well to move into an assisted care facility.

I picked up some information on them. Level one states that you must be able to vacate the facility without any assistance of a walker or wheelchair in two minutes. Level two requires vacating in four minutes. My companion can hardly ambulate with a walker, so she would not qualify. She would have to go to a nursing home, but I thought perhaps she could get along with occasional day care. She needs someone to talk to. I should visit her more often and stay longer.

The other night, instead of sleeping, I thought about a friend who lives on the 3rd floor of her apartment and depends on her walker totally. What is she going to do if there is a fire? The elevator would be out of service and she can't do stairs. After I realize someone has a problem, I work on how to solve it. How about if they install roll down slides like they have to exit airplanes? I liked that idea until in my mind I pictured 30 poorly mobile seniors careening down the slide and 30 walkers flying about. Not a good idea.

2 a.m. still haven't solved the problem.

I keep thinking of my RSVP senior. She is lucky to have a doctor in a group that makes house calls. I visited her one day after the doctor had visited. Her problem is swollen legs. She wears a sweatshirt, sweatpants and large slippers. Her legs were swollen twice their size. She said the doctor told her to wrap her legs with ACE bandages. She told the doctor she was physically unable to do that, so the doctor wrote a prescription for pain pills (which my senior said she was allergic to) and left, saying she would see her next month.

I asked her if her daughter could help her and she said, "No." Her daughter had knee replacement surgery, lost her job, lost her health insurance and could hardly walk. She has no physical therapy and no further doctor visits.

Her son-in-law also lost his job. They live in Stead and he's not well.

I told her I would get the prescription filled and she reminded me she was allergic to it. I asked her if she had considered going to an assisted living facility. She said she wanted to stay in her own apartment.

I'm a retired registered nurse and want to help her, but we aren't allowed to do any physical care and she can't afford to hire someone.

I guess the most I can do is pray for her.

YOGA!

For a number of years I've been interested in learning Yoga. I had never watched a class and occasionally when I saw it on TV I only saw someone briefly in a pose, but not how they got that way.

I attend "Curves" exercise classes which I can accomplish without antagonizing my arthritic body. Two weeks ago there was a sign on the door, "Yoga Class Saturday at 12:30."

I arrived at 12:25, and was greeted by a soft spoken young woman in tights who reminded me of Peter Pan. I'd venture to say all in attendance were in their 20's and the heaviest was about 115 pounds.

Soft music was playing. She told everyone to lie down on a mat on the floor. I don't do "floor" very well. I resemble a hippopotamus at the watering hole. I haven't been on the floor for years and my soon to turn 80 body protested. My groans drowned out the music. Pain!

She kept telling us to do various impossible things, "Put your leg on your back. Put your head on your foot and don't forget to breathe." I'm hard of hearing and couldn't understand her, anyway.

Then it happened! My right knee popped and I yelled out in pain! The class stopped momentarily while I straightened my leg.

The next contortion used a canvas belt with a large buckle and we were told to roll on our belly and breathe. I had a terrible pain in my belly. We were to slip the belt under the foot and with the leg stiff, pull it up over our head and breathe. The pain was excruciating and I rolled over and discovered the belt buckle was penetrating my belly, causing the pain.

Two days later I went to Curves and they asked how I liked Yoga? I said, "My Yoga days are over."

Now I've given up Yoga and bowling.

BILLIE'S RECIPES

SWEET POTATO PECAN PIE

A long time ago someone I worked with brought a pecan pie for one of our pot luck luncheons. I asked her for the recipe and she said told me it was a family secret.

I decided I would experiment and I made a pecan pie filling, added mashed sweet potatoes and with the help of Joy of Cooking, pre-baked the shells before filling and my pie was better than hers!

3 eggs slightly beaten

1 cup dark corn syrup

½ cup granulated sugar

¾ cup canned yams or sweet potatoes, drained & mashed

(1 large can yams makes 2 cups plus a little more, or enough for 4 pies, or you can freeze what's left over)

1 teaspoon vanilla

½ tsp salt

Combine above and mix gently with a fork

Stir in:

2 cups (¾ lb) pecan halves

1 Tbls melted butter

Pour into a pie shell, 9" deep dish, that has been baked 5 minutes in a 400* oven. This sets the crust so it doesn't get soggy when you add the filling. (If using frozen shells, check bottom and make sure the aluminum isn't pierced, the filling runs out of the pie and out the bottom of the tin.(continued....))

Preheat oven 400* and bake 15 minutes, reduce heat to 350* and bake 30 minutes longer. It will be gooey, but remove from the oven anyway and put on a wire rack to cool.

Serve in small slices with whipped cream. It is very rich.

THE COOKIE CONTEST

One afternoon in the early 1970's I was watching TV when an advertisement came on for the Nevada State Fair. The first prize for the Men's Cookie Baking contest was a portable gas grill and I wanted that grill!

When Bob came home from work, I asked him if he would enter and see if he could win the grill for us. He agreed and the cooking lesson began. At the time, the only thing he had cooked without my help was broiled bean sandwiches.

We went through my recipes and decided on Date Nut Squares. The following day I bought all of the ingredients and the first day together we made a batch of these best ever cookies. It took us over 3 hours and he had to do it in one hour, start to finish. I called the Fair office and asked how much preparatory work could be done. They said everything could be pre-measured in separate containers and the dates could be pre-cut and nuts chopped - back to the drawing board.

He cut the dates and chopped the nuts and measured the flour, baking powder, coconut, salt and the brown sugar together in a plastic bag. He put two eggs and the vanilla into a jar and beat them well. These were the ingredients for step two.

For step one he measured the flour and brown sugar together, added the butter and mixed them well and put it into a plastic bag. Then he greased an 8 x 8 inch baking pan and put that in a plastic bag. I taught him how to measure, cutting the flour with a table knife; pack the brown sugar, etc. so if they asked any questions he could answer. The following day we set the timer and he turned on the oven, put all step one ingredients into the prepared pan and put it in the oven for 10 minutes. While in the oven, he put all step two ingredients together and fixed his cookie plate with dishes for serving. The ten minute timer went off and he put the "crust" into the freezer to cool for 5 minutes. Which was a great guess; it worked fine. Then he put ingredients for step two in the pan and put it into the oven for 30 minutes. The timers went off and he pulled it out of the oven, cut it into 2 inch squares, pried them out of the baking pan and he placed them on the doilies and had two minutes to spare! Our practice session worked perfectly and the cookies were great.

The day to go to the Fair came and he did everything as in the practice "bake-off" and he was very much at ease in front of the judges and spectators. His cookies were judged "Best" and he won the barbecue. The man who came in second cried because he didn't win and he had entered the contest every year.

We used that barbecue for 20 years and either gave it to one of our kids or maybe it's in the garage....

I never found anything else I wanted him to win for me, but he helps with all of our cooking and makes great ham and lima beans.

Recipe follows:

DATE NUT SQUARES

Step One

1 cup flour
½ cup brown sugar, packed
1 cube butter softened at room temperature

Mix well and put into a greased 8x8x2 inch baking pan.
Bake 10 minutes in a 350* oven.

Step Two

In a mixing bowl combine:

2 eggs, beaten
2 tablespoons flour
½ tsp baking powder
½ cup coconut
12 dates cut in quarters
1 cup brown sugar, packed
1/8 tsp salt
½ tsp vanilla
1 cup walnuts, chopped

Spread over cooled “crust”. Bake in 350° oven for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle with powdered sugar. Cut into squares while hot or it will harden and you can't cut it.

DORA TAYLOR

I met Dora Taylor in 1987 when I joined the Great Basin Basketmakers. She and her friend Jeanie McClard lived in Cromwell near Graeagle, California. They drove to Reno once a month for the Basketmakers meeting.

Over the years, I spent enough time with her to realize she had a story waiting to be told. This is being written January, 2008. I interviewed her last November in her apartment at Classic Residence.

This is her story:

My parents were from Germany. They moved to Kauai, Koloa, Hawaii about 1916. My father was hired to supervise a sugar cane plantation. Most of the people on the Island spoke only German. The children were not allowed to go to public school so they had tutors. This period of time was the end of World War I so the Germans were hated by the Hawaiians.

After the war all of the Germans were fired. My father found work on another plantation on Oahu, Hawaii. My brother and I were sent to live with my paternal grandparents. They lived a long way from town, which the only transportation was by horse and carriage.

The plantation where my father worked had the only sugar mill that made white sugar. There wasn't any discrimination here. By this time we had learned to speak the English language.

We lived in the town of Aiea. We walked to school and everywhere else since there were few cars and we didn't have a horse and buggy. Kids in the upper grades walked to the train and were transported to school.

I graduated from high school at age 14 and then went to Phillips Commercial School (business college). I worked in an attorney's office, did court reporting in shorthand and typed notes at night. I worked 5 years and then got married.

My father died when I was 18 and living at home. My mother and I went to live with my sister in her house.

A girlfriend's brother took us to a dance. I met my future husband, Shell. We were married 2 months later in 1939. He was 5 years my senior. He owned a bottling company and a retail franchise for Coca-Cola. I continued to work until World War II started. We never had children.

Three months prior to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, the Army confiscated our seven delivery trucks and never told us why.

On December 6, 1941, we were partying at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel and were out late. Early Sunday morning on December 7, Shell's mother woke us up and told us the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. She and Shell's father had

been playing golf on a course overlooking Pearl Harbor. She told us Shell's trucks had been turned into ambulances.

Life changed for us. Every night we were in a "blackout". When the Army paid us for our trucks we bought blackout paper and went into business selling it.

We were lucky that we had a large home. We invited service men to stay with us when they needed a place to stay. They brought us liquor and cigarettes which we couldn't buy. After a few month Shell left for the United States. He had a job with a paper company. I stayed behind until I sold our house and furniture. Shell had influence and got me a first class ticket on a R.B.Y. aircraft that had a large stateroom and a big bed. I was unable to sleep and was lonely, so I found a couple of very tired servicemen and gave them my room, then went out to the main cabin and visited. Air travel was quite new then and it took 17 hours to fly from Hawaii to San Francisco.

We lived in a hotel in San Francisco for two months until we found an apartment on Sutter Street. We lived there until we bought a lovely home in St. Francis Woods. Shell worked at Crown-Zellerback, a lumber company. We later bought a variety store and had it for 15 years. Then he sold it and we retired to Cromberg near Graeagle. We both enjoyed golf and played a lot.

I met Jeanie McClard on the golf course. We became very good friends. She made baskets and taught me how. In 1987 we read that Mary Lee Fulkerson was starting a contemporary basket group, the Great Basin Basketmakers, in Reno and we joined.

Dora's husband Shell went on a canoe trip from New York to Nome with a friend before he met Dora. He died about 15 years ago from Leukemia. She moved to Reno and is presently living at Classic Residence.

Dora was an excellent cook. At one of our basket parties she brought mango chutney. (Recipe follows) This is April 2008 and she is well into her eighties and participates in all of the activities at the residence. Last week we went to lunch.

MANGO CHUTNEY

15 pounds sliced mangos
1 cup sliced almonds
½ pound raisins
5 pounds brown sugar
½ pounds currants
2 chili peppers chopped fine (optional)
1 tsp nutmeg
1 tsp allspice
1 clove garlic chopped fine
½ cup preserved, chopped ginger
3 cups vinegar (cider)
1 cup chopped onions
1 tsp powdered cloves
1 tsp cinnamon

Peel and slice mangoes. Cook sugar and vinegar. Add garlic, ginger, onions, raisins, peppers and spices. Cook 12 minutes. Add mangoes and cook until they become transparent.

WILD & BROWN RICE

Bob used to go hunting every fall and all the fills brought food and warmed it up for supper. They “camped” in a double-wide mobile home with hot and cold running water, a gas stove with a double oven. He always wanted me to fix chicken and sour cream and wild rice. He would help me.

1 cup wild rice
2 cups long grain brown rice
7 cups water
½ cube margarine or butter
6 bouillon cubes, chicken flavor
2 tsp garlic salt
1 tsp Beau Monde
1 cup chopped walnuts
6 mushrooms, walnut size

Cut mushrooms into small pieces. Melt butter in Dutch oven, add mushrooms and cook until limp, stirring frequently. Dissolve bouillon cubes and garlic salt in water and add to pot. Add rices and bring to a boil. Stir well. Cover with tight lid and put into preheated 350° oven for 1 hour & 20 minutes.
Remove from oven. Remove lid. Fluff with fork and stir in nuts.

Freezes well.

VEGETARIAN CHILI

This is a good, low calorie, meat-free meal. It is very good with corn bread. My good friend, Ellaine Thompson gave me this recipe. Ellaine and I went to school together. Her husband, Tom was in the Air Force. They traveled a lot. When he retired they moved to their house overlooking Noyo Harbor with all the fishing boats. It was a million dollar view. She got Leukemia and died young in her 60's. Tom remarried 3 months later.

Ellains Beans

2 cups Kidney beans (1 lb dry beans = 2 ½ cups	4 shakes black pepper
2 cups Pinto beans (1 lb)	2 bay leaves
10 cups cold water	1 Tbls oregano
6 cups water	1 Tbls basil
6 cloves garlic, crushed	1 ½ Tbls ground cumin
3 onions, chopped	1 tsp ground coriander
2 bell peppers, chopped	2 Tbl chili powder
2 carrots, grated	¼ cup sugar
½ lb fresh mushrooms, chopped	1Tbls Beau Monde
3 cans 28oz tomatoes, pureed chunky	3 Tbls beef boullion
6 Tbls soy sauce	(optional 1 can beer)

Wash dry beans and soak overnight in 10 cups of water. After soaking, drain off water and put beans in a heavy pot with 6 cups of water, (1 can of beer), 2 cloves garlic and 1 chopped onion. Cover, bring to boil and simmer until tender, about 2 hours. In a separate fry pan: add 1 Tbl oil and sauté 2 chopped onions, 2 cloves crushed garlic, green peppers, carrots and mushrooms until barely tender. Add to cooked beans. Add tomatoes and seasonings. Simmer several hours. Makes 16, 1 cup servings.

RUM CAKE

My dear friend, Nancy Diehl, used to make Rum cakes that are out of this world. Every year she made one for Bob for his birthday. He wasn't fond of desserts but he was absolutely crazy about the rum cake. The secret of getting the full benefit of the rum is to let the glaze cool some instead of putting it in while hot. I prefer it in a rectangular pan, Bob liked his in a Bundt pan.

Rum Cake

Cake:

1 cup chopped nuts
1 yellow cake mix (can use pudding in the cake mix)
1 pkg 3.9 oz. instant vanilla pudding mix
4 eggs
½ c cold water
½ c rum (any kind)
½ c oil

Glaze:

1 cube (¼ lb) butter
¼ c water
1 c granulated sugar
½ c rum

Pre-heat oven to 350°. Spray bottom of 12 x 9 inch pan or grease and flour a Bundt pan. Pour nuts on bottom of pan. Mix all ingredients for cake in mixer. Blend & then beat for 2 minutes on cake mix setting. Pour over nuts & bake 45 minutes for rectangular pan; 55 minutes for Bundt. Check for doneness with a toothpick.

Let cool 10 minutes then invert on a rack to cool. When cool turn out on a platter so nuts are on the bottom.

Glaze: Melt butter in sauce pan over low heat. Add sugar and water. Bring to boil over low heat for 5 minutes stirring constantly with wire whisk. Let cool to lukewarm and stir in rum. Poke holes in cake with a meat fork and pour glaze all over cake. YUM!

TRIPLE CHOCOLATE FUDGE RUM CAKE

My friend, Nancy Diehl, made white rum cake. I fooled around with her recipe to come up with a chocolate version.

If you have to drive don't have more than one piece or you might get a DUI.

1- 18 ½ oz Chocolate cake mix (any brand with pudding)

1- 3.9 oz Instant chocolate pudding mix

¾ cup cooking oil

1 cup Rum (light or dark)

4 eggs

1- 12 oz package mini chocolate chips

1 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350°. Spray bottom only of 9 x 13 x 2 pan. Sprinkle nuts in bottom of pan. Pour cake mix and pudding mix into mixer bowl, mix well. Measure oil & rum into separate bowl, add eggs and beat with fork or whisk until eggs are blended with liquids; pour into cake mixture, mix on low speed until ingredients are blended (very thick). Beat on medium speed for 2 minutes, using spatula as needed to mix well. Bake in preheated oven for 50 minutes. Remove from oven and let stand for 10 minutes. Then turn out on cake rack to cool more. When completely cool, turn out onto cardboard or tray to glaze.

Glaze

1 cube butter (1/2 cup)

1 cup granulated sugar

¼ cup water

½ cup rum

Melt butter in medium sauce pan. Stir in sugar and water. When mixed, put over high heat until it bubbles. Turn heat on low and set timer for 5 minutes. Stir continuously. It will rise to the top of the pan so keep stirring. Move on and off the low heat while stirring for the entire 5 minutes so it won't over flow.

Remove to a cool place and stir occasionally. A butter scum will form, and that's fine, it will stir in. When lukewarm, add rum and stir until it's mixed well.

Using a meat fork pierce the top of the cake and slowly pour glaze over, it will soak in.

Makes about 24 servings of 2" x 2".

To warm individual servings, microwave for 15 seconds on a safe plate. This melts the chocolate chips and makes it YUMMY!

SURPRISE CHEF

Soon after we were married, a Hawaiian friend was complaining he hadn't had any good Oriental food and his mother's cooking since he left the Island. I told him I would cook some for him and invited him to dinner the following week. After he left, Bob asked if I had ever cooked Chinese food. I said I had not and he said what possessed me to practice on company. I said it was fun.

I went to the store and bought a bottle of soy sauce with a little folder of recipes attached to the neck. A few days before my "dinner party" I bought the ingredients.

On party day I cooked; guests arrived; I served dinner and it was delicious. The Hawaiian said it was as good as his mother's. Bob said, "YOU AMAZE ME".
All you need is a good recipe:

SWEET & SOUR PORK

1 ½ lbs pork steak or 3 lbs spare ribs
¼ cup chopped onion
¼ cup chopped celery
¼ cup chopped green pepper
2 Tbl oil
1 Tbl corn starch
2 cups pineapple chunks
¼ cup cider vinegar
3 Tbl soy sauce
4 Tbl brown sugar
¼ tsp garlic powder
¼ tsp ginger
¼ tsp ground cloves
½ cup pineapple juice

Place ribs in shallow pan, sprinkle with salt & pepper. Roast, uncovered at 380° for 1 hr or cut pork steak into cubes, cook 350°, stirring in Dutch oven with lid for 1 hr.

Cook onion, celery & green pepper in oil until tender. Sprinkle cornstarch over vegetable. Add pineapple, vinegar, brown sugar, soy sauce, garlic, ginger, cloves & pineapple juice. Stir & cook until mixture is clear and thickened. Spoon sauce over meat & cook at 340° for 1 hr. Serves 4.

STIR FRIED CHICKEN & CASHEWS

2 Whole chicken breasts, skinned, boned & cut in ½ inch cubes
2 Tbls soy sauce
1 Tbls dry sherry
½ tsp sugar
1 cup raw cashew nuts
2 Tbls cooking oil
1 Tbls Hoisin sauce

In a medium bowl, combine chicken, soy sauce, sherry & sugar; set aside.

In 12 inch skillet or wok stir-fry cashews in hot oil over high heat for 1-2 minutes until browned. Lift out with slotted spoon and set aside. Add chicken mix to skillet & stir-fry over high heat 2-3 minutes or until just done. Stir in Hoisin sauce & cashews. If desired sprinkle with chopped green onions. Serve at once with hot cooked rice. Makes 4 or 5 servings.

CHOW MEIN

2 cups pork or other cooked meat, cut into strips or cubes
2 cups sliced celery
2 cups sliced onion
1 cup sliced green pepper
3 cups canned bean sprouts drained
2 tsp salt
½ cup water (or juice from sprouts)
2 Tbls oil
1 ½ Tbls corn starch
2 Tbls soy sauce
2 Tbls brown sugar

Fry meat in hot oil for 3 minutes. Add salt, celery & onion, mushrooms. Cook 3 minutes. Add bean sprouts & green peppers. Cook 4 minutes. Mix cornstarch, water, brown sugar & soy sauce. Add, stirring continually. Cook 2 more minutes. Serves 4.

ORIENTAL CHICKEN SALAD

3 chicken breasts, broiled and shredded

1 head lettuce, shredded

1 pkg sliced almonds

1 bunch green onions, chopped

1 can chow mein noodles

Dressing continued:

Dressing:

½ c oil

½ c red wine vinegar

½ c sugar

2 tsp salt

1 tsp pepper

Mix dressing and stir into salad and serve.

SEAFOOD CHOWDER

Bob and I used to go to Mendocino once or twice a year. We would invite friends. I always made clam chowder.

Frequently we would go to the Mendocino hotel for lunch. One of our friends ordered clam chowder. I asked him how it was. He said, "It's very good, but not as good as yours".

4 cans clams, chopped or minced

1 lb cooked baby shrimp

2 cups celery, finely chopped

1 ½ cups onion, finely chopped

4 large potatoes, cubed into bite size

2 cubes butter

1 cup flour

2 qts half & half

½ tsp sugar, garlic salt, ground pepper, beau monde, lemon herbs to taste.

In a large thick bottom pot, add celery, onions, potatoes and juice from clams. Add enough water to just cover. Put a tight lid on pot and simmer over medium heat until potatoes are tender (about 20 minutes).

In a pan melt butter, add flour and blend well, cook about 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Add half & half, stirring constantly with a wire whisk until smooth and thick. Add the cream sauce to the pot and stir. Add the clams, shrimp, salt, sugar and pepper.

You could also transfer to a crock pot sprayed with Pam.

Heat to high. Serves 8.

RED CABBAGE

I love German food, especially red cabbage and sausage. I got this recipe from Pat Beach. She's a great cook. Serve with sausage and fried potatoes.

1 large head red cabbage
1/3 cup to 1/2 cup butter or margarine
4 Tbl red wine vinegar
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup water

Finely shred cabbage. Add to a large pot. Add all ingredients and simmer for 2 1/2 hours. During last 10 minutes add more sugar and vinegar to taste if desired.

QUICK CHIOPPINO

Years ago, Louie Valsecchi, a friend of my parents, and later Bob and mine, made chioppino. It was with great fanfare and took all day to gather ingredients; Herbs from his garden, tomatoes from a friend, seafood from a special market, and he and Bob had a glass of wine at every stop.

One night I decided to make it. I bought all the ingredients and went home.

Bob said “you have to cook the clams tonight so we have the juice to drink. That’s how Louie does it.”

I said, “No you put the clams in with the other shell fish so the flavor gets in.”

Bob said we should call Louie and we did. He said he does it both ways, depending on how much he had to drink.

After making it Louie’s way many times, I decided to take a shortcut and came up with Quick Chioppino my way and it’s just as good.

3- 28oz bottled spaghetti sauce (tomato garlic onion flavor)

2 cups burgundy wine

1 ½ tsp garlic salt

1 Tbls sugar

¼ tsp nutmeg

6 cloves garlic cut up

2 Tbl lemon juice

Saute garlic in 3 Tbl olive oil in a large pot. Add all ingredients and cover. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to low and simmer 45 minutes.

Add:

2 lbs King crab legs cut into 1 ½” pices

3 lbs large shrimp

1 ½ lb calamari cut into bite size pieces

1 lb Scallops

1 pkg frozen green mussels in the half shell

Gently boil 20 minutes.

2 lb cod but into bite size pieces.

Spray 9 x 13 pan with Spray cooking oil. Put cod in pan and microwave 5 minutes.

To serve, put cod into bottom of individual serving bowls and put sauce and shell fish on top. Serve with garlic bread.

Serves 6

INSIDE-OUT RAVIOLI

My friend, Maureen Killion, gave me this recipe. She made it fairly often when I lived with her between husbands. I use bow tie macaroni. You can make it a few hours ahead of time and bake it just before you are ready to eat.

1 jar spaghetti sauce, mushroom flavor
1 8oz can tomato sauce
1 6oz can tomato paste
1 pkg large shell macaroni, cooked
1 pkg chopped spinach, cooked. Squeeze juice and save
1 ½ pounds ground beef
1 medium onion, chopped
1 cup fresh mushrooms, chopped
1 clove garlic
½ tsp salt
4 shakes Tabasco sauce
Wine
1 cup cheddar cheese, grated
2 slices bread, crumbled
2 eggs, well beaten
¼ cup oil

Cook the beef with the onion, mushrooms and garlic. Drain fat. Measure spinach juice and add enough wine to make 1 cup. Stir into meat. Add tomato sauces, salt & Tabasco, cook 10 minutes.

In a bowl combine noodles, spinach, cheese, bread, eggs & oil.

Spray/oil a 9 x 12 x 2 baking dish. Spread noodle mixture into dish. Top with meat mixture. Do not stir. Bake 30 minutes at 350°. Remove and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese or more grated cheddar cheese. Serve with French bread and green salad.

HOT TURKEY SALAD

The Daughters of the Nile (Shrine Ladies) used to have a fund raiser luncheon every year. Everyone would be given the same recipe. There were about 30 of us and not two casseroles looked or tasted alike.

This recipe was from Evelyn Johnson. She was another good cook.

2 cups turkey or chicken, diced

2 cups celery diced

½ cup almonds, chopped

½ tsp salt

2 tsp onion grated

2 Tbl lemon juice

1 cup mayonnaise

1 cup potato chips, crushed

½ cup American cheese, grated

Combine all ingredients, except cheese and chips, into a baking dish. Put cheese and chips on top. Bake 450° for 10 minutes.

Garnish with parsley and cranberries. This is nice served with asparagus tips, relishes and sliced tomatoes.

CHILI RELLENO BAKE

I love Chile Rellenos but frequently eat a seed and have a hot mouth. In order to prevent this I make this casserole. I open the chilies, scrape out the seeds and rinse them. I've never found anyone who did not love this recipe.

½ lb sausage

½ lb beef

1 large onion or 4 Tbl dry onions reconstituted with 3 Tbs water

2 4oz cans green chilies.

2 cups Jack cheese, coarse grated

4 eggs

¼ cup flour

1 ½ cups milk

½ tsp garlic salt

2 shakes Tobasco sauce

Cook and crumble meat. Drain fat. Add onion and cook until onion is limp. Set aside.

Spray/oil 12 x 8 x 2 baking dish. Split and rinse chilies. Line pan with half of the chilies. Cover chilies with 1 ½ cups of the cheese. Add the meat mixture. Top with remaining chilies. Beat the eggs, milk, garlic salt, Tabasco. Pour this over the mixture in the pan. Sprinkle remaining cheese over the top.

Bake 350° for 45 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving. Serves 6.

CHICKEN SALAD WITH POMEGRANATES AND ALMONDS (Recipe courtesy of POM Wonderful)

Pomegranates offer beneficial phytochemical, just like cherries, plums, cranberries, and other red or brightly colored fruits and berries. In particular, they are rich in potent antioxidants known as polyphenols and they have more of these compounds than green tea, red grape juice or orange juice. In addition, a whole pomegranate is low in calories (120) and provides a day's work of vitamin C, as well as some iron and calcium.

2 pomegranates
½ cup golden raisins
1 pound cooked chicken breast meat, cut into 1" chunks
1/3 cup toasted sliced almonds
1 chopped apple
½ cup chopped or thinly sliced celery
1 Tablespoon chopped Italian parsley
¼ cup chopped green onions
¼ to ½ teaspoon curry powder (optional)
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

1. In a large mixing bowl combine the pomegranate arils and seeds, raisins, chicken, almonds, apple, celery, parsley, green onion and curry powder.
 2. In a small bowl whisk together the olive oil and vinegar. Pour in chicken mixture, mix well. Add salt and pepper to taste.
 3. Refrigerate until ready to serve
- Makes 6 servings, 386 calories

To open a pomegranate, cut off the crown end then lightly score the rind and membrane in four vertical cuts. Soak the fruit in a bowl of water for 5 minutes.

Holding the fruit under water, break the sections apart, separating seeds from membrane. The seeds will sink; the rind and membrane will float. Discard the rind and membrane. Pour the seeds into a colander; drain and pat dry.

Uncut fruit will last up to 4 weeks if refrigerated. The cut fruit should last a week in the refrigerator, if wrapped in plastic or a container.
The juice is good as a marinade for fish and meat.

CHICKEN AND SOUR CREAM

This is what Bob took hunting every year.

He loved to watch me cook and that drove me crazy. He just stood there and kept watching. I decided to have him help me and asked him to chop an onion. Even if I didn't need it I'd have him chop it. Chop fine, small pieces, very small. I'd put it in a bowl in the freezer. I had a lot of chopped onion. I always kept and onion in the pantry to keep him busy.

5-6 lbs skinless breasts or 1 large chicken cut up & skinned
2 bell peppers, green or red, chopped
2 medium yellow onions, chopped
2 chicken bouillon cubes
2 cups boiling water
1 cup white wine
½ pint sour cream
½ tsp each: Paprika, thyme, garlic salt
1 lb mushrooms cut into 1/8's
Oil for frying

Spray oil on chicken pieces. Sprinkle spices on one side. Place with spice side down into a frying pan with hot oil. Sprinkle spices on top side of chicken pieces. Brown both sides of chicken. Place into a Dutch oven or oven safe pan. Brown the pepper, onions and mushrooms. Put on top of chicken. Boil water, dissolve bouillon. Add to pot, add wine. Cover with a lid. Bake at 350° for 1 ½ hours. Remove chicken to a platter. Stir sour cream into juice in pan. Heat on stove but do not boil. Pour over chicken. Serve with wild rice.

BEER HOTCAKES

My cousin, Jack, had a significant other, Annie, who was a great cook. The first time I ate her Beer Hotcakes, I was hooked. They have a sourdough flavor. They are like a crepe, but better.

It's OK for the cook to have a sip of beer before breakfast, before putting it in the batter – but only one.

You can freeze left overs.

In a medium bowl mix:

2 eggs

1 cup milk

Add:

2 cups biscuit mix

2 Tbl melted butter or oil

1 12oz can of beer

2 tsp vanilla

Beat with an egg beater. Batter will be very thin and lumpy. Pour batter into a measuring cup with a spout. Slowly pour small amounts for each pancake onto a griddle set on medium-hi. Serves 4.

BILLIE CHILI

I don't have a story with these beans. They are just good. Serve with corn bread.

2 lb ground beef, chicken or turkey or combination of above
1- 15oz can tomato sauce
4 cups chopped fine onion (about 6 medium)
4 cloves garlic chopped
4- cans 1 lb 12oz each tomatoes
3- cans 27 oz kidney beans, drained (reserve liquid)
1 can 12 oz, beer
2 Tbl sugar
5 Tbl chili powder
1 Tbl seasoned salt
1 tsp garlic salt
5 shakes tobacco sauce
2 tsp cumin

Cook meat, drain in colander to drain fat. Crumble meat into Dutch oven when slightly cool. Add onion and garlic. Cook until onion is limp stirring frequently. Add everything except beans, but add the bean juice to meat. Bring to boil, lower to simmer 1 1/2 to 2 hours without lid. Add beans and simmer.
20 servings, 1 1/4 cups each. Freeze leftovers.

CORN BREAD

Corn bread is so easy to make. It's good for beginning cooks and grand kids. My little Taylor loved to cook. This is one of the first things she made.

I use the Polenta style. That was Bob's favorite.

You can add things to the batter such as bacon bits or chopped chilies (not for me!)
Be creative.

Preheat oven 400°.

In a bowl mix together:

1 cup milk

1 egg

¼ cup oil

Add:

1 cup cornmeal

1 cup flour

¼ cup sugar

2 tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

Mix just until blended. Pour into a sprayed or greased pan 8 x 8 x 2. Bake 25 minutes.

BBQ BEANS

These taste like old fashion Boston Baked Beans. I like them with ribs, salad and corn bread.

2 one lb cans pork and beans

2 Tbl bacon bits

1 Tbl liquid smoke

¼ cup catsup

1 pinch dry mustard

1 Tbl brown sugar

½ small onion, chopped

2 Tbl dark molasses

Mix together in oven proof pot and bake at 350° for 1 hour uncovered.

SEAFOOD LASAGNE

10 lasagne noodles
1 can 2.5oz sliced black olives
3 cans (4 to 6 oz) seafood(clams, shrimp or crab, mix or match)
2 ½ cups cold milk
8 Tbls flour
½ cup sherry
½ cup sherry mixed with water
1 tsp garlic salt
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp beaumonde
1 10oz pkg chopped spinach thawed and drained
1 pkg (24oz) lowfat cottage cheese
8 oz mozzarella cheese
½ lb fresh Parmesan cheese, grated

In a large sauce pan add cold milk and flour, and then whisk to remove lumps. Add seasonings, except sherry. Stir over medium heat stirring constantly, until it bubbles. Reduce heat to low and stir for one minute. Remove from heat. Add ½ cup sherry and stir in seafood and olives.

Spray 9 x 12 baking dish with oil. Spread half of seafood mixture in pan. Cover with 5 uncooked noodles. Mix spinach with cottage cheese and put over noodles. Sprinkle with cheeses and reserve one cup of cheese for top. Add the rest of the noodles, add the rest of the seafood mixture and the rest of the cheese. Pour ¾ cup of water around the edges. Spray foil with Pam and cover. Bake one hour at 350°. Uncover and bake 20 minutes longer. Serve with buttered garlic bread and a green salad.

ZUCCHINI SOUP

4 cups zucchini, unpeeled, cut up
½ cup water
1 Tbls minced onion
½ tsp Beaumonde
1 Tbls parsley flakes
2 chicken bouillon cubes

Cook above, covered, until squash is soft. Cool. Whirl in a blender.

1 cup milk
2 Tbls butter
2 Tbls flour
1/8 tsp white pepper
½ cup half and half

In a large pot:

Melt butter and stir in the flour. Add the milk, the half and half and seasonings. Stir over medium high heat until it bubbles. Reduce heat and cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add squash mixture and stir. Now it's ready to serve.

Any vegetable can be substituted for zucchini.