

From the Heart of Our Kitchen

Coconut Cake

Filling:

2 (8-ounce) cartons sour cream

2 cups sugar

1 (6-ounce) package frozen coconut, thawed

Mix above ingredients. Cover, and store in refrigerator for 24 hours.

Cake:

Prepare 2 layers using Duncan Hines Yellow Cake mix. When cool, divide the layers, making 4 layers. Stack, spreading filling on top of each layer, including the top layer.

Frosting:

½ pint sweetened whipped cream

1 (6-ounce) package frozen coconut, thawed

Frost sides and top with sweetened whipped cream. Sprinkle with coconut. Cover finished cake with foil, and refrigerate for 24 hours before serving. The filling will be juicy, but that's OK.

— *Janet Truckner*



IMAGE OF BOOK BY BERT VANDERVEEN

Cooking by Heart

Most community cookbooks start with a cause — a church ministry, a fire department auxiliary, a school project. For two ladies in the Triangle, the purpose was more personal.

By Diane Summerville

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT HULSMAN

FOOD STYLING BY MATT HULSMAN AND WENDY PERRY

For 10 years, Frances Pendergrass and Diane Asbill dodged the question, “When are you going to write a cookbook?” Best known in the 1980s by their brand, The Bread Lady, the Chapel Hill duo was too busy baking cakes, breads, cookies, jams, and jellies and selling them at craft shows and farmers markets to take the time to put their families’ favorite recipes in writing.

That excuse evaporated in 1997 with a single phone call. Asbill learned her aunt Kathryn needed a liver transplant. Insurance would pay for the surgery, but doctors advised the family to launch a fund-raiser to help cover the high cost of antirejection medications.

Six weeks later, Pendergrass and Asbill released *From the Heart of Our Kitchen: Cooking with The Bread Lady and Friends*, a collection of 960 recipes, many of them well known to the pair’s customers, such as Asbill’s mom’s recipe for coconut cake. Many more came from family, friends, fellow church members, and co-workers.

“We spread the word to everyone we knew — ‘This is what we’re doing and why we’re doing it,’” Asbill says. The response was overwhelming. “The purpose of this book touched people’s hearts.”

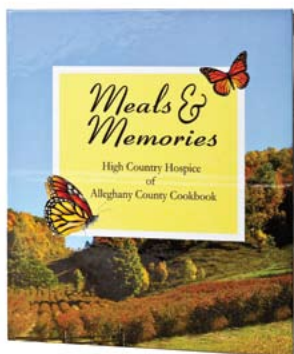
Especially Aunt Kathryn. Fourteen years and more than 4,500 cookbooks later, she’s still grateful.

“I thank everyone involved from the bottom of my heart,” she says. “I want them to know how much I love them for what they’ve done.”

The Bread Lady, which was a second source of income for Pendergrass and Asbill, is no longer in business. Pendergrass, who is Asbill’s aunt by marriage, retired, and Asbill went back to work full-time when her children got older. But the cookbook, which is still available, continues to keep local kitchens filled with the enticing aromas of their treasured recipes. 🍷

Diane Summerville is the senior editor of Our State magazine.

In addition to 392 pages of family recipes, *From the Heart of Our Kitchen* has several special sections including “For Those Who Don’t Cook,” “Around the Campfire,” and “Restaurants and Bed & Breakfasts,” offering recipes from several professional kitchens in the Piedmont and Wilmington. To order a copy, contact Janet Truckner at (919) 688-7588 or ctruckner@mindspring.com.



Meals & Memories

Most of the recipes are familiar classics that mountain families have enjoyed for years, such as Louise Evans's pickled eggs. Some of the recipes, such as Jane Wallace's sweet corn and Parmesan flan, are fresh and fun.

For the variety of recipes alone, *Meals & Memories* would have been a good seller. But knowing the cookbook also supports High Country Hospice of Allegheny County, which has been serving folks in Allegheny, Ashe, and Watauga counties since 1986, has made it a must-have for many.

The hardbound cookbook raises funds for the nonprofit but also, through stories and photographs, preserves memories of people whom Hospice has served as well as volunteers who share their time and talents with the organization.

To order a copy, contact High Country Hospice at (336) 372-4375 or pwagoner@hchealth.net.

Sweet Corn and Parmesan Flan

- 2½ cups fresh corn kernels (about 5 ears)
- 1 cup 1% milk
- ⅓ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 teaspoon flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper, freshly ground
- 4 large eggs
- 18 small cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil, sliced thin

Preheat oven to 350°. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add corn, and cook 5 minutes or until tender. Set aside 1 cup corn kernels. Place remaining corn in a food processor; pulse 5 times or until coarsely chopped. Add milk and next 5 ingredients (through eggs) to food processor. Pulse 4 times or until combined. Pour about ½ cup corn mixture into each of 6 ramekins* coated with cooking spray. Place ramekins in a 9-inch x 13-inch baking pan. Add hot water to pan to a depth of 1 inch. Bake at 350° for 35 minutes or until the center barely moves when ramekins are touched. Remove ramekins from pan; cool 5 minutes on a wire rack. Invert flan onto each of 6 plates. Garnish each serving with about 2½ teaspoons corn kernels, 6 tomato halves, and 1 teaspoon basil.

*This dish can also be made in one baking dish.

— Jane Wallace, High Country Hospice Volunteer



IMAGE OF BOOK BY BERT VANDERVEEN



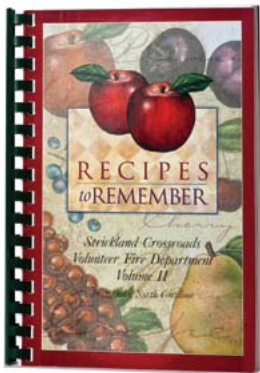
Pickled Eggs

- 2 dozen eggs, hard-boiled
- 1 cup beets, sliced thin and boiled until tender; reserve beet juice
- 1 pint white vinegar
- 1½ heaping teaspoons salt
- 10 heaping tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon red food coloring

Boil and peel eggs.* Fill measuring cup with sliced beets, then add beet juice to fill cup. Pour beets and juice into small glass bowl, and add vinegar, salt, sugar, and red food coloring. Stir to combine, and pour over the peeled eggs in a glass jar with a lid. Keep refrigerated until ready to eat (beet juice stains plastic containers). Prepare this recipe at least 4 days before eating, but a week or two is even better.

*To help eggs peel easily, add about 2 tablespoons salt to the water when cooking them. When they are cooked, pour off the hot water, tap each egg to break the shell, then fill pan with cool water. Remove eggs from the water as you peel them.

— Louise Evans (submitted by her daughter, Sandy Herndon)



Recipes to Remember

When the Strickland Crossroads Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary gets together for its monthly meetings, somebody usually brings baked sugar pecans, a traditional favorite in the community near Four Oaks.

“We end up with refreshments because we have a lot of good cooks,” says Sherry Johnson, who was president of the auxiliary when the group produced *Recipes to Remember* to raise funds for the department in 2001. Another popular recipe in the book is a summer favorite — fried okra. The cookbook is one of several fund-raisers that have helped the department buy firefighting equipment, including a truck.

The fire department celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, and the Ladies Auxiliary has been supporting the organization since 1982.

The cookbook is out of print and no longer available for purchase.

Baked Sugar Pecans

- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 egg white
- 2 teaspoons cold water
- 1 quart pecans

Preheat oven to 250° (no higher). Mix salt, sugar, and cinnamon together in a small bowl. Set aside. Beat egg white and water until stiff; pour in pecans, and mix well. Pour sugar mixture over pecans, and mix well so that mixture sticks to pecans. Pour pecans onto flat baking sheet in a single layer. Bake for 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes. (If pecans are small, only bake for 45 minutes.)

— Brenda Batten



IMAGE OF BOOK BY BERT VANDERVEEN

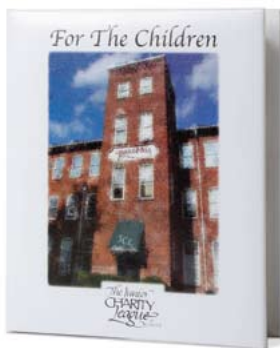


Fried Okra

- Fresh okra
- 1 egg, beaten
- Cornmeal
- Salt and pepper to taste

Wash and dry okra. Cut diagonally into ½- to 1-inch pieces. Dip in beaten egg. Roll in mixture of cornmeal, salt, and pepper. In frying pan, heat vegetable oil to almost boiling. Brown, turning okra constantly to avoid burning. Drain on paper towels before serving.

— Nannie Bradford



For the Children

This past school year, 1,640 Cabarrus County schoolchildren walked out of the Junior Charity League of Concord's Clothing Room with new jeans, shirts, uniforms, shoes, socks, coats, and gloves. Starting this month, probably that many more will turn to the charity for help getting dressed for school.

One of the ways the league pays for its biggest project is with proceeds from its cookbook, *For the Children*.

Founded in 1930 to feed schoolchildren whose families were hard hit by the Depression, the Junior Charity League has produced seven cookbooks since 1941. The most recent edition was published in 2010.

To order a copy, contact the Junior Charity League office at (704) 652-0669 or office@jclofconcord.com.

Shredded French Dip Sandwiches

- 1 (3-pound) beef chuck roast, boneless
- 1 (10³/₄-ounce) can condensed French onion soup
- 1 (10³/₄-ounce) can condensed beef consommé
- 1 (10³/₄-ounce) can condensed beef broth
- 1 teaspoon beef bouillon granules
- 8-10 French or Italian rolls
- Swiss cheese, grated, to taste
- Green peppers, sliced, to taste
- Onion, chopped, to taste

To Crock-Pot, add chuck roast, French onion soup, beef consommé, beef broth, and beef bouillon. Cook on low for 6 to 8 hours. Shred meat with fork, and put on rolls. Add cheese, green peppers, and onions to taste. Use juices from Crock-Pot to dip sandwiches.

— Kim Cranford



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Fried Green Tomatoes

- 4 large green tomatoes, sliced 1/4- to 1/2-inch thick
- 1 1/2 cups buttermilk
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup self-rising cornmeal
- 3 cups vegetable oil
- Salt to taste

Place tomato slices in shallow dish. Pour buttermilk over tomatoes. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Combine flour and cornmeal in shallow dish or pie plate. Dredge tomato slices in flour/cornmeal mixture. Fry tomatoes, in batches, in hot oil in a large (preferably cast-iron) skillet over medium heat for 3 minutes on each side or until golden. Drain on paper towels. Salt to taste.

— Melbia McCain