

Two's company but with 3 you're assured a salad

paring up Kathe Ross

With this edition of Shopping Cart, Kathe and Bill Ross begin their column Paring Up, sharing with readers of the Observer & Eccentric their experiences in the gastro-nomic delight department. Kathe, 29, is an East Detroit resident who graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in dental hygiene. Bill, 31, is from Beaver Falls, Pa. He, too, graduated from U-M, and completed his master's degree work in business administration at the University of Pittsburgh. The couple, who have been boning up on things edible for the past seven years, are residents of Canton.

We welcome your comments or suggestions. Please send them along to the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

I CH. The kitchen detail. How many of you women love to enter that gourmet kitchen of yours, stocked with all the nifty handy-dandy gadgets on the market to make cooking a breeze and the copper pots hanging from the beamed ceiling, to start creating a fabulous feast for your hard-working man and loving children?

Dream on. Somehow I visualize only a few heads nodding vigorously in reply. More likely the response is a groan — "Ick! Kitchen detail!"

More and more families are sharing the kitchen detail. They are cooperating when everyone arrives home from a grueling day in the outside world, and dividing jobs among themselves, from the mental such as peeling the spud to the creative task of combining fresh garden vegetables for a tossed salad.

Well, my husband Bill and I have discovered that the daily chore of preparing meals is much more fun if we share the duties whenever it's possible. Besides Bill is a great cook, probably due to having it during those football-playing college years at Michigan and living with his buddies at the University of Pittsburgh whose schedule were completely different from his own (oh, how I've heard of the masterpieces that he can create with a pound of hamburger, spices, and little else besides a box of hamburger helper).

He's come a long way from those good ol' days and does himself proud in the kitchen. At times it's his expertise that whips up a great pot of chili for those post-football parties or even his scrumptious lasagna for my parents' dinner party or my friend's bridal shower. I often boast of his abilities as a chef (and at times, he does too). I always thought I was fortunate to have gotten more than I bargained for when I married him. But my friends tell me I was downright LUCKY and few men like Bill exist who are willing to

pitch in around the house and help in the kitchen to boot.

So when a friend of a friend called to ask if she knew of any couple who puttered around the kitchen together, our names popped up. A few months later, after a few letters and phone interviews, we were thrilled to find ourselves featured in May's issue of "Redbook" in an article titled "Couples who share the cooking."

I guess we added dimension to the article since we were the only couple featured with a newborn son (Brent celebrated his first birthday last month) to alter our lifestyle. After seven years together as a twosome, there were more than a few changes to be made. For example, the 50-50 arrangement of preparing dinner has dwindled as I spend more and more time in the kitchen alone (disregarding my son being underfoot). Bill, now a financial analyst with Ford Parts and Service, used to be a salesman and usually arrived home before I had escaped from the office. In those glorious days of yore, dinner was bubbling away on the stove and the aromas filled my nostrils as I walked in the door. Now if I'm organized and Brent cooperates by entertaining himself (which doesn't happen often) dinner may be started when Bill arrives home.

We will adapt, however. Sharing and building on our family customs are important to us. We would like to pass them on to our son. As often as we can, therefore, we try to recall my German-English and Bill's Italian background that gave us our heritage and made our childhood loving and special. I guess one way we do that is by using some of the family recipes acquired from our parents and grandparents. Probably one of our favorite meat casseroles is my grandmother's veal-mushroom dish. This is fairly easy to fix beforehand (during naptimes I get so much accomplished). The browning of the meat and preparing the

casserole can be finished and placed in the oven with scrubbed potatoes and I have approximately one hour to tidy the house and finish a few loose ends before Bill comes home.

Two other casseroles (they're accredited to my mother) which allow me the same freedom also follow. One, chocked full of nutrients, is a sausage-and-bean medley with a tomato sauce. It has all the ingredients for a balanced meal in the one casserole dish and is great served on a cool evening with some warmed hard-crusted rolls. The second is basically an oven-baked dish of browned chicken thighs with a wine-vinegar sauce. Enough sauce remains after baking to serve on baked or mashed potatoes, whichever is preferred.

GRANDMA'S VEAL-MUSHROOM CASSEROLE

1 large egg
2 1/2 cup milk
1 1/2 cup saltine crackers
1/2 tsp. pepper
1 1/2 lbs. veal stew meat
1/2 cup vegetable oil or shortening
1 can (10 1/2 oz.) of cream of mushroom soup

In a small bowl beat egg and 1/2 cup milk together. With rolling pin crush the saltine crackers until fine. Add to them the pepper. Then dip the meat in the egg-milk mixture and coat them with crumbs. In a large skillet, brown the meat in the vegetable oil and then remove the pieces to a 2-quart casserole dish. Repeat with the remaining meat. Mix the remaining 1/2 cup of milk with the undiluted soup and pour this mixture over the meat. Cover and bake in a 350-degree oven one hour. Uncover and bake another 15 minutes, until lightly browned on the surface. Serves 5 people.

MOM'S LIMA BEAN CASSEROLE

1 lb. link sausage
1 large onion
3 stalks celery
1 green pepper
1 can of tomato soup (10 1/2 oz.)
1 can of tomato paste (8 oz.)
Dash of Worcestershire sauce
1 can of baby lima beans
1 can of buttered beans

In large skillet, cook and brown the sausage according to the package directions. While sausage is browning, peel and chop onion, core and chop celery, may be sliced for variance, and chop pepper. Set aside. Remove links and place in a 9-by-13-inch casserole dish. Add chopped vegetables to reserve fat. Simmer until the onion becomes transparent about 5 minutes. Drain the canned beans and add to skillet. Then stir in the sauce and soup, adding the worcestershire sauce, too. This skillet mixture should then be added to the sausage in the casserole. Bake in a 350-degree oven until heated through, about 45 minutes.

BARBECUED CHICKEN THIGHS

8-12 chicken thighs
Salt and pepper
3 tbsp. margarine
h of paprika
1/2 cup of reserved fat
1/2 cup wine vinegar
1/2 cup water
1 tsp. dry mustard
2 tsp. brown sugar
2 tsp. worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. hot pepper sauce

Salt and pepper meat to taste. In frying skillet, melt margarine and brown chicken on both sides. Remove chicken from skillet and place in casserole dish. Sprinkle poultry with paprika. Remove all but 2 tablespoons of fat from the skillet. Add the vinegar, water, dry mustard, brown sugar, worcestershire sauce, and sauce. Heat and stir well. Pour over chicken and bake uncovered for 45 minutes in a 325-degree oven. Baste several times. Serves 4 or 5 people.

Rise and shine

It's September. It's the morning after. The alarm goes off and the sun you haven't seen for what seems like months has again skipped town for the shores off Monterey.

It's a day when pancakes and sausage or brunch with Bach would only aggravate an already grating situation.

What's for breakfast? Try the following.
1/2 cup orange or other fruit juice
(freshly squeezed preferred but optional)
1/2 tonic water
1 raw egg
1 tsp. honey

Mix in blender until frothy. Drink down. Go back to bed.

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