

MONDAY, MAY 10, 1993

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CHEF LARRY JANES

Momma's cooking impossible to beat

Honest to gosh, I've been planning to write this column for the past year. As luck would have it, it's surfacing the day after Mother's Day.

I pride myself for my punctuality, so even if this comes off like a belated Mother's Day story, rest assured that the facts are true and in my opinion apply 365 days a year.

A funny thing happens when you write a column and get your picture in the paper 52 weeks a year. One of the perks of this job is that I frequently get stopped by readers at the grocery store, the deli or at a restaurant who say "hi" and comment on my columns.

I also get regular and Voice Mail, not to mention hundreds of "here, try my favorite recipe for..." postcards and letters. And if there's one question or comment that comes to mind, ya'll ask about my momma. Understandably so, since I probably mention her more than any other source.

Well folks, momma's doing fine. I mentioned to her that I would be writing this about her and asked if I could mention her name and offer a little background.

She darn near choked on a jelly filled Dunkin' Donut when I asked. So I won't get into anything personal other than explain to you the influence she's had on me, and offer the information she's shared.

The truth

Let it be known that I don't actually call her "momma." As long as I can remember, it's always been "ma" and she's called me "Lee." Momma called Grandma Lory "ma" and I can remember Grandma Lory calling Mimmy Lofleur "ma."

Momma is the James Gang matriarchal cook. Nobody cooks better than momma and no one has ever tried.

Not to say that Aunt Phyllis' potato salad isn't the best I've ever tasted or that my older sister Rosie's cherry cobbler gives me goose bumps, but when it comes to cooking, momma beats 'em both hands down.

Momma's tools

What amazes me is that she can do this with the same set of pots and pans she received as a wedding gift 55 years ago. I bring her Cuisinarts, Trident cutlery, exotic herbs, breadmakers, Calphalon cookware and the latest gadgets.

She smiles, mumbles a thanks, tries them and then they end up covered with dollops on the steps leading to the upstairs. I'm a good cook, but I need my tools. She's a better cook and relies on what she has.

I read cookbooks the way she reads the Michigan Catholic newspaper. The kids talked her into a self-cleaning oven about five years ago. Last week I stopped by to visit and found her on her hands and knees in the kitchen cleaning the oven by hand. Dad was in the basement scrubbing the oven racks in the laundry tub.

When asked her why she doesn't just "flip the switch" she replied that "you gotta get down and wipe it out anyway, so what's the difference?"

Cooking secrets

When it comes to cooking, the lady has no peers. I spend 12 hours cooking down a Bordelaise sauce and offer her a taste and she says it tastes like her beef gravy with mashed up carrots and onions in it.

Momma's idea of a fancy restaurant is the Friday fish fry at the local Don Polski hall. She loves McDonald's's Quarter Pounders. Wendy's chili and Sander's Hot Fudge Cream Puffs, yet she can bake a pan of pork chops so tender that they fall off the bone and beg to be eaten with lots of bread to soak up the luscious juices.

Her biscuits could bring Colonel Sander's to his knees, not to say anything about her infamous German Chocolate Cake that she now makes only for my birthday.

What's her secret, you ask? I asked her and her pat response was "It's not what you have, it's what you do with what you got."

I'll pass along her recipe for biscuits that I "borrowed" from the old recipe box with a worn out picture of the Milkmaid Bridge on it but it won't taste like her's. Momma would never use a fork to cut in the fat — she'd use her fingers.

She would never cut them with a biscuit cutter — she'd use her favorite glass dipped in flour. She'd never use a \$20 air cushioned baking pan like mine, but instead the one she won at Cousin Janice's wedding shower 25 years ago and, lastly, she'd never bake them in an oven that was cleaned by tossing a switch.

She knitted me a potholder a few years back and for some odd reason, it's the only one that feels good. I wonder why. I love you, ma.

See Larry Janes' family-tested recipes inside. To leave a message for Chef Larry, dial 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then mailbox number 1885.

■ May is National High Blood Pressure Month. Cut back on salt, and processed foods to lower your risk of developing high blood pressure.

By ANNE LEHMANN
SPECIAL WRITER



For everything there is a season including high blood pressure. May is National High Blood Pressure Month, a time to think about

the silent killer which afflicts 61 million Americans annually, almost half of whom do not even know they have it.

What is particularly insidious about this problem is that there are no overt symptoms, and when left undetected and untreated, high blood pressure can be life threatening.

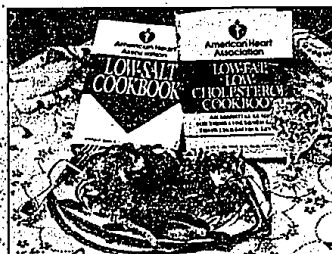
According to the American Heart Association, which has an office in Lathrup Village, "high blood pressure in adults is a consistently elevated blood pressure of 140 mm Hg (millimeters of mercury) systolic and/or 90 mm Hg diastolic or higher."

Factors which increase the risk of a person developing high blood pressure include heredity, race (blacks are more likely to develop the problem than whites), sex (males are at a higher risk than women), age, obesity, heavy alcohol consumption, use of oral contraceptives and a sedentary lifestyle.

According to the American Heart Association, those with high blood pressure, or hypertension, are at greater for developing heart attacks, congestive heart failure, stroke, atherosclerosis, blood clots and kidney disease.

Although this sounds ominous, the fact is that high blood pressure can be controlled with medical supervision

See 2B, SHAKE



Shake salt habit FOR HEALTHIER DIET



SHARON LEMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Nutritious lunch: Debra Finkelstein, a registered dietitian, keeps her blood pressure at a healthy level with a low sodium diet. Chicken with mustard and herbs, from the "American Heart Association, Low-Fat, Low Cholesterol Cookbook," (top) is rich in flavor and nutrition.

TEST YOUR SODIUM I.Q.

What contains more sodium, A. One-half cup 99 percent fat-free cottage cheese or B. One ounce potato chips? Take our mini quiz, the answers may surprise you.

1. A. 1/2 cup 99 percent fat-free cottage cheese
B. 1 ounce potato chips
2. A. Tuna sub
B. Baked potato with broccoli and cheese
3. A. Green salad with 2 tablespoons Thousand Island dressing
B. Macaroni and cheese
4. A. All-Bran cereal
B. Corn Pops
5. A. 1 ounce regular cream cheese
B. 1 ounce Light 'n Lively singles
6. A. 1 cup (canned) chicken noodle soup
B. Big Mac
7. A. 12 ounces cola
B. 6 ounces V-8 Juice

ANSWERS

1. (A), 2. (A), 3. (B), 4. (A), 5. (B), 6. (A), 7. (B)
 • One of the things to remember is that salt tastes saltier than foods cooked or processed with salt. Potato chips taste saltier, but contain less sodium than cottage cheese.
 • Low sodium doesn't mean healthy. People on a low sodium diet usually have to lose weight as well as the fat and calorie content become important considerations as well.
 • Although potato chips are lower in sodium than cottage cheese, the nutritional density — high in protein, low in calories — makes cottage cheese a better choice.

Working mom's pasta dish easy, fast

WINNER DINNER



BETSY BRETHIEN

Recently I read an article that said American women are taking great pride in the accomplishments of Hillary Rodham Clinton. Smart, competent and career-oriented, Clinton, like so many of us, is a wife and mother who juggles many different responsibilities and roles.

Statistics which show our society has changed, especially for women, are quite revealing. In 1973, 45 percent of married women worked outside their homes; in 1991, 75 percent of mothers with children between the ages of 6 and 13 were working outside their homes.

With more and more women bring-

ing home the bacon, and then having to cook it, recipes that are easy, imaginative and nutritious best fit the needs of the career-minded women of the 1990s.

Although she's not in the public spotlight, this week's Winner Dinner Winner, Kathy Gallizi of Farmington Hills, works every bit as hard as the First Lady at keeping the many different facets of her life balanced and running smoothly.

Married to John and the mother of Michael, Gallizi works as a pharmacist, at Russell's Pharmacy in the Fisher Building in Detroit.

She became a certified catechist three years ago, and teaches catechism once a week to first graders at St. Colette's in Livonia. She loves to cook and credits her grandmothers,

See WORKING, 2B

Quick dinner:

Kathy Gallizi and her son Michael, work together to make Pasta with Vegetables, Garlic and Oil, a delicious, easy entree that's ready in minutes.



SHARON LEMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC

Winner Dinner Recipes



PASTA WITH VEGETABLES, GARLIC AND OIL

- 1 pound spaghetti
- 3/4 cup olive oil
- 2 or more cloves garlic, peeled, smashed
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup broccoli florets, (can substitute frozen)
- 1 cup carrot slices, (can substitute frozen)
- 1 cup cauliflower, (can substitute frozen)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Red pepper flakes to taste (optional)

Microwave vegetables until tender. Drain and set aside. Bring a large pot of salted water to a rapid boil. Prepare spaghetti according to package directions and drain.

Heat olive oil and garlic in a small saucepan for 1 to 2 minutes or until garlic begins to color. Be careful not to burn.

Pour olive oil and garlic on spaghetti, add salt and pepper. Toss in vegetables and cheese, making sure all are coated with sauce. Transfer to warmed plate and serve. Serves 4 to 6 people.

CAESAR SALAD

- 1 head romaine lettuce, washed and torn into pieces
 - 2 to 3 garlic cloves minced and smashed
 - 1 teaspoon anchovy paste
 - Juice of 1/2 lemon
 - 1/4 teaspoon Dijon style mustard
 - Dash Worcestershire sauce
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt
 - black pepper to taste
 - 1 can (15-ounces) hearts of palm, sliced
 - 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese
 - 1/4 cup olive oil
 - 1/2 cup red wine vinegar
 - 1 cup croutons
- Mince and mash garlic. Add anchovy paste in a bowl along with lemon, salt, pepper, Worcestershire sauce, Dijon mustard, olive oil and vinegar.
- Mix well. Add 1/4 of the cheese to the dressing. Save the rest for the romaine.
- Add dressing to salad along with hearts of palm and croutons adding the rest of the cheese. Toss and serve.
- Serves 4 to 6.
- Serve this pasta entree with a loaf of Italian bread. For dessert, Kathy Gallizi suggests Gelato — Italian ice cream or ice.