

This week we learned about the passing of our friend and former columnist, Darlene Dixon. We wanted to honor her and what she provided to us and our readers by revisiting her recipes. Kitchen Delights was a staple in The Wright County Journal-Press for over 30 years.

Like you, most of my “go to” recipes came from Darlene’s column, and I would scan through the paper each week to see which one would be our new family favorite!

Inside the cookbook “Sharing the Best” (dated Sept. 2008), she has an inscription that I felt was perfectly written for looking back at her time with us at The Wright County Journal-Press: “The times I cherish most are the ones that bring special joy. The last twenty years have been golden years. I have this fantastic job of writing a recipe column, called ‘Kitchen Delights’ for the Wright County Journal-Press, in Buffalo, Minnesota. It’s filled a divine purpose in my life, with significance for me and for the path God has gifted me with. Sharing recipes has brought me such a joy and I have met so many friends who look forward to reading my recipes each week.”

This week - we are featuring some recipes from this cookbook, and plan on sharing some of her columns through the years, with you in the weeks and months ahead.

Egg pancakes

(Darlene's Moms recipe)
Makes: 12-16

6 eggs
2 C. milk or buttermilk
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking powder
1 C. flour

Beat eggs; stir in milk, salt, baking powder and flour. Pour batter into hot skillet, using a little butter in pan first. Depends on size of pan, as to how many pancakes you make each time. Flip as they brown. Serve with your favorite syrup or butter spread on pancake, with sugar sprinkled on top.

Darlene’s Bread Pudding

Serves: 12

3 C. cinnamon rolls, cubed
3/4 C. raisins
4 C. milk, heated, but don’t boil
2/3 C. sugar
9 eggs
Sugar and cinnamon
1/2 tsp. salt
2 tsp. vanilla
1-1/2 tsp. butter

Combine cubed cinnamon rolls and raisins in a greased 3 qt. casserole.

Heat milk. Mix sugar, eggs, salt and vanilla in blender; mix into hot milk. Pour over cubed rolls. Dab pieces of butter on top; sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon. Set casserole in an 8” pan with 1/2 to 2” of water in pan. Bake at 350°F until set in center, about 1-1/2 hours. Test with knife inserted in center.

Darlene’s Chicken Noodle Soup

3 T. chicken bouillon granules
6-8 C. Water
2 bay leaves
1 tsp. basil
1/4 tsp. thyme
1 med. onion, diced
2 ribs celery, diced
1 lg. carrot, diced fine
1/2 tsp. pepper
1/2 tsp. yellow food coloring
Pinch of garlic or garlic powder
1 tsp. savory
Salt to taste
2 C. cooked chicken
1 C. egg noodles

Combine soup ingredients (less 2 C. chicken and noodles) together in a large cooking pot and boil for 45 min. Add cooked chicken and noodles and cook for 10 min. Add Spatzle Dumplings. (see below)

Spatzle Dumplings

Serves: 8

1 tsp. melted butter
1 egg
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. baking powder
1 C. flour
1/4 C. milk

Mix together ingredients and drop by teaspoonfuls into hot soup; cook for 5 min. Turn dumplings. Cook another 5 minutes.

Macaroni Goulash

Darlene labels as "The Best" and her family's favorite
Serves: 6

1 to 1-1/2 lbs. lean hamburger
1/2 C. diced onion
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1 (7 oz.) box macaroni
3/4 tsp. chili powder
1/2 tsp. oregano
1/2 tsp. basil
1/2 tsp. cumin
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1 to 2 tsp. sugar
1 pt. homemade canned tomatoes OR 1 (16 oz.) can spaghetti sauce
1 (8 oz.) can tomato sauce
1/4 to 1/2 C. water
Salt and pepper to taste

In skillet, brown hamburger, onion, salt and pepper. Drain. Meanwhile, cook pasta according to package directions. Rinse and drain. Pour cooked pasta back in saucepan or skillet; add hamburger mixture and rest of ingredients. Add salt, pepper and water, if needed. Simmer over low heat until hot.

Easy Lasagna (using uncooked noodles)

Serves: 6
Recipe from Darlene's daughter, Melodie

1-1/2 lbs. lean ground beef
1/2 C. diced onion
1 (15 1/2 oz.) can of spaghetti sauce
1 can tomato sauce
2 eggs, beaten
1 carton ricotta cheese
1 tsp. oregano
1 tsp. Italian seasoning
1 tsp. sugar
Salt and pepper to taste
1-1/2 C. shredded mozzarella cheese
1/2 C. Parmesan cheese
12 lasagna noodles
3/4-1 C. hot water

Place hamburger and onion in large skillet; season lightly with salt and pepper. Brown and drain. Add spaghetti sauce, tomato sauce, beaten eggs, cottage cheese, oregano and Italian seasoning. Season lightly. Heat together over low heat. Place 4 lasagna noodles in a 9 x13 pan. Then add a layer of sauce and then a sprinkle of cheese. Repeat layers. Top with noodles. Pour boiling water over top (enough to cover). Cover with foil. Set in refrigerator overnight. When ready to bake, take foil off and cover with rest of cheese. Cover with foil again. Bake at 350 °F for 1 hour. Uncover and bake another 15 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before cutting.

Strawberry Mousse Salad

Serves: 6-8

Recipe from Darlene's daughter, Mary

1 (3 oz.) pkg. instant vanilla pudding
1 (3 oz.) pkg. tapioca pudding
1 (3 oz.) pkg. strawberry gelatin
2 C. boiling water
1 (10 oz.) pkg. frozen strawberries, thawed

In large bowl, combine puddings and gelatin into boiling water. Stir until dissolved, (use the strawberry juice for part of the water.) Freeze for 1 hour. Stir in strawberries; stir often as it's freezing. Keep refrigerated or frozen until ready to serve.

For orange-peach: use 1 pkg. of orange gelatin and frozen or canned peaches. Pineapple can also be added.

Fudge Ribbon Cake

Recipe from Darlene's daughter, Michele

Cake

1/2 C. vegetable oil
1/3 C. sugar
3 eggs
1-1/4 C. water
1 tsp. vanilla
1 (18 oz.) pkg. chocolate cake mix

Filling

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, room temp
2 T. soft butter
1 T. cornstarch
1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla
1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk

Mock Whipped Cream Frosting

4 T. flour
1 C. milk
1/2 C. butter
1/2 C. shortening
1-1/4 C. white sugar
1 tsp. vanilla

Cake: combine all ingredients in large mixing bowl; beat 5 min. Pour into greased 12-cup sized bundt pan. Set aside. Heat oven to 350°F. Prepare filling.

Filling: cream the cream cheese, butter and cornstarch until smooth and creamy. Beat in egg, vanilla and sweetened condensed milk. Spoon over the batter (be careful not to touch sides of pan). Bake at 350 for 60 minutes. Filling will go to the bottom.

Frosting: cook flour and milk in microwave; whisk smooth. Cool. Whip butter, shortening, sugar and vanilla in mixer. Beat in cooled mixture. Frost Cake.

Monster Cookies (cookies w/out flour)

Makes: 6 doz.

MY personal favorite recipe from Darlene

1 C. butter
2 C. sugar
2 1/4 C. brown sugar
2-2/3 C. creamy peanut butter
5 eggs
1-12/ tsp. salt

1-1/2 T. baking soda
2 tsp. vanilla extract
8-1/2 to 9 C. quick rolled oats
2 (12 oz.) pkgs milk chocolate chips
1 (7 oz.) Hershey® bar (with or without almonds) chopped fine
1 (12 oz.) pkg. M&M® candies
2 C. chopped almonds or pecans

Cream butter, sugar and brown sugar. Beat in peanut butter, eggs, salt, soda and vanilla. Gradually stir in enough rolled oats. Fold in chips, Hershey® bar, candies and nuts. Drop by heaping tablespoonfuls onto cookie sheets. Bake at 350°F for 10 to 12 minutes. For chew cookies, don't overbake.

Quote of the Week:

“May you have just enough clouds in your life to give you beautiful sunsets. Your recipe friend.”

~ Darlene Dixon

Written inside the cover of my copy of “Sharing the Best” cookbook