



COLUMN

Going bananas over baking

The smell of six bananas ripening and over ripening by the minute was beginning to permeate the kitchen.

"Why don't you make Banana-Nut Bread?" Bob asked.

"Because, unlike your mother, I don't bake. My mother didn't bake and her mother before her didn't bake. I come from a long line of non-bakers. Now, why don't you go out and play golf?" I snapped back.

I knew my answer was cloaked in half-truths.

Of course my mother and grandmother baked. Grandma Providenza baked pies, as in pizza, and my mother baked layered specialties, as in lasagna.

Before that, I'm sure my maternal ancestors baked — it was the dark ages and they probably had to bake things like real pies, cakes and cookies in order to survive.

The only time I was forced to bake desserts was in my college foods classes.

It was bake, or be baked with a failing grade, so I baked.

In this day and age, however, I choose to leave the preparation of such items to experts like Sara Lee and Mrs. Smith.

There's no way on God's green earth that I'd dirty my kitchen with splattered flour, spilled sugar and a counter full of bowls, measuring utensils, spatulas and who-knows-what-else just to bake a cake.

As Bob headed out the door to an all-day golf tournament, I went to Mom's recipe file that I inherited away from my brother John.

There were some cookie recipes in there, but they were my aunts' holiday cookies.

On rare occasions, Mom and Grandma sometimes made those from scratch.

In the file too, written in my mother's own hand, was a recipe for Banana Nut Bread.

I didn't recall her ever making Banana Nut Bread.

Just looking at the spattered and worn the 3 x 5 card should have triggered my sensory memory of baking bananas and nuts.

I do remember her actually baking her favorite, however, an Applesauce Cake.

But the Banana Nut Bread recipe had to be some kind of mistake.

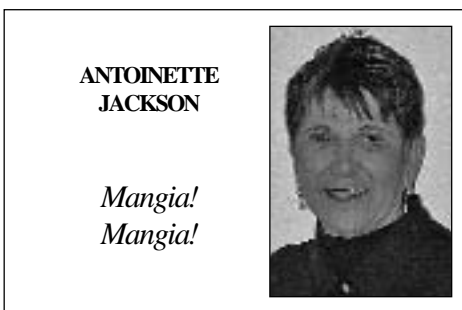
Yet she used the word "Crisco" and Mom always called shortening Crisco, so it had to be her recipe.

I closed the box and busied myself with another project until it was time to start dinner.

Just as I was about to sauté the garlic, the phone rang.

"Hi Babe. We just finished 18 holes and some of the players aren't even in. I'll probably be another couple of hours," said my husband.

I thanked Bob for letting me know, told him to have fun and wondered what I would do with all the free time on my



ANTOINETTE JACKSON

Mangia!
Mangia!



Antoinette and her niece Seanna

hands. Just then, those darn bananas called out to me.

I get a stomachache from raw bananas so I certainly wasn't going to eat one.

Bob was so sweet to call and tell me not to worry about dinner.

I decided to pull out Mom's recipe, bite the bullet and, you guessed it, and bake Banana-Nut Bread.

Like my mother had grumbled, all the while making fresh tomato paste, I grumbled too while pulling foreign ingredients like baking soda, baking powder, and "Crisco" out of my cupboard.

Fortunately I had them on hand, but putting them all together created chaos on my kitchen counters.

All this trouble when, for a couple of bucks, I could have bought the stuff.

As I cleaned up the mess, the unmistakable sweet aroma of something special began to fill the kitchen.

And, unlike merely the scent from my favorite pumpkin pie spice candle, soon there would be something good to eat. Maybe this wasn't such a bad thing, I told myself.

My complaining was rewarded when Bob walked into the house, sniffed, and said, "Something smells good in here. What is it?"

"Banana Nut Bread."

"You don't bake. What happened?"

"I went crazy from the smell of spoiling bananas," I answered.

Needless to say, Bob was so happy to get freshly baked goods that more of those tasty little loaves will probably be in our future.

Oh, I was curious if yet another generation non-baking women had developed in my family.

That evening I e-mailed my niece Seanna to ask her if she baked for her husband and two boys.

Her answer, "No, I'm not a baker. I try, but I'm limited to Glen's grandma's banana pudding recipe, boxed cake mixes or cookies that come in a tube.

"I don't remember Grandma baking either. Did she?"

"No Grandma didn't bake," I replied. "I think it's a genetic thing."

Mom's Banana Nut Bread

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 / 2 "Crisco" shortening
- 2 eggs beaten
- 3 ripe bananas, mashed
- 1 tablespoon milk plus 1 teaspoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 / 2 tablespoon salt
- 2 cups flour
- 1 / 2 cup walnuts

Cream Crisco and sugar. Add the eggs. Add mashed bananas and mix. Add milk and combined dry ingredients. Fold in nuts. Pour into a in a greased and floured 9 x 5 x 3 pan.

Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Loaf is done when a wooden toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean.

Glenn's Grandmother Long's Banana Pudding

- 3/4 cup sugar divided
- 1/3 cup flour
- Dash of salt
- 3 eggs separated
- 2 cups milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 45 vanilla wafers
- 5 ripe bananas slices (about 3/4 c), divided

Mix 1/2 cup sugar, flour and salt in top of double broiler.

Blend in 3 egg yolks and milk.

Cook, uncovered, over boiling water, stirring constantly for 10 to 12 minutes or until thickened.

Remove from heat and stir in vanilla. Set aside 10 wafers for garnish.

Spread a small amount of custard on the bottom of 1/2 quart casserole; cover with layer of wafers and layer with sliced bananas.

Pour about 1/3 of the custard over bananas.

Continue to layer wafers, bananas and custard to make a total of three layers of each ending with custard.

Beat egg whites until soft peaks form.

Gradually add the remaining 1/4 cup sugar, beating until stiff but not dry.

Spoon on top of custard, spreading to cover entire surface and sealing well to edges.

Bake at 350 for 15 to 20 minutes or until browned. Cool slightly or refrigerate several hours until chilled. Top with reserved wafers.

Makes 8 servings

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Basics on proper flag etiquette

July always feels a little extra patriotic, doesn't it?

Today's column is dedicated to all those folks who were children during WWII.

Like our own parents who remember watching the boys march off, many of you have carried the torch of patriotism, passing it down to children and grandchildren.

My son's grandmother saved a pamphlet printed in 1969, titled "Our Flag" all these years just for him.

That means she had it 28 years before William ever came on the scene.

He and I paraphrased its points just for you, in hopes that it will help you in your efforts to pass along the love of country to those children and grandchildren in your life.

When the flag is hung over a street, in the event of a parade for example, it hangs vertically with the blue field of stars, also called the union, towards the north, if the street runs east-west.

If the street runs north-south, then the union hangs towards the east.

When our US flag is displayed with another flag on a wall from crossed staffs, our flag is supposed to be on the right, that is, the flag's own right, with its staff over the other flag's staff.

When flown at half mast, it should be first raised to the top of the pole and then lowered to half mast. At the end of the day, it must be raised to the top again before it is taken down. Only the President has the authority to order that flags be flown at half mast.

The US flag should be the highest flag on the same pole with other state or city flags. In a line of poles, the US flag should be the first one raised and the last to come down and it should be the first in line, that is, the one on the farthest right.

When the flag is suspended from a rope over a sidewalk, say from a house to a pole, the flag's union should be toward the street and away from the building.

When the flag is hung on a staff from a building or home at an angle, (like we all do now in 2007), the union goes on top.

When it is used to cover a casket, the union is placed at the head and over the left shoulder of the casket. It is not lowered into the grave or allowed to touch the ground.

When it is not on a



CATHY KAFIRVE

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pole, the flag should be flat. Whether horizontal or vertical on the wall, the union is uppermost on the flag's right or on the left as you look at it. In the window, the union is still on the flag's right or on the left as you look at it from the street. Red, white and blue bunting can be draped as decoration, but not the flag.

When carried in a parade, the US flag should be the first on the flag's right in a line of flags or it should be ahead of the others.

In a group, the US flag should be the highest among all flags of states, localities, or organizations.

International law requires that all flags of nations are flown from similar poles at the same height and the flags should be similar in size, forbidding the display of one flag higher than another during times of peace.

There is something about our red, white, and blue flag that brings us together. Perhaps, it is the vision that our forefathers had to establish a country based on self-government and respect for others.

Or, perhaps it is the cost that the flag represents. As my son put it, "we stand tall and straight together to salute our heroic fallen soldiers with our hats off and our hands over our hearts."

To all those who remember WWII, we hope you have a relaxed summer, enjoying all the benefits and blessings of living in a free country, especially the blessing of visits from grandchildren.

If, by chance, you are reading the Bullard Banner News over the internet for a little whiff of home because you are stationed in Iraq or Afghanistan, please know how thankful we are for your willingness to service our country.

May the Lord protect you and bring you safely home to us.

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