

# Valentine's Day for the others you love

Have you noticed that Christmas has instantaneously evaporated from the stores, replaced by heart-shaped boxes of chocolate?

Yes, the merchants are hoping to evoke loving emotions that translate into bucks spent on candy and flowers.

I don't begrudge them their enterprise; I'm a big fan of capitalism.

After all, at least the flowers are local.

Anyway, as tempting as the chocolate is, it is really the Girl Scout cookies that torpedo my New Year's diet every year.

For some reason, the heart-shaped bearers of temptation don't remind me of my true love.

They remind me of my mom.

I'm not sure what that tells you about my childhood, except that women who love chocolate trait is hereditary in our family.

Seeing red and pink hearts in all the stores fills me with love and appreciation for the two women who have been irreplaceable in raising my children: the two grandmothers of my children.

I asked my oldest child what advice she would give grandparents.

"Just ask them," she responded with authority.

"Huh?" Grandkids can always say no, but ask them to do anything with you, no matter how silly you may think it sounds, she explained.

Then she listed all the things she had experienced because her grandparents invited her along in their life.

- Cultural events, like symphonies, ballets, plays, and operas

- The US political process, by way of Smith County Party Conventions, and League of Women Voters meetings, not to mention meeting candidates in person

- Sporting events, including little league games and football on TV

- Travel, like the trip to Disney World or Europe

- Skills, like vegetable gardening, woodworking, knitting, quilting, praying, bible studying

- Community Service,

CATHY KRAFVE

Checklist Charlie



like fundraising, performing for civic functions, and participating in event planning

The list was extensive.

Honestly, as parents, we were often just too busy to do the extra stuff. Many of these experiences would not have happened without the grandparents.

My daughter said it never occurred to her that one of these activities would be boring or tedious, because her grandparents had spoiled her rotten as long as she could remember.

Any invitation with them had an instant appeal.

That's pretty sweet stuff.

We always reap what we sow.

In recent years, my grown daughters have returned the favor by inviting their grandparents on adventures.

My favorite was when they were at TJC and invited their grandmothers to travel with Dr. Crawford's group to New York.

It turned into an all-girl foursome with both grandmothers and my two daughters sharing a room and taking in bunch of Broadway shows.

All the love that these grandparents have lavishly poured out on their grandkids is returning to them in the way they are loved and honored by their grandchildren.

So, while for some reason I can't seem to remember Grandparents' Day, Valentine's Day always makes me think of two very special women, my children's grandmothers.

I am planning to do a series on grandparenting which is kind of ironic since I don't have grandchildren yet.

I need help, so if you have some experience in this area I hope to hear from you.

■ **Cathy Primer Kraefve, aka Checklist Charlie, lives with her family in the beautiful woods of East Texas. She welcomes all comments, suggestions, and lists at CAEKraefve2@aol.com.**

# What's in a name: An explanation

Jack and Bob, Ann and Toni, Johnny, and Cousin John, Prudy and Nancy.

If you've been reading my column for a while, you are either quite savvy as to these names or totally confused.

It's about time I explained.

First, I am Antoinette Therese Mary Chiarenza Jackson. Quite a mouthful. That's why ever since sixth grade people have chosen to shorten my name. Mrs. Simmons, simply wrote "Anto" on the blackboard. My cousin Marietta and friend Pat still call me that.

When I got to high school, a classmate had a sister who was also named Antoinette. Mary Cozza said to me, "We call my sister 'Toni' so that's what I'm going to call you. It caught on and all my friends from high school, college and my early career called me "Toni."

In 1974, when I met this blond-hair, blue-eyed hunk at the swimming pool at the City Apartments in Orange California, he introduced himself as "Jack Jackson". "Hi, I'm Toni," I responded.

When Robert E. Jackson and Antoinette T. Chiarenza wed, our families still called us "Bobby" or "Bob" and "Antoinette" and "Ann". It didn't take long before "Jack" was calling me "Ann" and I was calling him "Bob."

Except, now stay with me here, when we started working together in our spa manufacturing business.

In the workplace, he was still known as "Jack," and signs his name "R.E." Jackson, but I became "Ann"

To insure that you aren't totally confused, let me summarize. Friends and business associates call him Jack. Depending upon if you met me before or after I became Mrs. Jackson, I am "Toni" before and "Ann" after.

All of these appellations are one and the same as Robert E. and Antoinette T. Jackson. So, when I write about these two people, what I name them depends upon where they are placed.

Whew, I even confused myself there for a while.

Now, presuming I haven't lost you, I want to go onto the hierarchy of names in the Italian family.

You may want to get out a highlighter for this one.

The custom is to name the first son after the father's father.

Example, my father Matteo is the oldest son and is named after his grandfather.

My brother is the firstborn son and is named after Daddy's father, Giovanni, or John.

Old timers say it is bad luck to name the first son after one's self.

Old timers are supersti-

ANTOINETTE JACKSON

Mangia! Mangia!



The family portrait.

rious, but when I've seen kids turn out bad I been known to attribute it to being named improperly.

When the next boy child is born, that son is to be named after the maternal grandfather.

My parents had only one boy, and conveniently, my mother's father was also named Giovanni, so my brother John was "two birds with one stone" Mom used to say.

When the first daughter is born, she is named after the paternal grandmother.

That is why I am named Antoinette after Grandmother Antionetta Chiarenza. Incidentally, Mom often said if Johnny had been born first, there would have been no little Antoinette.)

I believe after you have named the first daughter, you may properly name the second daughter after the Blessed Virgin Mary. Ergo, my mother is named Maria.

All of this neat pecking order appeals to the compulsive organizer in me and is usually not a problem.

Until, one gets in the same room with first cousins, second cousins, third cousins, etc.

At my father's funeral, for example.

While I knew everyone but my husband (what's his name?)

Right, Bob because we are with family), Bob had never met some of my Aunt Frances Pugliese's children and grandchildren.

There was her oldest boy Salvatore or Sammy, named after his paternal grandfather; Sammy's oldest son, named after his paternal grandfather, Nicky; and Sammy's second son, named after his father, whom we all called "Little" Sammy.

Next was Aunt Francis' son

John, named after, that's right, his maternal grandfather.

He also had a son, named John whom we called "Little Johnny" to distinguish him from his father. He has a son named, you're catching on I can tell, John.

Let me give you one more example before I have you ripping your hair out and tearing up the newspaper.

Aunt Frances had a third son who was named Nicky, after his father. Nicky was the black sheep of the family, so I will not go into whom his children are or what their names are in order to protect their privacy.

In addition to the cousins I have named above, I will quickly name my other first cousins: Uncle Giovanni, Anglicized to Gene, had two boys: Genie and Richard.

Genie never married and has no children that he has told us about.

Richard had named his daughter Gena after his dad.

Uncle Lorenzo begat son John who moved away from the family at age 9 when his father died.

And saving the best for last, I write a lot about Uncle Frank's daughter, cousin Prudy.

She is named after our Grandmother Providenza, or Prudence.

That's a heavy load to carry, so some time ago her husband Jim, whom I presume is named properly since he is half Italian and half German, started calling her Nancy.

I retrained my brain to call her Nancy and did so for over 35 years until she said, "Antoinette no one calls me 'Prudy' any more except the family.

"Would you please call me that instead of Nancy?"

Well sure, but my brain is a

lot more set in its ways than it was in 1970.

I try but find myself going back and forth between Prudy and Nancy.

Now for all you readers who are still with me, this sounds very simple to first generation Italians and even the Greeks.

If you saw "My Big Fat Greek Wedding," everyone howling in the aisles when she was introducing her husband to her family, was either Greek or Italian or married to a Greek or Italian.

Family names were simple, I thought, until the tables got turned when we went to Montreal this August. There were first, second and third cousins on my father's side whom I had never met.

Of course, I knew my cousin Matteo, who was named in honor of my father, and his brother Giovanni, named after, that's right, our grandfather.

And I knew their mother, my Zia Rosa, Daddy's brother Filippo's widow, but I didn't know her other children: Antionetta (wow, another one), Maria and Emily. Josepina stayed at home to marry off her son Fillipoin in Italy.

As Roberto, remember not all of them spoke English, and I were being introduced to my cousins, and their husbands, and their children, and their grandchildren, I suddenly knew how my husband has felt o'er these last 33 years.

There were so many Rosas, Rosannas, and Filippas that I needed a chart to keep up with who belonged to which branch of the family tree.

So to you my dear readers, if I have confused you with all the different names over the years, I apologize.

I resolve that on some rainy day when I need a major project to keep from getting depressed over there being no sunlight, I will put together a family tree to keep us all from being confused... can anyone out there suggest a good software program?

## Cugina Maria Orlando's Veal Cutlet

2 pounds veal cutlets sliced very thin

1 egg beaten  
1 / 2 teaspoon salt  
1 / 4 teaspoon pepper

1 cup seasoned bread-crumbs, add more if needed  
1 / 4 cup grated Parmesan

Extra Virgin Olive Oil for frying

Dip cutlets in beaten egg, then into breadcrumbs, and place on platter.

In batches, fry in hot oil until golden brown.

Allowing three per person, recipe should feed four.

■ **Antoinette, Antionetta Ann, Toni can be reached at Antojxn@aol.com**

## City, County Information

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