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A Blast from the Past

By Susie Iventosch



From left: Russell, June and Steve Thaw Photo courtesy Steve Thaw

Delightful old recipes resurface from time to time and with a wee bit of updating, they make very nice “new” additions to our recipe files. My mom recently pulled her mom’s chicken and wild rice casserole out of the file to take to her book club luncheon in Graeagle. The recipe was safely tucked into Do Bee’s (my grandmother) file on two different recipe cards—one from Maxine Demeter and the other from Jean St. Hill, both good friends from her Orinda bridge club days. Just like today, they enjoyed their potlucks and were always on the lookout for the perfect new recipe to share.

My mom and I decided to update the original, adding Kalamata olives, sundried tomatoes and fresh basil, but who knows what our daughters and granddaughters will add when they dust off these recipes and add the latest ingredients to hit market shelves in 2050!

Longtime Orinda-Moraga resident Steve Thaw (a member of Campolindo’s first graduating class in 1966), brought to our attention an award-winning recipe his mom, June, submitted to The Squire* back in June of 1968. Her “Patio Steak Broil” won her a \$5 gift certificate—good at any store in the Moraga Center!

The winning recipe was for scored flank steak marinated in a delicious-sounding concoction made of melted butter, tomato paste, garlic, pepper, red wine vinegar and bay leaf. This seems like it might be perfectly current today, though Thaw, now a vegan, would prefer to use it with a veggie burger or eggplant!

“Both my mom and her mom, Lula Taylor, were really good cooks,” Thaw remembers. “Anything my mom fixed for my dad’s company potlucks were the first to go. Her potato salad was amazing.”

Her potato salad is still one of his all-time favorites.

“She always cooked the potatoes just right ... not too mushy and not too underdone, either,” he said.

After serving in both fronts of WWII, Steve’s dad, Wallace, worked for many well-known companies from Standard Oil, to Sherwin Williams, Cutter Labs and Kaiser Center for Technology, so June’s delicious cooking enjoyed a wide audience. She also served as president of the Moraga Betas and the Welcome Wagon, where her dishes were always popular.

Diagnosed with polio in 1954, June made all of her wonderful dishes with the use of just

one of her arms. But, this did not cut down on her socializing—or cooking efforts. Her many friends took turns picking her up and off they went to social and philanthropic functions, goodies in hand.

“My mom entered quite a few recipes contests, and I now have her huge box of cookbooks,” Thaw said. “I am an advocate for good food and diet and I really appreciate home cooking. My mom fostered that outlook for me, not only with her excellent cooking, but by taking the time to make Christmas, gingerbread and oatmeal cookies with my twin brother, Russell, and me. Nowadays, I really enjoy cooking and going to vegan potlucks.”

Thaw says he makes his own popular dish—a salad, and, following family tradition, his is also one of the first to disappear at potlucks. The salad contains spinach, almonds, sesame sticks, blueberries, red onion, raw potato, (yes, raw potato!), olives, and “nearly any veggie you like”, all dressed in a mustard-balsamic dressing. Maybe I can get him to send us an official copy, so we can share it with you one of these days!

More on financiers ...

If you enjoyed the “financiers” recipe from our last issue, you may be interested in knowing there is an actual “financiers” pan available at Sur La Table. Lamorinda Weekly reporter Sophie Braccini, who hails from France, said, “I don’t think that the shape of the ‘moule’ changes much of anything, but this distinctive shape makes the little cake more noticeable.”

I’ve also seen them made in fluted round shapes, which are also really cute.

Here is a link to the rectangular financiers pan:

<http://www.surlatable.com/product/PRO-612655/de-Buyer-Elastomoule-Mini-Financier-Grid>
 *Check our archive for more articles about The Squire at www.lamorindaweekly.com.

Chicken & Wild Rice Casserole

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup brown rice, cooked (1 cup before cooking)
- 1 cup wild rice, cooked (1 cup before cooking)
- 1 large yellow onion, coarsely chopped and caramelized in olive oil
- 3/4 cup chopped sundried tomatoes
- 1 cup (pitted and quartered) Kalamata olives
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cooked and cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2 Italian turkey sausages, cooked, casing removed and cut into bite-sized pieces (optional), about 1½ cups bite-sized sausage bits.
- 1½ cups grated Parmesan (or sharp white cheddar, or both!)
- 1 can cream of chicken soup or cream of mushroom soup (can use two cans, but I prefer to use just one)
- 2 teaspoons Pick-a-Pepper Sauce
- 1 tablespoon Soy Sauce
- ¼ fresh basil leaves, cut into fine strips or chiffonade

DIRECTIONS

Cook rice according to directions. Mix all ingredients (reserve ½ cup cheese) and pour into greased 9x13 inch casserole dish. Sprinkle reserved cheese over the top. Bake at 350° until hot and cheese is bubbly.

Note* The original recipes called for diced celery, mushrooms, green pepper and sometimes shrimp, too, but no olives, basil, or sundried tomatoes. I’ve used feta cheese, too. You can definitely integrate your favorite ingredients into this dish!



Photo Susie Iventosch

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net.

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These recipes are available on our web site. Go to: www.lamorindaweekly.com

Many of our readers like Susie’s recipes. Our website now features a link to our recipe page where you can read, print or download all of the recipes we have published. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at 925-377-0977



Copied from The Squire, June 1968

Mrs. Wallace Shaw’s Award-Winning Patio Steak Broil

The Squire is very pleased to announce the winner of our recipe contest ... Mrs. Wallace Thaw, 30 Woodside Drive, Moraga.

It was a very difficult contest to judge, since all entries were delicious. But, the judges finally selected Mrs. Thaw’s Patio-Steak Broil for her unusual twist to the recipe.

Mrs. Thaw wins a \$5 gift certificate good at any store in the Moraga Center. And, many thanks for the other entrants for their very good recipes.

Patio Steak Broil

INGREDIENTS

- About 2 lbs. flank steak, scored
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- ½ to 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 1 cup water
- 1 bay leaf

DIRECTIONS

In a shallow dish, prepare marinade by blending together tomato paste, garlic salt, salt, pepper, vinegar and water. Add bay leaf. Place steak in marinade overnight. Remove steak, also bay leaf. Transfer marinade to small pan and add butter. Place 4 to 5 inches from coals and broil 5 to 7 minutes, occasionally spoon marinade over top. Turn and broil additional 5 to 7 minutes or until desired doneness. Add topping, slice diagonally and serve.

Toppings

Whip ¼ cup butter until fluffy, add 2 cups shredded cheese. Beat until smooth. Or, lightly fold 2 tablespoons chili sauce, 1 tablespoon chopped onion, and 1 teaspoon prepared horseradish into ½ cup sour cream.

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