

Baker shares her best baking bets

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Citizen Staff/Ken Thomas

Edith Bolstad was recently honored when a holiday recipe she created was chosen for publication in a Gooseberry Patch cookbook. She is shown with the new cookbook and a plate of her tasty chocolate cherry bars.

When Edith Bolstad was younger she had a great fondness for chocolate covered cherries.

To recapture that memory, the enthusiastic baker has re-created that treat in a form that everyone can enjoy. Her recipe for "chocolate cherry bars" was recently published in a [Gooseberry Patch cookbook](#) — Christmas Cookie Jar. The company that specializes in old fashioned pursuits offers cooking and decorating books, accessories, kitchen trinkets and cookware, homespun tips and other items through its catalog and online at www.gooseberrypatch.com.

"I love cherries," Edith said. "I had kiddie cocktails whenever I could when I was young, and my mom (Joyce Callies) would always give us a box of chocolate covered cherries and a box of Life Savers for Christmas. I don't know if that's what inspired me, but that was probably part of

it."

Another favorite is chocolate chips, which find their way into most of her recipes.

"I put chocolate chips in everything," she said. "My husband once asked, 'Can't you just make a loaf of plain banana bread?'"

"I just can't help myself."

Her concoctions are often based on whatever is in the cupboard, and that is what led her to adapt the ideas of other cookie bars to give it her own particular spin. She didn't have to think twice about what a great dessert should contain, and soon devised something to bring back some of her fondest childhood memories.

After a little bit of refining, the recipe was ready for publication and off it went.

"Gooseberry Patch gather recipes from people all over the country," Edith said. "If they accept it they send you a free copy of the book that it's published in."

She held up a copy of the end result in a hard cover and easy-to-use spiral binder.

Edith is a fan of what Gooseberry Patch has to offer, and she has many of their previous publications in her cooking library

"They're really nice, and they're easy to use because they lay flat on the counter when you open them to a page," Edith said. "I have a many of them in my cooking library."

Another of Edith's recipes, "Hot, spicy cider for a crowd" was published in Gooseberry's Patch's Fall Family & Friends cookbook in 2006.

The accomplished cook and baker is much younger than one might expect. An "old soul," both she and her husband enjoy collecting antiques and relaxing in their cozy brick home on Beaver Street.

Those interests, paired with love of family and good food, are part of Edith's make-up as a daughter, wife and mother.

"I've always loved to cook," she said. "My mother was a professional cook in a cafe in New Orleans where I was born and when we came to Beaver Dam she worked at Miller's Cozy Corner on Parallel Street. She also managed the Eagle's Club (now Bayside Supper Club).

"My dad (Bill Callies) also liked to cook," she added, indicating that his tradition of making Rice Krispies bars and sprinkled them with colored sugar is another cherished tradition.

Another recipe, from Grandma Bolstad, is a fool proof formula for Christmas cut-outs.

"It's so easy, and it works every time," said Edith. "The only hard part is the frosting."

Sharing seems to be another family specialty, now that Edith's daughters are away at college.

"You can halve a recipe but it's still more than the two of us can eat," she said. "I simply can't not bake, so I'm always giving things away. And at Christmas time I'm always giving CARE packages to friends and family - my cousins, nieces and nephews."

That, according to Edith, is what the holidays are all about.

"Somebody once told me that food is love, and we share a lot of love here in Wisconsin."

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