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**Right:** Nancy Mollrem of Eau Claire has submitted several recipes that appeared in the Gooseberry Patch cookbooks.

**Below:** Among her published recipes were Braided Coffee Bread, left, and Company Breakfast Casserole.

**Staff photos by**  
Andi Stempniak

An Eau Claire woman submitted some favorite recipes to the Gooseberry Patch cookbooks that became the ...

## Publisher's picks

### Made the Cut

- Recipes submitted by Nancy Mollrem appear in these Gooseberry Patch cookbooks:
- Fudge Nut Bars, "Christmas Cookies."
  - Chicken Chestnut Casserole, "Cozy Country Christmas."
  - Fabulous Fruit Salad, "Gooseberry Patch Christmas, Book 4" and "Country Friends Collection: Potlucks."
  - Potato Casserole, "Comfort and Joy."
  - Braided Coffee Bread, "Comfort and Joy."
  - Chicken and Mushroom Bake, "Flavors of Fall."
  - Grilled Banana Boats, "One-Pot Meals."
  - Hot Ham and Cheese Sandwiches, "Recipes for Comfort."
  - Teriyaki Grilled Vegetables, "What's for Dinner?"
  - Company Breakfast Casserole, "Christmas in the Country."
  - Old-Fashioned Shortcake, "Patchwork Potluck."
  - New England Dressing, "In the Kitchen With Family & Friends."

**By Blythe Wachter**  
Leader-Telegram

**F**ans of Gooseberry Patch cookbooks might recognize the name Nancy Mollrem.

After all, recipes submitted by the 58-year-old Eau Claire woman appear in 12 of the community-style cookbooks.

About 40 of Gooseberry Patch's books line shelves in Mollrem's home — an indication of her fondness for the homey publications.

Cookbooks put out by the Delaware, Ohio-based company contain family recipes, helpful cooking tips and little stories from contributors. "I do more reading of cookbooks than cooking with them because they're fun to read," Mollrem said.

Mollrem submitted a recipe for Company Breakfast Casserole that appeared in the recent Gooseberry Patch publication "Christmas in the Country" (\$16.95).

"This recipe is one I know I can count on for holiday breakfast buffets," she said.

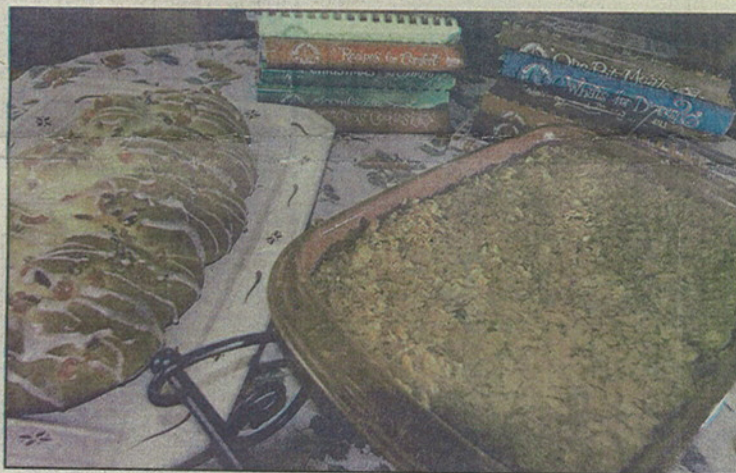
The egg, sausage and crouton dish, one of more than 200 recipes in the book, is a favorite when her five children and five grandchildren come for the holidays. She prepares the casserole the night before, then throws it in the oven the next day for her guests.

"I like making as many side dishes as I can the day before. ... I like to play with the little kids when they come in and not be standing over a hot stove," she said.

A crouton base and crushed cornflake topping add crunch to the casserole. Mollrem's daughter-in-law made three versions for a baby shower: one with sausage, one with ham and one with spinach and asparagus.

The recipe came from "The Randall Foods Cookbook," published by the former grocery store. Lenore Davey of Eau Claire submitted the recipe for that publication.

Mollrem, who has taken baking classes for fun at Chippewa Valley Technical College, also earned



■ For more information about Gooseberry Patch cookbooks, see [www.gooseberrypatch.com](http://www.gooseberrypatch.com).

recognition from the store; she said she got picked as a winner in a couple of Randall's cooking contests.

She shared her mother's recipe for a braided coffee bread in another Gooseberry Patch book. Her mother made it for every holiday when she was growing up, and now she usually does the same.

None of the recipes Mollrem submits to Gooseberry Patch are her original creations. Instead, she said she shares delicious ideas that came from her mother, friends, neighbors and other cookbooks and which she often adapts.

Her husband, Nathan, and daughter Denise, who lives at home, enjoy the fruits of her labors. And when she cooks, the family's miniature dachshund, Tootsie, "hangs around for crumbs to fall on the floor," she said.

Mollrem's husband described her as "the best cook this side of Lowes Creek."

Mollrem submitted her first recipe to Gooseberry Patch about 10 years ago. She doesn't receive money for submitting recipes, but she gets a free cookbook, she said.

Jill Burton, a public relations spokeswoman for the company,

said Mollrem has been "a wonderful contributor over the years."

"Based on the themes of our cookbooks and categories of the chapters, our book editors look for recipes that look the most delicious," Burton said.

The company's cookbooks appeal to people partly because they use common ingredients — "nothing you have to go hunting for," Mollrem said. But the recipes aren't the only draw.

"These books are so cute," Mollrem said, adding that they also tell how to make crafts and decorate.

"They're fun. They're cozy and homey cookbooks, and the recipes are all people's favorites and they're easy to make. They're just fun to read."

Many contributors share memories with recipes. Mollrem told about being stationed in England for the Air Force and making friends with another military family whose potato casserole recipe became one of her holiday fixtures.

Gooseberry Patch cookbooks have been available at local hospital gift shops and businesses, Mollrem said. The books also can be ordered through a catalog or online.

Seeing favorite recipes get published is "kind of exciting," she said.

### Recipes

These recipes submitted by Nancy Mollrem appeared in Gooseberry Patch cookbooks:

#### Company Breakfast Casserole

- 6-oz. package seasoned croutons
- 1 lb. ground pork sausage, browned and drained
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese (can add extra cheese)
- 8 eggs
- 3 cups milk
- ½ tsp. dry mustard
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 cups cornflake cereal, crushed
- ½ cup butter, melted



Place the croutons in the bottom of a lightly greased 13-by-9-inch baking pan. Top with the sausage. Sprinkle with the cheese. Beat the eggs, milk, mustard and salt together; pour over the cheese. Cover and refrigerate pan overnight.

Before baking, top casserole with the cornflake crumbs and drizzle with the butter. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes; cool for 10 minutes. Serves 6 to 8.

Recipe appeared in "Christmas in the Country" ([www.gooseberrypatch.com](http://www.gooseberrypatch.com)).

#### Braided Coffee Bread

- Bread:**
- 1½ packages active dry yeast (rapid rise)
  - ¼ cup warm water
  - 3 T. sugar
  - ½ cup milk, scalded and cooled
  - 3 cups flour, divided
  - 3 eggs, beaten
  - ½ tsp. salt
  - ½ cup butter, softened
  - Chopped pecans and maraschino cherries

- Powered sugar icing:**
- 1 T. water, or more as needed
  - 1 cup powdered sugar
  - ½ tsp. vanilla

For the bread, dissolve the yeast in the water; add the sugar. Stir in the milk and ½ cup flour. Blend in a mixer until smooth. Add the eggs, salt and butter and blend again. Stir in the rest of the flour and knead until smooth. Place in a bowl, cover and chill in the refrigerator overnight.

Divide dough into three parts; form each into a roll about 18 inches long. Braid rolls together on a greased cookie sheet and cover with greased plastic wrap. Let rise until almost double. Bake at 375 degrees about 20 minutes or until done. Cool.

For the icing, mix together the 1 tablespoon water, powdered sugar and vanilla. Add more water if needed to reach the right consistency, ½ teaspoon at a time.

Drizzle the bread with the icing and sprinkle with the pecans and cherries. Makes 1 loaf.

Recipe appeared in "Comfort and Joy" ([www.gooseberrypatch.com](http://www.gooseberrypatch.com)).

#### Potato Casserole

- 4 to 6 potatoes, peeled, boiled and drained
- 1½ cups cottage cheese
- ½ cup sour cream
- 2 T. onion, chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 T. butter
- Sliced almonds (garnish to taste)

Mash the potatoes in a large bowl. Mix with the cottage cheese, sour cream, onion, salt and pepper. Spread in a 1½-quart baking pan. Dot with the butter. Sprinkle with the nuts. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Serves 4 to 6.

Recipe appeared in "Comfort and Joy" ([www.gooseberrypatch.com](http://www.gooseberrypatch.com)).

#### Fabulous Fruit Salad

- 8-oz. jar maraschino cherries
- 2 pints frozen strawberries, thawed
- 6-oz. can frozen orange juice, thawed
- 12-oz. can lemon-lime soda
- 16-oz. can pineapple tidbits with juice
- 2 bananas, sliced
- 6-oz. can frozen lemonade, thawed

Mix ingredients together. Pour into a 13-by-9-inch cake pan and freeze. Cut into squares and place on lettuce leaves. Serves 12 to 14.

Recipe appeared in "Gooseberry Patch Christmas, Book 4" and "Country Friends Collection: Potlucks" ([www.gooseberrypatch.com](http://www.gooseberrypatch.com)).