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Living

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Busy mother tweaks recipes to satisfy tastes of five boys

By Diana Parker
The Journal Gazette

Fort Wayne resident Kathy Grashoff is an amusing family woman who has, as she says, "a zest for life."

Together with her husband, Don, a co-owner of Wisman's Appliance, Grashoff has raised five sons.

In detailing what each one is doing, she grabs pictures of the refrigerator at her north-side home and points to them individually, saying, "Andrew was in the Air Force. He's done his four years and is at IU in Bloomington. My oldest son, Chris, is at Harvard — MBA in business. He's just been interviewed and may be in Fortune magazine.

"Joe and Pat are service technicians at Wisman's Appliance. John is going to Wabash College in the fall. He's into Gooseberry Patch cookbooks, too."

Grashoff mentions the cookbooks because she has been in the popular series numerous times and has 30 cookbooks to prove it.

Gooseberry Patch cookbooks are based on a particular theme such as Southern cooking, picnic ideas and holiday dining and feature recipes from cooks throughout the country.

Asked how many recipes she thinks she's submitted over the years, Grashoff casually replies, "Count the books and count two recipes per books, so there's more than 30 recipes. Plus, they have those pamphlets and there's recipes in those."

Grashoff says she's never had a recipe rejected, although once she did receive a phone call from the company questioning a blondie — a butterscotch-flavored bar cookie — because the recipe didn't require eggs.

As for her favorite cookbook, Grashoff says, "I have one from St. Vincent (Catholic Church). The kids loved lunches at St. Vincent. They love their spaghetti."

But she quickly adds, "I do cook out of Gooseberry Patch a ton!"

Actually, Grashoff will get recipes anywhere she can.

"Read, read, read," she says. "And you know, if I taste something I love, you know I'll get the recipe. You know you never know where a recipe will pop up. I've found recipes everywhere. I've found them on backs of cans at the doctor's office.

"My mother-in-law, Mary Ann Bussard, gave me a kitchen journal filled with handwritten recipes. It has recipes that my husband grew up with — like the Apple Crisp. And I have a ton of recipes from my sister-in-law, Laurie Grashoff. She loves to try new recipes."

Emphasizing her point, Grashoff goes to a tin-punch pantry her husband made and opens the door. "This is a sin, but this used to have food; now it's filled with cookbooks," she says. Walking across the kitchen, she says, "Look at this!"

Opening a kitchen drawer, Grashoff picks up a fistful of recipes and exclaims: "This is a sin! It really is. I take these and will go upstairs and go through these and say, 'Gosh, I haven't had this for a while.'"

With a twinkle in her eyes, she jokingly adds, "You know, I could keep sending you recipes until the end of the year. Just keep changing my name!"

Grashoff has been cleaning homes and offices on a part-time basis for more than 15 years, mostly because she wanted to be available for her children.

"We do things together. We canoe, water ski, snow ski, whatever season it is. With five boys, you need to be involved with sports and watching sports. We do a lot with our family. It's important to do that," she says.

Feeding a family of men healthy meals has not always been a breeze, but Grashoff manages.

"I try to do that. They don't like it if I tweak and use Splenda. We do a lot of chicken, fish and shrimp. I try to buy low-fat. I don't like fat-free," she says, adding, "I try to offer fresh vegetables and fruit with a little dip."

She found one sure-fire way to get them to eat green beans.

Relating the instructions, Grashoff says, "I have one easy recipe. It feeds four to six people. I take six cans of green beans and drain them and stick them in a Dutch oven. Add little pieces of cooked bacon that are about 1- to 1 1/2 -inches long. I use the already cooked bacon — I like shortcuts. Sprinkle the bacon over the green beans. Heat those until they're hot. Turn on low and add four to five deluxe-type cheese slices (on the beans) and put a lid on it. My kids will fight over it. I mean, it's got meat and cheese!"

Noting that leftovers were uncommon, Grashoff says, "If we had a leftover, that meant they didn't like it. But that happened rarely. You couldn't do prissy recipes. It was meat and potatoes.

"I always had someone in football at (Bishop) Dwenger; I had to make a plate for them and put it away or there was nothing left."

When she was asked what her favorite food is, Grashoff thinks for a moment and replies: "Oh gosh, I love everything. I love dips. I love Mexican dip and that stuff. I really love everything. I should weigh 300 pounds!"

Grashoff Apple Crisp

1 cup flour

1 cup sugar

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 egg, beaten

4 to 6 tart apples, unpeeled

1/3 cup butter, melted

Cinnamon, as desired

Sift flour, sugar and baking powder together. Add egg and mix. Sprinkle over sliced and cored apples in an ungreased 13-by-9-inch baking dish. Pour melted butter on mixture. Sprinkle cinnamon on top. Bake at 400 degrees for 40 minutes. Can be served with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Blueberry Puffs

1 cup buttermilk biscuit baking mix

1 cup multigrain pancake mix

2 eggs, beaten

2/3 cup milk

1/3 cup sugar

2 tablespoons butter, melted

1 cup blueberries

Combine the two mixes, set aside. Mix eggs, milk, sugar and butter together; add to dry mixes. Fold in blueberries; fill greased muffin cups 3/4 full. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes. Remove to a wire rack to cool. Makes 1 dozen.

Blueberry-Sour Cream Cake

1 1/2 cups flour

1 cup sugar, divided

1/2 cup butter, softened

1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1 egg

2 teaspoons vanilla extract, divided

1 quart blueberries

2 cups sour cream

2 egg yolks

Combine flour, 1/2 cup sugar, butter, baking powder, egg and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract; mix thoroughly. Spread batter in a greased 9-by-9-inch baking pan; sprinkle with blueberries. Set aside. Blend sour cream, egg yolks, remaining sugar and vanilla together. Pour over blueberries. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Makes 9 servings.

Tidbits

Q. If you could have a meal with one person — past or present — who would it be?

A. "Off the top of my head, Rachael Ray."

"How about Oprah?" John asks.

"Oprah. Sorry, Rachael, you're out. Yes, Oprah. I can see her like a friend. She would make for interesting table conversation. I love how she gives back. I really like when she surprises someone. She remembers where she came from. It doesn't matter who, I think she encourages them to be the best (they) can be. She knows it starts at home. Maybe she'll let me be on her show! I've been trying to get in the audience."

Cook's Corner is a weekly feature. If you know someone to be profiled, write to Cook's Corner, The Journal Gazette, P.O. Box 88, Fort Wayne, IN 46801-0088; fax 461-8648; or email at dparker@jg.net. — "Almost Homemade" Gooseberry Patch Cookbook. — "Come On Over" Gooseberry Patch Cookbook

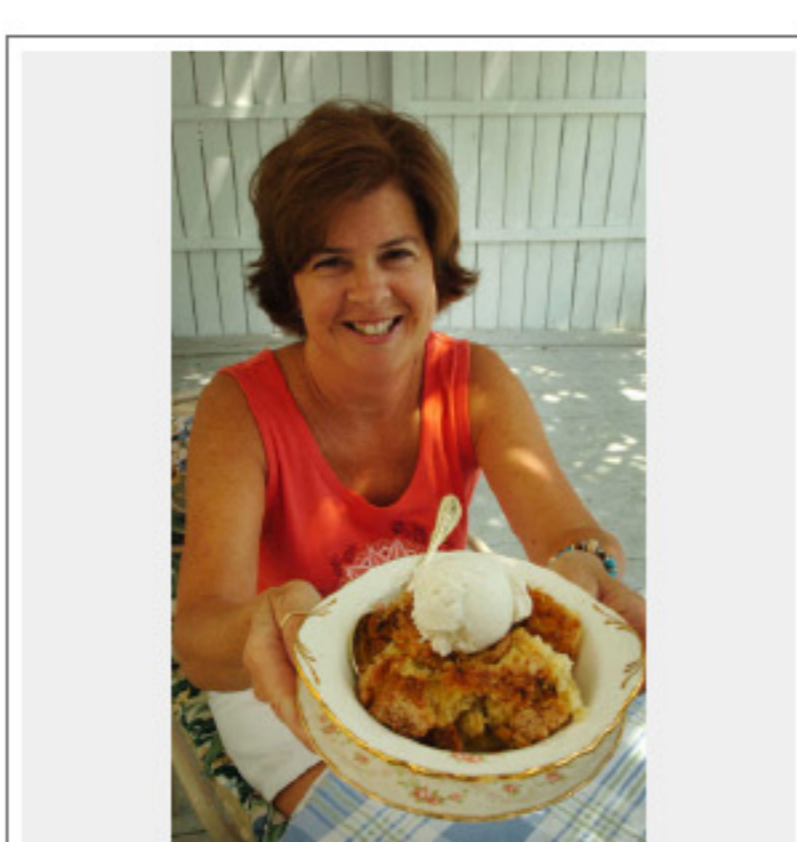


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Kathy Grashoff serves up fresh Apple Crisp, which her husband grew up eating.



Additional recipes - on the web