



Be my guest, be my guest

B&B owner shares love of cooking

**Story and photos
by Vicki Bennington**

• ELSAH •

When it comes to the holidays, Connie Davis, who owns and operates Elsay's Green Tree Inn along with her husband, Gary, always has a few tried and true desserts and other dishes up her sleeve.

"Cooking is my passion," Connie said. "And I believe food is meant to be enjoyed. I love that I can combine that with running the inn — and our guests have time to savor and enjoy the food — and hopefully, create memories."

The fact that many returning guests make special food requests like her hash brown quiche or homemade oatmeal cake when they call to make a reservation is a testament that food memories have indeed been created.

Connie grew up on a small farm near Springfield, Missouri, and learned the true

meaning of "cooking from scratch" at an early age.

"Starting when I was in fifth grade, my mom asked that I cook dinner when I got home from school, while the rest of the family completed other chores on the farm," she said. "We used what we had; what we grew and raised."

That included eggs she helped to gather, fresh fruits and vegetables from the garden that she learned to can or freeze for the winter, and chickens that were raised on the farm that she also helped prepare and freeze for the cold weather months. Luckily, they sent the cows and hogs to the butcher for preparation. Everything counted, and nothing was wasted.

They canned pickles and tomatoes and froze green beans, corn and strawberries.

To further her skills, Connie belonged to the local 4-H and FHA clubs.

"I really liked participating in the 4-H fairs, and I won many blue ribbons, particularly for my canning skills and cookie

baking," she said.

She took cooking classes in high school, and later became a cooking teacher for 4-H.

And she learned a few things from her grandma like homemade noodles that Connie remembers her grandmother making in a large pot for Thanksgiving and Christmas family dinners. Connie herself now owns and utilizes that pot for holiday gatherings.

When she married, she made sure to have a hot breakfast and dinner on the table every day. And she began creating memorable dishes of her own. She has been making what family members have come to refer to as "Connie's Chocolate Poof" for about 29 years.

"I got the recipe from my aunt, and made it for Gary's family Christmas party, and everyone has wanted me to make it every year since then," Connie said. "And I like to make it here at the inn too."

Along with her special desserts and other holiday concoctions at Green Tree, Connie likes to decorate with five Christmas trees,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Flaire FOR WOMEN December 2017 11

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

an extensive assortment of snowmen, and a large Christmas village collection that welcomes guests as they come in the door.

Operating the inn for five years now, there are numerous repeat guests, and she's become known for her cooking skills.

She prepares a full breakfast with a fruit, meat, egg and home-made bread that varies from day to day, and an afternoon "sweet treat" that also greets those incoming guests, as well as serves as a much-anticipated daily delicacy for those already in residence.

So her days are full, first making sure breakfast is hot and ready for those with varying time schedules, cleaning up afterward, then



Carefully layered ingredients produces a dreamy dessert that is also pleasing to the eye.

baking the bread for the next morning, as well as the day's sweet treat. Consequently, she doesn't always feel like making a big dinner, so she and Gary have learned to grab what they can for the evening meal.

But when she has the time, her spaghetti bake, lasagna, sweet potato casserole, and ham and scalloped potatoes are favorites of her husband's and their combined family of three children and one granddaughter, Michaela, whom the couple spends as much time with as possible.

And Connie's daughter, Jessica, knows her way around the kitchen, too, a skill her mother taught her from an early age.

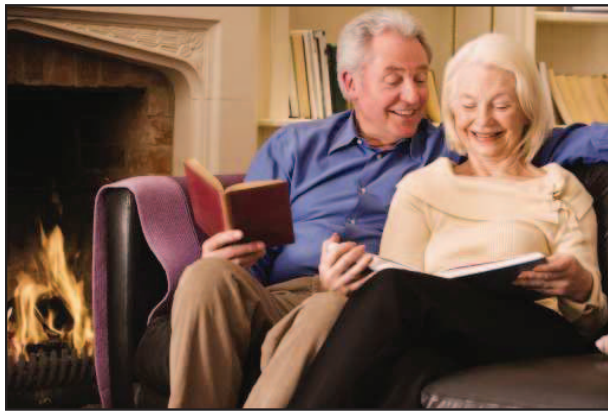
"It makes me very proud to see that she is interested in cooking and does such a great job," Connie said.

Connie's Chocolate Poof

- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup pecans
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 16-ounce tub of Cool Whip
- 2 small packages, chocolate instant pudding
- 3 cups milk

For crust, blend melted butter, flour and pecans and press into 13- by 9-inch pan. Bake at 350 F for 15 minutes or until light brown. Let cool. Cream together the cream cheese, powdered sugar and one cup of Cool Whip, then spoon onto the cooled crust. Mix instant chocolate pudding with three cups of milk. Blend well and spoon on top of cream cheese mixture. Top with remaining Cool Whip.

Come to Villa Rose for Carefree Living!



**All the comforts of home....
and then some!**

Private apartments, restaurant-style dining, weekly housekeeping, social activities and events, free scheduled transportation, 24-hour emergency response, secure access. Add-on daily care services available through BJC Home Care Services.



Villa Rose Senior Living Community

401 S. Moreland Rd • Bethalto
(618) 377-3239 • www.villaroseslc.com



12 December 2017 Flaire FOR WOMEN

What's Kasasa?

It's like

YOUR CASH \$

is on some crazy new

FERTILIZER. \$

How high can your money grow?
Free Kasasa checking lets you earn way above the national average. And there's no minimum balance to earn our highest dividend rates.*

1stmidamerica.org

Ask for free KasasaSM checking

Account approval, conditions, qualifications, limits, timeframes, enrollments, log-ons and other requirements apply. No minimum deposit is required to open the account. Enrollment in electronic services (e.g. online banking, electronic statements, and log-ons may be required to meet some of the account's qualifications. Limit 1 account per social security number / individual taxpayer identification number / household. There are no recurring monthly service charges or fees to open or close this account. Contact a 1st MidAmerica Credit Union service representative for additional information, details, restrictions, processing limitations and enrollment instructions. Federally insured by NCUA. Kasasa and Kasasa Cash are trademarks of Kasasa, Ltd., registered in the U.S.A. Federally Insured by **NCUA**