

SLEMCO

POWER

SEPT/OCT
2013



BAYOU REBORN

Renewed interest in the Teche
is bringing new life to its waters

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Cover photo © Virginia McKain. Courtesy Tour du Teche

TakeNote

REMOTE MONITORING ENSURES RELIABLE POWER

Whenever there is a problem on one of SLEMCO's power lines, our SCADA (Supervisor Control and Data Acquisition) system is the first to know (Lucky Account Number 3054234200).

Recently updated to work even faster, the system has equipment in each substation and at other critical points throughout SLEMCO's system that remotely checks in nearly every 30 seconds with the computers manned by our dispatchers.

This transmitted data is recorded and used to identify and prevent potential problems that might affect your SLEMCO service (Lucky Account Number 4513511500).

Replacing seven-year-old SCADA equipment, the recent \$460,000 upgrade offers greater reliability, faster processing and more user-friendly software. The update also provides greater security, all of which helps us to provide faster and more reliable service to our members. ●



SUGARLAND SUBSTATION WILL IMPROVE CAPACITY

Existing substations in Broussard and Youngville will soon reach their peak electrical capacity due to rapid growth in those areas. But a new substation is currently under construction to meet this load and make sure there is plenty of capacity for future growth.

SLEMCO's new Sugarland substation, named for the sugarcane fields surrounding it, will increase the reliability of SLEMCO's electric system in the area by adding six distribution feeders.

These additional feeders will minimize the number of customers affected by outages and will allow SLEMCO personnel to more efficiently restore power whenever outages occur (Lucky Account Number 3054234200).

The Sugarland substation is scheduled for completion by the end of this year and should be fully operational in the first quarter of 2014. The total budgeted cost for the substation, feeders and associated transmission lines is \$11.3 million. ●



Photos by Mary Laurent

SLEMCO CIRCLES THE WAGONS FOR HURRICANE SEASON

Vermilion Parish may not be the wild west, but during hurricane season the weather can turn wild in a hurry.

That's why SLEMCO continually upgrades, repairs and replaces any equipment that is not up to our rigorous standards, all to withstand the worst that Mother Nature sends our way. By preparing in advance, we are able to keep power outages to a minimum when

disaster strikes (Lucky Account Number 3406067500).

Some 48 transmission poles between our LeBlanc substation in the Erath area and our Esther substation were recently replaced by SLEMCO linemen, who circled the structures with line trucks to get the job done. Wood poles were replaced with new steel poles, ranging from 60 feet to 85 feet high, at a cost of \$310,000. ●



ENERGY SAVING IDEAS

COMPARE THE COSTS OF DRIVING WITH ELECTRICITY

With signs at every gas station advertising cost per gallon, it's easy knowing what you're paying for fuel. But what if you're considering an electric vehicle?

The Energy Department has launched eGallon as a way for consumers to compare the cost of fueling a vehicle with electricity.

The price of an eGallon tells consumers how much it costs to drive an electric vehicle (EV) the same distance as they could go on a gallon of gas in a similar car.

According to the data for August 6, here in Louisiana gasoline averaged \$3.30, with an electric eGallon only \$0.90.

On average, the Department of Energy says fueling an EV costs about three times less. And because the cost of electricity is regional and more stable, EV owners avoid wide swings in gas prices (Lucky Account Number 2059170004).

For further information on eGallon, visit <http://energy.gov/articles/egallon-how-much-cheaper-it-drive-electricity>. ●

NEW LIFE ON THE TECHE

BY CURTIS DARRAH

© Mike Van Etten. Courtesy TECHE Project

Springing from the waters of Bayou Courtableau in Port Barre, Bayou Teche flows 125 miles before joining the lower Atchafalaya at Berwick. For a time, thousands of years ago, it was the main course of the Mississippi. And the first Acadians, migrating deep into South Louisiana, relied on the Bayou Teche as a transportation artery, giving rise to settlements and plantation homes along its banks.

But the Teche, from a Chitimacha word for snake, was at the heart of the area's culture long before the Acadians arrived. According to the legends of Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, their warriors bravely battled an enormous snake that had been their enemy. The battle lasted for many years. As the giant serpent slowly expired, it coiled and writhed in agony, creating the twisting course of Bayou Teche.

Today the Bayou Teche is entering a new era as volunteers and communities work to maintain its health and promote its enjoyment through paddling trails and a world-class race from Port Barre to Berwick.

THE TECHE PROJECT

Thanks to energetic volunteers and community support, the Teach Ecology, Culture and History Education (TECHE) Project, established in 2009, is already making waves in efforts to preserve the history, enhance the ecology and develop the recreational and ecotourism potential of the Teche.

A healthier waterway is key to its mission. One of its programs, Cajuns for the Bayou Teche, has already

removed over 50 tons of debris with the help of volunteers, parish governments, sheriffs and tourist commissions. TECHE volunteers work to protect the bayou, not only monitoring water quality but removing threatening invasive water plants and offering workshops on reducing pollution.

The TECHE Project will hold its second annual Shake Your Trail Feather festival in Breaux Bridge on October 19, to raise funds to maintain official Bayou Teche Paddling Trail trailheads in four parishes, according to Kristen Kordecki, the project's executive director (Lucky Account Number 3439246900).



© Ken Grissom. Courtesy TECHE Project



BAYOU TECHE CLEANUP

© Blake Covillion. Courtesy TECHE Project

TOUR DU TECHE

Tour du Teche is an annual, three-day adventure race for canoes, kayaks and pirogues (the traditional Cajun canoe) over the entire Bayou Teche. This paddling marathon actually covers 135 miles by including small sections of Bayou Courtableau and the Atchafalaya River.

Highlighted as the world's longest adventure non-motorized boat race, competitors come from across the nation and around the world to its starting point in Port Barre on the first Friday in October. This year's race, the fourth, will be held October 4-6.

According to Nicole Patin, the Tour du Teche's executive director, the race was the brainchild of Ken Grissom, editor of the *Teche News* in St. Martinville, who envisioned a race from Arnaudville to St. Martinville. But at the suggestion of Ray Pellerin, the race

was expanded to cover the entire Teche. That first Tour du Teche in 2010 not only introduced Teche country to paddlers and ecotourists, but highlighted the bayou's recreational, aesthetic, cultural and economic value for local residents. As a result, the Tour has become not merely a demanding paddling marathon, but a three-day party in towns along the route, with local families cheering on racers from backyard barbecues along the banks.

This year's events include Le Grande Boucherie in St. Martinville and the Harvest Moon Fest in Franklin on Sat., Oct. 5, and the Lighthouse Festival in Berwick at the race's finish on Sun., Oct. 6.

"After paddling 60 miles in a day, the racers may not want to party, but their families and the people who come with them will have a chance to experience our scenic bayou and communities, our Cajun food and culture," Patin explained.

One hundred boats entered last year. Patin said even more are expected this year. The Tour du Teche may be the organization's namesake event, but shorter races and a paddling camp are held throughout the year.

But the real winner of the Tour du Teche is the Bayou Teche itself. "We're seeing changes on the bayou—more boat traffic throughout the year and not seeing burning trash along the banks," she noted. "It's pretty cool."

BAYOU TECHE EXPERIENCE

Bayou Teche Experience, a new kayak rental/shuttle service/trip outfitter, is benefiting from these changes for the Teche and contributing to the bayou's renewed vitality.

Cory Werk moved from California last year to run the business, which he established with his father, Ing Werk.

A sleek racing kayak rests along the wall in his bayouside office, on historic property adjacent to Breaux Bridge's city park and nearly in the shadow of the downtown bridge crossing the Teche. A few yards from his kayaks and canoes are a monument engraved with the Chitimachas' legend of the bayou and another with a sculptural representation of the Teche as that snake, with town names mapped out along its sinuous body.

"Louisiana was a very familiar place to me while growing up," Cory Werk explained. "My mom's from Baton Rouge and my grandmother's from Breaux Bridge, so I have a lot of family here,

and deep ties to this area. Practically every summer I'd visit my grandparents and my aunts and uncles."

That connection is why his family was probably Los Angeles' only mail subscribers to the *Teche News*. That's where he and his father read about the first Tour du Teche.

"We came out for the first year's race and met the organizers." He and his father were impressed with this renewed spirit of revitalization for the Teche. This gave them the confidence to start their business, the first of its kind for the area. Werk participated in the second-year race and, a few months later in March 2012, he was open for business (Lucky Account Number 1413977500).

"We wanted to open a kayak shop that was available for rentals, shuttle service and tours seven days a week," he said. "There's a direct correlation between what's happened on the Teche and what I do here. The TECHE Project was the first group to sprout up picking up trash out of the bayou. If they hadn't picked up trash, I could not be here, having people paddle the bayou," he said. "And the Tour du Teche is something that I feel gives the Teche continuing national and international recognition."

"We're here all year round so people can enjoy the bayou, use the shuttle service, rent a boat and paddle," he said.

"The best thing about my job is the 100-percent awesome, positive feedback. People come to Cajun country and can't wait to try the food and listen to music and meet the people: I just add another dimension."

Sitting in his office adjacent to the first bridge for vehicles to span the Teche, Werk added, "The bayou is the reason we're here: it's the bayou the Acadians originally traveled up. So

paddling is a way to get back to our roots," he reflected.

"We may not rely on the Bayou Teche the same way we used to, but we can still enjoy it." ●

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

—TECHE Project: www.techeproject.org

—Tour du Teche: www.tourduteche.com

—Bayou Teche Experience: 317 E Bridge St., Breaux Bridge, LA 70517, 337-366-0337, www.bayoutecheexperience.com



© Curtis Derrah



© Virginia McKain. Courtesy Tour du Teche

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Southwest Louisiana Electric Membership Corporation (SLEMCO) has filed with the Federal Government a Compliance Assurance in which it assures the Rural Utilities Service that it will comply fully with all requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, all requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, all requirements of the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and all requirements of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the end that no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in the conduct of its program or the operation of its facilities.

Under this Assurance, and in accordance to Federal Law, this organization is committed not to discriminate against any person on the ground of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex,



marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs), in its policies and practices relating to applications for service or any other policies and practices relating to treatment of beneficiaries and participants including employment, rates, conditions and extension of service, admission or access to or use of any of its facilities, attendance at and participation in any meetings of beneficiaries and participants or the exercise of any rights of such beneficiaries and participants in the conduct of the operations of this organization. The person in this organization responsible for coordinating the non-discrimination compliance efforts of this organization is Mrs. Katherine Domingue.

Any individual, or any specific class of individuals, who feels subjected by this organization to discrimination prohibited by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, by the Age Discrimination Act or by the rules and regulation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture may personally or through a representative, file a complaint of discrimination, by writing the USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-5964 (TDD). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc...) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Such complaint must be filed not later than 180 days after the alleged discrimination, or by such later date to which the Secretary of Agriculture or the Administrator of the Rural Utilities Service extends the time for filing. Identity of complainants will be kept confidential except to the extent necessary to carry out the purposes of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. ●

LUCKY NUMBER WINNERS

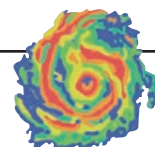
Four of the 10 SLEMCO customers whose account numbers were hidden in the July/August issue of *SLEMCO Power* called in to claim their \$10 prize. They were **Tom Bellow** of Opelousas, **Cynthia Earles** of Crowley, **Randall Villejoin** of Rayne and **Carl Dischler** of Iota.

Six others missed their chance for a \$10 credit. They were **Margaret Fain** of Lafayette, **Alice Wood** of



Opelousas, **Adam Andrew** of Maurice, **Patricia Craig** of Breaux Bridge, **Kathleen Yates** of Youngsville and **Nelson P. Zeno Jr.** of Carencro.

Ten more numbers are hidden in this issue. Check now to see if yours is one of them. If you find your SLEMCO account number contact Mrs. Gayle Babin at 896-2504. If you are a winner, she'll credit \$10 to your account (Lucky Account Number 2110331510). ●



WEB UPDATES DURING WEATHER EMERGENCIES

During severe weather such as hurricanes, you can count on SLEMCO to keep you updated on the status of repairs in your service area.

SLEMCO customers who evacuate will be able to watch the home page of www.slemco.com for a special Emergency News link (Lucky Account Number 1431091000).

Clicking this Emergency News link will take you to the latest information on SLEMCO power restoration. ●



in 14 days. Fredette was hooked, and has competed in the Great Race and other vintage rally events ever since.

“I’ve won races by a half second and lost them by a second,” he said. “This year we won three days but had some bad luck on the other days. Coming out of Crowley, I broke a shackle at the left rear and by the time we got it fixed, we were out of the running.”

“Of course, I get upset when we lose but you can’t win all of ’em,” he shrugged. One thing that keeps Fredette coming back year after year is the opportunity to partner with his son—whenever his work permits.

“Where else does a man like me in his sixties and his son in his forties spend a week or two together, competing the whole time, and still be friends when they walk away (Lucky Account Number 4513951501).

“We make a very good team,” he said with pride. But apparently Kenneth isn’t the only navigator worthy of a seat in the Speedster.

“A couple of years ago my grandson and I went out to Nebraska and raced a rally, ending up second overall.

“He was tickled pink. And he couldn’t wait to get on the phone and tell his dad he was a better navigator,” he chuckled.

COUNTING THE SECONDS

STORY & PHOTOS BY CURTIS DARRAH

Ninety-nine teams in antique cars and trucks set out on June 22 from St. Paul, Minn., to test their mettle over the 2,100 miles of the 2013 Hemming Motor News Great Race. Among the participants—and one of seven past winners of the event—was Carencro’s Richard Fredette.

Normally, his son Kenneth would be in the navigator seat of the 1932 Ford Boattailed Speedster. But Fredette, a retired businessman, explains his son has one bad habit—“he works for a living”—so this year Bill Loubiere filled in for this eight-day rally to Mobile, Ala.

Instead of top speed, rally racing tests the team’s skill and endurance in following precise course instructions with split-second precision for a cross-country trip on public roads. Every second counts. At surprise checkpoints throughout the event, teams lose a point for every second they stray from the official time-distance schedule.

For enthusiasts like Fredette, driving an antique car adds to the fun. Although a few Great Race participants may not know a balance shaft from a hood bonnet, Fredette enjoys wrenching on his collection of classic vehicles in a well-equipped garage just a short stroll from his house.

Prior to moving to Louisiana in 1982, Fredette raced motorcycle enduros, another time-and-distance event. Vintage rallying proved a natural transition.

“I first heard of the Great Race in ’83,” he recalled. “In 1992, they had a stop at the

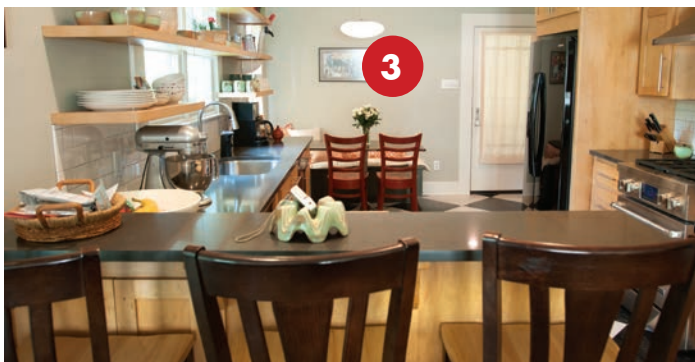
Northgate Mall in Lafayette.” After talking with the participants, he realized vintage rallies were a way to stoke his competitive fires, free from the aches and pains of racing motorcycles.

Fredette’s brother was his first navigator: “He and I teamed up to do our first one in ’99, from Austin to Sacramento, Calif. Then my son came on with me in 2003 and we won our class.” Father and son earned matching Rolex watches in addition to the overall win. Their margin of victory: three meager seconds, after driving 4,500 miles



Competitors use speedometer and clock to follow a route chart with split-second precision.





1

OPEN IT UP

Upper cabinets can make a small room feel cramped. Consider open shelving, which offers storage with a lighter look. These floating shelves run across the window without blocking the view; for a traditional look, use bracketed shelves on each side of the window.

2

SIMPLE COLOR PALETTE

Colors from a single color family visually expand a space. This home uses shades of grey: sage grey walls, dark grey quartz countertop and a white subway tile backsplash. The diagonal black and white checkerboard floor has strong visual impact. Deep red dining chairs offer a highlight of bright color.

3

CREATIVE SEATING

If your dining room table is a space gobbler and rarely used, opt instead for a snack bar with comfortable stools. A banquette adds compact dining plus hidden storage—just lift the lids. If you take off your shoes when you enter the house, build in a box near the entry to keep them neat and tidy.

4

GET ORGANIZED!

Never thought you'd have room for a pantry? Shallow shelves work well, keeping everything within easy reach. Consider drawers instead of cabinets with doors: everything will be at your fingertips. Add spring-loaded or permanent dividers to organize small items. Pots and lids are easily organized in drawers too.

IF YOUR HOUSE IS SMALL, WITH A LITTLE INGENUITY IT CAN FEEL SPACIOUS



5
LET THE SUNSHINE IN
Doubling the size of these windows really opened up the space. But more than just adding light, the windows frame a beautiful garden view you'd enjoy every time you cook. An added plus: replacing drafty old windows with energy-efficient versions will reduce electric bills for the life of your home.

6
VARY CABINET DEPTHS
Details make a difference. This shallow lower cabinet with curved feet in the passageway to the living room leaves comfortable walking space. The upper cabinet features glass-front doors, crown molding and a lower overall height, details making an elegant transition from kitchen to living room.

7
CAN THE CLUTTER
A small house often feels even tinier when it's overflowing with large furniture and too many nick-nacks. Simple is best in making a small space a peaceful retreat. By creating usable storage for everyday items you can keep surfaces uncluttered, then choose a few cherished items, to display in your now tidy home.

8
BE DARING
For wide open spaces, tear down a wall as these Lafayette homeowners did. Not only will your home seem larger, but family and guests will always feel included (Lucky Account Number 4502842301).

Text: Anne Darrah
Photos: P.C. Piazza

These recipes come from *For the Love of Italian Cooking, A National Collection of Traditional Recipes from the Order Sons of Italy in America*. To order, send \$24.95, plus \$5 shipping and handling, to *Order Sons of Italy in America, 219 E St. NE, Washington, DC 20002* or call 800-552-OSIA.

Spinach Balls

- 2 cups chopped spinach, cooked and drained
- 2 tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp. melted butter
- 1 1/2 cups bread crumbs
- 2 beaten eggs, divided
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/3 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup olive oil

Combine spinach, cheese, butter, bread crumbs and 1 of the beaten eggs; roll into balls. Combine remaining egg with water, pepper and salt; beat together. Dip spinach balls into additional bread crumbs, then into egg mixture and once again into bread crumbs. Fry spinach balls in olive oil until lightly browned.

Country Style Pasta

- 1/2 lb. each hot and sweet Italian sausage
- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 lb. large hollow pasta, such as rigatoni
- 1 1/2 large onions, sliced
- 2 red peppers, cleaned and cored
- 2 green peppers, cleaned and cored
- 2–3 cloves garlic
- 1 generous pinch of red pepper flakes
- 2 cups marinara sauce
- 1 lb. fresh mozzarella, cubed

Cook sausages in a 350° oven for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool. In a saucepan, sprinkle chicken with olive oil, a little water, salt and pepper; cook 6 minutes. Remove from pan and let cool. Chicken may be a little pink, but it will cook further later on. Slice sausages and chicken diagonally into thin strips about 2 inches long.

Cook pasta in salted water until almost al dente. Meanwhile, in a large pan, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. When oil begins to smoke, add onions and peppers. Cook 2 minutes, add garlic, pepper flakes, 2 pinches salt and 1 pinch pepper. Stir mixture and cook 1 minute. Stir in chicken, sausage and marinara sauce; heat thoroughly. Drain pasta and toss to mix with sauce. Place in an oven-safe dish. Sprinkle cheese cubes over top and broil until cheese melts.

Bracciolini di Vitello

VEAL ROLLETTES

- 1 (1.75 oz.) can anchovy fillets
- 1/4 cup milk
- 8 veal cutlets, 1/8-inch thick
- 8 slices prosciutto or ham
- 8 slices provolone cheese
- 4 tbsp. margarine or butter
- 1 tbsp. chopped parsley
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice

Soak anchovies in milk 15 minutes to remove excess salt; rinse and dry on a paper towel. Place 1 slice prosciutto, 1 slice cheese and 2 anchovies on each veal slice. Roll and secure with a toothpick. In a large skillet, melt margarine or butter. Brown veal rolls on all sides, stir in parsley and lemon juice. Cook over medium heat, basting rolls frequently, until veal is cooked, about 12 to 15 minutes.

Sausage and Polenta

- 1 1/2 qts. water (6 cups)
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups polenta (*coarse corn meal*)
- 1/2 tsp. thyme
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, grated or 1/4 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 cup grated mozzarella cheese, divided
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- 2 lbs. sweet Italian sausage, cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 qts. tomato sauce, your favorite

In a large pot, add water, salt and olive

oil; bring to a boil. Slowly pour in polenta, stirring with a whisk, making sure to get out any lumps. Reduce heat to low and simmer 20 minutes, stirring frequently. When polenta is thick, remove from heat. Add thyme, pepper, garlic, 1/2 cup of the mozzarella and 1/2 cup of the Parmesan cheese; reserve remaining cheese for the top. Mix thoroughly and pour into a greased 9x13-inch pan to cool. When cool, refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight.

Cook sausage in a large frying pan. When cooked thoroughly, add tomato sauce and set aside. When polenta is completely cooled, cut into serving squares. Place in a greased 11x15-inch baking pan. Pour sausage and tomato sauce mixture over top of polenta; sprinkle with remaining cheeses. Bake at 350° for 45 to 60 minutes, or until thoroughly heated.

Lasagna with Meat & Béchamel Sauce

MEAT SAUCE

- 4 tbsp. butter
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup finely chopped carrot
- 1/2 cup finely chopped celery
- 1/2 cup finely chopped flat parsley
- 1 lb. meat loaf mixture combined (beef, pork and veal)
- 1 lb. mild or hot Italian sausage, casings removed
- 1/4 cup red wine
- 1 (16-oz.) can puréed tomatoes
- 6 tbsp. tomato paste
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- red pepper flakes to taste
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 tsp. sweet dried basil
- 1/2 tsp. dried oregano

BÉCHAMEL SAUCE

- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 6 tbsp. flour
- 2 1/2 cups whole milk
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- dash white pepper

1/2 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg

LASAGNA

1 lb. box “no bake” lasagna
1 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

MEAT SAUCE: Heat butter and oil in a large saucepan. Add onions, carrot, celery and parsley; sauté until tender. Add meats and sauté until lightly browned, breaking meat into small pieces with spoon as it cooks. Add remaining meat sauce ingredients and mix well. Bring to a boil, cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer 1 to 2 hours or until thick and zesty.

BÉCHAMEL SAUCE: In a heavy saucepan, melt butter. Add flour and cook over low heat for 2 minutes, stirring constantly with wire whisk. Add milk, all at once, stirring constantly until it thickens. Add salt, pepper and nutmeg. Stir well and let cool before assembling lasagna.

LASAGNA: Lightly grease a 13x9x2-inch lasagna pan or casserole. Place a thin layer of meat sauce to coat bottom of pan. Place 1 layer of lasagna directly from box in bottom of the pan. Strips should overlap each other. Spread with meat sauce, making sure all pasta is completely covered. Follow with 1/2 cup of the béchamel sauce. Sprinkle with 1/4 cup of the grated cheese. Continue in this manner until all ingredients are used. You should end with béchamel sauce and grated cheese on top. Bake in a preheated 350° oven 45 minutes to 1 hour. Let lasagna set 15 to 20 minutes before serving. May be prepared and refrigerated up to 2 days prior. Does not freeze well.

Stuffed Artichokes Sicilian Style

4 medium-sized artichokes
juice of 1/2 lemon
1 cup fine bread crumbs
3/4 cup grated goat or Parmesan cheese
(reserve 1/4 cup for topping)
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 tsp. chopped parsley
1 tsp. kosher salt
1 tsp. ground peppercorn
1/4 tsp. salt (for salting water)
1/2 cup olive oil, divided



Stuffed Artichokes
Sicilian Style

Look for fresh artichokes that have tight leaves and are green and not turning brown; remove outside, lower leaves. Cut stems off about 1-inch straight across top of artichoke with a sharp stainless steel knife. Snip off tips of remaining leaves with stainless steel kitchen scissors. Rinse artichokes in cold water with juice of 1/2 lemon. Drain upside down. Peel stems and cook with artichokes. In a large 4-inch high shallow bowl, add bread crumbs, 1/2 cup grated cheese, garlic, parsley, kosher salt and ground peppercorn. Mix together. Spread open leaves, carefully spoon mixture (or use your fingers) into leaves of artichoke. Sprinkle top of artichokes with reserved 1/4 cup cheese.

Place artichokes upright in a large, stainless steel pot with a tight-fitting lid. Make sure artichokes have enough room to cook in the pot. Fill bottom of pot with 2 inches of water. Add 1/4 tsp. salt to water. Drizzle 1/4 cup olive oil very slowly over top of each artichoke. Pour any remaining olive oil in the pot. Cover and cook on medium to low heat until tender. Check the pot occasionally for water. Add water to keep the level in the bottom of the pot at 2 inches so that artichokes don't burn.

Artichokes are to be eaten with your fingers. With your fingers, pull out leaves, one by one. Scrape filling and artichokes meat against bottom teeth. When you are done with leaves, the part left in the middle, which consists of immature florets in the center of the bud, is the choke. These are not edible in older and larger artichokes; the base of the artichoke is the heart. Discard the “hairy” part of the heart.

Cut the heart of artichoke with a knife and sprinkle with salt.

Note: Leftovers can be stored in your refrigerator 3 to 4 days. They can be reheated in the microwave 1 minute on high.

Fragole Deliziose

1 qt. fresh strawberries
1/4 cup sugar
1 cup orange juice
1/4 cup Marsala wine or vermouth
(optional)

Rinse strawberries and remove stems. If strawberries are very large, cut in half. Place in a decorative bowl. Add sugar and orange juice; stir. Add vermouth or Marsala, if using. Let stand 1 hour. Spoon into dessert cups. Served cold or at room temperature.

Pignoli Cookies

1 lb. almond paste
2 cups sugar
4 egg whites
pinch of salt
1/4 cup flour
1/2 lb. pine nuts
confectioners' sugar

Mix together almond paste, sugar and egg whites. Add salt and flour; mix well. Take a small amount of dough and coat with pine nuts. Shape into a crescent shape. Place on a cookie sheet that has been lined with parchment paper. Bake at 325° for 25 minutes or until cookies are golden brown. Wait until cookies are cool before removing them from cookie sheet. When ready to serve, sprinkle with confectioners' sugar. Yield: about 60 cookies.

Note: These cookies freeze well.

Amaretto Balls

2 cups crushed chocolate covered graham crackers
1/2 cup amaretto
2 cups crushed pecans

Combine crackers and amaretto; roll into small 1-inch balls. Roll each ball in crushed pecans. Keep tightly covered in refrigerator.

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