

# CROSSVILLE CHRONICLE

## "Taste The Best"

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One of my favorite things about Christmas is all the open houses and hors d'oeuvres served at them.

It's fun food -- small and tasty. And for some reason, I don't feel guilty munching on it (although my hips tell a different story, but we won't go there).

Some of my favorites are pigs in blankets (honestly, is there a Southerner who doesn't love those things?), cheese balls, crab dip, spinach dip ... oh, heck, any dip will do!

Betty McClanahan's newest cookbook, *Merry Christmas from Tennessee: Recipes for the Season*, combines simplicity with Southern hospitality for a merry holiday gathering. Recipes for buffets, breakfast or brunch and open houses and office parties can be found in this 192-page volume from McClanahan Publishing.

The Nashville resident and Tennessee Technological University graduate uses everyday ingredients to prepare delicious dishes. A special section of the book includes some gift-giving ideas from McClanahan's kitchen that would make perfect gifts for teachers, hostesses, friends and family.

*Merry Christmas from Tennessee* is available at gift shops and major bookstore chains. It may also be ordered by calling 1-800-544-6959.

Another Southern friend, Mr. Food, has some tempting sweets for your open house and/or party table.

They're brought to us courtesy of our good friend, Polly Romine.

Merry Christmas!

**Office Party Crab Ball**

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese

1 lb. fresh or canned crabmeat  
1 (10 or 12 oz.) bottle seafood sauce  
horseradish, to taste

Soften cream cheese; mix with crab; roll into a ball. Refrigerate until ready to serve, then add horseradish to sauce, if desired, and pour sauce over the ball. Serve with crackers.

Covers 30-50 crackers.

From Merry Christmas from Tennessee by Betty Jane McClanahan

### **Shrimp Dip**

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened  
1 small pkg. Roquefort cheese  
1 T. mayonnaise  
1-3 T. milk

finely chopped celery

chopped parsley

garlic salt

1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1 (8 oz.) pkg. small frozen cooked shrimp, thawed

Combine all ingredients, adding shrimp last. Cover and refrigerate several hours before serving. Serve with crackers or chips. Makes about 2 cups of dip.

From Merry Christmas from Tennessee by Betty Jane McClanahan

### **No-Fuss Swedish Meatballs**

1 lb. sausage  
1/3 c. fine dry bread crumbs  
1 egg, beaten  
1/2 tsp. sage  
1 T. vinegar  
1 T. soy sauce  
2 T. brown sugar  
1/2 c. ketchup

Mix first four ingredients; shape into balls and brown in skillet. Combine remaining ingredients and pour over meatballs; cover and simmer 30 minutes. Serve hot, using toothpicks. Makes about 40 per pound of meat.

From Merry Christmas from Tennessee by Betty Jane McClanahan

### **Holiday Ham Appetizers**

3 c. biscuit mix  
1 1/2 c. finely chopped cooked ham  
4 c. shredded Cheddar cheese  
1/2 c. Parmesan cheese  
2 T. chopped parsley

2 tsp. spicy mustard

2/3 c. milk

Mix all ingredients; shape into 1-inch balls. Place 2 inches apart on a lightly greased jellyroll pan. Bake 20-25 minutes in preheated 350-degree oven. Serve warm. Makes 7 dozen.

From Merry Christmas from Tennessee by Betty Jane McClanahan

### **'Tis the Season Bacon Rounds**

1 (8 oz.) can refrigerated crescent rolls

1 (3 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened

5 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled

3 T. finely chopped onion

1 tsp. milk

grated Parmesan cheese

Unroll crescent rolls and separate into 4 rectangles; press perforations to seal. Combine cream cheese, bacon and onion; spread on rectangles. Roll up, starting at long side and press together edges to seal. Cut each roll into 8 slices; place on ungreased baking sheet. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake at 375 degrees for 12-15 minutes. Serve warm. Makes 24-30.

From Merry Christmas from Tennessee by Betty Jane McClanahan

### **Cracker Barrel Double Fudge Coca-Cola Cake**

1 c. Coca-cola

1/2 c. oil

1 stick margarine

3 T. cocoa

2 c. sugar

2 c. flour

1/2 tsp. salt

2 eggs

1/2 c. buttermilk

1 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. vanilla

In a saucepan, bring Coca-Cola, oil, margarine and cocoa to a boil; mix the sugar, flour and salt. Pour in the boiling liquid and beat well. Add the eggs, buttermilk, soda and vanilla and beat well. Pour into a greased and floured sheet cake pan and bake at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes.

Frosting:

1/4 lb. margarine

3 T. cocoa

6 T. cream or milk

1 tsp. vanilla

1/2 to 1 c. pecans chopped

1 lb. confectioners' sugar

In a saucepan, combine butter, cocoa and milk and heat until the butter melts. Beat in the remaining ingredients, and spread on the hot cake. Cool and cut.

From the kitchen of CD Kitchen

[www.cdktichen.com](http://www.cdktichen.com)

## Velvet Cake

4 oz. unsweetened chocolate

2 c. sugar

1 1/2 c. sifted all-purpose flour

3/4 tsp. baking soda

1/2 tsp. salt

1 c. strong coffee OR 5 tsp. instant coffee dissolved in 1 c. hot water

1/2 c. sour cream, at room temperature

1/2 c. vegetable oil

2 large eggs, lightly beaten, room temperature

Preheat oven to 345 degrees. Lightly grease two 8-inch layer cake pans with oil or butter, or line them with parchment circles. Melt chocolate in top of double boiler placed over simmering water, then turn off the heat. Sift sugar, flour, baking soda and salt together into a large mixing bowl.

In a separate bowl, blend hot coffee, sour cream, and vegetable oil with whisk. With the mixer on low speed, add the coffee mixture in a stream to the dry ingredients and mix until blended, about 35 seconds. Stop mixer to scrape the bowl several times with spatula. Add eggs, one at a time, and mix on medium-low speed after each addition until smooth, about 15 seconds. Scrape bowl each time. Add chocolate and mix until batter is uniform in color, about 10 seconds. Divide batter evenly between pans and place on center rack in oven. Bake until cake springs back to touch and tester comes out dry (do not wait for crust to form), 35-38 minutes. Cool layers in the pans on a rack.

Fudge Filling:

2 oz. unsweetened chocolate

2 T. unsalted butter

5 T. plus 1 1/2 tsp. sugar

6 T. hot water

1/2 tsp. vanilla

Place all ingredients except vanilla in top of double boiler over simmering water and cook uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the chocolate is melted and sugar dissolved, about 30 minutes. Mixture will be smooth and velvety. Pour fudge into small bowl, stir in vanilla and refrigerate until the mixture is thick and of spreading consistency, about 2 hours.

Buttercream:

8 T. unsalted butter, room temperature

1 1/4 c. confectioner's sugar

3/4 Cc plus 2 T. heavy (whipping) cream, chilled

Place all ingredients in a food processor and process until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Stop mixer several times to scrape down sides of bowl. Transfer buttercream to medium-size mixing bowl and, using the paddle attachment of an electric mixer, continue to beat on medium-high speed, until buttercream is white and fluffy, 15-20 minutes. Stop mixer to scrape bowl several times. (If you don't have a paddle attachment, use whisk.) Use buttercream within an hour, or it will need rewhipping. Spread all interior layers of cake with fudge filling and outside of cake with about 1 1/2 C. of buttercream. Shave 1 ounce dark chocolate over surface of cake with a fine grater, then use the knife method of shaving to make darker accents on the top of the cake. Makes 12-16 servings.

From the kitchen of [www.allsand.com](http://www.allsand.com)

### **Slow Cooker Candy**

1 box German chocolate cooking chocolate

12 oz. semi-sweet chocolate chips

48 oz. almond bark OR 24 oz. almond bark and 24 oz. milk chocolate bark

1 (16 oz.) jar dry roasted unsalted peanuts

1 (16 oz.) jar dry roasted salted peanuts

Chop all chocolates and place into a slow cooker. Pour peanuts over. Cover and turn onto low and allow to cook without interruptions for 3 hours. DO NOT OPEN THE LID. DO NOT STIR. DO NOT DO ANYTHING. After 3 hours, spread several cookie sheets with waxed paper. Turn off slow cooker, uncover and stir contents for four or five minutes or until completely blended. Chocolate will not lose its shine. Using a soup spoon, dip up candy and drop onto waxed paper. You may want to stir pot several times while dipping out the candy. Allow to cool and you are ready to eat. There is no need to refrigerate this candy.

Recipe source: Mr. Food

From the kitchen of Polly Romine, Lake Tansi Village

### **Roasted Nuts**

(Sweet or Salty)

2 egg whites, lightly whipped

1 lb. pecan halves

2 T. seasoned salt (or 1 pkg. taco seasoning mix)

Beat egg whites until they are just frothy. Stir in pecans and then seasoning. Pour onto a lightly oiled cookie sheet and spread evenly. Bake in a 250 degree oven about 1 hour, stirring each 15 minutes. Allow to cool before serving or storing in a tight container.

Cook's note: If you want sweet instead of salty, simply substitute about 1 cup sugar mixed with 1 tablespoon cinnamon for the seasoned salt and follow the recipe.

Recipe source: Mr. Food

From the kitchen of Polly Romine, Lake Tansi Village

### **Easy Turtle Candy**

1/4 lb. pecan halves

24 individually wrapped caramels, unwrapped

1 tsp. shortening

1 c. semisweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Cover cookies sheet with aluminum foil, shiny side exposed. Lightly grease foil with vegetable oil spray. Place 3 pecan halves in a "Y" shape on the foil. Place 1 caramel candy in the center of each "Y." Bake just until caramel is melted, about 9-10 minutes. Heat shortening and chocolate chips over low heat just until chocolate is melted. Spread over candies and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Recipe source: Mr. Food

From the kitchen of Polly Romine, Lake Tansi Village

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