



NOJOSHING

Indian word for "straight tongue"

land protrudes out into Lake Michigan like a straight tongue

Newsletter published quarterly

Non-Profit Organization 501c3

December 2022

My childhood dream comes true!! My cookie recipe makes it into the 2022 We Energies Cookie Book by Carol L. Wojtecki

My family moved to the city of St. Francis in December 1952, just a few days before Christmas. I remember my mom using the Wisconsin Electric Cookie Book to make us special treats to celebrate the holiday that year and many years thereafter. Later, in my adult life, I collected and used the cookie book, too.

I always dreamed about being one of those special people who shared a cookie recipe in that book. How did they do it? In January 2022, the electric bill came with possibility to make my dream come true. A little flyer in the bill invited people to "share a favorite cookie recipe and let them know what makes your hometown so special." This was my moment! I could do this and maybe, just maybe, I could get in the cookie book.

After some thought, I decided that the most heart-warming, cookie related story about my city took place at the Christmas event of 2001 that was celebrated at the St. Francis Library. My husband, Dennis, and I were on the committee to celebrate the city's 50th anniversary of the city's founding. Celebration events took place throughout 2001. I chose to co-chair the Christmas event at the library with the late Maggie Luczywko, the library director at the time. We called it "Old-Time Christmas."

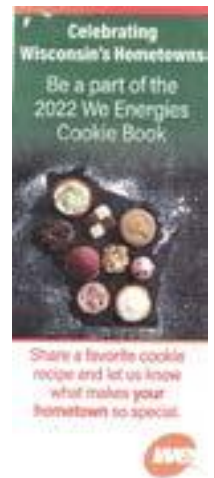
People dressed in 1800 costumes, there was a horse-drawn wagon ride, tree decorating, and a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Of course, there were cookies made from a 1898 cookie book that I found in the Peshtigo Wisconsin Fire Museum. The recipe was a basic sugar cookie called "Jumbles." I thought that this would be my story for the 2022 cookie book.

I talked to Mayor Ken Tutaj about my idea, and he thought it was a great one. I wrote the story and submitted it with the recipe from the old cookbook to We Energies website before the February 25, 2022, deadline. So, I waited to see if they would accept my entry for the cookie book.



Toward the end of April, I got a call telling me that my story and recipe were accepted. I was so happy that my childhood dream had become reality. In August, I received a prototype of how my recipe would look in the cookie book. I was asked to make corrections. What I found was they had edited out most of the facts of why I had used the Jumbles cookie recipe. They didn't include that the recipe was from an 1898 cookbook, or the fact that the people of St. Francis were preceded by strong pioneers who helped make the city what it is today.

I know it is their book, and they have the right to edit down the text to fit the page space that is available. I also know that I am happy to have been one of the 38 recipes in the cookbook. But I wanted everyone to know the rest of the story I submitted about my hometown of 70 years, St. Francis, Wisconsin.



What's New?

Calendar contest

Get out your old family photo albums and prepare to enter our upcoming "2024 Photo Calendar Contest." In an effort to expand our photo archives with old and previously unpublished photos of Town of Lake and the city of St Francis, we will be hosting our first photo calendar contest. There will be cash prizes awarded to the winners: 1st \$75, 2nd \$50, 3rd \$25, Honorable mentions \$10. Photo subjects could include: family life, church/religious traditions, school, weather, commerce, police and fire, Lake Michigan, etc. You get the idea. Entry forms with guidelines and rules will be made available soon.

The Election Bake Sale

Thanks to all who planned, worked, and/or made sweets for the bake sale. It was great to talk to the residents of the city. We had really great bakery, and the voters appreciated all the work it took to create these great treats.

Christmas Dinner

All members should have received an invitation to the St. Francis Historical Society Christmas Dinner on Tuesday, Dec. 13, at 5:30 pm at the K-Ranch at 4840 S. Whitnall Ave. in Cudahy. Hope to see you there!! If you have any questions, contact Jan at 414-744-1443 or email pientokj@aol.com.

January Elections

Are you interested in being on the St. Francis Historical Society board of directors? 414-316-4391 or email at st.francishistoricalsociety@gmail.com

We Are in Need of Speakers

Our John Gurda and Jessica Michna programs were a real hit. We are looking for more fine speakers. If you have any suggestions, please call us at 414-316-4391 or email at st.francishistoricalsociety@gmail.com.



Carol's recipe appears on page 26 of the 2022 cookie book.

Electric Company 2022 Cookie Book

St. Francis, Wisconsin, is a small city on the shoreline of Lake Michigan, just south of Milwaukee. It is a friendly community that takes pride in its rich history from the American Indians, the early Yankee settlers, the religious German immigrants, the concerned citizens who worked to incorporate the city in 1951, to the present-day city leaders and citizens. In 2001, the city celebrated its 50-year anniversary, which culminated in an "Old Time Christmas" event at the city library. It seemed appropriate to make an old time cookie recipe from the 1898 "New Gult Cookbook." Young and old enjoyed the event and especially the cookie. As the saying on the city logo states, "**City of St. Francis---Where Your Heart Remains.**"

Jumbles recipe

2 cups sugar
2 cups butter
1/2 cup milk
3 eggs
3 teaspoons baking powder
3 cups flour

Stir all together with a spoon, then add a little more flour but keep it soft. Roll, then bake in a quick oven. Put water on top and sprinkle with sugar.

Note: These are the original recipe instructions. I used an electric mixer. Flour was increased from three to four cups. The dough was chilled before rolling. A quick oven is about 375 degrees. I baked them for 10 minutes.

Homemade Christmas Memories Of Long Ago

by Karen Gersonde

I love Christmas time. It is a season of joy and celebrating, being together with family and friends, and a time to remember the loved ones who have gone before us, but who will always be remembered at this special time of the year. Growing up in St. Francis in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, we didn't have a lot but we were happy. We were truly a loving family, and my parents always made sure we had a wonderful Christmas with the little that we had.

One great memory is that we always had a real Christmas tree. I believe it was a Scotch Pine, the kind that always made our house smell like a pine forest. To this day, I love the smell of fresh pine. My parents didn't have a lot of money to decorate the tree, so we made a lot of homemade ornaments. One favorite activity every year was that we made popcorn strings for the tree. My mother, being a seamstress, had ample thread and needles. My dad would make batches of fresh popcorn on the stove in a pan with oil and popcorn seeds. The house would smell delicious of freshly popped popcorn. My brother and I couldn't wait until a batch was done. When the popcorn cooled, we then took a needle and thread and threaded the popped popcorn onto the thread, and then hung the strands on the Christmas tree. The problem was the popcorn smelled so good, I think my brother Glenn and I ate more popcorn than we would string. Hence, Dad had to make several batches. We used to hang tinsel on the tree, too. Plus, Mom did have a few dime store ornaments that she had purchased. The tree didn't have much, but it was our tree and we loved it!

In later years, my mom made a lot of very ornate ornaments for the tree. She was a great crafter, as was my dad. A few of these ornaments survived over the years, and I still use them for my Christmas tree today. Pictured are a few of the ornaments that were made by my mother, Fausta Gierzycki. Many consisted of a Styrofoam ball with very ornate beading or crocheting over them. Some were hand stitched animals, such as this horse. Horses were my favorite animal, and this ornament is truly a treasure for me. She also made a lot of ornaments out of plastic canvas, but as of this writing those are still up in the rafters, waiting to come out for Christmas.

Times have changed. I now own an artificial Christmas tree. We no longer use tinsel or the popcorn strands on the tree. We no longer have the huge colored light bulb Christmas tree lights. We have small LED lights, which are more energy efficient. My present-day Christmas tree is gorgeous, no doubt about it. My husband loads it up with over a thousand lights. The tree has lots of glittering garland, bows, and various ornaments. But what makes it special are my mom's ornaments from Christmas past. Those are memories that I will always cherish!



Karen's family created popcorn strings like this.

Ornament photos courtesy of Karen Gersonde

A Natural Gas Leak Causes a House Explosion on Lipton Avenue in 1977

by Anna Passante

When Lorraine Wolff went to bed on February 27, 1977, she never thought in her wildest dreams that she would wake up the next morning buried in debris caused by an explosion that leveled her home. Miraculously, she survived the explosion but suffered some serious injuries. The blast occurred at 7:20 a.m. and threw Lorraine from her bed. She landed amid debris outside the home's foundation, according to a rescuer. Being thrown clear of the blast may have saved her life. Her bedroom floor had caved in, and if she had fallen into the basement with the debris, who knows if she would have survived. Wolff suffered burns to 25 percent of her body, according to a news article. She also suffered a skull fracture, three broken vertebrae, a brain contusion, and multiple cuts.

Lorraine, a widow of two years, lived alone at 4145 South Lipton Avenue in St. Francis. Her home was one of many two-bedroom post-WWII ranches built in the neighborhood in the early 1950s for returning servicemen and their families.



A house similar to the house that blew up.



Unidentified newspaper photo shows the ruined house and the house next door that was damaged.



This house replaced the destroyed house. It now faces East Denton addressed 3367 E. Denton Ave.

A neighbor, Cecil Hanna, across the street at 4127 South Lipton Avenue, witnessed the explosion. According to a local newspaper, he was in his kitchen and saw the sides of her house go out and roof going up. The house, said Hanna, was instantly enveloped in flames. He tried to call the fire department but the phone had been knocked out by the blast. He ran to the scene. "I saw Lorraine's head and shoulder's sticking out of the debris," said Hanna in a Milwaukee Sentinel newspaper article. "She was conscious—you could tell that by her eyes, and she was laying with her face up." He had trouble getting her loose from the debris, but he was determined to move her because flames were flaring in other areas of the wreckage.

Three brothers who lived across the street at 4144 South Lipton Avenue heard the blast and came running. Richard, Ronald, and James Zimmer helped Hanna carry Wolff to the Zimmer home to await the St. Francis Fire Department. Wolff was dazed, according to the newspaper article, and complained of chest pains. The fire department took her to Trinity Memorial Hospital.

Emmett McCauley thought it was an earthquake. McCauley, Wolf's neighbor to the south, sustained damage to the house, including melted aluminum siding and shattered windows. Part of Wolff's roof landed on top of McCauley's house. Picture frames were knocked off the walls. His mother, Virginia, age 85, was asleep when her bedroom windows shattered and the curtains caught on fire.

The Milwaukee Sentinel reported that the fire was caused by a gas leak in the street. By 3:26 p.m. the day of the explosion, the Wisconsin Natural Gas Company had fixed the two inch gas main under East Denton Avenue. A gas company representative said that the cause of the leak may have been related to the frost.

The house was rebuilt as a brick three-bedroom ranch and faced Denton Avenue rather than Lipton. The house is now addressed 3367 East Denton Avenue. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, it was said that Lorraine Wolff didn't want gas in her new house. She chose electric heat. Wolff continued to live in the new house for some time but later moved to Oak Creek, Wisconsin, where she died in 2014 at the ripe old age of 91.

Clio's Attic

by George Ramponi

With television, radio, and internet streaming services, we're used to "bringing celebrities into our homes." A little over a century ago this would have been inconceivable. But the development of recorded sound made this possible. We have three such examples in our collection--all Victor recordings.

The oldest is "Listen to the Mocking Bird," which is a one-sided record cut from February 18, 1916, performed by the Romanian born soprano Alma Gluck (1884-1938). Gluck's son was the actor Efram Zimolist Jr., whom some might remember. Gluck partnered on the "Mocking Bird" recording with one of my favorite oddball Americans, Charles Kellogg (1868-1949), a bird caller extraordinaire. Effectively raised by a Native American and a Chinese cook, it was said he could imitate bird songs before he learned to speak. He did it from the throat ----no whistling. An ardent naturalist, Kellogg later toured the country in his "Travel Log," a three ton section of Redwood that he had hollowed out. That was



Alma Gluck's "Listen to the Mockingbird"

after he had carved a bed, kitchen, and toilet from the log. He had the "Travel Log" mounted on a Nash truck frame. Top speed of the Travel Log was 18 miles per hour.

The second recording-cut on November 13, 1914, is another of Alma's. This time it was with a male chorus of four guys: "Carry Me Back To Old Virginy," one of her biggest hits. Whether a million copies were sold is open to dispute.

The last of our records is double sided, cut on March 31, 1916. It features Evan Williams, the son of poor Welsh immigrants who had moved to Ohio coal country. Evan was mining by the age of 14. While singing in the local church choir, certain congregants discovered his sweet tenor sound and sent him to



"Carry Me Back To Old Virginy," by Alma Gluck

Cleveland for vocal training. He became a regional hit, and by his 27th birthday, an international one. He toured the U.K. and the U.S. "Molly Darling" and "When You And I Were Young Maggie" are the two selections on our recording.

One thing is for certain:Alma, Charles, and Evan would have been stunned if they had known that we can listen to them today on our phones! I encourage you to find the three artists' recordings. They are readily available on YouTube, but if you want to completely nerd out, try the Discography of American Historical Recording (DAHR). And check out Evan's "Tim Rooney's At The Fightin'," the best World War I song you'll probably ever hear.



"When You And I Were Young Maggie" by Evan Williams

Tips to look after your husband (Extract from 1950 Home Economics Books)

Submitted by St. Francis Historical Society member Julie Myszkowski

Have dinner ready

Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal on time. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospects of a good meal are part of the warm welcome needed.



Prepare yourself

Take 15 minutes to rest so you will be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your makeup, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh looking. He has just been with a lot of work weary people. Be a little gay and little more interesting. His boring day may need a lift.



Clear away the clutter

Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives, gathering up schoolbooks, toys, paper etc. Then run a dust cloth over the tables. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too.



Prepare the children

Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces (if they are small), comb their hair, and if necessary, change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part.

Minimize all noise

At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of washer, drier, dishwasher or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet. Be happy to see him. Greet him with a warm smile and be glad to see him.

Some don'ts

Don't greet him with problems or complaints. Don't complain it he's late for dinner. Count this as minor compared with what he might have gone through that day.

Make him comfortable

Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or suggest he lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him. Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soft, soothing and pleasant voice. Allow him to relax--unwind.

Listen to him

You may have a lot of things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first.

Make the evening his

Never complain if he does not take you out to dinner or to other places of entertainment. Instead, try to understand his world of strain and pressure, his need to come home and relax.



2022 Fall presentations at the St. Francis Civic Center



John Gurda's presentation on September 15.
"Smokestacks On the Lakefront"

Jessica Michna took on the role of Helen Keller.

Both presentations were well attended and terrific.

Dedication of Two New Signs

On Saturday, September 10, the St. Francis Historical Society dedicated two new signs for the Lake Protestant Cemetery. John Toth of MKE-graphics designed them. A tour of the cemetery took place after the dedication.

The book *Lake Protestant Cemetery, Our Pioneer's Resting Place, St. Francis, Wisconsin*, by Anna Passante, is available for \$15 at the Society office and on Amazon.com. All profits go to the restoration of the cemetery.



DPW workers John and Gary install the new signs.

TWO 2022 SUMMER EVENTS DOCUMENTED IN PICTURES

St. Francis Days parade photos 2022



Cemetery signs dedication September 2022



Left, Anna Passante (center) with belly dancers

Center, George Ramponi wears the sign proudly

Cemetery sign dedication



St. Francis Historical Society
3400 E. Howard Ave.
St. Francis, WI 53235

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Newsletter

Anna Passante

Mark YourCalendar

Meetings at the St. Francis Civic Center at 3400 E. Howard Ave.:

The monthly board meetings are the 3rd Saturday of the month at 9:30 a.m. Visitors welcomed.

No December 2022 meeting

January 21, 2023

February 18, 2023

Upcoming events (see “What’s New” column for details)

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