

# Former Shonkin woman releases new book: "The 406 Table"

By Connlee Gray

Karen Barbee of Billings recently released "The 406 Table," a collection of original recipes contributed by her and her family, accompanied by Montana history

and photos, party ideas and tutorials, and stories of growing up on a Chouteau County farm in the 1960s.

The book is divided into sections including beverages, breakfast, appetizers, breads and butters, sandwiches, soups, sides and beans, main courses, salads, cookies, desserts and cakes, pies, toppings and sweet sauces. In addition to recipes, there are also sections for party themes, weddings and celebrations, mansions of Montana and Montana facts and trivia.

The preface includes history about Barbee and growing up on her family's farm and her past experiences working in restaurants and as an event planner. Barbee took the majority of the 283 photos included in the book, featuring places all around Montana.

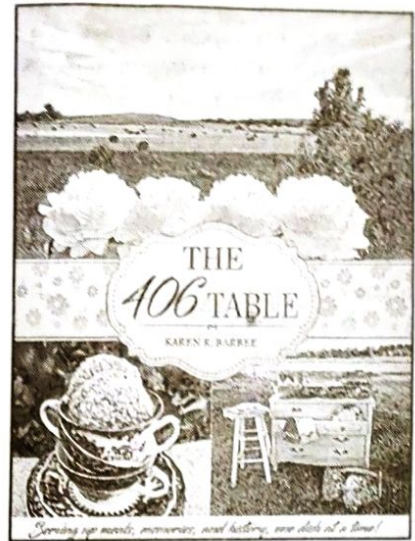
"It really does celebrate family, food and Montana history," Barbee said. "People have said the farm stories have encouraged them to make a trip to see Montana."

Barbee has unique names for recipes throughout the book, many of which are relevant to hot spots and businesses around Montana. None of the businesses contributed financially to the book, and none of the recipes are from the businesses they're named for. Barbee received permission to include information regarding these locations with her recipes, and by doing so she hopes to be a "neighbor helping a neighbor" by highlighting Montana places.

Fort Benton is among the communities featured in the pages of "The 406 Table."

The story of Shep is included next to a recipe for "Shep's Pie," a savory pie that features mashed potatoes and chicken strips. Barbee also dedicated two full pages to the historic Grand Union Hotel, with a photo and a paragraph that delves into its history. The second page is a recipe for A Grand Union Hot Chocolate, a recipe inspired by Barbee's daughter's love for her homemade hot chocolate.

"They're my recipes, but I've named them as sort of a dedication to places or histories that are important to how I grew up and areas in Montana that are of interest to people. They are my dedication to them," Barbee said.



**NEW BOOK** – "The 406 Table" released on Nov. 1.

Contributed photo (book cover)

entered homemade recipes in the Chouteau County Fair each year, where she also helped out in the Chuck Wagon food booth.

"Cooking has always been a passion," Barbee said.

Barbee started her cookbook a couple decades ago, but got serious about completing it two years ago.

Chili is the first big meal Barbee remembers preparing for her family when she was about 10 years old, but as it turned out, she used cayenne pepper instead of chili pepper and it ended up packing some heat.

"Everybody was putting a lot of crackers in it," Barbee said. "Since then I have made it very well."

Despite its first attempt, the Stampede Chili recipe made it into the cookbook. Other recipes that Barbee recommends are the Bridger Bowl Chowder and A Tisket, A Tasket, a white chocolate mousse basket.

Barbee's main inspiration for the book comes from her grandmother's recipe box, which she inherited after her grandmother passed away in 1985. Another piece of her inspiration was to create a book that can be shared with her family that involves a lot of their own recipes.

"The book has been a long journey and a labor of love," Barbee said. "It has been so well received. I'm so grateful for anybody that has made a purchase."

More than 250 copies were sold in the first week of the book's Nov. 1 release and as of Monday,