By Nancy Whitaker

HOT MILK TOAST

Everyone has a bad day once in a while or they get sick occasionally. While some like to drink their problems away, others just light up a cigarette to calm them down. When I have a bad day one thing that I turn to is food. I call it my “comfort food.”

Sometimes, I love to think back to my childhood and remember some of the foods my mom cooked. That always brings a touch of nostalgia and triggers my memories of growing up. Some of those are my comfort foods.

Growing up in the 1950s and living in the country, our food was simple fare, but it was really tasty. A group of friends were talking the other night about the various foods they ate when they were growing up.

One item everyone seems to have eaten years ago was hot milk toast. When we were kids it was one of our main “heal all” foods. It was toast with butter torn up in pieces, hot milk poured over it and then sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar. Although, I have not had it for quite some time, but some say it is still a favorite “go to” comfort food.

Some recalled eating bread, milk and sugar, while others talked about “coffee soup.” Coffee soup was coffee with lots of cream and sugar and crunched up soda crackers in it.

If I think back to my childhood and then look at the kids of today, I am sure our “go to” comfort foods have changed. While good old soup and hot tea will remain on everyone's lists of comfort foods, according to a survey, comfort foods now include a wide variety of different items.

So, what are today's comfort foods and do you agree with the choices? First on the list of today’s comfort foods is good old macaroni and cheese. Now mac and cheese was not a staple at my house when growing up, but my own children and grandchildren love it and I am sure it will be around for years to come. Some say, “Cheese, more cheese, and lots of carbs, makes for the ultimate comfort food.”

Ice cream took the number two spot. I know that sometimes when I feel I need a lift in spirits, I will throw caution to the wind and go buy a wild flavored ice cream to help me feel better.

To me wild flavors are those like Creme Brulee, Cappachino, Caramel Peanut Butter, Strawberry Cheesecake and some of the new ones like Vanilla Snow and Birthday Cake flavored. Ice cream is sweet, creamy, cold and oh so satisfying.

America and apple pie go hand in hand. Apple pie according to a report takes the number three spot as a comfort food. The saying goes “apple pie fresh out of the oven, the smell alone calms the soul.

Other comfort foods include chocolate chip cookies, potato soup, fried chicken and Campbells soup.

One thing my mama and grandma both did when things were upsetting was to “put on the tea kettle.” There was just something about hearing the tea kettle whistling and knowing that a pot of hot tea would soon be brewing that would soothe our body and soul.

Now we know that what we choose to eat as our comfort foods depends on the season and the weather. This is winter and when the snow flies and the ice crackles I think about making a pot

of soup.

In the summer, it is something cooked outside on the grill that provides comfort. In the fall, I think of outdoor weiner roasts and cider. When spring comes around I want fresh lettuce and green peas out of the garden.

The weather today is really not hot or cold, it is cloudy and overcast and the threat of snow has been forecast. I do believe I have the makings for a pot of vegetable soup.

What is the one food that you eat which makes you feel good all over? What is the one food you eat where you just throw caution to the wind and eat it for fun? Did you ever eat hot milk toast? Let me know and I'll give you a Penny for Your Thoughts.