

My latest book is not a romance. It's the more or less true account, (writers are notorious for mixing fact with fiction and calling it story) of my years spent running a B&B in Vancouver. I had such fun writing it--I hope these couple of chapters convince you it would be fun to read it. But first, a couple of comments by readers.

The first is an Amazon review--(thank you, reviewer!)

#### Editorial Reviews

##### Product Description

Writing with terrific inventiveness and creativity, Hutchinson's tales of opening and running her B&B draw you in as they display a lighthearted feel for human nature and the foibles that we all share.

When a twice-divorced, sixty-something woman whose sole source of income was writing steamy romance novels decided to make a change in her life, she had no idea what she would soon face. Despite never having stayed in a bed and breakfast, and knowing absolutely nothing about running a B&B, she jumped right in. Strange people, some from nearby and some from halfway around the world, arrived at her home with their stories and their struggles, not to mention their baggage (psychological and otherwise).

In Blue Collar B&B, author Bobby Hutchinson tells magnificently entertaining tales of her foray into operating a bed and breakfast. She turned her home into a friendly oasis for travelers, at the same time maintaining her friendships with a cast of neighborhood characters who provide a constant mix of laughter and consternation.

Each chapter of Blue Collar B&B is a great tale, peppered with humor, a little tragedy, and many life lessons. Writing with terrific inventiveness and creativity, Hutchinson effortlessly displays a lighthearted feel for human nature and the foibles that we all share.

The following note came from Jenna Jensen, brilliant editor and journalist, who writes and publishes Black Rock News. Sparwood and Elkford had no local paper until Jenna created one. Her note touches my heart. The greatest gift a writer can receive is knowing a reader was touched by her words.

So many thanks, Jenna.

Hi Bobby,

I really needed to tell you how amazing your book is, and I'm not just saying that because we are friends.

It has been a really long time since I have read a book that I could not put down until I read and finished yours last night. You did a fantastic job! It is a really nice break from my reality to read your story and be taken away to your B&B life in Vancouver. You describe everything perfectly & your guests seem as though I have just met them myself. Your life seemed a little crazy, but mostly fun, your friends eclectic but steady and true. The recipes are a great addition and I can't wait to try the cookies one.

I will say though you must write a part two. Even though I know you, I feel left hanging wondering how your B&B adventures are in Sparwood, if listening to your gut was the right thing, and if you are happy back home, and maybe next time I see you, you can tell me because I just can't wait till your next book.

Your book definitely teaches the most important lesson, to not jump so quick to judge people by what they look like, because everyone has their own story.

Thanks for everything, and again an amazing job. You are an inspiration to me.

Sincerely,

Jenna



BLUE COLLAR B&B, ADVENTURES IN HOSPITALITY (SAMPLE CHAPTERS)

Divorce is the mother of invention. Of course, necessity comes into it, but for me, divorce came first, which is why I decided, out of the fullness of my ignorance, to start a Bed and Breakfast. I needed money, and how hard could it be? I'd raised three strapping sons, I knew how to scrub bathrooms, change sheets, and make breakfasts Paul Bunyan would appreciate.

I was sixty-one, twice divorced, loved people but hated leaving my home to be among them. I'd been single two years. My house in Vancouver had a respectable west side address, a terrifying mortgage due to buying out my ex, and three empty bedrooms upstairs. My education consisted of a high school diploma from Sparwood High, located in a coal mining town in interior British Columbia, Canada. I'd married at eighteen, had a son at nineteen, and read my way through two more pregnancies (and several libraries) while trying to maintain sanity as I raised three diabolically inventive sons whose sole mission in life seemed either to commit suicide on my watch or live past adolescence—in jail.

My only saleable talent was writing steamy romance novels. I was far too old for prostitution, the only other job I could think of which might net enough to pay the mortgage. Writing earned me a fair living, but it was unpredictable. The urban myth about romance writers making mega bucks applies to those few exalted souls who make the coveted bestseller lists. There are others who turn out ten saleable properties a year, eating candy from a desk drawer, and sacrificing their health for thirty good pages a day. Their rule is: if you can't write better, write faster.

Of course, there are a few amazingly gifted people—Nora Roberts comes to mind—who can write both fast and really well. It's rumoured Nora will turn out an entire page turner while waiting in line for takeout Chinese.

Most of us are somewhere in between—nail-biting, coffee-guzzling peons who glue our respective asses to the chair each morning and churn out five pages a day, probably earning less in a year than the checkout girl at the local grocery store. Then why, people might ask, do we do it? We do it because we have to. Writing for us is like breathing—do it or die. I'd done it successfully forty-three times and despite the impressive number of published books gracing my mantle, I am far from wealthy, albeit grateful to Harlequin for my not-so-steady income.

Writing fiction is hit and miss—one's best, most brilliant ideas are often not what editors think will sell. Advance payments are always late. Most professional writers can finish a novel in the time it takes their publisher to send out the cheque originally meant to tide the starving writer through the creative process. If we're lucky, twice yearly royalties may pay the house taxes and the lawyer's fees with enough left over to go to Puerto Vallarta to recuperate from divorce and deadlines. Or, more probably, the cheque will barely buy a tank of gas. There's no surety in this writing game—you're only as good as your next novel, and you have to sell the damned proposal for that masterpiece before you can even write it.

Faced with shrinking markets and diminishing returns, I put a couple of notices on the Internet. I started with craigslist and added B&B International—might as well go from the ridiculous to the sublime. This is what I posted:

Blue Collar B&B.

Stay in the heart of beautiful Vancouver with a romance writer who wants to hear your story. Reasonable rates, full breakfast. Close to golf links, shopping, and India town.

JP Kinsella once said, Build it and they will come.  
Guess what? He was right.

## THE JUNKMAN

"I polished up the handles so carefully,  
They made me the ruler of the Queen's Navy."  
(Gilbert and Sullivan, HMS Pinafore)

Utterly petrified, I cowered in the kitchen as the doorbell announced my first guest. I'd checked the upstairs bathroom (pristine) pristine, the sheets on the king bed (freshly laundered, soft beige flannel, loosely tucked) and my hair and makeup, but at a certain age, there's only so much one can hope for in that department. Besides, he wasn't coming to date me, was he? He was coming to golf, his pert-sounding secretary had said. And he preferred B&B's to hotel rooms. Yippee for me. I was on my way to earning that few hundred extra a week I thought the B&B might bring, if I could only dredge up enough courage to answer the door.

It had dawned on me that not only had I never stayed at a B&B, I also didn't have the slightest clue how to run one. My one piece of advice, from my friend Patricia, who'd once operated a B&B with two toddlers underfoot while heavily pregnant with a third, was in answer to my query about sheets. How often should I change them if people stayed a week or longer? Pat thought it over. "Well, I think I'd definitely change them between guests," she advised. So, I was on my own, and I didn't know how to do this. But I hadn't known how to write when I started, either. My rule of thumb has always been, the more you do a thing the better you get at it. In my case, it always worked, with the exception of marriage, of course. The bell chimed again. A good beginning would probably be to open the front door. I took a deep calming breath, sucked in my belly, and there he was, smiling at me, my virgin bed and breakfaster.

"Hi, Bobby. I'm John Quinlan."

He was tall, handsome, fit looking—a good candidate for a hero in one of my books. Dark hair, good teeth, interesting eyebrows, squeaky clean. Forty-five, maybe. He heaved a small duffel and a large golf bag into my living room and set them on the rug, taking in the wall of bookshelves, the framed Klimt print of The Kiss, and the overstuffed furniture I'd inherited when my mother died. I'd tried to make up for its sagging cushions and bland tan colour by sewing a dozen silk pillows in a rainbow of bright colours and tossing them blithely around.

"Welcome, John. Did you have a good journey?" Too late, I remembered that he'd only come across from Vancouver Island, a mere two-and-a-half- hour ferry ride and forty minute drive.

"I did."

He had a great smile.

"It's always a good day when it isn't raining on the Lower Mainland. Nice place you have here. You do the landscaping yourself?"

"I have a gardener." I couldn't afford Mavis, but I couldn't fire her. She was forty-two and newly pregnant with her first baby by way of a much older man who wasn't yet divorced from his even older wife. He had six other kids, all older than Mavis. It goes to show that Viagra is not always a good thing.

Mavis was in big trouble with the income tax department, bipolar, and prone to suicidal depression. She was also brilliant at unconventional landscaping. She'd turned my ordinary Vancouver lot into a showplace that had my oriental neighbours begging to see the back garden.

"I like the driftwood."

"Thanks. I always wanted a beach house, so we dragged that stuff home and covered all the grass with black plastic and then sand. Grass isn't my thing. What do people ever use it for?" Besides golf, I remembered too late. Oh God, what if he worshipped the stuff?

"I know what you mean. Grass needs way too much maintenance for what you get out of it."

Hey, I liked this guy. "Let me take your duffel. Your room is up these stairs." I led the way through the kitchen and made a sharp left, trying not to bang the bag, which was surprisingly heavy, against my newly washed walls, and also trying not to look as if I was about to have the Big One as I hoisted the bag up the stairs. At the top, I abandoned the cursed thing on the carpet in his room and tried to get my breath back without puffing audibly or giving in to the urge to collapse in a chair.

His eyes took in the gabled walls and the king sized bed wedged into an alcove. A wealthy, compassionate friend had given me the bed when I decided on the B&B knowing that the room had no furniture except for my desk and computer—which I'd now relocated.

The cartage men had warned me that if I ever moved, the bed stayed with the house. It had taken two husky specimens, cursing and sweating, to force the pillow top mattress up the narrow staircase and around the corner.

"Cozy," my guest declared, walking over to the window. "Is that a tree house down there?"

"It is." My friend Eric had built a narrow bridge from my back deck to the stately old cherry tree, and then designed and constructed an irregularly shaped tree house among the spreading branches. The result was kooky and vaguely Oriental, but then so was Eric.

"Feel free to use the hammock." We'd suspended a Himalayan sitting hammock, orange and green and gold, from the cherry tree boughs.

John laughed. "Thanks, but I'll pass. I might never get out of the thing. Your back garden is spectacular. It looks like a jungle. I love the pond and the bridge. And what's the little cottage for?"

"It's my studio. Where I write." My first blind date after my divorce was with a down-on-his luck carpenter who'd built yachts in his heyday. He'd lost that job because of his nose and what he sniffed into it. He was more or less clean and sober by the time I met him. I hired him to design and build the studio when I realized the B&B would potentially be crowded with guests. The romance, like most of my romances, skidded to a jarring halt when he proved to be surly in the morning, bad tempered by afternoon, and miserable by nightfall. My track record with men was one of the reasons my nieces had labelled me Catch and Release.

"What's the square footage on the studio?"

Damn. I'd have to make up a list of guest's questions and find reasonable answers for them. But now all I could do was tell the truth. "I'm not sure, but it has plumbing and a loft." And the interior had rounded corners with built-in ship's storage, and the most ingenious little galley. It was the perfect marriage between a boat and a cottage.

"Maybe I could have a look? I'm interested in innovative housing."

"Sure. I'll let you get settled first. Your bathroom's just down the hall. If you want a beer or some tea, come on down, and then I'll show you the studio."

"Thanks. Oh, if I'm late tonight and you're out, do I need keys?"

I hadn't thought of that either. I only had one set.

"Oh, no problem," I lied. "I never lock the doors."

"In Vancouver? You're a trusting soul."

"It's all in the energy you send out," I babbled. "Like attracts like."

Get extra keys made, I added to my mental to-do list.

The next morning, I was up at five after a mostly sleepless night spent radiating fearful energy that could have attracted every serial killer in the city. Unlocked doors, indeed.

John had said he'd like breakfast at seven because he was hitting the links early. I knew he drank coffee, but I hadn't thought to ask him what he might like to eat. In a nervous frenzy, I made fruit salad, currant scones, and blackberry muffins. I hadn't mentioned on the website that I was a vegan vegetarian, figuring it would limit my clientele. I had no intention of allowing bacon into my pristine kitchen, but now I was worried about that decision—this was a husky Canadian man who looked like he ate substantial quantities of animal protein.

Buy bacon at the same time as keys, I added to my to-do list. To hell with purism, where had it ever gotten me? Quantity—that was probably the answer for now. Load the table and he'd never notice the missing animal protein. I whipped up whole wheat pancakes, sautéed veggies for an omelette, and carefully sliced up potatoes to sauté in butter. I unfroze homemade baked beans, put on a pot of coffee, and put oranges through the juicer. I raced out to the garden and picked pansies for a centerpiece and basil leaves to garnish the eggs.

When he came down the stairs at 6:47 a.m., the table was a work of art, the kitchen was a colossal disaster, and I'd sweated through two Gap tees. Nevertheless, I greeted him as if I'd spent the morning sipping café au lait whilst painting my toenails.

I seated him in the dining room and poured coffee and juice, wading through the mess in the kitchen to even reach the stove.

"This can't all be for me." He stared at the baskets and plates and hot and cold entrees. "I usually just have a bowl of cold cereal. Maybe that and a piece of toast?"

"No problem. Whole wheat or white?"

Two slices of toasted white bread and a bowl of Cheerios later, he reached for a muffin as I poured him another coffee.

"You been doing this B&B thing long?"

Busted.

"Nope. Just starting." I collapsed across from him and sipped my green energy drink, hoping it would revive me enough to make quasi-intelligent conversation. "What sort of work do you do, John?" Get him talking, that was the ticket.

"I'm the mayor of a small town on the Island."

He named it, and I barely managed to swallow without choking. Even I'd heard about this idyllic little community. There'd been a glowing article in Vancouver Life announcing that his town had won an award from the Planning Institute of British Columbia for innovative housing. The reporter extolled its bucolic charms and smart leadership. And here I was entertaining the mayor, for God's sake. Right here in my own dining room. Me, a political imbecile who didn't even vote. I racked my brain for a suitable conversational lead, grateful I'd used cloth napkins and my best china.

"Is this your first, um, term?" Is that what they called it?

"Nope. I've been mayor since 1992."

"Do you have to—" Here we were again. I couldn't think of the word for convincing people to vote for you.

"Campaign?" He shook his head and munched on my humble muffin. "I've never campaigned. I've been lucky enough to be elected by acclamation. But I'm getting to be too much of a fixture, so it's probably time for me to step down and let someone else take over."

"Did you always want to be a—" Politician? Boss of a town? It came to me, thank heaven. "—elected representative?" He laughed. "Not in my wildest dreams. See, I started out as a junk collector."

This was amazing. I abandoned my herbal tea and leaned forward, elbows on the table. "How did you make the transition?"

"It just happened." He shrugged. "I hated school, quit in grade ten. I started working for a contractor cleaning up after the workmen, driving his truck to the dump and back. I saved my money and bought a beat up half ton of my own, started cleaning up after a couple of other contractors. Then I bought another truck and hired my cousin. One thing led to the next. I bought a big truck, then another. Hired more relatives and friends. Eventually, a garbage contract came up for the town. I bid on it. I didn't get it that year, but I did the next. I formed a company."

"And then what?" I poured more coffee, hoping he'd finish the story before he ran off to play golf.

"I believed in being fair. I always gave my employees the chance to buy into the business. Most of them have been with me since the beginning. I had ups and downs, but I eventually got the garbage contracts for most of the towns in B.C. Then one of my employees decided I should run for town council when a situation came up that we all felt was unfair. There was a lot of apathy going around. I got in, did that for a couple of years before the town was incorporated. I found out how things work on the municipal level. See, everybody complains about government, but the only way to change things is to get in there and do it yourself. I made some changes when I got elected, and now our little town does pretty well."

"What sort of changes?" I was really into this conversation. I reached for a muffin and buttered it, and sure enough he took a second one.

He bit into it, and after he'd swallowed he said, "Oh, first thing I did was close down the municipal offices. What did we need all that space for? It cost the town a fortune. Now we use the church if we need to have a meeting. Otherwise, everybody runs things out of their homes. It made for substantial savings and we funded a much needed community daycare centre with the money we saved. It operates out of our old building."

“What else?” I was making mental notes. This guy was a ringer for a romance hero.

“I got the council going on affordable housing. I knew enough about the building trades to know that it was possible to design and build a pretty nice three-bedroom house for \$160 thousand. We’ve put up seven houses so far and there’s another four starting. We’re pretty careful who we sell to. We’ve paid for the land by throwing a series of charity golf events and fishing derbies.” He swallowed the last of his muffin and drained his coffee mug. “Speaking of golf, I’ve got to get a move on. The mayor of Vancouver and I are teeing off in half an hour.” He got to his feet.

“Thanks for a great breakfast. Sorry I didn’t eat more.”

The man was an entrepreneur, the first I’d ever met. I might never have such an opportunity again.

“What suggestions do you have for me, John?” I babbled, all but clutching at his shirt front. “I’m just starting out and I really need feedback.”

He paused at the bottom of the stairs. “You’re doing great. You’re going to be a big success at this B&B thing. The house is just eccentric enough and so are you.”

Me, eccentric? I opened my mouth to say a dubious thank you, but he was on a roll.

“You have a knack for making people feel at home, you obviously like to cook, and the bed is really comfortable. And you’re an excellent listener. Play up the romance writer thing, folks are fascinated by that. There are a couple things you could do to improve business, though.”

“What?” I’d asked for it. I steeled myself for painful criticism.

“How many bedrooms do you have for guests?”

“Three.”

“At the price you’re charging, that’s not enough to make a hefty profit on the venture.” He jabbed a thumb in a westerly direction. “There was an old gent walking around your garden at two this morning calling for somebody named Sammy.”

My neighbour. I should have guessed. John was going to suggest muzzling the old man. I’d grown so used to Louie wandering around my garden searching for his tomcat I never heard him anymore and hadn’t thought to warn my guest about his nocturnal wanderings.

“Sorry, that’s Louie Price. He’s seventy-six, mentally challenged, and his only companion is his ginger cat, Sammy. He has a caregiver, but he’s alone at night. Louie gets nervous when Sammy stays out late.”

“Well, not to sound ghoulish, but Louie is a certain age. When and if his house comes up for sale, I’d buy it the moment it hits the market. You don’t have enough bedrooms here to really make serious money, and you could turn the one next door into rooms with ensuites. Knock the fence down and run the two places together with a covered walkway.”

He was on a roll. “Get your--gardener to marry up the two areas. In the meantime, I’d knock out that wall—” he said, gesturing at the one separating my bedroom from the dining room. “Expand the dining room, incorporate the deck by adding one of those Plexiglas enclosures. Charge extra for serving breakfast in the tree house.” With another one of those engaging grins, he headed up the stairs, leaving me to tackle the mess in the kitchen and mull on the vast chasm between genius—John—and mediocrity—me.

The space in between had everything to do with the size of one’s dreams. So, B&B entrepreneur, dream big!

## BLUE COLLAR CREATIVE MUFFINS

(John liked these)

Preheat oven to 350°F

Mix together:

2 eggs

½ cup vegetable oil

¾ cup brown sugar

½ teaspoon vanilla

In a separate bowl, sift together:

2 cups unbleached flour

1 tsp. baking powder

½ tsp. salt

Choose any one of the following to add to your wet stuff, and keep in mind the basic ingredients do not make edible muffins without some of this stuff added.

2 cups grated apples and 1 teaspoon lemon peel

or

1 ½ cups mashed bananas plus ½ cup chocolate chips

or

1 ½ cups blueberries, blackberries or whatever you have, fresh, frozen or dried, plus 1 tbsp. good old grated lemon peel  
or

1 ½ cups dried cranberries plus (you guessed it) lemon peel

Stir dry into wet until just combined. You can add ½ cup chopped nuts to any of the above. Spoon into muffin cups (12 large) and bake for 25 minutes.

He seemed like such a nice man

By the time two weeks had passed, I figured I was really catching on to the B&B thing. I'd had four guests after the mayor—young couples in Vancouver to attend a folk music festival. They loved the massive breakfasts and by the rhythmic thumping of the beds overhead and the telltale stains on my sheets, they'd enjoyed their stay.

How does one get semen stains out of flannelette, anyway? I checked out Google. Rub with liquid soap, scrub with a toothbrush, and discard brush afterwards. Tip number one on how to run a successful B&B.

The Seattle couple arrived the following day.

"I'm Carol," she said, "and this is my companion, Lionel." They were somewhere in their late forties, laden down with three overnight bags each when they arrived at my door.

Carol was beautiful. She had masses of messy auburn curls swept carelessly into an updo, and the first eyes I'd ever seen that were honestly violet and lashed to the max. She had a lush Renoirish body that declared sexuality and she had a powerful magnet of a smile.

Lionel was five ten, large boned bordering on fat. He had a huge square head, too much straight brown hair, a vague expression on his face, and close together, washed out blue eyes that didn't quite meet mine. And his handshake was tepid and damp. Not your Type A kind of hero, I assessed. His first words were, "Anywhere I can plug in my laptop?"

I showed them to their bedroom, pointed out the outlets, and gave them a house key and my now-familiar speech about tea downstairs whenever they were settled, with a few words about harmless Louie wandering the premises in the middle of the night calling for his cat.

Carol came down after an hour. She tucked her bare feet under her on the sofa and accepted the green tea and oatmeal cookies I offered. I asked the usual questions: who, what, when, where, and how.

Carol was a florist. Lionel—big surprise—did something obscure with computers and worked from home.

"He's really reclusive, doesn't relate well to people, but he's great when you get to know him," Carol said.

They'd met through an online dating service, had been together two years, and things were going well. Carol had been married, Lionel not.

"My first husband left me when I needed an ileostomy for Crohn's disease. He said it made him sick to his stomach. It was a blessing, because he was abusive. Physically and mentally."

"Well, good riddance to him." I told her I'd had a husband like that. Well, two of them, actually. As for the ileostomy, I'd written eight medical romances and some of the research actually stuck to my slippery brain. Ileostomy—surgical creation of an opening called a stoma from the small intestine to the abdominal wall. The colon and rectum are either removed or bypassed. Digestive wastes are expelled via the stoma into a bag. Not what every little girl dreams of having when she grows up. I studiously avoided glancing at the affected area.

"That must have been so hard for you, that operation." I felt such compassion for her. Aging was hard enough without nasty holes showing up where they weren't intended.

She nodded and nibbled on an oatmeal cookie. "After I got out of the hospital, I made detailed plans on how to kill myself," she said candidly. "I stockpiled pills and bought old fashioned straight razors at garage sales and learned about cutting lengthwise rather than across. But then I decided to go out on one more date before I did it. Just to confirm that I was now going to totally disgust every single man alive."

"And what happened?"

She giggled. "This guy I knew took me out to dinner and I waited until we'd had dessert to explain in great detail about the stoma and the bag, and he listened and then all he said was, Is it catching? When I said no, he came on to me."

I laughed with delight. There was hope for the male species.

She went on.

"Almost the same thing happened with three other guys over the next six months, and it finally dawned on me that all they cared about was that there was still a nice warm place to put it, and they couldn't catch whatever I had."

We giggled at the beguiling simplicity of men.

"So you gave up on suicide and decided to be promiscuous instead?" I said, summing it up for her.

"You got it." She wrinkled her pretty nose. "It's way more fun than suicide. And besides, I figured my life was spared once already, so I had an obligation."

"The operation. Yeah, that must have been so scary."

"Well, that too, but I meant one other time. See, when I was in college, I dated a serial killer."

"Omigod. Who?"

"Gerard Schaefer. I met him in college in Fort Lauderdale. I dated him for about two months, but there was something not right about him, so I dumped him."

"Good instincts." I added that I hadn't heard of him.

"He went to church. He became a cop, of all things. He was convicted of torturing and killing two young girls, but it's pretty certain he killed as many as thirty, some right about the time I knew him. And like everyone says about Jeffrey Dahmer, Gerard seemed like such a nice guy and was fairly good looking. He was a good kisser, I remember that." We both shuddered.

"Do you have nightmares over it?"

"I used to, while he was still alive. But he was stabbed to death in prison in 1995. It made me doubt my taste in men, that's for sure."

"But now you have a good one?" I tried to sound positive. Lionel hadn't struck me as a romantic hero.

"Oh, I really do. Lionel is a super guy. He's a bit eccentric. All he reads are murder mysteries and he's really antisocial, but I make up for it."

I wanted to ask her if Lionel had ever wet the bed, killed small animals, and lit fires, but I held my tongue.

That night, I slid a heavy chest in front of my bedroom door and slept with scissors under my pillow. Sometimes that damned theory about energy and like attracting like is no comfort at all. The lesson here for the discerning, discreet B&B hostess is to install a really good lock on the bedroom door, just in case. There's that famous line about trusting in God and tying up one's camel.

#### BLUE COLLAR OATMEAL-CHOCOLATE CHIP SERIAL COOKIES

(because you can't stop at only one)

Cream together:

1 cup soft butter  
1 cup white sugar  
1 cup brown sugar

Add:

2 tsps. vanilla  
2 tbsps. milk  
2 eggs  
Beat well

In a separate bowl, sift:

2 cups flour  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. baking powder  
1 tsp. baking soda  
Stir into creamed mixture.

Add:

2 ½ cups oats  
1½ cups chocolate chips  
Walnuts or pecans

Roll into golf ball size balls, flatten with fork, bake at 350°F for about 14 minutes.