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Repast

Quarterly Newsletter of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

FROM ARISTOCRATIC PASTIME
TO PROFESSION



THE ART OF SLICING FISH AND FOWL IN MEDIEVAL JAPAN

by Xenia Heinickel

Xenia Heinickel lives in Hamburg, Germany. She is a recent graduate of Hamburg University, where she studied the Japanese language and culture while minoring in art history and comparative religion. She is now studying for a doctorate and further elaborating on the early history of the Japanese cook. Xenia has traveled in Japan many times, including a nine-month stay, and she hopes to return and explore the vegetarian cultures of the country.

In Western eyes, the delicately cut piece of food is often regarded as central to traditional Japanese cooking. The skilful use of the knife is indeed one of the most prominent features of the Japanese kitchen, and mastery of various cutting-techniques is a matter of course to the Japanese chef as well as to the ambitious homemaker. However, the origins of this focus on the knife as the most favored kitchen tool are not well understood. The search for these origins leads us back many a century to the world of classical and medieval Japan and to one of the least known of the Japanese arts: *hōchō*, the art of slicing the meats of fish and fowl.¹

A Prince in His Cooking Chambers

The first traces of this art are to be found in the classical or Heian period (794-1185 CE). Heian Japan was a large aristocratic-bureaucratic state in which the court nobles held an unrivalled position as the political and cultural leaders. The core and center of their world was the capital Heiankyō (modern Kyōto), where the Emperor's court and the other spacious residences were situated. There the nobles led leisurely lives, with their days dedicated to the refinement of various arts, aesthetic ideas, and pastimes, one of which was cooking.

By this era, the preparation of food as a proper occupation for noblemen had already had a long history in



七十一番職人歌合

A *hōchōnin* slices a fish in this illustration from the *Shichijūichiban shokunin utaawase* ("Poetry competition of the professions in 71 rounds"), dated to 1500, authors unknown. From Iwasaki Kae, ed., *Shichijūichiban shokunin utaawase*, Shinsen kyōkashū, Kokon ikyokushū (=Shin nihon koten bungaku taikei vol. 61), Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten, 1993.

Japan. Rooted in a vivid understanding of the utmost importance of food for human life, there was even a recognition of cooking as a pursuit fit for an Imperial prince, as Yoshida Kenkō reports in his early 14th-Century classic *Tsurezuregusa*.² There it is related that the prince Kōkō Tennō used to cook his own meals in a private kitchen-chamber. His enthronement as Emperor (reigning 884-887) brought an end to this beloved pastime of his, but he kept the chamber and it became known as "the black room" (*kokushitsu*) because its walls were completely blackened by the smoke of the open cooking-place. Speaking for his own time, Yoshida states that since eating sustains human life, a person able to prepare a delicious and nourishing meal is of great value to society. The author therefore admonishes every nobleman to learn the art of preparing meals.

Within this tradition of an aristocratic kitchen, the styles and techniques of food preparation as well as the range and variety of foodstuffs all changed markedly during the Heian and the subsequent medieval period (1185-1573) of Japanese history.

The name of the Prince's chamber indicates that he made ample use of fire in his cooking, but the kitchen of the Heian era was actually dominated by raw and cold foods. The everyday diet of the Heian nobility consisted of dried, salted, or otherwise preserved provisions, mostly fish and vegetables. These were cut into mouth-sized pieces and eaten with spices such as salt, vinegar, and an early form of *miso* (fermented soybean paste). The spices were served in

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THE ART OF SLICING *continued from page 1*

small bowls on a separate plate and added at will by the diner himself. Rice-cakes, soups, and a hard steamed rice³ complemented this diet.

This style of eating was based on a concept of taste that did not favor richly-spiced dishes, but fostered every effort to bring out what was perceived to be the natural, untainted flavor of every food. To reach this result the food had to be prepared with the most careful and least invasive method, which was simply to cut it and otherwise leave it raw. Within this concept taste was regarded as a product of sensations not from the tongue and palate alone, but just as importantly from the eyes. The historian Shimofusa Shunichi even proposed that in the Heian period these senses were intermingled so thoroughly that a nicely cut slice of food was orally experienced as tasty (Shimofusa, p. 184). The emphasis on the visual and representational aspects of food that has persisted in Japan to the present day derives from this perception.

The knife was important to this kind of eating-culture, but its most profound role emerged in the consumption of fresh fish and fowl, foods that were considered luxurious and festive. While the Heian nobility were the most privileged members of society, their cultural horizons were largely restricted to Heiankyô, a town as urban and as inland as a place in early Japan could possibly be. In terms of diet, fowl were hardly ever available to them, and fresh fish only through enormous and costly effort.⁴ Fresh fish and fowl thus came to be regarded as extremely valuable foods, and they retained their prestige even after they became widely available later, in the Middle Ages.

Repast

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The Courty Skill of the Knife Master

Such costly treats had to be prepared and eaten with particular attention and decorum. Scholars agree that fresh meats were usually not eaten all by oneself, but shared with honored guests and dear friends. Some writers have imagined the noble host himself acting as chef and preparing an animal before the eyes of his guests. As far as I know there is no evidence to be found in the documents of the time for this assumption. Indeed, literary sources verify that as early as the 11th Century, renowned specialists in knifework emerged from the ranks of the nobility. These knife masters all came from the Fujiwara clan⁵, so their skills were documented in outstanding literary works such as the *Taiki*⁶ and the *Kokon chomon shû*⁷. The aforementioned *Tsurezuregusa* also relates a story about a Fujiwara knife master. All of the reported masters of the art were invited to show their skills when they happened to be among the guests, and when they did so— usually after some modest hesitation— their knifework was much marvelled at. It's probably safe to say that in the world of the Heian nobility the majority of the men knew how to prepare fish and fowl, but that wherever real expertise and elegance in cutting was to be found an extra effort was made to showcase this skill.

Certainly one important reason for this early turning toward the knife master or "specialist" was the prevailing concept of taste that welcomed a clear and perfect cut, as mentioned above. But another very important reason was the craving for entertainment, which made elegance of movement and gesture as well as showmanship prerequisites for a good knife master. Evidence for this can be taken from visual and literary sources alike. Pictures of skilful knifework, which are the leading source of information on this subject, always include one or more spectators with fascinated faces. One of the most striking examples can be observed in the *Matsugasaki tenjin engi emaki*⁸, a picture scroll dating from the early 14th Century. In this scene, reproduced on page 9, we see the kitchen of a Kyôto coppersmith, where the master of the house is about to prepare a huge fish while a woman (and a cat) are fixed on his every move. The composition is very dense, with no blank space, but the moment of spectacle obviously was too important to be left out.

Other picture scrolls also show this focus on the entertainment value of knifework, and later depictions even omit the aspect of food preparation entirely. At the end of the 17th Century we find an illustration from a contemporary edition of the *Tsurezuregusa* that shows the knife master preparing a carp amidst a circle of noblemen; there is no sign that the scene is a meal, a cue that had never been left out before. In literary sources the awe and marvel at the dexterity of the knife master are usually stressed quite clearly, and even for the Western observer the act of slicing obviously held strong fascination. In his *History of the church in Japan*, Portuguese Jesuit missionary Iôão Rodrigues⁹ marvels at the work of knife masters whom he has watched in the kitchens of various lords and exclaims, "They are so skilful, that it is amazing to see them at work" (Rodrigues, p. 112).

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BOOK REVIEW

TRIM SAILS, HEARTY FARE

Anne Chotzinoff Grossman
and Lisa Grossman Thomas,
Lobscouse & Spotted Dog
New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997
304pp., \$16.95 paper

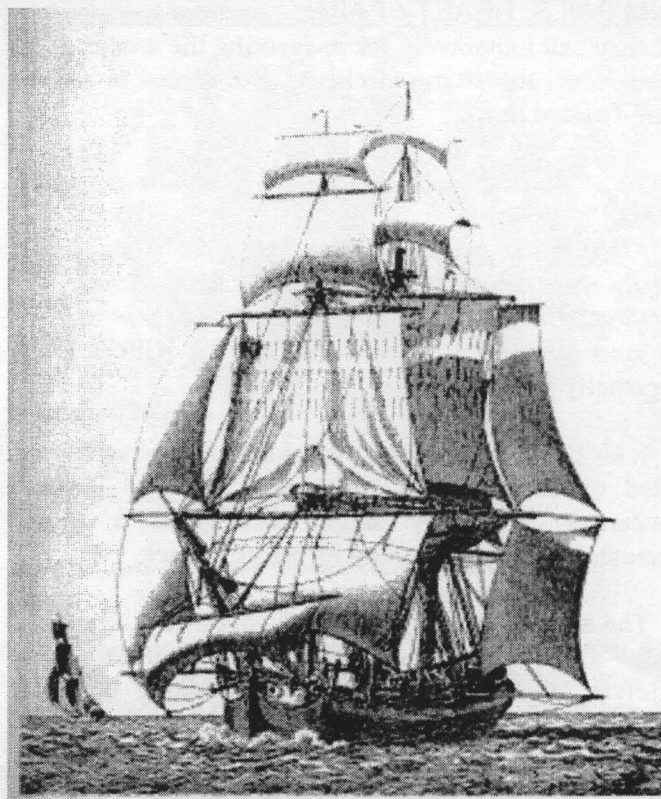
by Ann F. Woodward

Ann Woodward is a longtime member of CHAA and past editor of this newsletter (1994-98). A fiction writer, her knowledge of Japanese language and culture are evident in her acclaimed mystery novels of medieval Japan, including The Exile Way (Avon, 1996) and Of Death and Black Rivers (Avon, 1998). Originally from Culpeper, Virginia, Ann and her husband Jack, a University of Michigan emeritus professor of naval architecture and marine engineering, are connoisseurs of all things nautical. They divide their time between Ann Arbor, MI, Charlevoix, MI, and Bisbee, AZ.

Patrick O'Brian's novels about the British Royal Navy during the Napoleonic years are unusually rich in period atmosphere and his characterizations are consistently individual and likeable. The two heroes, Jack Aubrey, rising officer and rash but successful leader of his men in fighting the French, and Stephen Maturin, physician and avid naturalist, develop exactly as he has laid them down in the beginning, over the course of twenty books and many adventures. All this is reason enough to relish his work.

But the books are far more than good historical novels. For one thing, O'Brian's English is full of delicious and unexpected turns of phrase, the kinds of little surprises that make you laugh out loud. I confess to having read all these novels three times and I know that I am not unusual in this. Sometimes I like to just open one and let the beautiful language roll. The other consistent interest lies in his use of obscure nautical terms—someone has published a whole dictionary of those used in the novels. And then there is the food.

Two women, mother and daughter, have designed and executed the heroic project of this cookbook, which undertakes to reproduce recipes mentioned in the books, along with traditional shipboard cooking methods. They have done their research in old cookbooks, of course, and in libraries and online. Much help came from fellow O'Brian enthusiasts. They have roasted meats in their fireplace, boiled a dozen kinds of puddings, built coffins and sea-pies, searched out specialty meats (like pig's harslet: heart, liver, lungs and sometimes pancreas, which



should properly be called offal; the recipe, a breakfast dish, sounds hearty and good, though I suppose it might help not to know what you were eating). It was an adventure and makes fascinating reading, even if you don't plan to cook these things. The authors say, "We do not recommend [these foods] to the unimaginative or faint of heart; some of them call for exotic, revolting, or fearfully expensive ingredients; many take upwards of a week to make; most of them cheerfully violate all the nutritional tenets of our health-conscious age."

Meals are described with as much verve as anything in the novels and each section of this book is headed by an appropriate quotation. Mysteries abound. What are stirabout (oatmeal), portable soup (cakes of highly flavored gelatin, part of the doctor's supplies), inspissated juice (from lemon, lime, fig, or lettuce, sweetened and thickened by heat or in the sun to preserve it), Dog's Nose (a drink)? And *what* are lobscouse and spotted dog?

It is hard to be brief about a book that cries out to be read every word, especially by culinary historians. Perhaps I can best serve these authors and Patrick O'Brian by giving quotations from them all. Passages from the novels are in italics below; those from the cookbook are in plain print in quotation marks.

One of the foods I myself have always found most intriguing is "toasted cheese." The men like this in the evening, perhaps after they have been relaxing by playing chamber music (the captain on violin, the doctor on cello)

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TRIM SAILS, HEARTY FARE continued from page 3

and they call impatiently for it, savoring the aroma. Well, we all know the aroma of cheese. But served in a silver dish? Toasted how?

“... Killick, belay there; are you now about the cheese?”

“Which it’s just coming up, ain’t it?” said Killick angrily. He . . . muttered something about “those that worshipped their bellies . . . blowing out their gaffs by day and by night . . . never satisfied.” Killick is the perpetually pettish steward.

It is “bread, toasted and placed in a dish, covered with grated or thinly sliced cheese, and browned under a salamander.” Perfectly simple but given a special character by the name and by its use as a snack.

The authors, on the subject of Thin-Sliced, Raw Salt Beef: “There was no point in even trying to make ourselves believe that what we were doing bore any resemblance to the raw salt-horse in question, but as a purely symbolic gesture we thin-sliced some of our modern corned beef raw. If you like raw beef (we are evenly divided on the issue), it’s not bad at all.”

And now to resolve the title’s puzzles: “*It is one of the oldest of the forecandle dishes, and eats very savoury when it is well made*” . . . [said Jack]. *This was a rich man’s lobsouse . . . the potatoes and pounded biscuit that ordinarily made up the bulk of the dish could scarcely be detected at all, being quite overpowered by the fat meat, fried onions and powerful spices.* There you have it: a stew of meat, resembling our corned beef hash.

The pudding was Jack’s favourite, a spotted dog, and a spotted dog fit for a line-of-battle ship, carried in by two strong men. And from the authors: “[W]e must put in a special word for Spotted Dog. It is a handsome object, brown and appetizing; it has a moist, dense, cake-like texture; it is sweet but not too sweet, spicy but not too spicy, and altogether satisfying.” They say further, “[W]hen we came to study the origins of Spotted Dog (or Spotted Dick), Plum Duff, and Figgy-Dowdy (not to mention Treacle-Dowdy, Pandowdy, etc.), we were delighted to discover that ‘dog,’ ‘dick,’ ‘duff,’ and ‘dowdy’ all come from the same Old English word meaning . . . dough.”

Actually, though the references in the novels are to vast dishes, the recipes in this book are adjusted for reasonable portions and could be made in a modern kitchen. There is detailed advice in a special section at the back of the book, the interest as much in what these women went through in their dedication as in inducement to try the flavors and textures that so satisfied Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin.

A FIRE AT SEA

The influence of the Royal Navy in transplanting foodways across the Atlantic and other seas is still felt today. R. W. Apple, Jr., gave us a small but interesting example in his article on the foods of Bermuda (*New York Times* Feb. 12, 2003). On that chain of islands, which was once a British colony, certain old families will still brew up their own “sherry peppers,” a fiery-hot sauce used on fish chowder (the national dish) as well as on stews, sauces, scrambled eggs, and other foods. Yeaton Outerbridge, who started commercially producing the popular Outerbridge’s brand in his kitchen and basement in 1964, says that the sherry peppers tradition goes back to sailing vessels of the Royal Navy, where the condiment was used to mask the taste of food gone bad at sea. He and his company’s co-founder— his late cousin Robert, a retired RAF pilot— descended from a man who arrived in Bermuda from Yorkshire in 1619. To make the sauce they would steep hot chili peppers, along with more than a dozen other herbs and spices, for nine months in 50-gallon vats of Spanish sherry. Hot peppers were traditionally grown in backyards on the islands, but the company, needing larger quantities, began importing them from Japan, then China, then Nigeria. As business grew, production was moved to a building at the former Royal Navy dockyard on Ireland Island (which dates to 1814), and more recently to plants in the northeastern U.S. For more information or to order their sauces or their cookbook, visit www.outerbridge.com. —R.K.S.

Stephen . . . drank the wine that a heavily-breathing Marine poured into his glass, his brimming glass. It was the same sillery that Jack had drunk the day before and it went down even more gratefully.

“What delightful wine,” observed Stephen to nobody in particular. “But it is by no means innocent,” he added, slowly drinking the rest of the glass.

As this book is by no means innocent. Hmm. I wonder if I have a pudding bowl? ■

Editor’s Note

As the Grossmans explain on page 18 of their book, the term “lobsouse” is akin to the Norwegian *lapskaus*, Danish *labskovs*, and Dutch-German *labskaus*, all words meaning “hodge-podge.” The earliest known use of the term in English is from 1706. The dish itself is still very popular in Hamburg, Germany, where it is often garnished with a fried egg.

The dictionary to which Ann refers is by Dean King, *A Sea of Words: A Lexicon and Companion to the Complete Seafaring Tales of Patrick O’Brian* (1995, 2000). King describes spotted dog as “a suet pudding, containing currants (the spots) and cooked to a firm consistency in a tightly wrapped pudding cloth.”

"LET'S GET STUFFED!"

It was a many-layered as well as a many-splendored affair when the Culinary Historians and friends held its annual summer theme picnic last July 13. We gathered, slightly over 40 of us, at the home of members Marion and Nick Holt to sample all manner of things stuffed or studded, encased or enwrapped—a “filling” feast consisting entirely of foods-within-foods, prepared by the picnickers themselves.

Our picnic was also a celebration of the 70th birthday (July 31) of Jan Longone, CHAA founding member and Honorary President. For this surprise, Program Chair Julie Lewis baked a magnificent lemon-sourcream poundcake, graced with an image of the American flag in blueberries and raspberries on a white icing. The cake, and the many messages of congratulation sent by food scholars and friends from around the world, paid homage to Jan's decades of labor in reconstructing and preserving American culinary history.

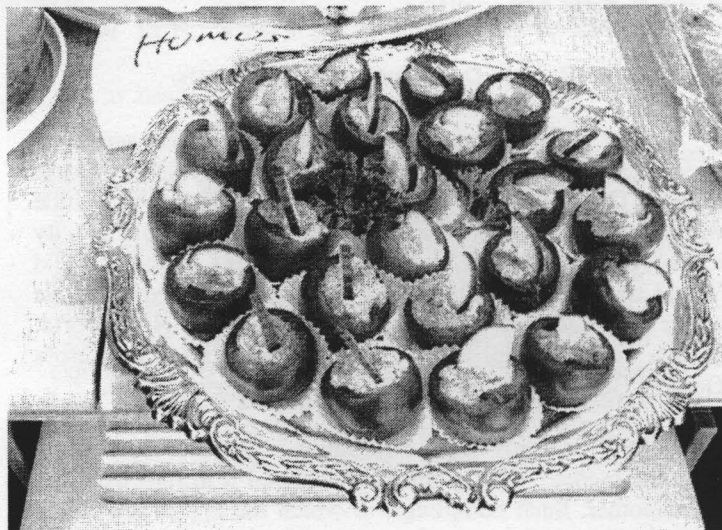
Evolution of the Pork Pie

As evidenced by the roster of picnic dishes (page 6), this was indeed a “filling” meal, from the lamb-stuffed eggplant down to the last garlic-stuffed olive. But in a few cases, participants went even further and supplied extensive historical information (summarized below) about the foods that they had stuffed for the meal.

Julie Lewis baked us a pair of hearty and delicious **pork pies**, authentic right down to her use of rendered pork lard in the hot-water pastry dough. She based the two pies on recipes from Marilyn Aslani's *Harrods Cookery Book* (1985) and from a Carl G. Sontheimer contribution to the Cuisinart periodical *The Pleasures of Cooking* (Vol. 7, No. 6), respectively.

Pork pie is almost uniquely a tradition of England, where Julie was born and raised. She found a history of the pie at the website of Henry Newbould Ltd., a family meat-butcher and meat-pie business that dates to 1856 in Middlesbrough, in the north of England (www.newboulds.co.uk). According to Newbould's history, the pork pie probably grew out of the Roman technique of cooking meats in a paste of flour and oil. In early medieval England, a pork pastry might be delivered as a gift, its succulence preserved by a thick crust made from rough rye or barley flour and little fat. The rough crust helped seal in the juices during baking, but was not eaten itself. The earliest known written recipes for pork pastries appeared in *The Forme of Cury* (c. 1390), compiled by the master-cooks of King Richard II's court. The recipes there called for a “long coffyn” of pastry to be filled with a pork mincemeat that incorporated sweet ingredients like sugar and raisins as well as eggs, cheese, saffron, and spices.

Later, substitution of the word “pye” for “coffyn” signaled a trend that had begun in royal and noble kitchens: a richer and



Jane Wilkinson's tomatoes stuffed with hummus and cucumber slices. [Photo: Pat Cornett.]

more edible crust achieved through the use of wheaten flour and butter. The thick, firm dough would be molded around a cylindrical wooden cask to the height of a good few inches. The dough was then removed from its mold, filled with the pork mixture, sealed with an upper crust, and baked free-standing in an oven to produce what is known as a “raised pie.” (This cylindrical shape would eventually become the model for the “porkpie hat.”)

Gradually over time, the mincemeat in pork pies became less elaborate and less sweet. By 1600 almost all of the seasonings had been dispensed with except for parsley and “sweet” spices (cinnamon, mace, cloves, ginger), and by 1800 even these had mostly disappeared, leaving only salt and a generous amount of pepper. By this time, the pork pie was most often a savory pastry of cubed pork (usually salt-cured), eaten at room temperature long after being baked. It was the custom, after the pie had cooled, to poke a hole in the upper crust and pour in some stock boiled from meat bones. The resulting “jelly” filled the air pockets left by shrinkage of the filling, and helped preserve the pie in a succulent condition for two months or more without refrigeration, as in an aspic or *confit*.

It was no coincidence that the English counties that became famous for pork pies (notably Cheshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Yorkshire, and Leicestershire) were also the leading cheesemaking centers, since production of cheese and pork—the most available meat in medieval England—were closely intertwined. Before refrigeration, dairy farmers had to turn most of their milk into cheese; by raising pigs, they could make use of whey as feed, one of the few early uses found for this cheese by-product. The first porkpie recipe named after an English county was Cheshire Pye with Pork (recorded by Richard Bradley in 1732), which used salt loin of pork and white wine; today, fermented cider and/or cooking apples are often used. Commercial production of pork pies began in the 1840s when John Dickinson established a concession at the railway station in Melton Mowbray, the Leicestershire town known as the center of Stilton cheese making. The Melton Mowbray Pork Pie is famous for its juicy, jellied filling and for a special tang that comes from anchovy essence.

continued on next page

"LET'S GET STUFFED" *continued from page 5*

Ravioli, Dumplings, and Creampuffs

Randy Schwartz supplied the picnic with *cappellaci di zucca* (ravioli of winter squash) made from a recipe by Mario Batali. The invention of these ravioli, shaped like little cardinal's hats, was considered a triumph of the Estensi nobility in 16th-Century Ferrara, Italy, since the dish united the Old World tradition of stuffed pasta and one of the exotic edible plants that had just become available from the New World: squash. For the complete story, refer to Randy's article "Across Oceans: Butternut Squash Ravioli" (*Repast* Spring 1999).

John Thomson's **apple dumplings** were based on a recipe from his mother, who might have obtained it in turn from her grandmother. Such dumplings, in which the apples are cored, spiced, wrapped in pastry dough, and baked (or boiled), were probably an offshoot of tart and dumpling traditions going back to medieval Europe. Helen Peacocke, in her article "Apple Appeal" that appeared in the Oxfordshire-based online magazine *Limited Edition*, notes that apple pies in the Middle Ages used whole rather than sliced apples, and these might have been the precursor for the dumplings. A menu from the Kingswood School (a boarding school outside Bristol, England) in the late 1700s indicates that the boys were regularly served apple dumplings with their dinners on Mondays and Fridays. English cookbook pioneer Eliza Acton, in her 1849 recipe for apple dumplings, called for stuffing the peeled and cored apples with other fruits and spices, enclosing them in pastry dough, and boiling them wrapped in a knitted cloth.

John decided to serve his apple dumplings with a brandy sauce after he read that this was popular a century ago. Betty Crocker's *Gold Medal Jubilee Select Recipes, 1880-1955* (General Mills, Inc., 1955) notes that apple dumplings with brandy sauce were a Yale College tradition, and suggested that apple dumplings might have had their American origin in Connecticut. In the autobiography *The Use and Need of the Life of Carry A. Nation* (1905), the prohibitionist recounts with horror how she showed up at Yale Dining Hall one day in 1904 and found such items as "Apple Dumplings and Brandy Sauce" and "Roast Ham and Champagne Sauce" on the menus. "There should be an investigation and that quick," she huffs (Chapter 17).

Perhaps equally sinful, Art and Joanne Cole baked up some *éclairs*. They used Paul Rambali's *Boulangerie* (1994) for guidance on the *choux* pastry (*pâte à choux*), and Julia Child's *The Way to Cook* (1989) for the cream filling (*crème pâtissière*). Rambali writes that "the genius of the *éclair* is that it's essentially a way to eat the cream filling." He notes that both the pastry itself and its cream filling are exquisitely light—in fact, *éclair* means a flash of light—but that the cream calls for much greater culinary skill than does the pastry. The chef Antonin Carême, by including a recipe for *choux* pastry in his cookbook *Le pâtissier royal* (1815), set off a frenzy of culinary invention: bakers across France took to devising their own cream fillings, and used various shapes and combinations of pastry buns. For example, a pastry chef Fauvel invented the *gâteau Saint-Honoré* (named after the patron saint of bakers) by filling his puffs with a custardy pastry cream

lightened with Italian meringue. He kept secret his recipe for the cream, dubbing it *crème Chiboust* after the house in whose kitchen he worked. Also invented around the same time were the loaf-shaped *éclair*, the *caroline* with its vanilla cream, the *religieuse* (shaped like a nun's hat), and the *divorce* (a pair of *éclairs* with contrasting coffee- and chocolate-flavored cream fillings). Later, in 1910, the *pâtissier* Durand invented a cream-filled ring of *choux* pastry that he called the *Paris-Brest* (the name of an important bicycle race) because its shape is reminiscent of a bicycle tire! ■

ROSTER OF PICNIC DISHES

Starters

Stuffed appetizers (deviled eggs with avocado and bacon; celery with salmon salad; olives with garlic) [Doris Berkenfeld]; olive-stuffed cheese balls [Barbara DeWolfe]; three types of Swedish *pâte à choux* (*choux* pastry filled with cream cheese, olive *tapenade*, pecans, etc.) [Kay and Steve Oldstrom]; Japanese *sushi* with rice, egg, *tofu*, ginger, and *shiitake* mushrooms [Howard Ando]; Greek/Turkish *dolma* (grape leaves stuffed with rice) [Tom Blaske]; Greek *spanakopita* (*philo* squares stuffed with *feta* and cream cheese, egg, and spinach) [Judy Goldwasser]; spinach-stuffed *philo* (Turkish with onions [*borekas*], Greek with *feta* cheese [*spanakopita*], and American with chicken) [Mila Simmons]; tomatoes stuffed with cucumber and *hummus* (Arab chickpea spread) [Jane Wilkinson]

Breads

Herb-stuffed bread [Phil and Barbara Zaret]; olive bread and vegetable-stuffed picnic sandwich loaves [Pat Cornett and Mel Annis]

Vegetable Dishes

Baked tomatoes stuffed with kernel corn and vegetables, topped with Muenster cheese [Eleanor Hoag]; Roma tomatoes stuffed with couscous [Doris Miller and Sandy Pearlman]; stuffed pasta-shells Florentine [Midge and Bob Lusardi]; *cappellaci di zucca* (ravioli of winter squash) [Randy Schwartz]; *enchiladas calabazas* (Mexican winter-squash *enchiladas*) [Mary Lou Unterberger]; Chinese spring rolls with a peanut dipping-sauce [Toni Hopping]; Chinese-style stuffed lettuce with cashews and water chestnuts [Jane and Herb Kaufer]

Meat Dishes

English pork pies [Julie and Bob Lewis]; Polish *holishkes* (cabbage leaves stuffed with ground beef and rice) [Marion and Nick Holt]; Hungarian *haloopies* (cabbage leaves stuffed with ground veal, pork, beef, and rice) [Mary Steffek Blaske]; Middle Eastern lamb-stuffed eggplant [Gwen and John Nystuen]

Sweets

Watermelon stuffed with blueberries and strawberries [Ann and Don Fowler]; French *crêpes* filled with strawberries and lemony cream cheese [Fran Lyman]; apple dumplings with brandy sauce [John and Carroll Thomson]; sourcream poundcake with almond/cream cheese filling and blueberry/cream cheese glaze [Jan and Dan Longone]; French *éclairs* [Art and Joanne Cole]

GRATITUDE FROM JAN LONGONE

I have been having great difficulty in writing this thank-you to all members of CHAA and others interested in culinary history who joined in making my 70th birthday such a memorable event. How do I *adequately* express my pleasure and gratitude at having so many friends and colleagues give of their time and talent to share their thoughts? To see and feel that one's passion and life's work has been recognized is a most humbling, and most gratifying, experience.

I say a simple THANK YOU to all. But I must particularly thank Julie and Bob Lewis, Carroll and John Thomson, Marion and Nick Holt, and Dan Longone for coordinating the festivities at "Stuffed"—the seventeenth annual CHAA picnic—and for contacting people worldwide who sent messages and letters. We are in the process of making a notebook of these and will bring it to a future meeting for all to see. A special note here to thank Julie Lewis for that beautiful-to-look-at and scrumptious-to-eat American-flag birthday cake. And, especially for her comments as to the why of the cake design—my role in making American Culinary History a viable subject of interest and study.

The CHAA celebration was one of the two grand surprises I received for my birthday. The second was a donation, in honor of my birthday, from the Clements Culinary Docents to the Library of a superb bit of American culinary history: a book entitled *Hotel Planning and Outfitting*. Since so many of the Docents are also CHAA members, I thought it might be fitting to express my gratitude here. The book, published in 1928, has 483 pages of text and hundreds of illustrations of the great hotels of late 19th- and early 20th-Century America. I have jokingly said that twenty scholars could each get a Ph.D. just from this one book! (Come and see it.)

The docents have for many years given of their time, talent, and encouragement—and they will make our Archive one of the most valuable resources for the study of American culinary history. And then, to add to all of that, to donate a book (and what a book!) as well. I am truly blessed. All the docents worked on this, but I want to specifically thank Ann Fowler for her yeoman work in making the donation a reality.

I am trying to not think of my 80th birthday... but I hope we can all celebrate it and the coming of age of culinary history, especially American, together.

My heart is full. Thank you to all of you who contributed.

— Jan Longone

ON THE TRAIL OF LEWIS & CLARK

by Randy K. Schwartz

When **Leandra Zim Holland**, 59, a Western writer on food history and food travel, tragically died in a pre-dawn SUV accident on a Montana road this past October 4, she left behind a husband and a just-finished volume of food research. She had pressed herself to complete her work in time to mark the bicentennial of the 1803 launching of the Lewis and Clark expedition, President Jefferson's bid to explore the newly acquired American Northwest. Leandra's book, scheduled for release this December, is *Feasting and Fasting with Lewis & Clark: A Food and Social History of the Early 1800s* (Emigrant, MT: Old Yellowstone Publishing, 2003; 288 pp., \$30 cloth, \$20 paper).

To encourage other researchers to continue the work in which she believed strongly, the Leandra Zim Holland Memorial Research Fund has been established under the auspices of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc. For more information, contact the foundation at P.O. Box 3434, Great Falls, MT 59403, or by telephone (888-701-3434) or website (www.lewisandclark.org).

In the field of Lewis and Clark scholarship, the problem of food plays a pivotal role. How did a perilous three-year trek across 8,000 miles succeed against such stiff odds? Answering this question requires an understanding both of foods that were routine for these men, such as ashcakes and salt pork stew, and of foods that were shared by local tribes sustaining the voyagers, such as dried salmon and stewed dog. Such an investigation also raises contentious issues about the level of development of native agriculture, fishing, and hunting, and about the impact of subsequent white settlement on native food resources like salmon and bison.

Several cookbooks have already been published for the bicentennial, two of which seem to have a more authentic approach than the others. **Mary Gunderson**, a South Dakota author whose specialty is books on food history for adults and children, was commissioned to write the official cookbook of the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, *The Food Journal of Lewis and Clark: Recipes for an Expedition* (Yankton, SD: History Cooks, 2002; 176pp., \$19.95 paper). Gunderson presents a chronology of the journey accompanied by over 80 recipes based on entries from the expedition's journals: from new potatoes with hazelnuts and fennel to *boudin blanc* of bison meat; from hominy to wild game; from plum tarts to "portable soup," a congealed meat stock that can be rehydrated. Napa Valley cookbook author **Leslie Mansfield** has written *The Lewis & Clark Cookbook: Historic Recipes from the Corps of Discovery & Jefferson's America* (Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts, 2003; 157 pp., \$17.95 paper). Sprinkled with excerpts from expedition journals and correspondence, Mansfield's book includes 150 recipes, some meant to represent the voyage itself, others the life that was left back home in Virginia: roast duck with blackberry sauce; venison with rosemary-dijon crust; sweet and sour cabbage; parsnip fritters; shrimp bisque; etc. ■

THE ART OF SLICING *continued from page 2*

A Warrior's Art at Medieval Feasts

The art of the knife, then, already had an aura of fine taste and performance when it was handed down to a new elite at the beginning of the Middle Ages. Toward the end of the 12th Century the autocracy of the Heian nobility came to a close, and the formerly inconspicuous military caste rose to power as the new ruling class of Japan.

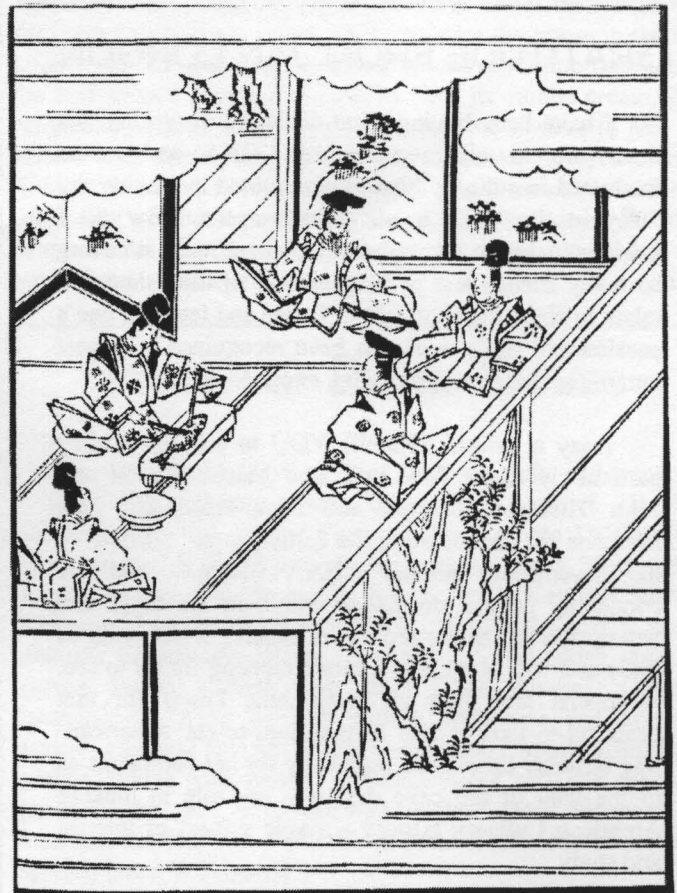
The *samurai* (warriors) were conscious of their non-Heian and therefore less refined backgrounds, but they brought with them their own cultural habits and aesthetic ideals. In a situation in which the Heian nobility retained cultural hegemony, an ideal of the warrior gentleman was formed that allowed a mingling of two very different sensibilities. Named *bunbu ryôdô* (literally "the ways of both culture and war"), this ideal combined the traditional arts of the military with the arts and pastimes pursued by the nobility to produce a new canon of culture.

Within this new cultural aesthetic, the skills of the knife were formally classified as an "art" (*geinô*) and came to be regarded, alongside poetry, calligraphy, and the like, as a means to refine the personality. Perfection in knifework was believed to be the mark of a good person and, especially important in this hierarchical society, a good servant. Its practice was recommended in the written regulations maintained by the more distinguished warrior families, and every self-confident warrior of high rank was assumed to have some degree of mastery of this art.

The most important setting in which these skills were displayed was the elaborate culture of feasts that developed within this new cultural atmosphere. When the military caste first rose to power these feasts were ascetic and frugal, an expression of more ancient ceremonies and rituals used to mark crucial times in the life of a warrior such as departing for battle or receiving one's overlord. However, in the late 14th Century, as the conditions of life of the highest-ranking warriors approached those of the nobility, these feasts evolved into extravagant banquets. Contemporary diaries of high-ranking warriors indicate that opulent feasts were held on an almost daily basis¹⁰. They served not only as entertainment but as inalienable platforms for political life, where the cream of society met to talk over events of the day and to bolster their social and political positions.

Such banquets might last the whole day, and they certainly cost enormous sums of money. They followed a set pattern that combined strictly formal elements with more leisurely interludes, both parts being well-drowned in *sake*. Slicing the meat of a bird or fish was customarily done at two different points during the banquet. Ehara Kei, a Japanese historian and herself a proficient cook, analyzed various diaries and found that usually a carp was prepared in the first, formal portion of the event, followed by the cutting of a pheasant in the leisurely portion (Ehara, p. 16).

The knife masters showing their skills on such occasions were guests and, as had been the case in the courts of the nobles, the most skilful specialists among them were



A woodcut illustration from a 17th-Century edition of the story collection *Tsurezuregusa* (see note 2 in the text). From Oscar Benl, ed. & trans., *Yoshida Kenkô Betrachtungen aus der Stille, Tsurezuregusa*, Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1963.

the most favored. Being members of high social strata themselves, these specialists enjoyed a standing that wasn't defined mainly by their cutlery skills. Such specialization was thus a step, but only a step, toward professionalization. In this context it seems appropriate to stress that even after knifework became a profession, it retained its reputation as a very respectable art and hobby for the cultivated nonprofessional.

Kitchen Professionals for the Warlord

What helped transform the art of the knife into a full-fledged profession were two interlocking developments. The first was a shift of focus from Heian as the sole political center of Japan to a decentralized system of multi-local governments. Local overlords throughout the country built splendid residences, sparing no expense to compete with one another and with the Capital itself. The kitchens of these residences often occupied separate buildings on the premises and were furnished with luxurious devices and up-to-date kitchen technology¹¹. Such large kitchens could only be run efficiently by a numerous and highly-specialized staff. It is these medieval warlord kitchens, rather than the urban restaurants of early modern times, that should be regarded as the cradle of the professional cook in Japan.

The second important factor in the professionalization of the art of the knife was the increased availability of fish and fowl. Technological improvements— such as new

methods of fishing, the breeding of birds and fish, the building of better routes for transportation, and the construction of storage houses alongside roads— together with the warriors' fondness of hunting and fishing helped expand the Japanese market for these meats. Hunting and fishing were indeed traditional, once even vital, preoccupations of the warriors¹². They hunted pheasant, quail, snipe, swan, duck, wild goose, sparrow, and crane, and from local waters they caught carp, sea perch, octopus, salmon, and tuna.

Down the Social Ladder

With the growing taste for *sashimi*— the dishes of elegantly sliced and garnished fresh meats, the most prominent product of the knife master's art— and the increasing fashion for elaborate edible fantasies made from fish, leaves, and flowers, the slicing of fish and fowl became an occupation of the kitchen staff.

Certainly there were servants doing menial work in these warlord kitchens, but the final dishes were prepared by people who were *samurai* themselves. This shouldn't altogether surprise us if we remember that warriors had always been accustomed to providing their own food¹³. It is likely that in earlier days, most every member of the warrior caste had had to deal with food preparation to some degree. But in the rigid medieval military hierarchy, with its strict allotment of functions to each rank, kitchen work came to be relegated to those occupying some of the lowest ranks. Knifework was handed down to them as one of a range of duties, and they appear to have acquired a not inconsiderable skill in performing it.

How could Japanese society countenance the demotion in status of such a highly-valued cultural property as the art of the knife? In part, because this turnabout was in accord with the spirit of the age. The warrior class had seized political control from the hands of the aristocracy; following this fundamental change in the structure of power, underdogs had begun to overcome their masters in many other spheres as well. Possibly providing an additional impulse in the special case of *hōchō* was a tradition that had developed within the early warrior society: the ceremonial feeding of the higher-ranking member, usually one's direct lord. This practice, thought to have originated as a means to bond together brothers-in-arms, was later ritualized in the annual serving of the lord in a ceremony called *ōban*. When *ōban* was held at the beginning of every year, the lord was invited to the warrior's home and served with *sake*, a special dish of steamed rice, and a side dish. The earliest documented *ōban* invitation dates from 1181 when Chiba Tsunetane served his lord Minamoto no Yoritomo with *sake*, rice, and a huge carp on the side¹⁴. It isn't reported who actually sliced the fish, but it's not hard to see how this tradition of feeding the superior, on the one hand, and the relegation of knifework to subordinate professionals, on the other hand, might have been mutually reinforcing phenomena. Besides, as the above-mentioned detail from the picture scroll *Matsugasaki tenjin engi emaki* reminds us, knifework, although still an art, was to some degree an everyman's occupation. It could no more be restricted to a single social group than could eating itself.

continued on next page

A Kyōto coppersmith slices a fish in his kitchen in this scene from the picture scroll *Matsugasaki tenjin engi emaki*, dated 1311 (see note 8 in the text). From Atsuta Tadashi, ed., *Nihon bunka no rekishi* vol. 6, Tōkyō: Shōgakkan, 1988 (4th edition).



The Profession and Its Heritage

Research on the actual range of duties, the degree of specialization, and the personal as well as professional circumstances of medieval kitchen staff is still very much in its early stages and is hampered by a deplorable lack of documentary materials. Pictures, the main sources of information about medieval kitchens, usually show men clad in warrior's gear, often still wearing swords at their side, who sit behind the chopping board in the position and with the tools of the knife master. It is quite clear that these professionals use the same techniques as the former men of art, even attracting the same awed spectators, but the reality of their working lives remains obscure. Rodrigues for his time informs us of men working in the private kitchens of the wealthier houses who were responsible for slicing animals hunted with falcons, but there is no clear evidence that this was their entire job description. Knifework as a profession in itself, carried out in the kitchen as well as the banquet hall, might have existed for only a brief time. In the Edo period (1600-1868), these skills were incorporated into the larger repertoire of restaurant cooks, whose range of duties went well beyond the slicing of meat.

The skills of the knife masters can still be observed in Japan at certain shrines, where on special occasions such as local holidays fish is cut and shared as a common meal among ceremony participants. This remnant of the custom of *hōchōshiki* provides a glimpse of the techniques involved but, as with the Edo restaurant culture, it tells us little about how medieval knife masters actually lived and worked.

Today, the knife is a profane kitchen tool that is found in many different shapes. But its noble past in Japan was never completely forgotten, and a predilection for its use has persisted to the present day. The maxim "Cutting is the master, cooking follows after" was even more deeply embedded into the culinary culture of the country when, in the modern era, *sushi* and *sashimi* established themselves as basics of the Japanese kitchen. That the knife and its skilful use are still held dear by the Japanese chef is reflected in an anecdote from the 1964 Summer Olympic Games held in Tōkyō. The Olympic village's own French chef—a Japanese native—was invited to observe the work of his counterpart from France, a chef who accompanied the French team. Asked for his impression afterwards, the Japanese man gravely shook his head and answered, "It's shameful to call someone with such bad cutting techniques a chef" (Ehara, p. 16). French chef though he was, it never occurred to him that French cuisine is not a cuisine of the knife. ■

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Rodrigues, João, *History of the church in Japan*, translated by Michael Cooper as *This island of Japon*. Tōkyō and New York: Kodansha International, 1973.
Shimofusa Shunichi, *Bukehōchō no seiritsu*, in: Haga Noburo, ed., *Zenshu nihon no shokubunka*, vol. 7. Tōkyō: Yūzankaku shuppan, 1999.

Endnotes

1. I have chosen to translate this as "slicing" rather than "carving," since the connotations of the latter term in the West do not apply to this Japanese tradition.
2. From c. 1335, a collection of anecdotal stories and musings about all sorts of human experience. Translated as *Essays in idleness* by George B. Sansom.
3. The Heian nobility preferred their rice this way, *al dente*. The soaked grains were steamed, and the resulting product was probably quite hard to chew. Nevertheless *kowaii*, as the hard rice was called, ranked as "noble" and the aristocrats held on to this traditional mode of preparation long after boiled rice had become popular in the Middle Ages.
4. Fowl in those days rarely reached noble dining tables since it was only available through hunting, an occupation pursued by warriors and not by nobles. Meanwhile, the utmost effort and expense were necessary to bring fresh fish (and seafood in general) from the coast to the city in still edible condition, especially in the hot and humid spring and summer.
5. The Fujiwara family held the actual political power during the time that came to be termed the Fujiwara period (866-1185).
6. The 12-volume diary of the court noble Fujiwara no Yorinaga (1120-1156). The diary renders detailed observations of the life and customs at the Emperor's Court.
7. "Collection of things heard from times old and new" (1254), author unknown. One of the collections of worldly and Buddhist-influenced stories from historical times that were very popular in medieval Japan. More widely known are the *Konjaku monogatari* and the *Uji shui monogatari*, both close to the *Kokon chomon shū* in time and contents.
8. A picture scroll in six volumes (1311) owned by the Matsugasaki Tenmangu Shrine in Yamaguchi and designated as Important Cultural Property. It belongs to the genre of *Tenjin engi emaki* that report the deplorable fate of the court noble and leading politician Sugawara no Michizane (845-903).
9. Rodrigues (1561-1633), who lived in Japan at the close of its medieval period, was a translator who accompanied Portuguese missionaries and emerged as an important scholar of the Japanese language. This particular work was planned as a comprehensive history of Christianity in Japan, but Rodrigues was able to complete only the introduction, in which he described the country and its people. He had a very keen interest in everyday life, and his observations about the clothes, bodies, houses, and habits of the Japanese are very detailed and reported with a loving eye. Luckily, customs of eating and drinking especially fascinated the Portuguese, and this report is a goldmine of culinary information. The book is very touching and I highly recommend it.
10. Well-known examples are the *Kanmon nikki* ("Diary of Kanmon") written in the beginning of the 15th Century and the *Uwai kakuken nikki* ("The diary of Uwai Kakuken") compiled 150 years later. Keeping a diary was an accepted pastime for high-ranking warriors.
11. Because of the high standard of their equipment, the kitchens were at times even opened to the admiring public. João Rodrigues inspected several of them and marvelled at their size and their wonders. Most of all, though, he was impressed by their cleanliness.
12. Hunting and fishing had been a necessity in former days, when the military lived a rural and often impoverished life. Both became prestigious and typical military men's occupations, hunting— and falconry in particular— being the more popular.
13. From their rural homes in ancient and Heian Japan, warriors prepared not only their daily food but also provisions for their time in battle. Army victuals had to be easy to carry and to eat. They included, for example, cracklings from boar skin, dried and scraped bonito, *miso*, dried vegetables, salt, and a preserve from unripe apricots called *umeboshi*.
14. The first *ōban* is recorded in the *Azuma kagami* ("Mirror of the East"), a report on the formative years of the *bakufu*, or military government, in the period 1180-1266. An amazing amount of information on foodways makes this 52-volume report an interesting source for culinary history.

MORSELS & TIDBITS

"Food Buffs Eat Up History," a profile of the CHAA by freelance writer **Eleanor Loikits**, was the lead story in the Food section of the *Ann Arbor News* this past July 9. The article, which helped mark CHAA's twentieth anniversary, was based on interviews with **Jan Longone**, **Carroll Thomson**, and **Julie Lewis**. It also featured recipes they supplied to help trace the evolution of Indian cornmeal pudding. Separately, Carroll and John Thomson made a presentation about our group at the Kerrytown Book Fest in Ann Arbor on September 14.

Carlo Coppola, who wrote about the Esc-Ho-ffier connection in our last issue, was the featured speaker at the "Contra-Columbus Celebration," a dinner held on Columbus Day, October 14, at the Drayton Presbyterian Church in Ferndale, MI. Diners were regaled not only with fine foods and wines from the church's Canapé Cart Kitchen, but also with Prof. Coppola's insights on everything they hadn't known before about Christopher Columbus and the worldwide food revolution that he started. **Rich Weinkauff**, who in the same Summer issue of *Repast* recounted his student experiences coming to terms with Escoffier, went on to captain Schoolcraft College's Culinary Knowledge Bowl team to first-place national honors at the American Culinary Federation competition in Washington, D.C. on July 26-27.

"The Food Page: The Press and Public Policy" was a panel discussion held here on September 15 examining the impact of public discourse on how Americans eat. Held under a tent at the Farmers' Market/Kerrytown, it was organized by the University of Michigan's Knight-Wallace Fellows in Journalism, with funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The 15 panelists included *New York Times* editor **R. W. "Johnny" Apple, Jr.**, addressing how food habits have been shaped by American culture; **Harvey Levenstein**, emeritus history professor at McMaster University, on the forces that transformed the American diet following Independence in 1776; **Paula Allen-Meares**, Dean of UM's School of Social Work, on studies of poverty and nutrition, obesity, and eating disorders; and food writer **Lynne Rossetto Kasper** on the slow-food movement as a yearning for the past.

And speaking of the slow-food movement... **Alice Waters**, founder of the path-breaking restaurant Chez Panisse in Berkeley, CA, was the subject of a PBS-TV "American Masters" documentary this summer, "Alice Waters and Her Delicious Revolution." **Julia Child**, who has also labored for decades to restore forgotten traditions of food preparation to America's kitchens, was among 11 persons awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom at the White House on July 23. Ironically, one of the other 10 Medals of Freedom awarded this year went posthumously to **Dave Thomas**, founder of the Wendy's fast-food restaurant chain! (Two steps forward, one step back...)

CHAA member **Ari Weinzwieg**, a founding partner of Zingerman's Deli, has published two books this year. Based on his extensive travels and research, *Zingerman's Guide to Good Eating* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003; 483 pp.,

\$19.95 paper) details how dozens of artisanal foods are produced, and explains what cooks should do to select and use ingredients of the highest quality. Distilling lessons that have led to huge customer satisfaction at the deli and its allied businesses for over two decades is the goal of Ari's other book, *Zingerman's Guide to Giving Great Service: Treating Our Customers Like Royalty* (130 pp., \$12 paper).

This past April 4, UM professor **Susan E. Alcock** addressed the topic of "Power Lunches in the Eastern Roman Empire," her inaugural lecture for the John H. D'Arms Collegiate Professorship in Classical Archaeology and Classics. Picking up on some themes explored by the late D'Arms in his study of Roman *convivia* and other elite public feasts, Alcock examined the impact of empire on eating habits in what is now Greece, Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon during the first three centuries CE. The text of her lecture has been published in the *Michigan Quarterly Review* (Fall 2003) and at www.umich.edu/~classics.

CHAA member **Robert E. Lewis**, UM English professor and editor-in-chief of the recently completed 13-volume *Middle English Dictionary*, was awarded the prestigious Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Prize by the British Academy. The biennial prize recognizes outstanding published works in the history of English language and literature. The Academy stated that the *MED* "represents what is surely the most important single contribution from transatlantic scholarship to the understanding of medieval English texts." Bob is only the third American to receive the prize since it was established in 1924. He and Julie flew to London in October to attend the award dinner.

Editor **Massimo Montanari** announced that the first issue of the scholarly journal *Food & History* was published in September 2003 by the European Institute of Food History (IEHA), based in Tours, France. *Food & History*, the first journal in Europe to focus on this topic, is a semiannual, multilingual publication dealing with many different aspects of food history. IEHA is also organizing its third annual colloquium to take place Dec. 11-15, 2003 in Bologna, Italy on the theme of "Food Borders": the evolution of individual and social food preferences and aversions, recommendations and prohibitions. For more information on the colloquium or journal, visit www.ieha.asso.fr.

Jane Bedula, Curator of Exhibits at Macculloch Hall Historical Museum in Morristown, NJ, has announced that a new exhibit "Dining Through the Decades" is running there from September 28, 2003 through February 16, 2004. Featuring displays of dining-room furniture, china, glassware, and silver, the exhibit explores social aspects of dining in the U.S. from Independence until the Civil War. Located in a restored old home in Morristown's National Historic District, this museum specializes in American and English fine and decorative arts. Admission is \$4, and visiting hours are 1-4pm on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. For more information, call the museum at 973-538-2404. ■

CHAA CALENDAR

(Unless noted, programs are scheduled for 4-6pm at Ann Arbor Senior Center, 1320 Baldwin Ave.)

December 14, 2003

CHAA Participatory Holiday Dinner Celebrating
the Centenary of James Beard's Birth
(4-7pm, Huntington Woods Public Library,
26415 Scotia Road)

January 18, 2004

Mark Napierkowski, Sausage Maker
at Zingerman's Deli,
"Artisan Sausage-Making in the
New Millennium: Dead or Alive?"

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First Class