

A Remembrance of Things Past

Reminiscences of Chefs and Other Food Professionals

part 2



Lidia Bastianich as a young girl, standing above the family *giardini* in Pula beside the Adriatic Sea. On pages 10-11 inside, the well-known chef and TV host recalls her rustic childhood.

MORSELS & TIDBITS

“Meet the Cookbook Collector Who’s Been Saving American Culinary History for 50 Years” is a profile of CHAA founding member **Jan Longone** that was published in March on the saveur.com website. The author was **Giancarlo Buonomo**, a Univ. of Michigan student who writes about food and the arts for *The Michigan Daily*. Buonomo described Jan as “one of the lesser-known icons of American gastronomy, someone who has, more than anyone else, spent her life preserving and studying the annals of American food.... In a field with an ever-growing pile of second and third and fourth-hand sources, she remains the primary source for primary sources.” He quoted the celebrated chefs Jeremiah Tower and Rick Bayless on the role that Jan played in their lives and careers. The article summarized Jan’s evolution from her schooldays, when she and fellow grad students would take turns cooking “national dishes” from many countries. Later, she amassed a formidable library of hard-to-find books, and eventually she took on curatorial work for UM libraries and exhibitions to document the neglected history of American food.

Jeremiah Tower, the renowned chef whose reminiscence, “Early Playpens”, appeared in our last issue, is profiled in a new film, “Jeremiah Tower: The Last Magnificent”. The filmmakers used several materials from the Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive at the Univ. of Michigan Special Collections Library. Directed by Lydia Tenaglia and co-produced by Anthony Bourdain, CNN Films, and Zero Point Zero, the 103-minute documentary premiered on Apr. 16 at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York. It’s scheduled for release to theaters early next year, and CNN plans to televise it subsequently.

Jayne Cohen, who wrote the article about A. Goodman & Sons in *Repast* (Winter 2013), is the organizer and moderator of a panel discussion, “Shalom Y’all: A Gefilte Gumbo of Jewish, Southern, and African-American Cuisine”, to be held on Sunday, Sep. 25 at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Manhattan. Speakers include Michael W. Twitty, Ted Merwin, Hasia Diner, Katherine Romanow, and Robin Amer.

The second annual **Smithsonian Food History Weekend** (Washington, DC, Oct. 27-29, 2016), will bring together culinary leaders, researchers, practitioners, and scholars to popularize the history of food in America and explore how the future of food is being shaped today. More information is available at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/events/food-history-weekend>.

“What America Ate” (<http://whatamericaate.org/>) is a new, open-access database of digitized primary resources from 1930s America. Users can browse historical recipes or search for information by topic, state, or region. The database includes materials from the Federal Writers’ Project “America Eats”; 200 rare community cookbooks from across the U.S.; and a massive collection of food-industry ads, pamphlets, recipe leaflets, and food packaging materials. Funders have included the National Endowment for the Humanities and many small donors via a Kickstarter campaign. Spearheading the project has been Michigan State Univ. history professor **Helen Zoe Veit**, who spoke to CHAA in May 2014 about American food habits in the Progressive Era. Prof. Veit’s two volumes of *Food in the Civil War Era: The North and The South*, and her two corresponding volumes of modernized Civil War recipes, have recently been published by MSU Press.

Prof. **Lucy M. Long** at Bowling Green State Univ. has edited a new textbook, *Food and Folklore Reader* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015). The 40 essays document examples of how popular American and international food customs help shape, and are shaped by, other aspects of culture such as writing and language, art, film, family rituals, worship, community and regional identity, and tourism. Dr. Long wrote about food festivals in *Repast* (Winter 2008), and in Sep. 2009 she spoke to CHAA about “Regional American Foodways: Sense of Place and Green Bean Casserole”. Her next book, *Honey: A Global History*, is forthcoming from Reaktion Books. ■

Repast

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THE TOUGH YEARS BEFORE “YAN CAN COOK”

by Martin Yan

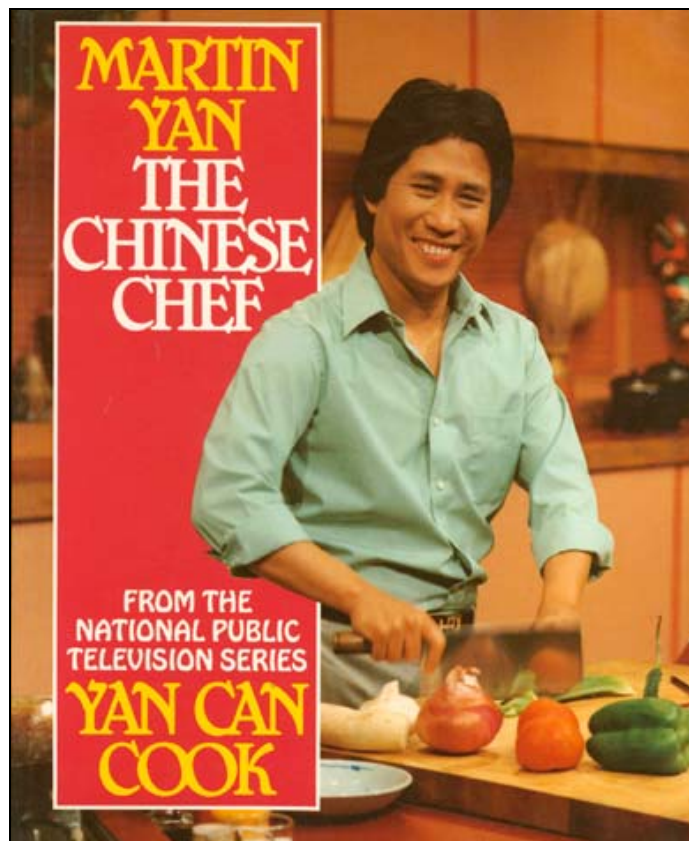
Certified Master Chef Martin Yan is known worldwide as an ambassador of Chinese and Asian cuisine. He has authored more than 20 cookbooks and hosted more than a dozen television series, foremost among them the “Yan Can Cook Show”, which has run continuously on national public TV since 1978 and has aired in scores of other countries in English, Mandarin, and Cantonese. Chef Yan emigrated from Hong Kong to Calgary, Alberta, in 1965 at the age of 17, but soon transferred to the Univ. of California at Davis, where he completed a master’s degree in food science in 1975. He and his wife Susan live in San Mateo, CA. The following is based on a recorded telephone interview conducted on June 3, 2016, by Repast editor Randy K. Schwartz.

I was raised in a restaurant environment, because my father ran a small successful restaurant operation in our city of Guangzhou, China. And my mother was running a grocery store a couple of blocks away. So even when I was growing up, I spent a lot of time in the restaurant or in the grocery store. Whether I liked it or not, I was already absorbing a lot of the flavors, understanding what smells good, what smells bad, what tastes good and what does not taste good. So I was well-trained at a very early age.

My Chinese name was Man-tat Yan. My father, Tak-ning Yan, had once worked in Portland, Oregon, where he had a little coffee shop serving chop suey, chow mein and stuff. In the old days, U.S. immigration law didn’t allow Chinese men to bring their wives into the country. So most of them made just enough money to go back to China and get married, buy property, and open a restaurant. And that’s what my father had done.

My family’s restaurant in Guangzhou was nothing fancy, just 60-70 seats. They specialized in clay-pot cooking and simple stir-fry. There were just a few people running the place: my father, and a young chef cooking in the kitchen, and another relative managing the outside and handling the money. So it was very much a simple, neighborhood, family-style operation.

I was always hanging around the restaurant. My father was so busy and my mother was running the grocery store, so I just kind of roamed around the place and the kitchen— in



One of Martin Yan’s early cookbooks, *The Chinese Chef* (Doubleday, 1985)

and out, in and out. When I got hungry I’d just go in and pick up something to eat. I’d see it and I’d smell it and I’d taste it, and somehow this developed my palate. It was very much a hands-on learning experience.

I was still pretty young when my father passed away, and my mother raised me. Since we were capitalists, under communism my mother, Sai-mui Lam, always had to go to late-night brainwashing meetings where they chastised the capitalists. So she suffered quite a bit mentally, but she was a very strong lady. She always wanted me to be able to get out of the country. When I was finishing primary school and going to high school, she basically told me, “Maybe it’s time for you to move on.”

So when I was about 13-14 years old, I left China and went by myself to Hong Kong [then under British rule] to stay with a distant uncle. He had worked with my dad when they were both in Oregon. They weren’t actually direct relatives; in Chinese custom, when you are not blood-related but are from the same village, you call each other “uncle” and “aunt”. So I went to my “uncle’s” place in Hong Kong.

Prep Work and Barbecue in Hong Kong

My uncle, Mr. Wong, happened to run a restaurant, too. It was especially famous for wonton noodle soup and for bar-

continued on next page

MARTIN YAN*continued from page 3*

becue, and they also did catering. It was not a very big operation, but it was a few floors, and each floor held maybe about 150 customers. The restaurant part was downstairs, and they'd do catering on the second and third floors. That was truly a decent-sized restaurant in those days.

I was working and helping out in the kitchen. It was prep work and occasionally getting on the wok stove—but at first I was too young, small, and weak to be able to pick up the wok. Instead I learned how to bone the chicken, the poultry, cut up the duck, all different kinds of dishes. Boning chicken, fileting fish, cutting up vegetables—that's why I was trained to use my knife and be very fast with it!

This restaurant served very famous barbecue. Chinese barbecue (*siu mei*) is different from American barbecue in a few ways. First of all, it uses a lot more than just beef and pork ribs and chicken. They have duck, they have goose, they have Spring chicken, they have all kinds of liver—chicken liver, duck liver—and they basically barbecue everything—the duck neck, the duck feet, chicken wings, everything.

Second, the Chinese always marinate their barbecue meat, particularly roast duck. The most typical barbecue seasoning would be made of soy sauce, sugar, wine, five-spice powder, and hoisin sauce. So basically, it's like a Chinese version of American barbecue sauce, except that the American sauce has a baked-tomato flavor profile and a variety of spices and herbs, and also tends to be a little acidic.

Third, the Chinese barbecue station is not just about roasting. Unlike a square oven or an open-pit barbecue, the Chinese do barbecue in a very specialized enclosed vertical oven to create a convection of high heat. The oil and the juices drip down to a holder, and they'll collect those and boil them again and filter it, and use it to provide additional flavoring and dressing for other dishes. The barbecue station is not just open-pit, open-fire barbecue, they actually have other things: braised meat, stews, poached chicken, roast chicken, barbecued chicken, soy sauce chicken (which is actually boiled), and so on. There's a lot more variety in the Chinese barbecue station or shop than in the typical Tex-Mex or Texas barbecue, which is basically just beef and pork ribs.

In the beginning, I actually slept in the restaurant every evening after it closed. If you've ever been in Hong Kong, you probably know it's not like Ann Arbor where there's a lot of wide-open spaces and not that many people. In Hong Kong there are now eight million people living in a very small area! So living space is very precious. The permanent staff actually slept in the restaurant after it closed. They would put a board on top of chairs or a table, or on top of a booth, and they just slept there. So life was pretty rough, pretty tough and minimal then.

The kitchen was very hot and very humid, like Summer in the Southeast—humid, hot, and dirty. And we didn't have a true bathroom, either. We had a washroom, but we couldn't really take baths the way they take baths with a shower head and everything. You'd use a bucket of water and just pour it

all over you and scrub it around and clean up, and that's it. Just like you'd do in the wild. It was a pretty rough few years.

While I was going to high school and working in my distant uncle's restaurant, I also was taking some cooking classes from a professional chef friend of mine. So during those five and a half years I eventually made enough to have a place to stay on my own.

A Visit to Mme. Wu at UCLA

After I finished high school I was sponsored by a Baptist school to come over here [to North America] to go to college. When I first landed I started looking for a job in a restaurant, because I had the skills. I was able to land a job, but in those days 30-40 years ago, the pay was only about 50-60 cents an hour.

I was accepted at the University of California at Davis, but being a foreign student meant that I had to pay three times as much in tuition and fees. I would never be able to make enough money to support myself in school and pay for rent, food, and tuition and fees if I only made 50-60 cents an hour or 65 cents an hour.

Then I heard that there was a lady, Madame Wu, who was teaching a cooking class at UCLA and she also had a very successful restaurant*. I took a Greyhound bus and went down to Los Angeles and visited her and said, "Hey, I'd like to find out more about teaching Chinese cooking." She told me all the things about what to do and how to do it, and I came back and talked to the Dean of the UC-Davis Extension and said "Hey, I want to teach." And he asked me, "Are you a master chef? How many years have you been a head chef? Do you have any teaching credentials?" I said, "I have none of those. I'm not a master chef, I do not have credentials, and I have never been a head chef in a restaurant because I was too young when I left Hong Kong." So basically he said, "Then you're not qualified."

But I was the type of person who never gives up, so I kept bugging him and bugging him until I drove him crazy! So he finally gave me an opportunity. He said, "Okay, I'll put an ad in the paper, and if we can get 15 or more people to enroll then you can teach—otherwise don't come back and bother me again." And then I called all my friends, all the people that I knew from when I was working in the restaurant and doing catering, and all my customers, and I said "Hey, I'm teaching a cooking class. You should come and sign up." So when the ad came out, within a week about 43 people signed up!

So that's how I started my teaching career, at the UC-Davis Extension. It was a lot of hard work—when all my

* Editor's note: Madame Wu's Garden was a famous restaurant in Santa Monica, CA, open from 1959 to 1998. The proprietor, Madame Sylvia Wu, born Sylvia Cheng in Jiujiang, China, in 1915, had emigrated to the U.S. during World War 2. Her 1973 cookbook, *Madame Wu's Art of Chinese Cooking*, would also be very influential. At age 100, Mme. Wu continues to live in the Los Angeles area.

friends and my roommate were dating and having fun, I was actually working every day. I was being paid \$18 an hour, which is almost 20 times as much as I would get working in the kitchen. I was teaching two classes a week, and then at the end of six weeks I'd take the students to Chinatown and buy a whole bunch of seasoning and woks and sell it to them at a premium. That's how I was able to make enough money to go through my entire undergraduate and graduate school.

To Be a Great Chef

To become good at Chinese cooking is not difficult, but to do so you've got to understand the essence, the spirit, of the cuisine, just like any other cuisine. Most chef students are still trained in French techniques, and the French techniques are probably about skills and about understanding the spirit of the cuisine. And with Chinese cuisine it's the same, with Japanese it's the same: it's about the essence, about using fresh ingredients. A lot of skills are involved because everything is done by hand. If you ask Jacques Pépin, if you ask all the French chefs or Italian, German, or Swiss chefs, they'll tell you that they peel the potato, use the knife, and beat the egg by hand. Everything is hand-made, hand-done.

But today, it's all about cooking school. You go through a one- or two-year program and most likely, you do not have enough time and opportunity to really build your skill sets. The young chef student is not able to develop enough skill sets because they don't have enough practice. I think that the key for young people to understand is that to be a great chef, to be a master, to be a good chef, you have to take the time to develop a skill. You have to be patient, you have to be persistent, you have to be willing to work hard. And a lot of young people are not willing to work hard. A lot of the apprentices, they have a lot of ambition when they get out of cooking school; they want to be the master, they want to be the chef rather than to start from the bottom, psychologically speaking.

I make a lot of presentations and commencement speeches at culinary schools in this country and worldwide. And I always encourage people and say, first you've got to believe this is what you really want. You have to believe this is your passion, this is where your interests lie, before you really devote yourself to this profession. Because it's long hours, a lot of hard work. But it's also very satisfying and very challenging. There's a lot of satisfaction if you're cooking for somebody and they're enjoying what you prepare.

Chinese Cuisine is a Global Cuisine

When I first came over here about 40 years ago I was told there were probably about 3000-4000 Chinese restaurants, and most of them were serving chop suey and chow mein. Because in the old days people didn't travel as much, and they didn't really venture out of their dietary habits. But now there are 52,000 Chinese restaurants in the U.S. alone! And look at how many Vietnamese restaurants there are, Thai restaurants, Indian, how many ethnic restaurants.



So I think this will continue to grow, but to grow in a direction unlike before. Before, whenever they'd open another restaurant it was just another chop suey restaurant. But now, if you go to New York, to Detroit, or to Windsor right across from Detroit, there's all kinds of regional Chinese cuisine: Beijing, Cantonese, Hong Kong, Hunan, Szechuan, Shanghai, Cantonese dim sum. This was not even available 30 years ago, and now it's everywhere. And 30 years ago there were very few sushi restaurants, but now it's all over the place, even in small towns. Why? Because Americans and people around the world are communicating, using today's transportation and today's media and Internet. People are learning a lot more, they experience a lot more, and they travel a lot more.

When I go to the Great Wall near Beijing, I see thousands and thousands of Americans. I go to Xi'an and see groups of Americans and Europeans running all over the place to see the Terracotta Warriors. When they travel, they're exposed to local foods, not just chop suey and chow mein anymore. In Beijing they experience Peking Duck; in Shanghai, the Shanghai dumplings; in Szechuan, the spicy hot Hunan and Szechuan cuisine; in Guangzhou, Canton, my home town, the dim sum and Cantonese barbecue. When people are exposed to it, they develop their palates and start appreciating it.

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BAKING WITH MY SYRIAN AUNT ZAHIEYEH

by Anissa Helou

Anissa Helou is a Lebanese-born author, teacher, and chef. While currently residing in Italy, she has lived most of her adult life in London, where she first came to study art and interior design and then worked as an art and antiquities expert, including for the Sotheby's auction house. Her cookbooks include Lebanese Cuisine (1994), Street Cafe Morocco (1999), Mediterranean Street Food (2002), The Fifth Quarter: An Offal Cookbook (2005), Modern Mezze (2007), Savory Baking from the Mediterranean (2007), and Levant: Recipes and Memories from the Middle East (2013). She has been a frequent guest on radio and TV broadcasts about food.

I grew up in Beirut, where hardly anyone baked bread at home. For this, you had to go to the villages and small towns where home cooks made their own *marqouq*, a very large and very thin flat bread baked over a *saj* (a kind of inverted wok, once fired by wood but now mostly by gas). And even though I spent part of my Summers at my grandmother's village, Reshmaya, in the Shouf mountains of Lebanon, no one in her family baked at home.

For home-baked bread, I had to wait until my Summers in Syria, when we went to my father's village, Mashta el-Helou. There, we stayed with his sister, my aunt Zahiye. Twice a week she baked her own *tannur* bread, a flat bread baked in a type of pit oven, also called *tannur*, one of the oldest ovens in the world. My aunt would awaken very early on baking day to make the dough, which she leavened with leftover dough from the previous batch. She then let the dough rise while she attended to various chores around the house and outside in her courtyard, where she kept chickens and a milking cow, as well as lighting the wood fire at the bottom of a *tannur* that she had built in the field across from her courtyard. When the embers started glowing, she went back into the kitchen to divide and shape the risen dough into large disks, which she stacked in a large shallow bowl, laying floured cloths between them.

She carried the shaped dough out to the *tannur* and began slapping the disks of dough against the burning walls of the oven. I didn't know it then— as I had never seen anyone except her bake such bread— but she really should have used a cushion to slap the dough against the hot walls of the oven.



Anissa as a child in Lebanon in the late 1950s.

She seemed to have asbestos hands and an incredible knack to keep the dough from getting tangled without having to stretch it on a cushion. The bread baked in seconds and I was always there waiting by her side for her to peel the baked bread off the oven walls, again with her hand, so that I could eat one piping-hot and still crackling.

Occasionally, she used the dough to make us *manaqish* (typical Lebanese breakfast flat breads spread with *za'atar* and olive oil; the singular is *manqousheh* or *man'oushe*), which my Lebanese mother had taught her. When she made these, I never left her side. *Manaqish* were one of my favourite breakfasts and in Beirut, I always went along to the baker with our housekeeper to sneak one straight out of the oven before taking the rest home— almost all Lebanese home cooks make the topping at home, then have their local baker use his own dough to make the *manaqish*.

My aunt's *tannur manaqish* were even more scrumptious than those I had at home in Beirut, which were baked in a conventional oven and as a result were not as crisp. I was also mesmerized by my aunt's ability to hold onto the dough even though it had been slathered with *za'atar* and olive oil. I can still visualize her now, over 50 years later, her face red and



A loaf of flatbread bakes on the wall of a Levantine *tannur* oven.

sweaty as she bent over the hot *tannur* to either slap the bread against the burning walls or peel it off them.

And whenever I travelled around Syria before the uprising, I would remember my aunt each time I came across *tannur* bakers. By then, *tannur* bread had become a kind of tourist attraction and there were many makeshift *tannur* bakeries popping up along roadsides. All of this is sadly gone now, but I hope that one day soon the Syrian government will stop being at war with its own people and that I will be able to return to a beautiful country that is not only rich in history and culture, but also in personal memories. ■

Anissa in Summer 1982 at her aunt Zahiyyeh's home in Mashta el-Helou, a village in the An-Nusayriyah Mountains of coastal Syria.



THRILLING TRANSFORMATIONS AT PORTLAND'S TOWN CLUB

by Fernando Divina

Certified Executive Chef Fernando Divina has served since 2012 as the Executive Chef of Food and Nutrition Services at Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) in Portland, and he heads a consulting business, FD Food + Restaurant. He has previously been chef at Lon's at the Hermosa Inn (Paradise Valley, Arizona), at Cave B Inn at SageCliffe (located at an estate winery and resort on cliffs above the Columbia River in Washington), and at several Portland restaurants. He was schooled at Clark College and at the Culinary Institute of America, and also received instruction from Diana Kennedy in Mexico and from Wolfgang Puck. Fernando's wife, Marlene Divina, wrote the article "Pacific Northwest Bounty: Foraging for Life" in Repast (Spring 2008). The couple were members of the design and development team for the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, and they co-authored the James Beard Foundation Award-winning book, Foods of the Americas: Native Recipes and Traditions (2004).

As a chef and Oregon resident, I've been touched in a number of ways by the work of Portland's renowned culinary son, James Beard. One of the most enduring lessons that I drew from Beard is that all aspects of American *haute cuisine* can coexist with simple and mundane foods when these are procured and presented in an elegant way.

Within this city of aspiring cooks, coffee roasters, and wine makers, perhaps nowhere in Portland are James Beard's teachings and legacy felt more deeply than at the venerable Town Club (est. 1928), a women's private club located in the Goose Hollow neighborhood in the hills above downtown. When I was entering the professional culinary scene, the kitchens there were headed by Beard's protégé and devotee, Richard Nelson. He had been the able cooking assistant for many of Beard's hometown visits over the years, including classroom retreats held in Portland and in Gearhart by the sea. The volumes of Beard's typewritten personal cooking receipts bear handwritten notations in the margins and literally between the lines, including brilliant observations, notes, and corrections entered not only by Beard but by Nelson as well.



It was through Richard Nelson's assessment of my own newly-acquired culinary training that I was appointed Chef de Cuisine by the Club's incoming and affable director. The year was 1980; I was still single then and resided at Portland Towers, directly across the street from the Town Club. Together, Nelson and I curated special menus, seasonal features, and other events, selecting each course with reverence and care, mindful of the personal palates associated with this sophisticated membership.

Turning Dairy Cream into Carved Spheres of Butter

One day, we were preparing for an afternoon tea at four o'clock, a monthly tradition for the ladies of the Club. Very early that morning, we had received our delivery of local dairy cream. A portion of it was to be used to make ice cream for that evening's service, while another lot would be churned into butter and shaped into scored spheres by the servers, using special ridged paddles of pine.

The butter would be held on shaved ice until refreshed with cubed ice and presented on crystal-lined and domed sterling-silver butter dishes. Luxe and luscious, with butter fork and knife at the ready, this basic farm food would then be complete, transformed to delight the elite. As someone who spent his boy-



At left, the Town Club in Portland, Oregon.

a time, having freed myself of the burden of the at-capacity ovens to tend to my timer. The alarm was muted by the solid wood pantry door, crafted of timber that had been hewn in the 1920s from the adjacent Southwest hillside. Clip-clopping downward in wooden clogs, I adjusted my floppy toque to better inspect the progress of the ice cream contraption, a turn-of-the-century White Mountain model that gave out a near-deafening whine as it churned.

I heaved aside the cast-aluminum latch that secured the main vessel, a pail of brine-soaked cedar reinforced with heavy gauge strapping. I pried the metal breaker to the off position and dabbed a pinstriped linen cloth to carefully brush away the crushed ice and saline solution, condensed and beading on all the surfaces and threatening to drip into openings perilously exposed. The contrast of a beloved prize literally buried beneath a potential disaster is the kind of challenge faced by a Chef de Cuisine hour after hour.

I remember coaxing the lid gingerly to release the metal and wood paddle from the gear, and then— behold! It's always with unfailing wonderment that I "re-discover" how a viscous lather of refined *crème Anglaise* has magically transformed into a rich *crème glacée*.

With trepidation, catching briny droplets from the base of the heavy vessel, I removed the ice cream to three bowls that I had readied with complementary flavors and textures to comprise the *bombes glacées* of frozen custard cream. I gently folded those garnishes into the frozen mass, and used this to shape an initial layer within each of three French tin *bombe* molds. Then I placed the molds into shallow vessels of salted ice, and covered each with a clean linen cloth for placement into the *cave de glacées*, a special ice-cream freezer procured especially for this purpose.

That was the first of three different layers of ice cream. When complete, we sliced the three-layer *bombes* to accompany a hazelnut tart, one of the elements of the dessert course we presented that evening. We also prepared a chocolate enrobing sauce using cacao from a single *finca* (estate) in Venezuela's mountainous interior. This was served in a silver *saucier* passed by one of the two servers assigned to each table.

For me, no experience before or since has compared to the devotion of the staff at Portland's Town Club. Each precious daily service— five courses for luncheon, seven courses for supper— was created or recreated with discipline and a love of craft. The joy embodied by the freshly-churned butter and ice cream that I have described, and by the journey of the *bombes glacées* from inception to consumption, gives a taste of the awe-inspiring and thrilling transformations that were carried out every day inside the Club kitchens. ■

hood Summers doing fieldwork on truck farms in Washington's eastern valley, such a transformation from minimal to maximal for the sake of pleasure has been a recurrent aspect of my life, setting the stage for a mixture of diverse cultures and foodways.

The Club boasts a beautiful exterior of arched Romanesque architecture and an austere interior, although by tea-time this day the grand dining hall had a festive hue. Each pedestal table for four guests was set with a Sheffield sterling-silver hollowware tea service on enameled cast-iron trivets. This was encircled by floral-pattern teacups and saucers of fine Spode china.

We had carefully prepared the tea-time savories and sweets and placed them, protected by gold-leaf doilies, on silver platters of Old Sheffield Plate with filigreed borders. Among these were finger sandwiches made with freshly-baked Pullman loaves, the crusts removed, the sandwiches filled variously with wild-harvested watercress, locally-grown Lebanese lemon cucumbers, or a salad of select chicken meat. In the light of the dangling crystal scone orbs, this pyramid of delicacies cast its shadow over the spot-lit sideboard laden with fine damask linens and napery. Our confections included jewel-hued French *macarons* with pistachio-spiked Swiss meringue buttercream and chocolate ganache filling.

Using a 100-Year Machine to Make *Bombes Glacées*

Two floors below the swelling hum of activities in preparation for that evening's service, another juxtaposition of the plain and the refined unfolded. I descended the stairs, two at

GROWING UP IN ISTRIA

by Lidia Bastianich

The well-known chef and TV host Lidia Bastianich lives in Little Neck Bay in northern Queens, NY, with her mother, Erminia Motika, 96. When Lidia was 10, she and her family moved to New York from the town of Pola, which was then part of Tito's Yugoslavia. She has written more than a dozen cookbooks, including the recent Lidia's Mastering the Art of Italian Cuisine (2015), while her five cooking-show series on public television have included "Lidia's Italian Table" and the currently-running "Lidia's Kitchen". She and her children own and manage several Italian restaurants in the U.S., some retail food businesses, and a travel agency.

Running as a child through flowering thyme bushes, in homemade slippers with soles fashioned out of recycled bicycle tires, and crawling through the cracks of the

white rocks decorating the coastline of the Istrian peninsula, I had no idea that my life would bring me to America. No idea that those formative years, my exposure and contact with the pristine flavors of ingredients, the unadulterated aromas of nature, and the simple country cooking of my grandmother and great aunt in a courtyard in Busoler, would set standards in my culinary repertoire, which I would try to recapture in a different place in a different time.

We lived in Pola (now known as Pula): my mother Erminia, who was an elementary school teacher, my father Vittorio, a mechanic, and my brother Franco, who is three years older than me. Pola is a quaint tourist resort on the tip of the Istrian peninsula, with a beautiful shoreline on the Adriatic Sea. The city and its surroundings are full of Roman ruins, with a beautiful arena in the center of town that is still used for cultural events like concerts, opera, theatre, and other presentations. The islands of Brioni, about five miles off Pola's coast, were used as private resorts by many different rulers: the Romans, the Venetians, the Hapsburgs, Tito, and Tudjman.

But my kingdom was Busoler, a small town then made up of only 30 houses along one white stone road. The epicenter of this kingdom was the courtyard where my maternal grandparents lived, Rosa and Giovanni. Giovanni was nicknamed Quortici because he would go every Sunday to the *osteria* (tavern) in the neighboring town of Sissonò to play *bocce* and order a *quortici*, or quarter-liter, of wine. He would call grandma Coga di Parigi, dialect for "cook from Paris". I had no idea what that meant



Nonna Rosa and family working in the grape vineyards at their home in Busoler on the Istrian peninsula.

then, but I can attest to it now that grandma's cooking was the antithesis of a Parisian haute chef. Grandma's cooking was magical for me; it was as if the fields would give birth to bread, pasta, and tender vegetables, and the sea would bring gifts of exquisite, briny morsels. It was a cuisine where small portions were gratifying, lasting experiences. In my upbringing food was respected, it had a complete cycle and nothing was wasted; even the breadcrumbs were collected and given to the chickens and pigeons. The meal was a ritual of body and soul, a sacred time for the family to share the gifts of the land and their union.

I would go to Busoler as often as I could, every weekend, every holiday, and the first 11 birthdays of my life. Busoler was on a seasonal clock, with all the work and labor dictated by nature. My grandfather Giovanni worked in the arsenal (shipyard) to secure some income and a pension, but his passion was the *campagna*, the land. They grew, raised, produced, vinified, and milled everything they needed to survive, and bartered any excess for items that they did not have.

To the north of the courtyard leading in to the *pinetta* woods (pines) were the pens where the animals were kept. Nonna had a *casetta nera*, a small black house, called so because its walls were all black from the smoke that came from her open hearth. Bouquets of bay leaves and oregano adorned the black walls, and it was inside this house where she would do her food preparation: rendering fat, smoking *prosciutto*, sausages, and *pancetta*, and hanging braids of onions and garlic to dry in the Winter. She would also cook for the pigs here, using potato peels, pumpkins, any unused food, and the bran left over from milling the wheat into flour for bread and pasta.

Beyond the *casetta nera* was the chicken coop. We had chickens that were on a small loft fabricated of carefully-spaced wooden planks with wooden stairs for their ascent, while the ducks and geese were on the *pied à terre*. On the planks there were wooden boxes, filled with hay that I would help to change periodically, where the chickens would lay their eggs. We had some larger ones on the floor for the ducks and geese, but they were somewhat less obedient and would lay their eggs under the bushes in the woods. I would love to collect them, and I knew their secret spots where they liked to lay eggs.

The geese in particular were noisy and always protesting about something. They could be quite nasty with me, challenging and pecking me with their orange beaks as I rounded them up with a stick, but grandma praised their large eggs and used them for making fresh pasta. For special holidays like Christmas, she would roast a whole goose for hours in a wood-burning oven, with rosemary, until the flesh fell from the bone. I just loved roasted goose; maybe there was even a bit of revenge on my part.

We always had two or three pens of rabbits, separated according to sex and united only when grandma wanted to breed them. They demanded a lot of attention and food, eating the outer leaves of our lettuces and cabbages, and the trimmings from the vegetables that we cleaned and prepped for the market would also be given to the rabbits. Grandma and I would go to the fields with a sickle, especially in the Springtime, and harvest clover and flowers for them. In the Wintertime they would eat hay, and the straw from the milled wheat was used to line their pen, as well as those of the pigs and chickens. I loved playing



with the young bunnies; they were like furry little balls and would tickle me as they tried to smell my face when I held them near.

I didn't enjoy much the pigsty, although grandma and grandpa deemed it very important, and would go to a fair in February or March to buy piglets. The piglets were cared for, cooked for, and fed until they were ready for slaughter around November or December. There was always a feast in Busoler when the pigs were being slaughtered; neighbors came to help, and the host household provided food and wine for everybody. Every few days it was another household and celebration.

The pig was an extremely important animal in the food chain of Busoler. They used every part of the animal. Nothing was wasted; even the ears and the tail were salted and air-cured for *minestres* (soups based on vegetables in a broth, often enriched with pasta, meat scraps, or other ingredients). The two hind legs were made into *prosciutto*, the front legs into *spoletta* (a thinner version of *prosciutto* not made often today), the jowl was made into *guanciale* (cheek bacon), the hooves were salted and smoke-cured. All of the head (snout, tongue, and ears), if not salt-cured, was used in making *cotecchino* (headcheese sausage).

The internal organs— heart, liver, lungs, kidneys, sweetbreads, and spleen— all were included in *frottiglie*: sautéed in small pieces with an abundant amount of onions, bay leaves, white wine, and coarsely-ground black pepper. The blood was saved and made into *baldoni*: cooked polenta or rice would be added to the blood, then *pignoli* (pine nuts), sugar, and sometimes cocoa, all stuffed in the large intestine casing and cooked slowly in boiling water. Slices of *baldoni* would be reheated in olive oil for *merenda* (morning snack) or lunch. The

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FALLING IN LOVE WITH LITTLE HAVANA

by Eve Aronoff Fernandez

Eve Aronoff Fernandez is currently chef/ owner of two Ann Arbor eateries: Frita Batidos (a Cuban-inspired fast casual restaurant and bar) and eve the restaurant (in the Bell Tower Hotel, with Armando Lopez as Executive of Culinary Operations). She began cooking in restaurants while still an undergraduate at Brandeis University, and later earned diplomas in French cuisine and wine and spirits at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. In 2006 Chef Aronoff published a cookbook, Eve: Contemporary Cuisine, Méthode Traditionnelle (Huron River Press), and in 2009 she competed on the Bravo TV reality series “Top Chef” (season 9, Las Vegas).

I have so many food memories that sometimes it feels like all I did throughout my childhood was to eat or think about food. I still have notes that I jotted down from the multi-course, international dinner parties that I made for my parents’ friends’ birthday celebrations from the time I was 12 years old, when I was working through my first cookbook, the *New York Times International Cookbook*. I remember writing a letter to my best friend every day from Summer camp, regaling her with the details of what we had eaten that day— how many teaspoons of sugar I’d put on my bowl of corn flakes, whether we’d had grilled cheese or pizza for lunch, spaghetti or meatloaf for dinner. (It must have been very exciting to read!)

To this day, every time I hear the theme music at the start of NPR’s “All Things Considered”, I can see, smell, and taste the big teal Pyrex bowl etched with white roosters and piled high with my Mom’s spaghetti— as the start of that show coincided with dinnertime throughout my childhood. The spaghetti dinner was simple, but after all these years, not many things have been more delicious to me.

I can remember driving from Michigan to New York City and arriving late at night to an enormous spread that my grandmother had prepared, her care lavished on every last detail— sliced Beefsteak tomatoes, roast beef, apple and raspberry strudels. I can remember my other grandmother arriving to visit us from Miami with her suitcases stuffed to the gills— full of stuffed cabbage, chicken paprikash, farfel, and other Jewish, Eastern European delicacies layered between ice packs, foods that she had slaved over the stove to prepare for us.

But one of my most transformative food memories arose from one of my many visits to that same grandmother, my Grandma Rosie, in Miami. It was a visit while I was newly away



Eve and her husband in Little Havana, Miami

at college and finally old enough to venture off by myself for the afternoon. My goal for the day was to map out the several connecting busses that it would take to get to Calle Ocho in Little Havana, a community that I’d imagined for years but had never had the occasion to visit.

I loved the heat of Miami, the multicultural feeling, the Jewish delicatessens in Miami Beach (Wolfie’s Rascal House, in particular, is a powerful food memory of mine in and of itself). But throughout my childhood, I had never been able to convince my grandmother to accompany me to— what seemed like a world away— the Cuban neighborhood of Little Havana.

Reaching Calle Ocho

After mapping out my bus routes and connections, and taking phone money (these were pre-cellphone days, and Grandmother had me take a quarter dollar and write out her address and phone number), I ventured off that morning, very excited, but nervous, for my adventure. I remember hearing Spanish spoken in the streets as I made my way across Miami, and more and more as I got further from the retirement community of N. Miami Beach. I remember the landscape and buildings changing, driving by red-roofed *casitas*, and finally arriving in Little Havana.

Much of the rest of the day was kind of a magical blur. I remember seeing little stores with stacks of flip-flops piled into baskets, and signs for *pan Cubano* in the windows— you could



Photo: "Top Chef"

practically taste the freshly baked loaves just by looking at them in their open white paper bags, and smelling their faint scent of lard.

I have never been drawn to “fancy” environments— those have never been exciting to me. By contrast, in Little Havana there was a genuine warmth in people’s expressions, and they communicated with so much emotion and animation. I watched groups of older men playing dominoes on little rickety tables on the sidewalk, drinking thimbles of sweetened coffee that they’d ordered at the outdoor counters. Somehow, all of these little details that afternoon influenced me and my cooking more than the years I labored and studied, working my way up from prep cook to line cook to Sous Chef to Chef de Cuisine; even influenced me more than my time in Paris where I got my diploma in French Cuisine. Actually experiencing the reality of this new culture changed me and impacted my style of cooking more than any other single moment or day.

I lost track of the time, and the day got away from me. As it was getting dark, I called Grandmother from outside the Aventura Mall on my roundabout route home, only to find that she had actually called the police, afraid from my being away for so long and not having heard from me. In my family, it’s in all of our natures to err in the direction of worry, but I had to take full responsibility, in this case, after I came to my senses and my Cuban reverie subsided a little bit.

When I developed my own style of cooking as an aspiring chef, I was strongly influenced by the spirit of Cuban culture and

ingredients. In college, while studying Comparative Literature, I started cooking professionally and reading as much as I could about different cultures and cuisines. I had become enthralled with the history, recipes, architecture, and overall spirit of Cuban culture, and I adored the ingredients native to Cuba and Southern Florida. But everything I had read and dreamt about became utterly palpable when I stepped off the bus into Little Havana that day. Working in restaurants after I graduated from college, I didn’t get much vacation time, but Miami was my go-to destination any time I did get to go away.

Later I opened my restaurant, Frita Batidos, its name honoring two staples of Cuban street-food culture. The *frita* is a Cuban-style burger made from *chorizo* on a soft egg bun, topped with shoestring fries. The *batido* is a tropical type of milkshake. Strangely enough, I was inspired to pair these two dishes as the centerpiece of my restaurant simply from reading about them and imagining how absolutely delicious they must be, and ridiculously good together. Only years later did I actually taste a traditional *frita* and *batido*. My interpretations of them derived from my own cooking styles and flavor profiles, paired with the spirit of Cuban culture that I fell in love with. This love came to fruition on that afternoon that I spent wandering around Calle Ocho for an irresponsibly long day almost 27 years ago. ■

LIDIA BASTIANICH *continued from page 11*

stomach would make a great pot of *trippa* (tripe) and the belly fat would be soft-cured into *pancetta*. Ribs and loins with bones would be cured and smoked in the *casetta nera*. All the small pieces of fat would be rendered, as lard and *ciccioli* (cracklings), made in a big heavy pot slowly over a wood fire. We loved the hot cracklings with some salt but they were also used to dress *gnocchi* or pasta, and were put in *frittatas* and bread. Small pieces of meat that were left from the butchering were turned into sausages and salamis with some of the fat.

There was also a pen with three or four goats, and they were always a handful. Grandma would send them to pasture behind the house, where they would indiscriminately eat anything, although they preferred garden vegetables, fruits, and grapes, so they had to be watched closely. They produced excellent milk, from which grandma would make *ricotta* and fresh cheese just for us. And every Easter we had roasted baby goat with fresh rosemary, Spring potatoes, and fresh pear braised with fresh Spring onions.

The vegetables that we grew were diverse. I remember I loved the spinach that grandma would cook. She would pluck the whole little plant with its pink roots, and wash it well. After sautéing some sliced garlic in a pan with olive oil until it was golden, she would add the fresh spinach, season it, and finish it with breadcrumbs.

It is all these pure, unadulterated flavors that I remember so vividly. It is where my collection of taste is rooted; it is an extended quest in everything I cook to recapture these flavors.

“FOR US, MAKING A MISTAKE WOULD BE COSTLY”

❧

SHAPED BY A FAMILY KITCHEN IN DETROIT

by Shawn J. Loving

Certified Executive Chef Shawn Loving is Department Chair of Culinary Arts at Schoolcraft College (Livonia, MI), where he supervises two- and four-year degree programs as well as the American Harvest Restaurant and other operations. Previously he has been chef at the Epcot Center in Orlando, FL; at EuroDisney in Marne-la-Vallée, France; at Race Rock International in Orlando, FL; and at several Detroit-area restaurants including his own, Loving Spoonful, which overlooked Copper Creek Golf Course in Farmington Hills. He has collected an array of awards and medals in national and international food preparation competitions and has served as team chef for the Detroit Pistons and U.S. Olympic basketball teams. The following is based on a recorded interview conducted in Chef Loving's campus office on May 9, 2016, by Repast editor Randy K. Schwartz.

I was the youngest of three brothers growing up on the east side of Detroit, where I went to Van Zile Elementary, to Pulaski and then Osborn High School. Our father Neal was in the food business, and still is, now semi-retired in Arizona. His work, though, was in hospital food services, or what I consider food service for wellness— not the culinary arts, which was eventually the way that I desired to come into the business.

At home it was our mother Diane who was doing the cooking. When I was seven years old my parents had divorced, and that same year, in 1976, my grandmother Thelma who'd been living with us passed. That Bicentennial Year was a big turning point for the country and in a different way for me, as a kid— to be with your grandparent and she passes away. You're remembering her stove having good substantive meals on it, and then that changed. It was my mother and her sister who took over the reins of family service and food and experiences.

So my mom's cooking was most influential to me. It was a matter of watching her cook in the kitchen, and I always liked to be around the kitchen. I would help her, but as with most kids it was in very small ways. You're given tasks that are the most simplistic, that you can't mess up: clean the spinach or greens, wash something up really good, cut the biscuits, butter the pancakes. Because for us, making a mistake would be costly— that meal is needed, and it's real. I remember that for sure! It's a little different than the level of forgiveness that we have when people are learning to prepare food in an institutional environment like here at Schoolcraft College.

I would watch my mom make things like collard greens and yeast rolls, pork chops and johnnycakes. These are some foods that are sort of stereotyped now as African-American in origin, and they're probably still eaten in lots of inner-city homes. But I think the reality is that this way of eating isn't so much tied to a particular race as it is just something that



Left, Shawn Loving as a culinary student at Schoolcraft College in 1989. Next to him are chef/ professor Richard Benson, Vice President Conway Jeffress, and President Richard McDowell.



arose as peasant cooking in the South. It matched well with family-style eating because these were share-driven foods, as opposed to plated foods. Your typical family table might have a big bowl of creamy mashed potatoes and smothered pork chops, or smothered chicken, and big bowls of vegetables. These were complete meals, but they weren't individually plated.

And johnnycakes were a way to utilize battered cornbread. As opposed to baking it in a baking pan and serving wedges or pieces—like you would a cake—instead, you eat it as a crispy-edged, textured pancake, but on the savory side of things, without the syrup.

What Do You Want to Be?

As I grew up, it was 10th grade that started to reveal what I was going to do with my life. I wasn't doing bad in school at all, in fact I was doing fine, but I had not really been asked the question about what did I want to become, where did I really want to go, what road did I want to go down? Then in 10th grade my guidance counselor asked me, What do you want to do? What do you want to be? She had a list of all the trades in vocational education. You could choose to be a welder, or go to a police academy, or something along those lines.

And when I saw “Culinary Arts” on the list, what jumped immediately into my head was Thanksgiving and other holidays that seemed to be the most joyous times for family. Everyone separates the rest of the year, when they're upset and bothered, from the holidays, when no one's upset. And I really enjoyed holidays the most—from watching my mom make homemade yeast rolls and cinnamon rolls, to her timing of all of the food being ready at the same time. Bringing people together that you hadn't seen in a long time. Now I know the word for it, “hospitality”, and I understand the essence of it, but already back then the concept drew me.

And so I took that challenge in high school. I enrolled at the Golightly Technical Center, a vocational school on Jefferson Avenue. I went there for 11th and 12th grade, and learned the basics of culinary arts.

After high school, I proceeded to work at local restaurants—the Hotel Pontchartrain, Salvatore Scallopini, Les Auteurs—a variety of dining concepts. I received a scholarship to go to school here at Schoolcraft and did that for three years, graduating in 1991. The school was taking part in lots of competitions internationally, and I was on the Salon Team, so I competed in Singapore and Luxembourg. Based on my performance in Singapore I was offered a job opportunity with the Executive Chef of Epcot Center.

Taking a job with Epcot and working for Walt Disney World was a big step for a city kid! The company moved me to Florida, so I was going out of state, alone, leaving home and family behind. It was kind of equivalent to an individual jumping from a two-year stint in a community college and then going to a university. My university level was taking a salaried position for a huge company like Walt Disney World. I worked in multiple areas at Epcot's Future World: The Living Seas, The Land, even growing hydroponic vegetables. That was all kind of like an educational dip in the ocean for me—big restaurants with lots of leadership responsibilities.

I think what allowed me to rise to these challenges was first and foremost how we were raised to be thoughtful, to be professional, to be kind. Education was important in our upbringing, but even more important was how you presented yourself, how you treated people. Watching our parents and how they treated others was the x-factor in our growth. I don't think that growth was just based on cooking talent, because I think everyone's talented. Instead, how you treat people professionally is really the difference in how you grow, how you lead, especially in kitchens where things are very frantic and pressure-driven. A calm demeanor and calm leadership is critical in hospitality. ■

IN MEMORIAM: MAXWELL READE

Apr. 11, 1916 – Apr. 13, 2016

Maxwell Ossian “Mac” Reade accomplished his long-stated goal of living to be 100— and with two days to spare! A memorial was held at the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor on June 9.

Mac and his second wife, Marjorie Reade, were CHAA members in the 1990s and 2000s. They weren’t able to attend many of our regular monthly meetings, but were pretty faithful participants in the twice-annual theme meals. Marge passed away in Aug. 2010 at age 92 (see memorial in *Repast*, Fall 2010).

Raised in New York, Dr. Reade was a Harvard graduate who worked as a mathematics professor at the Univ. of Michigan for 40 years. He specialized in complex analysis, but was best known for recruiting and supporting students of African-American, international, and other underrepresented backgrounds.

Mac’s recruiting trips around the U.S. also allowed him to indulge in his passion for blues and jazz music. He and music education professor James A. Standifer interviewed many famous musicians; these valuable recordings were archived at UM.

One of his former students commented at his memorial, “What strikes me most about him was his humanity— he loved people and he loved helping people.” He was active in many campaigns against poverty, war, and injustice, and he had a generous spirit and a great sense of humor.

Mac enjoyed visiting with friends one-on-one or in groups, and was known to pass out jars of his homemade fruit preserves. He made jams and jellies from pawpaw fruits or from foraged wild grapes, crabapples, or sumac berries. He also enjoyed baking acorn bread, and was an accomplished potter.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Marjorie and Maxwell Reade Fund for Student Support at the UM Dept. of Mathematics. ■

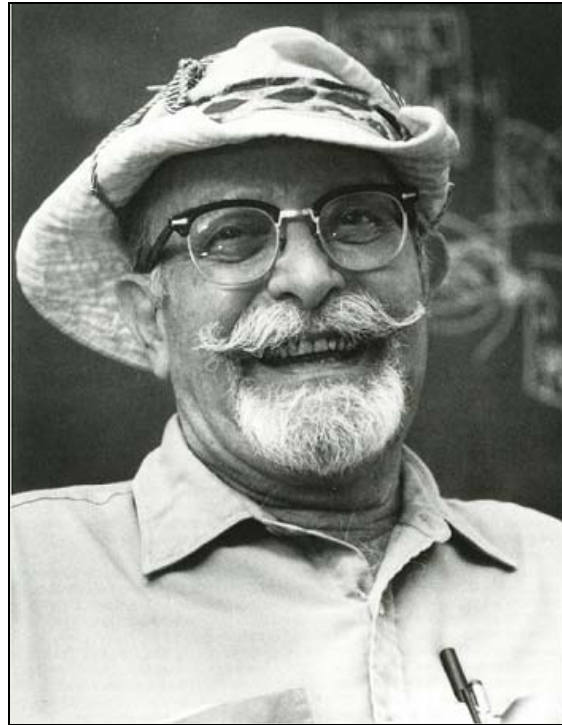


Photo: Univ. of Michigan

MARTIN YAN

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Chinese cuisine has become a global cuisine, it has become a very, very mainstream diet and dietary habit. You go anywhere— I bet where you are, there are hundreds of Chinese restaurants. And it’s not just in Ann Arbor, not just in Michigan but even in Billings, Montana, in North Dakota, South Dakota, Florida. You don’t even have to mention New York or Chicago or Los Angeles or San Francisco— if you go to any remote area where there’s over 4000 or 5000 people, I’ll bet there are not just one but a few Chinese restaurants.

America is an All-Encompassing Country

Since I immigrated to this great country, there have been many twists and turns. Like many other first-generation immigrants, we came over here and had to adapt to a new motherland, and adopt all the morals and the working conditions and the mindset. So it all started out because we’re different, and came from a different country.

But America is an all-encompassing country and a very civilized place that takes in all kinds of culture and tradition and cuisine. My wife and I have twin boys. When they were young, we trained them to eat sushi. Now they go to sushi bars by themselves. Before, a lot of people never ate raw fish— now, everybody in the U.S. is eating sushi and sashimi, right?

That’s what makes America truly a world melting pot. You’ve got great Italian food, Russian food, German food, Asian food, Indian food, and also Tex-Mex, Hispanic food. And nowadays you see a lot of Cambodian food, and now Myanmar food, Vietnamese food, Korean food. You go to New York or Los Angeles and you see an entire street with Korean restaurants!

WINTER 2016 CHAA MEETINGS REPORT



IN FOOD AND WINE, TRUTH

The good news is that sales of cookbooks haven't collapsed like a bad soufflé, the plight of many other categories of printed hardcover books according to CHAA Co-President **Joanne Nesbit** in her Jan. 17 presentation, "Cookbooks from A to Z". Perhaps one reason for the good sales is that many consumers view these books as somewhat ephemeral, like clothes that need to be replaced with more newly-purchased styles. The resurgence of a do-it-yourself or "maker" ethic has also increased the allure of home cooking and thus the need for cooking instruction. Joanne treated us to a PowerPoint potpourri of items drawn from her own quirky collection, all purchased locally and second-hand. The genre of ephemera, if not outright folly (we did give you the good news first) is exemplified by *The Twinkies Cookbook: An Inventive and Unexpected Recipe Collection from Hostess* (Ten Speed Press, 2006), which includes such dishes as Twinkie Lasagna, Twinkie Burrito, and Twinkie Sushi (don't ask). Similarly *The Magic of Peanut Butter* (2005 from Unilever, the then-parent company of Skippy) includes African Beef Stew and Peanut Butter Pumpkin Pie.

Among Joanne's more interesting curiosities is *Hawkers Flavour: A Guide to Penang Hawkers Food* (S. Abdul Majeed, 1991?) by the mysterious trio Engee., Embee., and Tai Peng Tan, where we can learn about such popular Malaysian street foods as prawn fritters, stuffed bean curd, and *roti jala*, a bundle of strands of griddled wheat batter, usually used as a nest for hot curry. We'd also be tempted to try a solewich, one of the recipes in Adrian Fiorino's *Insanewiches: 101 Ways to Think Outside the Lunchbox* (St. Martin's Griffin, 2011). Jim Martin's *Southwestern Cuisine* (Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, 1993) includes notes written by children who visited this center in Cortez, Colorado, in order to learn about their own cultural and culinary heritage. Much closer to home, Judith Ann Bosley's spiral-bound *Tasty Taters: Potato Cookbook* (L.E.B., Inc., 1989) was die-cut in the shape of a potato by the Livonia, Michigan, printer. Joanne and her friend Susan made us some SPAM Dip Canapés and a rhyming casserole, Mac & Cheese with SPAM & Peas, two tasty dishes from Ann Kondo Corum's *Hawai'i's Spam Cookbook* (Bess Press, 1987).

"In Vino Veritas" (in wine, truth) was the Feb. 21 presentation by **Darlene Levinson**, a certified sommelier and wine educator and a culinary instructor at Oakland Community College, north of Detroit. Levinson began by

summarizing major varieties of grapes and the role of natural and human factors in the winemaking process. She discussed fermentation methods including carbonic maceration, which produces fresh, fruity wines such as Nouveau Beaujolais, and malolactic fermentation, which produces buttery, less-acidic wines such as Chardonnay.

The heart of her presentation was a comparison and tasting of Old versus New World wines. In winemaking, Old World refers only to Europe and the Middle East, where wine has been made for thousands of years. In general, these wines have tended to be subtle and complex, resulting from the winemakers' focus on structure (body, acids, tannins, etc.), *terroir*, and an organic relationship with local cuisine. New World wines tend to be fruitier and higher in alcohol content; their producers focus on the application of scientific methods as much as on traditions and food pairings. Our tasting compared Old and New World versions of two reds and a white: Cabernet Sauvignon (from Médoc and California), Pinot Noir (Côte-d'Or and Oregon), and Sauvignon Blanc (Sancerre and New Zealand).

Like the Soda Fountains of Old

Rob Hess, founder, owner, and "head churner" at Go! Ice Cream in Ypsilanti, MI (goicecreamgo.com), spoke to us on Mar. 20. Begun in 2013, his company produces vintage flavors such as Strawberry, Chocolate Sorbet, and Brûléed Banana. These rich, artisanal ice creams are more challenging to make and have a shorter "shelf life" than industrial versions. Hess summarized his core values of taste, adventure, integrity, and community relationships. He makes small batches using fresh ingredients and natural thickening agents, instead of synthetic essences, xanthan or guar gum, and chemical stabilizers. In most cases a batch is pasteurized via his ongoing partnership with the larger Zingerman's Creamery; a few flavors, such as strawberry, are added raw instead of cooked.

Up to now, Go! sales have been at farmer's markets and other outlets, or else online and delivered by bicycle, but Hess is now establishing his own storefront. The space will feature a 1942 Knight-Stanley soda fountain, rescued from Chicago and refurbished. He loves delving into the history, culture, and traditions behind a given soda-fountain flavor, and combing through old manuals to learn about flavors such as cherry-lime rickey, the egg creams of Brooklyn, or root beers made with sassafras and burdock root.

About 40 CHAA members attended "How We Do What We Do at the Tracklements Smokery", **T. R. Durham's** presentation on Apr. 17. Durham began to learn hands-on about curing and smoking fileted fish during his honeymoon in the Scottish Highlands in the early 1990s. Returning to Amherst, MA, he adapted a Julia Child recipe for gravlax to develop five styles of cured smoked salmon: Classic Highland, Mediterranean Herb, Thai Spice, Teriyaki, and Santa Fe. Rave reviews followed. Durham now sources his farmed Atlantic salmon from the Faroe Islands and from the northern Bay of Fundy. He noted that the quality of the final product is affected less by the hot- or cold-smoking than by

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MEETINGS REPORT *continued from page 17*

the curing process that precedes it. In contrast to commercial brining, his hand-rubbed dry cure enables him to infuse herbs and other seasonings slowly (48-72 hours) without drowning

out the flavor of the fish. Durham told us that his entire artisanal approach can be boiled down to having what corn geneticist Barbara McClintock once called “a feeling for the organism”, which he broadens to include an intimacy not on-

Dorothy Hartley and Her Tracklements

In his talk on Apr. 17, T. R. Durham mentioned that the word “tracklement” was coined by Dorothy Hartley in her classic book, *Food in England* (1954). A new edition of that work is issued every several years; it remains the most celebrated of the many books by Hartley (1893-1985), a social historian and educator who was also talented in writing, art, and photography.

Opinionated, quirky, and encyclopedic at well over 600 pages, *Food in England* is nevertheless a delightfully readable and wonderfully illustrated compendium of contemporary and disappearing English food customs and recipes. With historical quotations and related commentary, its scope goes all the way back to medieval times.

Given her background, it's not too surprising that Hartley would resuscitate a nearly-forgotten word from dialects of North and Central England, where “tranklement” or “tanchiment” apparently once denoted trinkets, ornaments. In her chapter on Meat, she concluded each major section (Beef, Pork, Venison, Mutton) with a subsection entitled Tracklements, by which she meant classic pairings, or adornments, for the meat. For example, she discussed how to use sprigs of thyme or rosemary; parsnips or other vegetables; beans (with pork); barley or oat puddings; pickles; horseradish; apple sauce; mustard sauce; and jellies of mint, red currants, or rowan berries. Her specificity was amazing: for instance, in the section on mutton tracklements, she mentioned which one goes best with each different breed of sheep!

Hartley also recommended sauces and other accompaniments in her chapters on poultry, game, and fish, but here she didn't use the term “tracklement” (its use, however, has since broadened to include these, too). Her section on Salting and Smoking Fish included her wonderfully poetic firsthand description and artwork of how fish filets were traditionally smoked inside people's cottages on the moors, the “smokies” set in a rack just under the low thatched roof, where smoke would curl up from the open-hearth peat fire.

Incidentally, “kipper” is a British term for a salted and hot-smoked fish filet, a process most often applied to herring and salmon. Some of the salmon, mackerel, and trout sold at Durham's shop is kippered. “Finnan haddie” (Hartley also mentioned the variant pronunciations “findon” and “finny” haddie) is a Scottish term for haddock that is cold-smoked, traditionally with green wood, turf, or peat. Durham mentioned that finnan haddie, one of the few white-fish products sold at his shop, is delicious when creamed with potato, used in kedgeree, or used in place of *bacalao* (salt-cured cod) in many recipes.

CHAA Co-President Judy Steeh called to our attention last year a new Dorothy Hartley collection, *Lost World: England 1933-36* (Prospect Books, 2012). Hartley spent those years roving England by automobile and bicycle to observe regional customs, especially the farming and food practices of rural areas. She filed charming weekly columns for a tabloid called the *Daily Sketch*, 66 of which are gathered in this volume. Here is how she described the “white cloth spread” of a traditional high tea in her native Yorkshire:

There was always a white jar of potted fish, or potted meat on the table. Of course there would be the usual chops or steaks, and game pie, and ham, and a cold round of beef, and apple tart, and pie and pikelets [the local variety of crumpets, i.e., griddle cakes], and a slab of parkin [a Yorkshire gingerbread cake of oatmeal and black treacle] and boiled eggs, and hot tea cakes, and jam (two sorts, red and yellow), and plum cake, and cheese, and all the *usual* things one had for one's tea in Yorkshire, but you always left space for the potted meat, and salt butter, and watercress, and home-made loaves, because they were *good*.



Dorothy Hartley in Essex in the 1930s (photo from *Lost World*)

ly with the harvested creatures but also with the organic process upon which the enterprise is based.

In 1997 he relocated his small business, Durham's Tracklements and Smokery (tracklements.com), to a space in Ann Arbor's Kerrytown. There, he has continued to experiment and to add new flavors, curing methods, and fish and meat products: trout, cod, haddock, bluefish, mackerel, sable, sturgeon, sea scallops, duck, lamb, pork, and beef. Recent years have seen a surge in the popularity of his line of "tracklements", the pickles and other relishes made by his assistant Jamie to accompany the smoked products. We were treated to Highland smoked salmon, smoked duck breast, two smoked cheddars (Cabot from Vermont and Tillamook from Oregon), Dijon mustard, Bourbon apricot mustard, Muscato de Asti mustard, and bread-and-butter pickles, this last adapted by Jamie from her German grandmother's recipe.

Cake and Accoutrements

"Cake: The Intersection of All Things 'Cake' and the Art World" was the May 15 presentation by **Margaret Carney**, CHAA member and the director and curator of the Dinnerware Museum. Her ongoing exhibit "Cake" (The Museum on Main Street, Ann Arbor) includes invitational and juried artwork cake stands, as well as sculptural works of cake in all sorts of materials (wood, glass, ceramic, plastic, Lego's, etc.), some of them imitating famous works by Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso, and others. Also on display are some late 19th- and early 20th-Century American cake stands of pressed glass and other materials, as well as two English Wedgwood masterpieces (c. 1800) loaned by the Birmingham Museum of Art: an egg-beating vessel of lead-glazed creamware and a faux cake vessel of caneware. In addition, the show includes Ryan Kelly's mini-exhibit on the oat cakes of Robinson Crusoe; two modern American toys, Kenner's 1963 Easy-Bake Oven and Topper's 1966 Suzy Homemaker Super Oven; and explorations of the history of cake and of such cake-related expressions as "cake walk" and "Let them eat cake."

At this talk, we learned that the earliest cakes were simple and bread-like, sweetened with honey, fruit, or nuts. "Groom's cakes" were originally fruit cakes symbolizing fertility. Dr. Carney discussed the famous red-bean moon cakes associated with the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, and the King Cakes marking Twelfth Night celebrations in France, New Orleans, and elsewhere. Queen Victoria was one of the first brides whose wedding cake was topped with pure white icing, now called royal icing. The slides also portrayed relevant pages from historical literature, such as cake illustrations from Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management* (1861 edition, London); Marion Jane Parker's *The Children's Party Book* (1924 edition, Chicago), with illustrations by Frances Tipton Hunter and recipes by Helen Harrington Downing; and the Franklin Baker Company's *Baker's Coconut Recipes* (1926 edition, Hoboken, NJ). In addition, we saw cake-related paintings and sculptures by modern artists such as Claes Oldenburg, Wayne Thiebaud, Pat Lasch, and Jeff Nebeker. ■

Still More Things "Cake"

CHAA member Julie Lewis brought to our attention the article "A Sweet Slice of History: Oxford's Love Affair with Cake", posted to the "Oxford Today" website on Mar. 30. It was written by Dr. **Alysa Levene**, a social historian at Oxford Brookes Univ. who has just published *Cake: A Slice of History* (Pegasus, 2016). The article notes that cake has long been part of the relaxed side of Oxford life because it allows a "pause from an afternoon of hard work to indulge in a sweet treat and a chat.... Many nineteenth-century dons would take social calls in their rooms, accompanied by cake and tea." Further, as recently as in the mid-1900s, teatime with cake was one of the few chances for male and female students to get together, as "they were not allowed in each other's rooms before lunch or after six.... Since the cakes went stale quickly a fresh one was a real testament to a young man's interest." Levene goes on to discuss the special status of cherry cakes at Oxford's All Souls College (built on a former cherry orchard), a type of fruit cake called Great Oxfordshire Cake, the sweet buns of Abingdon County just to the south, and Banbury Cakes to the north, as well as appearances of Oxford cakes in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* and other literature.

The little-known Smith Island Cake was the subject of an article by **Josh Zumbun** on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* (Nov. 7, 2015), with the punny headline, "When Trapped on a Dessert Island, Keep on Baking". The tiny Smith Island (pop. 169) straddles the border between Maryland and Virginia in the Chesapeake Bay. Its eponymous cake—typically made with 16-24 thin layers, alternating between yellow cake and chocolate icing—is gorgeous to see when sliced open (see drawing below). Historically, the cakes arose in the 1800s as a symbol of togetherness; watermen would take their wives' cakes with them on their boats during the weeks-long oyster harvest in the Fall. Zumbun wrote that the multiple layers of icing helped keep the cakes moist during such a lengthy period. He reported that Smith Island Baking Co. (smithislandcake.com) sold nearly 70,000 of these stack-cakes in 2014. Jane and Michael Stern included a recipe (now available online) with their article about Virginia's Eastern Shore ("Surf and Turf", *Saveur*, No. 145 [March 2012], pp. 22-24). The Sterns wrote that the cake is rooted in tortes that were baked by Welsh immigrants in the 1600s, when the island was first settled.

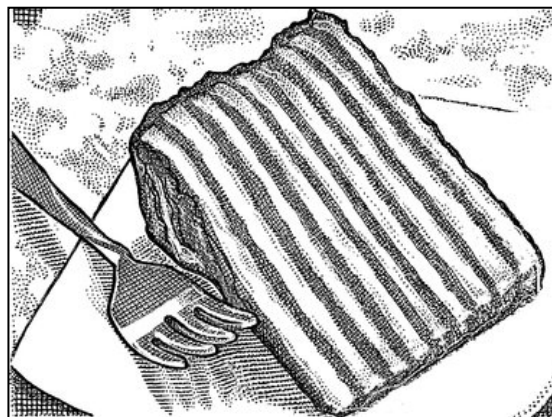


Photo: Wall Street Journal

CHAA CALENDAR

(Unless otherwise noted, programs are scheduled for 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.)

Sunday, July 17, 2016

4-7 p.m., Ladies' Literary Club of Ypsilanti
(218 N. Washington St., Ypsilanti),
Members-only participatory theme meal,
"Honoring Marcella Hazan and Paula Wolfert,
Queens of Mediterranean Cuisine".

Sunday, September 18, 2016

Ann Arbor District Library –
Malletts Creek Branch (3090 E. Eisenhower Parkway),
Shiloh Maples and Chantel Henry (American Indian
Health and Family Services of Southeastern Michigan),
"The People of the Three Fires: Food in Celebrations
and Ceremonies of the Ojibwa (Chippewa), Odawa
(Ottawa), and Potawatomi Tribal Groups of Michigan".

Sunday, October 16, 2016

2-5 p.m., Ann Arbor District Library –
Downtown Branch, Multipurpose Room,
"Deli Man: Paul Saginaw in Conversation
about the Documentary 'Deli Man'"
Paul Saginaw, Co-Founder of Zingerman's, will screen this
documentary about the history of delicatessens in the U.S.
and discuss the film and his experiences at Zingerman's.

On the Back Burner: We welcome ideas and submissions
from all readers of *Repast*, including for the following planned
future theme-issues. Suggestions for future themes are also
welcome.

- Fall 2016: The Food Culture of Portugal.

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First Class