

Spring 2015



PANACHE

Quarterly Newsletter, Les Dames D'Escoffier Chicago



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Meet Your Board, A Final Installment

A "Heritage Potluck" sparks an e-cookbook for Les Dames Chicago

By Suzanne Florek

When you are in the food, restaurant, wine or spirits business and you want to celebrate with your friends and colleagues, a convenient time often is after the holiday season and before the spring activities begin.

I've been part of Les Dames Chicago, our amazing group of women in the food and wine business, for almost 25 years. For many of those years, our after-the-holiday celebration has been the third Sunday in January. It is a fabulous potluck, a food and wine party that you wish would last longer than it does. This year our hostess Portia Belloc Lowndes insisted it be a "Heritage Potluck."

As we prepared to ascend to Portia's home with recipes that we grew up eating, I realized the marketing of food is a funny thing. I open my e-mail every day and see that certain foods have become hip, and I laugh. "Kale is trendy," they say. Yet I grew up eating kale made in a pressure cooker with pinkelwurst (pork and oats sausage), bought at the German delicatessen in New York City. My Oma made it, and eventually my mom took over the recipe. It was a surprise to see how much kale she could actually fit inside the pressure cooker.

My mom, Beverly, was the queen of tradition; she made sure holidays were special, integrating traditions from both sides of the family. She made steak tartar every year for

Christmas Eve, making sure the meat had come from the most upstanding butcher in the area. When we moved to Spain, it was a struggle the first year to find the perfect beef. I remember helping her by mixing in the raw eggs with my hands, a fun job for a little girl with pigtails on a kitchen chair. Somewhere along the timeline, raw beef became unhip. But now it is hip again!

Gravlax, a Nordic, cured raw fish, took the tartar's place. During the holidays my mom now makes up to 4 pounds of it, as the family has grown from four to thirteen. The preparation of gravlax is a process: buying the perfect piece of salmon, curing it, transporting it to the party, and slicing it into perfectly thin pieces.

After careful consideration between pinkelwurst and kale, steak tartar and gravlax, I choose gravlax as my contribution to this year's Heritage Potluck Holiday Party. I think most of us Dames went through a similar sort of decision on what dish to share this year.

We asked that everyone bring their recipe and a photo of the dish to compile a Heritage e-CookBook of our holiday potluck soiree. We collected 16 heritage recipes from the group. Mary Abbott Hess was the photographer at large, capturing some great photos of food and members. The book is free and available on Salty Fig.

Directions to view the e-CookBook:

1. Please use the following URL <http://ow.ly/IQHzi> in your browser.
2. You will see the book, click view you will be able to view the book.

If you register on Salty Fig, you can save it in your account:

1. Register
2. Click Books
3. Click Shared Books, you will see the book
4. Click the purple "Fig It" button and it will always show up in your "Figged Books" a.k.a. saved books.



A thank you to all who took the task seriously! We had a lot of fun putting the e-CookBook together. Enjoy!

Any questions: email suz@saltyfig.com

Dana Benigno (TOP)
Karen Levin & Bill Reynolds (BELOW)





PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Chicago Dames,

It's one of the quirks of print deadlines that I'm writing this letter for the Spring 2015 issue of Panache in mid-February as the Polar Vortex descends upon

Chicago ... again. So I'm not in a particularly "springy" state of mind. But I've got the prospect of our upcoming "Dames in the Hood" potlucks to keep me warm! And since our hosts (Dames Jeanne McInerney Lubeck, Rebecca Wheeler and Suzanne Florek) have thoughtfully chosen warm-weather themes (think Ottolenghi's Jerusalem, the tapas of Spain, and a Mexican fiesta), we've got even more to look forward to.

Spring means rebirth and renewal, and for Les Dames, that includes the search for wonderful new members, as well as new additions to our Board of Directors. Membership Chair Catherine Koelling is already hard at work and has assembled a veteran team to sort through the applications. Our thanks in advance to Dames Nancy Brussat, Priscilla Cretier, Renee Zonka, Shannon Kinsella and Mary McMahan for serving on the committee.

There are three Board positions to fill this year, and Dame Toria Emas has agreed to serve as Nominating Chair. Toria and her team will wrestle a bit with the topic of succession planning, a subject that will also be discussed at the upcoming Past Presidents Advisory Council lunch.

In other news, I am proud to announce that the Board has unanimously approved a donation of \$5000 to help underwrite "Food City: The Encyclopedia of Chicago Food and Drink," which will be published by the University of Illinois press. Many of our members are writing sections, and our own Dame Carol Mighton Haddix is a co-editor. We are thrilled to help support the genesis of this reference work. Carol tells me that they hope to have it ready for the 2016 holiday season.

Stay warm and dream of spring!

Fondly,



Les Dames d'Escotier International

Executive Board 2014-2015

President: Julie Chernoff
Vice President: Donna Pierce
Treasurer: Polly Peters
Secretary: Anne Kauffman
Past President: Jennifer Lamplough

Board of Directors:

Portia Belloc Lowndes
Patricia Erd
Suzanne Florek
Catherine Koelling
Mary Reidy McMahan
Melissa Yen

Another potluck tale: A taste of Malaysia in the Midwest

By Rebecca Wheeler 🍷

When I was little, my grandmother was in the Peace Corps in Malaysia. After she returned, this was the dish she would always make for me when I visited her farm in Ohio. She usually served it with a relish made from Ohio-grown corn – it was a little punch of acidity on the side.

I'll never forget the aroma of curry that would greet me upon opening her screen door. Now I make this for my family and friends, and have to fend off my eight-year-old for the leftovers for breakfast the next day.

This curry tastes best if allowed to rest for several hours or overnight (in refrigerator) so the flavors develop and blend. Serve with white rice; I like jasmine or basmati rice, cooked with a few whole cardamom pods.

Malaysian beef curry

Prep: 30 minutes

Cook: 1 ½ hours

Rest, optional: 3 hours or overnight

Makes: 6 servings

2 to 3 tablespoons vegetable or coconut oil

1 large onion, diced

1 to 2 minced serrano or Thai chilies, depending on desired level of heat

2 teaspoons black mustard seeds

3 cloves garlic, minced

2 tablespoons high quality curry powder

2 teaspoons pure chili powder

2 pounds well marbled boneless beef chuck, cut into small cubes

1 cup whole canned tomatoes, drained of excess juices, crushed with your hands

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

2 teaspoons kosher salt, more to taste

1/2 cup coconut milk

2 teaspoons ground garam masala, optional

Steamed jasmine or basmati rice

1. Heat the oven to 300 degrees. Heat the oil over medium high heat in a Dutch oven or large heavy saucepan. Add the onion, minced chilies and black mustard seeds; sauté until the onions are soft and translucent, 5 to 8 minutes. Add the garlic; sauté until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the curry and chili powders; cook 30 seconds. Mix in the beef, tomatoes, vinegar and salt. Heat to a boil.
2. Cover and place in the oven. Cook, stirring once or twice, until the meat is tender and some oils have come to the surface, 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Place the pot back on the stove over medium low heat. Stir in the coconut milk. Stir in garam masala. Heat. Taste; adjust salt as needed. Serve with rice

Meet your board

A final installment

By Joan Reardon 🌿

Here is the final round of profiles of your Les Dames Chicago board:

Julie Chernoff

One of my earliest memories of memories of Julie Chernoff places her in her old Arts & Crafts house in Evanston, visiting with Abby Mandel and a few other Dames who were assembled for a potluck supper. We swapped stories, dined deliciously, and proposed events that the Chicago chapter might pursue. But little did we know that our hostess Julie, a Yale graduate, rock star, and even then a family-centric mother and community activist, would one day become Les Dames Chicago chapter's president. Although we should have anticipated it.

Whether organizing a holiday Hanukkah fest, keeping tabs on her son, now living in New Orleans, and daughter, who resides in New Haven, Julie can still fantasize about taking a Zumba class, sprint to a lunch (with wine) somewhere delicious, and enjoy a double feature movie. With enormous energy, she works as Editor in Chief and Dining Editor of Make It Better magazine, dives into books such as "Americanah" with her book group, and dreams about taking her family "to South Africa to explore the wine and safari country, or to South America, or both places."

She loves the spring, although Chicago's are getting shorter and shorter, homemade pasta, and is proud to be a member of Les Dames, because it "affords the opportunity to network nationwide with women of talent and integrity, each whose lives are as food-centric as my own!" "Make It Better," indeed. Dare we say, "Hail to the Chief/Chef?"



Anne Kauffman

Born in Paris, France, and fluent in the French language, Anne brings not only a rich cultural inheritance, but also an intimate knowledge of French cuisine to her position of Associate Dean of The French Pastry School at City Colleges of Chicago. As a young woman, Anne was also fortunate to have traveled extensively and says, "After a few visits to Scotland, there is still an area that I haven't had the opportunity to visit, the Isle of Skye and the true beauty it has to offer." Anne studied abroad at The American University and at the Sorbonne in Paris her junior year of college. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Business and Language Area Studies with a double major in French from St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wis. Prior to joining The French Pastry School, she spent about seven years at the technology infrastructure provider, Forsythe Technology, Inc, where she eventually joined the marketing department on a full-time basis in 2003. Anne then was hired by The French Pastry School in 2005, becoming Marketing Director in 2009 and Associate Dean in 2013. Among other things, her responsibilities include supervising special events and coordinating marketing and public relations activities with the school's Scholarship Foundation, For the Love of Chocolate.



"One would think that by working at The French Pastry School that I would have become a great baker," she says, "But I have not. Instead I lean more towards cooking savory items, particularly anything pork or a cassoulet. Anne says that any free time is spent "with my family, my nieces and other special little tykes. We either try out new bakeries, have afternoon tea, or create a game where they always seem to win." In May 2012, Anne was inducted into Les Dames, where she has "made some great friends who are there to listen."

Jennifer Lamplough

Jennifer has moved on from Robert Morris College to Director of Nutrition Programs and Executive Chef at the Northern Illinois Food Bank with the same aplomb that propelled her from the presidency of Les Dames Chicago (2012-2014) to her present Board position of Past President. Jennifer grew up in Merrillville, Ind., where her father owned the local Dairy Queen. Jennifer's first job and "culinary experience" at age twelve was making Dilly Bars and hiding behind the counter when the local labor inspector arrived.

She attended Indiana University in Bloomington, graduating with a degree in journalism, and then Morris Graduate School of Management in Chicago where she earned a Masters of Business Administration. In her early years, she worked in communications, but food was a subject never very far from her thoughts. In 1999, she enrolled in the Cooking and Hospitality Institute, earning a Certificate in Professional Cooking, which propelled her into the position of Executive Chef of the Market Place Food Store in Chicago. When an opening at the Robert Morris Institute of Culinary Arts became available, she joined the faculty. Then the Associate Dean position opened, and she aced the interview.



Jennifer has co-authored "Healthy Calendar Diabetic Cooking" and "Healthy Carb Diabetes Cookbook," and has appeared as guest chef on radio and television programs. She also has generously given many hours to Les Dames, an organization that was a dream of hers since she was in culinary school. To have served as president, she considers the "biggest professional honor of her life." Her favorite meal is her "mother's chicken and dumplings because no one can make it better." Given a few hours away from her busy week, she would "go on a long run on the Fox River, spend the day with my husband, and then crack open a great bottle of red wine and cook a beautiful dinner for him."



Meet your board, Cont.

Polly Peters

Polly has had, she says, an “unusual path” to a Board position in Les Dames Chicago. A French major, she graduated Phi Beta from the College of Wooster in Ohio, spent her junior year abroad in Tours, France, and taught French in Shaker Heights, Ohio. Polly also received an MBA in Finance and International Business at the American University in D.C.

But it was a degree from The Cooking and Hospitality Institute in Chicago in 1994 that led to success in the culinary field. She is currently a consultant specializing in the catering and food marketing areas. She previously held positions at Fox & Obel, Blue Plate Catering and Foodstuffs, where she oversaw three stores on Chicago’s North Shore.



These days, she admits to slowing down a bit. “I enjoy a variety of activities in any given day from my home in Evanston. My ideal day would include exercise, social time with my husband or a good friend, quiet time alone with a book, or planning a trip. I would choose New Zealand. It is definitely on my bucket list, due to the fact that I’m a lover of the outdoors and beautiful natural surroundings. A cruise through Milford Sound would be right up my alley. It would be even more alluring if I could somehow twitch my nose and arrive there instantaneously!” She also enjoys cooking a nice meal for her husband and herself.

Becoming a member of Les Dames five years ago symbolized both her acceptance and her confirmation as a culinary professional. She says candidly, “Due to my often times quiet demeanor, people may be surprised to learn that I consider myself a socially-oriented person. I derive the most pleasure from dealing with people from many different walks of life and I love managing and mentoring others.” For the record, her work in making the “Supper Club” fundraiser happen and her volunteer work as a mentor were and are admirable.

Donna Pierce

That “food is much more than just something to eat,” was a conviction that Donna learned through multiple and various experiences. As a journalist, she wrote about fashion, business, and travel until she and a friend decided to give up their apartment in San Francisco in the 1980s, quit their jobs, bought Eurail passes, and traveled to Europe “with minimal luggage, a great camera, curiosity and adventurous spirits.” They used a favorite Left Bank hotel in Paris as a base, and spent more for their lunch than for their accommodations. Recording it all in the first entries of what would become Donna’s website, Skillet Diaries, she wrote about ingredients and meals she was savoring for the first time. On the Greek island Ios, she queried fishermen about indigenous seafood, sampled the most interesting sausages in Copenhagen, tasted the best split pea soup in Munich, and took an overnight train journey to Paul Bocuse’s restaurant in Lyon.



But dinners of gumbo and greens and cornbread, like her grandmother made, at Chez Haynes in Paris, and her many conversations with its owner Leroy Haynes, brought about her culinary conversion. Eventually she crossed the line from simply appreciating food to writing about food professionally at The Chicago Tribune and Upscale Magazine. During her first stint as a food editor, she met Julia Child at a writer’s conference, and she answered Julia’s questions with aplomb, and was confirmed in her calling when Julia said, “That’s your assignment. You are going to write about your culture and the importance of family recipes.” From that day forward, Donna has “highlighted family dishes, memories, chefs, books, and recipes from an African-American perspective.”

Visit
 The Urban Domestic Diva: Check out her Open-Faced Smoked Salmon Breakfast Sandwiches: <http://www.urbandomesticdiva.com>

Correction:

In the winter issue of Panache, we had the wrong first name for Veronica Hastings. Sorry, Veronica, for the error!

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