

CHoW Line

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.

November 2007

Volume XII, Number 3

Renew Your Membership in CHoW by November 30 to be included in the Membership List!

Fill out a membership form and send it with your check to



The membership year runs from September 1 to August 31. Annual dues are \$20 for an individual, household, or organization and \$10 for a student. Individual and household members are eligible to vote, hold office, and serve on committees.

CHoW/DC publishes *CHoWLine* nine times each year. More information can be found at www.chowdc.org.

Articles for CHoW Line

The newsletter editor will be pleased to receive contributions to the newsletter from members and subscribers, although we regret we cannot pay for articles.

NOVEMBER 11 MEETING

2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Incense and Spice: Entertaining in the Arabian Peninsula Amy Riolo

"What I enjoy most about food is its ability to inspire cultural pluralism in a way that everyone can relate to."

The above quotation is from Amy Riolo, a nationally recognized culinary expert, food writer, and cooking instructor based in the Washington, DC area. In her presentation to CHoW, she will talk about the history of the cuisine of the Arabian Peninsula and how the incense and spice trades impacted the area over the centuries.

Her first book, *Arabian Delights: Princely Entertaining – Recipes & Entertaining Ideas from the Arabian Peninsula* was published in October. Copies will be available at the lecture. The book highlights three kinds of entertaining: Palatial Feasts, Special Ceremonies, and Simpler Delights. It outlines various occasions within those three categories, gives historical and cultural information and menus for each, as well as recipes and a complete entertaining timeline for planning each venue. (Continued on page 2)



Calendar of CHoW Meetings

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| September 9 | Tyler Cowen , "Every Meal Counts: How and Why an Economist Became Obsessed with the Quest for the Perfect Meal" |
| October 14 | Stefanie Walker , Bartolomeo Scappi's " <i>Art of Cooking</i> " (<i>Dell'arte del cucinare</i>) of 1570 and Italian cookbooks from the 16th-17th centuries |
| November 11 | Amy Riolo , "Incense and Spice: Entertaining in the Arabian Peninsula" |
| December 9 | Mark McWilliams , "From Raw Beef without Salt to Freedom Fries: Haute Cuisine, the White House and Presidential Politics" |
| January 13 | Leni Sorensen , "Cooks and Slaves: Edith Fossett and Francis Hern of Monticello" |
| February 10 | TBA |
| March 9 | TBA |
| April 13 | Cooperative Supper |
| May 18 | Note: Not the second Sunday. |

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C. (CHoW/DC)

founded in 1996, is an informal, nonprofit, educational organization dedicated to the study of the history of foodstuffs, cuisines, and culinary customs, both historical and contemporary, from all parts of the world.

www.chowdc.org



What Happened at the October 14 Meeting?

The meeting was called to order by President Laura Gilliam at 2:45 p.m.

Announcements

Revised Website: *CHoWLine* editor Dianne Hennessy King requested that members send her titles of books or scholarly articles that they have written in order to include the titles in the newly expanded www.CHoWdc.org website. For books, please provide: full title, subtitle, publisher, place, and date. For articles, please limit to substantial articles (e.g. no book reviews or short notes) in scholarly journals. Please provide: journal title, article title, inclusive pages, volume and issue numbers, and date.

The names of websites written by CHoW members can also be added to the CHoWdc.org website.

In addition, she would like to include on the website information about local food festivals and other events in the D.C., Maryland and Virginia areas that are relevant to culinary history. Please send your material about books, articles, websites, food festivals and events to the editor at tuckking@aol.com

Whatsit

Laura asked for volunteers to take digital photos of past whatsits for the website. If you have brought in a whatsit anytime over the past few years, please bring it to the December 9 meeting to be photographed.

Refreshments

Olive Oil Cake from Claudia Kousoulas, "Zaleti" - Gialletti
Yellow Diamonds from Sue Latini and Biscotti d'anice (anise biscotti) from Amy Riolo

November 11 Refreshments:

Amy Riolo will be bringing sweets served in the Arabian Peninsula, so perhaps donors could think of bringing savory foods. The region's cuisine does include what we typically think of as Middle Eastern food, but the diet is also influenced by the Near East and North Africa.

Program

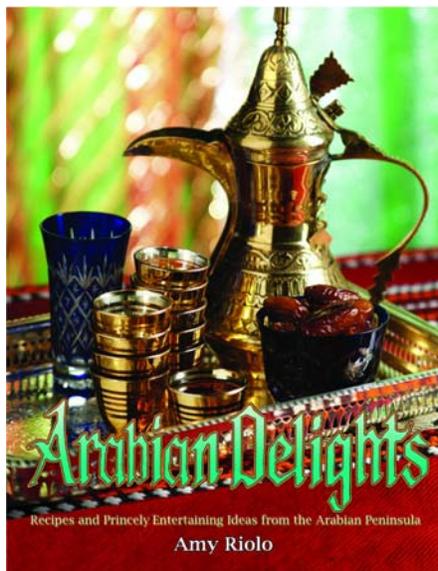
Sandy Hoexter introduced our speaker. "CHoW member **Stefanie Walker** taught art history and curated exhibitions at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts in New York for ten years before moving to Washington in 2005. Her main areas of interest include Roman Baroque decorative arts, jewelry history, and European gold and silver. While preparing the catalogue and exhibition for "Life and the Arts in the Baroque Palaces of Rome: Ambiente Barocco" (1999) she became especially involved in the elaborate dining traditions and table decorations of Italy during this period. She will be speaking about Bartolomeo Scappi's *Art of Cooking (Opera dell' arte del cucinare)*, first published in 1570. This became
(continued on page 3)

(November Speaker Amy Riolo, *continued from page 1)*

She is also completing two additional books: *Nile Style: Egyptian Celebratory Menus and Recipes*, and *The Mediterranean Memories Cookbook*.

Amy was born in Upstate New York. She was raised in an Italian-American family which nurtured her interests in cooking from an early age. Amy married into an Egyptian family while living in Rome, Italy 10 years ago. Since then, she has been discovering, creating, and teaching Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cuisine to American audiences.

A popular lecturer and expert on Middle Eastern and Mediterranean Cuisine, Amy has been an invited guest speaker for the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Montgomery College, and the Mycological Association of Washington,



DC. Amy teaches cooking classes at Sur la Table in Arlington, Virginia, and at Sheilah Kaufman's cooking school in Potomac, Maryland, in addition to teaching for private organizations.

Amy currently writes the "Culture and Cuisine" feature for the Baltimore-Luxor-Alexandria Sister City Committee. She has also written articles on Sauces and Spices for *Azizah Magazine*, and the Kulanu newsletter. Amy is a member of The International Association of Culinary Professionals, Culinary Historians of Washington, Slow Food DC, Welcome to Washington International, Cornell Club of Washington, and the Baltimore

- Luxor - Alexandria Sister City Committee. She maintains a home in Egypt, and travels to both the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern regions as often as possible.

(continued from page 2) one of the most popular manuals for the masters and stewards of large households. It details the complex etiquette of formal dining, offers suggestions for fanciful table decorations, and gives a whole year's worth of daily seasonal menus. Unlike similar books written by other authors, Scappi also includes a number of illustrations showing all manner of cooking utensil and layouts of an ideal kitchen."

Formal Dining in Italy

Stefanie Walker started her talk by explaining that nowhere was formal dining as elaborate as in Italy during the late 16th and 17th century. She stated that in the 17th century the Venetian ambassador described his dining experience as "mental horror, and physical drudgery." The banquet lasted more than three hours, which was indicative of how elaborate dining was during this period. Scappi effectively reflected this in his book. Scappi wrote his cookbook in 1570 and included over 1000 recipes. This work remains little known not only because of its size but because it has not been translated.

The book has three copyright statements: Pius V, Venetian Senate, and the Grand Duke in Tuscany. These statements were necessary to stop unauthorized copies; however, some did appear. The book is organized into six "books":

1. Introduction
2. Meat Recipes (4-footed animals and flying fowl)
3. Fish (Scappi's favorite fish, the sturgeon, generated 27 recipes)
4. Menus (courses for every month of the year. Also included fat and lean days in observation of Lent)
5. Pasta (anything made out of dough, both sweet and savory)
6. Foods for the sick and convalescent

Scappi structures Book 1 by addressing himself the task of giving advice to a young man, Giovanni. He says that the cook has to appeal to all appetites, be creative, clean, sober, organized, have good interpersonal skills and get along with his Steward. He emphasizes that a cook has to have a good knowledge of all ingredients.

Illustrations of the Times

In her PowerPoint presentation Stefanie used many detailed illustrations from Scappi's book and also several paintings that reflected the times. Although the illustrations in the book are rather primitive, they are extraordinary because they show all kinds of utensils, ingredients, what an ideal kitchen should look like, and how a banquet table should be set up. There are also illustrations of items that should be included in a traveling kitchen.



A Trio of Recipes

In order to illustrate what his recipes were like, Stefanie picked three of them and reviewed them for us. The three recipes chosen were:

1. Meat Rolls – Roman style
2. Peacock Recipe
3. Meat Stew with Vegetables and Meats.

These recipes exemplified how meals were prepared in extremely large quantities and which utensils were used in the preparations. The recipes outlined what was to be done, but they were not as detailed as today's recipes, especially in regards to measurements.

It is assumed that the reader would know how to cook meats and for how long. Many of the foods were more for the eyes than the stomach and much emphasis was given to how elaborate the foods looked.

Food sculptures were an Italian specialty. These artistic creations were for decoration and not for consumption. The high point of a banquet was the desserts which included elaborate sugar sculptures.

One of the illustrations that Stefanie showed was that of Pope Clementine IX eating publicly at an elaborate banquet. This was a rare occurrence because the Pope usually did not eat publicly: his exalted state made dining in public difficult. There were too many rituals that had to be observed, and people tried to make meaning of everything that the Pope did.

The presentation concluded with Stefanie stating that it would be great if someone undertook the task of translating Scappi's book. She then answered questions from CHoW members. The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.
Respectfully submitted by Clara Raju, Recording Secretary

Upcoming Events

“Menus of the Big Destination Hotels: What the Elite Ate in the Good Old Days”

Friday, November 30, 12 noon

The Hotel Roanoke

Roanoke, Va,

Fee: \$35

[http://spec.lib.vt.edu/culinary/PHCulinary/
PHFLecture20071015rev.pdf](http://spec.lib.vt.edu/culinary/PHCulinary/PHFLecture20071015rev.pdf)

Chef Billie Raper, executive chef of The Hotel Roanoke, will demonstrate an historical recipe from the hotel and discuss traditional menus from the early days of the big destination hotels like The Homestead, The Greenbrier, and The Biltmore. You may fill out an online registration form and send a check for \$35 to

Dr. JoAnn Emmel, Treasurer

Peacock-Harper Culinary History Friends

P.O. Box 11086

Blacksburg, VA 24062

News from Other Culinary Organizations

The International Directory of Food and Beverage Museums, on the Food History News website, now lists approximately 1350 entries on museums/collections in countries all over the world, as well as in almost every U.S. state. To check out museums' names, addresses, missions, and admission policies, go to www.foodhistorynews.com and click on Museum Directory. The excellent search engine will help you find what you are seeking, by specific food or beverage, cooking container or utensil, general topic, U.S. state, or foreign country.

Welcome, New Members!

Marigail Barcome

Interests: Pastry arts, Native American foodways, chocolate, table-top linens, flatware, china, and crystal, and French cooking traditions

Victoria D. (“Vicky”) Schwartz

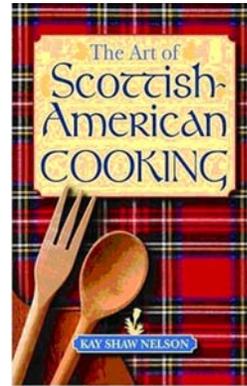
Wilhelm Jonach

Erratum

The correct surname of the author of *Cooking in Ten Minutes*, discussed by L. Peat O’Neil in the October issue of *CHoW Line*, is Pomiane.

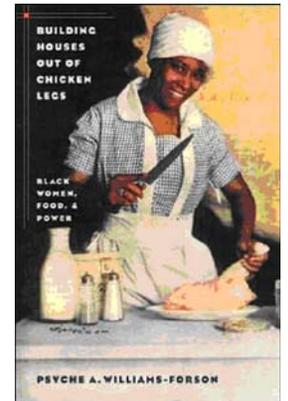
News of Our Members

Bharat Bhushan, who lives in Pune, India, is a CHoW Line subscriber. He maintains a blog on Indian food that he considers “a tribute to CHoW.” Take a look at www.planet-food.blogspot.com.



Kay Shaw Nelson was one of the featured authors at an outdoor festival at the Ocean County Library BookFest in Toms River, New Jersey on September 29. Kay and her 20th cookbook, *The Art of Scottish American Cooking*, were part of an event that united diverse educational, cultural, and civic groups to celebrate Literacy and Food. The Program title was “Something Cooking at the Ocean County Library, the BookFest with Literary Taste.”

Psyche Williams-Forson’s book, *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power*, received a laudatory review in the *Virginia Magazine*, published quarterly by the Virginia Historical Society. (Vol. 115, No.2, pg. 349-350.)



The CHoW Culinary History Collection at the National Museum of American History library continues to grow, with some books being added each

month by CHoW members. **Laura Gilliam** and **Shirley Cherkasky** each has a list of the books on the shelves there. To use a book, make an appointment beforehand with Chris Cottrill, of the library staff: Cottrillc@si.edu; 202-633-3859. See Claudia Kousoulas’s review on page 6 of a book donated to the Collection. The list of books in the collection is also available online at www.sil.si.edu. In the Book Search box, write “Culinary Historians of Washington.”



Calling All Book Lovers

Katy Hayes responded to our call to members to tell us about a food related book that occupies a special place in your heart. Your favorite memory might be of a novel, a memoir, a travelogue or another genre. Because of space considerations in the newsletter, future "appreciations" are requested to be limited to any length between a minimum of a paragraph and a maximum of 300 words. Send your contributions to Dianne Hennessy King at tuckking@aol.com.

- *Pot Shots from a Grosse Ile Kitchen*
- *Long Windows: being more Pot Shots from a Grosse Ile Kitchen*
- *French Cooking in Old Detroit since 1701*

By Sid and Lucy Corbett

"Appreciation"

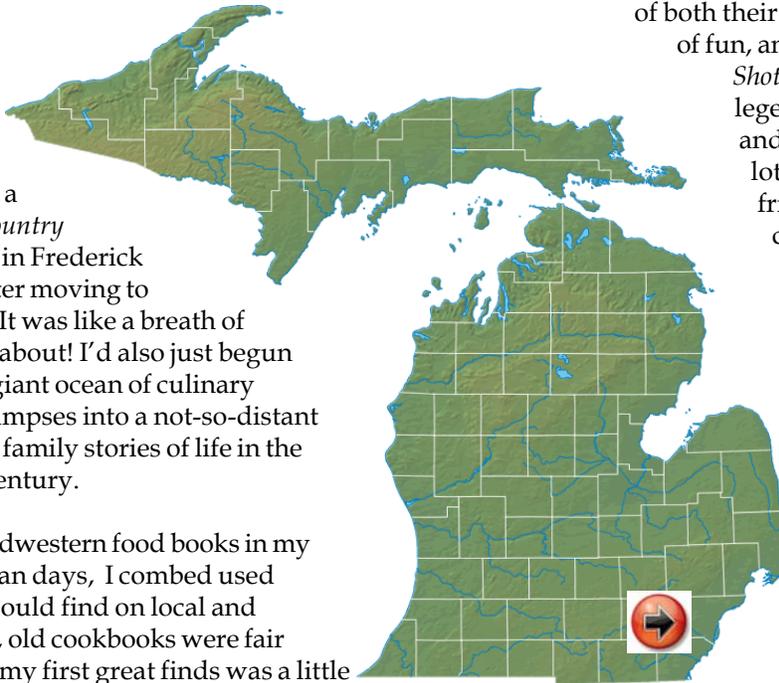
By Katy Hayes

I enjoyed reading your notice on the Della Lutes program given by Robin Mather Jenkins. I picked up a copy of Lutes' book, *The Country Kitchen*, in an antique mall in Frederick some years ago, shortly after moving to Maryland from Michigan. It was like a breath of home that I hadn't known about! I'd also just begun exploring deeper into the giant ocean of culinary history. Lutes' personal glimpses into a not-so-distant way of life took me back to family stories of life in the Midwest early in the 20th century.

It reminded me of other Midwestern food books in my library. Back in my Michigan days, I combed used bookstores for anything I could find on local and regional history. Of course, old cookbooks were fair game in that quest. One of my first great finds was a little book called *Pot Shots from a Grosse Ile Kitchen* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), and its successor, *Long Windows: being more Pot Shots from a Grosse Ile Kitchen* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948) by Sid and Lucy Corbett. Soon the authors added *French Cooking in Old Detroit since 1701* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1951). I regarded these with extra affection because they were illustrated with woodcuts by Bill Woodward. This artist was an old friend and art professor of my mother's back in her college days at Wayne State University. I had the pleasure to meet him during several "art group" get-togethers in the 1990s.

The *Pot Shots* books are taken from a column that Sid wrote for the Detroit News' Sunday Women's Section. He began writing after "sudden paralysis" left him homebound in a wheelchair. The background is artfully told in the prefaces to the *Pot Shots* books, which are compilations of Sid's columns with input from Lucy. They happened to live in a large 19th century house on an island with a view of the Detroit River and the Canadian shore to the east. This area was a crossroads of early settlement in the Upper Lakes, and the scene of much contention between the British and French up to the late 18th century.

These are essays about food and life: "A compote, as it were, of both their minds, and all their thoughts of fun, and friends, and food." (*Pot Shots*, Preface p. xiii) They weave legend, history, local custom, and personal imagination with lots of warmth and love of friends, food and drink. Some chapters blend the history with the foodways, introducing the Corbett's modern interpretations of traditional recipes. Others relate tales of neighbors and friends family events and traditions. The tone is that chatty, humorous and quick-witted style of patter so often heard in the movies made during the WWII era.



French Cooking is a collection of recipes, again accompanied by Woodward's evocative illustrations. They remind me a bit of John Minton's illustrations of Elizabeth David's *A Book of Mediterranean Food*. The recipes are a curious collection of historic and contemporary, and much in between. Some are surprisingly authentic, and some bear the flavor of the times in their selection of ingredients, which are sometimes listed separately, and sometimes included in paragraph format. Such recipes as Lamb Kidneys, Beef Heart, and Brains harken back to a time when everything was used. There are recipes for all types of game, and fish and shellfish from fresh to canned to salted. Hors d'oeuvres smack more of the times, some requiring such ingredients as cream cheese, coffee cream, canned meats, and peanut butter. The desserts include an amazing cold gelatin/egg/cream-based dessert flavored with whiskey and rum called a Rum Bumble. But these are evenly balanced by recipes with a definite foot in the past.

Thanks for affording me the opportunity to look back into these books and enjoy not only what they offer, but for the rekindled warm memories of home.

Book Review

The English Breakfast

The Biography of a National Meal with Recipes

By Kaori O'Connor

Kegan Paul, 2006, 489 pages, cloth, Price: £ 29.95

(US\$110 from Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble)

Review by Claudia Kousoulas

The phrase “English breakfast” brings to mind steaming pots of tea, butter drenched toast, and kippers, leisurely served in well-appointed dining rooms. It is a meal flavored with nostalgia and nationalism.

But, in her review of social, economic and cultural traditions, O'Connor points out that the “national meal of eternal England” was less than 100 years old when George Orwell wrote about crusty bread and suet pudding in 1940. Since then it has been shaped by patriotism, class, technology, and, tradition.

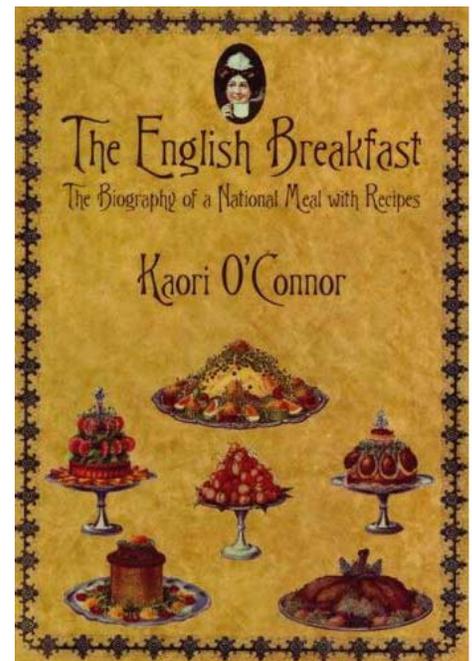
From earliest history, English foodways and the English breakfast have been influenced by outsiders. The Romans brought baking ovens and the notion of idealized country life, epitomized by the virtues of simply cooked food. Germanic and Danish tribes established Anglo-Saxon culture and introduced rye, pork, cheese, butter, and eggs created in settled country hamlets. The Norman Conquest emphasized class differences at the table, setting up what would seem to be eternal conflicts between French “slip slops” and the sturdy roast beef of old England.

O'Connor's tracing of influences and attitudes show how food – particularly breakfast – had moved beyond survival and was beginning to stand in for identity. Not only the style and ingredients of the meal, but how it was eaten had significance. Not eating breakfast was originally a signal of upper class refinement: one didn't need the fuel that a peasant did to get through the day's chores. Later, when the wealthy had staff and no need to rush off to business, a large breakfast signaled leisure. It was even more impressive if the spread included the game, fish, and produce of one's own estate.

With the Victorian focus on piety and patriotism, breakfast, preceded by prayers, was a family meal, since office and factory workers would not be home for lunch. And eating the fruits of the land, tied one to the land and by extension, to the nation. The service and dishes were codified by newly expanded publishing industry in cookery, etiquette, and household management books directed at the rising middle class. Mass production of elaborate serving pieces further contributed to establishing the traditional meal.

While French cooking was still the standard for upper class lunch and dinners, there really was no French breakfast and the English ideal of local country food – game, fish, hot breads, cured meats, and of course, bacon, eggs, tea, and toast became the English Breakfast.

O'Connor includes facsimile reprints of four Victorian and Edwardian recipe books: *A Mere Man's Perfect Breakfast*, Georgiana Hill's *The Breakfast Book*, Miss M.L. Allen's *Breakfast Dishes*, and Colonel Kenney Herbert's *Fifty Breakfasts*. All are interesting as texts, but O'Connor encourages her readers to taste history and cook dishes, though modern stomachs may find them hard to face at an early hour. Georgiana Hill includes anchovies, cold tongue, deviled bones, and dried sprats in the chapter titled “Things Most Commonly Served for Family



Breakfast.” In *Fifty Breakfasts*, Herbert recommends a different hot bread with each menu and devotes careful attention to recipes for bannocks, scones, oatcakes, crumpets, muffins, and more.

Just as contemporary cookbooks begin with a review of ingredients, encouraging cooks to use the best, local and most seasonal ingredients, perhaps reflecting our concern with the healthfulness of processed foods, Victorian cookbooks began with discussions of hygiene, regularity, nutrition, and economy. Not to mention morality, the purview of the “angel in the home,” the wife and mother responsible for the physical, economical, and moral health of her family and household.

In fact, the English breakfast may have been the first power breakfast, exported throughout the world by the army, steamship lines, and colonial settlements. O'Connor speculates that the meal took on iconic status as perhaps the reason that such a small island could control such a large empire.

World War II rationing and modern life have taken their toll on the daily English breakfast, which has managed to survive in brunch, but it remains an emblem of gentility and national character.