

# CHOW Line

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C. Dec 2009-January 2010

Volume XIV, Number 4

## Calendar of CHoW Meetings

### January 10, 2010

Tom Weiland, "The Search for the Elusive Schnitzel"

### February 14

Nancy Baggett, "Evolution of the Romantic Heart Shape and Flavors of Valentine Confections"

### March 4

**Special Tour:** Library of Congress's rare book holdings on gastronomy by Mark Dimunation, Chief, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, the Library of Congress. Thursday, 4:00 p.m.

### March 14

Fred Czara, "Spices of Life: The Savory Story of the First Global Marketplace"

### April 11

Cooperative Supper (Note: time change 4 to 6 p.m.)

### May 2

Barbara G. Carson, "Ambitious Appetites" — political aspects on dining in D.C. during the Federal period. (Note: first Sunday)

## Beyond Curry & Pad Thai: Regional Thai Cuisine

Speaker: Nongkran Daks

Sunday, December 13, 2009  
2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Services Center,  
4805 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, Maryland



**Nongkran Daks**, author, Thai cooking expert, TV personality, and Owner/Executive Chef of Thai Basil Restaurant in Chantilly, VA, will speak about regional Thai dishes and how indigenous and transplanted crops and other ingredients evolved into modern Thai cuisine. She will illustrate her talk with beautiful photos.

A native of southern Thailand, Nongkran Daks' introduction to cooking began at age seven. She would get up at 4:00 a.m. daily to pound curry paste. Later, as a college student in Bangkok, Nongkran waited tables at a restaurant with the unlikely name "Dairy Queen," and earned a degree in agricultural economics.

Before launching Thai Basil, Nongkran taught cooking and catered in Honolulu, Washington, D.C., China, Laos, Taiwan and Thailand. Multi-cultural and multi-lingual, Nongkran is a member of Les Dames d'Escoffier. Her cookbook, *The Secrets of Thai Cooking*, was published in 1994. Subsequently, Nongkran and Alexandra Greeley have co-authored a Vietnamese and two Thai cookbooks.

At the Thai Basil, Nongkran seeks maximum authenticity. She also offers cooking classes, catering and frequently lectures and conducts demonstrations on Thai cuisine.

Nongkran's cuisine has received favorable reviews and media coverage in *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Washington Post*, *Washingtonian* magazine, the Zagat and AOL and Gayot guides, and a number of local newspapers. In 2007, Thai Basil earned the Thai Select award under the Government of Thailand's restaurant certification program.

In the Spring of 2009, Nongkran was featured in a Pad Thai noodle competition with Celebrity Chef Bobby Flay on his TV Food Network program *Throwdown!*.

Learn more about Nongkran and the Thai Basil at [www.thaibasilchantilly.com](http://www.thaibasilchantilly.com)



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](http://www.chowdc.org)



## January CHoW Meeting

### “The Search for the Elusive Schnitzel”

**Speaker: Tom Weiland**

**Sunday, January 10, 2009**

**2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Services Center,  
4805 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, Maryland

The word “schnitzel” has been around for perhaps 150 years, but the concept of flattened meat goes back much further. Finding how much further is a trick, since early references are vague and most early schnitzel recipes go by a host of different names, with roots possibly in the Mediterranean or Middle East. Tom will talk about the definite, the probable, and the possible of schnitzels.

Tom’s professional life—25 years as a military operations research analyst—does not exactly scream “food author.” But in his free time he has been cooking since the tender age of 8. In 1982 this CHoW member traveled Europe for the summer and fell in love with the schnitzel and all its infinite variations. For decades he looked for a good schnitzel cookbook and found everything lacking, so he collected schnitzel recipes (over 1,500 to date) and finally decided to write the definitive schnitzel book himself. He is hoping to finish the final draft this year.



## GENERAL MEETING MINUTES November 8, 2009

The Meeting was called to order by **Katherine Livingston**, CHoW President at 2:40 p.m. There were 38 members and guests in attendance.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Treasurer **Bruce Reynolds** encouraged anyone who hasn’t yet renewed their membership or hasn’t joined for 2009, that he would gladly accept their payment following today’s meeting. No financial report was given.

**Announcements:** President Livingston informed the members about the soon to be released ListServ which will be used to share brief announcements with the membership. Should you not wish to participate in the ListServ you will be given the opportunity to opt out. She reported that due to recent difficulties experienced with the Web site host, it has been transferred to a new vendor. Thus far this decision has appears to have been wise for the difficulties that were previously encountered have disappeared.

**Kay Shaw Nelson** shared with the attendees information about her latest book which is now appearing on local

booksellers’ shelves. Titled *The Cloak and Dagger Cook: A CIA Memoir*, Kay provides a glimpse of her life as a CIA (not the Culinary Institute of America) Agent. At times under the cover of a cookbook writer, Nelson was gathering other types of useful information. Each chapter includes an unusual recipe and the story behind it. It was fun learning that Julia Child was not the only clandestine government operative from the culinary world.

**Whatzits:** **Jane Olmsted** brought a kitchen gadget that had belonged to her mother. After sharing it with the attendees, she informed us that it was used to break up ice cubes.

**Program:** **Dianne Hennessy King**, *CHoW Line* Editor, introduced today’s speaker, **Joan Bacharach**, who gave a look at the challenges of planning and developing culinary exhibits (with emphasis on the National Park Services museums) in museums, historic homes and virtual exhibits. Ms. Bacharach’s talk was titled “Curating Culinary Exhibits for Museums: Behind the Scenes.”

Meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by **David Bender**, Recording Secretary

# Curating Culinary Exhibits: Behind the Scenes



**Joan Bacharach, November 8** featured speaker, is a curator with U.S. National Park Service museum program where she develops virtual museum exhibits and historic house tours, including foodways from the homes of Mary Todd Lincoln, Bess Truman, the Robert E. Lees', as well as Alcatraz inmates and many others.



*Cornflower china used at Arlington House was the same pattern used by Robert E. Lee, Jr.*

**The museum's mission** is to collect "tangibles"

- Objects, specimens, historic photographs and documents
- The collections are encyclopedias of information, yielding information now and in the future
- Museums collect, educate and interpret, research, preserve and protect collections
- There are many kinds of museums, including
  - Art
  - History
  - Anthropology, etc.

**Interpreting foodways** helps understanding of cultures and communities from prehistoric times to the present.

**Why do food exhibits?**

- To understand ancient foodways
- To help us understand who we are
  - By comparing the historic past with the present
  - By looking at similarities and differences in cultural food practices and customs
  - Foodways illuminate social and family relationships, as well as agricultural and economic production. For example, foodways of the presidents and first ladies shows the domestic side of their lives

**Types of traditional exhibits** within the museum

- Historic house exhibits
  - These provide a context for us to appreciate home life and what happened in the kitchen and dining room
- Virtual exhibits
  - Reach diverse audiences, rural and urban, younger and older, online audiences and
  - Audience that cannot travel to the museum

**The National Park Service (NPS)** has 392 sites nationwide

- 360 sites have collections
- There are currently 30 online NPS exhibits at [www.nps.gov/history/museum](http://www.nps.gov/history/museum)
  - Five more online collections are now in preparation and others anticipated



**Developing an exhibit**

- Within the museum's mission
  - Such as food in art
  - Cultivated crops vs. wild progenitors
- Develop themes and concepts
  - Refine the 4-5 big themes
  - Be selective, don't try to include everything
- Develop exhibit design
  - Develop concept drawings
  - Research and write script
  - Captions and narrative text
  - Exhibit design and layout
- Select objects and images
  - The right objects will convey the story
  - Winnow down the objects to tell and illustrate the right story
  - The best exhibits have objects, documents and photos
  - Photography and licensing
  - Rights management: Anything after 1924 cannot be published without permission
  - Conservation: traveling exhibits are the most dangerous to artifacts
- Design graphics
- Fabricate structures
  - Case design: Display cases protect items from natural and ultraviolet light, regulate humidity, etc.
  - To-scale models
  - Design and flow of how people approach displays
- Install: Takes several weeks
- Events, public relations and educational programs
  - For example, "Dining with Mr. Douglass"

**Interesting thoughts:**

- Artifacts may be "original to the site," or they may be "of the period" or reproductions
- Today museums design educational curricula using collections to meet national education standards, in particular language arts and social sciences

Some NPS virtual museum exhibits at [www.nps.gov/history/museum](http://www.nps.gov/history/museum) that feature foodways and related collections:

- Arlington House, home of Robert E. Lee

(Continued on page 4)

- Mary Randolph, author of *The Virginia Housewife*, was a relative
- Cornflower pattern was frequently used by elite households at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- **Hampton National Historic Site**, Towson, MD (<http://www.nps.gov/hamp/index.htm>)
- **Frederick Douglass Home**
- **Reproduction chuck wagon** at Grant Kohrs Ranch in Montana, where interpretive programs include cookouts
- **George Washington Carver** at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, created a “moveable school” to reach out to the community, with nutrition education and recipe pamphlets
- **Ironclad gunboat**, U.S.S. Cairo sunk by torpedo — artifacts preserved under water since the Civil War
  - Can compare the different foodways of officers and enlisted men
- **Truman home** in Independence, Missouri: Features a classic kitchen where Bess prepared meals
  - Several of her hand written recipes are featured online
  - It is said that the young Harry S. Truman “married up” in the Independence social hierarchy
- **Eisenhower home** at Gettysburg, PA
  - Mamie liked pink and green and carried fabric swatches with her when she traveled
  - She had breakfast in her bedroom and worked there until noon each day
  - She did not cook often

Notes respectfully submitted by **Sheila Crye**, CHoW member and youth cooking teacher

---

## Refreshments

- **Jane Olmsted** brought Cauliflower à la Jaleo restaurant.
- **Claudia Kousoulas** brought Iced Ginger Cookies from the *Complete Magnolia Bakery Cookbook*.
- **David Bender** brought Bread and Butter Pickle Mayonnaise Dip.
- **Amy Snyder** brought Mixed Olive Tapenade, Classic Hummus, Pita Bite Crackers and Mini Toasts.
- **Felice Caspar** brought Danish Tomatoes from *Five Star Favorites: Recipes from Friends of Mamie & Ike*

**Keep Those Refreshments Coming!**

## CHoW's New Google Group Listserve



Occasionally CHoW members hear about events that will happen before another newsletter gets out, or a speaker may be unavailable at the last minute. Or, as winter approaches, we run the risk of a sudden weather change making it impossible to hold a meeting. We'd like to keep members up to date when these things occur.

To that end, the Board has decided to start over the next month an announcement only e-mail listserv via Google Groups, called **CHoW-DC**. This means that you won't be posting directly to the list, but your message will be read by the group moderator and Board members before being posted.

[chow-dc@googlegroups.com](mailto:chow-dc@googlegroups.com)

This will not be a high-traffic group. You probably won't receive messages more than a few times a month. We'll use your e-mail address as submitted with your CHoW membership. You will receive an invitation that you need to read and follow the directions to receive Google Group postings.

If you don't want to receive the postings, either don't respond, or e-mail the list address -- [chow-dc@googlegroups.com](mailto:chow-dc@googlegroups.com) -- requesting to be removed. Please be sure to include your name AND the e-mail address you want excluded. If you do not respond you will be removed after a month.

If you hear of events you think will be of interest to CHoW's membership, send them to [chow-dc@googlegroups.com](mailto:chow-dc@googlegroups.com), or to any Board member. All Board members' e-mail addresses are listed in the monthly newsletter. --**Katy Hayes**

---

## News of Our Members

In Memory of **Patricia Ann Gibbs** who passed away on October 31. She was a Colonial Williamsburg historian whose M.A. thesis was “Taverns in Tidewater Virginia 1700-1774.” See [www.colonialwilliamsburg.net/history/teaching/enewsletter/volume3/may05/iotm.cfm](http://www.colonialwilliamsburg.net/history/teaching/enewsletter/volume3/may05/iotm.cfm) for one of her articles about “Dining in Eighteenth-Century Virginia.”

**Welcome, New Members!**

**Karen Falk**, Jewish Museum of Maryland  
Interests: American Jewish Foodways

**Quentin Looney & Deborah Dougherty** (household)  
Interests: cooking, food science

# Upcoming Events



SAVE THE DATE FOR...

## Celebrating FOOD!

Cooking ~ Careers ~ Communications

Les Dames d'Escoffier's

Seventh Salute to Women in Gastronomy

**DATE:** Saturday, February 27, 2010  
**TIME:** 9:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.  
**PLACE:** University of Maryland at Shady Grove,  
Rockville, Maryland  
**COST:** \$95 including Continental breakfast & lunch

A full-day seminar Featuring:  
*Hands-on Cooking Lessons!*  
*12 panels of food experts!*

A *Fabulous Food Expo* with new products,  
samples and renowned experts!  
A Festival of Desserts!



**Featured Speakers**  
**Nongkran Daks**

TV Food Network Star

**Carla Hall**

Bravo-TV "Top Chef"  
Finalist



Co-sponsored by Washington, D.C. Chapter of  
Les Dames d'Escoffier International  
and the University of Maryland



## Julia Child Recipe of the Week



The National Museum of American History, home of the exhibit, "Bon Appétit! Julia Child's Kitchen at the Smithsonian," has been hosting a weekly blog in recent months, featuring members of the museum staff who choose to cook one of Julia Child's recipes and photograph and write about the process. Readers are invited to send in their stories, photos and videos of their own experiences preparing Julia Child's recipes.

<http://blog.americanhistory.si.edu/osaycanyousee/recipe-of-the-week-julia-child/> For years you have also been able to have an online visit to the kitchen exhibit at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/juliachild/>

## Annapolis Gingerbread Parade of Homes

Gingerbread homes will be displayed at businesses throughout the Annapolis Historic District, December 3-19. Visitors can vote for their favorite of the contest entries and the People's Choice Awards are announced December 19. In addition to the competition, Historic Annapolis Foundation is planning its holiday decorations at the William Paca House around the theme "Gingerbread." The Foundation's vice president for collections and interpretation, Heather Ersts said, "We will use the William Paca House holiday installation to illustrate the history and importance of ginger and gingerbreads." [www.annapolis.org](http://www.annapolis.org) or 410-267-8146



## Roger Smith Food Writers' Conference

The food writing craft is in transition, and if observers and technologists are to be believed, many more changes are soon to come. The purpose of the conference is to examine these trends and discuss the future of food writing. This conference is not sponsored or underwritten by anyone or any group. The hotel is donating free space for the conference February 12-14, 2010. Roger Smith Hotel, New York City. <http://rsfoodwriters.posterous.com/>

## Book Review

# Cooking in Europe, 1650-1850

By Patrick Evans-Hylton

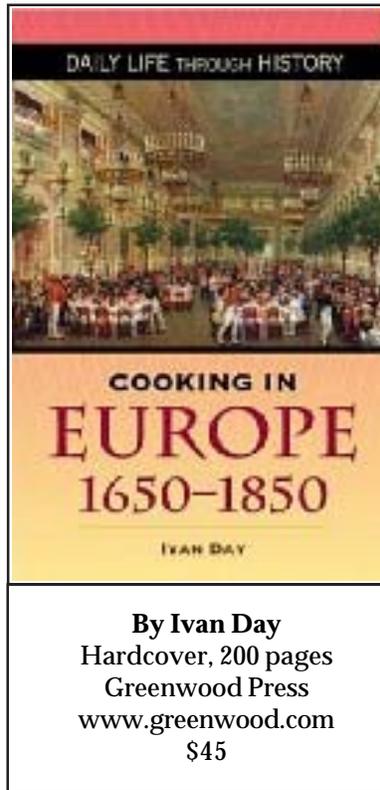
In his latest book, *Cooking in Europe, 1650-1850*, Ivan Day examines the multitude of food and foodway changes that were taking place from the Baroque Era to the Victorian Era. Fascinating not only on their own merit and the global implications that followed, the information is key for those who study Virginia cookery during this period as much of what was happening in England at the time was mirrored in the colony as well.

Day is a food historian, food educator, cook and broadcaster working from his antique kitchen artifacts-filled 17th-century farmhouse in Cumbria, England. He was recently the keynote speaker at “Foodways in the 18th Century: Bringing Virginia’s Bounty to the Royal Governor’s Table” conference in Colonial Williamsburg from November 8-10.

In his book, Day uses narratives and recipes to show changes in France, Italy, England, Austria, Germany, Holland, Portugal, Spain and Scotland cooking. The information is divided into eras, including the Baroque and Rococo Era from 1650 through 1750, the reign of Louis XV to the French Revolution from 1750 to 1800, and the reign of Napoleon to the Victorian Era from 1800 to 1850.

“It is a mistake to assume that because early cooks did not have all the conveniences of a modern kitchen, their cooking techniques and equipment must have been primitive,” writes Day. “Anyone who has compared the taste of food cooked in a microwave oven (hi-tech cookery) with that broiled skillfully over a charcoal grill (Neolithic cooking) will tell you that food is not necessarily improved by advancing technology.”

Over the course of two centuries, the use of food and evolving foodways are examined, including the rise of French fine cooking and its effect on culinary tastes, not only on the upper classes, but, gradually, the working class



as well. Food preparation methods and kitchen equipment are looked at too. Illustrations dot the pages throughout.

“[The] book covers a period in which European cookery underwent extraordinary transformation,” Day writes. “The recipes are divided into three sections and have been chosen to illuminate how these crucial changes unfolded.”

Recipes come with brief headnotes to describe the item and are organized by dish type, including: salads and cold dishes; soups; meat; poultry; fish and seafood; vegetables and fungi; eggs and dairy; sauces; savory pastries; starches, pastas, and legumes; breads and cakes; sweet pastries and puddings; fruit, nuts, and flower preserves; sweets and confections; jellies and ices; and drinks.

Day notes that of the almost 200 recipes included, all of which can be prepared using modern kitchen equipment, the

majority were everyday foods.

“A few luxurious dishes have been included as interesting examples of high-status dining, but it is not expected that readers will attempt these,” he writes. “Most recipes, however, are perfectly practical today and hopefully will open up a few unusual culinary byways for the modern cook to explore.”

A valuable tool in the book is a concise glossary of period food and cooking terms, from *adubos*, an old Portuguese name for a mixture of spices and seasonings, to *zuppa*, an Italian name for a thick soup-like dish. A thorough bibliography is another good resource in the book.

Day maintains an extensive website at: [www.historicfood.com](http://www.historicfood.com).

*Patrick Evans-Hylton is a food writer and food educator and member of CHoW/DC. Read about his adventures in food at: [www.patrickevanshylton.com](http://www.patrickevanshylton.com)*