

# Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

Winter/Spring, 1990

## *An Evening in Kerrytown*

*When Jan Longone stepped down as chairperson of the Culinary Historians, the group presented her with a gift certificate for the Kerrytown Bistro as a token of our appreciation for her years of dedication to the group. Below she reports on the dinner she and Dan enjoyed at the Bistro.*

I have received many intellectual and social pleasures from my experience founding and chairing the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor, but now I want to report on a recent gustatory pleasure — made possible by your generosity in presenting me with a gift certificate for dinner, with the companion of my choice, at the Kerrytown Bistro.

It will come as no surprise that my companion was your treasurer, Dan Longone. We thought of you all — most kindly — as we dined on Wednesday, February 21, on the following:

### First Course

Champignons Rotis — mushrooms roasted with garlic, olive oil, and marjoram. The dish was perfectly prepared and evoked thoughts of Provence and the Mediterranean.

Brandade de Morue — pounded salt cod, olive oil, garlic, and parsley served with toast rounds and Kalamata olives. Most savory.

### Entree

Cassoulet a la mode de Toulouse — white beans, fennel sausage, lamb, cotechino, preserved duck, blanched bacon, onions, garlic, breadcrumbs, herbs. This has long been a favorite dish of ours.

Coquilles Saint-Jacques et Crevettes, Sauce Matelote — a Burgundian specialty, mixing red wine with shell fish. Scallops and shrimp sauteed in garlic-infused olive oil, pan-sauced with red wine, clam juice, shallots, garlic, and fresh herbs. Served with basmati rice. As good as it sounds.

### Wine

1981 Cabernet Sauvignon from Jean Leon, Penedes, Spain

We were too full for dessert, but we enjoyed the espresso and an after-dinner sherry, courtesy of fellow culinary historian Peter di Lorenzi, co-owner of The Bistro. We would like to thank you all not simply for the fine meal, but for the thought behind your generous gift. We might add that the art work currently on display at the The Bistro consists of photographs of graffiti from the Berlin wall; it is most interesting.

*Jan Longone*



## Contents

Indian Pudding	2
<i>Jan Longone</i>	
The Cook's Bookshelf	5
Membership News	6
Calendar	8

# Indian Pudding:

## *The American National Dish?*

by Jan Longone



*This article was originally published in The American Magazine, a publication of the Clements Library at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. They have given us permission to reprint it in conjunction with Jan's talk to the Culinary Historians, 'Mother Maize and King Corn', at the March, 1990, meeting.*

"As American as apple pie." Bah! Humbug! And pshaw! I propose that the credentials for "as American as Indian pudding" are far more compelling. It is true that in Amelia Simmons' *American Cookery* (Hartford, 1796), considered to be the first American cookbook, there are two recipes for apple pie. However, these are recipes of English origin, using ingredients readily available in England and on the Continent as well. Furthermore, recipes for apple pie abound in cookbooks published in England prior to the nineteenth century.

On the other hand, the three recipes for Indian pudding which appear in this first American cookbook have been considered by historians to be not only the first printed recipes in English for that homely yet delicious food, but also the first for any dish using corn meal as an ingredient.

We do know that the techniques used in making Indian or hasty pudding are age-old; gruels, potages, porridges, frumenties, and puddings were made from earliest times. We also know that specific pudding recipes very similar in nature to those for Indian pudding appear in early English cookbooks, but these use wheat flour, rye flour, oatmeal, ground rice, crumbled bread or cake, or other cereals and starches in place of the corn meal. Further, there are records that various Indian tribes and civilizations in the New World were making some form of corn meal gruel or pudding, oftentimes sweetened with honey or native berries. But it is exactly the combination of the ancient techniques with the indigenous New World crop, corn, flavored with the colonial products of ginger, nutmeg, and molasses, which I believe makes Indian pudding a contender for our national dish.

### Earliest References

Although recipes for Indian pudding did not appear in print prior to 1796, we know that Americans had been eating it for about 150 years before that time. The *Dictionary of Americanisms* (Chicago, 1951) records the first printed usage of the words "Indian Pudding" to be in the March 17-26, 1722, edition of *The New England Courant*, the third newspaper printed in Boston and the fourth in the British colonies. Examination of this newspaper in the Clements Library archives did, indeed, uncover the following news article datelined Boston, March 26, 1722:

"We are at present amus'd with a very odd Story from Martha's Vineyard, which however is affirm'd for a Truth by some Persons lately come from thence. viz. That at a certain House in Edgar Town, a Plain Indian Pudding, being put into the Pot and boil'd the usual Time, it came out a Blood-red Colour, to the great Surprise of the whole Family. The Cause of this great Alteration in the Pudding is not yet known tho' it has been Matter of great Speculation in that Neighborhood."





The scientific curiosity in this news article surprised me until I discovered that the probable author was none other than Benjamin Franklin, who was at that time working on *The Courant* as an apprentice to the editor, his brother James.

## The Colonists' Salvation

It should not seem radical to suggest that a recipe using corn be our national dish. Throughout the length and breadth of this hemisphere, Indians were using this native grain in a variety of ways before the Europeans arrived. When the colonists did come, they were immediately introduced to corn; it sustained them and played a decisive role in making permanent settlement possible. The earliest personal letter in English in the Clements Library reveals how quickly the new arrivals accepted corn, although we see the letter writer's fear that his wife might not be pleased with this unknown grain when she arrived in America.

Writing "from Newbery in New England this 11th of the 8th month called October, 1638," Henry Biley sent a letter to his "deare & Lovinge wife, Mrs. Rebecca Biley in Sarum." Mr. Biley had come to the colonies early in 1638 but had to leave his wife back in England as she was pregnant. In this letter he tells her of his life and progress in Newbery, "for I am confident that there is noe Country under the sunn where men may more Comfort[ably] subsist if they be industrious." He tells her that he eagerly awaits her coming and then admonishes:

"& to the end you may the more comfortably subsist here, I would wish you to bring with you one hogshead of meale [I assume he means wheat], one barrel of oat meal, one hundred of ramish cheese with a firkin of suet, for I doubt whether this Country Corne may be so well liking unto you though for my part I like exceedingly well of it & so doe the most of the new Comers."

## Precedence for Puddings

Should our nation accept Indian pudding as its national dish, we would not be alone in our choice of a homely pudding as our culinary symbol. Any student of Scottish history knows that Robert Burns immortalized the "Great Chieftain o' the Puddin' Race" in his *Ode to Haggis*. Throughout the world on January 25, Haggis Dinners are given to commemorate the poet's birthday — and the national pudding.

The American language and literature are filled with poems, stories, and references to corn. It is our national grain. Among the many poems of praise to corn, I would like to discuss two which illustrate the almost mystical role that corn plays in the American ethos. Both were penned when their authors were abroad and homesick for their native land. It was corn which they longed for and which they considered to be the symbol of their homeland.

On a cold and bitter January day in 1793, Joel Barlow, diplomat and later author of the epic nationalistic poem *The Columbiad*, found himself in the town of Chambery (then part of Savoy, now in eastern France). There he was unexpectedly served a dish of corn meal mush. In a moment of whimsicality and homesickness, Barlow wrote *The Hasty Pudding*, a poem on the virtues of this favorite New England version of Indian Pudding. First published in *The New York Weekly Magazine*, January, 1796, and widely reprinted thereafter, *The Hasty Pudding* became Barlow's most popular work. Because the poem actually contains a recipe for Indian pudding, it is routinely cited in cookery bibliographies.

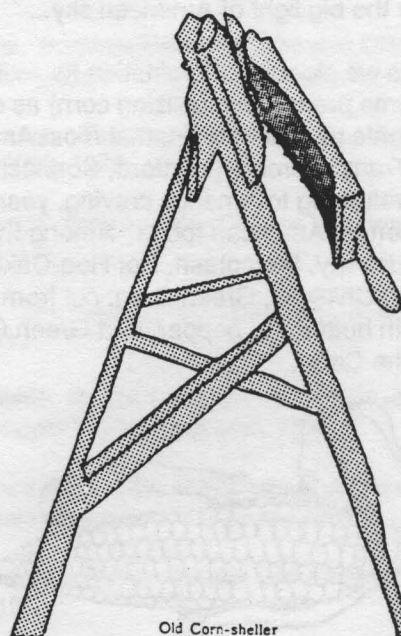
The poem is a delight to read, even today. In addition to the recipe for Hasty Pudding, Barlow discussed the planting, growing, harvesting, milling, and husking of corn as well as the role of Hasty Pudding in colonial life. Throughout the poem are paeans of praise for the discoverer of corn and all who work with it:

...what lovely squaw, in days of yore,  
(Ere great Columbus sought thy native shore)  
First gave thee to the world...

and to:

Some tawny Ceres, goddess of her days,  
First learn'd with stones to crack the well-dry'd  
maize,  
Thro' the rough sieve to shake the golden show'r,  
In boiling water stir the yellow flour.

see *Indian Pudding*, page 4



Old Corn-sheller

## Indian Pudding, from page 3

There is praise for the corn itself ("generous maize") and for Hasty Pudding ("my morning incense") and a charming verse:

And all my bones were made of Indian corn.  
Delicious grain! Whatever form it take,  
To roast or boil, to smother or to bake,  
In every dish 'tis welcome still to me,  
But most, my Hasty-Pudding, most in thee.

A century and a half later, Paul Engle, poet and longtime director of the Creative Writing and International Writers Programs at the University of Iowa, found himself homesick in England — homesick enough to write his poem, *Corn*, published in *Corn: A Book of Poems* (New York, 1939). In it, he recalls the "thousand-mile field, midwest, plowed without end" and "the autumn prairie blonde with corn." He complains that he had:

...grown tired of that dull foreign food,  
Wanting the piled-high plates of August corn,  
Golden like nothing in the English earth,  
Sweet with the rain and yellow with the sun.

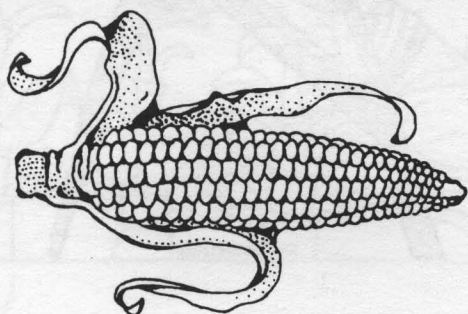
He says at last:

...I have come back  
To land I carry in my bones as corn  
Eaten when a child...

and:

...My life is  
To be at home here by the cornfield's edge,  
Under the big light of American sky...

And so we close our nomination for Indian pudding (or at least, some preparation utilizing corn) as our national dish with thoughts by Mark Twain, that most American of writers. In *A Tramp Abroad* (Hartford, Connecticut, 1878), Twain tells of returning to America craving, yearning for, lusting after, certain American foods. Among them are six corn dishes: Hominy, Succotash, Hot Hoe-Cakes, Hot Corn-Pone with Chitlings, Green Corn, cut from the ear and served with butter and pepper, and Green Corn on the ear (Corn on the Cob).



## Receipts

*Jan's original article in The American Magazine (Volume 2, Number 1, Spring-Summer, 1986) included 19 recipes for Indian pudding from 11 of America's most important historical cookbooks. Below we have reprinted several of the most interesting recipes.*

### A Nice Indian Pudding

No. 1. 3 pints scalded milk, 7 spoons fine Indian meal, stir well together while hot, let stand till cooled; add 7 eggs, half pound raisins, 4 ounces butter, spice and sugar, and bake one and half hour.

No. 2. 3 pints scalded milk to one pint meal salted; cool, add 2 eggs, 4 ounces butter, sugar or molasses and spice q.s. it will require two and a half hours baking.

No. 3. Salt a pint meal, wet with one quart milk, sweeten and put into a strong cloth, brass or bell metal vessel, stone or earthen pot, secure from wet and boil 12 hours.

Amelia Simmons, *American Cookery* (Hartford, 1796).

### An Excellent Indian Pudding without Eggs (A Cheap Dish)

Take seven heaping spoonfuls of Indian meal, half a tea-spoonful of salt, two spoonfuls of butter or sweet lard, a teacup of molasses, and two tea-spoonfuls of ginger or cinnamon, to the taste. Pour into these a quart of milk while boiling hot. Mix well, and put it in a buttered dish. Just as you set it in the oven stir in a teacup of cold water, which will produce the same effect as eggs. Bake three quarters of an hour, in a dish that will not spread it out thin.

Catherine Beecher, *Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book* (New York, 1852).

### Indian Pudding

5 cups scalded milk	1/2 cup molasses
1/3 cup Indian meal	1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ginger	

Pour milk slowly on meal, cook in double boiler twenty minutes, add molasses, salt, and ginger; pour into buttered pudding-dish and bake two hours in slow oven; serve with cream. If baked too rapidly it will not whey. Ginger may be omitted.

Fannie Farmer, *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* (Boston, 1896).



# The Cook's Bookshelf

*In conjunction with her March 22, 1990, presentation to the CHAA, Mother Maize and King Corn, Jan Longone has shared with us her expertise on corn books. The bibliography on corn is voluminous. This is a very partial listing, enough to get one started on exploring the subject.*

Arthur Anderson and C. Dibble (translators). **Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain.** N.M., 1950-1982.

Joel Barlow. **The Hasty-Pudding.** Tiebout & O'Brien, New Haven, 1796.

**Benjamin Franklin on the Art of Eating.** American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1958.

Louise Bercaw et al. **Corn in the Development of the Civilization of the Americas: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography.** BAE, Washington, D.C., 1940.

Eugene Brooks. **The Story of Corn and The Westward Migration.** Rand McNally, Chicago, 1916.

Porter Browne. **An Essay on Indian Corn.** J. Thompson, Philadelphia, 1837.

Joseph Burt-Davy. **Maize, Its History, Cultivation, Handling and Uses.** Longman's, Green & Co., London, New York, 1914.

Gerald Carson. **Cornflake Crusade.** Rinehart & Co., 1957.

Gerald Carson. **The Social History of Bourbon.** Dodd, Mead & Co., 1963.

William Cobbett. **A Treatise on Cobbett's Corn.** W. Cobbett, London, 1828.

Alfred Crosby. **The Columbian Exchange.** Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 1972.

Frank Cushing. **Zuni Breadstuff.** Museum of the American Indian, New York, 1920.

Joseph Dabney. **Mountain Spirits.** Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974.

William Emerson. **History and Incidents of Indian Corn and Its Culture.** Wrightson & Co., Cincinnati, 1878.

Edward Enfield. **Indian Corn: Its Value, Culture and Uses.** D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1866.

John Finan. **Maize in the Great Herbals.** Chronica Botanica, Waltham, MA, 1950.

Dorothy Giles. **Singing Valleys: The Story of Corn.** Random House, New York, 1940.

**Hagood Mills Corn Meal Recipe Book.** Pendleton Historic District, South Carolina, 1975.

Ulysses P. Hedrick. **A History of Horticulture in America to 1860.** Oxford University Press, New York, 1950.

Elizabeth Hiller. **The Corn Cook Book.** P. F. Volland, Chicago, 1918.

Sam Bowers Hilliard. **Hog Meat and Hoe Cake.** Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1972.

Eliza Leslie. **The Indian Meal Book.** Carey & Hart, Philadelphia, 1847.

Janice B. Longone. **Mother Maize and King Corn: The Persistence of Corn in the American Ethos.** The Clements Library, Ann Arbor, 1986.

Paul Mangelsdorf. **Corn: Its Origins, Evolution and Development.** Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1974.

Charles Murphy. **Indian Corn: A Cheap, Wholesome and Nutritious Food; 150 Ways to Prepare and Cook It.** G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1917.

Herbert Myrick. **The Book of Corn.** Orange Judd, New York, 1904.

Arthur Parker. **Iroquois Uses of Maize and Other Food Plants.** University of the State of New York, Albany, 1910.

W. J. Rorabaugh. **The Alcoholic Republic.** Oxford University Press, New York, 1979.

E. L. Sturtevant. **Indian Corn.** Charles Van Benthuyssen & Sons, 1880.

Mary Wade. **The Book of Corn Cookery.** A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago, 1917.

Howard Walden. **Native Inheritance. The Study of Corn in America.** Harper & Row, New York, 1966.

Henry Wallace and William Brown. **Corn and Its Early Fathers.** Michigan State University Press, East Lansing, 1956.

Paul Weatherwax. **Indian Corn in Old America.** Macmillan, New York, 1954.

Paul Weatherwax. **Story of the Maize Plant.** University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1928.



## Membership News...

### A Culinary Historian in Provence

A Week in Provence is wonderful to contemplate. It is also a vacation program that Nathalie Waag offers to food lovers in her hilltop village, Bonnieux, France. It is an immersion in the countryside and people of the film, *Manon des Sources*, or Laurence Wylie's book, *Village in the Vaucluse*, or the magical cooking described in Jean-Noel Escudier and Petra J. Fuller's *The Wonderful Food of Provence*. Last summer my wife and I took part in this cooking, eating, and exploring experience and found it to be all we had expected and more.

The program is orchestrated by Madame Waag, a delightfully warm and friendly woman of undeniable cooking talent. She speaks English fluently and is a thoroughly French woman in spite of "being stupidly born Swiss." She takes only four guests at a time, accommodating them in her 18th century apartment overlooking the Luberon mountain range. My wife and I were joined by a young American woman, a journalist, who had just completed an extensive cooking class in Paris. After our first day together, she declared that Nathalie's style of cooking was something she would actually incorporate into her life. We agreed.

Breakfasts in Nathalie's kitchen were leisurely: yogurt, fruit, coffee, and brioches and croissants from the marvelous bakery across the street, with butter, jams, and half a dozen local honeys. During breakfast the day's activities were mapped out. Usually, Nathalie made suggestions that were so tempting we rarely inquired about alternatives.

Possibilities included marketing in nearby villages such as Apt or Cavaillon, where the inspiration for the evening meal came from the choicest of the day's abun-

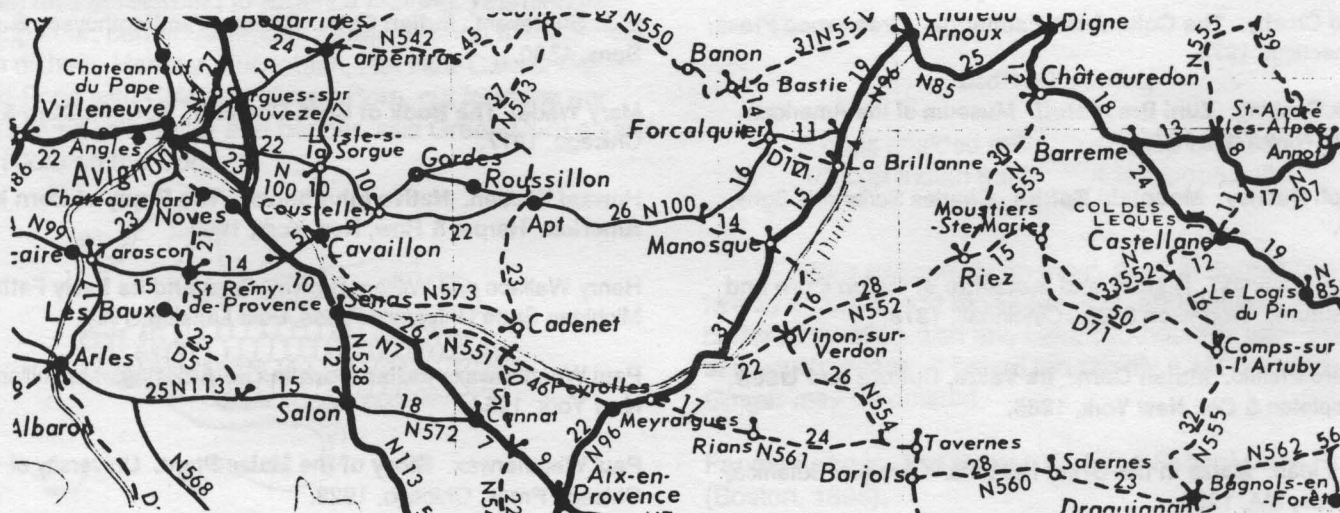
dant selection of foods. Balancing leisure and activity, the early afternoon might be rounded out by visits to a local winery or picturesque towns in the area between Avignon and Aix-en-Provence: Gordes, St.-Remy-de-Provence, Roussillon (the setting for *Village in the Vaucluse*). Lunches were often picnics of market discoveries or in small cafes. In one cafe we enjoyed that garlic blockbuster, aioli.

In the late afternoon the main event of the day began with a glass of rose and perhaps a tasting from a score of olive oils while Nathalie prepared dinner. The meal was invariably stunning in both flavor and simplicity. While she does not run a cooking school per se, Nathalie is happy to have you take notes while she cooks. I learned a great deal from her description of what she was doing and why. In addition to the entrees, dinners included soups, fresh salads, bread, wine, cheeses, and fruits. Some of our favorite dishes were the soupe au pistou, a marvelous lamb stew, rabbit, and a "fish orgy". As Nathalie's friend, Alice Waters of Berkeley's Chez Panisse, says "This is absolutely the best way to understand what eating is all about — simple, relaxed market cooking from Provence."

I judge an experience like this by asking whether I enjoyed it enough to go back again. In this case, there is no doubt about the answer. I shall return.

For more information on A Week in Provence with Nathalie Waag, write to her at 26 rue Republique, F-84480 Bonnieux, France.

Christopher Kent





## more News...

### Curious about the AIWF?

*Jan Longone, our Honorary Chair, has just been elected to the national board of the American Institute of Wine and Food (AIWF). Following are some of her thoughts after attending her first board meeting.*

The AIWF is a nonprofit, educational organization founded in 1981 by Julia Child, Robert Mondavi, Richard Graff, and others to advance the understanding, appreciation, and quality of wine and food. The Institute has 5,000 members and thirteen chapters operating around the country. A Michigan chapter is in the process of formation. For further information on this, contact Ellen Knofler, 6608 Stillwell, West Bloomfield, MI 48322, (313) 661-3717.

The AIWF publishes a quarterly, *The Journal of Gastronomy*, as well as a bi-monthly newsletter, *American Wine and Food*. It has sponsored national conferences on gastronomy at least once a year and a number of regional conferences.

My first board meeting took place in San Francisco, Saturday, January 20, 1990, with nine solid hours of meetings, discussions, debates, and decisions. Membership, fundraising, future conferences and publications, a revamping of the by-laws and goals of the Institute, the placement of the Simon/Lowenstein collection of gastronomic literature, committee appointments, all of the normal organizational tasks were confronted, but I will not elaborate on this aspect of the meeting.

Rather, I wanted to share with you two special dinners surrounding the board meeting — one of which turned out to be a rump session of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor! As many of you know, two founding members of the CHAA live in the Bay Area: Charlene Depner and Mitch Chyette. Charlene's sister, Cheryl Depner, an active member of the CHAA who was partly responsible for the great success of the 1989 French Revolution picnic, was also visiting San Francisco. With the two former members, Cheryl, my sister Louise Wallace (a CHAA member), Dan, and me we had a quorum for a West Coast meeting of the CHAA.

We chose our reunion site carefully: the China Moon Cafe, run by a fellow culinary historian, Barbara Tropp. Our menu included many of Barbara's specialties, some of which can be found in her well-received book, *The Modern Art of Chinese Cooking* (Morrow, New York, 1982), which is just about of print. However, the good news is that Barbara is at work on a new book, *The China Moon Cookbook*, which will be published within the year. In addition, you can receive news of the restaurant, recipes, etc. by subscribing to the *Fried Rice Times*. This charming newsletter will be issued quarterly and is available free of charge by writing to *Fried Rice Times*, China Moon Cafe, 639 Post Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

After the long hours of AIWF meetings on January 20, the evening was devoted to a very special banquet at Jeremiah Tower's restaurant, Stars. Robert Mondavi and Richard Graff graciously supplied wines from their own vineyards. Here is the menu:

Grilled Prawns, Bitter Greens & Mango Salad  
*Carmenet White, Edna Valley, 1986*

Ricotta Ravioli with Pancetta & Normandy Butter  
*Chalone Pinot Blanc, 1980*

Grilled Rack of Lamb with Garlic-Rosemary Potatoes  
*Robert Mondavi, Cabernet Sauvignon, Reserve, 1979 en magnum*

Winter Fruit Compote  
*Robert Mondavi, Sauvignon Blanc, Botrytis, 1983*

This meal was superior in every respect. How fortunate we all are to have a restaurateur of Jeremiah Tower's intelligence, taste, and creativity. The next board meeting will be in Atlanta in April. I will try to report on it in the Fall issue of the Newsletter.

*Jan Longone*

### Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

The Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor (CHAA) is a group of scholars, food writers, collectors, cooks, nutritionists, students, and others interested in the study of culinary history and gastronomy. For more information about the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor you may contact:

**Julie Lewis, Chair**  
301 N. Revena Blvd.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103  
(313) 662-9211

**Jan Longone, Honorary Chair**  
1207 W. Madison St.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103  
(313) 663-4894

Please address contributions to the Newsletter and editorial questions to the editor:

**Susan Fussell, Newsletter Editor**  
316 Westwood Avenue  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103



## CHAA Spring and Summer Programs



Meetings are held September through May, the third Sunday of the month from 7 to 9 p.m.  
at the Washtenaw County Extension Service Building, 4133 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor.

*April 15*

### **The History of American Cheese: Past and Present**

Ari Weinzwieg

*May 20*

### **Herbs in the Victorian Era**

Lois Young

*June*

No meeting scheduled

*July*

**Summer Picnic.** Tentative plans are to hold an Italian-style picnic at Ned and Joanne Chalat's house in Grosse Pointe. Details will be announced in the next Newsletter and by post card to nearby members.

### **CHAA Newsletter**

c/o Jan Longone

1207 West Madison

Ann Arbor, MI 48103

---

## Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor