

## Little Buds

chef Larry  
James

## Seminar outshines last year's

If there's one thing Schoolcraft College's Culinary Arts and Continuing Education departments know how to do, it's how to pull out all the big guns for its second annual Chef's Seminar. These weren't just the big guns, they were the heavy artillery.

If you remember my column last year at this time, my comments on the seminar were just so-so. Not this year.

Unfortunately for Livonia's Schoolcraft College, one of the brightest names on the culinary horizon in the Midwest, enrollment was down at this year's conference. Fortunately, for those who did sign up, this meant ample seating, perfect acoustics, incredible-sized samples and an opportunity to ask many of the Detroit-area's finest chefs anything your little heart desired.

The morning began with two of our area's most respected names in chefdom, Milos Chihelka of the Golden Mushroom in Southfield and Leopold Schaefer of Machus Red Fox in Bloomfield Township. Both Certified Master Chefs, these guys trotted around the shimmering stainless steel kitchens of Schoolcraft's famed Culinary Arts Department like ducks in water.

CHIEF MILOS, in his usual low-key demeanor, stuffed a loin of foal with sweetbreads and a oat forcemeat stuffing, deglazed the roasting pan to whip up an accompanying sauce and then tossed together a mussel and vegetable soup that could easily adorn the pages of any major food magazine. His culinary tidbits and tips were being jotted down by everyone in attendance, even the back-up chef-students from the school.

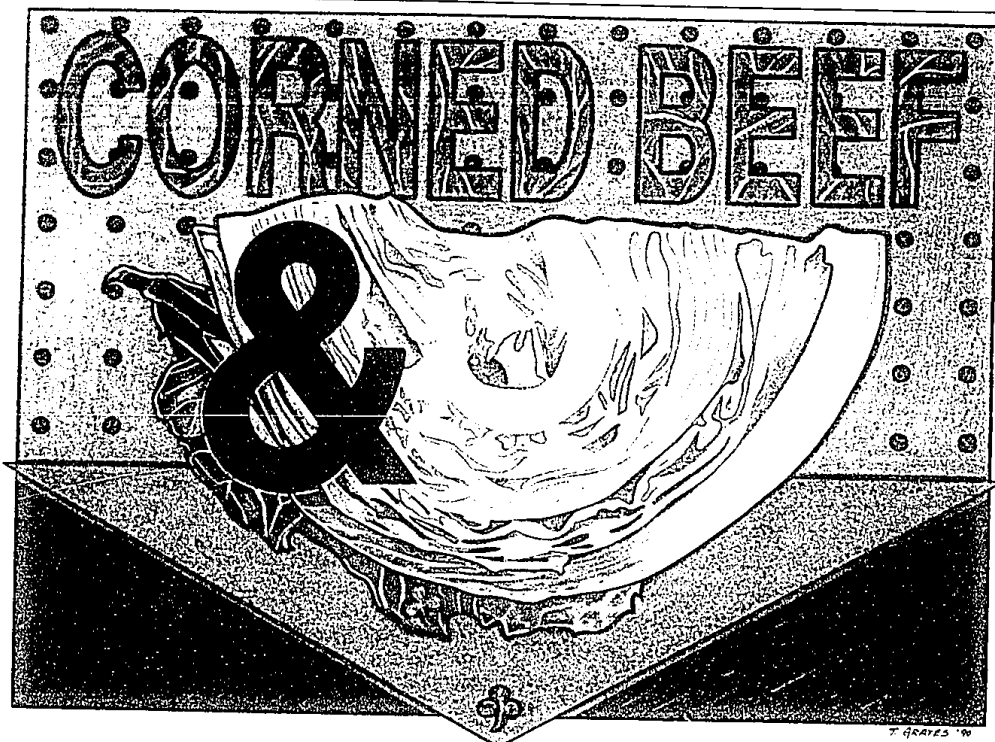
Chef Leopold assembled a fabulous Spanish Paella recipe laced with saffron, shrimps the size of a butterknife, chorizo sausage fresh from the Eastern Market, mussels and Little Neck clams. The audience, consisting of an equal number of culinary students and sophisticated cooks from all walks of life, raved at the fragrance, the combination of flavors and the ease that this noted chef incorporated. With only 20 or so students in the class, plates were heaped with the delectable paella and oohs and ahs emanated from the room upon exiting.

Session number two brought in the younger professionals, knowing that following the masters would be difficult but not necessarily impossible. Chef Brian Polyn, chef and partner at the Pike Street Station in Pontiac, created a melt-in-your-mouth shrimp mousse with a chive beurre blanc that yielded shouts of bravo from the not-so-hungry but ready-to-learn audience. The chef's nimble hands filleted a whole salmon so as to remove every bone with about as much effort as you and I exert when we make toast.

Not to be outdone, Chef Marcus Haight of the Lark Restaurant in West Bloomfield whipped together a Chocolate Meringue Cake complete with chocolate leaves. This young chef's talent was evident as he mastered a pastry bag to create perfectly round swirls of chocolate meringue. In addition to the sampling, one of the highlights was an opportunity for the students in the session to try their hand at making the chocolate leaves.

Lunch was held in the beautifully decorated American Harvest Restaurant in the Waterman Campus Center (yes, it's open to folks like you and me). Then, back to the demo lab for afternoon presentations by Carol Haskins and Michael McFarlen of the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham. One might think that chefdom is dominated by the talents of men, but rest assured Haskins can stand her ground with no problem. Chef Haskins and McFarlen bounced back and forth with trade secrets while they prepared an elegant lamb Florentine en croûte and gourmet green salad with a Dijon vinaigrette.

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## A meal fit for St. Pat

By Larry James  
special writer

**S**T. PATRICK'S WORK in Ireland is credited with bringing Christianity to the Emerald Isle beginning in the year 432. This famous saint used a green shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity. That's why the color green and shamrocks are so closely associated with the St. Patrick's Day celebrations we know of today.

The corned beef and cabbage dinner has become yet another symbol of this holiday. Even though the Jameses celebrate St. Patrick's Day with tours of the local watering holes, wearing plastic shamrocks emblazoned with "Kiss me — I'm Irish," we always return home to a large, upright, two-gallon Everhot roaster that has been plugged in all day with a humongous piece of corned beef, shards of cabbage and an occasional onion and carrot.

If memory serves me correctly, the mind-boggling effects of the green beer hold reign to the delicious tastes of the fork-tender brisket.

To this day, I can still remember the day after St. Patrick's Day when Dad would scour the aluminum bread box looking for crumbs of bread to "soak up" the warm, jellied juices of what was left in the bottom of the roaster from the previous day. Even

though Momma never had a drop of Irish blood in her body, her corned beef, cabbage and broth surely to this day could bring smiles of joy to anyone with a last name like O'Malley.

**THE CORNED BEEF** brisket — needless to say, the most integral part of the corned beef and cabbage dinner — hails from the front part of the beef breast, which includes the sternum bone and part of the first five ribs.

A whole boneless brisket weighs in at more than 12 pounds. It can then be cut numerous ways, with the center cut being the most cherished, evenly sized and well-marbled.

Before refrigeration, beef was pickled for preservation by immersion in kegs of brine (salted water). In those days, salt contained saltpeter as a preservative, so that the meat kept well and when cut still had a nice rosy color. Today, however, because of health standards and the oath that time is money, modern pickling processes inject brine into the meat by machine, lessening the curing period from several weeks to a few days. Unfortunately for the health conscious, nitrite has replaced saltpeter as the preserving agent.

Some pre-packaged supermarket types of corned beef need to be soaked in cold water overnight to rid

them of excess salt. Read the label and if salt is mentioned more than once, a good soaking couldn't hurt. But be aware that salt comes in many disguises, from sodium to MSG.

When it comes to cooking techniques for corned beef, cooking times can vary, depending on the thickness and weight of the brisket. If you purchase corned beef from a grocer, in packages seasoned with brine, you can use that liquid as the base for cooking. If you have purchased the brisket from a butcher, simply toss the brisket into a large stockpot, cover with water and bring to a boil.

AS CORNED BEEF cooks, don't be surprised to notice two-inch-thick layers of scum or foam rising to the top of the pot. The scum is the fat marbling that has broken down from the pickling in addition to the corning solution. Keep a long-handled slotted spoon nearby for the first 30 minutes or so of cooking, to remove this.

Don't forget alternative cooking methods such as microwaving and crock pot cooking for the faded corned beef brisket. You can, with limited success, microwave a brisket on medium high power, just be sure

## There are a lot of ways to prepare corned beef

### CORNED BEEF BRISKET WITH MUSTARD-GLAZED VEGETABLES

3 pound corned beef brisket  
8 cups sliced cabbage  
1 cup julienne carrots strips  
3 tablespoons butter, melted  
1 tablespoon Dijon-style mustard  
1 tablespoon chopped parsley

3 tablespoons red currant jelly,  
melted

Place corned beef brisket in a large dutch oven; add water to cover. Cover tightly and simmer for 3 hours or until meat is fork-tender.

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## Sure and 'tis the place to buy Irish foodstuffs

By M.B. Dillon  
staff writer

If you would like to prepare a genuinely Irish meal and don't have time for an overseas shopping spree, visit Irish Imports Inc. on Michigan Avenue in East Dearborn.

Not only will you find a grocery list of Irish items carried nowhere else in southeastern Michigan or southern Ontario, but you will have a wonderful time.

"It's a quaint little business — European style — where family and friends come in to help out," said Charlie French, in his long yellow apron dusted with flour. French, a friend of the owner, County Mayo-born Jack Derrig, was helping out one recent morning — baking and waiting on customers.

One of the customers was Livonia's Paul Molony, who used his lunch hour to pick up a tape and a book on Irish names. "I'm having a party and I want to use Gaelic spellings on my guests' nametags," he said.

Compiments of Derrig and French, Molony headed back to his office at Ford Motor with a sack of light, sweet-smelling scones, minutes out of Derrig's Blodgett oven.

"It's cholesterol heaven. They must have terrible cardiac problems in Ireland," said Molony, smiling as he headed out the door.

Pat Ronayne of Bloomfield Hills shops at least twice a year at the Irish Import Store — at Christmas time, and again just before St. Patrick's Day. He buys soda bread, Irish bacon from Limerick and 30 pounds of bangers — Derrig's homemade pork sausage and easily his biggest seller.

RONAYNE AND A GROUP of friends, appropriately outfitted in Irish kitchen attire, kick off every St. Patrick's Day at 7 a.m., serving up Irish coffee, bangers and scrambled eggs made with "cream cheese, green pepper, onion and a little pepper" for a happy household of family and friends. How to best cook bangers is something only chef "Ted the Wizard" knows for sure, said Ronayne. "That's secret."

Derrig's all-natural sausage recipe is 150 years old. "It's from Dublin. We make it like they make it, but much better. We use more lean meat," said Derrig, whose patrons hail from as far away as Toledo, Lansing and Leamington. "The government requires 8.5 percent protein. We use 13 percent."

To achieve the flavor he is after,

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Irish blood sausage is just one of the products owner John Derrig features at Irish Imports Inc. in Dearborn.

DILL BREIDLER/Staff