

Italian feast satisfies seniors



More cheese, please: Louise Varlesi holds out her plate for parmesan cheese grated by Anne Marie Diakow.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRIDGER

The aroma of spaghetti and meatballs wafting through the air, the click of silverware hitting plates, the din of pleasant conversations and laughter shared at tables.

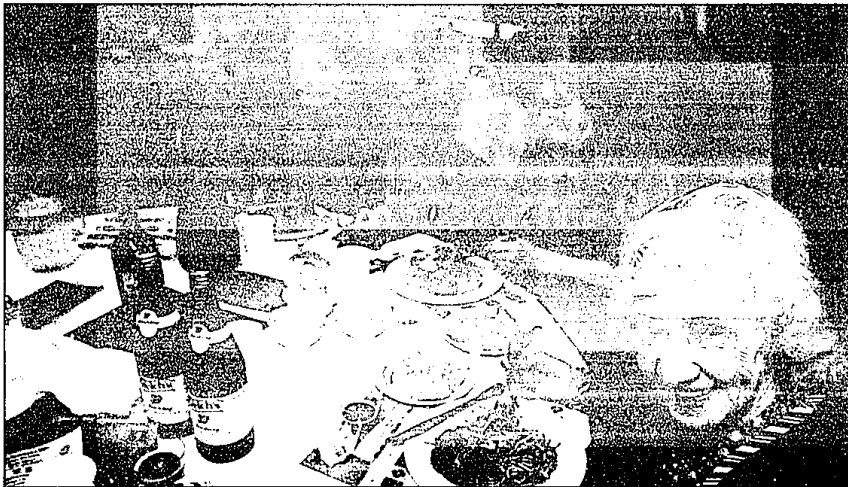
That was the mood when hundreds of senior citizens broke bread together last Thursday at the first annual Italian Feast sponsored by the Farmington Hills Senior Adult Center. Friends and neighbors 55 and older dined from 5-7 p.m. at the Farmington Hills Senior Center in the William Costick Activities Center, 28600 11 Mile Road.

The menu for the evening was all-you-can-eat spaghetti and meatballs, freshly grated parmesan cheese, salad, garlic bread and cannoli straight from Sicily, well - almost.

Candlelight, red-checked tablecloths and amore set the mood. A sparkling and entertaining dance showcase followed the dinner. The cost for all that ambiance was a mere \$5 per person.

For more information about events sponsored by the Farmington/Farmington Hills Senior Adult Division, call (248) 473-1862.

The Italian feast was co-sponsored by the Farmington Hills Inn.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRIDGER

Now that's Italian: Rose Hill, Mary Pandolfo and Bella Pandolfo enjoy their meal at the William Costick Activities Center's senior-sponsored Italian feast last Thursday evening.

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saw something greater than themselves, something that spanned any brokenness in their hearts and lives.

I believe they had a sense of that which is beyond our capacity to understand, something we can only ever feel with gut-level certainty and even then, only once or maybe twice in a lifetime.

I believe my parents were meant to be together in a way only they and God will, or should, ever understand.

Still caretaking

She feels lost without him sometimes, as do we all. Still, he takes care of her even now, from the notes he left her about winterizing the house to the dates he scrawled on the smoke detector batteries, so she'd know about how long they'd last.

Mom talks sometimes as though she had been a

spoiled child, pampered by his selfless, endless love, by how he cherished and protected her and took care of everything difficult so she didn't have to deal with it.

But if you'd ask him, I'd be willing to bet he was the one who felt cared for, by a wife who made eight or 10 loaves of bread every week and stretched too little money to feed too many children and followed and supported him through half a dozen moves and joblessness and fear, until he finally found his niche.

They both did their best and forgave each other the rest. Most of life doesn't take much more than that. I suppose in the end, it doesn't matter why my parents' love story lasted a lifetime. What matters most is that they just never stopped living it.

Joni Hubred is a staff writer for the Farmington Observer.

Party Friday

Join the Farmington Hills Senior Center for the annual Valentine's "Hearts & Flowers" party on Friday, Feb. 18. A special sweetheart lunch with a Valentine's dessert as well as dancing and door prizes are planned for the day. Tickets, limited to 150, are on sale now at a cost of \$4.

Silverware - a long history



Margit Erickson

"The world was my oyster, but I chose the wrong fork." - O s c a r Wilde

I am sure that when Mr. Wilde uttered those words, he was speaking generally - figuratively rather than literally. Yet, in our modern world, choosing the wrong fork literally is a problem most people seem to have. In fact, mention the word "etiquette" to anyone and the first thing they will think is "What fork do I use?"

Choosing the wrong fork could be more than embarrassing when you want to make a good impression such as when hosting a dinner party, when entertaining a special client or customer, when dining at a gala affair or even out on a first date.

According to a survey, the executives of the Fortune 500 companies stated they considered poor table manners an immediate turn-off. It was also found that only 12 percent of the young newly hired employees had knowledge of proper table manners. That's only 12 people out of 100! So that is why more companies are now interviewing prospective employees over a dining table - especially if those employees are going to be representing their companies publicly by entertaining clients. As you can imagine, there is enough pressure in the interview without the added tension of wondering how to handle the forest of silverware and the army of glassware in front of you.

I have added dining etiquette to almost all of the seminars I conduct, whether for business or those who simply want to know how to host a dinner party.

Speaking of forks and silverware, the oldest of all eating utensils is the spoon. The first ones used by cavemen were probably long straight sticks. When people began to cook and boil their food, I imagine some enterprising woman asked her Neanderthal mate to please use a thicker piece of wood and carve a scoop at one end to hold liquid.

In their journal during a 1804 expedition into the American northwest wilderness, Lewis and Clark wrote how they ate buffalo and pemican with potatoes using spoons fashioned out of animal horns by their Sioux Indian hosts. Eons later, they were made from metal and were fish-shaped. It wasn't until the 17th Century that they were made in the elliptical shape we have today. Spoons are the easiest and safest implement to use and is the one babies use first.

Knives, in one form or another, have been around for centuries and through the years have been used for various purposes - sharpening pencils, splitting firewood, whittling wood, and, at times, settling scores with one's enemies. It was also used for conveying food into the mouth by either piercing it with the knife tip or balancing it on the blade. This must have been tricky to do as, at first, both

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sides of the blade had sharp cutting edges. It wasn't until 1609 in France that dinner knives were reduced to only one cutting edge and the point was rounded off mainly because it was not only being used as a toothpick but to discourage assassinations at meals as well. It became illegal for cutlery to make pointed dinner knives or for innkeepers to lay them out on their tables. Recently pointed knives are again used at the dinner table but only as steak knives and in the only food for which it should be used.

Modern fork debuts

And then came the fork. That utterly strange new implement that was used not only to hold food still while it was being cut, but to transport it into the mouth. According to research, the first we read of a modern fork was in the early 11th Century when the Greek-born wife of a rich Venetian Doge insisted on eating with a fork, which at the time was an unheard-of innovation. This brought the wrath of the church down on her head and when she became ill and died it was deemed a divine punishment for the worldly arrogance displayed by her tableware and was God's retribution against her uppityness because she ate with a fork! What's more, the woman also took an occasional bath in fresh water. No wonder God struck her down. Conveniently, it was not mentioned that she and many hundreds perished during the plague.

Nevertheless, it was more than 300 years later that we read of forks again and another 200 years were to pass before the fork was accepted and used for eating. Even when it was introduced to the English in 1608 by a gentleman who saw it in Italy and brought back the custom to his own home, he was ridiculed about using it.

In 1395, Edward I standardized the silver alloy content and called it sterling. English silver is very prestigious and is called the queen of metals. In 1743 in Sheffield, England, silver plating began. Today silver is electroplated. With the invention of stainless steel in the 1920's, we have more choices of affordable dinnerware. If your choice is silver, be sure to wash silver promptly after each meal so foods do not tarnish it. Wash in hot, soapy water using a soft cloth or brush. Polish occasionally rubbing lengthwise and, again, wash in hot, soapy water, rinse well and dry with a soft clean cloth.

Use your good silver often. It will outlive you. Now that you know a bit of background on silverware, let me end with this quote from Judith Martin, Miss Manners: "Etiquette should not be perceived as just simply for forks rather than as guidelines for living."

Margit Erickson is founder of Margit Erickson & Co. She is host of *The Elegant Life* on cable TV. Call her at 471-6170.

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