

Story and photos
by Alicia Gillette



One of five women who have been preparing the feast for Saturday night's banquet, Mrs. Nick Salloum prepared stuffed grape leaves, while Mrs. John Zakoor looked on. Women have been meeting regularly for past two months to complete the evening's menu.



Philip Rashid and Mrs. George Barakat, who is called "Aunt Minnie" by hundreds of relatives, were among family members who have been holding mini-family get-togethers to plan this weekend's golden reunion at Southfield's Sheraton Southfield Hotel.

Feast for 500 is a labor of love

"A labor of love" is how Rashid family members describe the old-fashioned Arabic dinner which will welcome almost 500 members of the Rashid Family Club of America to their 50th anniversary convention this weekend at the Sheraton-Southfield Hotel in Southfield.

On Friday night the large roster of Rashid relations, who hail from California to Maryland and 27 states in between, will be hosted by the 63 families who live in the metropolitan Detroit area.

Sfeha (meat pies), Grape Leaf Rolls, Kibbe Balls, and Humus with Tahini will highlight the buffet dinner which will also include Syrian bread, Lebanese potato salad, baked ham, pork and beans, relishes and a sweet table.

Preparations for the meal, which has been cooked and frozen over the past two months, have been the responsibility of a coalition of five dedicated women, who not only planned the menu and prepared the meal, but have arranged for other members of the family to serve and host the golden anniversary ethnic feast.

Mrs. George Rashid of West Bloomfield, Mrs. Nick Salloum of Detroit, Mrs. Phillip Salloum of Dearborn Heights, Mrs. John Zakoor of West Bloomfield and Rose Marie Rashid of West Bloomfield, with the last-minute assistance of Mrs. Fred Rashid when she returned from Florida, have each legged 11 ten-hour days in their culinary efforts.

Add to that three planning meetings beforehand and Rose Marie's shopping expeditions to the American Oriental Grocery Co. for ingredients, and one can understand the scope of Rashid family hospitality.



Mrs. John Zakoor, in rear, loaned the family her West Bloomfield condominium kitchen for preparation of the gigantic feast for 500. Week by week the chefs, including Mrs. George Rashid, have prepared ethnic delicacies which the hotel will serve.

WE ARE THE OFFICIAL HOSTS for the 50th anniversary reunion," said Bunny Rashid Kalil of West Bloomfield, the great niece of one of the club founders, who is handling publicity for the event.

"They are our guests on Friday night and we don't want them to pay for their dinner. It's like entertaining in our own homes, which would be impossible with such a large group."

Each Detroit area family has contributed \$40 toward the purchase of 122 pounds of meat, 35 pounds of cracked wheat, 60 pounds of onions, 50 pounds of flour, 10 pounds of rice, seven pounds of pine nuts, 15 pounds of butter, a case of chick peas, 1 and one half gallons Mazola Oil, a gallon of Tahini and assorted spices.

Mrs. Kalil's sister, Rose Marie Rashid, who claims she "can't cook," served as coordinator of the cooking brigade.

She said the cooking committee had vetoed the idea of a potluck dinner and preferred to prepare the meal themselves.

"They decided it would be nicer for everyone to donate money so everything would be uniform and more organized," said Rose Marie. Eight servers and 12 hostesses will assist on Friday night, she said.

Stressing that her role had only been to organize the cooking effort, Rose Marie praised Jack Azzan of American Oriental Grocery Co. for providing them with freezer space, and the family cooks for working such long hours to fill the freezer.

"The women have worked so hard and have done such a great job. They wanted to do it because they want to see everybody get together and enjoy themselves."



When the family met in West Bloomfield, cousins Mike Beshara, left, family friend Chrissy Curran, Kim Kalli, Sue Beshara, and Terry Kalli were responsible for planning a hotel disco party for the

teenagers. Family maintains a scholarship fund to help educate the children, who have gone on to become doctors, lawyers, judges and distinguished members of the government.

Grape Leaf Rolls

100 grape leaves
1 cup uncooked rice
2 pounds coarsely ground lamb
2 T. butter
2 lemons
Salt, pepper, cinnamon and allspice to taste

Wash grape leaves and pour boiling water over leaves to soften. Wash and drain rice. Mix rice and spices, add lamb and mix loosely. Place about 1 tsp. of the meat mixture on the veined side of each grape leaf. Spread across in a line; turn in the

side ends and roll up completely. Line bottom of large pan with lamb bones. Place rolled up grape leaves evenly in rows in layers, criss-crossing each layer. Use an inverted plate to hold down rolls. Add boiling water to cover. Bring to a boil; then reduce to low heat and cook 30 min. Add juice of 2 lemons five minutes before removing from the heat.

Serve on a platter as an hors d'oeuvre or as part of the meal. Grape leaves may be home-grown or purchased in oriental markets, advised Mrs. George Rashid.

Kibbe Balls

3 pounds lean lamb, finely ground twice
3 cups fine wheat (Burbul)
2 medium onions, ground fine
Salt, pepper, cinnamon and allspice to taste.

Wash wheat several times and drain. Mix wheat with onion and seasonings. Add meat, knead well, adding ice cold water to soften.

Stuffing:
2 pounds coarsely ground lamb
1/2 cup pine nuts
2 medium onions, minced

Salt, pepper, cinnamon and allspice to taste

Saute onions and lamb together. Brown pine nuts and add to lamb and onions. Add seasonings and mix well.

Take enough kibbe mixture in hand and form a three inch oval. Make an opening at one end with forefinger pressing inside wall toward palms, turning as you press, making a thin outer shell.

Place a spoonful of filling in opening and close end. Fry or brush with butter and broil 10 minutes on each side.

Homos with Tahini

1 can chick peas
3 T. Tahini
1 clove garlic
one half tsp. salt
juice of 2 lemons
water

Press chick peas through grinder or use blender.

Crush garlic with salt, adding Tahini and lemon juice. Mix well.

Blend together with chick peas and season to taste. Thin with cold water to desired consistency. Garnish with oil and parsley.

Delicious when served as a dip with Pita bread.

Sfeha

DOUGH:
5 cups of flour
1/2 cup Crisco and butter mixed
1 1/4 cups of warm milk
1/2 yeast dissolved in one-quarter warm water
2 tsps. salt

MEAT FILLING
3 pounds coarsely ground lamb
2 onions, chopped fine
juice of one lemon
1/2 cup pine nuts
salt, pepper and cinnamon to taste

Combine above meat filling

ingredients. Mix flour, salt, Crisco and butter together, then add warm milk mixture and dissolved yeast.

Mix with hands until well blended. Cover and let rise for 45 minutes.

Take part of dough and roll out on slightly floured board. Cut out rounds three to four inches in diameter.

Place 2 heaping T. of meat filling in the center of the rounds. Shape into triangles by pinching edges together, leaving a small opening in the center.

Arrange on a greased baking sheet. Bake in 400 degree oven until bottoms are lightly browned. Then brown tops lightly under broiler.

'Our heritage'

Family is strength

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erous people. They have deep love for children and home life, but they don't understand independence. Women are still treated as second class citizens."

Adele Rashid Zakoor, West Bloomfield: "When we were all together any misdemeanor among the children was discussed and straight-

ened out. Never did anything go out of the family. We were considered children of the whole family."

Emily (Mrs. George) Rashid, West Bloomfield: "Children respected parents and elders in those days. We never had a child answer back to a parent.

"Father was king and mother was respected because of it."