

Thursday, April 9, 1981

## table talk

APPETIZERS, entrees and desserts — prepared by several of the chefs who will participate in Le Gala de Cuisine — greeted guests who previewed the event Monday at Cranbrook House. The third annual gala will be held at Cranbrook School's Quadrangle and Great Hall from 3-7 p.m. May 3. Proceeds from the gourmet party will benefit Cranbrook School in Bloomfield Hills.

For the preview, Miles Chelka (Golden Mushroom), Mike Agus (Plum Hollow Golf Club), Greg Goodman (Clarkston Cafe), Carol Haskins (Jacques) and Bonnie Fishman (Bonnie's Patisserie) provided an elegant sampling. Guests sipped champagne and nibbled hot and cold hors d'oeuvres, then lunched on lobster bisque, beef Wellington, veal madagascar, broccoli mousses and seafood fettuccine.

Hand-dipped chocolates from Birmingham Chocolatier and coffee drinks from The Coffee Beanery provided a final fillip.

Thirty-two Detroit-area chefs will be on hand for Le Gala de Cuisine. Tickets for the benefit are \$60 (\$45 tax deductible) per person and include the buffet feast, a recipe book, complimentary wine and continuous entertainment. There will be a cash bar.

For ticket information call 645-3633. Co-chairpersons for the gala are Lois Gamble and Scott Romney. At Monday's lunch, Romney speculated on how many more miles he would have to run the next morning to equal the three slices of rich cake he had on his plate.

A CUP of coffee will be "free" on Good Friday to donors who give \$1 between now and April 17 at one of the member restaurants of the Michigan Restaurant Association.


The donation goes to help a handicapped child in the Buck-a-Cup/Brace Child program. Donors receive a special button, which identifies them for the free coffee-pour Good Friday.

The last Buck-a-Cup netted \$27,000 for the Easter Seals Society, which co-sponsors the program.

Among area restaurants taking part are ones in Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Orchard Lake, Rochester, Southfield, Troy and West Bloomfield.

THE GOLDEN Grape Restaurant and Lounge at Troy's Somerset Inn has a new menu featuring specialty soups, salads, nachos, potato skins, western-style chili and quiche lorraine.

— Ethel Simmons



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## Characters keep to British cool

By Barbara Michals  
special writer

### review

"Murder at the Vicarage" is not the most exciting whodunit, but for lovers of the genre there are sufficient red herrings to keep you guessing.

As currently performed by St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook, "Murder at the Vicarage" offers a pleasing puzzle. The Agatha Christie mystery concludes its run at 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday at St. Dunstan's Playhouse on the grounds of Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills.

True to the spirit of the British original, the St. Dunstan's cast performs in a very British style — lots of stiff upper lip. Most of the characters in this little English village are so remarkably cool about there being a murderer in their midst that you wonder what on earth it would take to excite them.

AT A COUNTRY vicarage, someone shoots Col. Protheroe, a local bigwig whom everyone dislikes and from whose death nearly everyone stands to

benefit. Assisting the investigating police inspector is local busybody Miss Marple, Agatha Christie's famous spinster sleuth.

As Miss Marple, Maureen Cook's strengths are her authoritative voice and commanding manner. Despite her sensible British suits and oxfords, though, Ms. Cook appears too youthful and attractive to be a totally convincing Miss Marple; some grey hair might help.

Dawn Daniels pulls out all the stops portraying Mary, the vicarage maid, and major source of comic relief. Mary's slatternliness, cockney accent and great disdain for her "betters" are all handled masterfully.

The staid vicar and his young wife are competently played by Francis Loud and Laurie Pokowski. The vicar

found the body, but his wife Griselda can offer only a suspiciously vague account of her whereabouts at the time.

Also in the vicar's household are his nephew Dennis (Peter Blauman) and his curate Haws (Ronald Wheeler). Blauman appears too mature to be convincing as a teen-ager with a crush on the deceased's daughter. Wheeler's curate, upset at a possible scandal over missing church funds, is overplayed; he is so loony one wonders how any parish would employ him.

AMONG THE OTHER suspects are Lettice Protheroe (Janet Spector), the dead man's wild-willed daughter, and Ann Protheroe (Elizabeth Brooks), Lettice's stepmother. Ann confesses to a romantic involvement with Lawrence Redding (R. Joseph Dabbs), a visiting artist, but Lettice is also smitten with

him. All three are believable in their roles, especially the slightly rakish Dabbs.

Completing the scene are Dr. Haydock (Paul Geiger), needed to provide medical evidence about the murder, and Mrs. Price-Ridley (Monika Rogers), an amusing leftover from the days of the Empire whose main function seems to be to rattle Miss Marple.

As inspector Slack, John Curtis is very much the plodding bureaucrat, not a brilliant detective but a dependable sort.

Director Vincent Hayes cannot be faulted if the play is too long; the problem is with the talky script. Robert Rasic's set for the vicar's study is exceedingly handsome and very British. St. Dunstan's sets are consistently fine.

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