

taste buds
chef Larry
James

Talent crosses border

In my business, a lot of interesting people are interviewed. This one wrote a book, that one's on television. Sometimes you run across folks who can make an elephant out of chicken liver pate.

Occasionally, we're lucky enough to come across someone who has a feeling for food. Definitely the artist's touch. And so, this week, I find myself, as usual, writing a column that bridges the culinary cultures of both Windsor and Detroit.

Being a free-lance writer in both Canada and the United States, I seldom come across a subject or person who ideally fits into both genres. But this is International Freedom Festival week, with the United States and Canada celebrating a friendship that spans the Ambassador Bridge. I was proud to interview a man with an international reputation, Joe DeLauro.

Windsor folks might know Joe DeLauro as the founding father of the Visual Arts (Fine Arts Department) at the University of Windsor. He has sculpted the fountain figure for the Hiram Walker Gardens. He also will be remembered for his bronze portraits of Father Lefel, then president of Assumption University.

FOLKS FROM the states know DeLauro as an artist and sculptor, whose works are seen at the Detroit Public Library and St. Scholastica's, and as an instructor at Marygrove. I know DeLauro as a great "comfort" cook.

A recent interview at his home in Canton found DeLauro and his wife sipping coffee in a comfortable kitchen. No Cuisinart. No Jenn-Aire range. No fancy Wusthof-Trident cutlery. Just great cooks that herald from an Italian heritage, transplanted from New Haven, Conn.

When asked for a sampling of his favorite recipes, the retired artist wished he could photocopy his mind. Nothing much on paper, he responded, but many fond recipes and tales of growing up in an Italian neighborhood. Seems that Mamma DeLauro was born in Maffi, Italy, a southern coastal city rich in culture and know for its seafood cuisine.

I sampled one of the dishes DeLauro fondly remembers his mamma used to prepare. Simple, elegant, yet easy. "You start with a little olive oil in the bottom of a large pot," he recalled. "How much oil?" I butted in. "Just enough to cover the bottom" was his seasoned reply.

Then you take two or three large cloves of garlic and smash them, adding them to the simmering oil. Savor the aroma. "Chop in an onion and throw in two or three lobsters" was the next recalled direction. This was sounding too good to be true. "Put the top on the pan and cook the lobsters till just pink," Crmon Joe, "How long?" was my response.

"TILL JUST 'BOUT pink" came the reply, with a twinkle in his eye. "Then smash up the contents of a couple of cans of plum tomatoes and throw them in." What was this, an Italian bouillabaisse? I asked. No way, this was the way Mamma cooked was his pat answer.

While the lobsters cook in the tomato sauce, cook up a big pot of spaghetti in some boiling water, was the next remembered step. At this point, he noted you could remove the lid from the pot so the sauce would "thicken up a little."

"Add a little fresh chopped basil, drain the pasta and add it to the lobster and sauce." I was writing as frantically as I could. I wiped the corner of my mouth, trying not to sound too hungry as I jotted the culinary notes. "OK, Joe," I asked, "medium heat?"

Please turn to Page 2

Prizeworthy potato salads

By Ethel Simmons
staff writer

A recipe for lemon-langy Molded Potato Salad, submitted by Ann P. Miller of Redford, was judged the winner from among more than 50 entries received in the Observer & Eccentric's Potato Salad Contest.

For her winning entry, Miller will receive a \$25 gift certificate for a ham from the HoneyBaked Ham Co. In a phone conversation after winning the prize, Miller said she selected the recipe for the contest, "Because it was different, and you could make it ahead and serve it the next day."

The recipe was one of several she entered in the contest, all from the spiral-bound cookbook "Sharing Recipes with Lukemia Research Life Inc.," which she compiled. The Molded Potato Salad is one of the many recipes she contributed to the cookbook, which includes recipes by everyone from area residents to First Lady Nancy Reagan.

Twenty-one O&E employees, mostly from the editorial department, gathered to sample six entries, along with ham, during a Potato Salad Taste-Off buffet luncheon in the Livonia newsroom.

A PANEL of Taste judges, including Taste Buds columnist Larry James, had narrowed the entries down to six salads. Chef James made up a batch of each, according to the reader's recipe, and these were tasted at the lunch.

Of the tasters, more than half voted (by secret ballot) for the Molded Potato Salad as their favorite. Second place was awarded to Doris Van Doorn of Rochester Hills for her zesty Potato Salad recipe, clearly the judges' favored runner-up. Van Doorn will receive a cooking-related prize.

Some of the comments about the prize-winning Molded Potato Salad (although no one specifically mentioned the lemon accent) were: "Very tasty — like the spices." "Sweet, creamy and different from traditional potato salad." "It has a nice, sweet tang added to traditional flavor." "It has a sweet distinctive taste." "Bacon adds taste."

Opinions on the runner-up included: "This had a rich potato taste. The carrots and other seasonings only enhance it. This is potato salad." "Lots of potatoes and other good stuff, and it tastes good." "It tastes the most like my own."

Besides the winning recipes, three other potato salads were named as honorable mentions. These include Make-Ahead Potato Salad — Southern Style, from Suzi Shepard of West Bloomfield; Potato Salad, from Virginia Watson of Birmingham; and Christmas Potato Salad from Judi Alessandri of Livonia.

ONE OF THE SIX salads James made up for the tasting was not eligible for the contest because it did not contain potatoes. Just for fun (and because the reader who submitted it said her guests thought it was potatoes), Cold Cauliflower Nivernais, from Sally Matthews of Bloomfield Hills, was served at the buffet.

"I got the recipe from somewhere else," Miller said of the Molded Potato Salad. "I made it for the first time for the contest." She made it again for a family cookout on Father's Day. She also made one for the O&E photographer to picture her with. The ingredients go into a ring mold, and the recipe serves 8-10. "For a large group, you can do a double batch," Miller said. "Keep one on the table and one in the fridge, to replenish the table. Or use a large mold if it's to be eaten now."

The "Sharing Recipes" cookbook, which was her idea as a fund-raiser for Lukemia Research Life, has sold some 2,400 copies since it was published in 1985. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy may contact Miller at 532-3064.

Miller is planning a second cookbook, "Sharing Recipes II." She will include "recipes for low-cholesterol — my husband (James) has to watch his cholesterol, microwave recipes and children's recipes."

Miller baby sits every day with Christopher, 5, and Scott, 2, sons of daughter Betty Fryer of Westland. Another daughter, Carol Rachoza of Detroit, is a cook at Gest Omelette in Redford and has two daughters. Son James, who lives in Waterford, has two sons.

OF HER POTATO Salad Contest prize, Miller said, "We'll use the ham for a cookout and picnic, and share. We love HoneyBaked Ham anyhow. The bones make the best soup."

Doris Van Doorn of Rochester Hills, the second-prize winner, could not be reached by phone. Her son Jason said, "She is in New Mexico, studying Indian history. She is taking a class at a college and staying 10 days on an Indian Reservation."



DAVID FRANK/artist photographer

An array of potato salads from entries in the Observer & Eccentric's Potato Salad Contest is shown, along with spiral-sliced ham from the HoneyBaked Ham Co. The winning entry, Molded Potato Salad, is in the center row, next to the ham. The second-place winner, Potato

Salad, is at left, next to the picnic basket with flowers. Others are Christmas Potato Salad (left); Make-Ahead Potato Salad, Southern Style (behind the ring mold); and Potato Salad (right). Another bowl holds Cold Cauliflower Nivernais, a "look-alike" for potato salad.

Here are recipes for judges' choices

MOLDED POTATO SALAD

Serves 8-10

2-3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1 (3-ounce) envelope Good Seasons mild Italian salad dressing mix
3 cups cooked potatoes, diced
2-3 strips bacon, cooked and crumbled

½ cup minced onion
1 (3-ounce) package lemon Jello
1 cup boiling water
1 ½ cup mayonnaise

Combine vinegar and dressing mix; add potatoes, bacon and onion. Chill about 1 hour. Dissolve Jello in

boiling water, stirring until clear. Add cold water and blend in mayonnaise, chill until mixture lumps when stirred. Fold Jello mixture into potato mixture. Turn into 8-cup mold or metal bowl. Chill until firm, at least 3 hours. Unmold onto plate and garnish as desired.

Ann P. Miller
Redford

POTATO SALAD

Following is my potato salad recipe that my family loves.

5 pounds potatoes, peeled and cubed
1 tablespoon salt
8 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
1 ½ cup Hellman's mayonnaise
1 tablespoon prepared mustard
½ cup Wishbone Italian dressing
¼ cup Marzetti slaw dressing
4 green onions, cut fine including tops
3 stalks celery cut fine, save leaves
2 carrots, grated
½ teaspoon garlic salt
½ teaspoon onion salt
½ teaspoon Morton's Nature's Seasonings paprika

Boil potatoes in water with salt. When potatoes can break apart easily with a fork, drain the water and put potatoes in large bowl. While still hot, pour Wishbone Italian Dressing over them, cover and put in refrigerator to cool (about 5 hours).

Add cut-up vegetables to the potatoes. Sprinkle garlic salt, onion salt and Nature's Seasonings over potatoes. Add 7 sliced eggs (reserve one for decorating). Mix mayonnaise, mustard and slaw dressing together. Add to potatoes and mix thoroughly. Place potato salad in serving bowl, decorate with remaining egg slices. Place celery leaves (small ones) around the bowl. Sprinkle with paprika on top. Return to refrigerator.

(If you are going on a picnic or an outdoor concert, potato salad can be filled in hollowed-out green pepper for individual servings. Can be decorated with egg slices and paprika. Place upright in covered container.)

Doris Van Doorn
Rochester Hills

See more contest recipes, Page 2

MAKE-AHEAD POTATO SALAD, SOUTHERN STYLE (Serves 10)

8-10 medium-sized new potatoes (redskins)
1 cup mayonnaise
1 ½ cup sour cream
2 teaspoons prepared horseradish
1 teaspoon celery seed
¼ teaspoon salt
cracked pepper to taste
1 large sweet onion (Vidalia) or 2 bunches green onions with greens, chopped
1 cup chopped fresh parsley

Boil potatoes in skins. Cool, then peel and slice into ½-inch pieces.

Combine mayonnaise, sour cream, horseradish, celery seed, salt and pepper in a bowl.

In a glass bowl, layer ½ potato slices, ½ dressing and ½ parsley and onion pieces. Repeat layering in this order two more times. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight for flavors to blend.

Suzi Shepard
West Bloomfield

POTATO SALAD

3 medium potatoes, boiled in jackets, peeled and cubed
In bowl combine:
4 tablespoons Kraft mayo
2 tablespoons homemade boiled salad dressing
¼ teaspoon Coleman's dry mustard
1 teaspoon dill pickle juice
3 teaspoons sugar
salt, pepper, seasoned salt and dill weed.
1 fine-chopped hard boiled egg, green pepper and celery chopped
1 tablespoon fine-chopped onion

Mix above and add potatoes

1 cup sugar
1 tablespoon cornstarch

¾ teaspoon salt
¾ teaspoon dry mustard

Mix above with 1 egg, beat until smooth, add 1 cup milk, beat in ½ cup vinegar that has been heated to boiling point with 2 tablespoons butter. Add to first mixture and cook stirring constantly until it begins to thicken. Remove from heat and beat for 5 minutes. Makes 1 pint (good with fruit or chicken or tuna for salad.)

Virginia Watson
Birmingham

CHRISTMAS POTATO SALAD

The following recipe was never really named until last Christmas when it was served Christmas Eve with a buffet. No big deal, right? I didn't think so until I heard the next day that instead of breakfast Christmas morning my leftover potato salad was the first dish eaten as gifts were being opened, by Grandpa — who had two hefty helpings.

8 medium to large white potatoes
Pierce and boil until tender
Peel and slice — add ½ to 1 cup chopped celery and ½ to ¾ cup chopped onions

No need to mix
Marinate with ½ cup Good Seasons Italian Salad Dressing
Refrigerate at least 6 hours

Boil 4 eggs until hard cooked — chop whites
Add to potato mixture
Reserve yolks — sieve

To yolks add 1 cup sour cream, 1 cup Hellman's mayo, 1 teaspoon prepared mustard and 1 heaping teaspoon horseradish

Blend well and combine with other ingredients
Add salt and pepper to taste

Optional, but usually included in my salad: Snip fresh dill finely and add to personal taste
Garnish with sliced cucumber, tomatoes, green onions and sliced eggs

Judi Alessandri
Livonia



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

Ann P. Miller of Redford, who submitted several recipes to the contest, won first prize for her Molded Potato Salad that contains lemon Jello. More than 50 readers of the Taste pages submitted recipes.