



Chat Room

Jonl Hubred

Lefse and life require the right equipment

In virtually every cultural circle, some traditional foods are served only during the holidays.

I grew up in a Scandinavian household, where the watchwords between Thanksgiving and New Year's were "lutefisk and lefse." According to my mother, these words were also part of a high school cheer: "Lutefisk and lefse, ja ja ja... Hoffman High School, rahl rahl rahl!" But I digress.

Anyone who read the New York Times Christmas Day got a good idea what lutefisk is all about; for those who had better things to do, I'll just hit the highlights:

For reasons no one truly understands, Norwegians will soak cod in lye until the bones dissolve, then let it sit in salt water to leach out the poison. The wobbling gelatinous goop that remains is lutefisk. Those hearty few who love lutefisk bake it, serve it with cream sauce—and deal with the smell of fish in the house for days.

My folks got smart later in life and started attending Lutfisk Dinners served by the Ladies' Aid in the Church Basement. Before then, a piece of lutefisk made its way onto a cookie sheet in the oven, right underneath the turkey, almost every Christmas.

Odor notwithstanding, by the time it's poisoned and soaked, the stuff has no flavor at all. I've eaten it only once, at the insistence of a man who swore to me that properly cooked lutefisk is delicious.

I think what he meant was that the properly seasoned cream sauce poured atop the lutefisk was delicious.

But I digress.

LEFSE MATTERS

What really makes lutefisk tolerable is that it's partnered with lefse. This almost paper-thin, flat potato bread is the stuff my childhood holidays were made of.

Some kids dream of presents under the tree. I longed for lefse.

Chocolate Santas? Don't bother. Just pass the butter and sugar.

When I shared this tradition with my Best Friend, feeling him pre-packaged lefse (which used to be illegal in some parts of Minnesota, but times change), he raved about it.

And so it was that I decided to tackle tradition one Saturday afternoon in December. I'd watched my mother roll lefse hundreds of times over the years. How tough could it be?

Minutes of exhaustive research turned up the Sons of Norway Web site, from which I culled a lefse recipe. The Sons of Norway should know what they're doing, right?

I picked up a pastry sheet that promised nothing would stick to it, a 5-pound bag of red potatoes, a little heavy cream, sugar, butter—REAL, butter, not margarine—and I was ready to roll.

You start out boiling the potatoes, then "ricing" them, which is better than mashing because you get fewer lumps. We had a potato grinder, with which we made latkes for Hanukkah, and that worked like a dream. I added the butter, cream and sugar, mixed it all up and then added flour.

Now...the directions weren't specific about order, so I boiled the potatoes the night before, refrigerated



PHOTOS BY BILL DRESLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Alexander Hamilton stands behind the garage at the San Marino Golf Course. The statue stood in front of the Alexander Hamilton Insurance Company on Twelve Mile Road for years. Its new home will be in front of the new courthouse.

Hamilton statue finds a home

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

A donated bronze statue of Alexander Hamilton has been waiting patiently for a permanent home in Farmington Hills.

And soon it will have one in front of the new 47th District Courthouse on the Farmington Hills municipal campus. The \$12.3 million facility is being built behind Fire Station No. 5 off Orchard Lake Road, south of 11 Mile.

Construction delays have pushed back the project's anticipated completion in November 2002. The two-story building will likely open sometime between early February and late March, said court administrator David Walsh.

The author of the Federalist Paper No. 79, which outlines the thoughts behind this country's judicial system, Hamilton's likeness stands 10-feet tall. Writings from his papers pertaining to this country's court system will be newly etched on the granite base.

The statue was donated to the city of Farmington Hills by the Alexander Hamilton Insurance Company when it moved away from its headquarters on Twelve Mile Road several years ago, said Nancy Coumoundouros, cultural arts coordinator for Farmington Hills.

It's been stored at the Parks and Recreation garage by the San Marino golf course, waiting for a permanent home. The city's offer to have the statue erected outside the new courthouse's front doors is a perfect match.

"For us, we're really excited to have it," said Walsh. "It's an appropriate place to have Hamilton, considering his role in this country's judicial system." Coumoundouros said Artspark, a Farmington Hills company that specializes in moving art, will handle the move, cleaning and set up at the courthouse.

"I'm so happy it's found a home where it will be admired," Coumoundouros said.

She added that she hopes the statue will inspire more sculptures to be commissioned and permanently stationed in the community.

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A new base will have a Hamilton quote about our country's judicial system.

Longacre House is rich in community history

The roaring '20s brought prosperity to many Detroiters and riches to many others.

Wealthy residents sought luxuries like second homes in the country or country estates, some on former farms in Farmington Township.



Ruth Moehlman

An example was the Longacre Estate on Farmington Road. It belonged to Luman Goodenough, who also urged friends and clients to establish estates in the neighborhood.

The Longacre House now sits on five acres of land between 10 and 11 Mile roads, protected by a long fieldstone wall. The original square, brick house was built in 1869 by Palmer Sherman, a local farmer. It was renovated and expanded after Luman Goodenough bought it.

The house was given to the people of Farmington to be used as a community center in 1969 by the Goodenough heirs and has operated since then under a board of directors that consists of community residents.

The house was once the home of a well-to-do Detroit attorney and his family.

When Luman Goodenough

and his wife, Eliza, lived on their country estate, their lifestyle was designed to emulate that of a British country squire.

HOMELIFE

Luman Goodenough's grandson, Nick Spicer, in a local television interview, described the family Sunday dinners in the large dining room.

A typical dinner featured roast beef prepared by an English cook and served with Yorkshire pudding to all the grown children, their spouses and children and numerous guests. A large table accommodated the guests, and a maid and butler served the food.

At that time, a new kitchen had been added to the east side, in the old section of the Victorian brick house.

The Sherman house became one wing of a Georgian country house designed by architect Marcus Burrows. Eventually there were 20 rooms.

Marcus Burrows and his wife, Kathleen, were also good friends of the Goodenoughs. The Burrows built their home across the valley on five of the Goodenoughs' 100 acres.

The Burrows and the Goodenoughs and their families often walked or rode horseback to picnic or have afternoon tea together.

Marcus Burrows was a naturalist, artist and architect. He could identify the edible mush-



Our Story

rooms when the families had mushroom hunts or picnics. He didn't like horses and chose to walk.

Luman Goodenough had four horses that he rode every day, often up and down Farmington Road, which was gravel at that time.

Along the road were farms and some country estates.

The horses were stabled in a large building that also had a garage for the family automobiles and quarters for the chauffeur and his wife.

That combination building, designed by Marcus Burrows, is now the art studio in Heritage Park. A gravel driveway extended from the garage/stable to the house.

20 ROOMS

Off the dining room to the south side of the house was a room used as a breakfast room. There Nick Spicer described a white table and chairs used for informal occasions, plus lots of

cupboards used to store Mrs. Goodenough's glassware and dishes.

On the south side of the living room was a solarium for plants. It had a glass roof. The solarium was Mrs. Goodenough's favorite room.

Besides the plants, there were walls of bookcases for Mrs. Goodenough's books. Both the solarium and the breakfast room had tile floors. Most of the other rooms in the house had wood floors covered with Oriental rugs.

A large pink and blue Oriental rug in the living room was especially made for the Goodenoughs, according to Spicer.

In the 20-room Georgian country house, there were seven bathrooms each with Pewabic tile. There was significant remodeling done to the house that extended from 1918 to 1930. In 1930 the last room, the library, was constructed.

Many of the gardens on the grounds had fountains. A large pond was located where the band stand is today. It had fountains and fish and lilies.

Water for the fountains came from the well serving the house and grounds. That was why a tunnel extending from the basement of the house went out to the grounds.

There was a natural swimming area near the river and a private tennis court.

A log playhouse on the grounds was used by the Goodenough children to camp out. The little playhouse had a

stone fireplace and at one time was equipped with bunk beds and a table and chairs.

Because refrigeration was a later development, in the early 1920s ice boxes were used. The root cellar from the original farm stored vegetables for winter use. A lot of canning was done in summer to supply the winter food needs.

Various families who established country estates visited back and forth with the Goodenoughs. The Goodenoughs kept dogs and goats besides the horses.

In the attic was a pool table, storage room and cedar closet. Luman Goodenough and his guests enjoyed many hours playing billiards.

An elevator was built when Goodenough developed heart trouble in the 1940s.

Their daughter Eleanor was married in the house in 1935. She was given a house on acreage bordering her parents' home as a wedding gift by her cousin Martha Gray. She eventually owned a 200-acre farm from lands owned by her parents and other land acquired later. Her farm became Heritage Park.

Luman Goodenough died in 1947 and his wife, Eliza Mabel Goodenough, died in 1967.

The Longacre House became a state historical site in 1979 and is a Farmington Hills State Park.

Ruth Moehlman is a local historian and Farmington Hills resident.