

Dining GUIDE

A Supplement of *Kearsarge Magazine*
Summer 2011

Restaurant
Directory:
Where to
Find Good Food

Ellie's Café &
Deli in New London
Local Caterers



Yum on a plate: a Chicken
Caprese sandwich at Ellie's

Breakfast & Lunch at Ellie's: Dinner Coming Soon

BY Diane Taylor

PHOTOGRAPHY BY Jon Gilbert Fox

I'm a big fan of Eggs Benedict, a breakfast entrée traditionally served as poached eggs on an English muffin paired with a slice of ham and topped with Hollandaise sauce. Done right, the Hollandaise is light and creamy, the eggs are neither too hard nor too soft, and the English muffin is delicately crisp. It's a breakfast worth going out for.

That's why I was so pleased to dive into a serving of Eggs Benedict at Ellie's Café & Deli on Main Street in New London. Dressed up with crab meat and arugula (and a toasted croissant substituted for the English muffin) this meal looked — and tasted — like heaven on a plate. I am not a morning person by nature, and Ellie's is no fewer than 70 miles from my home in Topsham, Vt. But I will set the alarm clock and make the drive to indulge in this particular culinary pleasure again.

Eggs Benedict, of course, is not the only thing for breakfast at Ellie's. For those in a hurry, Ellie's offers croissants and a variety of muffins that can be picked up in a rush. For those who care to linger, Ellie's has everything from pumpkin pancakes to breakfast chimichangas to crème brûlée French

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toast. The day I fell in love with the Eggs Benedict, my daughter, Alison Taylor of Lebanon, N.H., enjoyed



Ellie's Café & Deli Chef Dan Beturne (left) and Owner Gen Izutsu (right)

a delightfully decadent French toast creation that included a creamy lemon filling, fresh fruit, whipped cream and warm maple syrup.

A place to relax

Completely stuffed by the time we finished breakfast, Alison and I were chagrined to discover we had no room for lunch. In our original strategy, a friend was supposed to join us at noon. When she cancelled at the last

minute, we were not quite sure what to do with ourselves.

As it turns out, Ellie's is a great place to mull over your options. You can lounge. Read a book. Open your laptop. Sit in the sunshine for as long as you like.

Gen Izutsu set up Ellie's two years ago in what used to be Jack's. "I was fortunate to inherit an architectural space where people feel comfortable," he says. It was a place Izutsu himself had come to enjoy. Although he grew up outside of Boston, Mass., Izutsu

spent four summers as a child at Camp Coniston in Croydon, and had returned as an adult to work there as a program coordinator for eight years. It was pure chance, Izutsu says, that he found himself sitting in Jack's literally one day before it closed.

"I had come in to use the free Wi-Fi during the ice storm of 2008," Izutsu recalls.

When he saw that one of his favorite haunts was shutting its doors, he didn't hesitate to jump into the breach. Izutsu had a vision of reworking the menu to offer high quality, affordable fare that would reflect his own international background. Izutsu's father is Japanese, and Izutsu spent the first five years of his life in Japan.

But Izutsu knew it was crucial to carry on Jack's legacy of a relaxed and warm ambiance, and he credits his staff with making people feel at home. "My front-of-house girls genuinely know the people who come in here on a regular basis," says Izutsu. "They chat with just about everybody. They're not going to chase anyone out before they are ready to go."

On the food front, Izutsu continued another part of Jack's legacy as well, keeping Chef Dan Beturne in the back of the house as they experimented with the menu. Together, they have encountered a few bumps in the road. "I tried to change the menu in the middle of our first summer, which is our busiest time. It was really stupid," Izutsu recalls. "After three or four days,

Order Ahead

See the menu online at www.elliescafeanddeli.com

we had to switch gears and take things down a notch."

But Izutsu says we have Beturne to thank for all that luscious

breakfast fare. A resident of Elkins, Beturne comes to Ellie's having worked in Wyoming and Oregon as a sous chef at the Grand Teton Lodge Company in Colter Bay and as a line cook at West Side Store & Deli in Jackson Hole and Mount Hood Meadows.

"Dan wanted to put out a nice breakfast," says Izutsu, "and now we pack the house during the summer months for breakfast. We get a lot of pre-church and post-church groups coming in for brunch."

And then there was lunch

As Alison and I debated what to do, we finally decided to order lunch to go. That way, we could give the food a fair assessment later in the day when our hunger had returned.

After the breakfast we had just consumed, we should have opted for a salad or a relatively low calorie sandwich. Ellie's has lots to choose from in both categories. We could have selected the Ashley Salad, which comes with grilled chicken, toasted almonds and dried cranberries. We could have had a roast beef sandwich with horseradish mayonnaise; a jicama and chicken lettuce wrap; quiche, soup or quesadillas. What we settled on, however, was the Chicken Caprese: a mozzarella and chicken sandwich served on country white bread with homemade basil pesto and accompanied by a small green salad.

We made it back to the car and buckled our seat belts before our resolve to wait until later in the day fell through the floor. That sandwich looked — and smelled — so good, we flipped open the plastic take-out container and took a few bites while the meal was still hot and fresh. >>>>



(Left to right) Claudio Lewis of New London, Donna Vassar and Lyn Ferguson of Newbury, and Joanne Hughes of New London enjoy lunch together while they take a break volunteering for the LSRVNA Renaissance Shoppe.

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Entremezzo

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Choice of Entrée

Grilled Filet Mignon
 with a Sauce Champignon
 and Provençal Bread Crumbs
 or
 Seared Yellowfin Tuna
 with a Sherried Mango Vinaigrette
 and Crispy Onions

Dessert

Dark Chocolate Mousse Napoleon
 with a Duet of Sauces
(sample menu)



Within minutes, nearly half the sandwich was gone.

And we weren't even hungry.

If the Chicken Caprese is any indication of what all the lunch items at Ellie's are like, then Ellie's is a place worth travelling to for lunch as well as for breakfast. You think a sandwich is just a sandwich, but it's not. The quality of each ingredient that goes into a seemingly simple sandwich makes a difference. According to Izutsu, Ellie's prepares virtually everything in-house — from the pesto to the roast beef. Says Izutsu, "We know what's going into everything we make."



The Chicken Caprese, a mozzarella and chicken sandwich served on country white bread with homemade basil pesto.

The result is quality you can taste. Even as a late night leftover reheated in my toaster oven at home, that Chicken Caprese sandwich was a treat. A week later, Alison was still thinking about it.

"I may have to go back to New London just to have that sandwich again," she said.

When she goes, I hope she takes me with her. **K**

Diane Taylor is a freelance writer who lives in Topsham, Vt. She has two grown children, Dennis Deuring and Alison Taylor, who live in the area. They are her favorite restaurant companions, always ready for a new culinary adventure.

Freelance photographer Jon Gilbert Fox is based out of Hanover, N.H.

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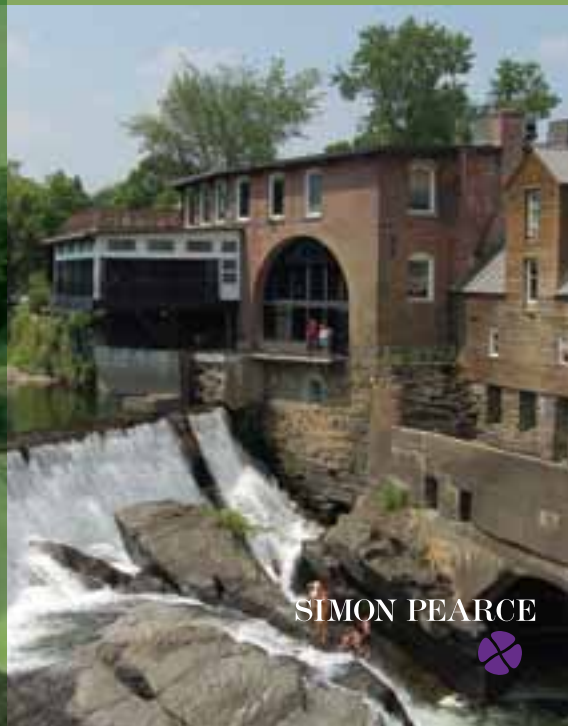
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SIMON PEARCE



It's too hot to cook, so why don't you hop in the air conditioned car and check out one of our local eateries? In our 2011 Dining Guide, we've listed all the locally owned restaurants we could find, and we've listed only places that have seating. (Chains and general stores were not included.) Then when the heat and humidity subside, you can try a few of the guide's recipes — supplied by local folks — at home.

Restaurant Directory

Andover

Blackwater Junction
Restaurant
730 Main Street
735-5099

Pizza Chef of Andover
163 Main Street
735-5002
pizzachef.com

Bradford

Appleseed Restaurant
& Catering
63 High Street
938-2100
appleseedrestaurant.com

Bradford Junction
Restaurant & Bakery
2370 Route 114
938-2424

Pizza Chef of Bradford
107 East Main Street
938-2600
pizzachef.com

Claremont

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Mankind
285 Washington Street
543-0806

BJ Brickers
214 Washington Street
543-3221

Common Man Inn &
Restaurant
21 Water Street
542-0647
theCman.com

Crown Garden
336 Washington Street
543-1228

DaddyPops Tumble Inn
Diner
1 Main Street
542-0074

Dimick's Choices
Restaurant
398 Main Street
542-6701

Dusty's Café
93 Pleasant Street
543-1131

East Buffet
93 Pleasant Street
542-8880

Farro's Deli
26 Opera House Square
543-6700

Fred's Family Restaurant
50 Pleasant Street
543-3800

Imperial Restaurant &
Lounge
154 Washington Street
542-8833

Lucky Wok Restaurant
367 Washington Street
543-3388

Kouzoku Japanese
Steak House
236 Washington Street
542-8866

Ming Chen
158 Pleasant Street
542-8000

New England Deli
149 Pleasant Street
543-3354

NeW Socials Bar and Grill
2 Pleasant Street
287-4416

Pleasant Street
Restaurant
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542-4600

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542-3704

Sweet Fire Barbeque
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542-9227
sweetfirebbq.com

The Hitchin' Post
121 Maple Avenue
543-1301

The Java Cup
37 Pleasant Street
542-2222 >>>>>

A RECIPE FROM A LOCAL KITCHEN

Lavender Lemonade

COURTESY OF *Amy Veilleux, Craney Nook Lavender Farm*

5 cups of water
1½ cups of sugar
¼ cup lavender leaves, chopped (use stems, buds and leaves)
1 cup lemon juice
Ice cubes

Heat 2½ cups of water and sugar to a boil until sugar dissolves.
Add lavender and let the mixture cool to room temperature.
Strain out the lavender. In a pitcher, add lavender infusion to last
2½ cups of water and lemon juice. Stir and add sugar to taste.
Chill and serve lemonade over ice. Serves six to eight people.



Learn more about the Veilleux family and their lavender farm on page 26 in this issue.

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Tremont House of Pizza
134 Pleasant Street
542-8017

Goshen

Back Side Inn
1171 Brook Road
863-5161
backsideinn.net

Grantham

Bistro Nouveau
6 Clubhouse Lane
863-8000
bistronouveau.com

Grantham Café
249 Route 10 North
863-1933

Pizza Chef of Grantham
120 Route 10 South
863-5044
pizzachef.com

Newbury

Bubba's Bar & Grille
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763-3290
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Digby's Steakhouse & Saloon
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763-3113

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themarzellideli.com
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Nonni's Italian Eatery
255 Newport Road
526-2265
nonnisitalianeatery.com

Peter Christian's Tavern
195 Main Street
526-4042

Pizza Chef of New London
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pizzachef.com
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Rockwell's at the Inn
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The Inn at Pleasant Lake
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526-6271
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863-1302
lilredbaron.com

Ming China
3 South Main Street
863-7730

Rocky Cannoli's Bakery at Red Barn Farm
72 Sand Hill Road
865-9841
RockyCannoli.com

Salt Hill Pub
58 Main Street
863-7774
salthillpub.com

The Old Courthouse Restaurant
30 Main Street
863-8360
eatatthecourthouse.com

Village Pizza of Newport
7 South Main Street
863-3400
villagepizza.net

Watts' New Bakery
63 Main Street
865-5294

Sunapee

Anchorage Restaurant
71 Main Street
763-3334
theanchorageatsunapee-harbor.com

Café Andre
699 Route 103
863-1842
cafeandre.net

Dexter's Inn
258 Stagecoach Road
763-5571
dextersnh.com

Marzelli's Sweet Shop & Café
72 Main Street
763-0072

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Dinner Boat
Sunapee Harbor
938-6465

One Mile West
6 Brook Road
863-7500
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Pizza Chef of Sunapee
498 Route 11
763-2515
pizzachef.com

Pizza Market
474 NH Route 11
763-3400

Sanctuary Dairy Farm Ice Cream (seasonal)
209 Route 103
863-8940

Wildwood Smokehouse
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A RECIPE FROM A LOCAL KITCHEN

Chuck's Favorite Apple Crisp

COURTESY OF

Chuck and Diane Souther, Apple Hill Farm

Peel, core and slice 8 medium apples (mix McIntosh and Cortland)

2/3 cup granulated sugar

1 cup flour

1 cup dark brown sugar

1 to 2 tsp. cinnamon

¾ to one stick of butter, softened

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut apples — make sure to eat a couple of slices — and place in 9-by-9 casserole dish or 9-inch deep dish pie plate. Sprinkle granulated sugar over apples and lightly stir in. Mix flour, dark brown sugar, cinnamon and butter together and spread over apples. Bake uncovered for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Serve warm, topped with vanilla ice cream. Even better warmed up the second day.

Apple Hill Farm is located on 580 Mountain Road in Concord. They even have an Apple Crisp Mix available for purchase at \$4.75 per bag. It's not the same as Chuck's recipe, as the mix has rolled oats, but it is just as good.

Learn more at www.applehillfarmnh.com





You should sell this

BY *Shelby Caisse*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Elizabeth Marcello*

At a local quilt shop, a conversation about cooking experiences started between two friends, Deb Coffin and Julia Philipson. Coffin had a mustard recipe she had been making for 25 years, a popular gift for family and friends who always wanted more. Coffin's father suggested she bottle and sell it, but she didn't know where to begin.

"I know how to do that!"

Philipson said. Philipson is famous in the Kearsarge area; she cooked at the popular Peter Christian's Tavern in New London for 30 years and is the co-author of their cookbook.

Over the next year, the ladies slowly started planning their business, Moose Country Gourmet, when something unexpected happened: Peter Christian's, also known for their tasty mustard, closed its doors. "This is our moment!" they thought and got busy in the kitchen. Old family recipes were reinvented with unique ingredient combinations, such as adding champagne and maple to mustard and fruit to maple syrups.

Everything Moose Country Gourmet produces is made in Coffin's home in New London. The kitchen received a state license after being

Old family recipes were reinvented with unique ingredient combinations, such as adding champagne and maple to mustard and fruit to maple syrups.

inspected and both women are ServSafe certified, meaning they've completed a rigorous program on food safety.

While Philipson can be credited



Moose Country Gourmet owners Deb Coffin and Julia Philipson at the Market on the Green in New London

with the cooking creativity, all administrative tasks are handled by Coffin, who received her business degree from Colby-Sawyer College before going onto a career in the mental health field. She retired about one month before her new title as a "mustard master" ensued.

Now most of their time is spent cooking and shipping orders for their specialty condiments company that started with one mustard in 2010 and has grown into a line of unique hot fudge sauces, maple syrups, barbeque sauces and chutneys. Moose Country Gourmet debuted their products at some local fairs — including the Bradford's Women's Club

Fair, the Moose Festival in Colebrook, and several Christmas fairs — but really gained a lot of fans by setting up a tent every Wednesday at New London's farmers' market, Market on the Green. "Product sampling makes all the difference," says Philipson.

Customers love the fact that Moose Country Gourmet uses fresh, local ingredients. Coffin explains: "We are great believers in supporting local farmers — all the fruit and syrup we use is locally produced." One community member even volunteered to pick blueberries for the Blubarb syrup. And while browsing the craft stands at Andover's Old Home Day, Coffin and Philipson met a gentleman selling his homemade jellies and wooden boxes crafted from

recycled materials. He now makes all the boxes for Moose Country's gift baskets.

Moose Country Gourmet currently has two specialty mustards (Original Homestead and Champagne Maple); four hot fudge sauces (Homestead, Dark Chocolate Mocha Fudge, Double Chocolate Mint and Raspberry Patch); and four syrups: Rhuby Red, Strawberry Rhubarb, Rhuby Red Raspberry and Blubarb. They recently added chutneys — the most popular being lemon blueberry — and BBQ sauces to the line.

The fudge sauces have been great sellers as well as entertaining conversational pieces. Coffin and Philipson laugh about the time someone once asked, "Is the hot fudge spicy? Are there hot peppers in it?" Or the time they were asked,

"How do you use hot fudge? What do you do with it?"

Coffin replied: "You can eat it with a spoon!"

Philipson chuckles, "I've really thought about packaging each jar with a spoon!"

WHO: Deb Coffin and Julia Philipson

WHAT: Moose Country Gourmet

WHERE: Gourmet Garden in New London, Rum Brook Market in Grantham, and Garfield's Smokehouse in Meriden, to name a few

HOW MUCH: Products range in price from \$5 to \$10

WHY: I'm glad to hear I'm not the only one who doesn't wait for ice cream to eat hot fudge sauce

WEB: www.moosecountrygourmet.com

Shelby Caisse graduated from Lebanon College with degrees in art and photography. She grew up in New London and has always had a passion for writing. Shelby currently resides in Wilmot.

A graduate of Colby-Sawyer College and New Hampshire resident, Elizabeth Marcello embraces her passion for exploring new points of view through expressive photography. She has worked with the State of New Hampshire and the National Wildlife Federation as well as several private clients.

A RECIPE FROM A LOCAL KITCHEN

Stuffed French Toast

COURTESY OF *Linda West, Sunapee View Bed & Breakfast*

FRUIT

2 to 3 sliced strawberries per person
2 to 3 sliced bananas per person
4 to 5 slices of above for garnishing

CREAM FILLING

One 8-ounce block of 1/3 less fat cream cheese
½ cup Greek (or other thick) vanilla yogurt
Optional: A little extra vanilla, ½ tsp. nutmeg, zest of orange or lemon, 1 tbsp. honey

EGG DIP

2 eggs per person
About ½ cup half and half (or milk) per person
Cinnamon to taste
Vanilla

BREAD

2 slices bread per person (Store bought soft Italian bread works fine, but use whatever is your preference. Slice the



bread no more than an inch as you will be doubling it in the end.)

DIRECTIONS

Whip together cream filling ingredients and refrigerate until ready to use. Then whip together egg dip ingredients and refrigerate as well.

Put a generous piece of butter on the hot griddle and let it melt. Dip both sides of bread in the egg mix, letting it sit a minute to soak up the liquid. Lay out two pieces of drenched French toast for each person and flip half of them when they are golden. Spread a heaping tablespoon of cream cheese mix on the toasted side of each piece of bread, spread it and sprinkle fruit on top of this. Place remaining toast, grilled side down, over the fruit. When the bottom is golden, flip over the "sandwich" as you would a grilled cheese. Serve garnished with fruit, sprinkled with some confectioner's sugar, and offer warm maple syrup on the side.

Linda West and her husband, George, own Sunapee View Bed & Breakfast (www.sunapeeviewinn.com) in Newbury. A full breakfast — an elegant and gourmet repast with fresh homemade breads and muffins — is offered every day to guests.



Love in every bite

BY *Laura H. Guion*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Paul Howe*

Crispy, crunchy, chewy, melty, chocolaty, yum. There are cookies and then there are cookies. Sweetly packaged with hand-tied bows, Gadzukes Cookies deliver that “special treat” experience. The company — mostly a one-woman show courtesy of Karen Haskell of New London — uses ingredients that you can identify in every bite. The crispy and melty are clearly the butter; the chewy and the crunchy are the delicious blend of Madagascar vanilla, sugar and King Arthur’s unbleached flour; and the chocolate is, of course, milk chocolate.

Attention to detail and “tweak-ing recipes that are already fabulous to make them her own” is how Haskell has been creating cookies for many years. But it wasn’t until spring 2009 that her Chocolate Chippers brought her fame and fortune.

Haskell packaged up a gift basket of goodies for a party. Upon entering, and unbeknownst to her, the cookies vanished from the gift basket. A few days later, her hostess contacted her to ask if she would be willing to package up 400 of those little six-pack gems. A friend from New York City was at the party, and he swiped the package of cookies. He happened to be a promoter and wanted the Chocolate Chippers for a high-end celebrity studded event in the Big Apple.

Haskell had to come up with a name. “When my children were little we had a safety word. I asked the kids and my husband, Bruce, what they thought of using our safety word as the name for our company, the all agreed that it was perfect,” she says. The code word was “Gadzukes” and the Gadzukes Cookie

Company was born. Bruce stepped in to help with deliveries, tying bows and doing whatever he could to help production.

Haskell decided to combine her cookie baking business with her philanthropy. Since 2002, Haskell has been gathering bears for the children at the Children’s Hospital of Dartmouth (CHaD). “Seven years ago, I had to go to the hospital. While I was there, I saw a child who was suffering far beyond my ailment. This child was clinging to a teddy bear for comfort,” she recalls. “I turned to my husband and said we have to do something for these children.”

She instituted the holiday drive, “The Gathering of the Teddy Bears”, with drop-off boxes at several local businesses, including her employer, Country Houses Real Estate. And she donates 10 percent of Gadzukes’ profits to the cause as well. On the Gadzukes tag is the symbol of a bear and a simple reference that says that Gadzukes designates a portion of its proceeds to buy new bears for patients at CHaD. This charitable component makes these gems ever so much more satisfying.

Gadzukes is as an exclamation of surprise, so the name is rather fitting



Owner Karen Haskell doesn’t mind slaving over a hot stove.

to the circumstance. Haskell couldn’t be more surprised with her success. She has plans for the future with additional products, such as peanut/peanut butter cookies made with hand-roasted peanuts and chocolate brownies. Gadzukes!

WHO: Karen Haskell

WHAT: Gadzukes Cookie Co.

WHERE: New London (you can find her cookies at Spring Ledge Farm)

WHY: These cookies will satisfy the best cookie aficionado as well as please the people who like the idea of giving back to the community

HOW MUCH: \$3 for a three-pack, \$6 for six and \$8 for eight (10 percent is donated to CHaD)

CONTACT: 763-2883 or Gadzukescookies@gmail.com

Kearsarge Dining Guide

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Have a no-guilt snack attack

BY *Kate Bradley*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Ken Davis*

Leo Dube learned about the power of popcorn more than 30 years ago, when he was in the Air Force. He was stationed in Florida and the Air Force Women's Auxiliary asked him to help them sell popcorn. Never did Leo or his wife, Priscilla, guess that after retirement, their lives would be filled with popped corn.

"It all started with a great recipe," Priscilla Dube, CEO of White Mountain Kettle Corn, says. "A recipe that we probably tried on everyone in Henniker."

Leo first approached Priscilla with the idea of kettle corn popping after he retired from his veterinary practice. "We thought it'd be fun to pop on a few sunny weekends," Priscilla says. "Looking back, if you're nearing retirement age and your husband says he has a business plan and wants you to be the president, ask a few more questions!"

This was how Priscilla became the CEO of White Mountain Kettle Corn, a Henniker-based company whose products can now be found from Maine to New Jersey in stores ranging from your local country store to Whole Foods and Hannafords. Priscilla, educated at Vassar, had once wanted to become a large animal vet, but "the powers that be back then didn't see how a woman could be a large animal vet," she says. Instead, she worked with her husband, running their veterinary practice.

Popcorn is more than a snack for the Dubes — it represents the progressing of American society in more ways than one. With 18 grams of whole grain per serving, kettle corn is a perfect treat for kids. It's also allergy conscious.

"Our facility is gluten free, dairy free and nut free. It's really a clean facility, which is important for a lot of people these days," Priscilla says.

And it's meant a successful business. "In 2000, we were off and running at a number of events, including craft fairs and agricultural fairs; people began to ask for the kettle corn to be shipped. As it turns out, our little recipe was light in calories and had a nice, light flavor," Priscilla says. The next customer request was for online ordering;

they complied with a web site. "This really was kind of a lark. You never know what's around the corner. It's been a learning curve, from e-commerce to packaging."

One might say the curve has worked itself out for the Dubes into a straight line of success: their popcorn is available outside of New England, a scant few years after the idea was just a glimmer in their eyes.

"When we started out, we would drive around two days a week in a cargo van around a 400-mile radius from Plymouth, N.H., to Lebanon, N.H., and Amherst, Mass., leaving at 4 am. It was great fun," Priscilla says. The remarkable thing about this is the Dubes



Kettle corn creators: Priscilla, son Chris and Leo Dube

weren't 20-somethings looking for a career, but were, ostensibly, retired.

To that end, Priscilla pointed out that they may have one advantage over other companies selling kettle corn: "I always have the old lady card to play," she says, and laughs.

WHO: Leo and Priscilla Dube (and son Chris, who recently joined the team)

WHAT: White Mountain Kettle Corn

WHY: Sweet and salty goodness in a snack-size bag, a big bag — or in bulk

WEB: www.whitemtnkettlecorn.com

Kate Bradley teaches writing and literature at Colby-Sawyer College and the Community College of Vermont.



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A plethora of plant-eating pioneers

BY *Tricia Orr*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Paul Howe*

In recent years, the “eat local” movement has blossomed like a daylily in June throughout the Kearsarge region, and blooming right next to it is a phlox-like group — this is, a smaller but rapidly growing band of conscientious eaters filling their plates with plant-based cuisine. That’s right, vegetarians (and vegans) are sprouting up all over — from New London to Warner and all towns in between.

A new group — the Kearsarge Vegetarian Society (KVS) — rang in 2011 with a potluck at Melvin Herbert and Tricia Orr’s home in Warner. The society brings together those who are already vegetarian or vegan for monthly potlucks or dining out events, and hopes to serve as a resource for those who are interested in incorporating more plant-based meals into their lives. So far, KVS members have enjoyed two potlucks at members’ homes, and dinner at Nonni’s Italian Eatery in New London. There are plans to offer vegetarian cooking classes to area residents who are “veg-curious,” says Joan Packard of Kearsarge Area Eat Local. “Those of us interested in eating locally want to learn new ways of preparing vegetables in



Members of the Kearsarge Vegetarian Society enjoy a meal. From left to right: Vinny Pearl, Mark Schwartz, Melvin Herbert and Tricia Orr.

season, so we’re really pleased to see this convergence of groups with common interests.”

The members of the KVS cite a variety of reasons for choosing to adopt a diet that leaves out meat, an item considered by most Americans to be the anchor of the dinner plate. Kate Power, a visiting nurse and longtime New London resident, became a vegetarian when she was in graduate school. “I read about the extreme confinement of animals on factory farms and that really made me lose my appetite for meat,” she says. “I understand that animals raised locally may have somewhat better lives, but I just don’t desire to eat meat anymore.”

Abbie Demers, a resident of Warner and snowboard instructor at Mount

Sunapee, explains that she transitioned to a vegetarian diet shortly after her son was born. “Ever since he was born, I have taken an interest in researching healthy ways to raise him. We switched over to eating locally raised meats for about a year, then cut out meat products altogether,” she says.

So far, the gatherings have focused on recipe swaps and sharing great food. However, this summer, the growing group plans to take day trips to visit local organic farms and an animal sanctuary in Vermont. “There are so many aspects to being a vegetarian: health, environment, compassion for animals,” Melvin Herbert, a vegan living in Warner, explains. “It’s quite fascinating to explore these issues and see how they connect with one another. Reading John



Robbins' book *Diet for a New America* as well as *The China Study* were eye opening for me personally."

Area restaurants are aware of the increasing demand to provide vegetarian and vegan items on their menus. Chef Rolf Schmidt at Dexter's in Sunapee makes sure that there are always several items that are appropriate for vegetarians and vegans, including a homey pasta primavera and, for the more adventurous palate, a Thai vegetable curry. Flying Goose has several vegetarian items, including a veggie burger that is described as "homemade and wicked good." Associate Manager Brianna Mills states that although the restaurant does not have any vegan items currently

available "we would love to be able to offer more items for vegans, perhaps a direction I can take when we change our menu this summer."

Millstone in New London offers many vegetarian options under the Lighter Fare section of their menu, including a stuffed sweet pepper dish and a Syrian salad served in a pita pocket. "We also will customize a vegetarian or vegan meal anytime if someone calls ahead and requests it," says Francie Stirling, Millstone's marketing communications person.

With summer here, local fruits and vegetables will be plentiful, making it the perfect time to explore the benefits of a plant-based diet. You can begin

with the recipe included here, which Herbert, KVS co-founder, says is one of his favorites.

WHAT: Kearsarge Vegetarian Society

WHY: You could even try a meatless Monday if you think you might be interested in a more plant-based diet

CONTACT: kearsargevegsociety@yahoo.com (and on Facebook)

Tricia Orr lives in Warner with her husband and two American Eskimo dogs. She teaches English as a second language at NHTI in Concord, is interested in animal welfare and rescue, and has been enjoying the health benefits of a vegan diet for the past three years.



A VEGETARIAN RECIPE

Savory Swiss Chard Pie

COURTESY OF *Tricia Orr and Melvin Herbert*

2 ounces chard
 1 medium onion, chopped
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 12 ounces firm or extra-firm silken tofu, drained
 ¼ cup milk (rice or oat milk are suitable as well)
 2 tbsp. nutritional yeast
 1 tsp. potato starch or cornstarch
 1 heaping tbsp. raw cashews (optional)
 ¼ tsp. onion powder
 ⅛ tsp. turmeric
 ¾ tsp. salt (or to taste)
 1 pinch nutmeg
 ⅛ tsp. cayenne
 2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves (or 1 tsp. dried)

Preheat oven to 375. Spray a 9-inch ceramic pie pan lightly with nonstick spray.

Wash the chard but do not dry. Remove the center stem from each leaf. Set the leaves aside and chop the stems into small pieces. In a large skillet, sauté the onion and chard stems until softened (about 5 minutes), adding a tablespoon of water if necessary to prevent sticking.

Meanwhile, cut the chard leaves into bite-sized pieces. Add them to the pan along with the garlic, reduce heat and cover. Cook until all chard is wilted.

Remove from heat. If any water has accumulated, drain it; then spread chard in bottom of prepared pie pan.

Place tofu and remaining ingredients in a blender, and puree until very smooth. Pour over the chard in the pie pan. Use a spoon to gently open holes through the chard so that the tofu mixture penetrates it. Smooth the top so that tofu layer is even and covers all the chard.

Bake for 30 minutes, or until center is set. Remove from oven and allow to rest for 10 minutes before slicing and serving. Serves four.

This recipe and others like it can be found at <http://blog.fatfreevegan.com>

Catering to Your Every Whim

BY *Diane Taylor*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Jim Block*

Are you planning a wedding? Hosting a cocktail party? Celebrating a graduation? Opening your home for a family reunion? Dreaming of a special dinner for an anniversary?

Whatever your entertainment needs, you'll want to get to know these three local ladies — Linda Kilar, Theresa Maier and Jane Solomon. Among the three of them, they have catered everything from lavish weddings to intimate dinners, from sophisticated cocktail parties to children's birthday parties, and every occasion in between.

The Country Gourmet

A self-styled "foodie turned caterer" who "inhales cookbooks like they're novels," Linda Kilar first invented herself as the Country Gourmet in the 1980s when she wrote a weekly food column for the *Argus-Champion*. >>>>>



The perfect July picnic menu prepared by Linda Kilar. From left to right: Parmesan Crusted Zucchini Sticks, Summer Rolls with Thai Sweet Chili Dipping Sauce, Rose Sangria, Blueberry Cupcakes, Strawberry Pie, Lemon Ginger Oven Roasted Chicken Drumettes. Kilar, owner of the Country Gourmet in New London, is pictured at the right.



Now a reading teacher assistant at Sutton Central School in Sutton, Kilar says she turned seriously to catering five years ago. She credits her mother as her mentor and inspiration.

“It sounds corny, but it’s true,” says Kilar from her kitchen in New London. “I learned cooking from my mother. Cooking was an adventure for her, and it’s an adventure for me as well.”

Kilar may have honed her culinary skills in her mother’s kitchen, but one glance at her sample menus proves she has expanded her repertoire far beyond the limits of home. She’s still her mother’s daughter, offering comfort foods like mashed potatoes and chicken noodle soup. But even when she’s working with traditional ingredients, Kilar whips up something special. A seafood dish becomes pan seared orange glazed scallop spoons, a homey soup becomes butternut squash apple soup shooters with a pepito garnish, and eating your vegetables means treating your palate to a roasted beet salad with pistachios, blue cheese and glazed walnuts.

Kilar’s passion for travel is evident



Theresa Maier of Henniker

Feed the Crowd

Whether you are in the market for a caterer, or you just like to look at tempting presentations of food, be sure to check out these websites for inspiration. And don’t hesitate to call the caterers if you have an event coming up.

The Country Gourmet

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www.thecountrygourmet.info

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in her offerings as well. There is a distinctive international flair to dishes like tandoori skewered chicken satay and mango soba noodle salad.

And the food doesn’t just sound wonderful; it looks that way, too. “Things need to look special,” says Kilar. “In some ways, catering is nothing more than cooking for others, but in a way that makes it something out of the ordinary.”

Looks alone, however, won’t carry the day. “Presentation is oh-so-important,” Kilar says, “but if the food

doesn’t taste good, people won’t tell their friends or give me a second call.”

Kilar notes that sometimes there is a big difference between what she might have in mind and what a client actually wants. The brunch Kilar initially imagined for a high school graduation party, for example, didn’t exactly jive with the wishes of the 18-year-old guest of honor. Kilar was thinking quiche and salads; the graduating senior was thinking muffins and doughnuts. And that’s exactly what she got.

“It’s their party. The client is

always right,” says Kilar. “I will bend over backwards to give them what they want.”

Leaning toward smaller, more intimate affairs, Kilar says she is happy to deliver a homemade dessert or prepare and serve a special dinner just for two in their own home.

“Catering is not just for the elite,” Kilar says. “I haven’t gotten a job yet that I’ve turned down.”

Home events require some extra research on Kilar’s part. In addition to shopping and preparing food, she also needs to check out the kitchen facilities on site and make sure all the appliances are in working order. She learned the hard way to always come equipped with her own oven thermometer, for example, when a client’s oven failed to heat properly and she had to improvise on the fly.

But minor glitches have yet to deter Kilar from exploring her passion for food. “Sharing my love of cooking with others is what makes this job worthwhile. If you make a wonderful batch of blueberry scones and don’t share them with someone?” Kilar holds her hands open like a question mark and shrugs. “You see what I mean.”

Theresa’s: Catering for All Occasions

If you read the *Concord Monitor*, you may already be familiar with Theresa Maier. Since 1991, she has penned a regular food column called Simple Suppers, where she weaves reflections on the everyday events of her life with stories of food and favorite recipes.

“My conversation with food happens in the column,” says Maier. “I see food as a metaphor for life.” That’s why Maier once requested a special treat for Mother’s Day, a dessert that combined rhubarb and strawberries so it would be both tart and sweet. “Because motherhood is not all sweetness. It has those tart elements, too,” Maier says.

Given her background — Maier earned a bachelor’s in philosophy from Columbia University and a master’s in English from City University of New

York — it is perhaps not surprising that she should view food as a metaphor.

But when Maier is catering an outdoor wedding party for 100 guests or serving hors d’oeuvres and cocktails to lobbyists at the Capitol Center for the Arts in Concord, she sets aside the poetry and gets down to business.

“In the summer, I average one wedding a week, and for each wedding, I will have been planning it with my clients for a year,” says Maier. That’s a lot of details to keep track of: linens,

tableware, chairs, tents, champagne glasses, lighting, dance floors, not to mention the food. Most of us become overwhelmed just thinking about our own weddings. Can you imagine facing that on a weekly basis?

Maier takes it all in stride. She maintains a folder on each of her clients and employs a regular crew of three to four part-time wait staff and prep cooks to assist with big events. Over the years, she has figured out which foods transport well — and which don’t >>>>



Jane Solomon of Wilmot



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Maier has been a full-time caterer for 19 years, working from a licensed commercial kitchen in the basement of her home in Henniker. She grew up in Pennsylvania where she says that, even as a child, she daydreamed about food and experimented with it as well. “If I was raking leaves in the morning, I’d be thinking about what to have for lunch,” Maier recalls. The day her brown bag lunch — a plain cheese sandwich — accidentally warmed to gooey perfection on a classroom heater remains a favorite childhood memory.

But it was attending college in the heart of New York City, where every food imaginable is available, that really opened Maier’s eyes to the wider world of culinary possibilities. If food is Maier’s metaphor for life, then she clearly enjoys a sumptuous life experience. The sample menu for a summer wedding include such tantalizing dishes as Thai shrimp in rice paper, wild mushroom quesadillas, and ginger salmon with soy sauce wasabi.

Maier doesn’t scrimp on presentation, either. No doubt, a mixed green salad with roasted beets and goat cheese would taste just fine without ornamentation. But a salad with heart-shaped beets is something special.

The philosopher in Maier still loves to delve into big questions that have no obvious answers. But the caterer in her remains drawn to the simplicity of her chosen profession. “I like the honesty of knowing that you’ve produced something,” Maier says. “It’s a real product. People have to eat it.”

Jane Solomon: Parties, Planning, Perfection

Jane Solomon of Wilmot has lived in the Kearsarge area for 14 years. She’s a poised, confident woman who got serious about cooking when she married a man of Lebanese descent and wanted to prepare meals that reminded him of



Jane Solomon's trademark brownies, homemade macarons and apricot rolls

home. Ever since she placed her first ad, she has been busy catering cocktail parties, dinners, luncheons and brunches, and she is proud to say that her clients are always happy with her services.

All the same, you can't talk about Jane Solomon without mentioning brownies, which makes her laugh. "I am famous for my brownies," Solomon admits. "When I worked at the Baker Hill Golf Club, the golfers would sometimes play for my brownies rather than money."

Solomon combined several different brownie recipes to come up with her own unforgettable treat, and those brownies remain her signature dessert. But one spectacular recipe does not a caterer make, and Solomon is quick to discuss some of the more challenging aspects of her job.

"Catering is not an easy thing to do," says Solomon. "And the cooking is the least of it. Hauling everything to and fro is the toughest part of the job."

Shopping is a challenge, too. If you are a caterer with a reputation to uphold and you want to keep your quality high and your prices reasonably low, "You have to travel to get what you want," Solomon says.

That's why people turn to caterers in the first place, Solomon notes. Summer is her busiest time, when families flock to the Kearsarge area and start calling her for help with large gatherings

that they have neither the time nor the expertise to handle on their own.

Take a typical scenario, such as a memorial service at a local church that involves a buffet luncheon for 80 to 100 people.

"It's daunting," Solomon says. "When you

do this all the time, you get a system in place," and the work becomes almost second nature. "But it's because I have all the tools and gadgets I need. And I know exactly how to pack things up in the car. And my husband, David, is my sous chef at home."

For a caterer like Solomon, the little things add up. A self-described "plateaholic," Solomon has a collection of platters she can use to turn an ordinary meal into something memorable. And for those clients who want to play it safe with their food choices, Solomon finds a way to make even a selection of sandwiches something special. For a cocktail party, Solomon can dress up a plate of cheese and crackers, or serve up bleu cheese and onion stuffed mushrooms, prosciutto wrapped melon balls, gorgonzola stuffed dates, and baba ganoush.

"The best thing about my job is

knowing that I can do it and that I do it well," Solomon says. "I am detail oriented and very service oriented. Everything has to be perfect or I won't take it." **K**

Diane Taylor is a freelance writer currently living in Vermont. After meeting these three caterers, she has been day-dreaming about an event — any event — needing a caterer.



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