

How many of our grandmothers ever heard of salsa?

Probably not many here in central Pennsylvania, unless they were of Mexican or perhaps Spanish heritage.

And yet, today, salsa is hot, hot, hot. Sometimes, quite literally hot. Because one of the key ingredients to this tomato-based snack dip is hot peppers, or chilies, as our friends in the Southwest call them. And hot peppers are full of the fiery ingredient used in the pepper spray directed at rioters and criminals on the run.

Salsa is one of those foods that came right into the American diet along with a variety of others, once primarily ethnic-associated, that have become mainstays. Pizza, as another, comes to mind.

Our kids introduced us to this low-fat, veggie treat, along with other Mexican favorites which the younger (and many of us older) generation has eagerly embraced. Under their enthusiasm and guidance, such goodies as tacos, burritos, and fajitas have become as familiar on our

table as more traditional, local "Pennsylvania Dutch" foods. Like chicken corn soup, dumplings, or that New Year mainstay, pork and sauerkraut.

Actually, the kids took to salsa much better than some older folks I've offered it to. Perhaps the aspect of cold tomatoes just doesn't appeal to the more traditional tastebuds of this region of the country.

For a couple of years, our salsa brand was either generic or whatever brand happened to be on sale. Or, for which I had a cents-off coupon. We sales/couponing diehards just abhor paying full price for stuff.

Then I began finding recipes for salsa scattered throughout newspaper and magazine recipe sections. And friends talked about making their own, homemade versions. In a take-off of Goldilocks and her visit with the bears, some were too hot. Some were to blah. Some were too runny.

With an annual windfall of tomatoes, I debated some years ago about trying my own hand at a salsa concoction. But the

recipes invariably called for stuff that wasn't on hand when the urge struck me—or I never got around to acquiring. Like cilantro, the herb seasoning which most salsa recipes include.

Not to mention another problem. Those hot peppers. Hot peppers are not something one wants to handle casually. Having suffered the consequences of burning fingers and a burning nose which had developed an itch while I was preparing a raw fiery pepper, I learned the uncomfortable way.

A friend recently made out worse in an encounter with hot peppers. Her young son, who was apparently "helping," managed to get a tad of the potent pepper ingredient in his eye. While trying to aid and comfort him, she likewise got peppered.

Last summer, I finally satisfied the urge to try my hand at making salsa. That was after finding those "add vinegar and this packet of season" salsa mixes at the supermarket. Not being big on the extra hot stuff, we lean toward the mild versions. Two batches held us for most of the winter; I carefully spooned the last over burritos in early summer. And then we remained salsa-less for a while.

Last week, some of the tomato abundance was transformed into the first of this year's batches of salsa. Getting ready to store the jars on the basement shelves, I stumbled onto three jars from last year, hiding in a spot where they'd been missed.

We have the salsa. Now all we need is a little organization.



An artisans' village with juried craftsmen, historical reenactments, Pennsylvania German food, farming demonstrations, music, lectures, storytelling and Revolutionary War living history highlight the fifth annual Heemet Fescht on Sept. 19 and 20 at Kutztown University. Hours for the event are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Heemet Fescht (Haymet Fesht) which means "home festival" is sponsored by the Kutztown University Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center. A voluntary \$2 contribution per person will be accepted. Parking is free. It will be held on the Heritage Center grounds, off Luckenbill Road, located diagonally across from the Kutztown Airport on Old Route 222. For more information, call (610) 683-1330.

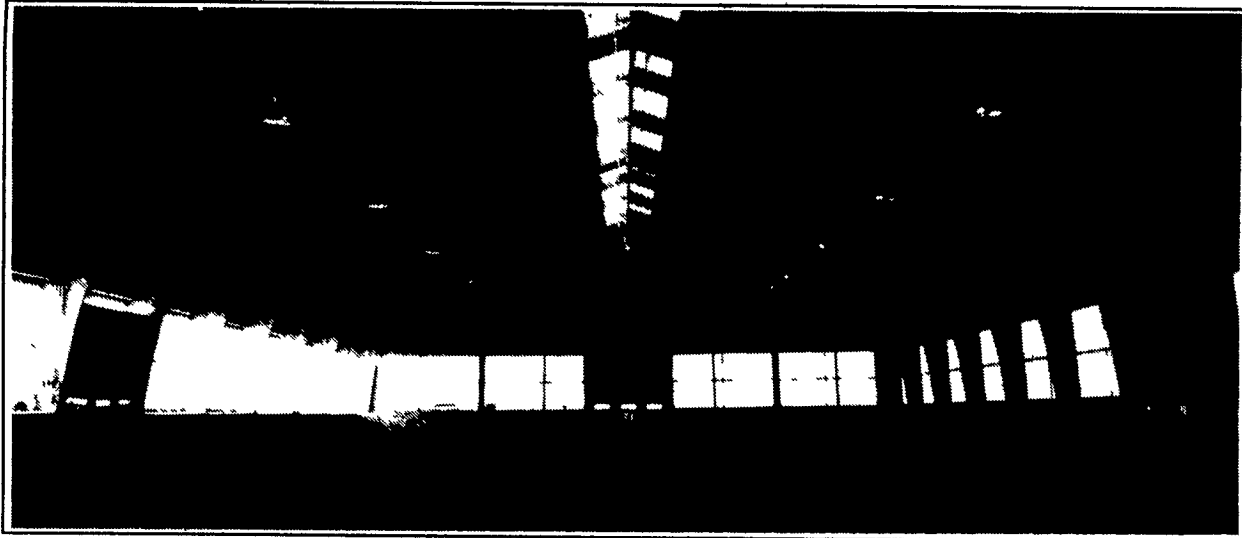
Fibromyalgia Support

ROTHSVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — The Fibromyalgia Support Group sponsored by the Arthritis Foundation will meet the second Monday evening, September 14, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at Rothsville Medical

Center on the second floor conference room. There will be a showing of a video tape. Spouses are encouraged to attend.

Any questions you may have can be directed to Connie Wright, (717) 733-2607.

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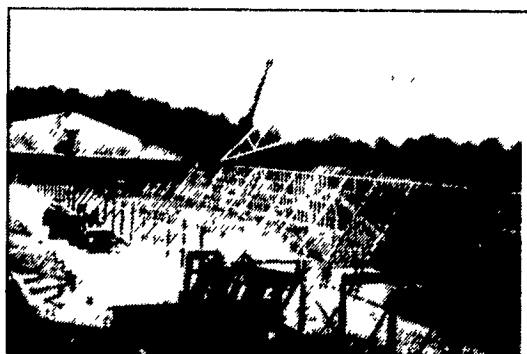
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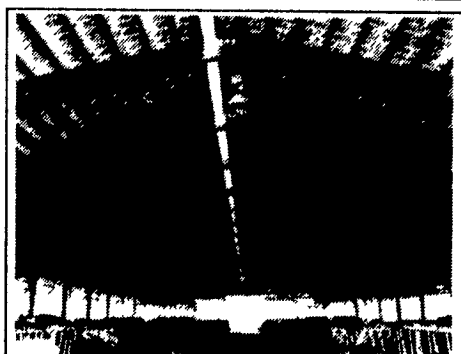
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