

Guests 'Kum Once't' To Try Dutch Dining

MICHELLE RANCK
Lancaster Farming Staff

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Patrons dropped in on "Aunt Fanny" and "Jakie" during Martin Court Room Restaurant's Guest Chef Night benefiting Landis Valley Museum.

Menu options for the evening were taken from the museum's "Pennsylvania German Food and Traditions" cookbook. Guests polished their Pennsylvania Dutch dialect as they ordered Hinkel welschkann Supp (chicken corn soup), Gerooscht Welschhaahne (roasted turkey with sides), Fisch Kuche (salmon cakes with sides), complemented with Kannbrot and Weezebrot (rye and wheat breads), Mosert Grumbiere (mustard potatoes), and Salat mit Heimbier Rahm Salatbreith (salad with raspberry cream dressing). The meal ended on a sweet note with Lebkuche mit Rahm (gingerbread with whipped cream).

Characters "Aunt Fanny" and "Jakie" livened the evening with their traditional 1800s costumes and energetic banter delivered with Pennsylvania Dutch accent. Approximately 90 guests had reservations for the evening.

"I'm going to sing, but the good news is that I'm not going to sing long," said "Fanny" before she plunged into a song about a stolen cow.

"Fanny's" costume included an asafetidae bag, literally, "devil's dirt," which was believed to keep evil spirits away. The pasty tree sap, which comes from the Far East, looks something like chewing gum, said Horner, and smells like a combination of garlic and old socks. "This was a time when fragrance was not so important," she said of the 1700 to early 1900 era. "They didn't know about germs, so they thought the evil spirits brought illness. They felt that something this strong had to keep evil spirits away."

"Aunt Fanny," portrayed by Jerri Horner, Manheim, and "Jakie," Tom Martin, Strasburg, are "an extension of a number of projects Tom and I have done together," said Horner.



Landis Valley Museum honored Mike Yeomans as volunteer of the year. Yeomans, who volunteers approximately 20 hours a week for the museum's farm program, has volunteered for a total of five years at the museum.

Both Martin and Horner are staff members at the museum and are drawing on their own Pennsylvania Dutch heritage, although "I'm from Johnstown, so 'Jakie' had to teach me the local dialect," said Horner.

Horner also uses the "Fanny" character to teach folklore and pow-wow (faith-healing), plus other historical subjects at the museum. "It's just a way to teach historical characters that makes it more entertaining," she said.

"It all started six or eight years ago when we were asked to put together a program about a funeral," she said. "We re-created an 1848 Mennonite funeral for a gentleman that once lived on Lebanon Valley Museum grounds for Harvest Days, a special event at the museum. Tom

did the research and I took the material and turned it into a first-person program."

"It just works," said Horner. "Tom's an excellent researcher and I enjoy taking dry, small facts and making them entertaining."

The funeral turned out to be the most popular program Horner, a 15-year employee of the museum, had ever done.

"It's a unique topic that's not talked about much," said Martin, who added that the topic was a novel educational opportunity for museum visitors. "I was amazed at how much the children retained." Visitors were cautioned and told what to expect before they entered the "funeral."

"Aunt Fanny" taught about "funeral biscuits" or raisin pies,

commonly found at funerals. Her presentation was followed by Martin's cooking demonstration. "We found it very exciting when young people would go from my program to his and say, 'I know what those pies are,'" said Horner. "People still come up to us and talk to us about that funeral."

The funeral is not Martin and Horner's only collaborative effort. Martin researched and Horner was the primary writer of the Landis Valley Museum's cookbook.

Also during the evening Landis Valley Museum awarded Mike Yeomans with the volunteer of the year distinction. Yeomans, who volunteers approximately 20 hours a week for the museum's farm program, has volunteered for a total of five years at the museum.

After a visit to the museum, Yeomans decided to come back and become a volunteer, where he began as a guide. Next he did open hearth cooking and rye coil basketry, which he learned at the museum.

Two years ago Yeomans got involved with the farm program. "The farm program's been going for three years, and it just gets more exciting to work there as each year goes on," he said.



Steve Miller, Conestoga, director of Landis Valley Museum, enjoys a joke during dinner.

Dinner Fit For A Governor



Lancaster County Poultry Association members serve a dinner fit for the governor at the Water Street Rescue Mission. The Feb. 10th dinner was in honor of Gov. Thomas Ridge. Pennfield Corporation provided chicken to feed 100 people. From left are Becky Petit, Andy Bradford, Amy Bradford, Nelson Groff, Mary Jo Kraft, and Poultry Ambassador Rijelle Kraft.



"Jakie" and "Aunt Fanny" dole out historical humor, Pennsylvania Dutch style, for Joseph B. Hess, Lancaster, a volunteer at Landis Valley Museum.