

Healthy Southern Cooking Served Up At Community Club

The Community Club of Garden City and Hempstead held its first general program of the new year at the Garden City Casino on Wednesday, January 8, 2010 and what a treat it was for those in attendance. A delicious sampling of the healthy southern style food served up by chef Leisa Dent at the restaurant co-owned by Leisa and her mother Lillian. "LL Dent" in Carle Place.

At "LL Dent," Leisa and Lillian serve authentic home style American cuisine with a southern flair set in an environment reminiscent of a southern dining room they had in Evans, Georgia where they lived before moving to Long Island. The food incorporates the recipes handed down from generation to generation, but Leisa has used her cooking skills honed at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y. to update the recipes to reflect a healthier style of cooking and eating. She showed us how to prepare a nutritional meal using typical southern food such as collard greens, black eyed peas, acorn squash and sweet potatoes, but she substituted smoked turkey breast and a pork loin for the fattier and calorie laden ham hocks. Most southerners love to eat.

Chef Leisa told us how to choose the freshest vegeta-

bles, which ones contained the most nutrients and how to prepare the vegetables using less salt and fat but maintaining their good taste. Everyone was given folders containing the recipes for the food being prepared and menus from "LL Dent." After the cooking demonstration chef Leisa and Lillian Dent showed true southern hospitality by graciously inviting all in attendance to come up and taste the meal and as an added treat even provided fresh baked cornbread. Everything was so delicious!

Chef Leisa started cooking at home at age eight and after graduating from the Culinary Institute she perfected her skills at Marriott Hotels in Atlanta and Uniondale and was personal chef to comedian/actor Eddie Murphy, whom she has known since childhood. Her mother Lillian spent thirty-one years at Dow Jones working in sales and marketing before she retired and opened "LL Dent" with Leisa. "LL Dent" is located at 221 Old Country Road in Carle Place.

Prior to the start of the program Community Club president Emily Sair presided over a short business meeting during which the minutes of the last meeting were read by recording secretary Michelle Leisberg.

Treasurer Carolyn Kaiser gave the treasurer's report, Past President Julie Freda alerted the membership to upcoming changes in the Club's by-laws. Florence Freda urged members to sign up for our trip to Woodloch Pines and past president Marye Heston thanked her committee for all the help they had given her in setting up the membership Christmas party. Then president Sair Asked Ann Marie Smith to introduce our guest speakers Leisa and Lillian Dent.

The next general program of the Community Club will be held on Wednesday, February 3, 2010, when we will present Dr. Julie Wosk in a fascinating presentation on "Alluring Androids and Robots in Film, Photography and Art." This program, which is free and open to the public is made possible, through the support of the New York Council For The Humanities, a state affiliate of the Nation Endowment For The Humanities.

For more information on the Community Club, its vast array of interesting and informative programs, trips and fine arts classes and how you may become a member, please contact our office at (516) 746-0488 on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.



Lillian and Chef Leisa are welcomed by Community Club president Emily Sair, center.



General program co-chairman Ruth La Bosco and hospitality chairman Phyllis Dima with Chef Leisa and Ann Marie Smith, rear, who introduced the Dents to the audience.



Past President Eda Meglio pours a cup of coffee for January Bridge Co-Chairman Ann Senchyshyn as Barbara Seale waits her turn.



Chef Leisa and her mother Lillian Dent are all smiles as they prepare for the start of the cooking program.



Phyllis Dima, Anna Marie Smith, Ruth La Bosco, Chef Leisa, Lillian Dent and Emily Sair.



Chef Leisa and Lillian Dent serve their delicious healthy southern food as members line up for a taste.



Phyllis Dima, center, helps the Dents serve.