THE INSERT THAT YOU JUST PULLED FROM THE CHICAGO READER IS THE LAST OF FOUR PLANNED ISSUES OF THE CHICAGO FOODCULTURA CLARION DISTRIBUTED IN A LIMITED EDITION OF 3000 COPIES ACROSS CHICAGOLAND. LUCKY YOU TO HAVE GOTTEN A HOLD OF ONE!
By Stephan Palmié

Gentle Reader,

By now there ought to be no need any more to introduce the Chicago Foodcultura Clarion, but for those of you who have fished it out of their neighborhood Reader box for the first time, here's a brief recap: the twelve page insert you just pulled from the latest issue of the Chicago Reader is the fruit of a collaboration between the Barcelona/Miami-based multidi- lictural artist Antoni Miralda, the University of Chicago anthropologist that is about the history of the menu includes Sue Gal, the head of the depart-

ment. Miss Gal, the current member of the editorial board and our tireless co-editors: the artist and chef Eric May, the individual who is behind Sushi Station food sleuth Peter Engler, and our new managing editor Evan Will- aim, we owe to you all for bringing us to our former spirits rector! And thanks for all, Paige! We airheads couldn't have done without your many gentle nudges towards sanity.

The result of a generous Mel- lon Foundation grant awarded to Miralda and Palmié by the University of Chicago’s Gray Center for Art and Inquiry, the Clarion was born in dark pan-

demic times. Miralda, Palmié, and their students in an experimental course on “The Art and Anthropology of Food and Cuisine” at the University of Chicago had originally planned to hold a symposium at the Chicago Cultural Center. But as in so many other areas of all of us, our lives, Covid-19 made hash of the best laid plans of mice and men. Enter The Chicago Food-cultura Clarion, a whimsical newspaper published as an insert in three thousand copies of the venerable Chicago Reader a few times a year. Our Mellon funds were just about enough to cover a few months' specialty food advertising, and never mind the Clarion #3 which we published in the spring of 2021 might have been the last – had it not been for the enthusiasm and generiosity of Palmié’s colleagues in the Uni-

versity of Chicago’s department of anthropology who took the Clarion under their wings, and helped us finance this fourth and now likely final issue. But who knows. The phoenix has been known to rise from the ashes. At any rate, for now special thanks go to Joe Masco, the current chair of the department, and to Sue Gal, the head of the depart-

ment’s Lichtenstein committee.

As always, we have prepared a rich feast for you, dear reader. This time the menu includes contributions about the history of South Asian and African American culinary interlinks, an Ebony Magazine’s longstanding food editor Frida DeKnight, the lost glory of Richard Koppe’s Gesamtkunstwerk Well of the Sea, a how-to guide for ordering classic Chicago sandwiches, Alberto Aguilera’s 50 ingredient mole project, and chef David Nikolaus Schneider’s quest for Aegean food beyond gyros, bëchamal, and that great, spec-

tacular, and utterly Chicagoan Greek-Toukey-faganaki.

But before we’ll ask you to the table, dear reader, let me once more serve you an appetizer in the form of a story. It concerns a largely unsung hero of a bygone era of Chicago’s world of gourmet foods whom the otherwise excellent Chicago Food Encyc-

lopedia utterly fails to mention. Ever heard of Max H. Ries? I bet you haven’t. Neither had I, until I revisited the University of Wis-

consin entomologist Gene de Folliart’s wonderful Food Insects Newsletter (published between 1988 and 2000) in search for materials on entomophagy for my course The Anthropology of Food and Cuisine. There, in the second issue of 1988, I came across a note entitled “Query: Are processed insect products still commercially available in the United States?” mentioning that, as of 1975, Reese Finer Foods, Inc. had counted among the largest purveyor of impor-

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arrived in the U.S., he believed he could make a greater impact importing foods and sharing the flavors and ingredients of the world with U.S. consumers.” Under the heading “1947 – Un-

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Reich recalled. Soon, the product range of Reese’s Finer Foods came to include Japanese tinned sparrows, fried grasshoppers and whale meat, ants shipped from Bogota and covered with chocolate by an Illinois candy maker, but also canned Canadian muskrat, and reindeer steaks from Lapland. As Goodyear tells the story, from there on, Max’s entrepreneurial antics took on on a fantastic, even surreal cast: He began to contact zoos to furnish him with lists of creatures that needed to be put down. He bought them, had their meat frozen and shipped to canning facilities. Whence his product line of canned lion, tiger and elephant meat. All this, of course, came crashing down with Congress’s passing of the Endangered Species Act in 1973. But while it lasted, it was a whopping success, thanks, not the least, to Max’s knack for showmanship: when the movie Jaws came out in 1975, he ran an advertisement for shark meat pâté featuring himself in a scuba diving suit and the headline “This is your chance to bite back”. Perhaps his wildest stunt was to reduce an overstock of his “Spooky Foods” gift set (chocolate-covered ants, bees, grasshoppers, and caterpillars), by hiring the ageing Bela Lugosi in full Dracula gear to advertise the product – which promptly sold out (Lugosi, by then, was a veteran in product placement: he also appeared in various beer, soda and cigarette ads). Perhaps his wildest stunt was to reduce an overstock of his “Spooky Foods” gift set (chocolate-covered ants, bees, grasshoppers, and caterpillars), by hiring the ageing Bela Lugosi in full Dracula gear to advertise the product – which promptly sold out (Lugosi, by then, was a veteran in product placement: he also appeared in various beer, soda and cigarette ads). Those were the days! Then, Reese’s insect products could still be found on the shelves of Marshall Fields, Bloomingdale, Macy, even Safeway and, I suspect, Dominick’s and Jewell. Now, you can count yourself lucky if you find Reese’s water chestnuts or baby corn in your local supermarket. Of course, there are Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups, but not only do they not contain any bugs; rather, being a Hershey product, they have nothing to do with Max Ries. And as for the entomophagists among you, dear readers, times have become tough here in Chicago. While only a few years ago, larvae could be found on the menu of Spoon Thai in Lincoln Square, the only restaurant I know where you can satisfy a craving for a chitinous crunch these days is the Oaxacan Kie Gol Lanie in Uptown which serves crispy fried chapulines, but only when they are in season (when is grasshopper season?). This is not to say that the Chicago Health Department doesn’t shut down a bunch of restaurants each year whose kitchens are crawling with bugs. But, of course, those aren’t on the menu!

Time now to ask you to the table, gentle reader. We hope you will enjoy the bill of fare. Time will tell if there may be second helpings in the future. But for now the Clarion’s kitchen is closed.

**“SPOOKY FOODS”** Items from the Archive

https://be-ladraculalugosi.wordpress.com/bela-lugosi-product-endorsements/
It’s rare to call eating fieldwork. Unless you’re approaching a plate with the intention, intimacy, and keen eye of a cook or critic, it’s likely that mealtime is defined by necessity, pleasure, and/or connection rather than investigation.

FOODCULTURA departed from the method of building knowledge characterized by interview transcripts and dusty stacks of books. Antoni Miralda and Stephan Palmié’s interdisciplinary course encouraged us to go out and taste the city of Chicago as researchers rather than as students; we built a base of knowledge about how anthropology and art have dealt with human foodways, how to reconcile the over-determination and aestheticization of one of the most natural human acts, and how to deepen our understanding of Chicago’s unique gustatory worlds.

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We settled on exploring fried chicken. How did fried chicken come to be embedded in the city’s landscape? How has its preparation shifted with the changing makeup of Chicago’s immigrant populations? What would a “Chicago fried chicken” look like if it paid homage to all of the city’s diversity?

To answer these questions, we visited several of Chicago’s best-known fried chicken spots: Harold’s, Mini Hut, Chicken Pollo Shack, Split-Rail, Honey Butter Fried Chicken, and Crisp. We ate and took notes at each with the intention of creating a palimpsest of fried chicken experiences, including everything from the menus to the grease.

Having recently celebrated seventy years as one of the city’s oldest Black-owned restaurants, Harold’s Chicken Shack specializes in uniquely-prepared fried chicken and sauces. The menu is sparse and varies slightly by location but because loyal customers know what they’re there for, they can order without much confusion. Mini Hut and Chicken Pollo Shack
function similarly, on implied knowledge and certain rootedness in their neighborhoods. Crisp is a Korean fried chicken restaurant, with a menu highlighting gochujang and kimchi as accompaniments to the dish born from US imperialism. Split-Rail, in contrast, is a white-owned upscale-casual restaurant, with a price point that reflects its self-perception as an “updated” comfort food spot. We struggled with claims of authenticity as markers of what makes a “good” fried chicken experience and examined how the owners and operators of these different restaurants approached the conversation about appropriation and gentrification of soul food.

With bellies full of research, we attempted to blend these disparate dishes into one that reached toward the city’s distinct cultural pockets, all in one bite. We buttermilk-brined a locally-sourced chicken and created a Southern-style rub. We double-fried the chicken parts in beef tallow, methods borrowed from Korean and Harold’s style chicken, and served it with rye bread (a nod to Polish and Jewish immigrants), white rolls, and a flight of sauces: ramp pesto (a nod to the Miami-Illinois word shiikaakwa, meaning an allium that grows along the Chicago River), honey butter, gochujang sauce, Chicago mild sauce, and Nashville hot sauce. The completed dish was nestled in a newspaper basket with the menus of all of the restaurants we visited as well as imitations of the menus that we created based on our own iteration of the Chicago fried chicken.

The annotated greasy palimpsest of menus accompanied process photos as our final product, the refuse of our foray into a complex culinary tangle. As students of Chicago’s gastronomic landscape and researchers hoping to contribute something of our own, we learned that a dish can only do so much storytelling work: the rest has to come from asking questions about what is on our plates and why.

By Sam Winikow, Noah Goodman, Maya Osman-Krinsky, Molly Donahue, Isabelle Sohn

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by Jim Behymer

As an Internationally Recognized Sandwich Expert™, I am often asked, “What is your favorite sandwich?” My standard answer is “The one in front of me,” which often gets a chuckle and ends the line of questioning.

Some folks persist, though. “But how do you decide what sandwich to put in front of you?”

Observation. What are other people ordering? Does this place serve only one or two things? Does the restaurant have a signature dish in its name? Sandwich shops and fast food joints on the South Side of Chicago tend to organize themselves into certain phyla, and each major family of restaurant has certain specialties that patrons seek it out for.

Am I on the Southwest Side of Chicago? Can I see a gyro cone in the kitchen or a prominently displayed Kronos poster in the dining room? Do I smell hamburgers?

If you answered yes to these questions, you may be at a Nicky’s. Or maybe it’s a Mickey’s. These loosely—or not-at-all-affiliated—Greek-owned fast food joints dot the Southwest Side and suburbs, and are among the more reliable fast food options in the area. Your best bet here is a Big Baby, though it might sometimes be called a Big Mickey. This is a doublecheeseburger built in a very specific way, with cheese between two small fast food-style patties, served with ketchup, mustard, pickle and grilled onions on a sesame-seed bun. Nicky’s also tends to have good Gyros and decent Italian Sandwiches if you aren’t in the mood for a burger.

Am I near UIC? Can I hear cars roaring by on the highway? Are there yellow signs everywhere I look? Is the smell of smoking onions heavy in the air?

You must be on Union Ave. just south of Roosevelt. This is the only place to get a Maxwell Street Polish Sandwich—and I do mean the only place, as you should ignore the words Maxwell Street Polish anywhere else you see them. A true Maxwell Street Polish is a thick section of kidBasia, its casing griddled to a crisp snap, dressed simply with yellow mustard, grilled onions, and sport peppers. Don’t like sausage? Try the bone-in Pork Chop Sandwich instead—just find the bone with your fingers and eat your way around it. You can get a hot dog or a burger as well, but if you want anything other than mustard, grilled onions, and sport peppers on your sandwich, you may be out of luck.

Am I in a South Side or South Suburban deli with an Italian name, like Soluri’s, Gia’s, Frangella, Rubino’s etc? Am I at a pizza place located in the Bridgeport neighborhood?

You have stumbled onto an embarrassment of riches, friend. See if they have a Freddy on the menu. This is a hot grinder made with an Italian sausage patty, marinara sauce, cheese, and sweet peppers. Eat one whenever you have an opportunity and spread the gospel; these sandwiches are a dying breed.

You may also want to ask about a Breaded Steak Sandwich. This sandwich features a very thin piece of breadcrumb-coated beefsteak, fried crisp, rolled up into a French roll and served with red sauce and melted cheese. A few years ago, Ted Berg wrote in the USA Today sports section that the breaded steak sandwich from Ricobene’s was the best sandwich in the world, but there are a half-dozen other places in Bridgeport doing it at least as well.

If neither of those appeal, an Italian Sub or an Italian Beef will probably be a safe bet as well.

Am I on the far South Side at an extremely busy and well-loved locally-owned sandwich shop? Do I smell a mixture of something like barbecue sauce and vinegar? Are the only things on the menu either some kind of hoagy or a steak sandwich?

The South Side’s hoagys houses are among the great treasures of Chicago’s fast food scene. The Hoagy will be a long roll with a combination of deli meat slices served with tomato, onion, pickle, pepperoncini, and “hoagy juice,” a kind of vinaigrette. It’s good if you’re in the mood for a cold sub, but do check out the Sweet Steak. This is a local variant on the cheesesteak, combining griddled shaved steak with a sweet barbecue-style sauce, melted American cheese, sweet peppers, and tomatoes. It is a mess, it is not photogenic at all, but it is one of the best, most unique sandwiches Chicago has to offer.

Is this a sub shop? Are the walls covered with hand-written signs and specials? Is the menu massive? Am I ordering my sandwich through bulletproof glass? Do the sandwiches come with fries and “can pop?”

I’m excited and a little scared for you. The experience you are about to have could be either amazing or terrible. Order a Jim Shoe, a sub sandwich containing roast beef, combed beef, and gyro meat; cheese and mustard; lettuce, tomato, and onion; “gyro sauce,” which may be tzatziki or mayonnaise or ranch dressing or some unholy combination of the three; and giardiniera, if you choose to add that greatest of condiments. When all those flavors combine just right, a Jim Shoe can be glorious. Be sure to get mild sauce on those fries, too.

Are there red and yellow signs everywhere? Red and yellow paint, red and yellow trim, red and yellow umbrellas over the tables outside, and the Vienna Beef logo plastered on everything in sight?

When in Rome, order a hot dog. If you want ketchup on it, you may need to put it on yourself—there’s a strong bias against ketchup on a hot dog in Chicago and change is a slow process—but for the places that identify this strongly with the Vienna Beef brand, it doesn’t matter whether they serve the old-school Depression Dog (featuring mustard, relish, diced onions, and hot peppers, rolled into wax paper with steaming hot fresh-cut French fries on top) or the classic salad-in-a-bun presentation that everyone thinks of when they hear Chicago-style Dog. Both are great.

Every rule has its exceptions though, and one of the most legendary hot dog spots on the South Side doesn’t have a Vienna Beef sign in sight. Fat Johnnie’s on S. Western uses David Berg brand dogs, and is also one of the premiere spots to order a Mother-in-Law. This tamale-in-a-bun comes covered in chili and often dragged through the garden like a Chicago-style dog. At Fat Johnnie’s you can gild the lily and order a Mighty Dog instead, which has both a tamale and a hot dog hidden under all those toppings.

Wait, none of these descriptions match the place I’m at. It’s some weird one-off that has a menu unlike anything you’ve mentioned! I’m confused and scared! What do I do?

In that case, pick the wildest, most unique option you can find on the menu and order that. Take a chance on something with a name like the Hossa, Crispy Cheesesteak, Smoke Bomb, Corleone, Gunslinger, or Wild Bill. It might be bad, it might be good, but it should at least be memorable. Make sure you send me a photo too—I want to hear all about it!
by Margaret Carney

The cover of an original Well of the Sea menu, dated 1959.

The Chicago Food Culture Clarion

Fast forward forty-five years to 2012, and I have established the International Museum of Dinnerware Design in Ann Arbor, Michigan. As its director and curator, I am exploring the topic of restaurant ware, and I stumble upon images of dishes with fantastic abstract designs of fish, fish hooks and lures manufactured by Shenango China for use in the Well of the Sea Restaurant. It takes me back to 1967, when, as an awkward teenager, I dined sans siblings with my parents at theWell of the Sea. I must have braved to dozens of complete strangers over the years how I had eaten at this strange restaurant. Did I tell them about the marvelous seafood cuisine or the plates with abstract fish designs? No, because I do not actually remember what I ate or what the dishes looked like. What I vividly recall is the ambiance of the restaurant, lit solely with black lights, which, along with the accompanying abstract murals and sculptures gave the impression that one was dining underwater. The little white flowers and ricrac on my 60s frock that my sister Kay had sewn, glowed in the dark under the ultraviolet lights. An uncanny photograph from 1942 shows a waiter appearing to use a flashlight to illuminate a menu for diners. In retrospect I believe that I was not as impressed by the abstract designs on the murals and dinnerware because in the late 1960s, these designs were not as unusual and provocative as they would have been in 1948 when the restaurant opened. The Well of the Sea opened to much fanfare. A press release published on December 28, 1948 announced the arrival of fresh seafood at the restaurant. Live turtles, lobsters, fish nets, and a large live fish were draped around the line stewardess, a mermaid, and the assistant to the president, all in street clothes. The restaurant was no ordinary restaurant. It was designed by artists, interior designers, and architects to evoke the experience of dining underwater. Rather than a literal interpretation, this was accomplished through the use of abstract murals and dramatically lit sculptures of fish, lures, and bait. Culinary histories may be captured by the menu—bouillon, nautilus, and flaming rum punch; Mid-Century Modern art collectors have fixated on the abstract undersea murals designed by Richard Koppe; dinnerware collectors cannot own too many place settings of the sturdy Shenango China restaurant quality dishes with the abstract fish motifs, adapted from Koppe’s murals by Shenango China’s noted designer Paul W. Cook. There is the novel restaurant concept, the architectural/interior design, the murals, the dinnerware, the cuisine. As a result, there are restaurant reviewers, art historians, interior designers, chefs, connoisseurs who remain captivated by the story of the Well of the Sea. At the time there was even a doctor who seemed obsessed with the effects of ultraviolet light on animals and the wait staff alike.

The restaurant closed in 1972, and the hotel closed the next year. The building was torn down in 1980. Perhaps because of the use of ultraviolet lighting in the dining area, there are few photographs of people dining in the restaurant interior, with most vintage images aimed at capturing the murals and sculpture in situ. Lucky for us and my poor, underdeveloped teenage visual memory, the restaurant was documented in illustrated art and architecture journals in 1949. There one can see the fantastic abstract murals, albeit in mostly black and white, one by one. Not everything seems to have been finalized in December 1948, in time for the grand opening. The restaurant china with the abstract fish motifs first appeared in use in the restaurant around 1953-1954. Fortunately, the manufacturer used backstamps which can reliably indicate production dates. By the mid-1960s, the original menus, which reproduced one memorable segment of one of Koppe’s five painted undersea murals, were replaced by newly designed menus that glowed under ultraviolet light and could be seen in the darkness that was the Well of the Sea. The menus actually describe all the tempting cuisine at the restaurant, including such delicious wordsmithing as “Bahama Chowder with Barbados Rum, said to be a favorite soup of Ernest Hemingway, believed to the natives of the Bahama Islands to promote virility and longevity.” All that for only 75 cents in the 1960s! The advertisements of the abstract fish, hat, and lure designs on the restaurant china.

We dined in the Cape Cod Room at the Drake Hotel. We ate under the multi-storied Christmas tree in the Walnut Room at Marshall Fields, memorable for the long line waiting to get a table under the tree. My mother and father boarding the train quickly propelled us to its front. Merry Christmas! That year was 1961. That same year, when Kay and I were safely on the train back to Iowa City, our parents dined at the renowned seafood restaurant Well of the Sea, located in the basement of the Hotel Sherman. The cover of an original Well of the Sea menu, dated 1959.
Growing up as a committed eater in the Aegean coast of Turkey, one of my favorite street bites was kököreç, lamb intestines fairly cleaned, wrapped around offal, grilled on a horizontal skewer, and seasoned with salt, oregano, and cumin before getting stuck in a half loaf of bread whichI used up all the fat. I have already lost you with this during recipe; my precious reader, but I was hardly the only lover of this dish. I always found it astonishing how kököreç was the first and last thing that the Kurdish side of my family had to eat when they came from Diyarbakır to visit us in Larime (Sanfrit in Greek). Ultimately, these kinds were proud meat eaters. Especially those from Diyarbakır liked to impress you by boasting about how they eat lamb liver for breakfast while people from Larime, my hometown, were rather taking pride in their culinary knowledge with the Aegean herbs and greens. How could this hard-core meat sandwich be native to my allegedly herbivorous land and delightfully exotic to my carnivorous cousins from Kurdistan?! Well, I didn’t think much. I kept on biting… It took me years—and watching the Athens episode of Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmern—to realize that my kököreç was endemic to my region because it was Greek; it was called kolovoriti in their language and it was not a street food for them but an Easter specialty! Suddenly, thanks to this crazy American, all the pieces started to fit together.

Now, if you are still with me and wondering where you can eat this mouthwatering dish, look no further than my precious reader. Kindly proceed to Chicago’s Wicker Park and grab a seat at Taxim Restaurant on Milwaukee Avenue. And if you are reading this because kolovoriti sounded intriguingly repellent, that’s also fine. Chef David Nikolaos Schneider and his team should have something in the pot for you since their extensive menu covers several regions in Europe and Asia Minor that Greeks once called home.

Chef Schneider is a food anthropologist of sorts. He has been to very many places and their household kitchens with a singular aim: learning to cook like a Greek! In his visits to the Greek mainland, Aegean islands, Cyprus, Turkey, and Syria he collected cooking techniques, recipes, and flavors which are very much alive in these regions’ culinary repertoire, but are not featured in mainstream representations of the Greek cuisine since its standardization with a Western influence in the 1930s. Our chef’s inquisitive spirit is why, my precious reader, you may have your chance to get a taste of Cypriot pork sausage (sajloviço) with halloumi, Cretan pastries, and a variety of Pide (Istanbul style) dishes from wood-fire roasted eggplants to artichoke stews, all beaked-buttered flat bread with sesame garlic sauce, all in one place. In fact, the restaurant’s name, Taxim, comes from Istanbul’s famous square, located in the cosmopolitan Pera district which was once home to the Greek inhabitants of the city—including Chef Schneider’s uncle—and a bustling taverna culture that brought together all sorts of city characters, not unlike today’s Wicker Park. That one doesn’t always need to go beyond the Ocean to get at the roots of Greek cooking, especially if they are in Chicago, a city which has attracted many Greek migrants since the 1880s. These migrants, who were running away from the Ottoman atrocities more often than not, brought their culinary wisdom to this side of the Atlantic long before the 20th century standardization of Greek cuisine. Chef Schneider learned how to make the Anatolian style cut (ciz) bread from one of their contemporary descendants on a propane gas tank in a Chicago kitchen. This delicious flatbread is now a main ingredient of Duck Gyro, a specialty of Taxim, rubbed with pomegranate and served with yoghurt sauce and a pomegranate reduction.

Chef Schneider does not strike me as an eclectic cook who draws on fusion. Duck Gyros is perhaps the most untraditional dish on the menu. Rather, he is a man of culinary convention with a passionate commitment to explore that convention’s hidden paths. When I ask him about his favorite ingredients, he proudly answers: “our homemade yoghurt!” If my kokoreç story sounding appealing to you to a bit of this? At Taxim it is served with Chef Schneider’s home-made yoghurt. When I ask him about what ingredients he certainly avoids, he is again quick to answer: anything that Greeks have not made use of historically. So, my precious reader, no kale, avocados, or quinoa for you at Taxim. Nor the sauce (as in moussaka) either, an ingredient that became the staple of the Greek restaurant experience in America since its introduction to Greek cooking in the 1930s by Chef Schneider’s cousin-born, but Vienna-bred namesake, Nikolaos Tselementes.

Taxim is an Athenian, Cretan, Smyrniote, Politeia, Cypriot, Cappadocian, and Pontic restaurant all at once, but it is equally Chicagian. Chef Schneider raves about how he can find greens that are specific to Crete in Chicago thanks to our town’s mild summers, high-quality soil, and visionary farmers. This, of course, does not stop him from scaling his backpack with bitter almonds while flying back from Greece and turning them to tears-inducingly (I told you, they are bitter!) delicious kourabiedes (bitter almonds) with powdered sugar.

No, my precious reader, now we hit the last lines of my piece and the Clarion is getting ready to bid you farewell until an unforeseeable future. I dipped my pita bread in a considerable amount of labneh and olive oil, made a ceviche of sorts with Aegean swordfish (salmou), and even watched Andrew Zimmern eat Iskab pide in Chicago while writing this. There would only be too much color and food stain on this page if I used actual pen and paper instead of a word document. It has been a mouthwatering journey to get to know and talk food with the unapologetically glutinous Clarion crew. Chef Schneider, and now you, Hayde, opa, cheers… to many more appreciating Chicagian adventures!
Alberto serving food at the recent molé event Mole Dog. The Feeling Shapey Carnival at Ox-Bow was part of this dinner series, people that didn’t be-for bringing together of acted as a metaphor and I think that it kind ner project that I did molé as part of this din- and mix the different re- amount of ingredients the top with an excessive molé that was just over and I thought it would list of all the ingredients Mexico and compiled a list of all the ingredients – my claim that I was making a molé with whatever you was 2011, in my home. And but I also did it at other sites, I was invited to do it at other places. One of the things that I started to do was I would go into people’s homes and I would make a molé out of whatever they had. So I never wanted them to buy any special products – my claim was that I was making a molé with whatever you had in your cupboards. EM: What if they had no chiles? they always have something that was in the cupboard. So I would use what was at hand – chocolate Quik, peanut butter. Worce- Saurus tamer sauce. But A1 sauce is another thing, it actu- ally has tamari in it, so A1 sauce would work in a molé. It’s just about getting the emphasis on the right ingredients to make it molé-like as possible. A while back I stopped making the molé. EM: Did you retire it purposefully? AA: I think time just happened and it fell to the back. But I’m actu- ally going to make dog seller at the Cub’s park – he did that for years, that was a big part of his life. Anyways, when we were out at the bistro, I was telling Jirasek about my mole dog project and he had the idea to combine both of our interests to create a molé hotdog, like a chili dog, like a Coney Island chili dog. With molé instead of the chili. He brought me the list of his ingredients and I made a drawing of it on top of the Oxbow map. EM: Have you seen Insta- gram. Did I like some Filipino ingredients? AA: There were several things. But actually he collaborated with sever- al artists who were vis- iting and then they made together. That got mixed into it, also. And Alex and I, for the end of our pro- gram, we created a car- nival at On-Blow in the open meadow. And we thought that we should serve these molés as a performance at this carnival. But that got put off so we actually passed them out during the dance party at the end of our session. After returning home, I wanted to commemo- rate that moment and that food that we made, collaboratively, with Jirasek so I thought it would be interesting to ask Southwest Signs to make a sign that I then gave as a gift to Jirasek. EM: So was it good, Frankin’s mole? AA: It was really good. It was a really fast mo- ment – it’s a hotdog and it was at a dance party. It’s not like you could sit down and savour the food. But it really was a good combo. He used turkey dogs, be- cause I told him about turkey molé. EM: Do the molés turn out different? Do they taste dramatically dif- ferent every time? AA: You know what, I feel like they always taste the same. It goes hand in hand with the metaphor of things coming together that doesn’t belong. It works, that’s more of the point, that these things are not going to work out, but in the end it does. May- be that’s the metaphor, right, that it’s a dish, for me, that welcomes everything, everybody, different cultures. The indigenous population, the Spanish population, and everything in be- tween.

Alberto Aguilar is an interdisciplinary artist based in Chicago. In 2009 he started a Personal Dinner Invitation, where he invited strangers into his home using a popular social media site. At these dinners he began making and serving a 50 in- gredient Mole which he has now made countless times. He teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His work is currently on display at The Franklin Gallery in the Garfield Park neigh- borhood of Chicago.
We don’t know exactly when the first Indians came to Chicago. (South Asians is a more appropriate term for what we now call Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, and people from other countries in South Asia.) The 1760 census lists eight people from India in Chicago, but they could have come from anywhere. India was part of the British Empire and residents could have come from any of its colonies. Three names rose very steadily to reach 717 in 1930. After this trend continued, the Indians were included in the Asian category until the 1970s.

Three early residents were mostly students, mainly at the University of Chicago. A 1920 article in the Chicago Tribune notes that the Indian students here, many from Madras, had formed a cricket team. For a time in the 1920s the University of Chicago had what must have been the university’s first and only polo team, headed by a dashing young man from Calcutta named Chunder Goswami.

While Mr. Goswami likely came from a wealthy background because of his polo-playing ability, most of the students were on scholarship and not wealthy. In a 1930 article in the Chicago Tribune, an Indian journalist who spent time in Chicago and Calcutta, wrote that his countrymen faced in entering restaurants and finding lodgings because of the color barrier. Starting in the 19th century, communities of Indians who had jumped ship or worked as wandering peddlers settled in New Orleans and New York. Some joined the Great Migration of African Americans that began in the late 19th century and continued until the 1970s. In 1963 Chicago’s first Indian restaurant opened by Sarjit Singh Sikand in 1967 at 2911 W. Madison, then a rather seedy area. It was the Taj Mahal, also called Taj Restaurant, which featured such items as Colonel Sanders style fried chicken and egg rolls.

In 1965 a major reform of U.S. immigration laws replaced the old quota system that favored ‘white’ countries by one that gave preference to professionals and relatives of citizens and third 1970, there were just over 3000 people of Indian origin in Chicago. Chicago’s first Indian grocery store was opened by Sanjot Singh Sidhu in 1967 at 3101 N. Broadway. Until then the only source of South Asian spices and lentils was Conta da Soveria on Rosedale Road. Sidhu began by selling imported items, especially lentils, to the owner. When business exceeded his expectations, he opened Indian Gills and Food at Belmont and Sheffield. In 1973 he opened a restaurant at the same location, which initially served kabsa and other Middle Eastern foods. The same year, run-away train tracks were laid, opening the clubhouse for the club. The restaurant featured such items as Colonel Skinner’s chicken and Pimm’s Cup. For a possible change that his restaurant was not ‘authentic’, Chulabon claimed in an April 8, 1973 article in the Chicago Tribune, “An authentic Indian restaurant owner would have... two cows, people would sit on the floor eating with their hands, and I would have to bring in 10 boxes.” It was the first day of business. A different manager, also called Taj Mahal opened at 10 E. Walton Place in 1973. By 1977, there were more than 150 Indian owned stores between California and Western Avenues.

In 1966, the first Indian-owned stores opened, including the upscale Khyber Restaurant on Western Avenue that opened in 1968. The menu featured such items as Colonel Sanders style chicken and egg rolls.

In 1967 the Devan Avenue on the north side became a center of activity for Indian immigrants, replacing what had been a largely Jewish area. In 1979 Maleki and Tuval Patel opened their first store at 2047 Devan near Damen, followed by a larger flagship store at 261 W. Devan which many Indians consider the new center of the city. Today Patel Brothers are the largest Indian grocery chain in the U.S. with 57 stores in 10 states and their own line of ethnic products. Other stores followed, including butchers selling halal meat for Muslims, sweet shops, Indian fish shops and grocery stores. By 1980 there were more than 150 Indian owned stores between California and Western Avenues.

Devan Avenue became a shopping mecca for the entire Midwest. Shoppers needed places to eat, and the first restaurants were the Standard India opened by the Kamboj family in 1963. It was a small ethnic restaurant that served mainland India. The menu featured such items as Chutney Masala, a popularly known as Nehru jackets). The restaurant was a small fine dining restaurant in an old mansion in the 2200 block of N. Clark, above a store that featured rice pulao, lamb korma with poppadums “prepared only for special parties.” The writer were Indians, students dressed in turban and turbans (jackets that became popularly known as Nehru jackets). The restaurant was a small fine dining restaurant in a mansion.

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By Donna Battle Pierce

When her A Date With A Dish cookbook was first published, Freda DeKnight probably referred to the carefully curated recipes as "By Us and For Us." This strong declaration began in 1948 during the Jim Crow era, more than four decades before the FBI's co-founders, Carl and Richard Daymond John, applied the "For Us By Us" acronym to their FUBJC sportswear line.

DeKnight was born during my grandmother's first published page classic book has also earned a special place in honor in my small condo kitchen, reminding me of the personal connection it comes to DeKnight's cultural perception, testing and tasting of the traditional passed-down cultural recipes such as my family's favorite
damson banana and a gumbo recipe made with tomatoes that only comes in second place to her recipe for "Mama's Stew."

"Freda DeKnight was one of the first who brought international attention to African-American food. ... She was a trailblazer," author and educator Jessica Harris stated several years ago when she offered advice about overcoming research progress with my DeKnight bio plan. "It takes a trailblazer to know one," I answered quickly, for unlike most of my research work, this an historic topic that puzzled me from her High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America, the author of a dozen books which focus on our cultural foodways answered back just as quickly, repeating encouraging words about my own project.

I only rave about the 1948 edition because it is the only edition with DeKnight's copyright and the only edition which includes the very personal chapter identifying and quoting a national collection of Black cooks with storytelling and memoirs of other cultural cooks, culinary historians, students and myself first inspirational and deeply meaningful.

In 1962 and 1973 when Ebony published a revised version of DeKnight's book with The Ebony Cookbook by Freda DeKnight added to the index and Johnson Point Press Company decided as the second right holder, they removed "an entire great part of the personal narratives that makes the first book such a pleasure to read."

The second of her From Fiction to Foodways: The James Baldwin Bookends, American Literary and Culinary Studies, included in the collection of authors published by the University of Illinois Press and edited by Ann and Asia C. Hutton. "In a fashion parallel to what Susan Lerman has demonstrated happened to The Joy of Cooking over the years..."

My heart leaps for joy when I read the W.F. Witte added, comparing the A Date With A Dish series of editions with the seven editions of A Date of Cooking.

And yet, based on W.F. "the kit's name" named "Freda has a unique voice that "put Freda in a separate DeKnight in her 1948 copyrighted cookbook, Freda DeKnight following her with Ebony's subsequent book copyrights and magazine columns and Freda De Knight appearing under her photograph on a Cartoons brochure describing her as a home career, a cook and a writer and what she spors writing "is a call to three thrust, the question arises..."

If you know how we capitalize and sparse her surname? For my part, following much gen- eral delirium based on the fact—no secret among friends and colleagues—that she was one of the first editors, the first editors, first time as my all-time favorite cookbook. Still, I chose not to follow the first edition's author style in my writing, instead choosing to capitalize and space DeKnight's last name the way I discover- ed the space and capitalization in the two edition copy follows this text: "May each 'Date' be a Date, you'll be proud of." This is also the capitalization and spaced used by Faulkner and pianist, Rene DeKnight (1913—2004) — who became an armchair cook for the 19th Dimension following Freda DeKnight's 1963 death from cancer.

When I began pieceting together stories about DeKnight's incredible cultural culinary contributions in 2012, most notable published with "not enough readership inter- est," which I understood trans- lated to "not enough white readership interest." After moving from national to regional pitches, the first acceptance came from the��'s Ancient Culinary His- torians for their Spring 2013 issue of Re- search.

Four years later, New York editor and writer Dan Peppe, writing in the February 27, 2017 Daily Paris Review, linked to my recently posted NPR article before paraphrasing the piece, quote Freda DeKnight in a promotion black older, writer and cook whose midcentu- ry fame has come completely evaporated Donna Battle Pierce explained. "Born in 1909, DeKnight spent much of her fiv- e-to-six years collecting recipes and publishing African-American culture and traditions in the years after World War II to make her into the midcentury set. Yet her name has been lost to the forever—they don't even know her that most basic of 21st century acknowledgments, a Wikipedia page..."

The first food editor for Ebony magazine, DeKnight wrote a pho- tographic memoir columns that afforded her home economics' tips, as we refer- ence recipes from "The Most Continu- ity" of home cooks, professional chef, caterers, restaurateurs and editors..."

DeKnight presented a more nuanced and often glamorous image of African-Amer- ican cooking and culture—not just to Afri- can-American readers, but to the broader world.

Both of my elegant grandmothers, Leana Peters Battle and Juanita Davis Potts Battle, who were frequently described as "Gold Coast club- woman" during the mid-20th century, did not favor cookbooks. Gran employed a women" during the mid-20th century, did not favor cookbooks. Gran employed a..."

As a Baby Boomer, my life changed after my 1970s College instructor, part of a 100-year celebration of integrating into the black history facts that had been left out of my white textbooks in classroom..."

And then, when I studied the details about DeKnight's Midwestern youth spent in Kansas, South Dakota, Iowa and Minnesota, her age didn't matter; I identified completely with how my mother used to refer to me: "a child of integration." One reference identifies DeKnight's birth year in 1909, the same year my mother, metal and steel, had been born. But her date of birth varies three years later. Yet DeKnight's efforts with food traditions, authors show that Black women cook because they want to nurture community, to help each other make a home, and to feel good about themselves.

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