

Life in LAMORINDA

Fish, Eat, Party

By Sophie Braccini



At the table with guests of Jim Logsdon (left) and chef Eric (right)

The Quillback Rockfish prepared with ginger and scallions that chef Eric brought to the tables of Hsiang's Restaurant on Monday evening were still swimming in the Pacific Ocean on Sunday morning. They found their way to the Orinda kitchen with the help of the rods of Orinda resident Jim Logsdon and his friends. They were partaking in a tradition of good sport and great eating that has been going on for ten years.

The two large round tables at Hsiang's were covered with many more creative and tasty dishes: Minced fish in lettuce cup, Braised Lingcod steaks in a hot, spicy sauce, Braised Cabezone

steaks in a sweet and hot sauce, Olive Rockfish and Blue Rockfish fillets fried in the Salt and Pepper style with Jalapeno peppers, and Hot and Spicy Szechwan style fish stew with Chinese lip-numbing pepper corns. The chef added white and brown rice, and a variety of vegetable dishes.

"Eric and I made our arrangement about ten years ago when he first opened the restaurant and Judy and I had just started seeing each other," says Jim Logsdon, "He has cooked many memorable meals for us over the years. In fact, we thought so much of his skill that Judy and I reserved the same two tables for our Rehearsal Dinner prior

to our marriage in 2000. We just told Eric to pull out all the stops and create a fabulous meal for twenty four people. It was one of the best meals I have ever eaten." Some of the dishes that Eric prepared that night are on his menu, sometimes in a "chicken version." Others are created for the occasion, depending on the catch.

As diners ate to one's fill, stories of the Sunday outing went around the table. They left Orinda before dawn on Sunday morning for Emeryville where they had reserved a boat with Emeryville Sportfishing (www.emeryvillesportfishing.com). The objective was the Farallon Islands where fishing has rarely been

Photo Sophie Braccini

disappointing for them.

"I had a hard fight with a seagull," told Logsdon. Fishermen use live anchovies as bait, so the boat is surrounded by a group of seagulls that try to get the baits before they reach the fishes. "I had cast my line when that seagull dived in pursuit of the anchovy. Suddenly my line started coming back up at great velocity and I reeled in as fast as I could. The bird emerged from the ocean, flapping his wings vigorously and screaming to the top of its lungs, the hook was stuck in his neck. I tried to grab the bird by the neck, but they are incredibly fast and their long neck is flexible in all directions. It was like dealing with a snake, only one with a long, hard and very sharp beak. The bird twisted his head around and snapped my hand in his beak. One of the deck-hands came to the rescue, but the bird wouldn't let go of my hand and would contort himself so much that the man couldn't do anything. Finally, I seized the bird with my other hand just below the head, like I did with snakes when I was a kid, and the man could remove the hook. We released the bird, but he was so shocked that the captain's dog got him, we all rushed to shoo the dog away and the seagull finally made his escape." What a story that bird must have told his family that night!

Everyone came back safe and sound, as they do every time and with a nice catch. Only the men went fishing that Sunday, but sometimes the wives join too. "I go out and try to be a good sport when I'm pretty sure that the weather is going to be nice," says Judy Logsdon.

Moraga-gate?

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Both Cheng and Chew are members of the Chinese American Political Association (CAPA). The anonymous email claimed that CAPA urges Moraga's Asian voters (15% of the population) to "block vote" for the candidate they choose.

Some members of Moraga's Asian community felt offended by the comment. Eugene Tomine, a Moraga resident of Japanese origin who had seen the email, found it distasteful. "I do not see why the '15% Asian Americans' living in Moraga had to be brought into this," he said. The soft-spoken attorney added that he didn't appreciate the racist tone of the text.

"I had never experienced racism toward Asians in Moraga before this email," said Susan Jun Fish, a Korean-American mother who has lived in Moraga for six years, "I recognized the racist tone of this negative campaign material and hope that other people will recognize it as well and just erase it." Jun Fish continued, "We have worked for decades to reduce racism; that email sent us back to the 60's. Racism doesn't belong in Moraga or anywhere else, it breeds paranoia and fear against other cultures when we need to foster integration of the many different traditions that make our country."

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An Evening of Musical Story Telling

By Cathy Tyson



Laura Zucker

Photo provided

Mother of three, attorney in a past life, and award winning singer/songwriter Laura Zucker will be appearing at Joe's of Lafayette on Saturday, November 1 at 7:30, for "Telling Our Stories," an evening of musical story telling in celebration of the release of her new CD "A Step Ahead." Performing with Zucker will be singer/songwriters Karen Mullally and Chris Hanson. With a style that has been compared to James Taylor and Shawn Colvin, seeing Zucker and friends perform might be the just the thing for tired trick or treaters.

The acoustic guitar player and vocalist released her first CD, "Left Foot Forward," in August of 2006 to much critical acclaim. The RI Muse describes Zucker's music as, "expertly crafted songs, accessible and compelling, performed with a seasoned finesse and a vocal quality that is honest and direct." She's the winner of West Coast Songwriters, "Best Song of 2007" for "I Can't Let Go" and Best Song 2006 for "It was you." Her song "Memorial Day" was a finalist in the Public Domain Foundation's

"Music to Life" contest, resulting in extensive airplay on XM radio.

"I am so fortunate that I get to write and perform. It's very soul satisfying, when so much of my time is taken up with the everyday tasks we all face: grocery shopping, laundry and carpoles. And to receive such overwhelmingly positive feedback is like the icing on the cake," said Zucker.

She was performing on the east coast for much of the early 1980's. "I took a break to attend law school and practice law, but knowing I would need something to fall back on, I kept my music skills honed," Zucker jokes. With children at Happy Valley, Stanley and Acalanes, she's only able to devote a fraction of her time to her own music, the rest being taken up with family, her part-time work as a music teacher and guitar teacher for teens and adults.

Go to www.laurazucker.com for a listen. Her haunting song, Memorial Day, references the Lafayette crosses and urges that we should never lose another child to war. "People keep trying to politicize that song, since it's

about war, and the crosses. But it's really just a mother's plea, and I think, about something we can all actually agree on."

Joe's of Lafayette, is located at 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd., on the west end of town. There is no cover charge.

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