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THE FIRST ANNUAL

BLACK DIRT



A celebration of farm to table

JULY 28, 2009

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Welcome

"Above all we need, particularly as children, the reassuring presence of a visible community, an intimate group that enfolds us with understanding and love, and that becomes an object of our spontaneous loyalty, as a criterion and point of reference for the rest of the human race."

Lewis Mumford, 1895-1990

Our First Annual Black Dirt Feast is more than a celebration of farm to table. It is a demonstration of the true collaboration that exists within a community, between producers and customers, among all segments of businesses and the economy.

The hamlet of Pine Island, like other parts of Warwick, has a long history of looking out for one another. The early Germans and Poles who arrived in this region were met with inhospitable swamplands, infested with mosquitoes and many other pests. They worked hard, against seemingly insurmountable odds, to provide a living for their families. The result of their early collaboration is one of the most fertile and coveted farmlands in North America, rich with diversity in produce as well as its people.

Our ancestors could not have foreseen that tonight we are reaping the benefits of their labors. To our guests we say welcome to our community. We hope that you enjoy the beauty and bounty of the Black Dirt Region.

Sue Wilk
President
Pine Island Chamber of Commerce



Black Dirt Feast Committee Members

Sondra & Peter Hall (*Event Chairpersons*)
Sue Wilk, *Pine Island Chamber of Commerce President*
Cheetah Haysom DaParma
Martha Donato
Eve McClanahan
Carol O'Malley-Levitan

The Black Dirt Feast Committee expresses a special thank you to Preston McClanahan for his design of the Black Dirt Feast logo.

Black Dirt Feast Menu

Hors d'oeuvres

Chef James Haurey: Salt cured torchon of Hudson Valley foie gras with local peaches & Bobolink Dairy Artisanal raw-milk cheese with organic greens & grilled rosemary bread
Chef Heather Kurosz: Mini onion pie & Figs in a blanket with red wine gastrique.

Appetizer

Chef Enrique Romero, Copper Bottom Restaurant
Grilled chili garlic shrimp over mozzarella and tomatoes topped with homemade toasted focaccia and dressed with a balsamic drizzle

Soup

Chef James Haurey, Crystal Inn Restaurant
Chilled cucumber soup with pickled ginger & Tonjes Farm yogurt

Salad

Chef Heather Kurosz, W. Rogowski Farm
A sweet pea sformata with pea shoot salad, mint oil & shaved pecorino

Entrée (Beef)

Chef Erik Jobansen, Iron Forge Inn
Lowlands Farm spice rubbed slow cooked beef with smoked tomato compote and warm summer vegetable ragout

Entrée (Trout)

Chef Michael DiMartino, Landmark Inn
Prosciutto-wrapped Edenbrook Farms grilled trout topped with lemon-herbed vinaigrette sauce, with grilled vegetable orzo, and fresh beans

Dessert

Chef Bill Leech, Coquito Restaurant
Flan caramel custard and apple crisp

Chef Lisa Ciriello, Lisa's Cookies
Assorted bite-sized cookies

Confectioners Lauren Brophy & Leigh Petrosky, Candy Apple Shoppe
Heath Bar Caramel Apple, Snow Cap Caramel Apple, Rocky Road Caramel Apple, Peanut Butter Chip & Chocolate Caramel Apple

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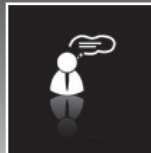
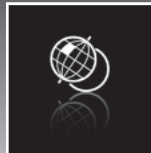
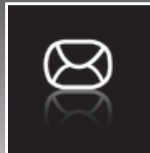
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THE FARM WORKERS COMMUNITY CENTER



The Farm Workers Community Center on Pulaski Highway, Goshen, is seeing an increase in needy people – those who have lost jobs in other industrial sectors in the economic downturn, and are turning to farms in search of work.

Known as The Alamo for the number of Mexican workers who used its services at one time, the community center also takes care of people from Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Honduras, El Salvador, Haiti and other countries in the region.

The community center was founded by the Warwick Area Migrant Committee, comprised of local churches, to provide instruction in English as a second language, a place to gather, recreation, clothes, food, drug and alcohol prevention, and an office where the State Department of Labor matches workers and the farmers who need them. It plays a vital role for many people and families working on the farms in this region, as well as for farm owners who use its services. The Alamo is also the site of a Government funded medical and dental clinic which serves anyone, whether they are farm workers or not, taking payment on a sliding scale.

Stash Grajewski, Executive Director of the Alamo, estimates that it serves about 2,000 people a year – some of whom make multiple visits. The operation is funded on a "shoestring" budget by State and County, with the help of donations. "We dread a call saying our budget has been cut."



The proceeds of The Black Dirt Feast will go to support the community services provided by The Alamo, and to help put food on the shelves at the Florida Food Pantry. Call 845-651-4272 or email: theAlamo@warwick.net

The Black Dirt Feast Committee expresses its thanks to the following individuals and groups who have graciously donated their time and energy to our event:

Bob Brady, maitre d' for the event • Nancy Scheinert, Liz DiPalmer, and Tara Wood, wait staff liaisons • Student volunteers from the Warwick Valley Central School District • Bartenders Caterina Toscano and Sarah Hill •

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"For me, it's creating something new, and then seeing that it makes people happy," says Enrique "Ricky" Romero, the 29-year-old chef born in Mexico City. He came to the United States 10 years ago, got experience in a wide range of food service businesses, and learned a variety of cuisines – most notably, he says, Italian. Romero was the understudy chef at the Copper Bottom when Mark Scott bought the business in 2005, and gave him the reins. Romero's bent for innovation, *doing things with a different touch*, has been a vital part of the popular restaurant's success. After winning several culinary awards, the restaurant now ranks among Hudson Valley's top ten.



Enrique Romero

Crystal Inn, 12 Amity Rd, Warwick, NY
 www.crystalinn.biz • 845-258-4232

Executive Chef at "the Crystal" was showcased in the James Beard Foundation's prestigious "Great Regional Chefs of America" event in 2006. A graduate of the College of Culinary Arts, Johnson and Wales University, Haurey has worked famed Ryland Inn in White House, NJ, and received the AAA Five Diamond Award for four consecutive years at the Short Hills Hilton Hotel. This energetic young chef, whose cuisine style is contemporary American with eclectic variations, lives in the black dirt region, close to the restaurant, and has hands-on familiarity with the agriculture of the region. It is not uncommon to find on the Crystal Inn menu food that Chef Jim Haurey helped to harvest that same day.



James Haurey

Black Dirt Gourmet, 327 Glenwood Rd, Pine Island, NY
 www.rogowskifarm.com • 845-258-4574

Heather Kurosz is the chef at Black Dirt Gourmet, the catering arm of Rogowski Farms, where, she says, "everyone is working with the same view about what is healthy and moral and ethical - what should and shouldn't be done to food. Here, love for food goes right from the seeds to the soup." At culinary school at Newbury College, Boston, Kurosz was set on specializing in pastry, but gradually she strayed toward savory foods. "Now, I love cooking in any shape or form, and finding new ways to use things." Typical of her experimental bent is the sweet tart using the leafy vegetable Swiss chard with honey that she planned to try one recent morning.



Heather Kurosz

Landmark Inn, 526 Rte 94 North, Warwick, NY
 www.landmarkinn.com • 845-986-5444

Michael DiMartino, Chef and owner at the 227-year-old Landmark Inn for 14 years, brings a quarter century of restaurant experience to The Feast. An honors graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, he has been featured in several cooking magazines and has appeared in the Food Network's *In Food Today*. DiMartino has gained recognition locally for his involvement in community events, and projects highlighting farm-to-table. DiMartino is renowned for his preparation of golden trout from Eden Brook Farms, Monticello. His favorite preparation is grilling the delicate, nutty fish with fresh sage on the folds, all wrapped in prosciutto. Lemon, extra-virgin olive oil, seasoning and a sprinkling of fresh sage help finish the dish.



Michael DiMartino



Erik Johansen

Iron Forge Inn, 38 Iron Forge Rd, Bellvale, NY
www.ironforgeinn.com • 845-986-3411

Erik Johansen, The Iron's Forge's head chef, was eyeing the beets, the carrots and the garlic – all freshly picked and still dusty with black dirt. Then he hand selected the produce for his menu that night. Johansen, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, is a stickler for getting his produce locally, and organic, and prefers to go and select it himself. "That way it's fresher and tastes better and I know where it comes from," he says. The Iron Forge restaurant occupies five, beautifully appointed rooms in a 1760 country house in Bellvale. The cuisine, however, is inspired modern American, that Johansen changes with the season.



Bill Leech

Coquito, 31 Forester Avenue, Warwick, NY
www.coquitony.com • 845-544-2790

Bill Leech and Annette "Brandi" Barretto are getting excellent reviews for the metamorphosis of the Back Yard Grill into the exciting *Nueva Latina* restaurant called Coquito, named after an exotic Puerto Rican cocktail with rum, coconut and cinnamon. Bill is a New Englander and a graduate of the Florida International University with a degree in Hotel/Business Management. He was chef/owner of a Manhattan restaurant for many years before coming to the Backyard Grill in Warwick, which he owned for 12 years, and now turned it into a sassy modern supper club for adults - beautiful ambiance, live jazz, dancing and excellent Latin cuisine. In the Warwick Valley, Coquito is one of a kind.



Lisa's Ciriello

Lisa's Cookie Shop, Florida, NY
www.lisascookieshop.com • 845-987-2167

Lisa's Cookies is a home start-up, an artisan food business specializing in all-natural gourmet cookies and bars using fresh ingredients. Lisa's fame has spread across the country, getting recognition from *Food and Wine* magazine, *Hudson Valley Magazine*, *The New York Daily News*, and *The New York Times*.

"Our mission is to give people the cookies they grew up with," says Ciriello, who ships to all 50 states. Among the local outlets for Lisa's Cookies are Pennings Farm Market, Maskers Orchard, Frazzleberry's and Scissors in Florida.



Leigh Petrosky & Lauren Brophy

Candy Apple Shoppe, 967 Rte 517, Glenwood, NJ
www.candyappleshoppe.com • 973-764-4060

Leigh Petrosky and Lauren Brophy of the Candy Apple Shoppe, a few miles down Glenwood Rd, were delighted to donate their signature confection, freshly hand-dipped chocolate candy apples.

The two, who are proprietors of the lovely Apple Valley Inn Bed and Breakfast, just over the New Jersey border, are constant promoters of the bounty of the black dirt region, of which they feel an integral part. Fulfilling a dream, they opened The Candy Apple Shoppe in a small barn on the side of their B&B inn. The store now is renowned for its chocolates truffles and 32 varieties of candy apples. They specialize in weddings, gift baskets, party favors and dinner party desserts.

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Our musical accompaniment for the Feast is a distinguished, local musician: **Peter Holmgren**. Peter is offering a variety of music to get your toes tapping at the cocktail hour with upbeat classic rock, and instrumental jazz during the dinner. Peter is on guitar, accompanied by Yan Falmange on keys and Zack Cooper on upright bass. Peter, owner of Village Music in Warwick and New City, NY is also the host of *Village Music Radio*, which airs on WTBQ on Saturdays from 5pm to 6pm. Born in Malmo, Sweden, Peter has been playing guitar since the age of 12. He has expanded his breadth of musical talent to mandolin which he has been playing extensively the past several years. We are privileged to have Peter and his colleagues with us this evening as we celebrate the first annual Black Dirt Feast. Enjoy!

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BLACK DIRT • BLACK GOLD • BLACK MAGIC



Photo: Breesepix.com

Early settlers in Orange County avoided farming the malodorous, mosquito-infested “drowned lands” until mid 19th Century immigrants from Eastern Europe, mainly Poles and Volga Germans, recognized it as “chernoziem” – the powerfully fertile organic soil of their own home country. They realized that, once drained, the mucklands could become black gold.

By the mid 19th century they, and other immigrants farmers, had drained the mucklands and planted the magnificent golden onions that made the region famous, eventually reaching a yield of 30,000 pounds of onions per acre. Pine Island, in the heart of the Black Dirt, became known as “The Onion Capital of the World.”

The 26, 000 acre basin of black organic soil was created when a glacier receded about 12,000 years ago, leaving the largest concentration of “chernoziem” in the United States outside Florida’s Everglades. Decades of flooding by the Wallkill River contributed more organic matter. This extraordinarily rich organic content contributes to the high sulphur component. Sulphur boosts pyruvic acid, making these black dirt onions the spiciest, most flavorful and heart-healthy, if also the most tear-inducing when chopped.

But in the past two decades market factors have profoundly affected onion farming in the Black Dirt Region. Onions farmers have diversified, many turning to sod. Others have planted lettuce, radishes, cabbage, carrots, corn, pumpkin, squash, and specialty crops with a growing “organic farming” component.

The Black Dirt Region is now a market garden for the entire Tri-State region, as well as the Warwick Valley where farmers’ markets and stands thrive. The fertility of the black dirt is only one aspect of its magic. As children of the region know, it shudders like a bowl of jello when you jump on it. It is highly combustible, which is why we don’t smoke cigarettes around it.

And, most significant to the future of this beautiful region, it is unsuitable for building. Development on the Black Dirt farmlands is restricted because of its designation as protected wetlands.



HAMLET OF PINE ISLAND

SCHEUERMANN FARM IN THE BLACK DIRT REGION



Photos: John Stage • Used with permission

