



AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION OF
UNIVERSITY
WOMEN

COURIER

MUSKEGON-NORTH OTTAWA BRANCH

DECEMBER 2007 NEWSLETTER



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Kathy Neff, President

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Welcome to the Holiday Season. I know everyone is very busy, but please take time to come to the potluck at the Muskegon County Museum and the tour of the Scolnik House. Look up your old recipes – maybe your family has some that originated during the depression and you have kept using. Remember that Spam arrived on the scene in 1937, a mysterious canned blend of chopped pork shoulder and ham. It has long been a butt of jokes (think Monty Python's SPAMALOT and a common term for junk email). However, Hormel Foods Corp., which sells 122 million cans annually, celebrates its meat treat with a festival and museum in Austin, Minnesota.

We are sad at the passing of one of our long-time members, Bonnie Johnson, on November 22. Her loving family celebrated her long life of 89 years with visitation on the 25th and a service at Samuel Lutheran on the 26th. Bonnie became a member in 1983. Her last working position was with MAISD for 22 years and she was two classes short of receiving her PhD in Education. She was an avid Red Wing fan and had a Red Wing shirt she wore when watching their games. She was a delightful person and always had lots of books to contribute to our sales. We will miss her.

I had a wonderful trip to the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador. The trip was the second one I have taken with Lindblad Expeditions/National Geographic and was just excellent. The temperature averaged 71 degrees, so that a light jacket was needed most of the time. The Humboldt Current comes up from the south and keeps the climate more moderate than tropical. The water temperature was 64 degrees, similar to Lake Michigan. It was the end of the dry season and we had almost no rain, so were able to hike, snorkel, or swim everyday. We flew from Miami to Guayaquil, Ecuador, and then caught another plane to the Galapagos where we embarked on a ship for a week with 65 other people for the tour of the Islands. The Islands are 600 miles west of the mainland Ecuador, but are part of Ecuador. The native foods were wonderful, especially their potato soup. The amazing part of the trip is that the birds and animals are not afraid of humans and often you had to be careful not to step on them. We swam and snorkeled with sea lions, penguins, wingless cormorants, and sea turtles. I have a short video of the trip that you can watch when we get together. See you soon.

DECEMBER 2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday, December 11

General Meeting: Depression Era Holiday Potluck & Tour of Scolnik Depression Era House

Monday, December 10 2:00 p.m.

Books One: *Holiday Party* (No meetings in January or February)

Thursday, December 20 11:00 a.m.

Books Too @ Marge Winter's House Book: *The Glass Castle* Reviewer: Jean Anderson

Friday, December 21 5:00 p.m.

Deadline for submission of articles for the December Courier to collethome@cs.com

AAUW MUSKEGON-NORTH OTTAWA BRANCH PROGRAMS

Ellie Williams, Vice-President, Programs
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Celebrate the Holidays with AAUW Friends at a Depression Era them potluck luncheon, then tour the Historic Scolnik House to imagine how Christmas and Hanukah were experienced during the Great Depression.

Explore your grandmother's era cookbooks for your holiday luncheon dish or dessert. Or find inspiration in the article that follows, *More than Bread Alone: Food and the Great Depression*. **Invite a friend or two. Call or e-mail Ellie Williams so we will know how many places to set.**

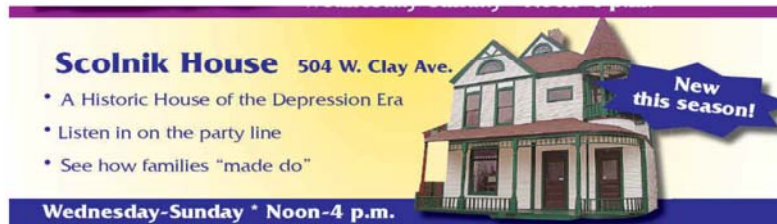
Tuesday, December 11

12:00 Noon – 2:30PM

Depression Era Holiday Potluck Luncheon

Muskegon County Museum

Tour of [THE SCOLNIK HOUSE - A Historic House of the Depression Era](#)



Since the Scolnik house opened in May 2007, guides have found the tables turned as they've been taken on a tour of the Depression era by the stories told by their visitors. Tours often become very personal, with visitors spilling emotional memories and sharing how their family survived years of scarcity, Muskegon County Museum staff and volunteer guides said. "The visitors that come here are usually very impressed with how authentic it is, and when they walk into the living room area, it immediately brings back memories to them," said Harold McDermed, staff guide. "I've seen them actually cry when they're in the house. It's that authentic to them." The new historic site opened in early May along with the Hackley & Hume Site and the Fire Barn museum. It is believed to be the only historic house depicting the Depression era in the country, and more than 3,700 people have toured the two-story home so far this summer. - Muskegon Chronicle, August 18, 2007

THERE WILL BE NO AAUW MEETING IN JANUARY

More Than Bread Alone *Food and The Great Depression*

"Often the number of meals was cut from three to two a day. Guests were no longer invited for dinner. Milk consumption was reduced, fresh fruit virtually disappeared, eggs took the place of meat, drippings stood in for butter. Families fell back on their historic staples: pasta and beans for Italian-Americans, corn meal for Southern blacks and whites, and beans and pancakes for Northern native-born whites. The most common complaint was about the monotony of these diets; that the fruits, meats and delicacies that added variety had disappeared." -- *Harvey Levenstein. Paradox of Plenty. A Social History of Eating in Modern America (New York, Oxford Univ. Press. 1993)*

Food riots broke out in small towns across America as hungry crowds shouted "We want food. We will not let our children starve." Severe drought dried up crops over much of the South. Alabama sharecroppers got by on their 3M diet-meat (salt-pork) corn meal and molasses. Al Capone opened a Chicago breadline. America is shocked to hear about people fighting for rotten food in St. Louis garbage dumps. An Appalachian coal miner's luncheon often consisted of beans and "bulldog gravy" (flour, water and grease), accompanied by a "water sandwich" (stale bread soaked in lard and water). One Appalachian food-saving strategy had the children eat on alternate days. People are evicted from

their homes for non-payment of rent. Shantytowns comprised of large crates sprouted in large cities to house the booming homeless population. 90,000 businesses failed completely. 15 million people lost their jobs. The ones who were lucky enough to keep working saw their wages cut in half. 20,000 people committed suicide. 10,000 banks collapsed, losing 2 million dollars in deposits. The economic catastrophe known as The Great Depression and its impact on life defies description.

I don't know what it's like to go hungry. I have only known food abundance-and sad to say, even waste. There are still times I think nothing of throwing a bruised piece of fruit in the trash and heavens forbid if the lettuce hatches too many rust spots because it too often rises to vegetable heaven.

So when I began to read about the Depression, I came away a bit more humble and a heap more grateful for the bounty I enjoy. History shows that an amazing thing happened to ordinary people who had always been able to put food on the table and who suddenly found themselves toting a bucket to a soup kitchen. The potent instinct to survive together with the optimistic hope that things would get better compelled those who lost everything they had, to matter-of-factly pick up their lives and start all over again. They made do with what they had.

The Depression is usually not branded as a time of culinary creativity. Meal makers were concerned more with providing substance than whipping up a Pillsbury Bake-off winner. However, making do with what few ingredients they could afford makes the Depression significant in culinary history. No time before or since has food been as simple or basic as then.

"Even though my Daddy couldn't find work and my mother took in sewing for extra money, we never starved because Grandpa was a fisherman and restaurants continued to buy from him." Says Maude Page, ten years old at the height of the Depression.

"There wasn't much money for convenience foods. For instance, my mother used to make some pretty delicious casseroles using canned goods, but canned goods were one of the things we couldn't afford during that time. Most everything we'd store bought before, like cookies and bread, was cheaper to make from scratch. There was a whole lot of baking going on during those days. Every Saturday night we'd have hotdogs and beans. Except for an occasional roast from Grandpa or a traded chicken from next door, we only had meat-hotdogs once a week.

The one thing we missed the most was fresh fruit. The only time the scent and taste of an orange graced our table was at Christmas. Every year we'd find an orange tucked in the toe of our stockings. We considered it a great treat."

DEPRESSION ERA RECIPES

On-line Credit: **The Culinary Sleuth**, by Lynn Kerrigan

Soup Kitchen Potato Soup

- 1 medium onion
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 1/2 cup oleo
- 2 cups water
- 4 medium or 6 small cubed potatoes

Sauté minced onion in 1/2 cup oleo. Add carrots, celery and 2 cups water. Boil 15 minutes. Add cubed potatoes. Cook until potatoes are tender. Add more water if needed.

Bread Line Stew

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 3 large carrots
- 2 large onions, sliced
- 2 large green peppers, sliced
- 1 large head cabbage

Brown ground beef; drain fat. Add sliced onions and green pepper. With vegetable peeler, shave cleaned carrots into the mixture. Slice cabbage thin and add to pot. Cook over medium heat until vegetables are done. Serve with applesauce and crusty bread.



DECEMBER 2007 COURIER

MUSKEGON-NORTH OTTAWA BRANCH

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AAUW, founded in 1881, is open to all graduates who hold an associate or equivalent, baccalaureate, or higher degree from a qualified educational institution... In principle and practice, AAUW values and seeks diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.

AAUW MUSKEGON-NORTH OTTAWA BRANCH
***DEPRESSION ERA HOLIDAY POTLUCK LUNCHEON
AND TOUR OF SCOLNIK DEPRESSION ERA HOUSE***

Scolnik House 504 W. Clay Ave.

- A Historic House of the Depression Era
- Listen in on the party line
- See how families "made do"

Wednesday-Sunday * Noon-4 p.m.



Tuesday, December 11, 2007

**12N Luncheon @ Muskegon County Museum
followed by Tour of the Scolnik House**