

SARATOGA

County Living

The magazine that features the faces behind the places

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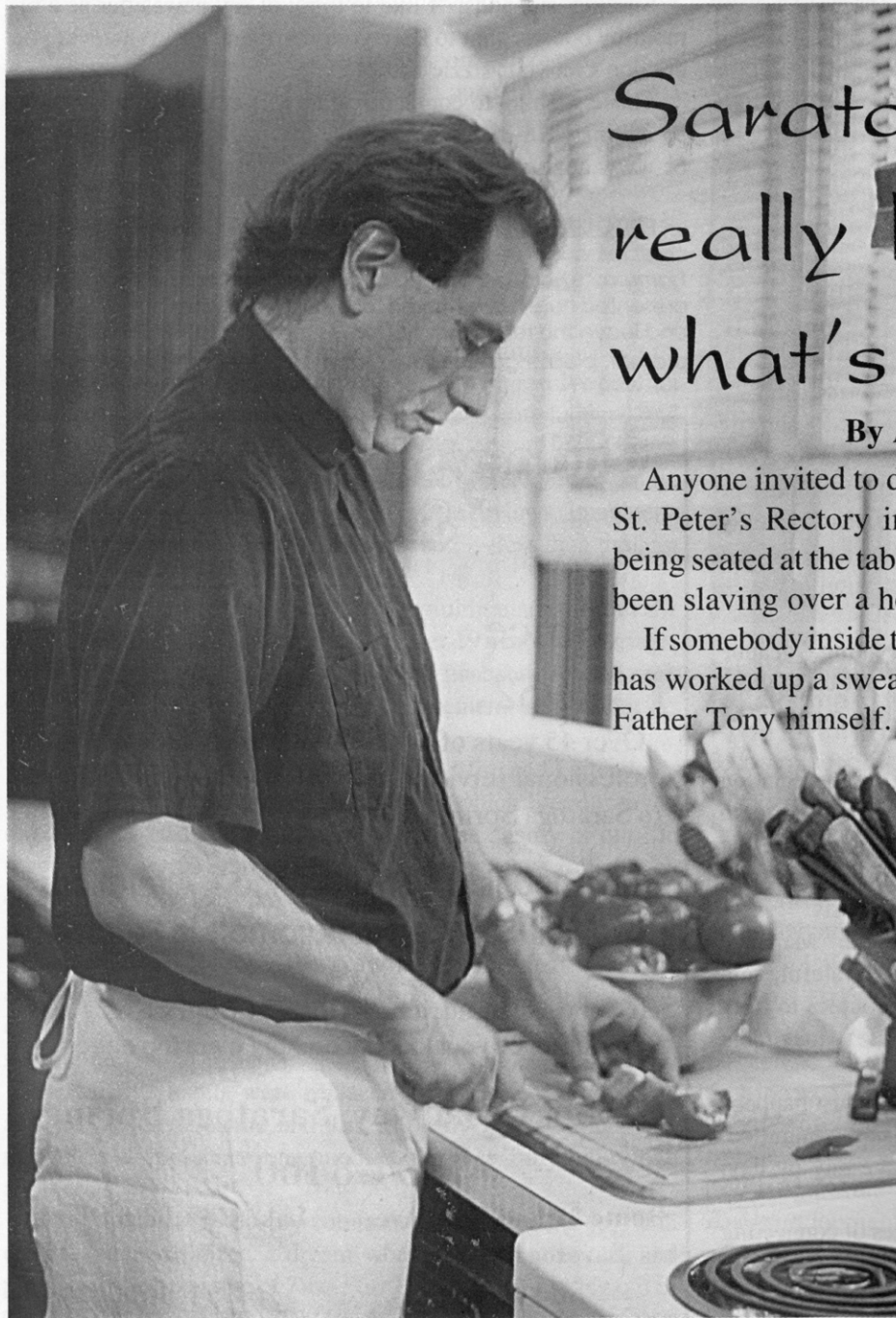
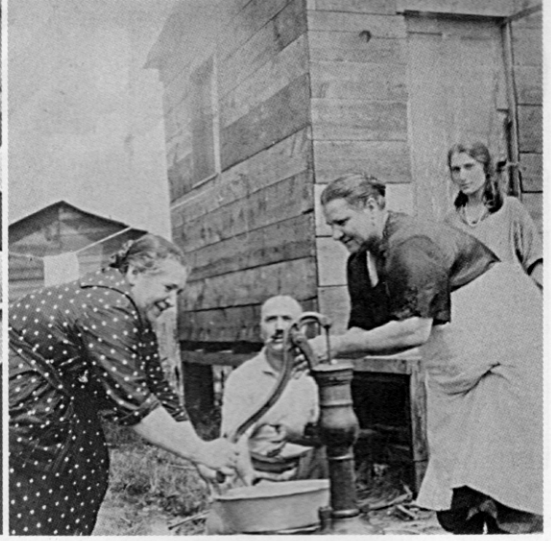
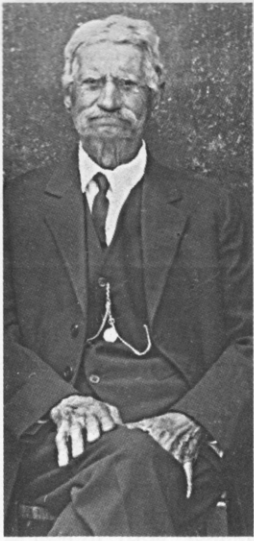
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Our gift to you!



Saratoga priest really knows what's cooking!

By ANN HAUPRICH

Anyone invited to dine with the Rev. Anthony Maione at St. Peter's Rectory in Saratoga Springs can forget about being seated at the table by a matronly housekeeper who has been slaving over a hot oven all day!

If somebody inside the historic South Broadway parsonage has worked up a sweat to prepare a feast fit for royalty, it's Father Tony himself.

While the apron might make it difficult for those he ministers to at Skidmore College and Saratoga Central Catholic Junior Senior High School (SCC) to recognize him at first, Father Tony manages to maintain a spiritual presence — even while stirring spaghetti sauce.

Using a well-worn cookbook containing family recipes that his beloved grandmother, Francesca Minasi Marrapodi, recorded in her native Italian earlier in the century, Father Tony says he sometimes becomes nostalgic while preparing dishes from the book.

"The recipes in this book have been handed down from generation-to-generation, and there's something about the knowledge that my ancestors prepared these same dishes that tends to make me reflective about my



roots. In some ways, it's almost a prayerful time for me as well as a time to relax."

While cooking isn't mentioned in Father Tony's job description, the gourmet cleric has been known to surprise co-workers with incredible edibles from his kitchen!

Indeed, when used in the context of Father Tony, the expression Take Out Food assumes a whole different meaning: "I happen to get a lot of enjoyment out of preparing food and then taking it out to others."

Emphasizing that "cooking is really the gift of self," the 40-year-old gourmet priest also puts considerable thought into how each mouth-watering tidbit originating in his kitchen is gift wrapped for the recipient. The use of baskets, festive foils and ribbons has become synonymous with Tony's Take Outs.

While a traditionalist at heart, Father Tony occasionally takes creative license with some of his old-family recipes. "It can be fun to experiment a little, though I've ended up with a few dishes I didn't have the nerve to offer to guests," admits Father Tony.

Relatives will, no doubt, be relieved to learn such culinary experiments will NOT be included in a cookbook Father Tony is in the process of compiling for their kitchen libraries. The work-in-progress involves

typing about 50 of his grandmother's recipes into a computer in both English and Italian. The heirloom cookbook will be illustrated with photographs of his ancestors, including many brought over from The Old Country.

The keepsake volume may also feature anecdotes about Grandma Marrapodi's bootlegging days — she reportedly continued to make wine, beer and liquors to be shared with family members during Prohibition. Then there are the stories about the neighbors of bygone eras for whom some of the recipes were named — such as Grillo's cookies.

Among Father Tony's happiest boyhood memories were lavish Sunday and holiday dinners prepared by his mother, Mary Maione, and Grandmother Marrapodi.

"There was always more than enough food to go around, and unexpected guests were greeted with a feast whenever they dropped by," recalls Father Tony. "You would never be caught without enough food in the house because then visitors might feel that they were intruding or were a burden. That would be just too inhospitable!"

As a matter of course, Father Tony's mother and grandmother always asked two questions of those who happened by

RECIPE FOR A HAPPY FAMILY:

A cookbook being compiled by the Rev. Anthony Maione will include photos representing five generations of family members. The baby (above, center) is Father Tony -- in the arms of his late grandfather, Guiseppe. To their right are the priest's beloved grandmother, Francesca, his mother, Mary, and his late father, John.

the house: "Did you eat?" and "Are you hungry?" with the appropriate answers being: "No" and "Yes." To respond otherwise would have deeply wounded the women's feelings, he insists.

Ironically, the meals Father Tony most enjoys preparing — and eating — today are those he affectionately terms peasant dishes, consisting primarily of fresh pasta, beans and vegetables, such as eggplant and escarole.

"Although these recipes were originally associated with the poor, I love them because they are not only low fat and highly nutritious, but also truly delicious," raves Father Tony. Another nice thing about them, especially for those who follow religious teachings advocating "Fish On Fridays" and fasting during Lent, is that most of the traditional peasant dishes are meatless.

There's even good news for those who normally gain five pounds just thinking about sitting down to a full-course Italian meal.

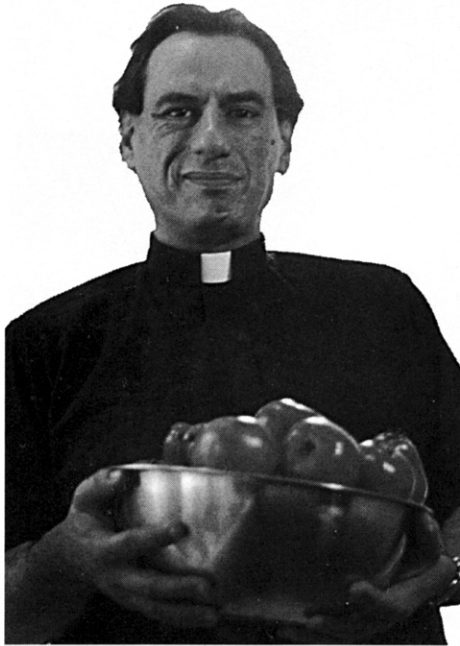
Around his 30th birthday, the 5' 11" cleric tipped the scales at almost 300

There's even good news for those who normally gain five pounds just thinking about sitting down to a full-course Italian meal... around his 30th birthday, the 5'11" cleric tipped the scales at almost 300 pounds, but shed 120 of them by substituting low fat ingredients in many of his ancestral recipes.

(Continued on next page)

Recipes help priest connect with roots

(Continued from previous page)



Father Tony Maione always starts with the freshest ingredients available, like these vine-ripened tomatoes.

pounds, but he shed 120 of them by substituting low fat ingredients in many of his ancestral recipes.

"I didn't want to give up the foods that I loved . . . so I made simple changes, like substituting low-fat or no-fat cheeses and using lean turkey or chicken in place of beef. It was great because I didn't feel like I was depriving myself, and yet the extra pounds disappeared."

To help keep the flab at bay, the fitness-conscious priest also took up weight training for a few years, earning him the nickname "The Powerlifting Padre." Father Tony even helped coach SCC's trophy-winning powerlifting team for a few years.

The Long Island native most recently made headlines after SCC was named "one of the top 25 most innovative Catholic schools in America" — in part because of

the campus ministry program Father Tony established there. During his decade as SCC's campus minister, Father Tony conducted retreats, accompanied students to youth conferences and led pilgrimages to Assisi and Rome.

Students who came under his wing lobbied the legislature, crusaded for violence prevention, mentored and tutored lower classmen, worked in soup kitchens and food pantries, and volunteered in settings ranging from child care centers to nursing homes.

For these and other contributions, Father Tony was also recently honored by SUNY/Albany, receiving the university's Excellence In Teaching Award for being "a man of ideals (who) is generous with his time and unstinting in his efforts to make the world, even a small part of it, a better place in which to live."

Clearly giving "the gift of self" is not limited simply to Father Tony's cooking!

"Frittata is a classic Lenten or Friday dish often served with a side of pasta with garlic and oil and a salad. It can also be served as a wonderful holiday appetizer when cut into bite-size pieces. Always serve this hot, right from the oven," emphasizes Father Tony Maione.

INGREDIENTS

- 2-3 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 potato quartered and sliced into 1/4 inch pieces
- 1 small onion, halved and sliced
- 1 clove of minced garlic
- 1 cup of sliced mushrooms
- 1 cup cooked asparagus cut into 1"

- pieces
- 8-10 eggs (or equivalent egg substitute)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/4 cup grated Locatelli/Romano cheese
- 2 tbsp. fresh chopped basil
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Directions

- 1) In a mixing bowl beat together eggs, salt and pepper, milk, grated cheese and basil. Put aside.
- 2) Preheat broiler/ heat oil on medium heat in a large skillet -- at least 12".
- 3) Fry potatoes in the oil. Add more oil as needed.

- 4) When potatoes start to brown, add onions and garlic.
- 5) When onions start to wilt, add mushrooms and asparagus.
- 6) When potatoes are cooked and tender, turn up heat a bit and add the egg mixture. As the mixture cooks, push the edges toward the center, smoothing out all vegetables in the pan.
- 7) When the mixture is cooked around the edges and has just some liquid texture on top, remove from the stove and place in an open broiler until the top is firm and begins to brown. Remove from broiler, sprinkle with mozzarella cheese and return to broiler until cheese melts.
- 8) Place on a serving dish and cut into 4-6 wedges.



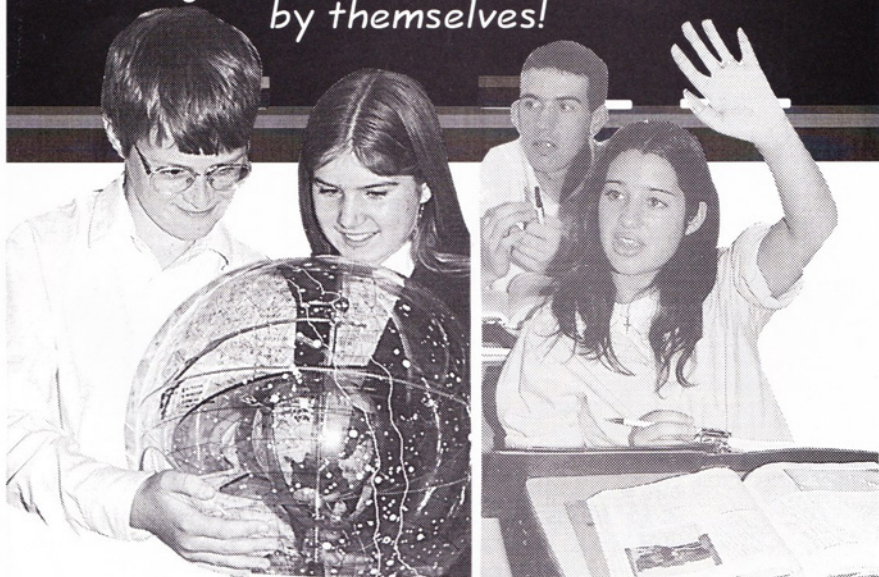
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