

How many of you remember Mary Perch? Her husband was Jivon, but we always called him "Perch." For several decades, Mary was our master cook and together with the "Dates" they prepared all of the dinners that Las Palmas Lodge served for any of its functions.

I bring up Mary as it is important for the members of our Lodge to have a chance to sit down with their spouse and/or guest and have a delicious home cooked meal on a monthly basis.

In Mary's menu there were three constants. For the Stated Meeting dinner before Easter, the meal was based around ham. For Thanksgiving, it was based around turkey and for Christmas it was also ham. Every few months, Mary would also prepare her Salisbury steak. As I remember, Mary's favorite ingredient was butter. Just about every entre had butter in its preparation.

When I was Master in 1980, Mary prepared a total of 15 dinners for us. Of course there were the 12 Stated Meeting dinners, there was a dinner for my installation, a steak dinner for Past Master's night, and a shish-kabob dinner for the 75th anniversary celebration for our Lodge. For all of these dinners, except for Past Master's night, our banquet room was filled with members and their spouses and sometimes children or grandchildren. When I say our banquet room was filled, I mean there were at least 150 meals served.

After Mary retired from being out chief cook, we continued to have monthly dinners which were prepared either members or a paid cook. During the summer two months, we brought in food prepared at a local restaurant such as Mexican food or Dr. Stan Wong would bring in Chinese food.

Our membership and attendance at these dinners did drop over time, but before Covid, it was still a good size and everyone had a wonderful meal. When Covid hit us, we had to close down Lodge and there were no more dinners. After Covid, our Secretary Bryan Kincade tried to resurrect the Stated Meeting dinners, but there was a mixed success.

Recently, Brother Ruben Rios, an Entered Apprentice Mason who took his first degree in Clovis Lodge a decade ago who retired this last January returned to Lodge to learn his proficiencies. I started to coach him and found him to be really excited about doing whatever he could for our Lodge as he now had a lot of free time. When I found out that he was a great cook, I asked him if he would take over the cooking duties for our Lodge. He was excited about this task and started by making his menu a month or

more in advance, straightening up out kitchen and seeing that a lot of old canned food and spices were sent to garbage and replaced with fresh ingredients.

If you haven't come to a Stated Meeting dinner, now is the time to return to your Lodge to participate in this monthly event. I know that you will find that Brother Rios's work in our kitchen is more than worth the effort on your part to enjoy a great meal.

These meals are only \$15 person and free to Masonic widows. While reservations are a good thing, Brother Rios does cook extra food so show up if you can.