

Chatham New York, 12 March 2006

Dear Friend of the Blue Plate:

Another year has passed, and it is time once again for my annual **State of the Plate** report. In spite of the troubling national / international situation, there is good news on the--very--local scene. I wrote in this place last year

*Hopefully, in time for my next annual letter, the Town of Chatham will have completed the revision of its 35 year-old Comprehensive Plan which can then be translated into a zoning code that will maintain & enhance area agriculture & protect our extraordinary natural environment.*

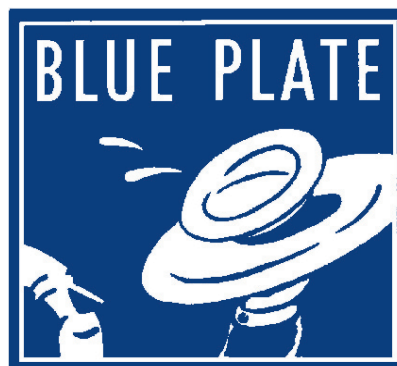
*Meanwhile, we continue to support the work of Community Agriculture whose mission to create & sustain a local food distribution system is in the best health & ethical interests of each one of us. Local restaurants have a unique opportunity to lead in this effort.*

I'm happy to report that, after several years' work by a dedicated group of local citizen volunteers, the Chatham Comprehensive Plan revision, based on detailed surveys sent to every member of the Town, is almost complete. After final acceptance, it will be used as the basis for "smart" zoning that will preserve what we most appreciate in our town and hopefully be LESS restrictive in other ways than the existing zoning.

Our mission is to support local farmers in any way we can. Whenever possible, we serve organic food from as close to home as we can find it. Most of our vegetables and salads are grown for us by Little Seed Garden of Chatham. Our lamb and much of our cheese comes from the Old Chatham Shepherding Co. Recently, we switched to whole bean organic Fair Trade coffee. Our customers say they prefer it, in spite of having to pay a little more per cup. We continue trying to eliminate plastic or even paper packaging wherever feasible.

In September, we were invited to participate in the Regional Farm & Food Project's local foods dinner held at the Canfield Casino in Saratoga Springs. I made a gallon of our very own fudge sauce to serve with the Osofsky brothers' famous Ronneybrook Farm ice-cream. What a fabulous pairing!

We have again hosted fund-raisers for causes we believe in. Our annual Planned Parenthood brunch took place on Sunday April 3, where the S\*T\*A\*R\*S from local High Schools (Seriously Talking About Responsible Sex) entertained us with their original skits. This season's brunch happens on March 26th. Habitat for Humanity (Columbia County) was the recipient of proceeds from a brunch on February 26th to raise funds to help alleviate the devastation caused by earthquakes in Guatemala. Perhaps the most successful fundraising event so far was the fabulous dinner party organized by the Blue Plate staff on January 7 (while we were officially closed to the public) to benefit the Columbia-Greene Humane Society Animal Shelter. They did everything themselves, from persuading their musician friends to volunteer their talents, to doing all the cooking, to coordinating a terrific auction. The impressive result of their efforts was a happy crowd of 200 guests who contributed \$8,300, all of which went to the Shelter to help care for the 1,000 homeless animals they serve every year. In addition, we decided to donate a portion of the proceeds of one particular weekend dinner to the victims of Katrina. (\$1000.00) I am blessed to have such an imaginative and benevolent staff, headed by Marcia Curran our indefatigable manager. Leo Castellanos is our hero in the kitchen, ably assisted by several members of his talented family.



The Wednesday night music series continues to have a loyal following. **Lincoln Mayorga & Otto Gardner (AKA Me & the Mailman)** do their unique jazz thing every Wednesday except the second, when **Selma Kaplan & George Wilson** offer their lively traditional piano-fiddle tunes. For photos of the musicians, in addition to those of the wait & cookstuffs, check our website, [www.chathamblueplate.net](http://www.chathamblueplate.net).

During our ninth season, we were pleased to welcome guests from Burlington to Berkeley, from Red Rock to Rockville Center, from North Chatham to North Reading, from Shropshire to Spencertown, from Newton to New Lebanon, from Ardsley to Austerlitz, from Cornwall (England) to Catskill (New York.) No matter how far you travel, whether across the continent, the Atlantic, or just across the street, you can count on our staff to put out the proverbial welcome mat for you.

We take your comments very seriously. After a short seasonal absence, we brought back the Sticky Toffee Pudding--we had loads of requests for it. A sampling of your comments: "It couldn't be better!" "The food was so delishes, it was'int even funny!" "Lovely, as usual," "1st class!" "Superb--again!" "Excellent, will spread the word!"

**We have recently opened for our tenth season at 1 Kinderhook Street.** It promises to be the best ever! We don't do much advertising, preferring that our diners find us through the recommendations of friends. Once having found us, they become an integral part of our growing family. We feel totally embedded here in the Village. Hardly a day passes that someone doesn't stop me to say "I don't know what we would do without you." It's great to be appreciated! We'll never stop working to earn your trust. **For comments and suggestions email [blueplate@taconic.net](mailto:blueplate@taconic.net).**

As we have every year for the past nine, we thank you for your continued confidence. I look forward to welcoming you personally during our tenth year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Judy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judy Grunberg, owner