

Ox Roast

by Lynne Belluscio

There's a lot of interest in the Ox Roast that will be held on June 8 on Trigon Park as part of the Bicentennial festivities. Tickets are now available at \$10. The price includes the beef, fresh baked corn bread, salt potatoes, cold slaw or three bean salad, and a beverage. Since gingerbread was traditional for muster day training, I thought it might be a good idea to serve gingerbread for dessert, so I called Sean at the D & R Depot and asked him to bake their famous gingerbread. The rest of the meal is being prepared by Colby's Catering from Rush. They are well known for their pig roasts, but they will be roasting a hind quarter of beef donated by Stein Farms for the Ox Roast. (Just for clarification – an ox is a castrated bull – a steer.)

The beef will be roasted at Colby's facility and then brought to LeRoy, piping hot. I think a lot of us would have liked to have seen a whole ox roasted, but I couldn't find anyone that has roasted a whole ox. In the Erie, Pennsylvania area, there are many ox roasts, but after reading through the information, they roast cuts of beef and serve them like beef on weck (or wick, and that's a whole different story.) In England, there are communities who still offer ox roasts -- it's still a major event and there are several catering services that are well known for roasting a whole ox. It takes quite a bit of time and the equipment has to be very sturdy. In one English town, the local Rotary Club reinstated a four-century old tradition by starting an ox roast in 1967.

Around here, pig roasts are more common. The methods of cooking vary from place to place. Sometimes the animal is cooked in a pit, and sometimes it is cooked on a spit. The term barbeque (or barbecue) has some interesting origins. Although at one time there was a belief that the term barbeque was of French origin, it is now believed that it comes from the Caribbean and was a description of a method of cooking meat. Today we use barbeque as a verb, a noun and an adjective.



Barbecue.

We barbeque meat. We eat barbeque and we have barbeque sauce. In an 1839 book called the "Universal Traveler," it states that a barbeque is an "act of hospitality. This is a feast in the open air, either under the shade of trees or in an artificial bower. This rural banquet is prepared under the direction and at the expense of such neighboring gentlemen, as choose to unite for the purpose of whom usually contributes such edible dainties, as his taste or convenience may suggest. Independent of these picnics, however, there is always some savoury animal roasted whole for this occasion, after the manner of the ancients. This is most commonly a fat, corn-fed swine; and from thence originated the phrase of "going the whole hog." To constitute a barbecue, it must be roasted whole – not a bone of it must be broken. These festivals take place during the summer and autumn months, when every luxury that the season can afford, accompanied with wine, (oops no open containers on Trigon Park!) punch, ices and other refreshments, is provided in generous abundance. Both sexes sometimes partake of this banquet, which is then enlivened by a band of music . . ."

If you want tickets for the Ox Roast (or beef barbeque) you can

call 768-7433 and we can take a charge card number and then mail out your tickets, or you can stop by the Jell-O Gallery and buy your tickets. Dinner for pre-sold tickets will be from 5 to 6:30. If there is any ox left, it will be sold after 6:30 -- but don't count on it. I have a sneaking suspicion that all the tickets will be sold, so don't wait.

And just an additional note

-- at the re-creation of the first town meeting that will take place after the ox roast, the town supervisor will propose that a fund be established for the poor. During the ox roast, there will be boxes on the tables for cash donations for the LeRoy Pantry. Please remember that 200 years have passed and this community still needs to remember those who are less fortunate.



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