

Time-saving dinners do not have to be expensive

By Michaela Kennedy

Native islander Courtney Hunter knows that eating well does not mean spending a lot of money or time. In these days, when many people worry about the price of convenience, Hunter proves that good nutrition can be affordable and within easy reach, despite a hectic lifestyle.

In the current issue of Yankee Magazine, Hunter's kitchen secrets were dubbed "Yankee chic," and her tricks for turning leftovers into elegant cuisine were revealed. But her passion for cooking goes beyond a talent for transforming leftovers. She claims that a well-stocked pantry is the key to her success, and she continually shops for pantry items. "Spices are expensive, but quality is important," she said. A busy woman who works full time, Hunter suggests buying

on sale instead of when ingredients are needed. "You save a lot of money, never mind the fact you're ready to cook things at any time."

Living in Jamestown allows easy access to good nutrition, and high prices do not need to accompany fine food, according to Hunter. Local organic produce is abundant, and herbs can be dried for use in the winter. "If you tend to your herb garden, it gives back tenfold," she said, adding, "There's nothing like a garden tomato."

Sam Albaugh, butcher at the meat counter in McQuade's Market, has seen Hunter in action over the years. He confirms that she is well-versed in butchering, and can cite the difference between a regular meat price and its sale price within a few cents per pound. "She always knows her cuts," he said. "She knows how to sniff out a



Courtney Hunter was recently featured in Yankee magazine for turning leftovers into gourmet meals. Photo by Michaela Kennedy

good sale."

Hunter gets so excited about helping other consumers find deals that she often throws advice out to fellow shoppers. "I always see people standing in front of the meat

counter and not knowing what they are looking at," she said. "You can feed a lot of people when you buy on sale."

The bargain hunter recalls seeing a father standing in the meat section holding a package of split chicken breasts. She was shocked to notice the package in his hand had a price tag well over twice the price of the boneless chicken tenders selling for \$1.99 per pound on the next shelf. Considering price and the amount of work the boneless meat saved in preparation, Hunter called the comparison a no-brainer. "I told him that his wife would really appreciate it if he stocked up on the boneless chicken on sale. He was grateful for the tip."

The lady with gourmet style said people pay too much for pre-made dinners. Her suggestions include knowing a few basic cook-

ing techniques to diversify recipes. "I'm amazed that some people will have drippings from a pan they have just cooked in, and then pull out a package to make a sauce," she said. "They don't know how to deglaze a pan. If you can do that, you already have a great sauce."

Hunter remembers the first time she learned to make risotto when she was a college junior studying abroad in Italy. She fell in love with Tuscan rustic cuisine, and learned how to take time to pick out fresh ingredients. She then realized how quick and easy the process was to make an elegant comfort food. Through self education, the amateur cook learned preparation techniques used in various cultures. "If you care about the process, it becomes easy to make a great meal," she said. "It's cooking with love."

It's 'Farm Kids' time at Watson Farm

Farm Kids is a six-week outdoor after school program that starts Friday, April 25. It offers children in grades 5 and 6 the opportunity to explore and experience the various habitats that make up the 265-acre Watson Farm.

Woodland, wetlands, shoreline, farm fields and barnyard are all parts of this working historic farm. "Farm Kids" will get a chance to see life on the farm through the change of seasons, and at the same time develop nature observation skills. It is an exciting time on the farm with Sheep Shearing Day, gardens

being planted and the birthing of lambs and calves. Most importantly the children will become a part of the farm community while learning about the history and future of agriculture on Conanicut Island.

The program is on Fridays from 3 to 5:30 p.m., starting April 25 and running May 2, 9, 16, and 30. Registration fee is \$40 for members of Historic New England and \$60 for non-members. Pre-registration is required and space is limited. For more information, contact Heather Minto at 423-0005.

Kennedy assassination book topic of lecture

The Friends of the Jamestown Library and the Jamestown Historical Society present Jamestown resident, David Kaiser, a history professor at the Naval War College, on Thursday, April 17 at 7 p.m.

Kaiser is the author of "American Tragedy: Kennedy, Johnson, and the Origins of the Vietnam War" among other works. His most recent book, "The Road to Dallas: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy" will be the subject of this talk.

In a starred review in Library Journal, reviewer Karl Helicher says: "A scrupulously researched ac-

count, which may be one of the best books yet on the assassination...Kaiser posits that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone gunman although he did not act alone: the murder plot was hatched by Mafia bosses Santo Trafficante, John Roselli, and Sam Giancana as revenge for Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy's relentless pursuit of the mob and for the vast sums of money they lost when Castro closed Cuba's mob-controlled casinos."

The meeting is free and open to the public. For more information, call the library at 423-7820.

Youth book group to discuss whaling adventure

The Jamestown Philomenian Library's Child & Parent book discussion group for children in grades 4 to 6 and their parents will meet on Tuesday, May 6, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

The book for the meeting is "The Voyage of Patience Goodspeed," by Heather Vogel Frederick.

The book is set on a whaling ship in the fall of 1835. Twelve-year-old Patience Goodspeed is the

daughter of the captain and gets involved in all kinds of adventures after they depart from Nantucket.

Pre-registration is required to plan for refreshments. To reserve the book and sign up for this new book discussion group, call the library at 423-7280 or visit the library's Web site www.jamestownri.com/library or email the children's and young adult librarian at rowenadunlap@gmail.com.

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