

Get a taste of the South and its food

Sundays in the cabins of Southern slaves were devoted to the three R's: Rest, religion and REAL homecooking.

Scripture fed the heart, but it was grits and greens, chicken and corn pone that fed the soul.

Virginia Tech is where you'll find the soul food Wednesday.

"A Place at the Table: Celebrating Southern Food, Literature and Culture" is the event. It begins at 1 p.m. in the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center.

Dance performances, art exhibits and speakers are part of the afternoon activities. Sixteen members of the Blacksburg Regional Art Association will have their works on display until 5:30 p.m. in Conference Room E. All of the works relate to the theme of the day.



**DONNA
ALVIS-BANKS**

Ann Kilkelly, Carol Burch-Brown and Elise Witt will get together to Sing, do some tap dancing and chew the fat (actually talk about food) at 1 p.m. Kilkelly's eight member rhythm dance company Footnotes will join them in Conference Room G.

At 2:30 p.m., Doris Witt of the University of Iowa will talk about her book, "Black Hunger: Food and the politics of U.S. identity. Katherine Soliniat and Alice Kinder of Virginia Tech's English department will bring together local writers and poets for a 1:30 p.m. reading, "Southern Comforts: Food and, Atmosphere."

With all that talk about food, you'll be glad to know that dinner is served at 5:30 p.m. Skillet-fried chicken, hominy grits, collard greens, roasted tomatoes, dried peas, cucumbers with

vinegar and sugar, corn pone and potato rolls are part of the spread. For dessert, there's rich pound cake with sweetened berries and cream.

Yuuuuuum-yuuuuuum.

Speakers at the dinner include Edna Lewis, author of "The Taste of Country Cooking" and "The Edna Lewis Cookbook," and Scott Peacock, chef of Atlanta's acclaimed Watershed Restaurant. Peacock—who studied with Lewis—also served as co-author of her book, "Coming Together to Cook."

Southern writer John Egerton, who produced "Generations" and "Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement," will serve as host at the meal. His titles also include "Southern Food" and its companion, "Side Orders."

Tickets for the dinner are on sale at the box office in Squires Student Center. They are \$15 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors 65 and older. To reserve, call 231-5615.

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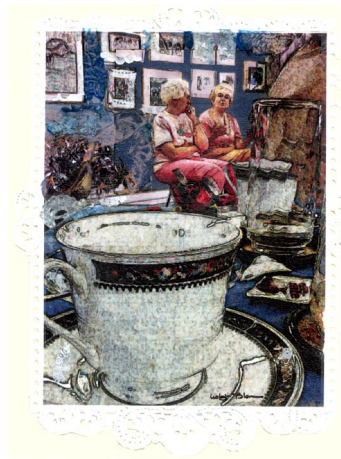
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Table

Everything else is free, including the evening highlight—a reading by Ernest Gaines, author of such award winning novels as "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" and "A Gathering of Old Men." His recent "A Lesson Before Dying" was a Pulitzer Prize nominee, winner of the National Critics Award and a 1997 Oprah Book Club selection.

Gaines will read at 8 p.m. in the Donaldson Brown Auditorium. Afterward, he will sign copies of his books.

For more information on Wednesday's celebration, call Virginia Fowler at 231-6919.



Leslye Bloom's "Art Place Tea" is one of the printings being exhibited at the "Celebration of Southern Food for the Heart, Mind and Palate" Bloom said the source files for the work were taken at the Art Place in Chilhowie, where she says Pulaski native Edna Love "puts together wonderful food, good company and great art.... That's Edna to the right of her sister, leading a roundtable discussion of the show. I've taken drastic liberties with the wall, placements and lighting."