

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Monday, January 30, 2012

Memories of Ecobelli's Tam O'Shanter Restaurant sought by book publisher

The publisher of a forthcoming cookbook titled *Laurina's Kitchen* is seeking memories and memorabilia linked to the historic Ecobelli's Tam O'Shanter Restaurant in Ballston Spa.

Richard Vang of Square Circle Press said the volume co-authored by siblings Lora Lee and Tom Ecobelli contains a bounty of recipes for dishes that were prepared and served at their ancestors' dining establishment in the 1900s, but the cookbook won't be complete until some now missing literary ingredients can be added to the pages.

"In Tom and Lora Lee's first efforts to gather content for this book, they collected a number of items that can be included, but we are eager to see more personal testimonials as well as vintage advertisements, menus, match book covers, newspaper clippings – or anything out of the ordinary," said Vang, whose publishing company is located in Knox, near Voorheesville.

"We are especially interested in hearing from former patrons and employees who might have personal stories or anecdotes to share about their experiences at Ecobelli's Tam O'Shanter," said Vang. "At this point, we just don't know what's out there."

To facilitate the submission of items for publication consideration, Square Circle Press has created a few different ways in which members of the public may submit their contributions. "We realize that not everyone has the same level of computer or Internet skills, so we have tried to accommodate everyone by posting sets of guidelines on our web site (www.squarecirclepress.com)," said Vang, emphasizing that all submissions must be received by March 31, 2012. The book is slated for release on or before June 1, 2012.

The publisher of Square Circle Press said he first heard about *Laurina's Kitchen* from Schenectady's city and county historian Don Rittner – who is also a Schenectady film commissioner. "Don and I were in contact about a forthcoming book of his in late December 2011 when he mentioned the cookbook in the context of the film project *Chickadee* – which was inspired by an Italian immigrant girl who grew up to be the matriarch of Ecobelli family," said Vang.

Under the direction of Emmy award-winning filmmaker Arthur Allan Seidelman, *Chickadee* is expected to bring star power that includes Raoul Bova, Ellen Burstyn, Chris Cooper, Julie Kavner, Simon Miller and Giovanna Zacarias to the Capital Region later this year, according to Laurina Film Partners. (The independent motion picture is budgeted at \$5-million and will commence production once funding is completed. Laurina Film Partners is working with a number of interested investors and benefactors. It is hoped filming will begin this year.)

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Based on the true story of the courageous young Laurina – who was at the center of a controversial trial in Upstate New York in the early 1900s, *Chickadee* will be shown in theatres and at major film festivals around the world, according to Seidelman. The director, whose credits include more than 50 movies and 100 television productions, said he is confident the finished product will become a classic in the style of *To Kill A Mockingbird* or *The Color Purple*.

Written by Ballston Spa natives Lora Lee and Tom Ecobelli after their now late grandmother Laurina shared a diary she had kept in the 1920s, *Chickadee* captures their ancestor's courage as well as her pain, said Seidelman.

The cookbook -- which includes dozens of Laurina's favorite recipes -- was a natural fit for Square Circle Press because the company's primary catalogue focus is on the history and culture of upstate New York, said Vang.

"As a publisher, I am interested in any genre that fits this focus. For some time, I have been wondering what type of cookbook might fit into our catalogue, but I knew it had to be special. Given the relationship to such an Upstate institution as Ecobelli's, I would have seriously considered such a cookbook on its own merit. But given the background of Laurina Ecobelli's early life and the connection of the cookbook to the movie *Chickadee*, I immediately knew that this was something extra special," said Vang. "I am a foodie, and I love our unique Upstate bars and restaurants. I never had the pleasure of visiting Ecobelli's Tam O'Shanter, but when I saw Tom Ecobelli's Facebook page and the comments from former patrons, I recognized that Ecobelli's was part of the fabric of many people's lives."

Laurina's Kitchen will be a richly illustrated 8.5" x 11" book with a design and layout that mimics a vintage Ecobelli's menu. Both full color and black and white images will be included. Vang expects *Laurina's Kitchen* to contain about 100 pages, depending upon the response from the public and how much additional content they have to contribute.

Those wishing to order advance copies of the *Laurina's Kitchen* may take advantage of a pre-publication sales price of \$20. The cover price will be in the \$30 range, said Vang. Correspondence re: the cookbook should be mailed to: Laurina's Kitchen c/o Square Circle Press, 137 Ketcham Road, Voorheesville, NY 12186.

To learn more about the cookbook, please visit www.squarecirclepress.com or call 518-432-6657. To learn more about the motion picture, please visit www.ChickadeeTheMovie.com or call Tom Ecobelli at 310-651-4099 or email him at aquabelll@aol.com.