

A New Year and a New Way at the Cottage Kitchen – January 2018

The Heritage Association and the Guild are proud of our efforts to preserve history in San Marcos. For over 40 years, the Charles S. Cock House has been the home of the Friday Cottage Kitchen luncheons providing a community gathering spot in an historic house. More than 35 groups and organizations partner with us to host the luncheons. To our knowledge, no reports have been made of any suspected food-related illnesses.

Updated state food codes are being enforced by the City of San Marcos Food Code Inspection Department and it requires a few changes in the way the Cottage Kitchen is run. We welcome the opportunity to improve our operation and ARE DETERMINED TO REMAIN OPEN, maintain our ambiance, and meet code. Here is our understanding of the current requirements:

FOOD PREPARATION

- 1) Desserts may still be baked in private kitchens. No changes here. A list of ingredients or the recipe must be brought in with the dessert so that food allergies (nuts, pineapple, etc.) may be addressed accurately.
- 2) Any other foods may only be prepared in approved, code-compliant kitchens like a restaurant, church, school, etc. Food may be prepared at the Cock House which is code-compliant. Home kitchens cannot be inspected and may not be used. This means no prep work at all at homes, not even cold salads.
- 3) This sounds drastic and will require a re-evaluation of menus but the main entrée is really all that is affected. Vegetables (green beans, corn, etc.) can be heated up in large pots at the Cock House. Salads fixings, store-bought rolls and desserts can be brought in. Set-up, serving, clean-up is all the same.
- 4) We are contacting local restaurants and caterers to see if they might want to partner with our hosts on a regular basis and provide some entrees.
- 5) Other options: There are some very good frozen lasagna and King Ranch Chicken casseroles, loaded baked potatoes, soup, chicken salad, pasta salad are suggestions.
- 6) Coffee Creamer will now be individual creamer cups which the Guild will provide. These are kept in the cupboard by the tea bags. No refrigeration required. Hosts do not purchase Half+Half anymore.

FOOD SERVING

- 1) Food Handler's Permit One person with a food handler's permit must be on premises at all times as long as there is food in the building. These are easily attainable online for \$10. If no one in your group has one of these, a Guild member can be there.
- 2) Gloves must be worn at all times when plating food in the kitchen or cutting desserts. No jewelry or watches are to be visible above the top of the gloves.
- 3) Wait Staff must be one person to serve plates and another to clear away dirty plates. Or hands must be washed in between these tasks.
- 4) Desserts can be plated up ahead of time but don't cut everything up all once. Cut enough for refills and then cut more as needed.

We have been working with the City since October 2017 to understand and work out the details of this situation. All angles have been explored including one-day memberships, free lunches for donation, etc. The bottom line is that we are serving food to the public and therefore must meet food code requirements.

Please consider any and all ways in which your group can continue to partner with us as we do not want to see our treasured Cottage Kitchen tradition end. We will work with you in any way we can to help your group succeed without incurring unacceptable expenses.

Call me with any questions as I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how to keep our luncheon doors open. Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marianne Moore

2018 Guild Chair

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