Letter from the *Editor*

Kate Chadwick introduces the issue

Just think how rich we'd be if we didn't have to eat." –My Mom, circa my entire childhood, usually while unpacking groceries. Suffice it to say that I didn't quite grasp this concept until I was an adult with a family of my own, often while doing the same thing.

My mom was the only girl in her family, and my grandmother didn't work outside the home. Therefore, by her own admission, although they were a working-class family my mother was "spoiled" and realized with some horror on her wedding day that she had zero "housewife" skills—no cleaning or cooking experience whatsoever. Throw in four kids within five years, returning to full-time work when I was six (and the oldest), and a husband who became fully disabled in his forties, and she got real serious in the art of "self-taught." Our house was always immaculate, somehow, and by the time she died, my mom was renowned among family, friends, and colleagues for her Martha Stewart-like cooking, baking, and hospitality.

Me...not so much. If I have people over, it's BYO and we're usually ordering pizza. I can cook, and there are a few things I'm quite good at in the kitchen (my breakfast potatoes are legend, for instance), but I don't truly love it like she did. I feel like cooking is something you must love to be great at, professionally or personally. I'm a big fan of restaurants. At the same time, I'm fairly low-maintenance, a cheap date, if you will—as happy at a diner as I am at a four-star gourmet eatery.

Once in a while, usually in winter, I'll go on a tear, spending an entire day in the kitchen, cooking and baking my head off and putting things in the freezer for a later date like some kind of grownup. And one of my favorite things to make (and eat) is soup, no matter the time of year. I love cold soups as much as hot ones, although I will admit defeat over gazpacho. I love to eat it but have made it exactly once—way too many moving parts.

So how thrilled was I when Danielle Davies pitched a story idea for this issue about the one-pot alchemy that is soup?? Very! She visits several places around town to get the scoop on how they soup. While we're warming up, let's talk about hot sauce, baby, one of my—and the rest of the country's—favorite condiments. Jesse Piersol tracks down four WC-made salsas picantes, if you're looking to spice things up in the kitchen while keeping it local—win/win. And finally, if you're looking to spice things up...uh, elsewhere, why not rethink your date night go-to spots? Humans are creatures of habit, but habits quickly become ruts. Becca Boyd gives us the rundown on the romance factors at a few area eateries, no matter what kind of date you're on.

So, fetch yourself some hot chocolate and relax with this warming, delicious issue of Taste. Thank you for reading! **—kate@tastewestchester.com**

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"Food is our common ground, a universal experience."
-James Beard

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Today's Menu

7 #TASTEWC
We're printing our favorite photos from our fans

9 SAVOR A SLICE
There's no such thing as bad pizza — some are better than others

11 BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS
The most important meal of the day. @ Mae's

15 FORM & FUNCTION
The borough's best kitchens and dining spaces. @ Greystone

17 SMALL FRY
Dining out with the young ones in tow. @ Split Rail

19 ~~NO~~ SOUP FOR YOU
A sampling of the borough's winter warmers.

29 ON A ROLL
The best foods served between slices of bread. @ Carlino's

31 THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT
West Chester hot sauces fire up the local palate

41 DINING OUT
Sampling some of the borough's best meals. @ Sedona Taphouse

45 DÎNER À DEUX
Date night in West Chester

53 BEHIND THE BAR WITH KARA JOHNSON
Discussing a life behind bars with the borough's best-known faces.

55 PHOTO HUNT
Find the five changes, win a gift card.