

# Tea Talk

*By Joyce A. Whitaker, owner of the Painted Lady Tea Room*

The children are back to school and the house is quiet after a busy and hectic summer, but the calm is welcomed by most mothers. We were privileged to serve tea to numerous grandmothers, mothers, aunts and daughters over the summer as they visited us in pretty dresses, hats and gloves and shiny patent leather shoes with crisp white anklets. One Saturday afternoon we were visited by three “princesses” in pink and powder blue frilly dresses complete with gloves and sparkling tiaras on their heads.

What a sight to behold! The trio had the attention of everyone in the tea room that day. The occasion was to celebrate birthdays for the whole group...grandma, mom, aunt and the young ladies. Their menu was special, too: teddy bear cookies, flower shaped peanut butter and honey tea sandwiches and cream cheese stuffed celery, raisins, chips and a “Shirley Temple” fruited drink adorned with a colorful paper umbrella. Each had her own decorated cup cake complete with a candle. Tea was served in elegant china teacups. What a cherished memory for the family as they watch these young ladies quickly grow up and what a beautiful experience for the girls.

Family traditions are so very important. Those special gatherings that bring loved ones together should be a part of everyone’s life. The fine art of entertaining is all but lost in our hectic society where convenience and time saving menus are the norm. The celebration of taking tea is why I enjoy my business so much. The very act of having a cup of tea forces guests to slow down, enjoy the ambience of the tea room and let someone else cater to their needs. We try to make every item on our menu artful, tasty and unique... not to mention healthful, therefore pampering our guests.

When we hear laughter and our guests linger while looking at photos, scrapbooks, and are planning coming events, we know we are filling a need. We cherish the ohs and ahs when they enter our grand old “Victorian” house and we appreciate the compliments as they leave promising to return soon.

We have held women’s hands as they discuss their engagement, wedding, shower or birth. We have consoled those who have a terminal disease, have lost a loved one or are critically ill. We have comforted women who are contemplating divorce. It is always heart warming to be there to make every single person who comes to our tea room welcome and to see that when they leave they feel a little bit better just knowing that someone cares!

Why not share the gift of having tea with someone who needs a warm smile and a hug. You don’t have to work too hard to impress, just put the kettle on and invite them over for a cup of hot tea and a cookie. That very act can work wonders for the soul...both theirs and yours!

Note: Joyce will be happy to answer your questions about tea through this column. You may reach her Email: [jwhitaker@A-TEA-ROOM.com](mailto:jwhitaker@A-TEA-ROOM.com) or stop by the Painted Lady.