

The American Cheese Society

N E W S L E T T E R

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(If any of the above information is incorrect or has changed, please contact Maurine at the ACS office.)

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 Dick Groves - Co Editor
 Gerd Stern - Co Editor
 Ann Salinas - Co Editor
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RUMINATIONS ON CHEESEMAKING

by: Ben Logan

My introduction to cheesemaking was in my mother's kitchen on an isolated farm we called "Seldom Seen." It began at morning choretime when my mother handed me the blue enamel kettle which I filled by holding it under the skim milk spout of the cream separator. I carried the kettle back to my Mother and she placed it on the reservoir end of the wood-burning kitchen range. There it stayed with my mother moving it back and forth now and then as the fire varied. Her thermometer was the inside of her arm, just above the wrist, which she held against the side of the kettle. The resistance of the clabber to her wooden spoon told her when it was ready. Then, something happened that told me my mother found some special pleasure in making her Cottage Cheese. She would begin to sing, just as we sang in the barn as we milked the cows. She sang as she worked at cutting the clabber, the rinsing and draining of the whey, the gentle squeezing with the cheesecloth, the rinsing and draining. Finally she put the cheese into the brown mixing bowl that had been her mother's - always the same bowl - and handed it to me to carry to the cellar, a slightly dampened cloth covering the bowl.

So you see, cheesemaking for me was a ritual and a story, and there is no way any of you can convince me that it is just a business. How can it be just a business when it made my mother sing? How can it be just a business when those who make cheese invest themselves in the

process in a way that turns their work into a way of life? How can it be just a business when the very word carries a sense of history and far-off places?

The history of cheese goes back thousands of years to the early nomadic herders of livestock, perhaps sometime near the end of the Neolithic period. The discovery gave

us the miracle of concentrated flavor and healthful energy. (I was told as I was growing up that a pound of cheese equaled two pounds of beef.) The hard cheeses changed how people lived. They could be safely carried on journeys, traded or stored for later use. Instructions for making Orkney cheese in Scotland ended with the words: "Dry it at an open window and keep buried in oatmeal until it is need."

As civilizations developed and class lines formed,

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**HOW CAN IT
BE JUST A
BUSINESS
WHEN IT
MADE MY
MOTHER
SING?**

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

by: Dick Groves

(Editor's Note: ACS members are encouraged to let us know about additional upcoming events of interest. Please contact Dick Groves at The Cheese Reporter, 608-246-8430, if you have an event you'd like to see added to this list.)

NFDA (National Food Distributors Association) Mid-Winter Table Top Show, January 12-14, 1996; San Antonio, TX. For information call 312-644-6610.

IFFCS (International Fancy Food and Confection Show) 21st Winter Show January 21-23, 1996; Moscone Center, San Francisco, CA. For information call NASFT (212) 921-1690.

Washington State Cheesemaking Workshop. March 4-7, 1996; for information call (509) 335-7516.

1996 World Cheese Championship in Green Bay, WI. March 5-7, 1996. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA), for information on entering the contest contact WCMA at (608) 255-2027.

IDDA (International Dairy Deli Association) Dairy-Deli-Bake '96, June 2-4, 1996; Minneapolis, MN. for information call (608) 238-7908.

University of California Davis, is offering sensory evaluation courses; Introduction to Statistical Methods for Sensory Evaluation of Foods, March 21-23, 1996; and Sensory Evaluation: Overview and Update, March 25-27, 1996; for information call (800) 752-0881, From Davis, Dixon or Woodland call (916) 757-8777. Micheal O'Mahoney, PhD, will teach both courses.

Mark your calendars for the **1st International Conference on Farmstead & Specialty Cheeses** Co-sponsored by the ACS, American Institute of Wine & Food and the Epirus Foundation to be held **June 14-16, 1996**, in Metsovo, Greece.

Watch for more information regarding **Conference on Aging of Cheeses** to be held in France in 1996.

If you have information or an article you would like considered for inclusion in future newsletters, send them to:

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214-293-3040

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I enter my second year as your President, I am thrilled by the flourish of activity I see around me. Members from all over are writing, wanting to get involved, wanting to do things. I would like to believe I am responsible, but it is not so, I am just the one lucky enough to be president when all this blossoming is going on.

As an example, Alyce Birchenough of Sweet Home Farm in Alabama wrote me with the idea of developing an International Cheesemaking Exchange Program, as a natural outgrowth of the conference in Greece. It is widely practiced among winemakers and an idea we will pursue.

Another informative conference, filled with more good sense ideas than we will be able to make flesh in one year. Green Bay was a gracious host. Dominique and Stacy, our new Vice President and President Elect, did such a fine job, working harder than you will ever know to make the conference a success.

A new set of by-laws that make sense, and will be made flesh over the next year, a vibrant board, a Directory, a wide spectrum of new and old members, money in the bank, a regular newsletter, sage opinions, great cheeses, all whipped up into a delightful few days, rich with satisfaction.

And a future filled with exciting news. Watch for more news on the First International Conference on Specialty and Farmstead Cheese to be held in Metsovo, Greece. If you're interested in coming then now is the time to let Maurine at the office know so you can get on the mailing list. Watch for exciting news on our regular conference to be held on the East Coast you're going to like it! Ruth Flore and John Greeley head up the committee for what promises to be the cap on an important year for special and farmstead cheese.

Most of all I want to thank all of you for bearing with me in spite of my shortcomings, and honoring me with the opportunity of serving such a wonderful group of human beings.

Daniel Strongin



Dan Strongin at "Meet the Trade"

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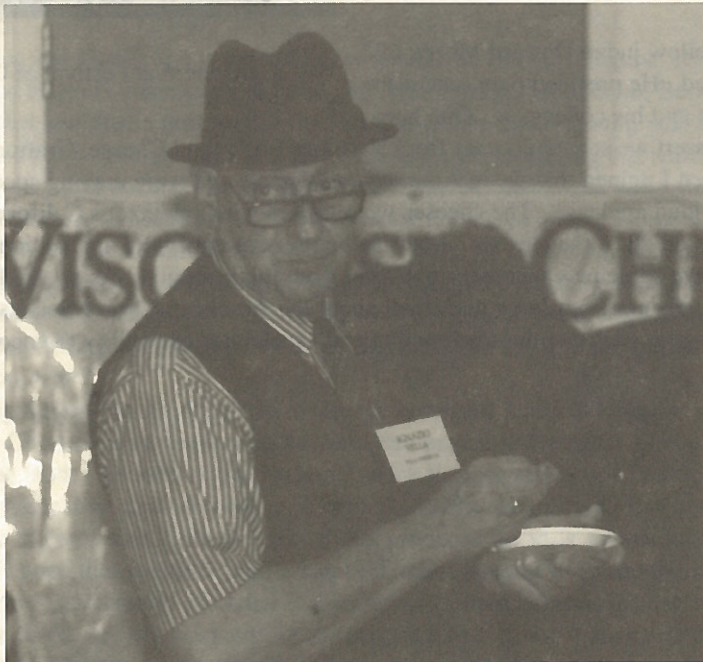
KEEPING TRACK

by: Avice R. Wilson

The American Cheese Society needs an archivist (Please don't ask me to be it, I'm just too busy)! My friends send me articles about cheese from various food magazines, and it is seldom a specialist cheese is discussed that is not made by one of our members. Sometimes I can recognize a cheese from its photograph. If members sent articles written on their cheeses, or other specialist cheeses, what a wealth of information this would be to members down the road in twenty years time. Already the records of our first cheese competition have become part of our Society's history and reveal many fascinating facts, as do the results of our cheese competition at Green Bay this year. A goat cheese as Best of Show, more innovative cheeses winning awards, new frontiers created by the cheese food products submitted, all these besides the tried and the true.

There is also much information to be had from an analysis of the winners over the years and why they are winners. Perhaps before our next conference we can work on this and obtain some clues. Certain factors seem self-evident. One cheesemaker of whom I asked the question "Why do you think you won?" said "My cheese is made from milk that some cheesemakers would kill for, its such good quality." Another told me he thought he had won because he used raw milk. Two more felt it was their cultures that gave the cheeses their winning quality. I notice that it is often the cheesemakers themselves that are the key to quality, they know how the milk they use is going to behave, and they have the confidence in themselves and their employees. This all reminds me of a leading English farmhouse cheesemaker who told me that his pigs fed well during the five years he spent acquiring the knack (as he called it) to make his now famous Gloucester cheese. A long time to learn perhaps, but he is a perfectionist.

Last year at the Californian conference we had a talk given by biochemist and nutritionist Dr. Artemis Simopoulos on changes that take place in the milk fat in naturally ripening cheeses. She demonstrated that enzymes break down the constituents of the fat and make them healthier to eat. In other words, the supposed harmful cholesterol present at the time the cheese is made is changed during ripening into less complex fats that are then healthier for us eat. Her talk was very technical, and the important message it contained did not come through too clearly. Dr. George Heinlein, one of the founder members is hoping to obtain a copy of her talk and transcribe it into simpler language in order to pass it on to our members and the general public. We should then have a weapon to combat the claims of such other foods as soybean, and convey to consumers of specialist cheeses that a ripened cheese should not be avoided because of its presumed cholesterol level.



Ignazio Vella at "Meet the Trade"

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Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board
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Zingerman's

CHEESE AS JUST A DESSERT

by: Gerd Stern

As president of the North Central Cheese Industries Association Al de Boer of Rochester Cheese Sales had asked me to speak on, "Issues Confronting the International Cheese Trade" at the association's annual conference in Minneapolis, on October 11, 1995. When Hon. David Minge informed the officers that he would not be able to leave Washington DC to speak at the Annual Awards Banquet I was asked to fill in and suggested a dessert tasting of specialty cheeses from the American Cheese Society with commentary.

The North Central Cheese Industries Association includes memberships of the major American dairy co-ops such as Mid-Am Dairymen and Land O'Lakes, AMPI and private companies such as Davisco (you may remember Mitch Davis' talk on whey at our California conference), Wapsie Valley Creamery and many suppliers of equipment and materials. The two day sessions included, "How To Make Award Winning Cheeses" by William Schlinsog of the US and World Cheese Contests, two presentations by Robert Gravani of Cornell University one on "Total Quality Management" and another on "Bacterial Food-Borne Pathogens." Mark Johnson, University of Wisconsin spoke on "Lowfat Cheese Research" and described how at the Center for Dairy Research they are experimenting with flavor production of lowfat cheeses utilizing the addition of bacterial cultures specifically chosen for flavor enhancement.

My first judging for ACS was under the tutelage of my fellow judge Howard Morris of the University of Minnesota, now emeritus but hardly retired. He presided over one of the sessions and it was a great pleasure to be together with him and his colleagues. One hundred and twenty five persons attended the banquet. For dessert we served cheeses from Vermont Butter and Cheese, Grafton Village, Roth Kaese and Auricchio. I spoke at some length and when I opined that we in America could make and were making specialty and farmstead cheeses the equal of any in the world, there was loud applause. The cheeses were served with a delicious California Moscato and there were highly appreciative questions and comments on all of the cheeses. Maurine had sent membership applications and newsletters. They disappeared rapidly and we'll hope to have some new members as fallout from this occasion. As an ACS member, please do take any opportunity that avails itself to speak to organizations large and small about the American Cheese Society. Cheese is available for tastings and the response and positive feelings at such events is heartening and accelerates our ability to encourage the consumption of our cheesemaker members' products.



Gerd Stern at Festival of Cheeses

THE JUDGING

by: John Greeley



L to R: Ricki Carrol, Dr. George Haenlein, Gerd Stern, and John Greeley at Awards Ceremony

The 1995 ACS Cheese Judging Competition was held in the confines of the Vanderite Cold Storage Warehouse in Green Bay Wisconsin on August 2. As usual, this was a closed event. Advertised as part of the conference activities, the judging is an all day event and concluded with the awards ceremony at the Festival of Cheeses.

The warehouse was perfect for cheese judging; ample room, totally refrigerated, isolated from distraction. As the day wore on the judges seemed more like prisoners to their task; limited to one "warm room," dressed in uniform (white smocks generously provided by Tony Fruzyna of Schreiber Foods) performing one task all day and limited to rations of cheese, bread, and water in their windowless, concrete "cell."

It is not easy judging this event. A lot of hard work was performed by the twelve technical and aesthetic judges. The first category was judged at 9:45 a.m. and the Best of Show was judged and declared unanimously by 4:30 p.m.. A very long day.

Judges were paired as teams of one technical and one aesthetic judge. The judging committee gratefully acknowledges the work of:

Technical Judges

Mr Tony Fruzyna, Schreiber Foods, Green Bay Wisconsin

Dr. George Haenlein, University of Delaware

Dr. William Wendorf, University of Wisconsin at Madison

Dr. Jim Path, University of Wisconsin at Madison

Mr. Michael Comotto, Rhone Poulenc Dairy Ingredients, Inc.

Mr Ron Klensch, Klensch Cheese, Park Ridge, Illinois

Aesthetic Judges

Ms. Susan Dolan, Senior Buyer - Sutton place, Washington D.C., and Hay Day Markets, CT.

Sherrie Zebrasky, Buyer, Wegman's Markets, Rochester N.Y.

Jacques Williams, Vice President, The Specialty Cheese Group

Bernard Horton, Dairy Consultant/Chemist, Horton International, Cambridge, Ma

Gerd Stern, Infood/Galilee, Tenafly N.J. and past President of ACS

Margaret Cicognia, Marketing Consultant for Cheese, Promotion, & Importing, NYC

The number of categories for cheese entries has increased from 11 five years ago to 21 in 1995. The newest category is Aged Sheepmilk Cheese: Category "T." Last year's newest categories: "S" and "ST" for Spreads and Tortas received enough entries this year to receive ribbons as well as a tie for third place among the spreads.

This year's judging included some firsts, some surprises, and a near disaster.

A First: One producer tied for second place...with their own two cheeses! (Grafton Cheddar 2nd Place tie with Garlic and Sage Cheddars)

A First: Enough entries from Cow, Goat, and Sheep milks allowed judges to create three sub-categories in category "C" - American Originals, and award each milk its own ribbon.

Surprise: For the past two years there were insufficient entries to award any ribbons to the butter category.....This year judges awarded three ribbons out of 13 entries.

Surprise: Vermont Butter and Cheese sets a new record by taking six ribbons.

Surprise: For the third year category "C" Fresh Sheepmilk Cheeses has insufficient entries to award any ribbons but Sheepmilk Cheeses win four First Place and one Second Place ribbons in other categories.

Near Disaster: We judged a cheese Best of Show at the end of the day. The cheese was shipped with the wrong number label (cheeses for judging are identified by a number and are shipped without names or labels).

As I was setting up the festival of cheeses, Judy Shad of Capriole watched me put the wrong name on the Best of Show winner and corrected me "oh that's not Kentucky Tome John...". The soft Indiana drawl continued "...that's my Wabash Cannonball".

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THE 12th ANNUAL CONFERENCE WAS TERRIFIC..... ALMOST AS GOOD AS THE CHEESES!

Thanks to all who submitted cheeses for judging and a special thanks to all the judges led by John Greeley.

Unlike other competitions where cheeses are judged on their technical merits only, the American Cheese Society's goal is to give positive recognition to those cheeses which are of the highest quality in all aspects-flavor, aroma, texture, as well as technical evaluation. The highest quality cheeses are those which the society feels deserve the recognition of an American Cheese Society Judging is to give recognition to the best American made cheese submitted for annual judging.

A. FRESH UNRIPENED CHEESE - GOAT/SHEEP

1st Place
Corralitas Cheese Co.
Fromage Blanc

2nd Place
Hollow Road Farms
Ricotta

A. FRESH UNRIPENED CHEESE - COW

1st Place
Egg Farm Dairy
Mascarpone

2nd Place
Specialty Cheese Co.
Queso Blanco

3rd Place
Auricchio Cheese
Mascarpone

B. SOFT RIPENED CHEESE - COW

1st Place
Old Europe Cheese
Brie 60%

2nd Place
Besnier America
2KG 60% Brie

B. SOFT RIPENED CHEESE - GOAT/SHEEP

1st Place
Hollow Road Farms
Camembert Style Cheese

2nd Place
Vermont Butter & Cheese
Vermont Chevre Ripened

C. AMERICAN ORIGINALS - COW

1st Place
Brewster Dairy
Red Rinded Lacey

2nd Place
LeRaysville Cheese Factory
Pennsylvania Jack

C. AMERICAN ORIGINALS - GOAT

1st Place
Capriole, Inc.
Old Kentucky Tomme

C. AMERICAN ORIGINALS - SHEEP

1st Place
Egg Farm Dairy
Margo

D. AMERICAN MADE/ INTERNATIONAL-AL/STYLES - COW

1st Place
Old Europe Cheese
Gouda

2nd Place
Auricchio Cheese
Asiago

3rd Place
Bongrain USA
FJ Kolb Baby Swiss

D. AMERICAN MADE/ INTERNATIONAL/STYLES - GOAT

1st Place
Capriole, Inc.
Banon

E. CHEDDARS - COW

1st Place
Cabot Creamery
Cabot Private Stock Cheddar

2nd Place
Grafton Village Cheese Co.
Grafton Cheddar

3rd Place
Shelburne Farms
Farmhouse Cheddar - Samantha

F. BLUE VEINED CHEESES - COW

1st Place
Auricchio Cheese
Gorgonzola

G. EXTERNAL BLUE VEINED - GOAT

1st Place
Westfield Farm
Hubbardston Blue

BEST OF SHOW

Capriole, Inc.
"Wabash Cannonball"



Judy Shad Accepts Best of Show Ribbon from Ricki Carrol and John Greeley

H. PASTA FILATA CHEESES - COW

1st Place
Auricchio Cheese
Sharp Provolone

2nd Place
Cappiello Dairy Products
Plain Scamorza

3rd Place
Mozzarella Co.
Scamorza

I. FETA - COW

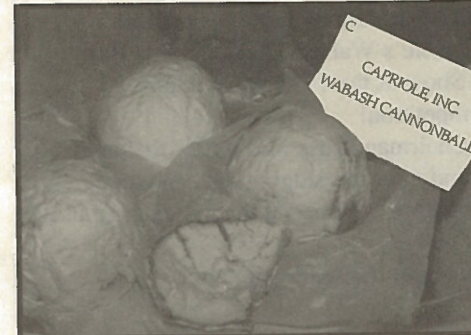
1st Place
Bongrain USA
Delicao Feta

J. LOW FAT/LOW SALT CHEESES - ALL MILKS

1st Place
Vermont Butter & Cheese
Fromage Blanc

2nd Place
Level Valley Dairy
Fat Free Cream Cheese

3rd Place
Coach Farms
Lowfat Stick



Cannonballs at the Festival

K. SPICED, HERBED AND FLAVORED CHEESES - COW

1st Place
LeRaysville Cheese Factory
Pepper

2nd Place - tie
Grafton Village Cheese Co.
Sage Cheddar

Grafton Village Cheese Co.
Garlic Cheddar

3rd Place
Brewster Dairy
Hot Pepper Jack

K. SPICED, HERBED AND FLAVORED CHEESES - GOAT

1st Place
Corralitos Cheese
Fromage with Herb/Garlic

2nd Place
Cyprus Grove
Chevre

3rd Place
Sea Stars Goat Cheese
Van Gogh

L. SMOKED CHEESES - COW

1st Place
Sugarbush Farm
Hickory & Maple Naturally

2nd Place
Cappiello Dairy Products
Smoked Scamorza

3rd Place
Mozzarella Co.
Smoked Scamorza

M. FARMHOUSE CHEESE - ALL MILKS

1st Place
Major Farm - Sheep
Vermont Shepherd

2nd Place
Goat's Leap Cheese - Goat
Carmella II

3rd Place
Sweet Home Farm - Cow
Baldwin Swiss

N. FRESH GOAT'S MILK CHEESE

1st Place
Vermont Butter & Cheese Co.
Impastada

2nd Place
Coach Dairy Goat Farm
Coach Assorted Buttons

3rd Place
Vermont Butter & Cheese Co.
Vermont Chevre

O. FRESH SHEEP'S MILK CHEESES

Insufficient Entries to Award

P. CHEESES MARINATED IN OILS - GOAT

1st Place
Fantome Farm
Chevre Provencal

Q. CULTURED PRODUCTS - ALL MILKS

1st Place
Mozzarella Co.
Creme Fraiche

2nd Place
Coach Dairy Goat Farm
Coach Assorted Yo-goats

R. BUTTERS - COW

1st Place
Lov-it Creamery
Salted Butter

2nd Place
Lov-it Creamery
Bellagusto 82%

3rd Place
Vermont Butter & Cheese
Cultured Butter

S. CHEESE SPREADS - ALL MILKS

1st Place
G&G Foods
Goldie's Sundried Tomato & Smoked Mozzarella

2nd Place
Avante Garde Foods
Spinach Florentine

3rd Place - tie
Cypress Grove Chevre
Goat Spread

G&G Foods
Goldies Roasted Garlic

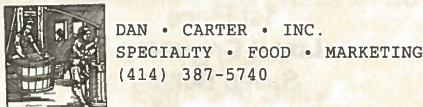
ST. TORTAS COW

1st Place
Vermont Butter & Cheese
Salmon Torta

T. AGED SHEEPMILK CHEESES

1st Place
Major Farm
Vermont Shepherd

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Judging...continued

I was stunned. Judy didn't know this was the winning cheese to be announced that evening. I couldn't tell her it was going to be Best of Show. Even worse....the brochures had been published listing the wrong cheese as Best of Show! What a way to end my last year as judging chairman. At the Festival Judy Graciously accepted the Best of Show award and helped explain the switched labels.

Congratulations Judy...Its official... Capriole's Wabash Cannonball is Best of Show at the 1995 ACS judging competition!

I want to thank Ricki Carroll and next year's Chairman, Russ McCall for the great effort and organization they maintained during and after the judging day, and along with all the volunteers and especially Stacy Knowlton.... A special thank you for putting together the best Festival of Cheeses we've had yet!

Finally, thank you to all the cheesemakers who enter the ACS competition. Congratulations and good luck to all of you.



Errico Auricchio & Russ McCall at Festival of Cheeses



Ari Weinzwieg and Stacy Kinsley-Knowlton at "Meet the Trade"

THOUGHTS FROM A WINNER

by: Judy Shad, Capriole Inc.

I want to thank ACS and everyone involved in this year's conference for recognizing Capriole and honoring us with Best of Show for our little Wabash Cannonball. I do believe it's the highest honor an American specialty cheese can receive, and it comes from such a dedicated group of good people that it warms my heart. Since it truly is the 'Oscar,' I am taking license to especially thank Letty and Bob Kilmoyer and Mary Keehn for the years of support and shared information, and encouragement to be a better cheesemaker.

As I haven't been able to attend the ACS conference for the last several years I had an overwhelming sense this year of coming home to a family reunion. Like a family, we've had many crises and growing pains, but there's also been an incredible amount of mutual support. Like a family we have a history, and in it we've found strength. This past year we lost ACS founder Frank Kosikowski from Cornell, but the person who believed and worked so hard for ACS in those early years, who kept it going from her own business and largely with her own funds is fortunately still very much with us; Ricki Carroll is not only our foundation as an organization, but without her a great many specialty and farmstead cheeses would simply not have happened. I took my first cheesemaking course with Ricki in 1992 at Dekalb, Illinois, and in the early years of cheesemaking she was for many farmstead cheesemakers like myself, the sole source of supplies, of information and advice. In the 80's with a few dedicated cheesemakers like Paula Lambert and Letty Kilmoyer and a handful of academics, Dick Klein and George Haenlein, Ricki was the ACS.



ACS Members Enjoying the Awards Ceremony

Mary Keehn and I went to our first ACS conference in 1989 at Rutgers. Ricki was tired, but a handful of new enthusiastic cheese marketers and retailers were ready to help. Ari Weinzwieg, Peter Mohn, Bernie Horton, John Greeley and Gerd Stern brought to ACS a public market and media perspective that came together the following year at the 1990 Conference in New York. I admit now as a cheesemaker I felt a little lost, but also had the sense that something big was happening--an education of media, marketers, and consumers necessary and positive for the growth of American farmstead and specialty cheeses. The 1991 Conference in San Francisco and the 1992 Conference in Madison pulled in so many dedicated people--some who had nothing to do with the industry itself, but loved cheeses, or believed in sustainable, regional agriculture, or just appreciated artisinal efforts. It was also the vision of Ari and Gerd that brought to the organization a broader range of specialty cheese companies whose quality cheeses reached a wider group of consumers. As in all periods of rapid growth. ACS then went through an energy crisis and a financial one, and there, with enthusiasm and commitment, was Dan Strongin, A realistic idealist, Dan believed in ACS and pulled it out. With his vision we are almost a full circle. Where do we go from here?

I'm looking forward to the ACS trip to Greece because I really believe we will see there in microcosm the circle completed at its beginnings. Great cheeses begin with the land that produces the milk. Great cheeses begin with agricultural philosophy and the people who work the land. We admire and respect Patrick Rances and Jean-Claude Le Jaquens who know this. ACS could be the first American organization that educates us all aspects of cheese production, from the land itself to the consumer of its products. People who produce the crop that feeds the animal that produces the milk are the most isolated, unappreciated link in the network of fine cheeses and I hope that the ACS family can seek them out and welcome them. They must stay alive and healthy, educated and aware, encouraged and appreciated. Whether it's Jersey or Golden Guernsey, goat, sheep, or buffalo--milk for specialty cheeses is as artisinal as the cheese itself, and the dairyman as an integral a part of our industry as the cheesemaker, the distributor, the retailer, the food-writer, and the consumer. Our strength is that we are inclusive and that we have encouraged new cheese traditions by educating and supporting each other. I am proud of the honor Capriole has received, but most proud that it was awarded by ACS.

Ruminations...continued

cheese cut across those lines. It was as important in the rudest hut as in the most luxurious manor house. It had good companions - a perfect marriage with good whole grain bread and good beer and good wine. It was an important presence at social gatherings. It became important, somehow more special than most foods, when families gathered for meals together. It could begin a meal and then end a meal as dessert. It is the focal point of thousands of recipes.

Cheese has linkages with hundreds of places around the world. Just listing all the different names of cheese could use all the time I have to speak here. And the names are inadequate because there is tremendous variety within the names. It is an adventure to travel the back roads in Italy and try the Pecorino cheese in little towns. Each Pecorino has its own special flavor or texture - a gentleness here, a pleasing sharpness in this one, this one firmer, this one a richer color. The people of each community give their own personality to the cheese they make, each seeming convinced that theirs is the best and is made the way Pecorino is supposed to be made.

The same is true in my own area. The Aged Cheddar from Monroe, Wisconsin with its sharp flavor is very different from the equally good but different textured Cheddar from Boscobel. The Asiago I buy in Prairie du Chien has a different personality than that I buy in Madison.

I say thank God for the wonderful diversity. In our increasingly homogenized society we have not yet found a way to take the personality from cheese. Some would say we have tried. Clifton Fadiman declared that "Processed cheese represents the triumph of technology over conscience." Someone else has called it "a convenience for desensitized person."

The diversity of cheese speaks of an industry with the roots and dedication. Each cheese carries the imprint of different land, different climate, different animals, different season, unique handed-down recipes, and often fierce opinions of those who make cheese.

In Italy there is a cheese called Viturbo in which a wild artichoke is used to curdle the milk. In the Hebrides, where cattle and sheep are driven to highlands in summer, old literature says the animals "graze on such a profusion of herbs that the air, the water and the milk are impregnated with the virtue of the herbs". Milkmaids were chosen for their voices so they could sing pretty music that would "please the cows."

All this stuff of story and in it we begin to get clues to how people, the animals, the land and milk and cheese are linked in a natural harmony.

Long ago I was working on a film on the Navaho Reservation in the American Southwest. A Navajo leader told me "To be a people we must tell our stories. If we stop telling our stories, we stop being a people."

We have stopped telling a lot of our stories. The story of food is one of them.

The hired man on our farm was a story teller. He didn't trust plain facts very much. When someone challenged the truth of a story, he would say "I guess some things are just too important to be left up to the facts."

American poet Carl Sandburg was a storyteller. He, too, believed it takes stories to get to the heart of things. His writing captured the gritty reality of the Great Drouth out on the Great Plains when the cussed, constant wind was blowing the land away. Two men are talking. One says something like, say that barn of yours was almost falling last time I saw it. How is it now? And the other man tells him he got a pole to hold it up on the east side and the wind holds it up on the west.

In another story, men are talking about the Drouth at a crossroads store. One is saying that yes, he'd like to see it rain. He points to the ten-year-old boy beside him and says, not so much for myself, but for my son here. You see I've seen it rain.

There is a power in the telling of stories. It is how cultural values get passed on, generation to generation. Stories tell us who we are, where we've been, what is important. There is a special power in stories linked with the land, because a lot of people who are not of the land have an innate need to feel connected to the land.

The story of food is a story we need to tell. The story of making cheese is a proud story. Cheese is much more than a chunk of something that gets tossed into a grocery cart. It is history. It is a gift from the land, but I do not believe most people know that.

It is time we helped them know.

You are in a lucky field. You have more than a product to sell. You have an untold story to tell..

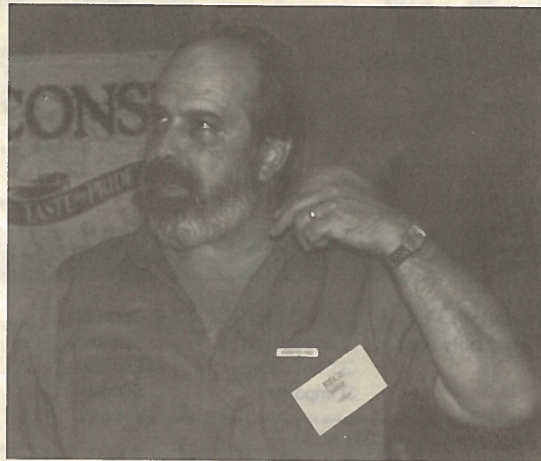
Comments of Ben Logan at The American Cheese Society 12th Annual Conference, Green Bay, Wisconsin, August 3, 1995

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FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the ACS newsletter is one of two issues that will cover the recent annual conference in Green Bay. Time limitations for our editors who also had regular jobs to do, assorted maladies and illnesses spread through our contributing authors, and limited space in the newsletter all contributed to the reality that we won't be able to fit the conference issue into only one newsletter.

Since so many of our members aren't able to make it to the annual conference, and the conference is packed full of excellent and interesting cheese seminars, we wanted to cover it appropriately. As you will see by the enclosed articles in this and the next issue, this year's conference in Green Bay was excellent and reflected all the hard work put into it. A lot of people worked very hard to pull it off and special thanks to Conference Chairperson Dominique Delugeau of Auricchio Cheese, and Stacy Kinsley Knowlton of Dan Carter Inc. for the work they did in putting together the conference and the program



Regi Hise at "Meet the Trade"

The American Cheese Society has changed dramatically over the last decade. Cheesemakers getting together to discuss how to make great cheeses in the United States have found that distributors, retailers and chef's are very interested in their efforts. Having the trade become more involved in our society has opened up more opportunities for our cheesemakers to get their cheese to market and our society has become a more diverse group of cheese lovers.

That brought up a very interesting discussion at the board meeting with regards to not forgetting our original mission in the American Cheese Society, to foster the production of truly great cheeses in America. It also means keeping our focus on information to help our cheesemakers. I think we can do that and still serve our other member's needs. If you look at the review of this year's conference program you'll see that it accomplished that in a well balanced program.

Over the course of the next year we will attempt to give a balanced perspective to the information in our newsletter to serve all our constituents. Whether you're a cheesemaker, distributor, retailer, chef, or just a cheese lover there will be something for everyone. The one bit of help we still need is your input. Let us know when you have a good idea for an article for the newsletter.

Regi Hise

Murray's Cheese Shop, New York City will be featuring American Specialty and Farmstead Cheeses in November. Any members wishing to participate should contact Rob Kaufelt at

212-243-3289 - phone

212-243-5001 - fax

American Cheese Society Newsletters will be distributed to interested customers.