

The American Cheese Society

NEWSLETTER 3RD QUARTER 2000

Terroir Terror

“Words that engender things...” — Willy the Shake

By Daniel Strongin

Daniel Strongin is a consultant and entrepreneur. He began his professional career as a cook in 1972 and worked at hotels and restaurants like the Ritz Carlton, Boston and the Claremont Resort Hotel, where he was Executive Chef. In 1984 he helped lead the revolution in freshly prepared food into supermarkets while Corporate Executive Chef and Director of Operations for Andronico's Markets based in Berkeley, Calif., where he was responsible for buying their specialty cheese. A past president of the American Cheese Society, he organized the first international conference on farmstead cheese held in Metsovo, Greece. He currently consults with marketers, cheesemakers and restaurateurs. He and his wife also operate an import/wholesale/retail business in the Home and Garden space called Access Tradition.

One of the most enlightening things about the U.S. is what Harry Truman called “plain speaking.” Our best

writers, like Twain and Menken, are known for “telling it like it is.” Except for a few privileged pockets, there is distrust of elitism ingrained in our culture, and for good reason. I, for one, am deeply concerned about the recent trend in the American Cheese Society toward a creeping lingoism. A lingo that reeks of exclusivity.

Dr. Kosikowski warned prophetically at the first-ever ACS conference about those who could pervert the aims of the ACS to their own personal ends.

Working as a cook back when we worked for minimum wage, before the rise of “Food as Fashion” and its concomitant crudities, “Plate Painting” and “Food that goes Up,” I have the deepest respect for the French. I say “cook” because the word “chef” no longer carries the honor and dignity it once implied in a

day when everyone who ever worked in a kitchen calls himself or herself a chef. The chefs I worked for were chefs in the biggest sense of the word. Mostly French, none of them had an elitist bone in their bodies. It is difficult to put on airs when your grandmother can cook circles around you.

While working at the Ritz in Boston in the early '70s, we cooks would admonish each other when one of us got too fussy with “what do you think, you're working for the Pope?” Another day I overheard the chef tell one of his fellow Frenchman, in French, to give a particularly mediocre dish a French name, “Americans will like anything as long as it has a French name.”

My concern began with the word “artisan.” I fought it and lost. I preferred “handmade” or “natural.” Though not perfect,

The litmus test for me is:
does a word help democratize
the appeal of the well made
cheese or does it serve the
elitists among us, making
cheese more exclusive,
something only real aficionados
can truly understand?
Afficionados who, by the way,
charge a hefty price to
“de-mystify” for the
“untutored” the very terms
they themselves created.

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The American Cheese Society

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*Member of Executive Committee

From the President...

ACS is Making a Global Impression



When I joined the board several years ago and co-chaired my first conference, I was enticed not only by the potential of the organization, but by the diverse and outspoken membership. Our niche industry was

beginning to draw significant media attention, our cheesemakers were beginning to actually sustain themselves with increased sales and 'American Originals' were finding their way into our annual judging, into cheese departments and onto restaurant cheeseboards across the country at a rapid rate of growth.

We are a mélange of creative and entrepreneurial persons, each and every one of us with very definitive views on the world of cheese. We are all agreed the goal is to produce and market quality, value-added products for our marketplace and educate our consumer to more than

just the product, but where it comes from, who crafts it, how the land affects the finished product. Our challenge is to preserve the tradition and art of cheesemaking. Our challenge is to make it sustainable.

One of many wonderfully long and animated conversations with Judy Schad (prompted by a missed deadline...this one, the last...) produced the following thoughts for you...

Our presence on the NASFT show floor serves to reinforce the wide-eyed interest and marketability of American specialty cheeses in our marketplace. When you see the display that David Grotenstein and his band of cheeseheads has created in both New York and San Francisco, you're inclined to step back and remark, "Wow,

these are all produced here? In this country?" At this summer's Fancy Food Show, we will move upstairs with an astonishing array of cheeses and cheesemakers in attendance. Our *continued on page seven*

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Calendar

June-August

The Wine Merchant Summer Wine & Cheese Pairings

Contact: ACS member Steven Jones or visit www.winemerchantltd.com for a listing of dates and events

Farmstead Dairy Field Days

June 27, Lovetree Farms, Grantsburg, Wis.

September 13, Buckwheat Acres, Three Lakes, Wis.

October 26, Specialty Cheese, Lowell, Wis.

University of Wisconsin Extension Emerging Markets

Agriculture teams with three producer/processors to sponsor Field Days beginning at 10:00 AM and ending at 3:00 PM or "whenever the crowd goes home."

Cost is \$25 and includes a catered lunch (picnic, weather permitting), handout materials, and cheese and product sampling.

Contact: Wisconsin Farm Center, 1-800-942-2474.

July 9-11

Summer Fancy Food and Confection Show

Javits Convention Center, New York City

Contact: NASFT, 212-482-6440 or

www.fancyfoodshows.com

July 14-16 and July 21-23

Cheesemaking with Freddie Michiels

Mad River Valley/Ag-Innovations farmstead cheesemaking facility in East Warren, Vt.

Freddie Michiels. Two 3-day courses.

Contact: 802/496-3998, or fax 802-496-4096.

July 25

The Small Ruminant Dairy Research Symposium

Hosted by ADSA/ASAS, Baltimore Convention Center

Meeting information: www.baltimore2k.org

August 10-13

American Cheese Society Conference

Sonoma County Doubletree in Rohnert Park, Calif.

Conference focus is terroir and the craft of cheesemaking. Programs will include the preservation of artisanal cheeses, small family dairies, distribution strategies for artisan cheesemakers, cheese trends of the past decade, the recent growth of sheep's milk cheeses, and pairing California wines and cheeses. The Festival of Cheeses, which is open to the public, will be held at the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone in Napa Valley. The conference also will offer tours to farmstead cheesemaking operations and wineries.

Contact: ACS office, 262-728-4458 or

www.cheesesociety.org

September 29-October 8

The British Cheese Awards

Looking for a trip overseas? Contact: 01608 659 325, or visit the web site: www.thecheeseweb.com

Word Perfect?

If We're Going to Use These Terms, Let's Define Them

It will probably never be completely possible to define elusive terms like "farmstead" or "artisanal" or "terroir," but the French, with their predilection for precision and perfection in language, are bound to try. I'm just home from the International Conference on Goats held in Tours, France, and sponsored by the International Goat Association, Institut de l'Elevage, and Institut Nationale de la Recherche Agronomique. In the course of four days of panels and programs, the French attempted to define precisely what the above terms mean to them in terms of their AOC and DOC definition: *fermier* or farmstead cheeses are those that are produced on the farm from milk that's made on that farm; *artisanal* describes cheeses produced from the milk of less than 50 milk producers—hardly our sense of the term at all; *terroir*, explained one French panelist, is the idea that the character of cheeses from a particular area are a reflection of the climate, geology, flora, and animal genetics of that area, as well as the *savoir faire* of the cheesemakers of the region, i.e., their talent and ability to develop and historically maintain a distinctive cheese. Whew! The goat cheeses of the Poitou were so extraordinary and different that they could make anyone believers in the validity of *terroir*. The producers themselves were convinced that in

theory and practice *terroir* is an asset to nurture and strive for.

The southern European countries—Spain, France, and Italy, in particular—feel threatened by trends that seem to be impacting their food

culture via northern Europe and the United States. While they need to export industrial food and are quite good at it, they also want to maintain the cultural integrity of their small productions. Reality and tradition seem at war, and the confusion that results becomes a part of the sell and romance that is marketed by industrial cheese. Few specialty producers here would consider a cheese produced in a factory from 50 herds or less an "artisanal" cheese. But the confusion between what is real and not is one we often feel in the U.S. as well. Here we have another problem. We are not at war with tradition; we are struggling in an industrial, non-traditional environment to create the traditions of great cheese. We are trying to do in 25 to 50 years what it's taken 500 years or more to accomplish in Europe. Amazingly, we have



Our distinguished Board Member Dr. George Haenlein judging the finalists in the goat cheese competition in the St. Maure. The winner? Pouligny St. Pierre. Jim Path & Judy Schad were also judges.

the brass to believe it's possible, or there would be no American Cheese Society.

And so Dan, while I agree that we need to rid ourselves of "gussification" and "elitism," "Willy the Shake" is right; words are potent things and need to be used carefully. The American Cheese Society is often looked to as a positive authority of what is exemplary and definitive in specialty cheese. We need, perhaps, to be a little more definitive with language that already exists and is meaningful in other contexts, i.e., a little more French in our approach to the language we use. Words like *terroir*, farmstead, and artisan have power but need definition.

Willy also says that "readiness is all" and "ripeness is all." We are already producing great cheeses reflective of a location and the particular

talents of a cheesemaker or cheesemakers. We are "ripe" to feel the same pride in our well crafted cheeses that other countries assume is always characteristic of their own. American vintners, brewers, and distillers know the value and the distinction of place, soil, climate, water, and craft. Why should we assume that our cheeses can't claim the same distinctions? After all, as we struggle to find our own uniqueness, much of Europe is losing theirs. A notable difference however, is that they haven't lost the certainty that they still do it best. Fifty to 70 percent of every cheese board we were offered in France was composed of beautiful farmstead cheeses of the region, but 30 to 50 percent were industrial. That's very different than it was five years ago. We must

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The American Cheese Society

NASFT: JULY 9-11

Thanks to our member participants for a great show!

Capriole, Inc.
CIBO
Fanny Mason
Fromagerie Belle Chevre
Fromagerie Tournevent
Grafton Village
Great Hill Blue
Laura Chenel's Chevre
Lioni Latticini
Vermont Shepherd
Mozzarella Company
Organic Valley
Sea Stars
Skunk Hollow Farm
Vermont Shepherd
Vermont Butter and Cheese Company
Winchester Cheese

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Dominique Delugeau
Stacy Kinsley
Joan Snyder
Gerd Stern
Radha Stern
Daniel Strongin
Ari Weinzwieg

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF CHEESEMAKERS

Patrick Rance
Janet Rance
Frank Kosikowski
Richard Kleyn

NEW ACS MEMBERS

April 1-June 13, 2000

Sheree Cardoos
Mt. Vikos, Inc.
Marshfield, Mass.

William Davis
Sonterra Cheese
Roswell, N.M.

Deborah Grojean

Whole Foods Market
Boulder, Colo.

Bill Harder

Grande Cheese Company
Lomira, Wis.

Rebecca Powell

Whole Foods Market
Ambler, Pa.

Les Talley
Sacramento, Calif.

From the Front Office...

Hello Loyal ACS Members:

So much has been going on within our organization this year, that my head really does spin at times. I wanted to take a moment to let you know that we are all (conference chair and committee, board members, and myself) so excited about this year's conference. Besides being in a lovely location, the agenda is packed with substance! I look forward to seeing each and every one of you, as we meet to mingle and share our mutual interest, specialty and farmstead cheese!

By now, most of you will notice our web site has changed its look considerably. Ricki and her 'web gurus' have been working hard to give us a fresh new look, and I hope you like the lighter colors as well. We hope you will find it easier to navigate, and also will continue to provide the best up-to-date information about all our members. You will see more changes occurring for the next month, and then again post-conference. Thank you for your patience, and make sure to get me any updates as soon as you know of them!

I hope to see some of you in New York, in July, for the NASFT! We already have been lining up a number of our great producers to participate: Capriole, CIBO, Fromagerie Tournevent, Grafton Village, Great Hill Blue, Laura Chenel, Lioni Latticini, Mozzarella Company, Organic Valley, Rising Sun Farm, Sea Stars Goat Cheese, Skunk Hollow Farm, Vermont Shepherd, Vermont Butter and Cheese, and Winchester Cheese. We still anticipate more participants, and encourage you to come see us at Jacob Javits July 9-11 at booth #443 and 445, and also at 'Meet the Cheesemakers.'

The Society is currently 450 members strong, with 140 cheesemakers, 80 retailers, 59 distributor/importers, 40 professed enthusiasts, and a variety of association, academics, government, and so on. You will find a list of new members in each newsletter, and I hope that if they call on any of you for assistance, you will be supportive and informative.

I also encourage you to continue to call the office with any suggestions or ideas you might have. Please contact the board members listed in this newsletter as well. They are on the board to help all of us make this a great endeavor in support of the specialty cheese industry. See you in July and August!

—Laura Jacobs Welch

Please note that your conference registration packet listed the office phone with the old area code! Our current area code and phone number is (262).

The ACS Store

For Questions or to Place an Order,
Call the ACS Office 262-728-4458 or
e-mail ljwelch@elknet.net

Latte Cups Now Available \$7 each +\$8H

15th Annual Polo \$40

15th Annual Denim Shirts \$42

16th Annual Apron \$25

16th Annual Cap \$18

15th Annual Polo \$40

13th Annual Polo (Back to Basics) \$20

ACS Conference Report

Bill McKenna of Bill McKenna & Associates, Inc. and Nancy Fletcher of the California Milk Advisory Board are this year's conference co-chairs and they have put together a great conference committee to help make this an unforgettable conference:

Ray Bair, Whole Foods

Sue Conley, Cowgirl Creamery

Debra Dickerson, Neal's Yard Dairy

Kathleen Shannon Finn, Columbus Distributing & ACS Vice President

Mary Keehn, Cypress Grove Chevre & ACS Board Member

Peggy Smith, Cowgirl Creamery

Diana Solari, ACS Treasurer

Radha Stern, California Cheese & Butter & ACS Board Member

OUR PANEL TOPICS WILL DEAL WITH ISSUES SUCH AS:

Best of Show *How former Best of Show winners capitalized on winning, and the impact on their business*

Chef's Panel *California Regional Cooking, with an emphasis on the relationship between cheesemaker & chef*

Cheesemakers Panel *How cheesemakers can sell themselves to distributors, retailers & chefs/ Survival of the Family Dairy: How small dairies can be profitable*

Sheep-Milk Panel

Discussing the growing demand for Sheep-milk cheeses

Retail Executive Chefs

Discussing the advantages of cross-merchandising the cheeses in the prepared foods department, with the cheese department

Wine & Cheese Pairing made simple

Raw Milk/Preserving Artisan Cheese Panel *Codex discussion Panelists at this year's conference will be made up of nationally and internationally respected cheese makers, specialty retailer, chefs, distributors and wine makers.*

Thursday's **cheesemakers program**, put together by Mary Keehn of Cypress Grove Chevre, will offer an extremely important program that deals with HACCP and the impact on cheesemakers. Cheesemakers will have samples of a few different HACCP programs and flow plans from a few different plants. All attendees of this program will leave with an outline that they can adjust to create their own HACCP program. As governmental controls become tighter in our industry, this is a very valuable program to attend. Space is limited to 100 attendees. We will definitely sell out so register early if you want to attend.

Thursday, August 10, at the Double Tree—Registration and a small welcoming reception from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. Then we are arranging for restaurants in the **Sonoma & Napa Valleys to host cheesemaker and winemaker dinners**. You will need to select which restaurants you want to go to at the time of registration, so we can pre-book your reservation with the participating restaurants (you will need to arrange your own transportation). The restaurant will select the cheesemaker and winemaker that they want to work with, and the cheesemakers and winemakers will act as hosts for the evening.

Friday, August 11—After the panels, we will spend Friday night under the Sonoma stars at a local winery yet to be decided upon. Get ready for a **California BBQ with a Mariachi Band**. There will be great food, wine and music for our annual get-together party where we can all catch up with each others lives and business since last we met in Vermont. We are looking for the perfect spot so we can enjoy ourselves with the warm summer breezes in the Sonoma Valley and create a memorable evening.

Saturday, August 12—After the panels we will be buses to the Grand Finale, "**The Festival of Cheese**." This year the festival will be held at the Culinary Institute of American at Greystone Winery in St. Helena, Napa Valley. We are taking over the Barrel Room in this beautiful building where chefs come to expand their culinary skills. This year we are expecting a sold out crowd of 600 people at the Festival of Cheese. The Barrel Room is the ideal place to host this event, as it is the scene of many high-profile food events in the Napa Valley, and most events attract a sophisticated food crowd. The expanded attendance of the festival will help our cheesemakers get access to the retailers and chefs that will not be able to attend the whole conference. We decided to hold the Festival of Cheese inside this year because evenings in August in the Napa Valley can be very warm, and we don't want our cheeses or our attendees to melt.

Sunday tours are still evolving, but we will have a **Sonoma tour and a Napa tour**. The tours will include a stops at cheesemaking facilities, wineries and olive oil facilities.

This year there is a conference committee, with each member of the committee responsible for handling different panels. The panels will be informative, interesting and lively (no yawns at this conference).

We are hoping to generate excitement and participation by launching a pre-publicity campaign which includes a series of press releases, and we will be holding a pre-conference event sometime in June that will be an invitation-only event targeting chefs and media. We hope that with this event we will be able to build lots of enthusiasm for the conference amongst the media and local restaurateurs. We want to get more chefs involved in our conference and to come to the Festival of Cheese so that they can see the scope of cheeses made by the American Cheese Society cheesemakers. Our hope is that every local paper and every local and national food magazine will write articles so that cheese enthusiasts that are not currently members will be interested in joining the ACS and attend the Festival of Cheese.

If you have any questions, comments or ideas to contribute, please e-mail me at billmckenna@msn.com. Mark your calendars and get ready for a great conference.

Book your hotel rooms early! August in the wine country is high season for hotels and we can only hold the rooms until the end of June. We have contracted with the Double Tree at \$129 per night for a double occupancy room. If you don't book early, you may have to pay considerably more for a hotel room in the area.

We look forward to seeing everyone there!
Bill McKenna & Nancy Fletcher, Conference Co-Chairs

NEW ACS MEMBERS

continued

Jeffrey Heindel
H.E. Heindel & Sons
Brogue, Pa.

Nancy Girard
Half Moon Bay
Wine & Cheese
Half Moon, Calif.

Kathy Guidi
Unlimited Potential
Schomberg, Canada

Karen Williams
Galley Gourmet
Bay Harbor, Mich.

Jeffrey Stark
Mineola, N.Y.

Olga Brewer
Olga, Inc.
Hillsborough, N.C.

Fons Smits
Tomaes Bay Foods/
Cowgirl Creamery
San Francisco, Calif.

Dianna Fate
Two Jersey's
Mineola, TX

Roger Crary
Agway
Vernon, N.Y.

Angelique Hill
The Back Door Delicatessen
Jackson, Wyo.

Michael Aug
European Imports Ltd.
Cincinnati, Ohio

Peter Hartjens
Tidedancers
St. Michaels, Md.

Andrew Ryland
Waters Fine Catering
San Diego, Calif.

ACS WEBSITE

The ACS web site has moved and is currently under construction! Ricki Carroll, current Web Committee Chairperson, has been working with a new webmaster and service provider to update our look, and help to make our site more efficient. The new look should be unveiled soon, and we will keep the membership up-to-date on any changes.

Guest Letter

Call for Judges & Volunteers: 2000 ACS Cheese Competition

This is a letter to update American Cheese Society members about this year's American Cheese Competition at the annual conference, which will be held in Rohnert Park, Calif., August 11-13, 2000. In 1999, I took on the position of judging chair at the conference in Shelburne, Vt. I found the experience of coordinating such a prestigious event thrilling and somewhat challenging. I learned a great deal and am looking forward to putting into practice some of the ideas that have been discussed since that time.

Last year, several important changes were made in the structure and administration of the judging. Most important was the formation of an advisory panel, consisting of five experienced judges and retired cheesemakers (or cheesemakers who did not take part in the competition). I am pleased to report that the addition of the advisory panel was a success. Their long-standing involvement in the ACS and expertise in judging, cheesemaking and dairy science was an invaluable resource to the judges. The members of the Advisory Panel also provided me with perceptive insight into both the successful aspects of the judging and the areas that could be improved.

The issues being discussed and re-examined in March and April are the following:

- stricter label restrictions
- explanatory notes from cheesemakers
- the structure of the score sheets
- better streamlined, computerized tallying up of scores
- alternative procedures for selecting the recipient of the Best of Show ribbon

The result of the judging committee's decisions will be published in the next newsletter, together with a letter of invitation to the Society's cheesemakers.



Today I would like to invite any members of the ACS interested in participating in the judging of cheeses to contact me. The benefits of becoming a judge are many and varied. The experience of seeing and tasting a wide range of unique American cheeses is a wonderful education in itself. Additionally, each judge has the opportunity to work with and learn from other colleagues in their own, or a related field, including working with the core of experts who are part of the advisory panel. In my own experience as a judge, I found the opportunity to taste such a large variety of cheeses in one sitting unique. This experience solidified for me the true meaning of the qualitative terms that I use daily in my professional life.

Potential judges must have working knowledge of, and experience with handling cheese as a professional, or enthusiast in the cheese world. Selected participants will be assigned as one of a pair of judges, one aesthetic and one technical, which will judge as a team for one or more categories of cheeses. All of the judges will vote in the Best of Show category, in addition to the categories to which they are assigned. If you would like to be considered as a judge for this year's competition, please contact me as soon as possible. Judges are selected based on their qualifications and the overall composition of the panel, so that each area of expertise pertaining to the relevant categories are represented.

We are also seeking volunteers to help with the set up and running of the competition, which will be held at the Culinary Institute of America's Greystone campus in St. Helena, Calif., on Thursday, August 10. I look forward to seeing you at the conference. Thank you for your interest!

Daphne Zepos
2905 1/2 Harrison Street • San Francisco, CA 94110
Email: daphnezepos@aol.com

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newly formed alliance with Oldways Preservation and Trust and the response the Coalition is generating reinforces the goal. The coalition has prompted the Cheese Importers of America to ask how we might join forces and help one another. People outside of the membership, outside of the industry, are interested in what we are doing. They're buying our cheeses. They are developing a more mature palate. I'm not as apt to hear the question, "Can I eat the rind?" but rather, "Where is this made?" "Who is the cheesemaker?" "Is this raw milk? I thought so, I can taste the grass." We should be proactive and will be successful at balancing and implementing at all levels of cheesemaking safe hygiene so that no one

At the end of the day, it's our milk source, the land, and our creativity that makes us who we are and defines what we have to offer. We don't have to take a back seat to anyone. We produce outstanding, unique and distinctive cheeses. We have a place in the market. Our farmers are testament to sustainable agriculture on the small farm.

cheese, domestic or imported, needs to be sacrificed or eliminated.

Judy is just returned from France, I from the Netherlands. We expect Daphne home from Italy any day now. Kathleen has just returned from Ireland. Our purposes were slightly different, but the results were the same. We all come home wondering what the next steps need to be. The challenge. Are we missing a piece? Who are we, and what have we to offer? Do we need to raise our level of consciousness? Appreciate how far we have come in the past several years in order to have an impact on the global marketplace and a role in preserving a craft and tradition? These are the challenges.

At the end of the day, it's our milk source, the land, and our creativity that makes us who we are and defines what we have to offer. We don't have to take a back seat to anyone. We produce outstanding, unique and distinctive cheeses. We have a place in the market. Our farmers are testament to sustainable agriculture on the small farm.

My thanks to every one of our cheesemaker members for their commitment to the tradition, thanks to my board for their support and outspokenness, albeit at all hours of the night and day! To those board members who stepped aside to make room for new blood and new ideas, thank you. With two conferences under my belt, thanks to Nancy Greeley for still inviting me to dinner whenever I'm in town. My deepest thanks to Laura who has navigated right alongside me and become an incredibly wonderful friend.



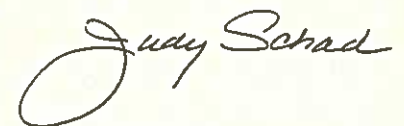
continued from page 3

have tasted 15 Camemberts and never found a really good one. Most of us in ACS could have rolled out 12-20 knock-your-socks-off American cheeses.

While "ripeness" is that special balance achieved in a great cheese just before the fall, it's also a metaphor for a conscious balance between self doubt and self assurance. In spite of obstacles, we are making and marketing great American cheese in a less-than-nourishing environment. It's time to believe in ourselves. I recently got to spend a weekend with Jodie Wische, and she demonstrated what it takes to get the word out. If there was a cheese tray at the table, she made sure the waiter described all the American cheeses accurately. If there was a Stilton or Roquefort instead of a Great Hills or a Jersey Blue, she let someone know. Who will do it if we don't, and while we're still small enough to have that community of pride in what we've accomplished?

To get better, we need to get more specific. *Terroir* is not only possible, it's inevitable. I have seen it reflected in the source of a critically controlled milk supply like Greg and Verena Sava's Brier Run cheeses or Fantome Farm's. What all of us need to know as milk producers, cheesemakers, and as marketers is more about how it works and the factors that make it realizable to one degree or another in our own country, our own region, and our own herds and flocks. Even large productions in France were concerned about how and where milk was produced. At the August 10 Conference in Sonoma, I hope we'll make some break-out time to discuss how this is possible in different sort of productions and different parts of the country. I invite you also to use the newsletter to describe and inform about specific practices that make a particular cheese a reflection of a place.

Before we discard potent terms like *terroir*, perhaps we should attempt as a Society to make them more accurate, less elusive and exclusive.



***Terroir*, explained one French panelist, is the idea that the character of cheeses from a particular area are a reflection of the climate, geology, flora, and animal genetics of that area, as well as the savoir faire of the cheesemakers of the region, i.e., their talent and ability to develop and historically maintain a distinctive cheese.**

Whew!

American Cheese Society 2000

17th Annual Conference

• Schedule of Events •

Wednesday, August 9

6:00 PM — Board Meeting

Sonoma Double Tree—Rohnert Park, CA

Thursday, August 10

7:30 AM

17th Annual Judging of Cheese Competition Entries

CIA at Greystone

Judges will receive their instructions under separate cover.

8:00 AM

Bus leaves hotel for cheesemakers program at Vella Cheese Company & The Vintage House, Sonoma, Calif.

8:45 AM–4:00 PM — Cheesemaker's Program

Presented by Mary Keehn of Cypress Grove Chevre, Felix Roth of Food Tech Switzerland and Gary Edwards & Ditty Vella of Sage Marketing. Limited to 150.

8:45–9:30 AM — Vella Cheese Company

Watching the start of their cheese making process while enjoying breakfast pastries, coffee and other goodies.

9:30–12:00 NOON — "Let's Clean Up Our Act"

Felix Roth will be here from Switzerland to lead the morning workshop with Peter Dixon, an HACCP consultant from Vermont on plant sanitation, HACCP plans, and resources. We will be addressing how to implement a HACCP program that works for your plant.

12:00 NOON–1:30 PM — Lunch

Watch the rolling of the curd for Ig Vella's Dry Jack.

1:30–3:00 PM — "What's Up?"

Small groups will discuss—What went wrong? What went right? Share your questions about different types of cheese with successful cheese makers. We will have on hand successful cheesemakers who specialize in the following areas, Fresh Cheese, Soft Ripened Cheese, Washed Rind/Smear Cheese. Move from group to group or spend your time with one cheese maker. Small groups will be based on the type of cheese. Bring samples of your experimental, problem, or great cheeses to share with the group.

3:00–4:00 PM — "How Did You Do That?"

Discussion on what goes into the development of a new cheese. Four panelists who have developed successful American Original Cheeses

5:00–7:30 PM — Welcoming Reception

Doubletree Hotel, Vineyard Room Dine Around

Make Reservations in advance—this is a busy time of year. Enclosed is a list of restaurants in Sonoma and Santa Rosa that we suggest.

Friday, August 11

7:00 AM — Conference Registration & ACS Store

Double Tree Grand Ballroom

8:15 AM — Opening Remarks

8:30–9:45 AM — Best of Show

Panel will discuss three or four past "Best of Show" winners and the trends of each of those years. What was happening in the industry when each of the winners took "Best of Show"? Panelists will be made up of cheesemakers and past ACS presidents; we will take a retrospective look at the ACS over the past 10 years.

9:45–10:00 AM — Books on Cheese

10:00–10:15 AM — Morning Break

10:15–10:30 AM — Books on Cheese

10:30–11:30 AM

Retail Chefs Challenge: From Cheese Case to Deli Case
Panel will explore using American specialty "value-added" cheeses to add flair to their menus and cheese trays. Panel will address ways to jointly promote and cross-merchandise American specialty cheeses between the Cheese Department and the Deli/Prepared Foods Department. Panelists will include leading local and national retailers.

11:30 AM–1:00 PM — Poolside Lunch

11:30 AM–1:00 PM — Executive Board Meeting & Lunch

1:00 PM–2:00 PM — Cheese.com

Cheesemakers selling their cheeses to the consumer via the Internet. How do you start? What is involved? What goes right? What goes wrong? Our panel includes cheesemakers, retailers, dot.com retailers and catalog companies.

2:15 PM–2:30 PM — Books on Cheese

2:30 PM–3:45 PM — Cheese & Wine

This panel will feature a lively and thought-provoking discussion between two well-known speakers who hold different viewpoints on the subject of pairing California wine and cheese. The panel will be led by Clark Wolf, a restaurant consultant, cheese expert and food trends commentator for the media.

3:45 PM–4:45 PM — General Membership Meeting

6:30 PM — Buses Depart Hotel for La Crema Winery

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

La Crema Winery will be the setting for a Sonoma BBQ featuring the best that Sonoma has to offer from chicken, lamb, and ripe organic vegetables, all highlighted by La Crema Wineries Pinot Noir, Zinfandel and Chardonnay. We will start the evening outside on the beautifully landscaped grounds for wine and light snacks, then we head into the wine cellar. We are actually having our reception in the wine cellar, so the temperature will be approximately 58 degrees. Dress appropriately—light sweaters or jackets will make your evening more comfortable.

Saturday August 12

7:30 AM — Conference Registration & ACS Store
Grand Ballroom Double Tree

8:30–9:30 AM — Survival of the Family Dairy

A discussion of how family dairies are struggling to survive and the implications for cheesemakers who rely on them for milk.

9:30–9:45 AM — Morning Break

9:45 – 10:00 AM — Memorium

The ACS will honor the passing of Steven Schack of Redwood Hill Farm and Patrick Rance world-renowned author and cheese lover.

10:00 – 11:30 AM — Chef's Panel, Cooking Regionally

A look at the relationship between chefs and cheesemakers and their cheeses, featuring several high profile Bay Area chefs discussing how cheeses have become an integral part of the menu.

11:30 – 1:00 PM — Poolside Lunch

1:00 – 2:15 PM — Sheep's Milk Cheese 2000 and Beyond

A look at the tradition of sheep's milk cheese making in America and where some of the leaders in the industry are setting their sights in years to come. What challenges they've overcome and how they're positioning themselves for the future.

2:15 – 2:30 PM — Afternoon Break

2:30 – 3:30 PM — Cheese of Choice Coalition: The Fight to Save Raw Milk Cheeses

A discussion of what lies ahead for raw milk cheeses, including

recent developments on the international front. The panel will be moderated by Dun Gifford of Oldways Preservation and Exchange Trust.

5:15 PM — Buses Depart Hotel for Festival of Cheese

6:00 – 10:00 PM — 17th Annual Festival of Cheeses (Ticketed Event)

This year's Festival of Cheese will be held at the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone Winery in St. Helena., Calif.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13TH — TBA

Sonoma Valley Tour

Napa Valley Tour

West Marin/Sonoma Coast Tour

East Bay Tour

Accommodations

A special conference rate of \$129.00 per night for a single or double has been arranged with the Sonoma Double Tree Hotel in Rohnert Park, CA for the conference attendees. Please mention that you are attending the ACS Conference for confirmed conference rates. For reservations please call 707-584-5466 and ask for the American Cheese Society group rate. Reservations must be made by June 30, 2000, in order to get a discounted rate.

Make your hotel reservations as soon as possible. We only have 100 rooms per night reserved. It is a very busy time of year in the Wine Country. You may have to pay a much higher rate, and/or stay far away from the conference center if you do not make your hotel reservations early.

Transportation

By shuttle, The Sonoma County Airport Express picks you up at SFO and will drop you at the front door of the Double Tree Sonoma County. Roundtrip tickets cost \$30 from SFO to Doubletree Sonoma County, bus leaves SFO every hour between 5:00 AM and 12:00 MIDNIGHT, contact www.airport-expressinc.com or call 707-837-8700.

By car, upon exiting the airport, take the San Bruno Interstate 380 on ramp. The 380 on ramp will take you to highway 280 North to San Francisco. Upon entering San Francisco stay to the three left lanes, these lanes will become 19th Avenue and take you through the city. 19th Avenue will take you directly to the Golden Gate Bridge; we are approximately 55 miles north on 101 Highway.

Hotel is located in the city of Rohnert Park. Take the Golf Course Drive Exit. At the traffic light at the bottom of the exit take a left onto Commerce Avenue and immediately make your next right onto Golf Course Drive. We are the second left hand turn on Golf Course Drive. There is not a traffic light, but there is a turn lane.

it would be hard to get too fluffed up over them and they do not automatically imply expensive. Given its rapid ascension, I live with it, though not with the syrupy intonations that some use when saying it. Few people stateside have made things with their hands directly for generations as they have in Europe, and those that have inhabit the lowest rungs of the economic ladder, or are falsely raised on a pedestal. When a European says the word "artisan," it has a completely different coloration of meaning. More down to earth. It is difficult to believe in your own specialness when someone in your family or your neighbors is but one of a long line of those who have worked wonders with their hands. How can you possibly be snotty about Uncle Bob or Aunt Milly?

But the latest "not terrible," our friend "*terroir*" presents another more prickly problem. In another language and context, it has a perfectly reasonable meaning, but in English and in our context, it carries overtones that only do dis-

service to the long-term aims of the ACS. It is obvious

that surroundings affect the cheese. Enough said! Must we gild it with Fragilification?

The litmus test for me is: does a word help democratize the appeal of the well made cheese or does it serve the elitists among us, making cheese more exclusive, something only real aficionados can truly understand?

Afficionados who, by the way, charge a hefty price to "de-mystify" for the "untutored" the very terms they themselves created. At the ACS conference in San Francisco nine years ago, Darryl Corti, who first recommended to the winemakers of California that they feature varietals, stood up and warned us not to fall into the wine industry's trap of creating a lingo that excludes ordinary people.

Cheese comes from milk, from animals that eat standing on the ground. Chrissakes, do we really want cheese to become fashion? "Foodies," of which I am a curmudgeonly one, are far too fickle an audience to

ensure any-

one's survival but our own. For the most part we cling to the coasts in derision of the "great unwashed." One of the most influential foodies announced during a presentation I attended that "mass follow class," a most ignoble point of view.

The more lingophilic we become, the more fashion driven, the less we will connect with the greater audience. The ACS needs that broad base to help ensure the survival of small scale agricultural and family dairy farms, a very serious matter.

Now that we are beginning to have real economic potential, we can't afford to be wide-eyed and naïve, or we will be consumed. The scent of money has a powerful attraction. You need only look at the world of "Natural Foods" to see what can happen. What started as a social movement to counter the marketing of by-products as food, has turned into its opposite. Visit the Natural Foods show and count suits. The little guys were gobbled up, spit out, and are gone.

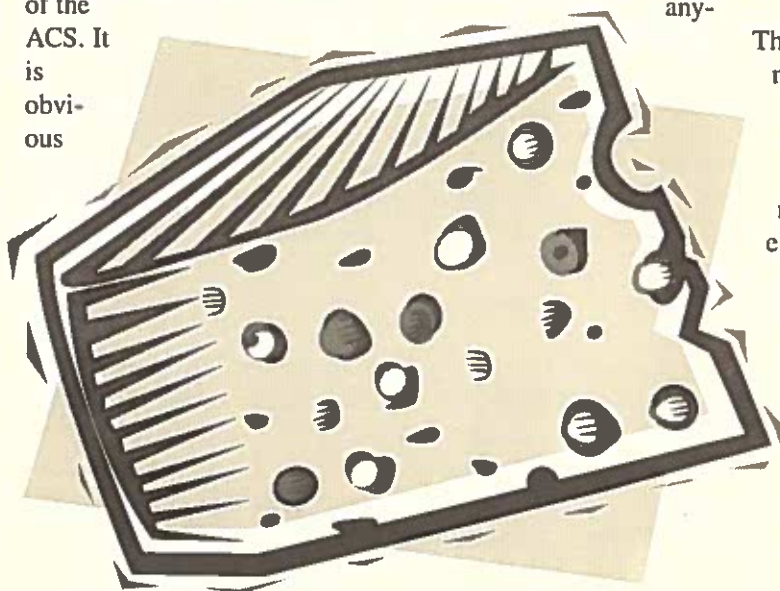
The only trend in recent memory that has avoided gussification is micro-brews, because, I think, beer drinkers to the marrow of their bones are anti-elitist.

In spite of the charm and romance of terms like *terroir* and those who

employ them, I for one hope that our flirtation with lingo comes to an end and that we get back to a more common touch. Let's follow the lead of the Picasso of Modern Chinese Art, Chih Pai Shih, who wrote on the wall in his workshop where he would be forced to see it every day, "I am common, as common as dirt and grass."

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News & Notes

Capriole farm is still looking for a herd or farm manager with a working knowledge of cows or goats, forage and rotational pasture management, and sanitation and milk quality. Capriole is located 20 miles above Louisville, Ky., in the hill country of southern Indiana. It's an 80-acre family farm with a closed herd of 350 dairy goats who produce the sole milk source for the cheeserie. The position includes salary, benefits, and a new one-bedroom cottage. The entire living area is glassed and overlooks woodland. For more information or to fax or e-mail a resume, call Capriole at 812-923-9408 or e-mail judygoat@aol.com.

On September 20 and 21, 2000, Steve and Ginnie Tate, owners of Goat Lady Dairy in Climax, N.C., will offer a course in "Profitable Farmstead Cheesemaking." The course consists of two intensive days of cheesemaking and business information and planning. On September 22, dairy consultant Peter Dixon will be at Goat Lady Dairy for a one-day advanced cheesemakers' seminar. Registration for both classes is through the Hometown Creamery Revival (HCR) project. For an informational flyer, please contact the HCR by writing HCR, P.O. Box 186, Willis, VA 24380; by phone at (540) 789-7877 before 9 PM EDT; or by e-mail - ladybug@swva.net.

Look for ACS at the 11th Annual Bon Appetit Wine & Spirits Focus. Dates of events are as follows - we'll let you know exactly which dates ACS will be participating in soon:

NEW YORK

Monday, September 25
New York Marriott Marquis

CHICAGO

Friday, October 27
The Field Museum

SAN FRANCISCO

Friday, February 23, 2001
One Market Restaurant &
Concourse



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GENERAL MANAGER

Old Chatham Shepherding Company is the largest sheep dairy operation in the U.S. which operates as a state-of-the-art creamery making artisanal, award-winning cheese and cultured milk products such as yogurt.

The General Manager will be responsible for expanding the brand and distribution for Old Chatham Shepherding products, as well as P&L responsibility for the operation while still keeping the uniqueness of artisan, farmstead cheeses. Successful candidates must have a minimum of three years general management experience which includes P&L responsibility. Experience in small, but growing entrepreneurial businesses and gourmet food production/distribution would be highly desirable. Most importantly, the successful candidate needs to understand and manage the "specialness" of the business, including a passionate desire to develop, produce and market the best sheep's milk cheeses and yogurts in the world.

For immediate, confidential consideration, please contact:

Nancy Humphries
Entrepreneurial Support Services, Inc.
7600 Wood Hollow Drive, Suite 1311, Austin, TX 78731
512-345-5311
nancy@essaustin.com

or
Tony Cashen
Entrepreneurial Support Services, Inc.
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ACS Corporate Member/Society Sponsor \$500

Includes all benefits of ACS Corporate Member with the distinction of being recognized as a Society Sponsor with company name, address and phone number in the newsletter. Society sponsors will receive a plaque in recognition of their support of the ACS.

The American Cheese Society is an active, not-for-profit organization which encourages the understanding, appreciation and promotion of America's farmstead and natural specialty cheeses.

By providing an educational forum for cheesemakers and cheese enthusiasts, the society fills an important gap in today's speciality food world.

You can be a part of this dynamic period in American cheesemaking by joining the American Cheese Society now!

YES, I wish to join the American Cheese Society at the membership level indicated. Send American Cheese Society literature and updates to me at the following address:

Name _____

Company/Organization _____ Title/Position _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

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Membership Level	<input type="checkbox"/> ACS Member \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> ACS Corporate Member/Society Sponsor \$500
	<input type="checkbox"/> ACS Corporate Member \$325	<input type="checkbox"/> ACS Newsletter Subscription — No Membership \$30

Profession: (Select only one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Academic	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheesemaker	<input type="checkbox"/> Distributor	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations/Writer	<input type="checkbox"/> Trade Publications
<input type="checkbox"/> Association	<input type="checkbox"/> Chef/Caterer	<input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiast	<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/> Others
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<input type="checkbox"/> Butter Maker	<input type="checkbox"/> Dairy	<input type="checkbox"/> Suppliers		

Who Suggested You Join ACS? _____

Check Money Order Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please send this completed application or a copy with your membership or subscription fee to:

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