

The American Cheese Society

NEWSLETTER 3RD QUARTER 2002

Everona Piedmont: From the Heart of Virginia

by Judy Schad

Farmstead cheeses of every description are blossoming from the Shenandoah to the Tidewater. According to a March 21, 2001, article in the Food section of *The*

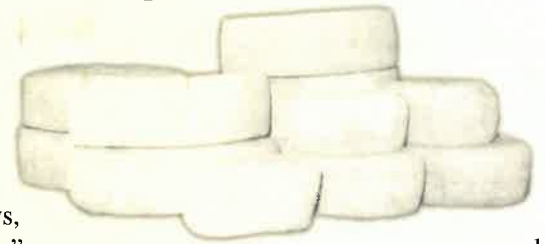
Washington Post, 13 farmstead cheesemakers were registered with the Virginia State Department of Agriculture. Some of these, like Blue Ridge Mountain Dairy, profiled in the last issue of the newsletter, sell their cheeses to the urban restaurants and retail stores of the Washington area. Others are relatively remote and are sold in local specialty stores, as well as through farm markets or mail order.

Most familiar to ACS members may be the wonderful sheep's milk cheeses made by Dr. Pat Elliot at Everona Dairy in Rapidan, Va. Like her cheeses, she reflects a unique and hearty combination of character, inspiration, and earthiness. Dr. Pat is a general practitioner who makes her rounds in the rural countryside and then spends 12 or more hours a day milking her 46 ewes and making her cheeses. She

didn't begin doing this until she was well into her 60s. "It is," she says, "great exercise."

She produces most of her own food — including wine — and believes in her soul, as she proves in fact, that "small is beautiful." Her Everona Piedmont, golden when young and slightly fruity, finishes to burnished beige wheels tinted with blue as they develop their distinctive sweet, buttery flavor.

Everona's cheeses, produced from raw milk and aged, include Juniper Berry, Pepper — a 2001 ACS Cheese Competition winner — and Piedmont, a simple and satisfying farmhouse cheese similar to Manchegos. The similarity was far from intentional. "I had never eaten a Manchego," she says. "I was just trying to make an



aged cheese that would pay for my sheep habit." And she did — a cheese now served at the Inn at Little Washington, the Maryland Club, and some of the best restaurants in the area.

It all started 10 years ago, when Dr. Pat went to the Montpelier Fiber Festival, watched the border collies work sheep, and was smitten. This is thoroughly understandable to anyone who has visited a state fair or watched the movie *Babe*. Border collies are among the oldest and most fascinating of working dogs, and a good one can practically make a sheep

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ACS Mission Statement

To uphold the highest standards of quality in the making of cheese and related fermented milk products.

To uphold the traditions and preserve the history of American cheesemaking

To be an educational resource for American cheesemakers and the public through sharing knowledge and experience on cheesemaking as a hobby or as a commercial enterprise, with special attention given to specialty and farmhouse cheeses made from all types of milk, including cow's, goat's and sheep's milk.

To encourage consumption through better education on the sensory pleasures of cheese and its healthful and nutritional values.

The American Cheese Society

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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The ACS Quarterly Newsletter is published by ACS and contains articles and information pertaining to its members. Views of contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the ACS. We encourage you to submit articles, letters, news items or photos to the editor for consideration.

2002 Members of the Newsletter Committee are: Kate Sander, Annie Esser, Patrick Geoghegan, Lynne Devereaux.

On Tuesday, September 11, the world changed around us. We, the committee, and the ACS board and officers, send our thoughts and prayers and good wishes to all of you — not as afterthoughts but constant ones. Be safe and be in touch.

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From the President...

New Organizational Structure and Volunteerism



As we prepare to gather for our Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., I want to talk about what is going on with the organizational structure and how each and every one of you can be a part of what is happening.

What is happening with the ACS Board?

The ACS Board has agreed to adopt Policy Governance. Policy Governance is a style of management that is applied to boards and businesses whereby responsibility and accountability have a checks-and-balances system that monitors what is happening. The system assures that the committees are working toward the ends/goals that have been set forth by the board. Under the guidelines of Policy Governance, the Board will meet in September in Louisville to set up our "Ends," which are the goals that the board will strive to achieve based upon the feedback we get from our members at the conference in Washington, D.C. Starting in September 2002, the Board will hold its annual planning meeting every September to address the needs of the ACS and to plan for the coming year.

The ACS Board now meets four times per year. We have general board meetings in January and July at the NASFT shows; in August we meet to elect new officers and board members at the annual conference; in September we have our annual planning session. Throughout the year the Board

communicates and votes on issues via e-mail.

How can you help?

I am asking for VOLUNTEERS. As we bring more structure to the organization, we need additional help with committees in order to facilitate our goals. All not-for-profit organizations depend on volunteers to make them run. In every newsletter there are a list of committees and their chairpersons. All

committees need more help in order to realize the goals that have been laid out by the board. I have derived great personal satisfaction working with several committees as we have achieved our goals. The perfect time to speak to a committee chair is during the upcoming conference, when you can find out what is happening with each committee and make an informed decision as to how you can help make a difference within the ACS. Consider how to best utilize your talents and volunteer for one of our committees!!!

In addition, think about what you feel is needed to make the ACS a better organization and discuss it with a board member. All members of the Board will be gathering information from conference attendees to bring to the table in September.

Enjoy the conference and please volunteer.

*Bill McKenna
President*

perform in a chorus line. She bought her first dog, Beck, and quickly decided that Beck needed a job, so she got 10 Dorsets to keep him occupied. At the time, she was making cheese from cow's milk from a nearby dairyman, so it seemed natural to her to try to make cheese from sheep milk. Natural? Yes, because above all this was an evolutionary, not revolutionary, process. By the time Beck was butted against a fence and decided sheep were not his thing, she had already added Katahdin and milking Dorsets to her flock. Now she really needed a dog to work the flock, and ordered a border collie from Wales. Between the extra sheep and a \$4,500 dog, she definitely had some bills to pay.

Unhappy with her milk production, she added three Friesian ewes, and then some more. In 1998 she became a commercial Grade A producer of cheese and yogurt, and in 2001 produced over 4,500 pounds of cheese from her flock of 30 ewes, some of which average 2,150 pounds over their 305-day lactation. This is significant production for a dairy goat. A plus was that the milk has the high butterfat and solids she needs for cheesemaking. The cheeses have been the same trial-and-error process as



they are for many small, beginning cheesemakers. Some, she admits, were not very good. But with time the learning curve has improved and she began to build a strong regional customer base. She has formed special relationships with some of the vineyards in her region, the Piedmont, and found that the complement of a regional wine producer has helped to sell her cheeses. Virginia and the D.C. area remain her primary customer base.

Everona cheeses are among the best that Virginia and the U.S. have to offer. And at 73, Dr. Pat Elliot, philosopher, shepherd and cheesemaker, is testimony to her own individual model of the good life — hard, challenging, and centered on the animals she loves.



Note: If you are traveling to this year's ACS conference in Washington, D.C., by car, you may want to schedule your own side trips to Virginia cheesemakers. Pat Elliott knows and recommends a few:

■ **Blue Ridge Dairy**
Mozzarella & ricotta. Paul Stephan. Available at the dairy Saturdays, 2-5 p.m. Blue Ridge Dairy, 12745 Milltown Rd., Lovettsville, Va. Call 540-822-4363.

■ **Everona Dairy**
Farm sales on weekend by appointment. Rapidan, Va. Call 888-443-5584.

■ **Monastery Country**
2- and 5-lb. goudas. Trappistine nuns of Our Lady of the Angels Monastery. Sales at the monastery by appointment. Our Lady of the Angels Monastery, 3365 Monastery Dr., Crozet, Va. Call 804-823-1452.

■ **Rucker Farm**
Hard, aged and soft, fresh goat cheeses. Farm sales Monday-Saturday 4-6 p.m. Rucker Farm, 13357 Crest Hill Rd., Flint Hill, Va.

The American Cheese Society

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Profile...

Giving Virginia a Taste of Cheese

By Mary Ellen Power

In the hub of Colonial Williamsburg, you'll find one of Virginia's finest cheese shops, The Cheese Shop, in Merchants Square. Opened in 1971, owners Tim, Mary Ellen and Cathy Power are moving one block away to a more prominent spot in Merchants Square. The new location on Duke of Gloucester Street ('Colonial Williamsburg's Rodeo Drive' smiles Cathy Power) will be 6,000 square feet, more than triple its current size. As a result, The Cheese Shop will be able to expand their already extensive selection of over 200 cheeses, and 2000 wines and gourmet foods.

Walking into The Cheese Shop is an impressive visual and delightful aromatic experience. The focal point is the 30-foot butcher block counter on which more than 200 cheese are displayed daily. "In designing the new business, cheese and its display will be taken to another level," explains Cathy Power. "It will be obvious that cheese is the heart of our business." Each morning at 10 a.m. a large selection of cheeses are displayed on the counter. "Tasting is at the heart of what we do; no customer purchases a cheese without tasting it," explains Mary Ellen. "And because our cheeses are served at room temperature, they get the full flavor." They bake their own breads as well as fly in fresh, stone-ground

Pain Poilane from Paris to accompany the tasting cheeses.

The new location will also include an American-style bistro operated by chef Thomas Power Jr. The opening is anticipated to take place in late summer 2002. Thomas recently returned to the family business after being chef and co-owner of three restaurants on the outer banks of North Carolina. A graduate of the prestigious Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, he has worked at the Ritz Carlton (Laguna Niguel), Ritz Carlton (Maui) and at Roy Yamaguchi (Maui). The menu at the new bistro will feature a number of cheese dishes as well as regional American dishes. "We are, of course, biased," smiles Tom Power Sr. "But he is an exceptionally talented chef. His style is casual, fresh and delicious. Our new Cheese Shop and Bistro is going to be the ultimate gastronomic experience."

There's Gold in Them There Cheeses



Power family and valuable Cheese Shop Managers
Second Row: Mary Ellen Power Jr., Phyllis Harrold, Tammy Schumacher and Cathy Power
First Row: Thomas Power Jr., Lisa Jones, Thomas Power Sr., Mary Ellen Power Sr.

The original cheese shop was only 600 square feet and a big gamble for the family. "We took a big risk in 1971 when we opened," says Mary Ellen Sr. "Most people in Virginia had little knowledge or interest in specialty cheese, and we didn't know if there would be enough demand to make our business a success." But she adds with a twinkle, "We also realized that if our concept proved premature or didn't succeed, at least our three children would have good healthy food on the table!" Their gamble paid off. With William and Mary College staff and students right on their doorstep, and a

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We Need Your Input to Make this Newsletter a Useful Tool for Everyone

The newsletter welcomes your thoughts, suggestions, articles, ads and calendar events. If you are interested in contributing, please contact: Judy Schad, 812-923-9408 (phone & fax) or e-mail judygoat@aol.com. While each issue has a focus, we invite other timely and pertinent information. The features for 2002 focus on American traditional cheeses.

The newsletter is now actively soliciting black and white ads.

- \$425 full page
- \$225 1/2 page
- \$130 1/4 page (about 3-1/2" x 5")
- \$90 1/6 page (about 2-5/16" x 5")
- \$45 about 2-5/16" x 2 "
- \$30 classified (35 characters or less)

For inquiries about ads, including specs, rates, and discounts for consecutive ads:

Barry King
The American Cheese Society
304 West Liberty Street, Suite 201
Louisville, KY 40202
Phone: 502-583-3783
Fax: 502-589-3602
E-mail: bking@hqtrs.com

Payment can be made via check, MasterCard or Visa to The American Cheese Society at the address above.

Upcoming Issues & Topics

• 4TH QUARTER 2002

Vermont Cheddar, and post conference report

August 1, 2002: Deadline for all articles, photos, ads and information.

In future issues, your contributions may be edited. We welcome information pertinent to cheesemaking, cheese education or new cheeses; however, we will use editorial discretion to define what may be more appropriate for ad copy and will advise contributors if we feel it should appear in ad form and be accompanied by payment.

The American Cheese Society welcomes your input, articles and/or photos for inclusion in this newsletter. Please let us know if you have suggestions for future topics or have interest in becoming involved in production or editing.

Conference Registration Forms Enclosed in this Newsletter

**19th Annual American Cheese Society Conference
August 1-3 • Capitol Hill Hilton, Washington, D.C.**

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Pacific Cheese Company
Hayward, Calif.

From the Editor...

See You at the Conference

Since the events of last fall, this has been an extraordinary year for all of us. The ACS year is quickly winding up to the 19th Annual Conference, August 1-4 in Washington, D.C. The conference promises great programs, as well as all the glories of the nation's capitol and a stay at the Capitol Hilton. It will be a grand celebration of the quality of American cheeses, the traditions on which they are built, and the innovation that has brought them into the limelight and made them the darlings of the specialty food world. Consider this as the perfect family vacation. You will never have such a great room rate at a beautiful downtown hotel — minutes from the White House — and complete with a spa and all the amenities.

Cathy Strange has done a superlative job planning balanced programs with a farm, cheesemaking, retail, and foodservice focus. In addition, events like an evening celebrating American artisan cheeses at the Smithsonian and a Senate Reception are going to make this a conference to remember.

I would also like to welcome the services of Liz Campbell who has already been an incredible help with this and the last newsletter. Please seek her out in Washington, tell her your story, and make suggestions as to what you want to see in future newsletters.

Can't wait to see you in D.C.!

*Judy Schad,
Newsletter Editor*

■ *continued from page 4*

regular procession of visitors from all over the U.S., the little shop has a flow of sophisticated, well-traveled customers, who have discretionary dollars to spend on good food. It seemed that these customers, like most of America, were ready for real cheese, and The Cheese Shop became more than a success story; it became something of an institution in the region.

After three decades, the growth has continued at a remarkable pace. "We have over 200 imported and domestic cheeses now," says Cathy. "And we sell Virginia's finest selection of artisanal, hand-crafted cheeses." These have become all the rage, she says, and in order to stay in touch and discover new products, they always attend ACS and NAFST (both in New York and San Francisco).

"We've been supporting farmstead cheesemakers and specialty cheeses for so many years, isn't it exciting to see the interest in them growing!" says Cathy. "Our customers are food lovers and are interested in their food's origins and cultural history. They want to know the story behind the product." And because they know and understand the story, the staff can share it. "The friendships we've made with producers sustain our pleasure," says Cathy. "It's a privilege to work with such dedicated people and to represent quality products such as these."

Promoting Local Cheeses

Among the many cheeses they carry are three from Virginia cheesemakers. Everona is an aged sheep's milk cheese produced by a Dr. Patricia Elliot, a physician in Ripidan (see cover story).

She rises early to milk her sheep before heading out on her rounds to visit her patients in rural Virginia. "She makes a fabulous cheese," says Mary Ellen. "And I love the fact that she's an old-fashioned doctor who does this as well as running her practice." The shop also carries a chèvre from Drinking Swamp Farm and a gouda from the Trappistine nuns at Crozet, in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The nuns support themselves with this cheese, and apart from selling it from the convent, The Cheese Shop is the only retail outlet where it can be found. "We often have to drive out there and pick it up because they don't drive," says Mary Ellen. "But it's a wonderful, mellow-flavored gouda, and we feature it in our catalog."

Their catalog was added in 1972, and over the past 30 years they have built their mailing list to close to 8,000 customers. The first gift item in the catalog is the American Artisanal Cheese Gift.

Customers can arrange to have three, hand-cut artisanal cheeses sent once or several times a year to themselves or to a friend. Last year, The Cheese Shop started offering a copy of *The New American Cheese Book* by Laura Werlin as part of the gift package, so the recipient can read about the cheeses they are eating.

Cathy has been a manager and partner with her parents since graduating from college in 1986. Mary Ellen Jr. recently returned after many years working out of state in sales and marketing. And Tom is returning after working most recently in New Orleans. Who could have guessed that Tom, Mary Ellen, and their three children (the original three employ-

News & Notes

New England Cheesemaking Supply Company has become the U.S. distributor for *Caseus International — Cheese Art and Culture*. This 100-page, full color magazine about cheese and cheesemaking worldwide has entered the North American market with its premiere English edition. *Caseus* is a remarkable work, started 7 years ago in Italy to enrich and promote the quality and diversity of cheese. Each issue contains cheesemaking recipes, articles on scientific advances in cheesemaking, consumer tastes and marketing, stories about Farmstead Cheesemaking and much more. Issues 1 and 2 are currently available from New England Cheesemaking Supply Company, POB 85, Ashfield, MA 01330. Or online at www.cheesemaking.com. \$20.00/individual copy or \$60.00/1 yr. subscription (3x yr.) For more information call 413-628-3808.

Cheesemaking Trip to France: Ricki Carroll of New England Cheesemaking Supply Company is organizing a 10-day trip to France beginning on October 25, 2002. The cost is \$2700 which includes lodging, training, transportation while in France, translation and all meals (does not include air fare). It is located in three regions — the South East Alps, the Lacaune, and the Poitou-Charentes — and includes training at teaching centers and on the farm. The trip includes visits to farmstead cheesemakers and the AOC cheese plants processing cow, ewe and goat milk, as well as to Alliance Pastorale. For more information contact New England Cheesemaking at 413-628-3808 or e-mail: info@cheesemaking.com.

Kathleen Shannon-Finn, chairman of the ACS Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for 2003 to the ACS Board of Directors. Contact her with nominations at e-mail: kfinn@columco.com, phone (510) 429-6860, ext. 3464, or fax (650) 637-8313.

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Rebecca S. Powell ACS, Editor ★ Don Klipstein ACS, Webweaver

ACS Calendar

July 7-9

NASFT Summer Fancy Food Show
Javits Convention Center, New York
Contact ACS Headquarters for information on exhibiting your cheeses in the ACS Booth

August 1-3

19th Annual American Cheese Society Conference
Capitol Hill Hilton, Washington, D.C.
Cathy Strange, Conference Chair: 707-527-7367 or
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Contact Cathy with conference suggestions.

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World of Cheese
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