

CornbreadNation

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The Newsletter of the Southern Foodways Alliance

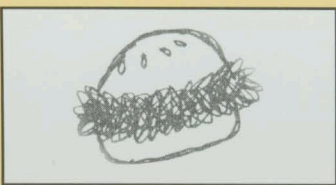
Congratulations to Frank Stitt

SFA founder and board member Frank Stitt won this year's American Express Best Chef in the Southeast award from the James Beard House. We couldn't think of a more deserving chef.

Frank has been a longtime champion of Southern culinary culture and has been a strong part of the SFA since its founding. He cooked the celebratory meal that followed our organizational meeting back in the summer of 1999, and was guest chef at our first Southern Foodways Symposium in 1998, where he wowed the crowd with a dish of pig ears in a mustard vinaigrette.

SMOKESTACK LIGHTNING:

The Movie



First came the book: *Smokestack Lightning: Adventures in the Heart of Barbecue Country*, a tour de force journey along the highways and byways of barbecue, written by SFA founding member Lolis Eric Elie. This spring, a documentary film, based in large part upon Elie's book, made its debut at the IndieMemphis Film Festival. As you might expect, the film, *Smokestack Lightning: A Day in the Life of Barbecue*, snagged the award as Best Documentary. Congratulations Lolis.

Fourth Annual

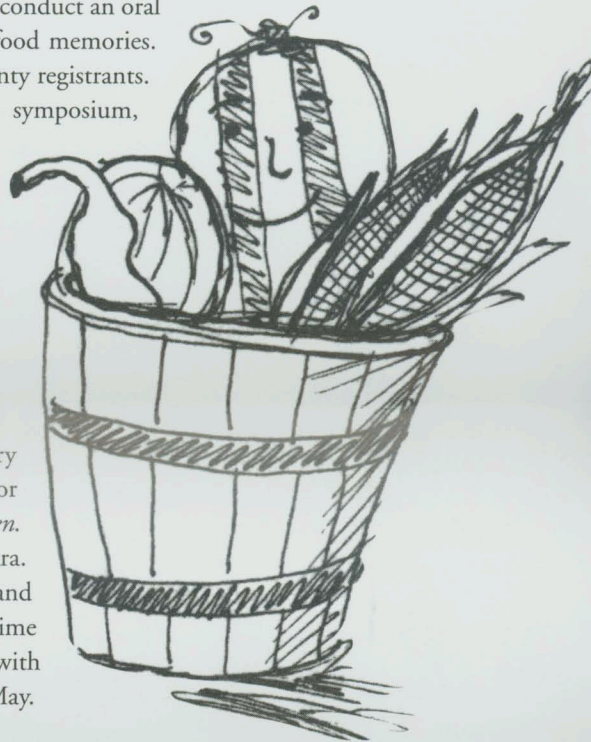
SOUTHERN FOODWAYS SYMPOSIUM WILL TAKE PLACE OCTOBER 25-28

The fourth annual Southern Foodways Symposium — From the Farm to the Table — will take place October 25-28, here on the campus of The University of Mississippi. This year we explore connections between the working of the land and the joys of the table. Here's a sneak preview of what to expect.

For 2001, we will expand the symposium by a day. On Thursday afternoon, Jennifer Abraham of Louisiana State University will conduct an oral history workshop geared toward the collection of food memories. The workshop will be free of charge to the first twenty registrants. That night, we gather for our first meal of the symposium, prepared by John Currence of City Grocery and Amy Crockett of Ajax Diner. On Saturday, guest chef Kathy Cary of Lily's in Louisville, Kentucky, will serve lunch in the sylvan grove at the heart of the Ole Miss campus. Over the course of the weekend, we will taste delectable catfish and Brunswick stew, not to mention long-simmered shuck beans and cathead biscuits slathered with sorghum.

Speakers confirmed at press time include culinary historian Karen Hess, whom you may know as author of the seminal work, *The Carolina Rice Kitchen*. Mrs. Hess will give a lecture on the history of okra. Tom Rankin of Duke University will share photos and tell tales of Crystal Springs, Mississippi, the onetime Tomatopolis of the South. The weekend closes with a Sunday afternoon garden sermon by author Lee May.

Registration opens in early August.



The Catfish Institute Gives \$4,000 to SFA

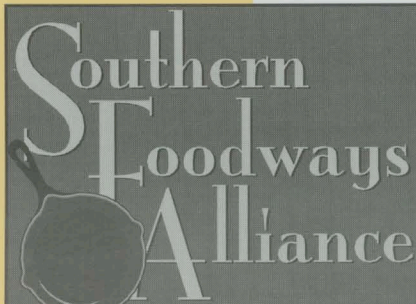
The Catfish Institute of Belzoni, Mississippi, donated \$4,000 to the SFA in recognition of the contributions of SFA secretary Marlene Osteen who helped program a celebrity chef contest at the annual Catfish Festival, and SFA director John T. Edge, who served as emcee. Among the chefs participating were Stephen Kalt of Spartina in New York City; Mark Militello of Mark's in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; Louis Osteen of Louis's in Charleston, South Carolina; and Elizabeth Terry of Elizabeth on 37th in Savannah, Georgia. Militello took the prize. We at the SFA express sincere thanks for the support of The Catfish Institute.



Bridges & Boundaries Revisited: African Americans and American Jews

The Atlanta History Center will present *Bridges & Boundaries Revisited: African Americans and American Jews* from August 3 through October 28, 2001. This exhibition examines the relationship between African Americans and American Jews in the twentieth century, revealing a dramatic and complex story of cooperation and conflict. A *Bridges & Boundaries Celebration of Cultures* on Sunday, August 26, will feature a panel discussion organized by Southern Foodways Alliance member Marcie Cohen Ferris. Scholars, chefs, and community members will share food memories and discuss how cultural identity is shaped and daily life defined by the foods we eat, the holidays we celebrate, and the products we buy. Visitors can also participate in a tasting of African American and Southern Jewish food, listen to live jazz and klezmer music, and tour the exhibit. For more information, call Pam Meister at 404-814-4071.

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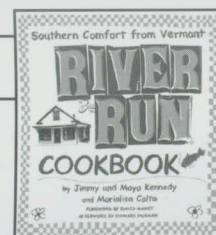
Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture Debuts. Is the SFA next?

Gastronomica, a new publication from University of California Press, made its debut this winter. A multidisciplinary publication, *Gastronomica* aims to unite the many segments of the food world, with articles from any field that deals with the history, production, uses, and depictions of food. Issued quarterly, and combining the latest research with an appreciation for the pleasures and aesthetics of food, *Gastronomica* provides a forum for sharing ideas, provoking discussion, and encouraging thoughtful reflection on the history, literature, representation, and cultural impact of food.

Gastronomica aims to reach a diverse audience of academics, culinary professionals, students, and general readers. Visit www.gastronomica.org for full information and subscription details. And be on the lookout for an announcement from the SFA regarding our very own Southern foodways journal, now in the works.

RIVER RUN COOKBOOK

Jimmy and Maya Kennedy and Marialisa Calta
Harper Collins 2001; 242 pages
\$35.00



Jimmy Kennedy is a native of Brewer, Mississippi. Since 1991 he has owned and operated the River Run Café in faraway Plainfield, Vermont. He may well be a long way from home, but Kennedy has not abandoned his native victuals. The cookbook is chockfull of catfish and black-eyed pea that, not to mention a recipe for fried dill pickles inspired by the A-Frame Dairy Bar in Shannon, Mississippi.

Though the book showcases the cooking of the Kennedys – and the elegant writing of Marialisa Calta – the portrait of Plainfield, Vermont, may well be the most compelling element. Through unpretentious recipes, photographs of beloved customers, and telling anecdotes, the authors paint the River Run as a sort of unofficial town hall, a gathering place for a diverse community that just happens to boast a Southern chef at the center, at the stove. “You know what I like?” asks a puppeteer named Graciela Monteagudo. “It’s the way this place brings different kinds of people together. Truck drivers. Artists. Hippies. Farmers...”

The River Run Café is an amalgam of people and place, a spiritual descendant of the South’s best community cookbooks, those spiral bound compilations that provide readers and eaters a window into the everyday life and foods of a group of churchgoers, a clutch of quilters, or a league of ladies inclined toward service. For those interested in how Southern life is lived in northern climes, the River Run Cookbook provides a compelling entree to a world unsuspected, way up above the Mason and Dixon.

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