

# Gravy

"I'm selling my pork chops, but I'm giving my gravy away." - Memphis Minnie

Number 8, Summer 2002

News from the Southern Foodways Alliance

## Member Profile Meet Virginia Wood

Native Texan Virginia Wood came to Austin to complete her college education in 1970 and never left. After graduation from the University of Texas, Virginia worked as a pastry chef and operated her own wholesale dessert business for many years. In 1989, she began writing about Texas foods in a self-syndicated newspaper column called "At Home on the Range." The column ran in the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Ft. Worth Star-Telegram* as well as several smaller Texas newspapers. In 1993, she began contributing restaurant reviews and features to the alternative newsweekly, the *Austin Chronicle*. She became the "Food-o-File" columnist for the *Chronicle* in 1995 and has been the food editor at that paper since 1997. Virginia has been an active member of the International Association of Culinary Professionals since 1995. She joined the SFA in 1999 and served as committee chair of this summer's second annual Field Trip.

## And Keep In Mind: Texas Barbecue T-shirts Available

Additional t-shirts from the Taste of Texas Barbecue Field Trip are available from the *Austin Chronicle*. If you would like to purchase a t-shirt, contact Tommi Ferguson via email ([ferguson@austinchronicle.com](mailto:ferguson@austinchronicle.com)) or fax (512/458-6910) to request an order form. Shirts are \$12 plus tax and shipping.

## President's Letter

By now I hope you have either experienced for yourself or have heard the raucous applause for our amazing second field trip, *A Taste of Texas Barbecue*, held in and around Austin. SFA members were joined by 19 new barbecue lovers who became members following two days of feasting on as much sausage, brisket, and ribs as was humanly possible. Indeed, a great time was had by all.

I can't go much further without congratulating and recognizing SFA members, volunteers, staff, sponsors, and board members for their support, ideas and, perhaps most important, their precious time. Specifically, I want to thank committee chair Virginia Wood and her tireless team for executing a culturally rich program in keeping with SFA objectives to "celebrate, teach, preserve, and promote the diverse food cultures of the American South."

To kick off this "Year of Barbecue," we chose to examine the cultural and geographic boundaries that separate the South from the Southwest. A symbolic stage was set on Friday evening when guests enjoyed a tasting of urban barbecue and contemporary blues in an historic venue, the Victory Grill. Frequented by Bobby Blue Bland and B.B. King, the Victory is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is one of Texas' original blues hot spots. Following two concurrent *Legends of Texas Barbecue* tours by way of the blacktop back roads of the region, the weekend culminated with a Southern hospitality party hosted by exiled Mississippian Eddie Wilson at his famous restaurant, Threadgill's World Headquarters. Our hearty thanks go out to Wilson, who keeps the taste of Mississippi alive on Central Texas tongues.

Last, but certainly, not least, I thank Tripp Holmgren of White Lily, the corporate sponsor for our second Field Trip. From the beginning, White Lily has recognized the SFA as a unique organization involved in important work that calls attention to Southern food and the people who create it. I am truly grateful for their support as we continue to establish comfortable social environments in which members can examine and reflect upon our collective culinary history and develop new perspectives that transcend the spheres of race and class.

Sincerely,  
Toni Tipton-Martin  
SFA Board President

## Fifth Southern Foodways Symposium Announced, Archival Research Workshop Featured



The fifth annual Southern Foodways Symposium will be held October 17-20, on the campus of the University of Mississippi in Oxford. This year we explore the people, places, and traditions that inform our regional obsession with barbecue. As with previous symposia, this event provides opportunities for cooks, chefs, food writers, and inquisitive eaters alike to come to a better understanding of Southern cuisine and Southern culture. Lectures, held in Barnard Observatory, the restored antebellum headquarters of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, are complemented by informal lunches and dinners served in and around Oxford and on the Ole Miss campus.

On Thursday, prior to the official opening of the symposium, Jennifer Ford and Leigh McWhite of the Department of Special Collections at The University of Mississippi's J.D. Williams Library will conduct a workshop on using archival materials in foodways research. Participants will explore resources such as diaries and daybooks, oral histories and ephemera. Though there is no additional fee for this session, seating is limited to 20 persons, first come first served. Contact Mary Beth Lasseter at [sfmail@olemiss.edu](mailto:sfmail@olemiss.edu).



*Damon Lee Fowler's New Southern Cooking*  
Damon Lee Fowler  
Simon & Schuster,  
\$26.00

Pork tenderloin biscuits with chutney butter, shrimp and green tomato gumbo, sweet potato latkes with applesauce and crème fraîche; bourbon pound cake, lemon pudding, and gingered peaches: Damon Lee Fowler's new book does not so much reinvent Southern cookery as breathe new life into old standards. By way of eloquent and insightful prose — not to mention engaging recipes — he proves that Southern culture and Southern cookery are not static.

### Coleslaw and Potato Salad Invitational

For the first (and most likely only) Coleslaw and Potato Salad Invitational, the SFA seeks recipes and recollections. Send us your heirloom recipes and fond memories. Please include your name, address, recipe provenance, and a 50-word essay on why it's swell. Curator Elizabeth Karmel will compile the entries and report her findings at the symposium. Email [slawnsalad@msn.com](mailto:slawnsalad@msn.com) by Labor Day. The first 100 entrants qualify for a tasty prize to be raffled off at the symposium.

## Newsletter to be Revamped, Editor Sought

Beginning with the fall edition of the SFA's newsletter, we move to a format more like a magazine and less like an internal public relations clarion. And we need your help. The SFA is in search of an editor who will work to solicit articles on Southern food books, restaurants, people, markets, and the like. We would like *Gravy* to function as an insider's take on the best of the South, and in order to accomplish this goal we need the help of a dedicated acquisitions editor. If you are willing to spend ten hours a month soliciting — and lightly editing — articles for a 1,500-word quarterly food letter from the South, we would like to hear from you. All copyediting and layout will be done at SFA headquarters; we just need your good ideas and contacts. Please reply to SFA director John T. Edge at [johnt@olemiss.edu](mailto:johnt@olemiss.edu).

## Barbecue Book Primer



If, in advance of the symposium, you have a hankering to bone up on your barbecue knowledge, here's a roster of works penned by featured speakers. Without a copy of each, no Southern foodways library can be considered complete:

Jim Auchmutey — *The Ultimate Barbecue Sauce Cookbook* (with Susan Puckett), Longstreet Press, \$14.95.

Ardie Davis — *The Great Barbecue Sauce Book: A Guide with Recipes*, Ten Speed Press, \$15.95.

Lolis Eric Elie — *Smokestack Lightning: Adventures in the Heart of Barbecue Country*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux (in a special edition published in association with Blue Smoke restaurant).

Bob Garner — *North Carolina Barbecue: Flavored by Time*, John F. Blair, \$21.95.

Vince Staten — *Jack Daniel's Old Time Barbecue Cookbook*, Sulgrave Press, \$24.95. (*Real Barbecue*, coauthored with Vince Staten, is out of print.)

Calvin Trillin — *The Tummy Trilogy*, Noonday Press, \$13.00.

Robb Walsh — *Legends of Texas Barbecue Cookbook: Recipes and Recollections from the Pit Bosses*, Chronicle Books, \$18.95.

Carolyn Wells — *Barbecue Greats Memphis Style*, Pig Out Publications, \$12.95.

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