

Cornbread Nation

Number 1 ~ 2000

The Newsletter of the Southern Foodways Alliance

Welcome to the first edition of the Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA) newsletter. Though SFA members and friends will continue to receive the *Southern Register* (the magazine of our parent organization, the Center for the Study of Southern Culture), effective this summer you will also begin receiving a bimonthly newsletter. In addition to notifying you of upcoming events, we hope to share member news, restaurant critiques, and book reviews. If I can be of any service, please do not hesitate to call me at 662-915-5993, or contact me via e-mail at johnt@olemiss.edu.

John T. Edge
Director, SFA

Third Annual Southern Foodways Symposium Announced

The third annual Southern Foodways Symposium will be held October 20-22, 2000, here on the campus of the University of Mississippi. This year's theme is *Travelin' On: Southern Food En Route*, an examination of what happens when Southerners and Southern foods travel north, and west, and across the Atlantic.

As was the case with previous symposia, this event will provide an opportunity for cooks, chefs, food writers, and inquisitive eaters alike to come to a better understanding of Southern cuisine and, in turn, Southern culture.

The keynote address will be given by New York resident and Southern expatriate Roy Blount Jr., author of, among many other works, the recent memoir *Be Sweet*. Also featured will be John Floyd, editor of *Southern Living* magazine, Joe Dabney, author of the award-winning cookbook *Smokehouse Ham, Spoonbread, & Scuppernon Wine*, author and

television personality Nathalie Dupree, and Monique Wells of Paris, France, author of the new cookbook, *Food for the Soul*. Jessica Harris will pay homage to Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA) board president and chef/proprietor of New Orleans' famed Dooky Chase's restaurant, Leah Chase, when she presents Mrs. Chase with the SFA's second Lifetime Achievement Award.

Lectures, to be held in Barnard Observatory, the restored antebellum headquarters of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, will be complemented by a series of informal lunches, served in the sylvan grove at the heart of the Ole Miss campus. Featured foods will include "dueling gumbos" prepared by Leah Chase, Fritz Blank of Deux Cheminees in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Johnny Faulk of Grand Lake, Louisiana, bass player for the Grammy-nominated Cajun band the Hackberry Ramblers. Friday lunch will feature a sampling of more modern Southern fare from chef Neal Langerman of Georgia Brown's restaurant in Washington, D.C.

Evening events include book signings, regional food and drink tastings, a barbecue, a catfish fry and catfish appetizer sampling, and a street dance hosted by the Hackberry Ramblers. Festivities will close with a dinner on the grounds. Registration opens August 3rd. Contact John T. Edge at 662-915-5993, or via email at johnt@olemiss.edu.

Wine Dinner to Precede Symposium

Plans are underway to stage a wine dinner on the Thursday evening preceding the symposium at Oxford's own City Grocery. Though not finalized at press time, the event promises to be a wonderful opportunity to sample a variety of grapes and vintages paired with updated versions of classic Southern dishes. A separate registration fee is required for this dinner. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Southern Foodways Alliance. Seating will be extremely limited. For details, contact Catherine Miles at 662-232-8080.

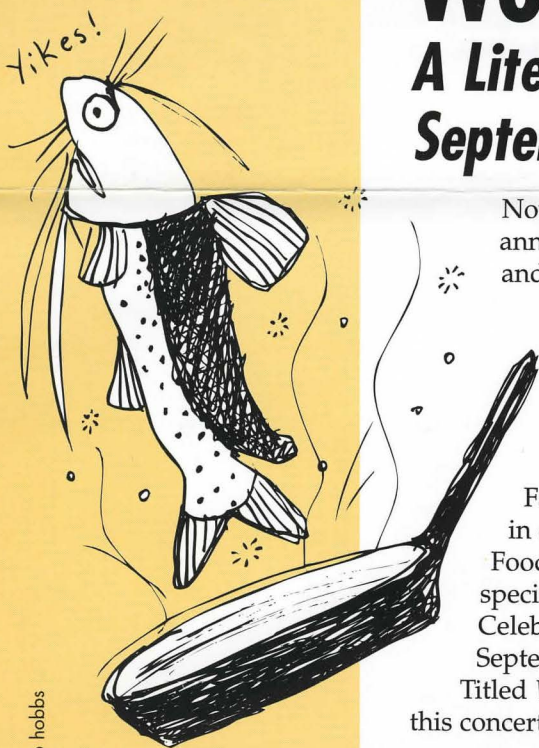
Words and Music A Literary Feast in New Orleans Announces September Southern Foodways Alliance Event

Now celebrating its tenth anniversary as a nonprofit literary and educational organization devoted to the preservation of the storytelling traditions of our region and to providing realistic assistance to developing authors and other artists, the Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society Of New Orleans, in concert with the Southern Foodways Alliance, announces a special edition of its Words and Music Celebration, to be held the evening of September 22nd in New Orleans.

Titled *Word Masters and Their Music*, this concert will feature the musical talents

of, among others, Jack Butler, author of *Living in Little Rock with Miss Little Rock*, and Tom Piazza, author of *Blues and Trouble*. The evening's performances will honor Leah Chase, of the famed Dooky Chase's in New Orleans, the restaurant that played an integral role in the development of Southern music. A gala supper party will follow at 10:00.

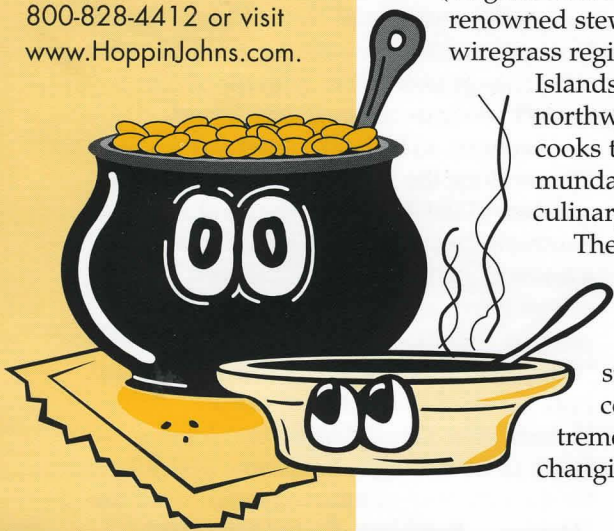
Other events of interest to SFA members are scheduled for that same week. For particulars on the SFA events, call 662-915-5993. For registration information, contact the Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society at 624 Pirate's Alley, New Orleans, La. 70116-3254; via phone: 504-586-1612, 504-529-3450; or e-mail faulkhouse@aol.com.



Thanks to John Thorne, author of, among other works, *Serious Pig*, for inspiration in the naming of our newsletter.

This just in...

SFA charter member John Martin Taylor has released his first batch of Hoppin' John's she-crab soup. It's a canned product unlike any other, as simple, subtle, and good as can be, with an ingredient list unsullied by fillers and chemicals. Milk, water, cream, blue crab, rice, crab roe, salt and spices: that's it. Call 800-828-4412 or visit www.HoppinJohns.com.



Southern Stews Exhibit

From the hills of Virginia to the South Carolina lowcountry, open pot cooking has been a vibrant component of regional culinary traditions embraced by Native Americans, Europeans, and African Americans. This tradition is examined in *Southern Stews: Traditions of One-Pot Cooking*, an exhibition now on display at the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina. The exhibition is built around video documentary work by Stan Woodward, whose 1980 video *It's Grits* cracked smiles and brought grits out of the Southern cultural closet and onto the plates of mainstream America.

For the exhibition, Woodward expanded beyond the battling Brunswicks (Virginia and Georgia) and their world-renowned stews, venturing to Georgia's wiregrass region, South Carolina's Sea Islands, and the river towns of northwestern Kentucky to find cooks transforming relatively mundane ingredients into culinary folk arts.

The exhibition, which highlights sequences from Woodward's videography and artifacts of stewartmakinglike pots, cooking tools, and accoutrements, examines the changing traditions of stew

making. *Southern Stews* explores the relationships between the stuff of stews (their ingredients, recipes and artifacts used in their production) and the social dynamics of stew making and consumption.

Woodward met and interviewed stewmasters who argue for the uniqueness of local recipes and cooking techniques. For example, makers of Carolina hash such as Rodney Long from Newberry County and Ray McLees of Union County may live in relatively close proximity, yet be remarkably divided in their choice of basic ingredients—one using only pork and the other only beef. To the burgoo makers of Owensboro, Kentucky, and the sheep stew chefs of Dundas, Virginia, the mutton in their stews defines community identity—even though the pottages differ in nearly all other respects.

Southern Stews runs through October 29. A highpoint in the exhibition will be McKissick Museum's Fall Folklife Festival, Saturday, October 21 (the same weekend as the annual Southern Foodways Symposium here in Oxford), when a champion Brunswick County stewmaster and a Carolina hasher will demonstrate cooking methods and provide festival participants and Museum visitors with a tasty complement to the exhibition on display inside the gallery. For more information on *Southern Stews*, point your web browser to www.cla.sc.edu/mcks/html/exhib.htm.

The mission of the SFA is to celebrate, teach, preserve, and promote the diverse food cultures of the American South. If you have not yet joined us, yearly dues are \$25 for students, \$50 for individuals, \$75 for families, \$200 for nonprofit entities, and \$500 for corporations. Please call 662-915-5993 for an application, or better yet, visit our web site at www.southernfoodways.com

Southern Foodways Alliance Celebrates Mississippi in New York's Central Park

We send out hearty thanks to charter SFA member and Television Food Network producer Dan Latham, who spent an unseasonably hot summer afternoon manning a booth at the annual Mississippi in the Park celebration held on June 10. In addition to handing out brochures and talking with interested parties about the SFA, Dan prepared what was, without a doubt, the best down-home spread to be had north of the Mason-Dixon. Among the treats served

were cucumber sandwiches, pimento cheese sandwiches, a dandelion salad, brisket sandwiches, and a vinegar coleslaw, the latter inspired by a recipe in SFA founding member Lolis Eric Elie's wonderful book *Smokestack Lightning*. Thanks Dan.

