

CornbreadNation

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The Newsletter of the Southern Foodways Alliance

Southern Foodways Alliance Board Gets Down to Business

The first annual Southern Foodways Alliance board of directors' retreat was held January 20-22. After three days of intense discussion, the board emerged energized and emboldened by a renewed sense of purpose and direction.

Look for the fruits of those labors to be in your hands soon: a revised set of bylaws and a membership directory too. For now, should you wish to become more deeply involved with the SFA, here's how to get in touch with the appropriate folks:

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First SFA Field Trip Announced

The first in a series of Southern Foodways Alliance Field Trips will take place July 13-15, 2001 in Greensboro, North Carolina. Intended to meet member requests for a broader opportunity to participate in the SFA than the single annual symposium in Oxford now allows, the weekend will be co-hosted by the O. Henry Hotel of Greensboro, North Carolina- an old-world-style, community-focused boutique hotel.

The event will celebrate and promote the products and foodways of one of the most prolific and delightful food regions of the South, the Carolina Piedmont. The official program features a mix of field trips to regional food producers, discussions led by SFA experts on the subject of Piedmont foodways, and meals by regional restaurateurs showcasing indigenous products.

Among the presenters will be peach farmer and author Dori Sanders of Clover, South Carolina; novelist and musician Clyde Edgerton of Raleigh, North Carolina; sage, writer, and raconteur John Egerton of Nashville, Tennessee; and food writer and author Jeanne Voltz of Pittsboro, North Carolina. John Shelton Reed of the University of North Carolina will act as master of ceremonies Friday night, while, on Sunday afternoon, David Perry of the University of North Carolina Press has the honor.

The weekend will revolve around three concurrent Saturday field trips. Choices include:

- View the gardens at Old Salem with director of horticulture Keyes Williamson and sample hearth cookery from their kitchens.
- Visit the Old Mill at Guilford to learn about grits, tour Handance Farms and come to a better understanding of organic farming, and visit Farmhouse Herbs and for a discussion of herb growing and a light lunch.
- Tour Goat Lady Dairy and discuss permaculture gardening with Ginnie and Steve Tate and then taste their award-winning cheeses.

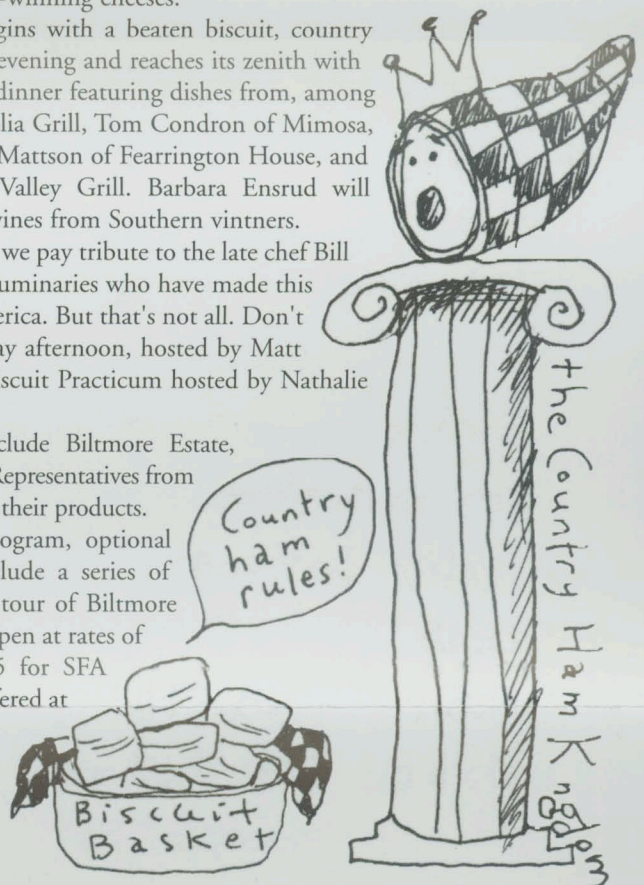
A weekend of great eating begins with a beaten biscuit, country ham, and champagne tasting on Friday evening and reaches its zenith with a Saturday night Taste of the Piedmont dinner featuring dishes from, among others, Ben and Karen Barker of Magnolia Grill, Tom Condon of Mimosa, Mildred Council of Mama Dip's, Cory Mattson of Fearrington House, and Bart Ortiz of Lucky 32 and Green Valley Grill. Barbara Ensrud will coordinate a complimentary tasting of wines from Southern vintners.

At a Sunday afternoon brunch, we pay tribute to the late chef Bill Neal and a pantheon of Southern food luminaries who have made this region one of the most delectable in America. But that's not all. Don't miss the Boiled Peanut Party on Saturday afternoon, hosted by Matt and Ted Lee, or the Sunday morning Biscuit Practicum hosted by Nathalie Dupree.

Sponsors for the weekend include Biltmore Estate, Spring Garden Brewing, and White Lily. Representatives from each will be on hand to share more about their products.

In addition to the official program, optional events now in the planning stages include a series of cooking classes and a special SFA-only tour of Biltmore Estate in Asheville. Registration is now open at rates of \$250 for the general public and \$225 for SFA members. Rooms at the O. Henry are offered at a special reduced rate of \$124 per night.

Like all SFA events, this inaugural field trip event promise to sell out quickly. To register, please contact Sarah Sherman of the O. Henry at 800-965-8529.



Dates for Southern Foodways Symposium 2001 Set

The fourth annual Southern Foodways Symposium will be held October 26-28, 2001, on the campus of the University of Mississippi. This year's gathering will explore connections between the farm and the table. If previous symposia serve as any indication, we should sell out soon after formal announcement of the program in July. Look for details in the next issue of *Cornbread Nation*.

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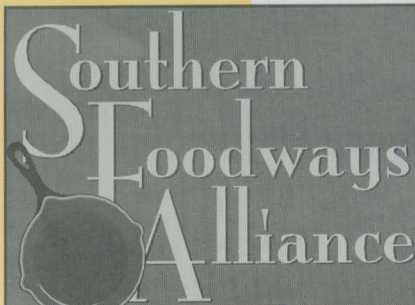
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Gifts Announced

The Southern Foodways Alliance received a gift of more than \$7,000 from the American Southern Food Institute, an organization that preceded our own by a few years and whose membership voted to fold their operations into the SFA. Their efforts paved the way for our own and we appreciate the gift, the gesture of good will and support, and we welcome their members into the SFA family.

Additionally, Anson Mills of Columbia, South Carolina has graciously agreed to underwrite the printing of our first membership directory. We thank Glenn Roberts and his staff for their support.

Virtual Foodways Library Debuts

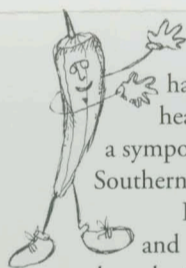
With a few notable exceptions, most libraries do not organize foodways research materials in a manner that is conducive to browsing for that article you once heard mention of, the one on the political ramifications of barbecue pitmaster choice in the election of Eugene Talmadge as governor of Georgia.

A new initiative spearheaded by Brian Fisher aims to right that wrong. Brian is at work on a virtual library to be displayed on the southernfoodways.com website. (It should be live by the time you read this.) By way of a simple series of menu-driven screen categories, the site will display a host of Southern foodways scholarship, useful for academics as well as writers and lay researchers.

Where else would you find a link to Jimmy Browning's "A Tie That Binds: Contemporary Funeral Foodways In Rural Kentucky" from the *Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin*? Or a roster of seminal community cookbooks published over the course of the past one hundred years?

Suggestions on content and organization are welcome. Please contact Brian at fishbrian@earthlink.net.

Introducing Brian Fisher



If you were in attendance at this year's symposium, then you must have met Brian Fisher. He was the guy running around like a chicken with his head chopped off. In all seriousness, he was the guy who transformed a dream of a symposium into reality. Brian is now in his second semester as a graduate student in Southern Studies.

He received his bachelor's degree in art history from Trinity University in 1988 and a certificate in culinary arts from Boston University in 1997. Brian, who will work as the SFA's graduate assistant through the spring of 2002, says that he came to the Center for the Study of Southern Culture because he was interested in food history and rhetoric: "I figured that the richest place to put the two together was here. Food isn't imbued with meaning in other places like it is in the South." To date, his academic projects include an examination of the ways in which the singer Memphis Minnie used food as a language to communicate with the black diaspora.

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