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**Upcoming CHSC Speakers Bureau Programs**

By Richard Foss, CHSC Speakers Bureau Committee Chair

- **August 19, 2017 at 2:00 PM**  
Christina Sleeper  
"Jamming Through The Ages"

As long as humans have been farming, they have had a problem: how to preserve those fruits that are so delicious when fresh but are so perishable. Christina Sleeper, a Master Preserver and the owner of Sleepers Gourmet, will explain the history of making jams and jellies and the techniques that make the preserves we enjoy even when fresh food is in season.

- **October 21, 2017 at 2:00 PM**  
Jeff Keasberry  
"Dutch-Indonesian cooking:  
The First European-Asian Fusion Cuisine"

It was the spice trade that first started the rush to colonization in Southeast Asia, and one of the earliest and longest enduring was the Dutch in Indonesia. Keasberry is the author of the first English language book on Indonesian-Dutch cooking and will explain how the cuisines of both cultures were changed.



Come attend these lectures at:  
**Palisades Branch Library**  
861 Alma Real Drive  
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272



**Upcoming Programs at the Central Library's Mark Taper Auditorium:**

- September 9, 2017**  
Linda Civitello  
"America Takes the Cake"

- October 14, 2017**  
Bill Esparza  
"Pocho Gastronomy is the Future of Mexican Cuisine in America"

- November 11, 2017**  
Panel with Melissa Pugash, moderator  
"Coffee History in Southern CA"

- December 9, 2017**  
Kathleen Hill  
"What is It?: A Collector's Kitchen Treasures"

- January 13, 2018**  
Charles Perry  
"What to Order in 13th-Century Granada"



**Become a new member or renew your membership today!**

We welcome new and returning members! You don't need to be an academic or culinary professional – many of our members are enthusiasts who enjoy exploring the history, anthropology, and culture of the world's cuisines. Pick up a membership form at any of our events or download the form from our website. Short on time? Email Susanna at [serdos@aol.com](mailto:serdos@aol.com) with your name and phone number and she'll contact you directly.

**THE FOOD JOURNAL**

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Dedicated to pursuing food history and supporting culinary collections at the Los Angeles Public Library



**Charles Perry**  
CHSC President

**Going Gastro in Abu Dhabi**

During the five-year gestation of my 13th-century Arabic cookbook, I joshed with one of my editors at NYU Press that he should arrange a signing for me in the Persian Gulf. "Don't laugh," he said. "It could happen." Yes, indeed. Late in April, there I was on my way to the Abu Dhabi International Book fair.

When I told my pharmacist I was going to Abu Dhabi, she insisted that I had to see *Sex and the City 2*, in which the usual S&C cascade of small talk and shoe-buying takes place in a kind of Abu Dhabi travelogue. Unlike Carrie and her pals, though, my flight on Etihad Airlines was business class, not first, so my seat was not a private cubicle with a bud vase and a sliding door. Still, it did have a colossal amount of leg room, not to be sneezed at during a 16-hour flight.

And one of the perks of business class was that you could order food at any hour, so I made a point of asking for a steak sandwich at 4:30 a.m. (Pacific time; it was 3:30 p.m. Emirates). The regular menu was the sort of eclectic list you might expect in a fancy hotel -- French, Italian, Indian, lite 'n' healthy -- but there was one Emirati dish, *machbūs*, a pleasant lamb stew flavored with a lot of cumin along with some raisins

*Continued on page 7*



**Nancy Zaslavsky**  
CHSC Vice President,  
Programs

**Program Notes**

A huge thank you to our outgoing Secretary, Joanna Erdos, for keeping us on track with her excellent minutes of quarterly board meetings and monthly e-mailers to members with up-to-date program and event information.

January kicked off the year with our annual president's talk, Charles Perry on, "Middle Eastern Cuisine is 500 Years Old." The talk, in a sense, was Charles's culmination of forty years studying Middle Eastern food history.

Andy Coe escaped February in New York to speak on, "Feeding Hungry Americans: Diets of the Great Depression." George Geary entertained everyone in March with his endearingly gossipy anecdotes in, "Famous Eateries of Hollywood's Golden Age." Neela Paniz and Nandita Godbole's chat, "Ancient Cuisine, Modern Interpretations" in April fascinated us with their quite different Indian upbringings and family relationships to food. May brought us Alicia Maher with, "El Salvador's Food, Pre-Hispanic to Today." How lovely it was for most of us to get a first-hand introduction to the Central American country's cuisine. Andy Smith was here in June to kick off his newest obsession, "Food Waste: A History," a topic Andy continues to research—an ancient yet definitely hot topic today.

Members, if you use Amazon.com to buy anything, not only our speakers' cookbooks, please make your purchases through Amazon Smile where CHSC gets a small percentage (.05%) through Amazon's charity donation (your item costs do not change). Type Culinary Historians of Southern California in the search bar under

*Continued on page 7*

The California Bear-Chef first appeared in the *Pan-Pacific Cook Book*, 1915.



Big bear hugs to Billie Connor-Dominguez & Ramon Dominguez for their \$300 sponsorship of the CHSC newsletter!

630 West Fifth Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90071-2002  
Address Correction Requested



The Culinary Historians of Southern California

## Events Around Los Angeles

**BrunchCon LA**  
**August 12-13, 2017**  
**The REEF, downtown Los Angeles**  
<http://brunchcon.com>



Too late for breakfast but too early for lunch? Celebrate this mealtime mashup with two days of brunch tastings from 50+ vendors featuring food and drinks from Southern CA's local restaurants, chefs, food trucks, and tastemakers included in the price of your ticket. Unlimited mimosas, live DJ music, a photo booth and lawn games galore. Must be over 21.

**Los Angeles Food & Wine Festival**  
**August 24-27, 2017**  
**Various locations in Los Angeles**  
[www.lafw.com](http://www.lafw.com)



Now in its 7th year, this four-day epicurean event showcases the finest in food and drink featuring celebrated chefs from throughout the country. The event spans the city and offers guests samples of food, wine, and cocktails from prominent influencers, live music, cookbook signings, wine seminars, and culinary demonstrations.

**PopUp Dinner L.A. 2017**  
**August 26, 2017**  
**Secret Los Angeles location**  
[www.handmade-events.com](http://www.handmade-events.com)



An elegant picnic that brings together thousands of people to celebrate community and creativity. We provide the location, table, chairs, and entertainment. You dress in chic white, bring your friends, gourmet food, beverages, and lavish table designs to a secret location revealed two hours prior. Guests must be 21+. Rain or shine - we will dine!

**Western Foodservice & Hospitality Expo**  
**August 27-29, 2017**  
**Los Angeles Convention Center**  
[www.westernfoodexpo.com](http://www.westernfoodexpo.com)



A premier three-day event that encompasses everything restaurant and food professionals need to master emerging trends, amp up profits, and engage their customers. Mouthwatering menu items to taste, mind-boggling foodservice technologies and equipment, dynamic innovations in menu development - it's all here!

**Cannabis Cooking Experience**  
**Friday eves., Sept. - Dec. 2017**  
**Address provided after ticket purchase**  
[www.eventbrite.com/e/cannabis-cooking-experience-los-angeles-edition-tickets-34189572933](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/cannabis-cooking-experience-los-angeles-edition-tickets-34189572933)



L.A. Cannabis Chefs & Happy Hippy Co. offer a hands-on 2.5 hour class. Learn different methods of infusion and how to perfect your cannabis cooking skills and dosages as an expert or first-timer. Taught in a 420 friendly setting. Must be over 21. No cannabis is guaranteed in the cost of the ticket to comply with local regulations for consumption-friendly events.

**Julian Grape Stomp**  
**September 2, 2017**  
**Menghini Winery, Julian, CA**  
[www.juliangrapestomp.com](http://www.juliangrapestomp.com)



Celebrate the crush - it's a rush! Performed for enjoyment and entertainment (no actual wine will be made from this event), it's an opportunity to see how wine was made before mechanization and to learn about this time-honored tradition. Includes tastings from 10 local wineries, food, shopping, Italian music and a bocce ball court. Come dressed as "I Love Lucy!"

**Indio International Tamale Festival**  
**December 2-3, 2017**  
**Downtown Indio, CA**  
[www.tamalefestival.net](http://www.tamalefestival.net)



How far would you drive for delicious tamales? Let us tempt you with 200 vendors, five stages of entertainment, beer and wine gardens, a tamale-eating contest, a carnival, a car show, and a parade. The Food Network ranked us in the top 10 All-American Food Festivals in the nation. Admission is free!

## A Letter from the Editor

I'm sure it's been said before, but we're really lucky to live in the metropolitan sprawl of Los Angeles when it comes to eating. The conflicts and challenges we face within such a diverse, multi-ethnic and dynamic community also yields the great reward of culinary variety, authentic tastes and opportunities to keep learning about food.

I would encourage residents to take advantage of the delicious subtleties that can be experienced through the numerous types of salsa in our restaurants, courtesy of broad Latin influences; the sumptuous feasts that can be had with Korean BBQ, Chinese hot pot, and Japanese shabu shabu restaurants in our many Asian neighborhoods, the ever-widening variety of boregs, lahmajun, shakshuka, kebobs and desserts available via our large Armenian community and the matzo ball soups, gefilte fish, and rugelach from the orthodox Jewish community on the west side. Those four may be among our largest communities here, but of course, there are countless other restaurants, delis, cafes and food trucks that bring splendid tastes and fascinating stories from around the globe to us here in Southern California, if you take the time to seek them out. Wouldn't you agree that our smorgasbord of cultures and fusion of tastes puts us in a great position for studying food history?

Also, eating in America is definitely a social activity, which is not always the case in other countries. My friend told me that it's considered bad form to eat in public streets in her native Korea. Another friend thought it strange that we make a point of eating out with others, when his Swiss-German culture dictates that it's customary to eat at home before meeting up with others for social activities. Such interesting lessons we learn from different traditions and perspectives. May you continue to explore the bounty of flavorful experiences in the greater Los Angeles region and value the ability to share our interests with like-minded fans of food.

*Sharon Tani*

Sharon Tani



## Piss and Vinegar

Ever wondered where this expression came from? Applied to people, "vinegary" denotes a crabby, ill-tempered manner. At the same time, "full of piss and vinegar" is a slangy Americanism for extreme exuberance and energy, not necessarily unflattering.

One of America's heroes of World War II, General Joseph Stilwell, renowned for his leadership in China and Burma, was nicknamed "Vinegar Joe," for the sharpness of his military campaigns rather than any sourness of disposition.

Source: Ammer, C. (1995). *Fruitcakes & couch potatoes, and other delicious expressions*. New York: Penguin Books.



## The Culinary Historians of Southern California

<http://chscsite.org/>

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**Newsletter Editor/Art Director:** Sharon Tani

Questions? Please contact: [Serdos@aol.com](mailto:Serdos@aol.com)

## Charles Perry: Going Gastro in Abu Dhabi Continued from Page 1

and cashews. It was a little like *taht al-'aish*, a common dish a bit further down the gulf in Oman, except that it was served mixed with the rice pilaf, rather than under it. It had intriguing Indian influences, Abu Dhabi being lots closer to Bombay than it is to Baghdad.

But it was the last Emirati food I would see on the trip. The locals are keen on making tourists happy, and they are a little diffident about their own cuisine, which is certainly not as highly developed as most of those represented in Abu Dhabi's hundreds of restaurants. At the book fair, there was even a Southern California taco truck ("Bespoke Comida to Your Taste"), and a bunch of Emirati dudes in gleaming white Arabian robes were lined up for their custom-made tacos. (The truck was run by an enterprising guy with a Cambodian name, more power to him.)



Photo credit: Charles Perry

Taco truck at the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair

I was there to do two nights of cooking demonstrations. I have only fluttering rags of memory from the first night, apart from having to work on an induction cooktop for the first time and having two eager assistants who seemed to be underfoot at all times. I'm a little better on the second night, when I made asparagus with coriander and eggs, cowpeas with caraway and ground walnuts and carrots with herbs and browned onions.

Among the people who came up to talk with me afterward were a cute Emirati couple, the husband wanting to know whether any of the medieval recipes were low-fat. How things had changed. Today Abu Dhabi is as new and colossal and flashy as Las Vegas. In 1980, when I was collecting the manuscripts I'd finally translated, it had been as up to date in its architecture -- and its worries -- as Kingman, AZ.

## Nancy Zaslavsky: Program Notes Continued from Page 1

"pick your own charitable organization." If we all go to smile.amazon.com and use the site regularly, CHSC's bank account will be a lot happier.

Please continue to generously support CHSC with sponsorships of our monthly expenses. Your donations certainly make a big difference in a world where everything is getting more expensive by the minute! Contributions can be earmarked for videotaping, our new website, even your favorite speaker's reception expenses.

Sheila Anderzunas is the chair of this year's members party, and we're thrilled to have her back! Lucky us. The party will be held at Sonia Gottesman's beautiful home in Sherman Oaks. **Save the date: Sunday, November 5th.** Theme, time, details to come. Don Corbett



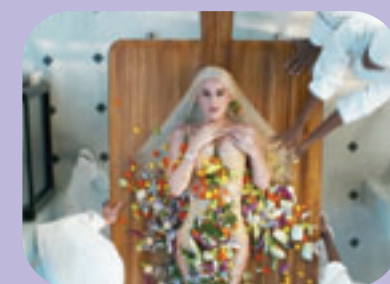
Save the date: November 5, 2017

is chair of the Silent Auction, so please join the fun and round up an item worth \$50 or more for the auction -- we're looking for gift certificates, food/wine gift baskets, travel/hotel stays, restaurant dinners, and items especially pertaining to food and wine--and contact Don with your donation. The Silent Auction is an important annual fundraiser for CHSC and we depend on the generosity of our members. Thanks!

## Who says food isn't fun, beautiful and sometimes downright weird?

Here's a few items that's been making news headlines:

Pop star Katy Perry released a new music video this year for her song, "Bon Appétit," featuring hip hop trio Migos and a cameo from Chef Roy Choi. The video is filled with sexual double entendres involving food and displays her body being kneaded, boiled, and chopped, as she's prepared and served by chefs as a meal. A metaphor for erotic liberation or a celebration of cannibalism? The song has been a top ten hit in France, Israel and Spain, though American reviewers have described it as "disturbing," "gross" and "goofy."



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPI-mRFEIHO](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPI-mRFEIHO)



Photo credit: theepisodiceater.com

A good way to impress your friends is to take them to Hana Restaurant in Singapore where soba and ramen soup are served with chopsticks magically poised in mid-air. Luckily for you this floating noodle dish doesn't require airfare anymore as it's being replicated at Neptune's Raw Oyster and Seafood Bar in Artesia, CA, whose owners are known for being up on all social media food trends.

Wonder how they do it? You'll have to order the dish to find out.

[www.facebook.com/neptunesrawbar/](http://www.facebook.com/neptunesrawbar/)

Emily Seilhamer of Elizabethtown, PA, is all about painting, upcycling, sewing and crafting, especially when it comes to using unconventional materials in an artistic way. On the day she met her future husband, he offered her a pack of Starburst candy and since then, family and friends have helped her save Starburst wrappers for 4 years. Ironing, organizing, folding and assembling them into paper chains sewn with elastic thread, she created this self-styled dress and doesn't seem to have suffered any ill effects from eating a lot of candy.



Photo credit: Emily Seilhamer

[www.facebook.com/EmilySeilhamerArt/](http://www.facebook.com/EmilySeilhamerArt/)



What's the most iconic building in Bordeaux, France today? Naturally, it's La Cité du Vin (City of Wine). Rising 180 feet above the Garonne River, this gold, silver and glass structure is meant to simulate a grapevine's root and branches. Each floor presents interactive exhibits about the science of grape growing, the art of wine tasting and the history of wine culture. Visitors can also dine in its restaurant, peruse its reading room, enter the wine cave, and enjoy the tasting bar. Most spectacular is the viewing platform called the Belvedere that offers a 360-degree panoramic view of Bordeaux.

[www.laciteduvin.com/en](http://www.laciteduvin.com/en)

A few years ago I was driving with a friend who saw a juice bar and asked, "What's the deal with juice bars? I can get juice at the grocery store, or make it at home. Why do people go to these places?" It was a valid question. You can buy fruit and vegetable juice in grocery stores, though the "fresh" juice there might have been sitting for a week. Some people obviously think there's enough of a difference that they patronize specialty juice bars.

To figure out who is and why, I posed a Slater, founder Juicery, a chain and now has people drinking juice they did it from specialty to claim that juice upswing, so was replied that he wasn't



Hayden Slater

buying these fresh juices question to Hayden and CEO of Pressed that started in 2010 23 locations. Are the same amount of years ago, but buying places? I expected him was on a permanent surprised when he sure.

"I think what's happening in the juice category is what happened with coffee, how it went from buying ground Folgers or instant crystals to specialists. Starbucks created this retail formula, and it started a demand for the artisanal form. In a way we've gone backwards; people used to juice their own oranges, and then came convenience products like frozen and pasteurized juices, even powders like Tang. We've brought back the cold-pressed, fresh, and raw category that brings back the flavor and nutrients, and it's making noise in this area."

This would be a satisfying answer if modern juice bars were selling mainly artisanal versions of commodity products like orange or apple juice, rather than blends of fruit, vegetables, and herbs that only need booze to be called a cocktail. I pointed out that while drinking juice may be traditional, the concoctions sold by modern juice bars are unlike any traditional beverage on Earth. Who, I asked, had the idea of mixing beet or carrot with orange juice, or any of the other outré ideas that are now available at most juice shops? Hayden thought a moment and then mentioned David Otto, who started the Beverly Hills Juice Club in 1975.

Otto's road to juicing started differently that most other nutritional health advocates. He wasn't personally unhealthy and seeking a cure, blessed with a philosophical or religious reason to lead a pure life, or under the impression he had figured out a secret about the human digestive system. He changed the way Americans drink their vegetables because the giant angry bull he was hallucinating told him to. Otto had dropped acid and ordered a steak in a restaurant (in 1967 this kind of decision wasn't as odd it would be now), and as he cut into his T-bone the spirit of the bull appeared in front of him. Otto "had a mental communication with this creature," and decided he would stop eating creatures. This started his journey into vegetarianism and evolution from a talent booker for local bands to a juicing and natural foods guru.



David Otto and his daughter Erika (left) and wife Jennifer (right)

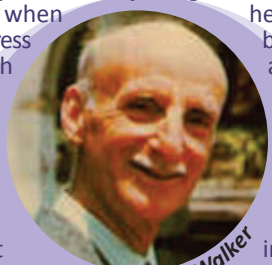
I called Otto, who at 79 years old is still at his shop on Beverly Boulevard, and mentioned that Hayden told me he was the founder of the juice craze. Otto was modestly unwilling to claim credit. "That's very nice of him. It is the general perception in Southern California that I started doing this in 1975, but there was one juice bar in business before I was, at the Grand Central Market Downtown. It was called La Hood's... There was another guy in Redondo Beach named Bruce who also had a juice bar back then, but he was kinda irregular - if the waves were good the store was closed and he was out surfing. There were also health food stores here and there that made fresh juices, but

[Bruce's Juices and LaHood's] were the only places that specialized in juice. The guy who really should get the kudos is a guy named Norman Walker, who wrote books about the health benefits of juice. He died at about 100 years old after a lifetime of promoting juices. That's where I got a lot of my information."

I've been unable to find out much about Bruce the juicer, but Norman Walker has an interesting history. Walker was a pioneer of juicing fruit and vegetables for health, and his 1936 book, *Fruit and Vegetable Juices: What's Missing In Your Body?*, was the first to champion juice as a cure-all. While his theories about the human digestive system were definitely wrong and he inflated his credentials by claiming to be a doctor, the diet he invented fits modern ideas about nutritionally balanced vegetarianism. It worked for him, since he lived to be 99 and was reportedly physically and mentally vigorous into old age. Walker also invented one of the first mechanical juicers, though it is less efficient and harder to clean than those used today. This matters in the world of juicing, as some advocates claim that the method and speed of extraction of juice alters the nutritional content. The people who run juice bars are frequently partisans of different technologies, and Hayden Slater rhapsodized about the merits of the system he uses.

"We use [the term] 'cold pressed' to compare with pasteurized or heat-processed juice. We do use a different process from places where the juice is blended right there using a centrifugal juicer. That makes a tasty product, but the way it is extracted starts it oxidizing immediately. You have to drink it extremely quickly. If you take it home or consume it later, the flavors and nutrients are lost. Our juices are made with the entire vegetable fruit or vegetable turned into a pulp, then subjected to 10,000 pounds of pressure in a refrigerated room. Some studies say that you get 90% more nutrients and enzymes that way. Our shelf life is longer for that reason."

I was curious about the change in juicing technology, and in the meaning of 'cold pressed' since I had never seen a competing product that was called hot pressed, so asked David Otto about it. He explained that juicing technology was a lot more primitive when he started his business. "I built my own press one that was big enough he said. 'Every press then was extremely put the words cold it, and that's the where now. I don't I just made it up. because we pressed it because I couldn't find and did what I wanted,' that was made back slow. Back in 1975 I pressed on the side of buzz word every-know what it means, Maybe it came to me in a cold room..."



Norman Walker

There is certainly a difference in flavor, and probably one in the nutritional value, between supermarket juice pressed days before and the fresh products. The water in the juice begins to separate, the bright, sharp flavors are lost to oxidation, and any citrus pulp in the mix begins infusing its more bitter flavor into the rest of the ingredients. In complex blends of fruit with vegetable juices or spices like turmeric the shift in flavor is more pronounced, with some flavors disappearing and others intensifying. It's harder to say what the health effects of keeping fresh juice around for days might be, but one of the main reasons for drinking juice is the beneficial antioxidants and digestive enzymes, and both are damaged by prolonged storage. While some have argued that there are few negative effects of storing fresh juice, nobody argues that the practice has any benefits.

Beverly Hills Juice Club, Pressed Juicery, and other local producers all offer exotic blends that include fruits, vegetables, nuts, and greens like cilantro and wheatgrass. Menus everywhere seem to be getting more baroque, and grocery stores and big chains like Starbucks now offer their own juice products. Fresh juices have moved beyond the core group of health enthusiasts, and are now part of the American mainstream. If there is a downside, it's that the new business climate may make it hard for young entrepreneurs with a juicer and some fresh ideas about health and flavor. That is ever the fate of pioneers like Dave Otto, who create a world in which they must compete with their own ideas gone mainstream.



## Feasting like it's 1869



by Faye Levy and Yakir Levy

*Cookbook*, a translation of a 13th-century cookbook.

But what Charles was preparing was not Middle Eastern food—it was classic French cuisine. To go with the steaks, he had made espagnole sauce, which he started with 30 pounds of meat! We asked how long the sauce had to cook. "Oh, about 24 hours," he said.

Each course was quite a project on its own, and all turned out delicious. A lovely consommé Sévigné, a chicken consommé that Charles clarified twice, had a garnish of peas and strips of chicken quenelles. Elaborate chicken brissotins, made from a baked chicken mixture that was then fried like croquettes, followed; they were coated with velouté sauce enriched with crème fraîche. The filet mignon steaks came topped with the espagnole sauce and butter-sautéed mushrooms and were accompanied by spinach and peas. Another main course was baked chicken cutlets that Charles had formed from a mixture of puréed chicken with béchamel



Charles cooking in the Corbetts' kitchen.

sauce seasoned with lemon juice and Tabasco, and finished by breading and pan-frying.

Afterwards came a refreshing citrus-flavored pear and currant sorbet that had so much sugar, said Charles, that it didn't even freeze. It was served doused with kirsch and champagne and it was spirited indeed! For the grand finale of this sumptuous dinner, Charles prepared a beautiful charlotte Parisienne filled with vanilla Bavarian cream and served with raspberry sauce.



A reproduction of Delmonico's New York 1869 "Dinner for California Pioneers"

## A Special CHSC Movie Screening and Interview with Jeremiah Tower & Lydia Tenaglia

This was an exciting and well-attended event! On April 23, 2017, CHSC members and their friends attended a special ticketed event at the Landmark Theatre in Los Angeles to screen the new motion picture release of, "Jeremiah Tower: The Last Magnificent."

This biopic records the remarkable life of Jeremiah Tower, one of the most controversial and influential figures in the history of American gastronomy. Documenting his early career at Chez Panisse in Berkeley in 1972 and his ascendancy to fame as a pioneering figure in the emerging California cuisine movement with the launch of his own Stars Restaurant in San Francisco, one of America's top-grossing U.S. restaurants of its time, the film also explores his eventual and mysterious departure from the restaurant scene for nearly two decades, only to resurface in New York City's fabled but troubled Tavern on the Green before subsequent launching into a journey of personal self-discovery. The film includes interviews with Mario Batali, Anthony Bourdain, Ruth Reichl and Martha Stewart to tell the story of the rise and fall of America's first celebrity chef, whose brash personality and culinary



Nancy Zaslavsky & Jeremiah Tower

genius has made him a living legend.

Following the screening, the audience was treated to a Q & A session with Jeremiah Tower and film director, Lydia Tenaglia, which was moderated by CHSC's Vice President of Programs, Nancy Zaslavsky. Here's a peek at some of her questions for Jeremiah Tower before the official interview began:

**NZ:** Who came up with the film's rather egotistic, flamboyant title?

**JT:** Ha! It was in reference to what James Villas described as Lucius Beebe (my hero) in the film.

**NZ:** You're widely considered "The father of California cuisine." How did L.A.'s Michael McCarty, Bruce Marder, and Wolfgang Puck influence Stars?

**JT:** West Beach Cafe's, Michael's and Michael Robert's Trumps' stark interior "looks," contemporary art, all-California menus. Everything simple. Simply great ingredients cooked simply and cleanly.

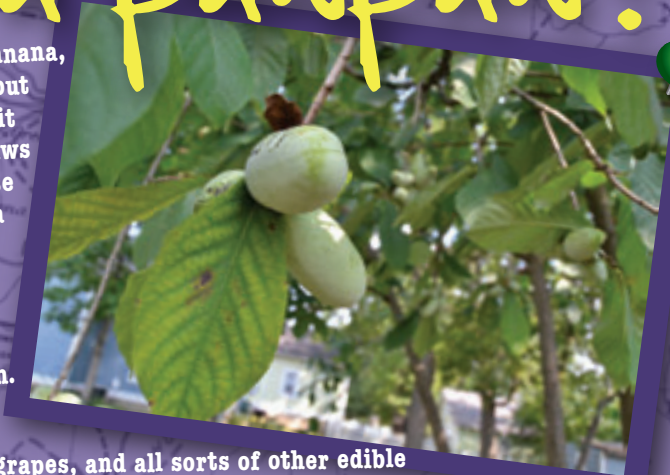
**NZ:** After Stars and the ill-fated Tavern on the Green fiasco you went off the grid to the Yucatan. Why there, and what are you doing these days?

**JT:** I ran to the sun, the sea, and Mayan history. I love living in the sun and writing. I finished *Start the Fire*, the rewrite of *California Dish*. I also finished *Table Manners*. Besides traveling, speaking, and more writing, I want to do a lot more scuba diving.

Following the event, Jeremiah was available for a meet-and-greet with CHSC members where he graciously signed autographs and took photos with fans, especially a few ex-Stars employees. Attendees had a great time and both presenters mentioned how impressed they were with the quality of the audience questions.

# What's a pawpaw?

Throughout the years it's gone by a lot of names – frost banana, Indiana banana, fetid-bush, bandango, custard apple, prairie banana, poor man's banana – but most of the time it's just been called pawpaw. At first glance, both the fruit and the tree seem out of place in North America. A cluster of young pawpaws hanging from its branch resembles a miniature hand of bananas. And those clusters are tucked behind the tree's lush foliage, shaded by leaves often a foot in length, larger and broader than those of avocado or mango. Wild pawpaws often appear kidney-shaped, two to six inches long, and one to three inches wide; they typically weigh from just a few ounces to half a pound. But under cultivation – and yes, there are pawpaw breeders and growers – fruits that weigh more than a pound and a half are not uncommon.



American landscapes are filled with berries, plums, persimmons, grapes, and all sorts of other edible fruits. But there is no native fruit as large as pawpaw. To walk into a wild grove is unlike any other American foraging experience. Rock-hard when underripe, the pawpaw eventually turns as delicate and fragile as a raspberry, and only at this stage of extreme vulnerability is it ready to be picked. If unpicked by human hands, ripe fruit will fall to the ground (hence the chorus of the American folk song: "Picking up pawpaws / Put 'em in a basket / Way down yonder in the pawpaw patch") and can then be eaten. Or, if you don't want to wait for them to fall on their own accord, a shake of the tree's trunk will release any fruits that are ready. But you must be gentle: Any unripe fruit shaken down too early will fail to ripen at all. A prematurely picked pawpaw will turn black and rot, yet never sweeten to its potential.

In the Deep South, pawpaws usually begin to ripen in late July or early August; in the mid-Atlantic and Ohio River Valley, early September; and in the fruit's northernmost range, with fruit ripening in mid- to late September, pawpaws can be picked as late as the middle of October. Each tree produces ripe fruit for about thirty days. But, as with everything else in nature, the time-tables depend on fluctuations in weather. I've begun to associate pawpaw with goldenrod: When the fields are yellow with the latter's bloom, it's time to check the pawpaw patch.

Pawpaws vary greatly from tree to tree, but even fruit from a single tree will differ in taste considerably depending on its ripeness, the amount of sunlight it receives, and a host of other factors. There is a stage in the ripe fruit's development when its flavor is perfect, but this, of course, is subjective. Regardless, after it's picked, the pawpaw's skin will begin to blacken in just three days, and its sweetness will intensify until caramel is the overwhelming flavor and scent. Alabamian Dale Brooks once told me you can judge a good pawpaw the same way you judge a Cajun gumbo. "If after you eat it and a minute later you start to talk and your lips stick together – that's a good one."

The pawpaw's flavor is most often described as a cross between banana and mango, hence "bandango." But again, they vary greatly. Wynn Dinnsen, a pawpaw grower in Pittsboro, North Carolina, keeps a log describing the fruits of more than two hundred unique trees he has raised from seed, including notes on their weight, seed-to-pulp ratio, and flavor. In the pages of his notebook, slightly stained from pawpaw pulp, he has recorded flavors ranging from melon and pineapple to cotton candy and anise. A "Hoosier lad" once told author Euell Gibbons, "They taste like mixed bananers and pears, and feel like sweet pertaters in your mouth." Jerry Dedon, a grower in Louisiana, says there are just two basic flavor types: banana or mango. Still others will state plainly, "Pawpaw tastes like pawpaw."

by Andrew Moore

Historically, pawpaws were one of the many fruits Native Americans culled from the forest. To the earliest European settlers, the fruit was both a curiosity and at times an important food source. At least two founding fathers were interested in pawpaws: Thomas Jefferson sent seeds to contacts in Europe, and George Washington planted them at Mount Vernon. Various species of pawpaw were described in Bartram's Travels - written by the famed naturalist William Bartram - accompanied by sketches of leaves, flowers, and fruit. Decades earlier, Williams's father, botanist John Bartram, was among the first Americans to send pawpaw seeds to Europe, in 1763. John James Audubon painted ripe, yellowing pawpaws and leaves in his portrait of the yellow-billed cuckoo as part of his seminal work, Birds of America. And from the works of James Whitcomb Riley and Kentuckian Jesse Stuart, to and Clark expedition fed – and contentedly so – during a stretch when their provisions were reduced to just one biscuit per man. One of their last journal entries reads, "Our party entirely out of provisions subsisting on poppaws . . . [but] the party appear perfectly contented and tell us they can live very well on the pappaws."

Towns named Paw Paw exist today in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, Michigan, and Kansas. Then there's Paw Paw Island, situated in the Mississippi River; Paw Paw Cove in the Chesapeake Bay; Paw Paw Cemetery in Ohio; and Pawpaw Plains, Tennessee; not to mention hundreds of Paw Paw Roads, Streets, and Avenues. Considering that each of these places was named for the locale's abundance of pawpaws, it's strange to think that the pawpaw went from something town founders couldn't help but notice and marvel at, to being nearly forgotten. Considering this, I wondered,



## Why didn't the pawpaw become as American as apple pie?

Of course, it's not really true that no Americans today are familiar with the pawpaw. Naturalists, woodsmen, hunters, fishermen, and rare fruit and nut enthusiasts have remained acquainted with it throughout the years, though more so in some regions than in others. And in my conversations with older Americans, from West Virginia and southern Ohio to Arkansas and Missouri, I've been regaled with fond and colorful pawpaw pickin' memories. One woman recalled that, as children, "starting about the middle of August, every kid was expected to walk the creek bottoms coming home from school and pick up pawpaws for dessert." But at some point in the twentieth century – as many of the same old-timers have concurred – it appears that pawpaws disappeared from common knowledge.

Although pawpaws were once widely sold at local markets, and regional newspapers even reported on the quality of the wild crop, the fruit was never brought into domestic cultivation. The most common explanation for this has been that pawpaws have too short a shelf life, and are too fragile to meet market demands. And with the rise of a global food system, the ease of shipping tropical fruits – bananas, pineapple, and more recently mangoes and avocados – had diminished the need for the poor man's banana. But as I began my research, I suspected that this wasn't the whole story.



In the few years since I first tasted a pawpaw, the fruit has experienced a modest comeback. Organic gardeners have become interested in it because, unlike so many fruit trees, pawpaws are virtually unaffected by pests and are easily grown organically. Native-plant and butterfly gardeners appreciate the tree both as a larval host and for its important niche in forest ecosystems. And because pawpaws are highly nutritious, they're gaining the interest of health conscious eaters. Scientists have even shown that certain compounds found within the tree – Annonaceous acetogenins – are among the most potent cancer-fighting substances yet discovered. Still, despite this history and this potential, those in the know remain a distinct minority.

To get the whole story of the pawpaw's importance – and later unimportance – to human cultures, I started at the beginning, traveling forty miles from Pittsburgh to the Meadowcroft Rockshelter. Meadowcroft is the earliest known site of human presence in North America, with the longest sequence of continuous use – at least sixteen thousand years. Among the fossils that have been discovered here are those pawpaw seeds. When I visited several years ago, at least a dozen pawpaw trees were growing along Cross Creek, a tributary of the Ohio. I was humbled to see that pawpaws, trees that provided food for the continent's earliest inhabitants nearly twenty thousand years ago, were still there, still flowering each spring, still producing fruit each fall. And yet despite such a long history, how many people today know they can eat those Cross Creek fruits, or the millions of others produced among similar creeks and streams throughout the Ohio Valley?

Andrew Moore grew up in Lake Wales, Florida, just south of the pawpaw's native range. A writer and gardener, he now lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He was the news editor and a feature writer for Pop City, a weekly news e-magazine in Pittsburgh, and his stories have been published in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, The Daily Yonder, and the Biscayne Times.



Pawpaw--a 2016 James Beard Foundation Award nominee in the Writing & Literature category--is his first book.

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