

# THE FOOD JOURNAL

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



## CHSC Programs at the Central Library's Mark Taper Auditorium:

**January 9, 2016**

Charles Perry

**Dried, Frozen and Rotted: Food Preservation**

**February 13, 2016**

Albert Sonnenfeld

**Global Warning: Macrowaves on Stormy Restaurant Seas**

**March 12, 2016**

Deborah Prinz

**Chocolate's Religious Narratives & Rituals**

**April 9, 2016**

Andy Smith

**Fast Food: A Global Perspective**

**May 14, 2016**

Liz Pollock

**Julia Child: A Well-Thumbbed Checklist of Books and Ephemera**

**June 11, 2016**

Amelia Saltsman

**"This Is Jewish Food? Who Knew?"**



**Charles Perry**  
CHSC President

## Stunt Cuisine

Food is about nutrition and flavor, sure, but sometimes it's got to be about more. Throughout history people have felt the need for special-occasion food that's way beyond haute cuisine. Food that isn't meant just to taste and look good but to make the diners gasp.

The simple-minded way is to use staggeringly rare and/or staggeringly expensive ingredients. We think of Roman emperors with their dishes of larks' tongues. Sixth-century Persian aristocrats feasted on *charp-angusht*, a pastry made with gazelle fat. The proverbially lean gazelle; I'm thinking it might have taken a whole gazelle to make a batch of *charp-angusht*.

Until the 18th century, sugar was a wildly expensive ingredient, so way too much sugar was a fashionable idea. Renaissance confectioners had figured out how to make hard candy by boiling syrup until it was just about to crystallize and then pouring it into molds. There are records of dinners where all the "dishware," all the "tableware" and all the "fruit" were pure sugar, as if a meal had been touched by a sort of simple-carbohydrate Midas. The English writer Elizabeth David observed that these read like the parties of silly, self-indulgent children. (We should remember that until recent centuries the usual life expectancy was about 35, so many a monarch was in

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**Nancy Zaslavsky**  
Vice Pres., Programs

## Program Notes

Raleigh Studios, Hollywood was the location this year for our annual member party. We double-celebrated CHSC's 20th birthday and the 100th anniversary of our culinary bear logo from the Pan Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. Many thanks to unflappable Chair Grace Bauer and her committee as they sweated through a September heat wave; everyone thanks them, one and all, for their Herculean efforts to make the event a success. We send special kudos to Don Corbett and Jan Fahey, and especially Charles Perry for another donation of an historical dinner for the silent auction.

L.A.'s record-breaking 2015 heat was a huge factor in August, too, as it kept people away from the Hollywood farmers market used cookbook sale. The Board and Chair Ani Boyadjian have plans to change the sale to an easier, less stressful, format. Keep your eyes and ears open for updates. Please, as always, save your unwanted cookbooks for the sale as you purge those over-stuffed bookshelves!

Cookbook librarian (as well as subject specialist for Patents and Trademarks area) Stella Mittelbach kicked off the fall speaker line-up with September's, "100 Years of California Cooking at the Central Library" with a photo presentation from the Library's stellar culinary collection. Piero Selvaggio, owner of Santa Monica's beloved Italian restaurant, Valentino, entertained in October on, "History of Los Angeles Italian

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Many thanks to **Joan Nielsen**, our first editor of *The Food Journal*, for sponsoring the printing of this issue in honor of her mother, **Helen Nielsen Allen**, our first Publicity Chair. Both were founding members of CHSC and coordinated many of our early events and members-only parties.

We applaud and thank you for your many contributions over the years. Cheers to you both!