

# THE DIGEST

## A Newsletter For The Interdisciplinary Study of Food

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Volume I No. 1

November, 1977

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Prior to the 1977 American Folklore Society Meetings, held in Philadelphia, Dr. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett proposed the creation of a Foodways Section and a newsletter devoted to the study of food. Its objective would be to facilitate the exchange of ideas among those who are interested and inform readers about ongoing research, conferences, publications and funding. The AFS responded by formalizing a Foodways section of the Society. In conjunction, a newsletter will be published three times each year with the hope of fulfilling the need for a mode of communication across disciplinary boundaries. The Digest welcomes contributions related to any investigations of food, dietary habits, nutrition, medicine, agriculture, home economics, cross-cultural food research, feast and festival foods, food and history, methodology of food research, and food attitudes. In this way we hope to acquaint readers with the work of scholars and students of foodways in various disciplines.

### Regular Features

The Newsletter will include: recent events, guest editorials, interviews, current research projects, reviews of books, films and other media, archival material, grants and support, courses, and notes and queries; a calendar of events and conferences will be announced as these occur. In addition, there will be special issues devoted to focal topics such as government, industry, museums, herbal medicine, sources of grants and funding and other diverse aspects of food study.

If you wish to receive the newsletter or to contribute material, a questionnaire has been included in the last section for your convenience. Please send replies to:

Janet Theophano  
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## RECENT EVENTS

The Cardiff Symposium on Ethnological Food Research: The Third International Conference on Ethnological Food Research was held at Cardiff, Wales, August 22-27. The first in the series was held at the University of Lund in Sweden, in 1970, the second at Helsinki in 1973. There were forty-five delegates in attendance, from twenty nations, and thirty of these read papers. The Americans present were Jay A. Anderson, Margaret L. Arnott, Norge W. Jerome, Judith Katena-Apte, Paul Rozin, Lorna Sass, F.J. Simoons, Robert J. Theodoratus, William Woyt Weaver, Roger Welsch, Christine S. Wilson, and Don Yoder. The schools represented were the Universities of California, Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania, Duke University, and the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. The European representatives involved England, Scotland, Wales, Eire, Northern Ireland, France, West Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. Most of the European delegates were associated with universities, academies of science, or ethnographic museums.

The symposium was sponsored and housed by the Welsh Folk Museum, Trevor M. Owen, Curator. The sessions took place and the delegates were housed at Dyffryn House, an estate used as a conference center, outside of Cardiff. The receptions held at the Welsh Folk Museum at St. Fagans, and the hospitality of the Lord Mayor of Cardiff, who entertained the delegates at a gala dinner in Cardiff Castle, plus two days of excursions through the mountains and valleys of South Wales, visiting agricultural villages, mining towns, and food processing plants, gave the attenders a marvelous taste of Welsh hospitality, and enabled them to sample traditional Welsh foods everywhere. A high point was the "Hwyrnos" or Welsh Night at Plas Glansein, Llangadog, where Welsh folksingers, harpists, clog dancers and other entertainers performed, as did the audience. The recipes for the Welsh dishes, some of which were taken to America by emigrants, can be found in the valuable new historical cookbook, *Welsh Fare: A Selection of Traditional Recipes*, by S. Minwel Tibbett, of the Welsh Folk Museum.

The papers ran the gamut of scholarly interest in traditional food and foodways. With their major focus on ethnological research into food in specific cultures, most of them dealt with Europe and the United States. Several treated medieval cuisine, several dealt with the history of specific foods (bread, potatoes, maize, sausage, even the Philadelphia soft pretzel).

Several papers dealt with food as medicine: "Food in a Medical System: Prescriptions in Health and Illness among Malays" (Christine S. Wilson); "The Production of Medicinal Wine in the 15th Century in Hungary: The Role of Wine in Folk Cuisine and Folk Medicine of the Present" (Elizabeth Sergo). Norge W. Jerome's paper, "Hunger Meals in Industrialized Societies" studied the recent American phenomenon of the TV-Dinner, and the author admitted having had difficulty in finding informants who would admit to having eaten them.

The more general papers included "Preferences and Taboos in Food and Drink" (Ulrich Tolksdorf and Konrad Kostlin); "Museums, Ethnological Food Research, and the World Food Crisis" (Jay A. Anderson); and "Starting an Anthropology Handbook on Food Habits for the Knowledge of Man's Food Behavior" (Paul Raybaut). Several participants discussed the folklore and psychology of food: "The Thrive-Morsel: A Study in Cultural Adaptation" (Nils-Arvid Bringeus); "Food and Traditional Verbal Modes in the Social Control of Children" (J.D.A. Widdowson); and "The Psychology of Eating" (Paul Rozin). Finally there were several papers analyzing cookbooks as cultural and social-historical documentation: "The Use of Cannabis in Two Cookbooks of the 15th Century" (Johanna Maria van Winter); and "The First Ethnic Cookbook in the United States" (William Woys Weaver).

The conference, like those at Lund and Helsinki, had two official languages, English and German. Simultaneous translations were provided by excellent interpreters, over superb electronic equipment, courtesy of the Welsh Folk Museum. Because of the number of papers, the time for formal discussion was limited, but the informal discussions went on constantly. The friendships and contacts made in this 20 nation group of scholars from the United States as well as Eastern and Western Europe will stimulate further research and initiate new cooperative projects over the years to come.

University of Pennsylvania

Don Yoder

Food Writers' Meeting: Interview with Dr. Bruce Buckley.

The Second National Association of Food Writers' meeting was held on June 9 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The NAF, a young group, consists of primarily non-syndicated columnists representing smaller cities of the United States. The purpose of these

meetings is to discuss and disseminate a broad range of information dealing with such diverse topics as the Nutrition Institute, food legislation, and health and cultural food habits.

Dr. Buckley, representing the Society for the North American Cultural Survey (SNACS), participated in the panel of the NAF meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Co-panelists were Karen Hess, co-author of The Taste of America and Richard H. Forsythe, vice-president of Food Science and Technology at the Campbell Institute of Food Research in Camden, New Jersey. Dr. Buckley discussed the responsibility of food editors to recognize and reinforce the cultural food preferences of their particular regions. He also described the SNACS project, its aims and accomplishments and its plans for the future. (See article on SNACS) Buckley mentioned a particularly interesting exchange with Karen Hess in which she argued that the best way to conduct contemporary and historic field research was through cookbooks of a given period. Buckley's widely quoted response was to ask if anyone wanted to be represented in history by the Galloping Gourmet, James Beard, or Julia Childs as examples of typical cookery.

#### Philadelphia Foodways Group

A multidisciplinary group of students and faculty from varied schools in the Philadelphia area have agreed to meet regularly (at three to four week intervals) for informal discussions of the participants' ongoing research in diverse aspects of food study. Past speakers have included: Dr. Hans Teuteberg, University of Munster, discussed the historical reconstruction of dietary changes during the Industrial Revolution in Germany; Amy Shuman, University of Pennsylvania, Folklore, talked about her interest in microanalytic studies of food and food related behavior, in particular "the rhetoric of portions"; Dr. Paul Rozin, April Fallon, Brenda Gines, University of Pennsylvania, Psychology Department, addressed the issue of the human acquisition of a 'liking' for bitter substances, such as coffee and the distinction between 'disgust' and 'dislike' as these affect food habits.

Dr. Judith Goode, Karen Curtis, Temple University, Anthropology Department and Janet Theophano, University of Pennsylvania, Folklore, will speak about an ethn nutritional study involving several Italian-American communities in Philadelphia. Future speakers will include Hugh A. Gilmore who will remark on the feeding strategies of baboons.

The group welcomes new participants to join the meetings either regularly or occasionally. Please address inquiries to Janet Theophano.

## COURSES

University of Maryland: Dr. Lois Woodarski of the Department of Food, Nutrition, and I.A. will be teaching a course on the origin of food and the development of foodways. The course is tentatively scheduled for the Spring, 1978.

Rider College: Dr. A.G. Zimmerman, Chairman of the American Studies Department, will be teaching a course in food and history. Tentative scheduling is for the Spring, 1978.

Agricultural schools and departments of nutrition of universities, colleges, and community colleges often have courses related to cultural and social scientific aspects of food. These schools may have excellent bibliographic and library resources.

Temple University: Dr. Judith Goode of the Anthropology Department will offer The Anthropology of Food beginning in the Spring, 1978. The course offers perspectives ranging from the ecology of food production and food choice, food and social exchange to phenomenological and symbolic analyses.

## PUBLICATIONS

The Newsletter of the International Committee for the Anthropology of Food and Food Habits. This publication is issued once each year under the auspices of the Science Union and the Congress of Anthropology and Ethnology. The newsletter, which straddles the various disciplines, shares information with its members about recent publications, commentaries and observations about food. For further information write to

Dr. Margaret Arnott  
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## CURRENT RESEARCH

Hans J. Teuteberg  
Professor for Modern Social and Economic History  
The University of Munster  
20-22 Domplatz; D4400 Munster  
Federal Republic of Germany

Born and educated in Germany, Dr. Teuteberg combined studies in history, economics, political science, sociology, and English

philology, before taking his doctorate in 1958. His journalistic skills and interests in sociology, economics, and politics have won Dr. Teuteberg a wide variety of positions: he has been a managing editor of the quarterly Soziale Welt; an assistant at the Social Research Center, University of Muenster; and the Director of Studies at "Haus Rissen", a private institute for economic and social politics in Hamburg. A professor of Modern Social and Economic History, and director of the Department of History, University of Muenster, Dr. Teuteberg has also published articles and monographs which bring an historical and sociological perspective to the field of nutrition studies. In 1973, he was elected to the Board of the German Society of Nutrition as chairman of the Division of Nutrition and Social Sciences. His most recent work in nutrition/history and sociology took him to the U.S. for a year, as a researcher for Hagley Mills. In May of 1977, Dr. Teuteberg presented a talk to the Foodways group, a gathering of psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and folklorists at the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Teuteberg is currently engaged in an historical study of nutrition in the United States. With a grant from the Hagley Foundation of Delaware, he spent 1975-77 in America, researching Change in Dietary Habits in the United States under the Influence of Industrialization 1776-1914. According to Teuteberg, improved nutrition--increased intake of vitamins, minerals, and trace elements as well as mere calories--co-occurred with the Industrial Revolution allowing "a few nations to escape the vicious cycle of chronic malnutrition and low productivity." To trace the history and study the developments of this "Dietary Revolution", and its impact on daily life, he examines a variety of primary and secondary materials, ranging from cookbooks, etiquettes, travel reports, diaries, magazines, household and military food lists, records of slave diets, and local histories to the scientific nutrition publications and Health Movement literature. Through careful examination of the historical record, Dr. Teuteberg thus integrates changing dietary patterns into the larger social and economic matrix. Besides reconstructing an historical context and providing the data for correlations of nutrition, health and economic growth, this empirical approach allows Dr. Teuteberg to clarify pre-existing nutritional generalizations such as those about working class diet, and the relative standards of living of rural and urban workers.



## SNACS

Folklorists and geographers have formed the Society for the North American Cultural Survey which is compiling an atlas of North American culture. The series will include a volume on food. Some of the possible topics considered will be: methods of food preparation, meal and snacking patterns, regionalisms in restaurants, symbolic attributes of various kinds of food and drink and many others.

A meeting of SNACS was held in Louisville, Ky. October 20-22, 1977. The progress of the foodways volume was reported by Dr. Bruce Buckley, who detailed some of the findings of the survey taken at the Festival of American Folklife. Later in the day, participants met in special interest sections. The foodways group discussed sampling techniques and interview procedures.

At this time, the final version of the foodways questionnaire devised by Dr. Buckley has been tested with the assistance of a small grant from the Smithsonian Institution. The project is ready to begin in January 1978. Dr. Wilbur Zelinsky of Penn State and Dr. Buckley are seeking funding for the collation and analysis of the data. According to Dr. John Rooney, executive director of SNACS, a national network of volunteers is going to coordinate the administration of the questionnaires nationwide. Volunteers who wish to help with the fieldwork are welcome to apply.

Interested persons who would like to join or support SNACS or who would like to obtain the first two "scratch" atlases may direct their inquiries to SNACS, Department of Geography, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 74074. Membership is \$5.00 per person. Volunteers or others who wish further information about the foodways atlas may contact either Dr. John Rooney at Oklahoma State or Dr. Bruce Buckley at Cooperstown, N.Y.

## Philadelphia Food Survey Project

The project, which began in 1973 with the aid of an NSF fund granted through Temple University, was developed by David Feingold, Judith Goode, and Karen Kerner. Fieldwork in an Italian-American community in South Philadelphia was conducted by Janet Theophano. The fieldwork consisted of three phases:

- 1) Initial interviews with the families which concerned aspects of household composition, socio-economic level, country and region of origin, daily, weekly and seasonal eating patterns,

ritual and festival events, folk and health beliefs, as well as a food item frequency inventory.

2) Following this was the additional interviewing of a selected portion of the community. This format was designed to elicit data on child socialization, the concept of meals, and cultural change and innovation.

3) The last phase of the research involved a biomedical appraisal to ascertain the nutritional status of the participants. Karen Curtis, Temple University, using the same format, interviewed Italian-American families in Ambler, Pa., thereby expanding the project to include varying locales for comparison.

The project was conceived as an interdisciplinary effort which would reveal the cognitive, symbolic, and economic determinants which shape the food complex of individuals and a social group. One of the goals of the project is to contribute to an understanding of the "processes of development of subcultural cuisines in the United States."

Sheila Cosminsky  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Rutgers University  
Camden, N.J.

An anthropologist and assistant professor at Rutgers University, Dr. Cosminsky's work in the area of foodways springs from an interest in medical anthropology, perspectives of cultural change, and culture and personality studies. Her work in Central America, Africa, and the Caribbean has dealt with many of the possible uses of food substances, both as nutrition and as medicine. Presently the anthropologist on MIT's interdisciplinary project, "Ecological Assessment of the Nutritional Status of a Guatemalan Finca Population", Dr. Cosminsky has also conducted field research on birth practices (in Belize), midwifery (Guatemala), and medical beliefs and practices in a Quiche Indian community undergoing social change. She has worked with the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama, Guatemala, and the Department of Nutrition and Food Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and has published numerous articles spanning the fields of medical anthropology, ethnobotany, and folk religion/cultural anthropology. A sample of Dr. Cosminsky's recent work includes Traditional Medicine: An Annotated Bibliography; "Alimento and Fresco: Nutritional Concepts and Their Implications for Health Care" (Human Organization); "Cross Cultural Perspectives on Midwifery" (Medical Anthropology), the introduction and supplemental bibliography to the reprint of Ethnobotany of the Maya, by Ralph Roys, and Changing Food and Medical Beliefs in a Guatemalan



Community" (The Ecology of Food and Nutrition). Among Dr. Cosminsky's most recent activities are her work as consultant with the Special Committee of World Health Organization Task Force on Indigenous Plants used for Fertility Regulation, Mexico City (1977), her election to the Executive Committee of the Society for Medical Anthropology (1976-1979), and her chairing of the panel "Women in Five Cultures" at the Temple University Conference on Visual Anthropology (1976).

Anne Sharman  
Institute for the Study of Human Issues  
3401 Market St., Suite 252  
Philadelphia, Pa., 19104

Dr. Sharman has developed in the past twelve years an interest in doing interdisciplinary research in the field of nutrition. Initial fieldwork in Eastern Uganda, from 1965-1967, where she studied the distribution of protein-calorie malnutrition in children under five, led to a doctoral dissertation entitled "Social and Economic Aspects of Nutrition in Padhola, Bukedi District, Uganda" (University of London, 1970). Publications arising from that investigation include "Nutrition and Social Planning" (Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 6, #4); "Food Consumption Patterns in Eastern Uganda: A Case Study" (Nutrition and Food in an African Economy, Vol. I); "Improving Nutrition in Bukedi District, Uganda" (Government and Rural Development in East Africa), and the forthcoming "Food in Padhola", in The Anthropologist's Cookbook.

In current research on the connection of diet, domestic relationships, and social position, Dr. Sharman is concentrating on the distribution and consumption of food within the household. With an especial interest in the applicability of economic models to nutritional research, she has chosen to study low income families in a Black neighborhood of Philadelphia; this project will consider the cross-cultural and inter-class relevance of theories meant to explain the continuity and change of dietary patterns, and the nutritional status of household members. Anne Sharman is currently on leave from the University of East Anglia, Norwich, England.

Charles Camp  
Maryland Arts Council

The folklorist on the Maryland Arts Council, Charles Camp is currently researching American regional food patterns, especially as they relate to cultural geography and social networks. More specifically, his dissertation topic is an investigation of the social definition of food habits, and the use of dietary patterns as one key to the description of other cultural constructs. These interests have led him to conduct his fieldwork at events such as church suppers, barbecues and family picnics. To date, Charley Camp has limited himself to American research. His work reflects an interest in the semiotic and contextual study of foodways, rather than in the historical reconstruction of diets of a particular folk group. Charles Camp is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Pennsylvania.

#### BOOK REVIEW

Zuni Breadstuff, by Frank H. Cushing (New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1975 reprint of the 1920 edition, Pp. 673. Forward, notes, index, illustrations.).

Frank Hamilton Cushing made his first journey to Zuni in 1879 when he was employed by the Bureau of American Ethnology to collect artifacts from the pueblos. Sympathetic with the Zuni way of life, Cushing lived with the tribe as an adopted member for five years. He mastered the language and came to know many aspects of Zuni life. He was honored by the Zuni by being named second chief of the tribe, a tribute to his knowledge and acceptance of their way of life. Zuni Breadstuff is Cushing's detailed account of Zuni foodways--a description not only of methods of preparation of staple foods, but also of the myths, folktales, and daily customs which are intermingled with such foodways.

Because it was first published in 1884, this material must be looked at in an historical perspective. Some of Cushing's statements bear the ring of sweeping generalizations, yet the thoroughness of his account of Zuni foodways, particularly in their relationship to other aspects of the culture, provides an important ethnography of Zuni life.

Jane Young  
University of Pennsylvania

Eating in America, A History. Waverly Root and Richard de Rochemont. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1976. 482 pp.

This account of Eating in America suggests that it is a rich history of food rather than a rich cuisine which is our legacy. It is a wholly absorbing and readable history that the authors have written, a valuable reference and a provocative exploration of the various influences which have contributed to American cuisine. The volume describes food production and preparation techniques and food consumption habits in the United States beginning with native Americans up to the present.

The authors decry the predominance of a banal English cookery in the United States which has been further tainted by the processed food era and contaminated the already bland and oversweetened American palate. The book resonates the authors' genuine concern for the quality of food in America and their hopes for its enhancement both in terms of flavor and nutrition. The history ends with the half-hearted hope that the smell of baking bread will once again warm American homes and symbolically and literally invigorate the American diet.

Root and de Rochemont are careful to describe Indian cooking -- food production; they examine the food habits of each tribe as a unique group with its own cultural system and inhabiting a distinct eco-niche. They view the overall food complex of the American Indian as rich and erotic and providing the early settlers with food items and production techniques necessary for their survival. However, the legacy of the American Indian is ultimately "absorbed" by the Anglo-Saxon cuisine brought by the settlers.

If the Indians failed to enhance the quality of Anglo-Saxon cooking, so did the ethnic groups who arrived in this country at the turn of the century. The authors' hopes for a literal melting pot, in which each of the national flavors would contribute to a shared cuisine, has, in their view, not been consummated. Ethnic cuisines in the United States, are, according to the authors, self-contained pockets of delicacies, their contributions to the dominant cookery negligible. Further, many of the so-called ethnic cuisines are counterfeits lacking authenticity. Thus, ethnic cookery, though thriving and self-contained, has failed to leave but a trace on the American diet.

The paradox remains unanswered. Ethnic cooking cannot at once be "absorbed" while remaining "undissolved and separate gastronomically". It is agreed that ethnic cooking thrives in the United States. Is it as self-contained as the authors argue? And who cooks in the Anglo-Saxon mode except as we view the group as part

of the American mosaic rather than the dominant theme. This history is informed by an assimilationist model, itself an analytic construct still to be verified by careful ethnographic documentation.

The authors view each historical period as contributing to our rich history of food, a cuisine central to that era, but the pot does not run over. Each era is clearly demarcated. When the period ends so does the cuisine leaving only the cannibalistic phantom called Anglo-Saxon cooking which absorbs all wholly and renders the unique indistinguishable.

Janet Theophano  
University of Pennsylvania

Hog Meat and Hoe Cake: Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860.  
Sam Bowers Hilliard. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972. Pp.xi, 296.

A great part of Hog Meat and Hoe Cake is devoted to describing and evaluating ante-bellum Southern food habits in straightforward and enjoyable prose. Recipes and food occasions are not included in this study but Hilliard thoroughly investigates every kind of food the Southerner ate in this time period. Pork and corn are given due importance in preference and availability, but the importance of the wider variety of foods in the region is also acknowledged. Several chapters discuss fruits, vegetables, game, seafood, poultry and other livestock, the place of these foods in the ante-bellum diet, and where these foods were obtained.

Hilliard's central point is that the South, in spite of its preoccupation with a staple crop economy, possessed a greater self-sufficiency in its food supply than has previously been considered. In order to prove his point he not only describes the food supply, but describes the population consuming this supply, transportation facilities which influenced the situation and trading and agricultural patterns. This information is all backed up with extensive and imaginative documentation in the form of county census records, traveller's journals, agricultural and commercial periodicals and farm account books. It would be nice if these excellent materials were more readily available to the reader in the form of a bibliographic essay or a plain listing of sources rather than buried in the footnotes. One other question should be raised, that of the small farmer's agricultural and trading habits. These seemed to be slightly scamped and lumped with the plantation patterns. However, these are small caveats in a study which makes the subject of food fascinating to a wide range of interests.

Leslie Prosterman  
University of Pennsylvania

Food and Civilization: A Symposium, Voice of America Forum Lectures, Charles C. Thomas, 1966.

The twenty-seven contributions to this volume were part of a Voice of America program and share a uniform political bias in support of a Western capitalist agriculture and nutrition model. The essays present information based on census statistics, experiments, and historical evidence, and although they offer prognoses and suggestions for the world's food future, they are not explicitly propagandistic (with a few outrageous exceptions). The general approach is "the facts speak for themselves," but the particular choices of facts and the predominant concentration on statistics and historical evidence often encourages simplistic analyses of complex situations. The subtle bias of the volume is its presentation of information almost entirely based on Western agricultural habits and food values. A few authors offer statistical and anecdotal information about non-Western cultures, but none of the essays includes ethnographic description or any in-depth investigation of non-Western food habits or values. Nevertheless, the information offered is factually instructive, and eleven years after publication, the essays are provocative for discussion.

Amy Shuman  
University of Pennsylvania

#### NOTES AND QUERIES

We are requesting that material contributed to The Digest be sent to the individuals designated below:

Bibliographic and financial resources: Amy Shuman

Food research outside the academic domain, i.e., government, industry, museums etc.: Leslie Prosterman

Publications: Rita Moonsammy

Courses, recent events and conferences: Jane Young

Current research projects: Janet Theophano

If you wish to review books, films or other material please include your area(s) of interest and expertise as well as suggestions of material for review. Send replies to Anne Kaplan.

Our next issue will include a directory of individuals interested in or involved in food research. If you wish to be included please send your subscription payment by January 15.

If you have any information relevant to microanalytic studies of food behavior, please contact:

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Any comments or suggestions concerning format or content are welcomed by the staff.

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Areas of Current Research Related to Food:

Publications Related to the Study of Food:

Areas of Interest in Food:

Courses related to food and food related behavior which you have taken or taught. Please indicate where, when, and by whom the course was taught. Please enclose course descriptions, syllabi and bibliographies.

Please provide names and addresses of others who might be interested in receiving this newsletter.

1.  
2.  
3.

Do you wish your name and address to appear in a directory which will be published in the next newsletter?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Organizations related to or involved in the study of any aspect of food:

Comments:

(Please attach any additional material)

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