

Canadian Association for Food Studies



Fall 2007, Issue 4

Message from the President

CAFS will be three years old in 2008. Since our beginning, we had two national conferences with the third scheduled for May 31- June in Vancouver.

Gwen Chapman will serve as the chair of the local organizing committee and Patty Williams and Diane Gillis are the program co-chairs this year. We would like to thank Gwen, Patty, Diane and our volunteers in Vancouver - Herb Barbolet, Christiana Miewald, Aleck Ostry, Karen Rideout, Alejandro Rojas, and Barb Seed. We hope to have an even wider participation this year. If you have any suggestions or advice to the committee Chairs please share them with Gwen, Patty, and Diane.

Membership renewals and drive: We currently have nearly 200 members. We delayed membership renewal notices until the beginning of the new term, as many have been away from their offices. Irena will soon send reminders. We depend on your on-going support and membership is our primary source of funding.

A visit to tri-councils: We are planning a visit to Ottawa to meet with the representatives of SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR and IDRC. The purpose of such a meeting is to find out how we can promote funding for interdisciplinary research in food studies. I think a bilingual committee with regional and disciplinary

diversity and track record will be very useful. We need to think about the composition of this committee. Suggestions are welcome.

Elections: We will have elections for a new Executive Committee in the Spring 2008. According to our constitution, the President or a VP and one other member of the Executive, plus three members elected at the AGM are required for the nominating committee. This year Patty Williams, Annette Desmarais, Peter Andree, Kelly Bronson, and Carol Henry will serve as the Nominations Committee. The Committee will call for nominations to the Executive. Those who are interested in serving on the CAFS Executive can find more about responsibilities of the executive members in our Constitution at the CAFS web site.

Publications: Elaine Power is working on the special issue of *Food Culture and Society*. It should be out in 2008. Rod McRae, Kelly Bronson and myself also developed an undergraduate reader (*Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Food Studies* published by McGraw Hill-Ryerson). Authors and editors decided to donate

royalties from this volume to CAFS. I will send a full account at the end of the academic year.

Journal: At our last general meeting we discussed the possibility of developing our own journal. In the coming months, we will explore possible sources of funding, feasibility of such a journal, potential names (e.g. *Canadian Journal of Food Studies*, *Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Food Studies* etc.) We have a list of volunteers for the editorial board. If you like to add your name, please contact us.

Membership to the Canadian Federation for Humanities and Social Sciences: CAFS will be applying for membership to the Canadian Federation for Humanities and Social Sciences. TO qualify for his membership, we had to be active for a three-year period and have had to acquire a formal association status. We will apply for full membership in May 2008. Membership has its advantages. You can read more about it at the Federation web site at: <http://www.fedcan.ca/>

Treasury: As CAFS gained a formal association status, Ryerson University's financial services informed us that they can no longer host our account. We are moving our account to Alterna Savings.

Web site development: We are looking for volunteers to coordinate and update our web site. We will also do our best to make our site truly bilingual. If you see any broken links or any creative suggestions for improving our web site, please contact us.

Member news: Congratulations to Fiona and to her new baby. This is the third baby in one year born to the members of the Executive Committee, after Elaine Power's and Steffanie Scott's. I guess nobody can say that the executive was not productive. Elaine Power informed us in September that she wanted to resign from the position of the Vice-President. Elaine is one of the co-founders of CAFS, was the Program Chair for our first Conference and has played a crucial role in our growth. We wish to thank Elaine and hope that we can benefit from her energy and wis-

dom once her baby is up and running. In its November 9, 2007 teleconference, CAFS Executive Committee appointed Patricia Williams as the Vice-President of CAFS till our next AGM. Because of Fiona's maternal leave, executive also appointed Irena Knezevic as the interim Secretary-Treasurer until our next-AGM. We welcome them to their new positions.

Mustafa (KOC)
CAFS President

Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery



by Carolyn Levy

The 26th annual Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery took place in Oxford, England this past September. Generally well attended by UK and European delegates, the Oxford symposium is little known in Canada and hopefully this will change as the Oxford meeting has much to recommend itself.

Created by Alan Davidson in 1979, the Oxford Symposium brings together people who have a wide range of interests in food. This year's topic of *Food and Morality* drew academics, independent scholars, food writers, book publishers, chefs, producers and interested parties from all over Europe, North and South America and Australia. The diversity of representation of attendees led to stimulating discussions that resonated throughout the three-day event.

The symposium began on Friday afternoon with a Waugh-inspired *Decline and Fall* picnic in the meadows of Christchurch Cathedral. Punting on the river and a welcome dinner at St Catherine's college

followed. Ruth Reichl, editor-in-chief of *Gourmet*, began the proceedings with an updated version of her 2005 Yale lecture. Beginning with the question, *What should we eat?* Reichl set the tone for the symposium by pointing to the often messy and contradictory issues surrounding food and morality.

A panel presenting the ethical difficulties of particular foods included Raymond Blanc (chef patron of Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons) who spoke on the cruelty of Kobe beef production. John Sharffenberger outlined the concept of fairly traded cocoa beans. He suggested that as farmers gain more from cultivating better quality beans, such as those used in dark chocolate production, there might be some incentive to fair-minded consumers to eat dark chocolate. Henrietta Green (founder of the farmer's market movement in the UK) reminded us that from a chicken's point of view, the only thing that mattered is whether or not the chicken suffered. And so, it must be the animal's perspective that provides the moral springboard for discussion. Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy at City University of London, finished the panel session with six noteworthy points that alerted us to the fact that food has always had a moral dimension and we are only just discovering it again. He proposed that there are clear ethical problems about the food supply but current public food policies have difficulty connecting to the issues because of the complex and contradictory nature of food and morality.

Concurrent sessions followed over the next two days and featured such presentations as Rachel Laudan's *The Good Cook: The Moral Dilemma of Cooking*; Aylin Öney Tan's *Globalisation and Poppy Cultivation in Turkey* and Kenneth Albala's *To Eat or Not to Eat: Ideology of Fasting in the Reformation Era*. Symposiasts reflected on the environmental and hidden costs in attempting to promote ethical eating as well as examining the intersection of market forces and moral issues as outlined in Michaela De Soucey's presentation on Virtuous Foods. The sessions were thought provoking and the small number

of attendees (180) allowed for meaningful conversations to develop over the weekend.

The Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery is a worthwhile event. The small numbers, international representation and involvement of people from wide ranging industries and institutions results in a conference that promotes cross-discipline engagement and stimulating ideas.

For more information on the Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery, please go to: <http://www.oxfordsymposium.org.uk/>. To access Rachel Laudan's paper *The Good Cook: The Moral Dilemma of Cooking*, follow the link and go to the bottom of the page:

<http://www.rachellaudan.com/culinary-history-files/culinary-history>

FILM REVIEW by Irena Knezevic

Pas de pays sans paysans / The Fight for True Farming Eve Lamont's *Pas de pays sans paysans / The Fight for True Farming* is a poignant assessment of the social and environmental consequences of industrial farming. Subtitled *Food Autonomy vs. Agribusiness*, the film addresses issues such as pesticide residues, declining farm income in Canada, and consumer and farmer resistance to genetically modified crops. At the same time, alternative approaches are considered, from organic farming to specialty cheese making. Lamont's film is an insightful piece that both informs and inspires. By considering local and global conditions of farming, Lamont shows that the frequently noted binary opposition between food autonomy and agribusiness is not an oversimplification of the current state of food production. Thoughtfully conducted interviews are carefully pieced together for this film, weaving a disturbing yet hopeful tale of our food system. 90 minutes, available through the National Film Board.

For more information please visit <http://www.nfb.ca/collection/films/fiche/index.php?id=54111>

H U N G E R F A C T S 2 0 0 7



FOOD BANK USE ACROSS CANADA

Number of people assisted by a food bank in March 2007: **720,231**

Number of meals served by food banks in March 2007: **2,344,462**

Change in food bank use... since 2006: **- 4.4 %**
 since 1997: **+ 8.4 %**
 since 1989: **+ 91 %**

Number of food banks in Canada: **673** and **2,867** affiliated agencies

Number of provinces & territories *without* a food bank: **0**

Years since Canada's first food bank opened in Edmonton: **26**

Percent of Canadians who believe that hunger is a problem in Canada: **73 %**

Percent who believe governments should take responsibility for solving the problem: **57 % ***



FOOD BANK USE REGIONALLY

Highest provincial food bank use, as percent of population: **Newfoundland (5.3 %)**

Province assisting largest number of food bank recipients: **Ontario (318,540)**

Province with highest percent of employed food bank recipients: **Alberta (27 %)**

Province with highest percent of recipients on social assistance: **Newfoundland (70.6 %)**



MEETING THE DEMAND FOR EMERGENCY FOOD

Percent of food banks with no paid staff: **32.4 %**

Number of volunteer hours donated per month: **419,557**

Number of staff hours worked per month: **288,096**

Full-time equivalent jobs provided by volunteers in one month: **5 at each location**



INSUFFICIENT INCOME

Percent of food bank clients whose primary source of income is from employment: **13.5 %**

Percent whose primary source of income is from social assistance: **50.7 %**

Percent whose primary source of income is from disability income supports: **12.5 %**

Percent whose primary source of income is from pensions: **6.1 %**



FOOD BANK USE AMONG CHILDREN

Percent of food bank clients who are children: **38.7 %**

Percent of households containing at least one child: **50.6 %**

Years since the federal government promised to eliminate child poverty: **18**

Change in the number of hungry children since then (1989): **+ 127,729**

* These data are taken from a national poll with a sample size of 808 randomly selected eligible Canadian voters, fielded by Strategic Communications, December 27-30, 2005 and January 2-3, 2006. Margin of error is +/- 3.4%, 19 times out of 20.



Canadian Association of Food Banks | Association canadienne des banques alimentaires

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Updates from the Ryerson Centre for Studies in Food Security (CSFS)

Certificate in Food Security We welcome Reg Noble as the new Program Coordinator for the Certificate in Food Security through the Raymond G. Chang School of Continuing Education at Ryerson University. Reg has taught in the program since 2004, and worked as a natural resource management consultant for many international development agencies, including FAO, OXFAM, and UNESCO. He has over 30 years teaching experience at several universities in both the United Kingdom and Africa, as well as at the United Nations University for Peace in Costa Rica. The CSFS looks forward to his continued dedication and work towards educating students on the issues around food security. For more information on the Certificate program, go to: <http://www.ryerson.ca/ce/foodsecurity>.

New course in Urban Agriculture Beginning in Winter 2008, The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education is offering the first of a proposed series of urban agriculture courses to both Canadian and international students via distance education, as part of a Certificate in Food Security. These courses are being developed in partnership with Ryerson University's Centre for Studies in Food Security, ETC-Urban Agriculture, and the International Network of Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security (RUAF).

For more information, please go to: <http://www.ryerson.ca/ce/foodsecurity>.

Indigenous Youth Exploring Identities through Food Security Three Indigenous youth from the Pankararu and Pataxó Cinta Vermelha Jundiba village in Brazil, were invited to Toronto by the CSFS for one week in June 2007. Itxai, Toê and Yamamy had the opportunity to meet with and exchange experiences with Katrina and Duma Dean, who are youth from the Mi'kmaq community of Elsipogtog First Nation in New Brunswick. The goal of the visit was

to identify how food and food security impact the cultural identities of Indigenous youth, in different locations in the Americas, with distinct (and yet, similar) colonization histories. For more information on this project visit:

<http://www.ryerson.ca/foodsecurity/projects/aboriginal/identities.html>

Women's Identity and Food: Settlement and resistance in immigrant Toronto Researchers at Ryerson's Centre for Studies in Food Security, in partnership with FoodShare Toronto, are finalizing a study that interviewed 50 new immigrant women in Toronto to understand the complexities of how food mediates settlement experiences. Recognizing that food has an enormous symbolic connection with immigration, this project examines how food facilitates, hinders, defines, or relates to immigrants re-rooting in Toronto. Food can also be implicated in various patterns of interaction in the diaspora. It can be used as a tool to express narratives of displacements and dislocations as well as diasporic healing. Funded by the Centre for Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS), this study is part of a program exploring identities, particularly the conditions shaping the formation of new identities as an important element of settlement.

For a summary visit:

<http://www.ryerson.ca/foodsecurity/projects/gender/immigrantwomen.html>

“Social Exclusion, Race, and Education in Brazil” On October 4, 2007, Dr. Gislene Aparecida dos Santos, from the University of São Paulo, delivered the inaugural lecture of the *Betinho Project Lecture Series*. Inspired by the desire to honour Herbert “Betinho” de Souza, a Brazilian humanitarian and former resident of Toronto, the *Betinho Project* is also working to fund the building of a community bake oven as part of The Stop Community Food Centre's Green Barn initiative. For more information on the *Betinho Project* visit: <http://www.ryerson.ca/betinho/>

Call For Papers

The York Centre for Asian Research (YCAR) and Founder's College, York University, will host Foodscapes of Southeast Asia on Friday, February 29, 2008.

The event will explore the complex relations between food production and consumption in Southeast Asia. The afternoon will consist of two panels of academic interdisciplinary papers with ample time for discussion. Currently, we expect to have presentations on the natural food revolution in Thailand, street foods of Hanoi, steamed rice cakes as representations of local identities in the Philippines, and a multimedia presentation entitled "Doing Lunch in Salaya." Following the panels, there will be a presentation by photographers and cookbook authors, Jeff Alford and Naomi Duguid, entitled "Hot Sour Salty Sweet: A Culinary Journey along the Mekong River," followed by a special Southeast Asian meal.

If you have a paper that you would like to present, please send a title and short abstract to ycar@yorku.ca by January 18, 2008. Works in progress by graduate students are particularly welcome. If you are interested in attending, please contact Alicia at ycar@yorku.ca or 416 736 2100 ext 44068 for more details.

is the new peer-reviewed journal hosted by McGill University

Cuizine seeks research papers (3000-5000 words) on the subject of food in Canada from multicultural perspectives.

Cuizine aims to provide an innovative academic forum for interdisciplinary discussions surrounding the diverse culinary cultures of Canada, while also providing a venue for dynamic creative content on the subject.

Cuizine encourages submissions from the humanities and social sciences that emphasize site-specific regional foodways across the country. Examples of suitable submissions include an historical examination of first generation Sri Lankan immigrant cooking in Toronto, a socio-economic study of seal hunting in Nunavut, or a literary analysis of Duddy Kravitz's smoked meat escapades. At the same time, Canada's ethnic groups and cultural practices are not understood in isolation or as static phenomena. Rather, they evolve constantly and, in a nation of immigrants, interplay with each other. *Cuizine* aims to nourish this cross-cultural exchange, as well as demonstrate the centrality of foodways to Canadian cultural identity.

Cuizine accepts and publishes English and French language pieces. To submit a paper for review, please send English or French abstracts of 500 words in Word-readable format or PDF, along with a CV, to: lara.rabinovitch@mcgill.ca

Executive Editor, Nathalie Cooke

Managing Editor, Lara Rabinovitch

Book Review

"Good Crop/Bad Crop - Seed Politics and the Future of Food in Canada," by Devlin Kuyek -- just out from Between The Lines.

In his back cover blurb, Brewster Kneen writes, "Few of us ever see the seeds of our food. They are small and

easily overlooked in spite of their multitudes and our utter dependency on their survival and continuing evolution. But while most of us were not looking, certain interests were busy capturing and transforming the seeds we depend upon.

Their goal: corporate control and profit. Kuyek tells the story of the

privatization of the seed in highly readable prose backed by his usual

impeccable research. This story is of crucial importance for anyone concerned about the corporate control of food and the seeds it comes from."

Harriet Friedmann, professor of sociology, Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto, adds: "Kuyek retells the amazing history of Canadian agriculture, with a twist. He delves deeply into the science politics and the political science of seeds. . . . Best of all, he shows how to change direction towards building diverse and resilient food systems."

Devlin Kuyek a researcher with GRAIN and is the author of *Stolen Seeds* and *The Real Board of Directors* – both available in PDF at www.ramshorn.ca.

Research and publication news

Tony Winson, a founding member of CAFS, was invited by the Argentine Association of Canadian Studies to deliver a series of lectures in November 2007 on his work dealing with the global dimensions of the contemporary transformation of food environments. His lectures took place at the National University of Cuyo in Mendoza, the National University of Comahue in Neuquen (Patagonia), and the offices of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) in Buenos Aires.

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The Quality of Nutritional Information Available on Popular Websites: A Content Analysis. *Health Education Research.* 2007.

<http://her.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/cym050>

The purpose of this study was to increase knowledge of the new informational landscape emerging on the Internet in relation to nutritional health content to provide policy makers with better health promotion tools. We identified sites most used by Canadians to access nutrition information and conducted a content analysis to identify the sources of this nutritional information as well as its quality by systematic comparison with the main guidelines published in the Canada Food Guide. Commercial web sites accounted for 80% of visits and time spent on seeking nutrition information.

We also found uneven messaging about fruit and vegetable intake as well as consistent messaging undermining the “eat a variety of foods” message, which is a central component of the Canada Food Guide. On the positive side, inappropriate or incongruent advice about salt, coffee, and alcohol intake was virtually non-existent and advice congruent with the guide was found three times more often than incongruent advice. Finally the site offering the best advice was a non-commercial government-based site. This site differed from the commercial sites not so much in its ability to deliver the “right” advice but more in its ability to exclude articles with poor advice on their sites.

Robin Kortright

Edible Backyards: Residential land use for food production in Toronto

Community gardens can help to support community food security by providing access to a safe, nutritious and culturally acceptable diet. However, community gardens are only one possible form of urban food production that can address food security concerns. A similar opportunity lies in every sunny back garden and patio that could be used to produce food. Very little is currently known about the contribution of such house-lot food growing practices to food security in Toronto. This research was designed to address this gap by developing an exploratory assessment of the contribution home food gardening makes to community food security in Toronto. Through a series of interviews, a portrait of home food gardeners in the context of their homes and communities was developed. The research examined where and how food is grown in Toronto home gardens, and what place the food grown occupies within the lives of the gardeners who grow, eat, and share it with others. A typology of food gardeners was developed, and this qualitative understanding of residential food production was then assessed from a community food security perspective. It was found that growing food contributes to food security at all income levels by encouraging and enabling a more nutritious diet. The sustainability of household food sourcing and gardeners' overall health and well-being also increased. Secure access to suitable land to grow food and gardening skills were the most significant barriers to residential food production found.

This research was conducted as part of an MA thesis by Robin Kortright for the University of Toronto Geography/ Collaborative Program in Environment and Health. The research was supported by the Centre for Urban Health Initiatives (CUHI) and should be available on their website (<http://www.cuhi.utoronto.ca/>) by the new year.

From the newsletter desk...

We are happy to hear from you with questions or contributions for the next newsletter. If you would like to get in touch, please send an email to:

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This newsletter was produced by:
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