

NOTABLE EDIBLES

BACK TO SCHOOL

This school year, 35 **East Hampton Middle School** students will visit a local beekeeper, make sauerkraut, and rake clams as part of the new “Healthy Bodies, Healthy Bays” after-school program to improve eating habits by building an appreciation for how food is raised on the East End. “We wanted to stress that we’re on an island,” said Mary Morgan of **Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County’s Marine Youth Education Center** and a leader of **East End Slow Food**. “And show how that makes our region different, what seasonal foods are unique to us, and to take the kids clamming and fishing.”

The pilot project is sponsored by **Cornell and Slow Food**, which raised money last spring for a Junior Slow Food program that would plant school gardens, encourage cooking classes, and take the principles of the inter-

national movement against fast food into the classroom. When Mrs. Morgan heard that students at the East Hampton Middle School had boycotted what they considered unhealthy cafeteria choices, she contacted the school and learned about an existing healthy eating campaign called **Bonac on Board to Wellness**. “We were on the same wavelength,” said Mrs. Morgan, who hopes to attract funding in order to expand the program. “Wouldn’t it be great to have a program like this in every East End school, every year?” (For more information, email mcmorgan@optonline.net or call 323-2320.)



THE BIG CHEESE

In July, at the American Cheese Society’s 22nd Annual Conference and Competition in Louisville, Kentucky, the judges gave the chèvre from **Catapano Dairy** in Mattituck the first place prize in the fresh unripened cheeses category. This cheese, from a 55-goat dairy that has only been in business for three years, beat out two goat cheeses from the renowned **Cypress Grove Chèvre** in Humboldt County, California.

“I always thought of Cypress Grove as the big boys,” said Michael Catapano, who splits his time between making cheese with his wife Karen and practicing medicine in Wainscott (and who might now be able to justify spending more time making cheese). After introducing yogurt and feta, he hopes to add a blue cheese, an Alpine style tome, and about one dozen goats next year. Although **Satur Farms** currently distributes the cheese to New York City restaurants, the dairy doesn’t make enough to meet any national demand inspired by the award. But its small size was apparently also an advantage, since it allows **Catapano Dairy** to use only milk from its own animals, which “makes the difference between a good cheese and one that’s special,” according to Mr. Catapano. Would **Cypress Grove** agree? “I’m sure



SEND WINE, PLEASE

Thanks to elected officials in Albany, East Enders have a new gift option for friends and family in other states: local wine. After the Supreme Court struck down a Prohibition-era law that restricted wine shipping into and out of New York State, Long Island wineries can now ship to customers in many other states. (The new law also allows New Yorkers—if they are so inclined—to buy up to three cases of wine each month from wineries in California, Oregon, Washington, and 21 other states.)

For small East End wineries without national distribution,

the new law greatly expands their potential reach. “I’ve talked to lots of wine writers who say they can’t write about Long Island wine even if they think it’s the best thing they’ve ever tasted, because their readers can’t get it,” said Allison Dubin, general manager at **Channing**

Daughters Winery in Bridgehampton, who traveled to Albany to lobby for the law change. Like other wineries, **Channing Daughters** noted a spike in emails and phone calls from out-of-state customers, as well as additional press attention since the ruling. (A bottle from **Wölffer Estate Vineyard** in Sagaponack showed up on the cover of the latest issue of the trade journal *Wine News*.) Mrs. Dubin noted that the vineyard also has a file of roughly 100 non-New Yorkers who want to join its popular wine club. “We’ve been collecting these names for years,” she said. “And we’re finally calling them back.”



they’re not too happy about this.” (Those who are happy about it can find **Catapano Dairy** cheeses at **Cavaniola’s Gourmet** in Sag Harbor, the **Village Cheese Shop** in Southampton and Mattituck, at **Round Swamp Farm** in East Hampton and at **Catapano Dairy** on Sound Avenue in Mattituck.)



SQUASHES GALORE

On September 25th, LongHouse Reserve in East Hampton will conclude its season-long, living art exhibit celebrating squashes with SquashFest. At this cornucopia of cucurbits—the family of plants that includes cucumbers, melons, and pumpkins—guests will help harvest LongHouse’s own “squash court,” compete in gourd carving and squash baking contests, and enjoy cooking demonstrations by local chefs. Children will also display homegrown zucchini, butternuts, and pumpkins raised from seeds that LongHouse distributed in May. (For information, call 329-3568 or see longhouse.org.)

The exhibit was inspired by the writing and art of food preservationist Amy Goldman, who raises hundreds of rare vegetables at her garden in Rhinebeck, NY (see her storage barn at right), but who first fell in love with melons and squashes as a teenager in Oyster Bay. “We had an Italian gardener who taught me how to grow melons in the Italian manner,” she remembered, using melon boxes (meloniers) to magnify the heat.

Today, Ms. Goldman, author of *The Compleat Squash and Melon’s for the Passionate Grower*, works to preserve our vanishing vegetable heritage “in seeds, first of all, in words, in deeds, and in bronze.” (She recently began making exquisite casts of cucurbits. See rareforms.com.) And what about the one squash that bears a local



name: the Long Island Cheese, a large, beige pumpkin that looks like a wheel of fromage? “It’s not one of my favorites,” admitted Ms. Goldman, who will offer advice on harvesting, storing, and cooking squash at the Fest. “It’s stunning, but it’s semi-domesticated. It needs more work. I love it only because it’s so beautiful, and it has a very, very long shelf life. By the end of fall, the Cheese stands alone.”

A PEACH WITH PEDIGREE

“This is all I can tell you,” said Antone Hugel, who sells assorted apples and one type of peach from his stand on Seven Ponds Road in Water Mill. “They are white peaches. They mature late. They don’t get very big and they don’t look very good. But people buy one or two to try, and they come back the same day and ask for more.” Last year, the peaches lasted just two days at the stand.

Such is the legend of the Gardiner’s Island peach a local variety with yellow, pink-blushed skin and white flesh that shows up at the rare farmstand and kitchen table in early October, nearly two months after the East End’s standard peach season. (Mr. Hugel suggested that lucky customers who snag a peach plant the pit in the interest of perpetuating the unique variety.)

Bridgehampton historian and farmer Richard Hendrickson said that the Gardiner’s Island peach has also been known as the Louis Phillippe peach, named after the French ship that ran aground in a fog at Mecox Bay in April of 1842. The ship, bound for New York City with wine,



champagne, and nursery stock, jettisoned much of its cargo, including the peach seedlings and rose bushes that became known as the Ship’s Rose or Shipwreck’s Rose and still persist in some Bridgehampton gardens. Mr. Hendrickson suggested that the Gardiner family either acquired a disproportionate number of peaches or showed an affinity for them, although two Gardiner family historians knew nothing of the peaches. (*Edible East End* is planning a fall expedition to Gardiner’s Island to look for signs of peaches.)

“Years ago, many local people cultivated them,” said Mr. Hendrickson, who is 93 and who has personally planted five generations of the trees. In recent decades, modern peach varieties that bore larger fruit earlier in the season squeezed the Gardiner’s Island peach out of South Fork gardens. Which is unfortunate. “I’ll tell you something that will make you drool,” said Mr. Hendrickson. “In the winter, there’s no better flavor than a scoop of vanilla ice cream with some Gardiner’s Island peaches on them that were canned when they’re ripe.”