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THE WRITING LIFE: On Cookbook Collaborating

Now that I'm working on the cookbook on grilled pizza and piadine, I'm learning a lot about collaborating. Mostly what I've learned is that I'm lucky to work with chef Craig Priebe, because of our respectful working relationship. I thought I'd end the year on a positive note, and give you an example of how well collaborators can work together:

Craig developed a grilled pizza with a crab topping. He finishes it with a roast beet and mandarin orange salad. (Yes, it's amazing.) The recipe said to roast one beet in the oven for an hour.

I thought about the pros and cons. On the plus side, it's easy to wrap one beet in foil and roast it for an hour. And you know it will taste better than anything from a can. On the other hand, it's wasteful to use a whole oven for one hour for one beet, and you're asking people to plan one hour ahead. So I called and asked him to consider canned beets (you don't have these kinds of conversations on email).

He was appalled. An accomplished chef like Craig thinks nothing of doing the extra steps that contribute to the flavor of a finished dish. It frustrates him that home cooks aren't as interested in doing the same amount of work, or want shortcuts that compromise flavor.

A few weeks later, he sent me this email: "I had another dawning revelation today. I think you're gonna like this one. OK, sit down. Ready? Canned beets will work fine for the San Francisco pizza! It is a big step for me to admit that! In fact they might be better! I still want to include the roasted beet recipe with a big time saver tip about using canned julienne beets! I mean what a mess with those red staining beets and all that oven time."

I laugh every time I read this note. I haven't worked with many chefs before, but I'm sure it's an unusual response.

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JOIN ME IN FRANCE, SUMMER 2007

Next June: If you like the idea of wandering around French farmers' markets, writing about the senses, reading aloud to a group and drinking good wine, come with me to a one-week food writing workshop in Southwest France. It's a bargain compared to other writing classes in Europe. For more see the Latitude Cultural Center's website, <http://www.latitude.org/> <<http://www.latitude.org/>>

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ALUMNI NEWS

I worked with **Linda Furiya** on her food memoir of growing up Japanese-American in the Midwest for about a year. Seal Press has just published her book, *Bento Box in the Heartland: My Japanese Girlhood in Whitebread America*. It is a "uniquely American story about girlhood, racism, assimilation, and the love of homemade food," beautifully told. See http://www.amazon.com/Bento-Box-Heartland-Japanese-Whitebread/dp/158005191X/sr=1-1/qid=1167020028/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1/103-9752245-4513442?ie=UTF8&s=books <http://www.amazon.com/Bento-Box-Heartland-Japanese-Whitebread/dp/158005191X/sr=1-1/qid=1167020028/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1/103-9752245-4513442?ie=UTF8&s=books>

In a Cajun Kitchen, by **Terry Pischoff Wuerthner**, was named by the *New York Times* as one of the notable cookbooks of 2006. I helped her write the book proposal for it. http://www.amazon.com/Cajun-Kitchen-Authentic-Recipes-Stories/dp/0312343051/sr=1-1/qid=1167021173/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1/103-9752245-4513442?ie=UTF8&s=books <http://www.amazon.com/Cajun-Kitchen-Authentic-Recipes-Stories/dp/0312343051/sr=1-1/qid=1167021173/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1/103-9752245-4513442?ie=UTF8&s=books>

Student **Erin Laverty** was accepted by New York University's Food Studies program for a Masters Degree.

Students **Steve Kimbrough** and **Marie Teixeira** will travel to Latitude, the SW France school where I'll be teaching next summer, to be the chefs du semaine. Currently they are writing recipes for teams of students at Kitchen on Fire cooking school in Berkeley, CA.

Saveur has assigned a piece on Turkish ice cream to student **Andrea Blum**.

Student **Nani Steele** has received an assignment on cheese from *Cooking Light* and from *Gourmet* on Mas Masimoto's Adopt-a-Tree program.

If you have news about what you're up to, drop me a line at diannej@diannej.com.

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WHAT'S NEW

I've written a new in-depth article on food blog trends. If you've ever wanted to start a blog, read *The New Wave of Food Blogs* on <http://www.diannej.com/>.

Fine Cooking magazine is looking for a new executive editor who's willing to live within a reasonable commuting distance of Newtown, CT. Email me for details.

Think you know about all the food-based publications? The *New York Daily News* made a list of the lesser known ones. Not all take freelance writing, but it's still a comprehensive list. http://www.nydailynews.com/city_life/story/478064p-402196c.html <http://www.nydailynews.com/city_life/story/478064p-402196c.html>

The estimable Irene Chalmers has written a useful new book: *Food Jobs: The*

Complete Guide to Careers in the Culinary World, to be published by Clarkson Potter in April, 2007. I wrote the section on food writing. Irene is the author of more than 50 cookbooks whose total sales have exceeded 18 million copies. She currently teaches food writing at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York.

Consider reading your narrative piece pertaining to food, wine, or spirits out loud at "Talking With Your Mouth Full," a new monthly series of New York open readings from Leite's Culinaria website. The events are only \$5 at the door, and January's reading is already sold out. Contact Cloe at cloe.lc@mac.com <<mailto:cloe.lc@mac.com>> to register, or go to <http://www.leitesculinaria.com/info/calendar.html> <<http://www.leitesculinaria.com/info/calendar.html>> to find out more.

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JUST FOR FUN

Menu translations from a foreign language to English can be hilarious. Here's a blog from a white guy living in Asia who has chronicled such menu gems as "Burn the Spring Chicken" and "Cowboy Legs." See Raho.com, <http://www.rahoi.com/2006/03/may-i-take-your-order.php>

If you can't get enough of glossy food magazines, now you can watch TV to see more. *Gourmet* has launched a slick, sophisticated television series called Diary of a Foodie to examine food trends, international travel, cooking techniques, and exotic ingredients. Find out more at <http://www.diaryofafoodie.org/>

The Food Network has launched The Hungry Detective, about a food critic in Los Angeles who travels across America to uncover the kind of restaurants that only the locals know about. For recent shows see http://www.foodnetwork.com/food/show_dc

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UPCOMING CLASSES AND APPEARANCES

January 11 – February 15, 2007

The Art of Cookbook Writing

Six Weeks, \$240

Book Passage Bookstore

Corte Madera, CA

Have you always wanted to write a cookbook but haven't known how or where to begin? Learn how to shape and strengthen your idea in this unique class. We'll cover the do's and don'ts of recipe writing and how to get a cookbook published and marketed. In-class writing exercises, short assignments and lots of support will move you forward.

February 3, 2007

Restaurant Critic for a Day

\$150

UC Santa Cruz Extension, Cupertino

If you love to dine out and have always wanted to write about it, here's a chance to combine your observational skills and passion for food and get paid as a bonus. Learn how the best critics in America do their job and how you can get started and

get published.

For lunch, you'll dine at a nearby restaurant. Back in the classroom, you'll write your review, share it with the group, and compare notes and techniques. **Award-winning restaurant critic Aleta Watson from the San Jose Mercury News will tell us how she does it.**

<http://www.ucsc-extension.edu/ucsc/search/publicCourseSearchDetails.do?method=load&courseId=2878911> <<http://www.ucsc-extension.edu/ucsc/search/publicCourseSearchDetails.do?method=load&courseId=2878911>>

February 5, 2007

Guest speaker, Left Coast Writers literary salon

7 – 9 p.m. Book Passage bookstore, Corte Madera, CA

<http://www.leftcoastwriters.com/> <<http://www.leftcoastwriters.com/>>

February 15-17, 2007

Writing to Keep Food on the Table

San Francisco Writers Conference panel

Mark Hopkins Hotel, San Francisco

<http://www.sanfranciscowritersconference.com/>
<<http://www.sanfranciscowritersconference.com/>>

February 22, 2007

7:30 p.m.

I will Interview Linda Furiya on food memoir writing

Lafayette Public Library, <http://www.ccclib.org/programs/laf.html>

<<http://www.ccclib.org/programs/laf.html>>

Lafayette, CA

Linda is the author of *Bento Box in the Heartland: My Japanese Girlhood in Whitebread America*.

April 12, 2007

Pizza, the Heart and Soul of Chicago

International Association of Culinary Professionals Annual Conference

<http://www.iacp.com/>

Chicago, IL

Join us as chef Craig Priebe (my collaborator) demonstrates how to make grilled pizza and hands out samples to the audience. Penny Pollack, co-author of *Everybody Loves Pizza: The Deep Dish on America's Favorite Food*, will discuss the history of pizza. Craig Priebe is a Chicago private chef. I am collaborating on a book on grilled pizza with him.

April 14, 2007

Eco-Gastronomy, the Next Frontier

International Association of Culinary Professionals

<http://www.iacp.com/>

Chicago, IL

"Ethical eating" has become a touch phrase for many chefs and food writers. Today we want to know where our food comes from and what sacrifices have been made to

the environment and natural resources as a result. More consumers are demanding humanely raised, sustainable, non-endangered food. Businesses struggle to be sustainable by balancing their economic interests with the need to be socially and environmentally responsible.

What are the trends in eco-gastronomy, and what changes are realistic for individuals and companies to make? Speakers are Marion Nestle, author of *What to Eat* and *Food Politics*; and Abby Mandel, the founder and president of Chicago's Green City Market, the city's only sustainable/certified organic green market. I will moderate.

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OTHER CLASSES

February 20-23, 2007
Symposium for Professional Wine Writers at Meadowood, Napa Valley
<http://www.winewriterssymposium.org/>

May 20-24, 2006
Symposium for Professional Food Writers at The Greenbrier
<http://www.greenbrier.com/foodwriters>

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Thanks for your time. If you know anyone else who might be interested in food writing, please forward this newsletter.

This email list is private and used by one person: me. To subscribe or unsubscribe, reply to this email and put either SUBSCRIBE or UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line.

Happy New Year and best wishes for a productive and literary 2007,
-- Dianne

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