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## STATION NEWS

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## BRIEFS

## SAGES Tennis Tournament

More results are now in from the Sages Tennis Tournament. Cynthia Smith won the women's beginner division, with a 6-1, 6-4 victory over Star Gao. Alan Lakso won the men's intermediate division, with a 6-0, 6-0 victory over Zsolt Galli. Brian Nault won the men's advanced division, with a hard fought 6-4, 6-7, 6-2 victory over Ken Bell.

The three new winners, along with women's advanced champion Donna Roelofs, received SAGES sweatshirts. Over 18 people participated in the games which spanned several weeks.

Complete information may be obtained from the SAGES web page at: <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/grads/2001tennis.htm>

## Emergency Preparedness

Dean Susan Henry has placed a high priority on college emergency planning. She is asking each department/unit to complete an emergency plan by November 12. Each department/unit at Geneva has received an emergency plan template to use. An electronic plan—the version that goes on the web—will be used by Station, College and University Environmental and Occupational Health officials during an emergency. The plan includes key staff contact information, staff rosters, facility information, special unit circumstances, etc. It deals with such crises as the loss of potable water, flooding, air conditioning failure, heat failure and escaped venomous animals, as well as evacuation procedures, floor plans, and limited contact information.

## Small Scale Food Processors Meet in Geneva

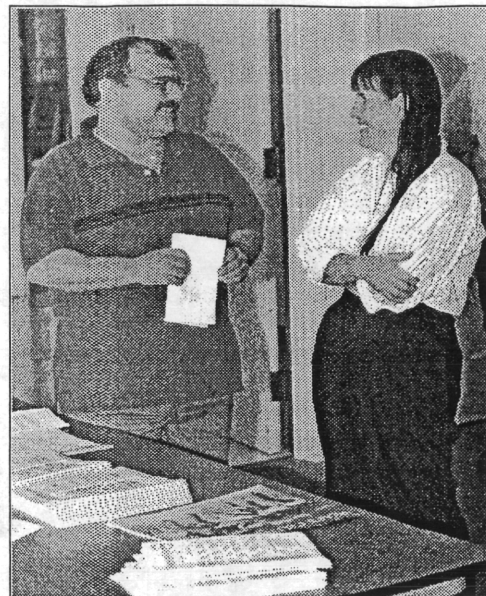
It has never been easy to be a small-scale food processor. Makers of bakery goods, dairy products, ethnic foods, jams and jellies, maple products, beverages, cut vegetables, fish or meat products, confections, pickles, condiments, and herbal products have always faced an uphill battle in developing marketable foodstuffs that people want to buy. The unique niche products require lots of time, effort and manual labor to make and market. The events of September 11th make the small-scale food processors' mission an even more complicated one. Now they are trying to market often high-ticket products in an iffy economy to jittery consumers. That's why over 30 different small food processors and support organizations from all over New York gathered on Friday, October 26, at Jordan Hall in Geneva to meet and discuss ways they could cooperate and share resources.

Alison Clarke, project leader of the mentoring program for The Small Scale Food Processors Association of New York (SSFPA), helped organized the meeting which was entitled "Collaboration for Community and Economic Vitality." The NYS Food Venture Center (FVC) hosted the event. The goals of the meeting were to make regional connections and identify ways to exchange ideas and offer community support to better serve the interests of small-scale food processors, according to Kelly Flegel, from the New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group.

The informal meeting started with introduction of the participants along with a brief overview by Amanda Hewitt, from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County, of what NYSSFPA offers to its members. Olga Padilla-Zakour, director of the FVC, briefly discussed how the Center can help small-scale food processors and other entrepreneurs by providing one-on-one assistance, printed materials, an ever-expanding web site, referrals to other experts, workshops, help with business development, and the use of Cornell facilities to develop test products. Padilla-Zakour also showed the participants the manual recently published by the Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship (NECFE) which contains a wealth of information for entrepreneurs.

Amy Machamer, from Hurd Orchards in Holly, NY, talked about the ever-changing needs of the small-scale processor. Machamer, who described the Food Venture Center as "critical to our success," said small-scale processors face many challenges. One of the challenges Machamer spoke of was the perception that "working with a physical product is not noble," or that working with one's hands is not something educated people aspire to. Consequently, the processors face management and labor issues because they have a difficult

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*Daniel Corsaro of Bisco Products, in Pine City, NY, discusses his Italian salsa with Amanda Hewitt of the Oneida County Cooperative Extension.*

*(FOOD PROCESSORS, continued)*

cult time finding people who want to work. She described how she has sat in on many panels with Cornell food science students and never heard any of them say they wanted to go work for a small family-run operation when they graduated.

Machamer also spoke about the changing dynamics of her customer base. Before September 11<sup>th</sup>, many of her products were sent to the big chain stores in New York City and Chicago. After September 11<sup>th</sup>, many of those stores have been forced to cancel their orders. Instead, Machamer's little shop in Holly has been uncharacteristically overwhelmed with customers. Machamer also made the point that while small-scale processors can't compete pricewise with mass produced products, they can still carve out

their own niche based on the idea of a product: a product so unique and special that consumers don't mind paying extra for it.

"The idea of the product is more important than the product itself," Machamer said. She encouraged people to be themselves and develop a unique product—"uniqueness is very important," she said.

The issue of intellectual property are becoming more and more important to small-scale processors because much of their success is based on offering a product that only they can deliver. They need to guard that uniqueness fiercely, Machamer noted.

After the lunch break the group broke up into smaller regional groups to network and discuss issues particular to each region.

Hank Herrera, from the Northeast Neighborhood Alliance of Rochester, NY,

gave the final presentation talking about the importance and implications of regional food production in underprivileged neighborhoods. After the meeting was over, participants were given an optional tour of the Food Venture Center.

"We had a very informative and productive meeting. The array of small processors, support organizations and service providers that participated in the presentations and discussions, facilitated the exchange of new ideas and the development of important ground work to strengthen the Small Scale Food Processors Association," Padilla-Zakour concluded.

Additional information on the Food Venture Center, which is part of the Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship, may be found at: [www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe/](http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe/)

# HOLIDAY

24th Annual

## CRAFT SHOW - BOOK SALE

Saturday, November 10, 2001 10:00 am - 3:00 pm • Jordan Hall



Christmas decorations, ceramics, dolls, baskets, paintings, jewelry, wooden crafts, needlework, tinsmithing, dried flowers, and much more. Refreshments and lots of books.

### ATTENTION RETIREES!

As you know, the NYSAES Annual Book and Craft Sale is November 10 and donations of food and/or workers are urgently needed for the luncheon booth. This is our ONLY fundraising project for the year, so your participation is necessary and will be much appreciated.

If you wish to donate food and/or work for an hour or so, please call Muriel Stobie at 315-789-4960 ASAP.

### ANNUAL

### BOOK SALE & EXCHANGE

This is the LAST WEEK to empty the bookshelves in your home or office to donate unwanted books (hard and soft cover) to the Library's Annual Book Sale/Exchange on November 10 in the Jordan Hall Auditorium.

Receive one free book for every three you donate. Puzzles are welcomed donations. The Library can only accept books November 8 and 9 during regular working hours. Please, no magazines or condensed Readers Digest. All proceeds benefit the Lee Library.