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STATION NEWS

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BRIEFS

Award Noted

Joe Ogrodnick received a First Award for his presentation "Photographic Interns - An Employer's Perspective" at the 71st Annual Meeting of the BioCommunications Association held this past summer. The award was presented at this year's meeting which was held the last weekend in February in Orlando, Florida.

SAGES Career Development
Workshops

SAGES is in the middle of a series of five workshops on career development. They will be shown in the FST Conference Room from 5:10-6 pm on the specified days. Refreshments will be provided at 5 pm.

Acting the Interview - Wed., Mar. 6

Career Development - Wed., Mar. 13

No session - Spring Break - Wed., Mar. 20

Networking - Wed., Mar. 27

This event is sponsored by Cornell GPSAFC. Registration is not necessary. Workshops are in video form. If you have other questions, please contact Haijing Hu at hh68@cornell.edu

Take a Chance on Fitness

For all those who are interested or curious as to what Taekardio is all about, the instructors from Geneva Martial Arts, Tina and Sue, will hold an informational meeting and Taekardio demonstration on Wednesday, March 6, 12:10 p.m., in the Jordan Hall Staff Room. Feel free to bring your lunch. Some people who recently attended the "Bring a Friend Day" may want to attend to get a better idea of what Taekardio is about, what the kicks and punches are, etc.

Tina describes Taekardio: "It's a progressive way to work out. It's a cutting edge

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Small Scale Food Processors Conference Held
In Geneva

The third annual Small Scale Food Processors Conference, "Making the Cash Register Ring," was held in Jordan Hall on the campus of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station on Monday, February 18th, 2002. The meeting was preceded the day before by an Entrepreneur Food Expo and dinner at the Ramada Inn in Geneva, featuring a presentation by Assemblyman Cliff Crouch (R-122nd) and a discussion on "Specialty Products Distribution" by Gary Redmond, owner of Regional Access, a company that distributes specialty foods in the Finger Lakes

Region. Both the conference and the expo were the result of a cooperative effort between the Small Scale Food Processors Association (SSFPA) and the Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship (NECFE).

The conference started off with a greeting by Dave Evans, president of the SSFPA, whose comments were followed by remarks by Assemblyman Bill Magee (D-111th), chair of the New York State Assembly's Agriculture Committee. Magee addressed audience concerns regarding distribution networks in New York City, right-to-farm laws, and the need to establish additional USDA-approved kitchens across the state. Magee said his committee was concerned with providing producers funding opportunities as well as technical assistance to get up and running. Magee considered the conference a "wonderful opportunity" to talk to people who are in the small scale food processing business. "I see a lot of growth in the value-added sector of the economy. The people I've talked to here are the people out there doing it," Magee noted.

The conference was broken into five sessions. The first session, "Financing Your Business," moderated by Alison Clarke, focused on options to finance small businesses. The entrepreneurs in attendance received information on grants, loans and other creative financing opportunities available to small scale processors. The second session, moderated by one of the conference organizers, Amanda Hewitt, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida Co., was "Connecting Markets to Products." The session started out as a panel discussion and then broke into one-on-one discussions with market owners and distributors from around the state who have an interest in New York products. The third session,

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Paul Howard, executive director of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council in Rochester, tells food processors about financial assistance that is available from the NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) at last week's conference.

(BRIEFS, continued)

exercise program that's geared for all ages and levels of fitness. Classes feature martial arts movements—punching and kicking combinations—all done to music. It's not your average aerobics class, it's Martial Arts Aerobics, also known as Taekardio."

Wine Industry Workshop: April 3-5

The 31st annual New York Wine Industry Workshop & 2002 annual meeting of the New York Wine & Grape Foundation will be held April 3-5 at the Ramada Inn Geneva Lakefront.

Part of this year's program is a mini symposium on Riesling—the "signature wine" of the Finger Lakes. Riesling is a strong suit of New York's other wine regions, and arguably one of the most distinctive and demanding grape varieties in the world. Sessions with experts from around the world will explore its flavor dimensions and what makes great Riesling—adaptations to unique growing conditions and winemaking techniques.

Riesling very strongly expresses "terroir," the unique characteristics of the vineyard site and vineyard practices, says Thomas Henick-Kling, who directs the Station's enology program. "We have outstanding people from Germany, Alsace, Washington, California, and, of course, New York State, participating. We will be exploring Riesling in great detail with tastings and expert insight into growing, making, and marketing."

Riesling is the focus of the program all day Wednesday, Thursday morning, and during the Unity Banquet on Wednesday night.

Another important issue for New York grape growers and winemakers is Atypical Aging defect (ATA) in white wines. "Apparently every white grape variety can be affected," notes Henick-Kling. "The wine can be a complete economic loss, and, most importantly, such defective wines can be very damaging to a winemaker's reputation." Participants are encouraged to come and listen to what is known about this problem Thursday afternoon.

Thursday night, the banquet will fea-

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(SMALL SCALE, continued)

moderated by Cheryl Leach of NECFE, was titled "Incubator Kitchens: Can They Work For You?" This session explored what existing kitchens offer and presented information on what the "Incubator Kitchen Bill" means for farmers and processors. The fourth session, moderated by Kelly Flegel of the NY Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, concentrated on "Regional Chapter Development." Because each region has unique strengths and needs, processors broke up into groups by region to brainstorm about what they could do to improve their businesses.

Finally, attendees were given the option to tour the Food Venture Center, one of the two NECFE sites in the Northeast. Olga Padilla-Zakour, assistant professor of food science and technology, and NECFE director, led the tour.

The conference and expo, which were attended by over 60 people, was well received by all, as indicated by the following comments.

"The conference was very beneficial. We were introduced to many aids to help our efforts to grow our businesses," said entrepreneur Chris Selkirk, aka "Tabasco Chris." "We're fortunate to have Cornell, Ag and Markets and the SSFPA there to help and provide support for our endeavors. Starting a small scale food processing business is quite an undertaking. These resources are invaluable. Everybody in our business has consulted with Olga and her staff at the Station. They're friendly and provide us with answers to all our technical questions. Things would be a lot more difficult without them."

"The SSFPA conference was most informative. I hope that many of the networking ideas that were put forward not only in the overall meeting but also in the informal groups will materialize. It was a pleasure to become acquainted with so many enthusiastic processors and retailers," said Jae Sullivan, proprietor of Jae's Organic Food. "NECFE program's materials are very helpful for organizing all the key elements of a new business. Staff consultations cover any remaining questions. It is very valuable to be able to check out ideas and get advice from process authorities. Starting a business, no matter how well planned, is a giant leap of faith. It's comforting to feel that there's more experience behind you than whatever you can muster yourself."

Sullivan also praised the Station's Pilot Plant calling it crucial to the incubation needed to get a new business through the first few years. "Without the Pilot Plant facility, we would not have been able to start at all. Especially for processors who require more than a steam kettle, the range of equipment available in that one place is something that no small business could reproduce in its early years," Sullivan said.

Dave Evans, president of the SSFPA, summed it up best: "The small scale food processors do a terrific job of bringing value added products to market and helping farmers get more money for their raw products. They enhance the agricultural economic base of New York. The Food Venture Center at Geneva is a big asset for these producers."



(l-r) Assemblyman Bill Magee, SSFPA president Dave Evans, Amanda Hewitt, CCE Oneida Co., and Olga Padilla-Zakour networked with smallscale food processors at the recent

J. Zakour