

The cheese stands alone

By Susan Ryan

"To get pleasure out of Christmas shopping, begin early and make your selections gradually. It is quite time to begin now. There are no gifts so satisfactory and lasting as well-chosen books, and none so flattering to the taste and intelligence of the recipient."

— New York Times, November 11, 1908

DECEMBER 1 MARKS my one-year anniversary at the helm of River Reader. It was not the best year to take over a business but it certainly was the best community to be in. Frances, Sherry and James were very patient teachers and everyone from this community that has ventured into the store has gone out of their way to make me feel welcome.



I have enjoyed all the extra perks of being a local bookstore owner. What a delight it is for me to write this column every month. I enjoyed being on Helena's Kitchen radio show reviewing cookbooks. I shall miss her as my neighbor. It was an honor to be asked to be on the panel discussing "To Kill a Mockingbird". I was quite a poor panelist but I learned a lot and enjoyed it immensely. I just finished judging the Friends of the Library essay contest for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. The students were asked to write an essay on how they could help improve their community. There were some very good ideas but what stood out in most in my mind was their awareness of what a special place this is and of its immense natural beauty. Several of the kids also said that we could help improve the community by shopping locally. Right on kids!

As a bookstore owner I have enjoyed all of the reading that is required, not only of books but of all the papers and magazines that review the books. The

author events that I have had at the store have been picking up momentum and the attendance has been growing. It is so amazing to hear an author read his/her own work. She or he is sharing a part of themselves and through words and voice making a connection.

You will not want to miss our last author event of the year from someone who not only connects well, but is well connected and has a lot of interesting stuff to share in a wonderful manner.

American Cheeses: The Best Regional, Artisan, and Farmhouse Cheeses, Who Makes Them, and Where to Find Them has arrived with a lot of well-deserved fanfare: Words by Clark Wolf and photographs by Scott Mitchell. These two big city locals have created a wonderful book. Michele Anna Jordan wrote, "Clark Wolf writes as he talks, with unrestrained passion, commanding knowledge, unapologetic opinion and engaging intimacy. As I read, it is as if he is in the room with me, telling me these marvelous stories and offering me delicious nibbles. Clark's voice and Scott's evocative photographs complement each other perfectly and together make *American Cheeses* as irresistible as the cheeses it celebrates."

Clark, a cheese expert and restaurant and food consultant comes by his knowledge with a lifetime of experience from a grandmother who made cheese, running a cheese shop in the city, as the manager of San Francisco branch of the Oakville Market and currently through Clark Wolf Company, his consulting firm.

Scott Peacock has called *American Cheeses* "a gem. Passionate and smart, with a distinctive and informed point of view, the book is a perfect introduction for the novice, yet detailed and nuanced enough to satisfy and delight the most seasoned aficionado and cook."

Join us at River Reader on Monday, December 8 at 6:30 p.m. to celebrate Clark's new book with a reading, signing, and sampling of some of America's best cheeses. On this night ten percent of the books profits will be donated to the Guerneville School Garden Program.

Best wishes to everyone this holiday season and remember you don't need power to read a book. Even a candle will do. ■

