

Southern California Bamboo

The newsletter of the Southern California Chapter of the American Bamboo Society.
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Chapter Web site: <http://www.ABSSoCal.org>

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Calendar

The new Board of Directors with great enthusiasm is in the process of creating a calendar of events to make ABS SoCal a fun, inspiring, inclusive and functional organization once again. (On May 1st, shortly before press time a conference call among the Board members was held. More details next newsletter, ed.)

Bamboo Revival

With the gracious help of the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, a meeting was held in the Auditorium of the Huntington Botanical Library complex at around 12:30 pm on April 16, 2016. A sign in table was set up near the roundabout near this complex with Paulina Hermansen and other volunteers facilitating this before the meeting began.

In the hallway just outside the Auditorium doors were tables prepared with refreshments including bamboo leaf tea (produced by Shanti Pierce and provided by Gerard Minakawa) and multiple savory dishes featuring chicken and bamboo which we feasted on. Jim Folsom Ph.D. Director of the Huntington Botanical Gardens and Dany Ramos Cisneros immediate past-President welcomed us. About 20 were in attendance. Because it was lunchtime we then proceeded into the hall to fill our plates with offerings of Green Curry with bamboo and chicken, Thai Basil Tofu stir fry including chili, onion, garlic (vegetarian, non-vegetarian with chicken), steamed jasmine rice, sticky rice marinated in coconut milk, sticky rice with black beans and coconut milk served in bamboo culms, Thai mango slices, and other delectables. 50-Fifty

Asian Fusion Cuisine located in Claremont, Calif., prepared our food (proprietor Joyce Patra, www.50-fiftyasianfusion.com). Joyce explained to us how the bamboo steamer on display was used to prepare the rice. Additionally Cliff Sussman M.D. brought a dish of bamboo shoot slices soaked in vinegar, garlic, onion, and chili.



Figure 1

Photo © 2016 Jim Folsom

Dany told us the purpose of the meeting was to revitalize the chapter. Then Gerard Minakawa founder of Bamboo DNA (www.bamboodna.com) wowed us with a fabulous slideshow of his work featuring larger than life bamboo structures. Among those structures were a bamboo recreation of the Hagia Sophia of Eastern Orthodox fame and a structure named the Temple of Venus. How is that for diversity? The audience was additionally treated to slides of a bamboo bridge designed like a railroad trestle and many other structures that are designed to engage the viewer: shade for seating, space for dancing, walk-throughs like a museum.

Gerard has built structures at Burning Man Festival in northern Nevada and at the Coachella



Figure 2 Photo © 2016 Jim Folsom

Music Festival among other places. One reason his creations hold such fascination is because of their larger than life presence. “Man that’s big!” Gerard also builds gigantic arthropods using a metal core of pipes to attach the bamboo legs onto. One feels like a part of the 1954 movie *Them!* What particularly struck me is Gerard’s willingness to explain setbacks. For example, one structure erected at the Coachella Music Festival nearly blew over so now an engineer reviews plans for stability. Similarly, early creations of gigantic bamboo spiders broke due to weakness in the off-the-shelf metal chassis. Now he welds his own. Overall this shows an honest portrayal of his design evolution. *Guadua* culms are his preferred building material.



Figure 3 Photo © 2016 Gerard Minakawa

After Gerard’s presentation, Dany made a pitch for ideas. Paulina passed out slips of paper to

solicit ideas to this end. Hao Dang, owner of the company Zero Emission World, Inc. (www.zeroemissionworld.com/services) wanted to inform us of his products and made an offer to do a presentation in the future. Dany then reported briefly on the Treasury. He told us there is approximately \$28,500 in our account and that there was no treasurer at present. Signers on the account are himself and Robert Verkade past-Treasurer. Continuing he added that about \$10,000 was spent on the ABS National Conference two years ago. Membership was reported at 33 members with about 10 more added the day of the meeting.



Figure 4 Photo © 2016 Gerard Minakawa

Following this Dany called for Board candidates to come to the front of the auditorium and tell everyone a little about themselves. Adam Graves was first and said that he works at the San Diego Zoo. Cliff followed and talked about his bamboo species and varieties importations. Roy Wiersma Ph. D. then spoke of his recent cloning success of Los Angeles’s oldest tree. Dany then spoke again and mentioned that he grew up in Texas and Redlands, Calif. Paulina already active in the day’s activities then spoke. Christian Lydick past-Vice President informed us that he farms in El Centro, Calif. Gerard needed no introduction since we were all still mesmerized by his presentation. Jim Folsom said he would not be a candidate but would be available as an advisor. Kevin Rowell (not present) of Do Lab was enthusiastically

recommended by Paulina and Gerard and had earlier submitted a candidate's biography.

It was decided that the Board would consist of Adam, Christian, Paulina, Roy, and Kevin, as Directors and Dany and Gerard as Alternate Directors. Officer positions and additional roles were decided by the newly seated Board in accordance with our bylaws as follows: Adam is Recording Secretary, Christian is Chapter Representative, Paulina is Vice President, Roy is Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, and Webmaster, and Kevin is President.

After the Board assignments were determined a tour of recent bamboo introductions was led by Cliff.



Figure 5 Photo ©2016 Gerard Minakawa

Introduction to New President

Kevin Rowell is the founder of Natural Builders (Naturalbuilding.com) a contracting company that works around the world doing cutting-edge work in natural building and international development. His passion for natural materials and their use in construction has shown through his work with groups such as the World Monuments Fund in preserving traditional architecture, and the United Nations where he has facilitated dialogues about the use of local materials in construction for development and in partnerships like those with the American Bamboo Society to produce bamboo training manuals like the Illustrated Bamboo Guide (http://www.naturalbuilding.com/publications/#mgld_2232) . He currently works as the Director of

Operations for Do Lab, Inc. a festival and event company based in Los Angeles.

Kevin mentions that we have the ability to offer a second public event at the Huntington Library this November/December 2016. A 1 to 2 day workshop on how to work and build with bamboo would be really worthwhile. Additionally he wants to see a moratorium on new spending by our Society until the Board can meet to review finances and establish clear spending and fundraising goals.



Figure 6 Photo © 2016 Gerard Minakawa

Suggestions Submitted by Attendees

Lynda Brothers submitted several ideas for consideration by the chapter. She is located in Moorpark which is about halfway between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. Her studio is available for workshops. About 20 varieties of bamboo are to be found growing on the property. Guest teachers working with bamboo in all aspects: cutting, splitting, basketry, fence making, weaving, art objects, painted, etc. is what she wants to see done. The setting up of workshops to build simple structures in local communities like community gardens, small farms, and local estates will help accomplish this. She wants to see someone leading bamboo cooking classes. Our chapter should be promoting bamboo artwork and crafts. Artisans can be promoted via gallery showings and open space displays. Her Web site is LyndaBrothers.com .

Other comments (anonymous) want us to educate the public on using bamboo in garden landscaping because in general the public think

bamboo is an invasive plant and should not be planted in landscaping.

Suggestions by the editor are the creation of a set of United States bamboo postage stamps, an athletic competition (ex. bamboo javelin throw, bamboo rhizome toss), a Miss Bamboo pageant, and a booth at the Los Angeles County Fair (September) promoting our organization.

Bamboo Allergy

by Harry Verschure

translated by Roy Wiersma Ph.D.

About thirty minutes after eating a meatball in our business restaurant I got tingling and bumps everywhere which remained for about four hours. I reported this to the chief chef and he magically produced the packaging with the meatballs: next to the pea flour and pea fibers were also bamboo fibers. Both of us did not know why bamboo fibers had to be in meatballs not at the expiration date. A week later I repeated an experiment, now through eating only one meatball (without pea flour, pea fiber, etc.). Thirty minutes later it started again, tingling, bumps, completely red skin. I took an antihistamine and went home. Of that I made a photo and it looks like a stinging nettle rash onset.

In Research

Following I sought contact with the manufacture for further information. They were not too cooperative with this. A little bit of sniffing around on the Internet did not turn up much. That's my problem, not the Internet. Months later I had some Ardenner pate, and I saw that here were also bamboo fibers mixed in. And sure enough light tingling after about 25 minutes. Also this manufacturer I approached, they came back with the communication that there was no Ardenner paté in the assortment whereupon I naturally asked at the cantina if they were able to find an old supply of that paté. They denied it. The manufacturer again was approached and he came back with the following information: it concerns here bamboo as a source of food fibers and it is less than 2%. The

botanical origin of the source fiber is *Dendrocalamus membranaceus* Munro. The production process is as follows:

1. Pulp process: cooking of the bamboo, separating of the bamboo fiber by filtration, washing of the fiber, bleaching with peroxide (this is dissolved in water and a chemical agent and leaves therefore no residues), drying.
2. The dried pulp is dry ground without additions of other ingredients or additives and further worked.

The bamboo fiber is 100% extracted of cellulose of the bamboo plant and free from other ingredients, additives, or contaminants of known allergens.

Food Fibers

More sniffing around on the Internet produced in each case a German supplier of bamboo fibers with a little text and explanation but I also found two interesting studies: one about food fiber as a functional ingredient in meat products and one about nourishment properties of bamboo shoots. The first article went extensively into the functional properties and their behaviour in ready-and-done meat products such as hot dogs and hamburgers. There are physical-chemical properties such as better retention of water which compensates for reduced fat content and that is then again important for suppliers that want to place leaner products in the market. The product becomes more solid, there is less boiling loss, and it is taste neutral. Further is a whole discourse about the various fibers that were tested.

Rightly Substantially Functional

For food, its texture, presentation, and taste is important. As food fiber, thus in some cases bamboo fiber, food is made more solid, the color is not influenced negatively but rightly the structure thus texture is made better. Then I began to understand why that was used. Also noteworthy is that silicium dioxide (E551), an important anti-

caking agent can be replaced with bamboo fiber as one aims for a more natural product.

The second article was more directed at the food value of various fibers but limited itself to bamboo shoots. They are pretty much never available here fresh on account of the limited delivery period. They are mainly canned and in less measure bamboo shoots are processed fermented. With the description of the food value it becomes focused upon the phytosterols and phenols that we cannot make ourselves; we well have need to have reduced, among others, cholesterol (the LDL variant). Very technical but still interesting to read about. Also useful to know that fermenting does not have a negative influence on the presence of these and other substances. Canning diminishes these substances considerably.

Further Research

But in the meantime I still don't know why I got such a severe allergic reaction after taking in chemically inert bamboo fiber. This will certainly still be followed up.

Reference

“Bamboe allergie” in *Bamboe – Tijdschrift van de European Bamboo Society, afdeling Nederland*. Jaargang 25, Nummer 3, 2015, pagina 8-9

See also www.bamboepagina.nl

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Figure 7

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Note: This newsletter is available in PDF format at the ABS-SoCal Web site: www.abssocal.org – In Color!

**Application for membership in: The American Bamboo Society
and the Southern California Chapter of the American Bamboo Society**

Renewal New

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____ e-mail: _____

- Membership for 2016 is (check one):
- Annual: \$50- ABS and ABS SoCal Chapter (\$40 digital)
 - Annual: \$15- ABS SoCal only
 - Supporting: \$70- ABS and ABS SoCal Chapter (\$60 digital)
 - Lifetime: \$800- ABS Membership only (\$600 digital)
 - Patron: \$130- ABS and ABS SoCal Chapter (\$120 digital)
 - Lifetime: \$300- ABS SoCal Chapter only
 - \$15/year for each additional Chapter checked below:
 - Three years: \$140- ABS and ABS SoCal Chapter (\$110 digital)
 - International: \$55- ABS only (\$40 digital)
 - Florida Caribbean; Hawaii; Louisiana- Gulf Coast; Mid-States; Northeast; Northern California;
 - Pacific Northwest; Southeast; Texas Bamboo Society

Make check to ABS SoCal: Mail to: **ABS SoCal Membership, 5387 Topaz St. , Alta Loma, CA 91701**
 Check here if you do **NOT** want your phone number and e-mail address listed in directories.