Geoffrey Roberts Award - 2006 winners and 2007 details

6 Jan 2007 by JR

Not a minute before time I am delighted to announce the winner of the Geoffrey Roberts Award 2006, and to call for applicants for this £3,000/$6,000 travel bursary in 2007. Since 1996 the Geoffrey Roberts Award has built a unique record of helping potential achievers to travel with the ultimate aim of improving the quality and integrity of food and drink.

Both the winner and runner-up in the 2006 Awards are young American women - quite a coincidence since we had applicants of all ages from all five continents. Our winner is **Nazli Parvizi** who is a food anthropologist who has been working as the youngest-ever Executive Director of the New York City Mayor's Volunteer Center. Several weeks spent in Vietnam in 2005 made her realize how rapidly the country was losing its unique, and strongly food-based, culture as tourism encroached on farmland. Her plan is to create links between Vietnamese Americans, especially chefs, and Vietnamese farmers and restaurateurs to help preserve sustainable farming and supply the growing tourist trade in Vietnam through an initiative centred on the ancient capital Hue. An organic garden is planned for the local community by the East Meets West Foundation, the largest non-governmental organization (NGO) working in Vietnam today, and Nazli will be working with them to design a food-based tour of Vietnam. She aims to coordinate workshops to create partnerships between restaurateurs and farmers in Vietnam, thereby encouraging responsible farming, agribusiness, tourism and development. All this may seem ambitious but based on Nazli's achievements to date; we judges are highly optimistic and excited by the potential of this proposal.

Runner-up in the 2006 Awards, for which we had an impressive array of proposals, from making a social historical documentary and piece to a study of Andalucian jamon serrano, was Belgian-American **Nathalie Jordi** who was working for Neal's Yard Dairy and shows an uncommon talent for writing. The granddaughter of an Appenzell cheesemaker, she has the long term aim of helping America's new generation of farmhouse cheesemakers market their wares more effectively in very practical ways. Her argument is that they are too busy making the cheese to have time to sell it as effectively as they might. She has spent her bursary visiting producers in Vermont, attending the American Cheese Conference in Portland, Oregon last summer, researching how Irish cheesemakers have devised a successful co-operative marketing strategy and working at The Tasting Room in New York supervising its all-American cheeseboard. Several exciting writing projects are in the pipeline.

We are now looking for applications for the **2007 Geoffrey Roberts Award**, set up in 1996 in memory of this pioneering New World wine importer into the UK. Your age, sex, location, and ability to write English don't matter at all. All you have to do is convince us judges that the result of your spending £3,000/$6,000 on some food- or drink-related travel project will make the world a better place. Full details of how to apply at www.geoffreyrobertsaward.com or email geoffreyrobertsa@aol.com

Applications close on 30 March, 2007.

See also yesterday's heart-warming report from Mary Taylor of New Zealand, winner of the 2005 Geoffrey Roberts Award.