

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



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## Together We Did

By Sheila Parisien, President SNA of Mass.

This is my last address to you as president of SNA. It's been suggested that I highlight my accomplishments while in office. Although I do like to brag, I can't take full credit for the wonderful things that have occurred over the past two years. We have moved forward in a very positive and productive way due to the dedication, passion, expertise and vision of many members. I am honored to have had the opportunity to serve with you all. Thank you!

Having said that, there were some areas that were a driving force for me. I had vision and goals, but was lacking a plan. We weren't equipped to address the many changes that were coming our way. The first thing we had to do was provide our volunteers with leadership training and resources that would equip them to go forward and make things happen. We brought in outside trainers and facilitators, structured committees, and set goals together. Empowering our volunteers with the tools they needed allowed them to accomplish many wonderful things for our members. Here are just a few of my favorite things.

I felt it was vital for us to raise the level of professionalism and perception of foodservice and child nutrition professionals. Changing our name to the School Nutrition Association was the start. We then increased the number of credentialed members by a whopping 200%. Next was bringing awareness of

outstanding districts to the forefront and we now have four districts in Mass. that have been awarded the national designation of Districts of Excellence. This doesn't seem like a large number, but considering that there are only 103 districts nationwide with this distinction, this is huge!

I felt that the association needed to increase and strengthen its partnerships with allied organizations that also had children's health and well being as their priority. The last newsletter spelled out just some of the success we have had in this area. (The "Together We Can" article is posted on our website, [www.schoolnutrition.info](http://www.schoolnutrition.info) under president's comments).

Educating our lawmakers about who we are, what we do and whom we represent has also been a priority. They need to understand completely that they shouldn't try to propose and pass bills without our expert opinion and input; the Koutoujian bill is evidence of this success (see the article with the history of this bill on page 4.)

Increasing our members' awareness and confidence in SNA as an organization that truly does make a difference was my highest priority. We're getting there. We have increased membership from the 100-500-member category to the 500-1000 member category, but there are still many school foodservice employees that haven't yet been reached. I truly believe that I can't do my job effectively for the children I serve without the resources, training, networking opportunities and industry contacts that I gain through my membership in SNA. I wanted and still want all school foodservice and child nutrition professionals in this state to realize that they each have the ability to make a difference in the lives of children. Becoming a member, staying a member, being an active member, volunteering or running for an office, are all wonderful ways to make a difference in our profession and in the lives of the children we serve. Think about it, get active, recruit and volunteer, please.

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## Industry Council

By Shelley Hill, Cotton, Cotton and Hill

*This is the first of a series that will focus on SNA of Mass. committees.*

The Industry Council is a group of dedicated professionals who assist the leadership of the SNA of Massachusetts. We have a growing list of responsibilities, which include solicitation, and management of the corporate sponsor program. We currently have over 60 corporate sponsors, which include 1 platinum patron and 14 gold patrons. Working closely with the exhibits committee, we coordinate the details of the various conference exhibits including the fall basket raffle and silent auction. These programs represent over 60% of the association's annual income.

Last fall the theme of the food show was "Let's Make a Deal". We changed the format to a buying show, and the vendors created lots of excitement with incentives, specials and prizes. Thank you to all the districts that attended and purchased at the show. The exhibitors were pleased with the result. We are currently planning the 2006 fall conference and food show and I'm sure it will be bigger and better than last year. We will continue the momentum with "The Price is Right" theme. This is a great opportunity for you to save money on your purchases, win prizes and have lots of fun. We look forward to seeing you in October! (10/17-10/18).

Our members include Melissa DeCoffe – Benchmark Sales, Shelley Hill (Chair) – Cotton, Cotton & Hill, Kim Imbornone (Asst. Chair) – NE Ice Cream, Rick Jewell – Culinary Sales, Karen Mc Donald –Thurston Foods , David Nichols – Pierre Foods, Candace Rassias – Nestle Foods, Bob Standley, – Standley Sales, and Dino Tessicini –Kellogg's

## National Leadership Conference

by Sandy Valeri, President-Elect

This is the first message from your President-Elect, Sandy Valeri, FSD in Leominster Public Schools. I am very eager and energized as I approach my term as president in August 2006. The National Leadership Conference is sponsored by SNA national to provide future presidents with leadership development. This year's conference sessions included updating the Annual Plan, Strategic Issues Management, Knowledge Based Decision Making, Building Membership Via Recognition, Identifying New Sources of Revenue, and Effective Committees.

My goal is to continue to build the strong foundation that the board has been developing over the past two years. I was pleased that SNA of Mass. had many of the suggestions in place now or had already planned to incorporate them for the 2006-07 year. We will continue to provide leadership training for our board members and committee chairs and we are committed to provide our volunteers with the necessary tools to do their work effectively. We learned about some great and workable ideas that we will be introducing at the upcoming Annual Meeting August 23, 2006 at Framingham State College and at the Fall Conference October 17 & 18, 2006 at the Best Western in Fitchburg, MA- off Rt. 2. Please mark your calendars.

In closing, I want to welcome and encourage all of our members and non-members to attend Chapter Meetings and/or conferences and if you have any questions or concerns or if you would like to join us on the board, please feel free to contact me at [svaleri@leominster.mec.edu](mailto:svaleri@leominster.mec.edu) or 978 534-7706. I am looking forward to the 2006-07 year and the opportunity to get to know more of our members.

## Spring Membership Drive

by Susan Murray, Membership Chair

We should all be proud and excited that as a team we were able to retain and recruit 117 members. The membership committee is looking forward to the upcoming year. During the board retreat in May, we conducted a mega discussion on how to better communicate the benefits of membership to our current and potential members. We received some great ideas from executive board members, but we would also like to hear from you. Please forward any ideas you have on any aspect of membership and we will have the committee start working on them. Speaking of committee, the membership committee is looking for new members. The only qualification you need is a desire to help your peers. For more information on what the member services committee does, call or email me and I will send you out a packet:

[susan.murray@compass-usa.com](mailto:susan.murray@compass-usa.com) or (508) 778-0563.

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On August 1, 2006, I will hand the presidency over to Sandy Valeri. Sandy is ready to meet the ongoing challenges and is surrounded by a wonderfully enthusiastic, talented and committed board of directors to assist her. The foundation we have been building over the past two years is solid and should serve the association well into the future. I'm not, however, going to disappear. I will remain on the executive board as the immediate past president and will also join the member services committee where my greatest passion is.

As immediate past president I will serve as the nominating chair which means that I will be seeking out volunteers and future leaders. My plan is to help develop resources that will clearly spell out what each position of the association board entails, so that potential candidates will have concrete information to assist them in making the decision about whether to step up to a board position or volunteer on a committee or work on a small or one time project. I will continue to spread the word that each member has the ability and yes, the obligation to make a difference in our profession and the lives of the children we serve. It is critical that SNA is accessible to all members and that all members feel they are not only a part of this association but have a sense of ownership of this association.

I am going to serve on the membership committee because I still have lots of ideas about how to better provide benefits and services to our current and future members including establishing the buddy and mentoring programs, and greater outreach to managers and workers. I am currently on SNA national's member services committee, and it makes sense to participate on the state level as well.

Since I do like to brag, I will say that I will always be able to boast that I was the last President of the Massachusetts School Food Service Association (MSFSA) and the first President of the School Nutrition Association of Mass (SNA of Mass.) What this means to me is that I was able to participate in the transition that raised our level of professionalism and allowed us to be recognized as one of the leaders in the field of school foodservice and child nutrition.

Sincerely, Sheila Parisien, President

#### The Years in Review 2004–2006

- hired an executive director
- name change to SNA of Mass.
- secured outside facilitation, Training-by-Design, to help provide leadership training for our board
- committee structure developed and put in place
- job descriptions revised and developed
- reintroduced the two scholarship programs
- brought credentialing exam to RI
- increased credentialed members by 200%
- increased membership
- moved the annual conference to a central location to allow for greater attendance in fall 06
- increased annual revenue
- worked effectively to craft the Koutoujian bill
- reintroduced a newsletter, 3x a year, Food for Thought
- began a corporate sponsorship program
- developed the website as a major information source
- introduced a members-only page
- created an online membership directory
- developed an evaluation form for all board meetings
- introduced the healthy happenings exhibit
- provided membership with quality educational opportunities through our chapter meetings and the spring and fall conferences
- worked to establish partnerships within the industry

## Mark Your Calendars

### SNA Annual Meeting

Wednesday, August 23, 2006  
Framingham State College  
Framingham, MA

### SNA Fall Conference and Food Show

Tuesday and Wednesday, October 17–18, 2006  
Best Western Royal Plaza and Trade Center  
Fitchburg, MA

### SNA Spring Conference

Healthy Happenings & Commodity Connection  
Tuesday and Wednesday, March 13–14, 2007  
Holiday Inn, Boxboro, MA

# The Koutoujian Bill: What is it and Where Are We?

by Debra Korzec-Ramirez, MSRD, CDN and SNA Legislative Action Chair

## History of the Bill

State Representative Peter Koutoujian (R-Waltham) introduced the “Act to Promote Proper School Nutrition” during the 2003–2004 legislative year (H. 1457). The intent of H. 1457 was to address the growing overweight and obesity epidemic in the United States.

Specifically this bill ensures that healthy snacks and foods are provided in vending, school stores, a la carte, snack lines and other venues in Massachusetts’s elementary, middle, and high schools. It also requires selected nutritional information for all foods not prepackaged. To view the complete document, visit:

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/house/ht01/ht01457.htm>

## How is H. 1457 progressing?

With great assistance and education from SNA of Mass., the standards for portion sizes, amounts of fat, saturated fat/trans fat, and carbohydrates have been adjusted to adhere to the guidelines produced by the Massachusetts Action for Healthy Kids ([http://www.maclearinghouse.com/PDFs/Health&Wellness/MA\\_Food\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.maclearinghouse.com/PDFs/Health&Wellness/MA_Food_Standards.pdf)).

The original bill did not address the nutritional guidelines in schools after the end of the school day. SNA strongly opposed this. In the amended version, this section has been addressed and if passed, the bill’s standards will apply all the time on school grounds. This was a great victory for us. The amended version would require the Department of Public Health to collect and report obesity trends and eating disorders in students

## The Senate vs. The House on Setting Nutrition Standards in Schools

On February 15, the Senate decided to move forward with its own school nutrition bill. This bill, sponsored by Senator Moore and differing in content and wording than the Koutoujian House Bill 4552, has strong influence and support by the American Beverage Association and its’ lobbyists. Passage of this Senate bill, a compromise to the nutritional integrity of our children, would be a major set back for supporters of the Koutoujian Bill (H-4452 ).

Under this Senate bill, soda would be banned from elementary schools only; some cola-flavored waters and diet sodas would be allowed in middle schools and high schools. If school districts vote to allow soda to be sold in high schools, no more than 50 percent of the beverage selection can be sweetened and non-sweetened carbonated beverages. Moore's bill would only apply to food sold during school hours, and would not affect concession stand items or other fundraising activities.

## Where We Are Now

A few weeks ago, much to our surprise and delight, the American Beverage Company announced it would stop the sale of soda and sweetened beverages in all elementary and middle schools. They further stated that in high schools, only diet soda and sports drinks would be sold. Although this is a positive step, selling of any type of soda in our schools remains a compromise to the nutritional integrity of our children.

Both of these bills remain ‘tabled’, meaning they have not yet been voted on. So, it is still important for you to contact your state representative and senator and request support for Representative Koutoujian’s Bill (H-4452). Together, as professionals in School Food Service and Nutrition, we can influence the direction our politicians vote with these bills. Call or write your legislators and urge their support for prohibiting the sale of soda and junk food in ALL schools. To determine who your legislators are, go to <http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/house/ht01/ht01457.htm>

## Healthy Choices

By Kimberly Mirsky, MS,RD,LDN & Christine Horan, MPH

Middle schools represent an ideal venue for a multidisciplinary effort to improve the nutrition and physical activity habits of students. The “tween” years reflects a period of time just before high school when children are still open to learning, while at the same time developing the freedoms to make more decisions for themselves. *Healthy Choices* is a middle school-based nutrition and physical activity program designed to increase knowledge and skills about establishing healthy habits by increasing access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity. *Healthy Choices* is a collaboration of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts *Jump Up and Go!* program. *Healthy Choices* is a 3-year grant program where schools must reapply for funding prior to each new school year. It promotes the 5-2-1 message of eating at least 5 or more fruits and vegetables a day, no more than 2 hours of screen time exposure per day including TV, video games and computers and getting at least 1 hour of physical activity every day. Schools that participate in the *Healthy Choices* program work to implement four major components: (1) a before and/or after school program, (2) *Planet Health*, an evidence-based classroom nutrition and physical activity curriculum, (3) a policy or systems change addressing school nutrition and/or physical activity, and (4) a school-wide promotion of the 5-2-1 message. Strong team building between school staff, parents, students and members of the community is the approach used to ensure the program's goals are met. Regional Coordinators from the MA Department of Public Health are also available to provide each school with technical assistance and support in implementing their program components.

During the 2005-2006 school year, a total of 114 public middle schools across the state of Massachusetts participated in the *Healthy Choices* program. Because every school has different needs and resources, *Healthy Choices* allows each school to create an individualized plan and targets the most appropriate grade level depending on existing resources and goals they wish to accomplish. Schools utilize their funding to purchase equipment, such as a salad bar, exercise equipment or education materials that can last years beyond the grant program and help sustain healthy behaviors.

The *Healthy Choices* program has also acted as a catalyst and as a resource for schools looking to make improvements in their nutrition and physical activity environments to comply with Federal mandates that all school districts have a wellness policy in place by the 2006-2007 school year. Staff from *Healthy Choices* schools have been able to share their successes from the middle schools with their district wellness councils and offer guidance in forming the new policies. Changes to school policies such as eliminating non-nutritious foods as rewards or fundraisers, prohibiting soda and non-nutritious items from vending machines and changing items served on a la carte lines or in the cafeteria are policies put in place in *Healthy Choices* schools that are now being considered by their districts. These achievements are largely due to the collaboration among staff, including administration, teachers, food service staff and nurses, who are committed to creating a healthier environment for their students.

For more information on the *Healthy Choices* program or for program ideas that you may be able to implement at your school, please call Christine Horan, *Healthy Choices* Program Coordinator from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at 617-994-9860.

### 06/07 Executive Board

**President** Sandy Valeri  
**President Elect** Joanne Morrissey  
**Vice President** Jackie Morgan  
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**Education** Ann Pitzen  
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**Parliamentarian** Janice Buxton  
**Professional Development** Jeanne Johnson  
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**Chapter 1 Delegate Elect** Wendy McCaul  
**Chapter 2 Delegate** Diane Mikulski  
**Chapter 2 Delegate Elect** Janice King  
**Chapter 3 Delegate** Susan Bodwell  
**Chapter 3 Delegate Elect** Jan Pedersen-Jenkins  
**Chapter 4 Delegate** Judy White-Orlando  
**Chapter 4 Delegate Elect** John Overcash  
**Chapter 5 Delegate** Megan Aardema  
**Chapter 5 Delegate Elect** Patrick Van Cott  
**DOE Representative** Katie Millet  
**Executive Director** Susan Sacks

## Did You Know?

- ❑ SNA national is compiling a collection of approved school wellness policies. If you would like to submit your policy please send to: [cjackson@schoolnutrition.org](mailto:cjackson@schoolnutrition.org) or fax 703-739-3915.
- ❑ We have a members-only section on our website. Log in on the home page [www.schoolnutrition.info](http://www.schoolnutrition.info) with your name and SNA membership number.
- ❑ New England Dairy and Food Council has become our first Platinum Patron! Thank you NEDFC.
- ❑ Kids First RI will sponsor a Healthy Foods Marketplace, August 10 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Warwick, RI 401-732-6000 [www.kidsfirstri.org](http://www.kidsfirstri.org).
- ❑ The Northeast Organic Farming Association's summer conference is August 10-14 in Amherst, MA [www.nofa.org](http://www.nofa.org)
- ❑ National School Lunch Week 2006 is the week of October 9<sup>th</sup>.
- ❑ If you wish to donate to the Silent Auction at the SNA ANC this July please go to the SNA Foundation's web page <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/CNF.aspx?id+1129> or contact Julie Curtis [jcurtis@schoolnutrition.org](mailto:jcurtis@schoolnutrition.org) 800-877-8822
- ❑ The winners of our Spring membership drive are Deb King (first), Sheila Parisient (second) and Judy White-Orlando (third). Thank you and congratulations!



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Annual meeting brochure &  
registration form enclosed!