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The Official Magazine of the Illinois Restaurant Association

Seasonings

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On in Culinary
Classrooms Today?**

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For Employees
and Guests**

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Chairman-on-the-Go

Where Has IRA Chairman Steve Palmer Been This Summer?



Steve Palmer has been on many trips to Washington during our annual National Lobby Day, here pictured with the Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (R-Yorkville). Outreach efforts like the NRA's Lobby Day are critical to our industry in Illinois and its \$15 billion in annual sales.



IRA Chairman Steve Palmer, seen here with former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, at the 2003 NRA Show at McCormick Place in Chicago.



Steve had a chance to catch up with some representatives of the IRA's chapters during the Lake County Chapter's annual scholarship dinner. Here Steve is pictured with the 2004 incoming McHenry Chapter president, Bernice Zubrzycki Nemz of Warsaw Inn.

IRA chairman Steve Palmer, of Palmer Place in LaGrange, has been on a crusade for our industry, touring the state and country to promote restaurant causes and defend our interests. Every summer, elected officials typically host events for upcoming elections. This year was no exception, and Steve was there to support those elected officials who are integral to our state's restaurant industry and its \$15 billion in sales.

Most recently on behalf of the IRA, Steve attended several fund-raisers in support of elected officials. Steve, along with Tommy Coutretsis (Tommy's Greek Express) and Donovan Pepper, IRA public affairs director, attended the Illinois State Republican Party reception, where they were able to speak face-to-face with the state's GOP. State Treasurer and Chairwoman Judy Baar Topinka and House Republican Leader Tom Cross (R-Oswego) appreciated the IRA's support. Steve also attended State Sen. Christine Radogno's (R-LaGrange) recent golf outing.

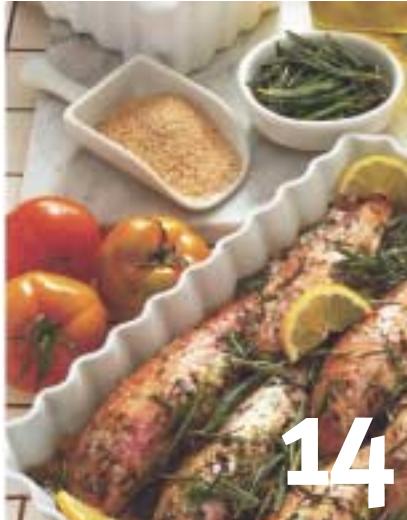
The IRA is fortunate to have Steve as its chairman, as he is devoted both to legislative advocacy on behalf of our industry and to improving the lines of communication among Illinois restaurateurs and elected officials in Chicago, Springfield and Washington, D.C. For years, Steve has been on the forefront of advocacy within and beyond the IRA, to continue relationships with those that affect our businesses day to day. But his involvement as chairman doesn't end there.

On July 29, Steve joined members of the Lake County Chapter of the IRA at the chapter's annual scholarship dinner at the Deer Path Inn in Lake Forest. More than 120 people attended the dinner and silent auction, where \$8,000 was awarded in scholarships. Steve will also be joining the McHenry Chapter for one of its upcoming events. Steve's aggressive advocacy and chapter outreach help keep public officials keenly aware of our industry's issues.

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ON THE COVER: Trident Technical College baking and pastry instructor chef Bernd Gronert. Photo by Trident staff photographer Lauren Preller Chambers.

FROM THE TOP



Get Involved in the IRA



**Steve Palmer,
IRA Chairman**

By the time you've received this issue of *Seasonings*, the latest National Restaurant Association Public Affairs Conference will have ended and a strong delegation of restaurant owners will have returned from Washington, D.C. Each year, Illinois restaurant owners—and about 600 other restaurant owners from across the nation—converge on the nation's capital to remind elected officials of the impact our industry has on the livelihoods of thousands of workers throughout our state. In Illinois alone, our industry represents \$15.4 billion in sales, with more than 362,000 employees—voices that can't be ignored.

I believe that the Illinois Restaurant Association is devoted to making Illinois the greatest state for the restaurant industry. The IRA is the unified voice of restaurant owners, managers and industry associates, but this voice is only as strong as you allow it to be. Each year, I personally telephone some of my peers—and this year I look at it as my duty as chairman—to get them involved in this and any other grassroots opportunity I-GO presents. I-GO, you may recall, is the Illinois Grassroots Opportunity network, which provides the voice that speaks on our behalf to our elected officials about the issues affecting us.

This year, I-GO came face-to-face with our legislative

leaders to discuss issues such as immigration, nutrition and obesity, association health plans, ADA notification and many other important topics. But if you're not there to alert your congressman and your senator to your everyday concerns, they'll never know.

There are many ways you can get involved in the IRA if you're not the "lobbying" type. Our annual Restaurateurs Ball, Nov. 7, is a great opportunity for you to meet industry peers while helping a terrific cause—the future of your trade. Hundreds of restaurant owners and suppliers attend the event each year to support the IRA Educational Foundation, and thousands of dollars are raised for students interested in continuing their culinary educations. Join us this year at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry to help further the cause while having a fantastic time.

The IRA is here to protect and promote you and me—restaurant owners—and I'm very proud to be a part of that. I want you to get involved and see first-hand what I'm talking about. Please watch your mail, fax or e-mail, and respond to the call to action.

Don't get caught asking what they did about it; help us decide what we are going to do about it. This is not the IRA of the past. This is the IRA working for your future, and membership does indeed have its privileges.★

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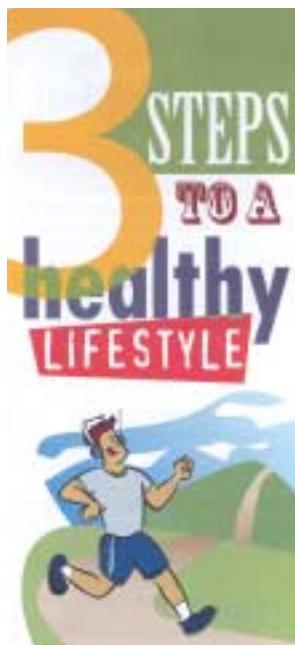
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In The News



OBESITY TACKLED ON NATIONAL LEVEL

In the wake of increased attention to the growing problem of obesity in the United States and the threat of frivolous obesity-related lawsuits against the restaurant industry, the National Restaurant Association has developed its "3 Steps to a Healthy Lifestyle" brochure for restaurant owners, which offers proactive nutrition and health advice. To get artwork for display in your restaurant, call 202-973-3667, or visit www.restaurant.org to download a copy of the brochure. This presents a great opportunity to let your customers know that your establishment is practical and offers a stable and logical approach to a difficult issue.

HOSPITALITY GROUPS HOST FUND-RAISER FOR SENATE PRESIDENT EMIL JONES JR.

Illinois hospitality groups and the IRA held a fund-raiser in honor of Senate President Emil Jones Jr. on Wednesday, July 30, 2003. Hosted by Harry Caray's Restaurant in Chicago, the event raised money to support the senator and to thank him for his efforts to help the tourism community in Illinois.

"If it weren't for the efforts of individuals like Senate President Jones, the hospitality community would be at a further loss for the extremely important funding that is used to increase tourism in Illinois," said Colleen McShane, IRA president.

More than \$31,000 was raised for Jones, who has befriended the tourism community many times in the past. The IRA sincerely appreciates all of his efforts to increase the strength and viability of the restaurant industry in Illinois.

LAKE COUNTY ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP DINNER

The Lake County Chapter of the Illinois Restaurant Association invited restaurant industry representatives to "See Our Stars!" at its annual scholarship dinner, July 29 at the Deer Path Inn in Lake Forest, Ill. More than 120 people attended the dinner and silent auction. Brian Margulis, chapter president and owner of Flatlander's Restaurant & Brewery in Lincolnshire, awarded each 2003 recipient a \$1,000 scholarship matched with an additional \$1,000 from the IRA Educational Foundation. Elizabeth Beeter, Brian Noparstak, Justin Rolls and Dana Rosenblatt all displayed the hard work and dedication needed to win the scholarship and work in the often-demanding restaurant trade. Special thanks go to Mike Lama, Michael Blankner and the entire staff of Deer Path Inn for their outstanding hospitality.

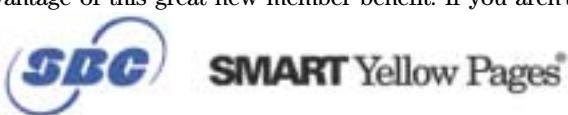
A very special thank-you goes to the sponsors, without whom the night wouldn't have been such a terrific success: Brown Forman; Deer Path Inn; Flatlander's Restaurant & Brewery; Immigration Law Associates, PC; LaSalle Bank; Trungale, Egan & Associates; and U.S. Foodservice.



(from left) Steve Palmer, IRA chairman and owner of Palmer Place, LaGrange; Erwin Hellberg, vice president of U.S. Foodservice and evening sponsor; Brian Noparstak, Elizabeth Beeter, and Justin Rolls, 2003 scholarship recipients; Brian Margulis, Lake County Chapter president and owner of Flatlander's Restaurant & Brewery, Lincolnshire

NEW ENDORSED PROGRAM: SBC SMART YELLOW PAGES

The IRA has a new endorsed program and corporate sponsor, SBC Smart Yellow Pages. After much negotiation, IRA members will receive a choice of one of the following free advertising upgrades: color, one ad size or a companion ad in the cuisine section of the restaurant section. Membership information for the IRA will be featured in the Business-to-Business Directory, and general restaurant information will be featured in the consumer directories. This partnership will be very beneficial to the IRA membership, as it assists in the IRA mission to continuously enhance and promote the restaurant industry. For further information or if you have any questions, visit www.sbcsmartyellowpages.com or contact Dave Kelly, 312-240-6078, to take advantage of this great new member benefit. If you aren't an IRA member and would like to receive this and our many other cost-saving benefits, call Moira O'Brien at our membership department today, 1-800-572-1086 or 312-787-4000.



Supplier SPOTLIGHT

Restaurant Depot: Come and Get It!

By Tom Tuerff

When we were kids, we all heard stories or dreamed about faraway lands where everything you could ever want was waiting for you when you needed it. Happy elves stood guard over the goodies, awaiting your beck and call. All you had to do was come and get it.

Well, for those of you fortunate enough to run restaurants in the Chicago area, that dream has come true in the form of Restaurant Depot. Its three locations in Chicago, Des Plaines and Alsip put real selection within reach of virtually every restaurant owner in Chicagoland.

"We cater solely to the foodservice industry," said Jim Kohler, the company's marketing director. "We're not a cookie cutter operation. Each of our locations knows the type of restaurants that operate in their area, and they stock specifically to satisfy those customers."

Restaurant Depot is a membership organization—like a Costco for restaurants.

Restaurant Depot is a membership organization—like a Costco for restaurants. But membership, Kohler said, is completely free. And the prices, he added, are definitely a dream come true for customers. The secret is in not going to the customer, but having the customer come there.

"We're strictly cash-and-carry," Kohler said. "We don't deliver. So we figure that if you're willing to drive the 15 to 20 miles that most of our customers do to shop with us, we can pass the savings on to you."

These savings, keep in mind, frequently run in the 15 percent to 25 percent range. And while you won't find any elves stocking the shelves at Restaurant Depot, you will find that former chefs and other folks with restaurant experience staff the place.

"Our managers are all well-versed in the restaurant business," Kohler said. "Many have run restaurants themselves. So they know what you need and can help you get it quickly."

And best of all, there's no minimum purchase. Last-minute buys are simply not a problem.

"For example, if you're planning a Sunday brunch and you realize on Saturday afternoon that you're a few pats of butter short, we're more than happy to help," Kohler said.

First-time visitors to Restaurant Depot are usually stunned by the sheer size of the selection and products available. Where in the past people frequently thought of it as a good place to buy non-perishable food items and accessories, Restaurant Depot has been making a solid push to promote its always-fresh meat and produce departments too.

"It's all here," Kohler said. "All you have to do is come and get it." ★

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WHAT'S GOING ON IN CULINARY CLASSROOMS TODAY?

By Jeff Owens

Next time you tuck in your napkin and start digging into your beef paupiettes with vegetables, consider that the chef who prepared such a delightful and impressive repast didn't just improvise the whole thing with crossed fingers.

Chefs, it bears remembering, go to school. Have for centuries. They learn their demanding art in the classrooms and kitchens of institutions where you must learn to crawl before you can learn to soar. Indeed, despite wave after trendy wave in U.S. restaurants eager to dish out the Next Big Cuisine, a revitalized emphasis on the basics is what you'll find in culinary classrooms today.

In the hospitality management program at Trident Technical College in Charleston, S.C., culinary arts instructor and restaurateur chef Bill Stacks says, "What we try to teach are the basics of cooking. I teach respect for the food and its natural flavor. We teach the techniques to retain the essential flavors of the products you're cooking, without them being masked by other flavorings."

You'll hear similar observations in culinary institutions nationwide. Basics beat trends. "I'm more interested in making sure they can actually cook and season the food," says Glenn Humphrey, certified executive chef at the Arizona Culinary Institute in Scottsdale, Ariz. "What we teach

here is really very basic cuisine; making sure students understand food and its components and how heat affects them, and how techniques make the food that much better. If they can't cook the food we're starting with, I don't care how they stack it or arrange it—it's not worth much if it's not properly cooked. These are processes and techniques that have worked for hundreds of years. They don't change, and there's a sense of history to them."

Julie Hendrickson, vice president of marketing at New England Culinary Institute in Montpelier, Vt., says, "Food goes around in cycles. Right now the emphasis seems to be on back-to-basics, using the freshest ingredients and making sure, for example, that the centerpiece dish is cooked to perfection and

complimented rather than drowned by other flavors. It takes skill."

Susan Notter, vice president and executive director at Culinard, the Culinary Institute at Virginia College in Birmingham, Ala., says, "We really try to give students a very solid foundation to enter the industry with. We teach what chefs in the industry will expect of them when they get out there. The foundation and repetition of it is so important—you don't learn something by doing it once."

Imparting a healthy attitude toward hard work is key, Notter adds: "A lot of it comes down to work ethic. You put someone with common sense, a good work ethic and a love of food in the kitchen, and you can't fail. We want students to be serious about what they're getting into, which is just as important as the culinary procedures and techniques."

Fortunately, two relatively recent developments seem to be boosting the quality and efficiency of culinary education: high-school level school-to-career programs and the digital age.

continued on page 10

Photo courtesy of Virginia College



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Brian Stanley, director of admissions for Johnson & Wales University in Charlotte, N.C., says the National Restaurant Association's ProStart® program, a two-year school-to-work program that introduces high school juniors and seniors to foodservice careers, is improving the entry-level knowledge and abilities of culinary students.

"We're seeing much more qualified high school students coming in," Stanley says. "They have more knowledge and technical skill about food in general, which is something we haven't seen before. Now we're starting to see the results of that."

Chef Tom Hickey, culinary chairman at Sullivan University in Louisville, Ky., said computer technology has made work—and budgeting—much easier. "What I'm seeing is that my faculty and chefs are finally realizing how wonderful computers and the Internet are," he says. "A lot of stodgy chefs didn't want to embrace computers, but the generation we're teaching now is a computer generation, and it's just marvelous."

Taped training sessions, PowerPoint presentations and digital photography have enabled more consistent and efficient teaching, Hickey says. "It's good continuity—the repetitive value is outstanding, because some students need to see a session or a technique four or five times, and it's no problem. It's also a money saver for the institution. For example, I've eliminated two-thirds of the beef I've had to order in for demos simply because we can record demonstrations and use them repeatedly."

Of course, the goal of all those well prepared and tech-savvy students is to graduate and get jobs. Toward that end, the Johnson & Wales University campus in Providence, R.I., has successfully implemented an ambitious job placement program.

Known as "Best Fit," it is officially an "employment career management system."

"Our university goal is 98 percent placement 60 days after graduation," says Paul McVety, associate dean at J&W's College of Culinary Arts. "We reached 99 percent for the 2002 graduating class. That doesn't just happen, it's all planned."

The Best Fit program is designed to fit the right students with the right career opportunities. It works by assessing not just how students' grades are, but whether they can actually cook. Each student gets, in addition to an academic transcript showing course grades, a "performance" transcript that assesses specific culinary skills—say, sautéing or braising—on three successive levels. Further, each student is assigned two advisors—an academic coach and a career coach—who coordinate coursework with future job direction and opportunities.

"We're getting better at how we assess student skills," McVety says. "All the students love it because it gives them an accurate assessment of where they are on specific skills, and they know what they need to work on. It makes for a better education, and it makes them stronger employees." ★

Despite wave
after trendy
wave in U.S.
restaurants
eager to dish
out the Next
Big Cuisine,
a revitalized
emphasis on
the basics is
what you'll
find in
culinary
classrooms
today.



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LiLAS: Your Tip for a Great Return

What would you do if someone offered you a \$3-to-\$1 return on your investment? What if this investment made it possible for you to afford an attractive benefit for your employees—a benefit that would increase job satisfaction, loyalty and productivity? Wouldn't you go for it?

That's exactly what more than 100 employees and 17 owners of Chicagoland-area restaurants and catering establishments have done, by signing on to innovative Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLAS).

The LiLA initiative is a two-year demonstration program sponsored by the Illinois Restaurant Association, managed by the national non-profit Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and funded by philanthropic foundations including the Ford Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust. LiLAS are being offered in limited sites and industries: Chicagoland area restaurants; manufacturing and the public sector in northeast Indiana, and the San Francisco healthcare sector. The goal is to demonstrate a simple and affordable way for employers to invest in employee education and training.

LiLAS work something like a 401k program. For every dollar an employee contributes, the employer matches it (up to \$500 annually) and the project matches two dollars (up to \$1,000 annually). For example, Maria, a server at Blue Plate Catering Company, contributed \$480 in the first year. Her employer matched those funds, bringing the total to \$960. The project contribution gives Maria a total of \$1,920.

Seventeen Chicagoland-area restaurants and caterers are participating in the program, which was introduced more than a year ago. Employees have enrolled in a variety of classes, such as conversational Spanish, electronics, wine tasting, introduction to pastry arts, cake confection and restaurant management. After a year, the participating employers are now starting to see real returns on their investment.

John Potterton, owner of the catering and conference space Conference Center Concepts (CCC), is pleased that LiLAS have promoted professionalism and boosted morale while helping the bottom line. Potterton sees employees

putting their new knowledge from LiLAS to work at CCC. One employee has developed new technical skills at DeVry University, which helps him respond to CCC equipment malfunctions.

"The return on investment [for lifelong learning] is tremendous for both employers and employees," Potterton said.

Wilma Nachsin, human resource manager of caterer Food for Thought, said her company benefits from LiLAS because it increases the likelihood that an employee will stay at the company for at least two years, and because it improves worker loyalty.

At Country House in Clarendon Hills, Ill., Dean Timson considers LiLAS as an affordable way to help him provide a perk for his employees.

LiLAS work something like a 401K program. For every dollar an employee contributes, the employer matches it (up to \$500 annually) and the project matches two dollars (up to \$1,000 annually).

"We are always looking for ways to increase our benefits to employees in order to make this a better place to work," he said. "We try to stay competitive by offering other innovative benefits—like the LiLA program."

Amy Sherman, CAEL national LiLA director, said, "These employers are leaders in developing a model that we are working to bring to a national level. We want to see LiLAS become a standard part of employees' compensation packages."

For further information on LiLAS, contact Diane Stoneman, 312-499-2669.

CAN THE VISA/MASTERCARD SETTLEMENT SAVE MERCHANTS \$200 MILLION A MONTH?

In the last Tech Talk, we discussed debit card processing. Since then, significant offline debit changes have taken place, with a momentous effect on the processing of these types of cards. Here are the details:

Aug. 1, 2003, marked a significant event in the credit card processing industry and for the millions of merchants that accept credit cards. On that date, Visa and MasterCard made drastic changes to interchange rates (the cost of processing credit cards), which are traditionally adjusted by bankcard associations each April or October.

Lower rates for offline debit cards. While many changes were made, the most significant was a reduction of interchange rates for processing of Visa Check and MasterMoney cards (offline debit cards requiring customer signatures). The reduction was prompted by required compliance in the recent settlement of a class action lawsuit between Wal-Mart (and other merchants) and Visa/MasterCard.

How it affects your business in dollars. The settlement terms required reductions in the cost of interchange rates charged to bankcard acquirers, effective Aug. 1, 2003. To comply, Visa agreed to reduce interchange rates for its Visa Check card by two basis points (.02 of 1 percent) and 10 cents per transaction. MasterCard agreed to reduce interchange rates for its MasterMoney card by 43 basis points (.43 of 1 percent). The savings from these reductions to merchants are significant, meaning potential savings of \$430 per merchant for every \$100,000 in MasterMoney cards processed.

Visa Check card savings are a bit more complicated, as part of the reduction is based on a transaction fee. Potential savings can go up or down based on the average ticket. A merchant with average tickets of \$15, \$25 and \$35 would have potential savings of \$687.70, \$420, and \$305.70 respectively for every \$100,000 in Visa Check cards processed.

Still, the potential savings is staggering, and it's estimated that these interchange reductions will provide potential savings of \$200 million per month in the form of cost reductions to merchant processors.

Are savings really passed to merchants? While the settlement requires Visa and MasterCard to reduce the cost of interchange to card processors, it's unclear whether the card processors are required to pass the savings on to their merchant clients or resellers. So while the savings are on the table, a merchant's ability to receive the savings at this time appears to be based on the individual decisions of each merchant processor.

My company (Heartland Payment Systems), for example, has committed to passing the savings directly to merchant customers. The savings aren't guaranteed, however, and all merchants need to understand the significance of the changes and their effect. In essence, every credit card processor in the nation began receiving the lower cost of interchange for these card types on Aug. 1, but can do what they will with the savings. Many processors will simply begin earning significant additional margins on the processing volume of the accounts they serve that didn't previously exist. It seems unfair that while up to \$200 million a month in new savings will now be available, all or part of the savings will never materialize for a large portion of the merchant community. It will remain, rather, in the coffers of the merchant processors.

The fair and honest thing to do. In a perfect world, every processor would feel obligated to inform its merchants of the changes and pass any savings along to them. If merchants receive rate changes, don't understand the effect of interchange rate changes or feel that they haven't received proper notification, they should call their processors immediately and ask for clarification and further detail.

Other changes. There were additional interchange rate changes. Visa and MasterCard are increasing interchange rates for face-to-face credit card transactions by 4 and 3 basis points respectively. This will increase the cost to process these transactions to \$40 per \$100,000 (Visa) and \$30 per \$100,000 (MasterCard).

As with all changes, it's important to know the details so you can tell if your processor is passing on legitimate cost increases or capitalizing on an opportunity to earn additional margin from re-pricing your account.

There are other changes that might affect your business, but these are the most significant to date. With all the changes in August, you can't afford to miss the facts. Doing so could mean missing out on hundreds of dollars in legitimate savings or, worse, more undue business expenses. To learn about all the changes, call your processor and ask for the details on the interchange adjustments. ★

Sanford Brown, senior vice president of hospitality marketing for Heartland Payment Systems Inc., can be reached at 1-888-472-0065, or by e-mail at sbrown@heartlandcard.com. To learn more on this topic, visit www.heartlandpaymentsystems.com/rateinfo.



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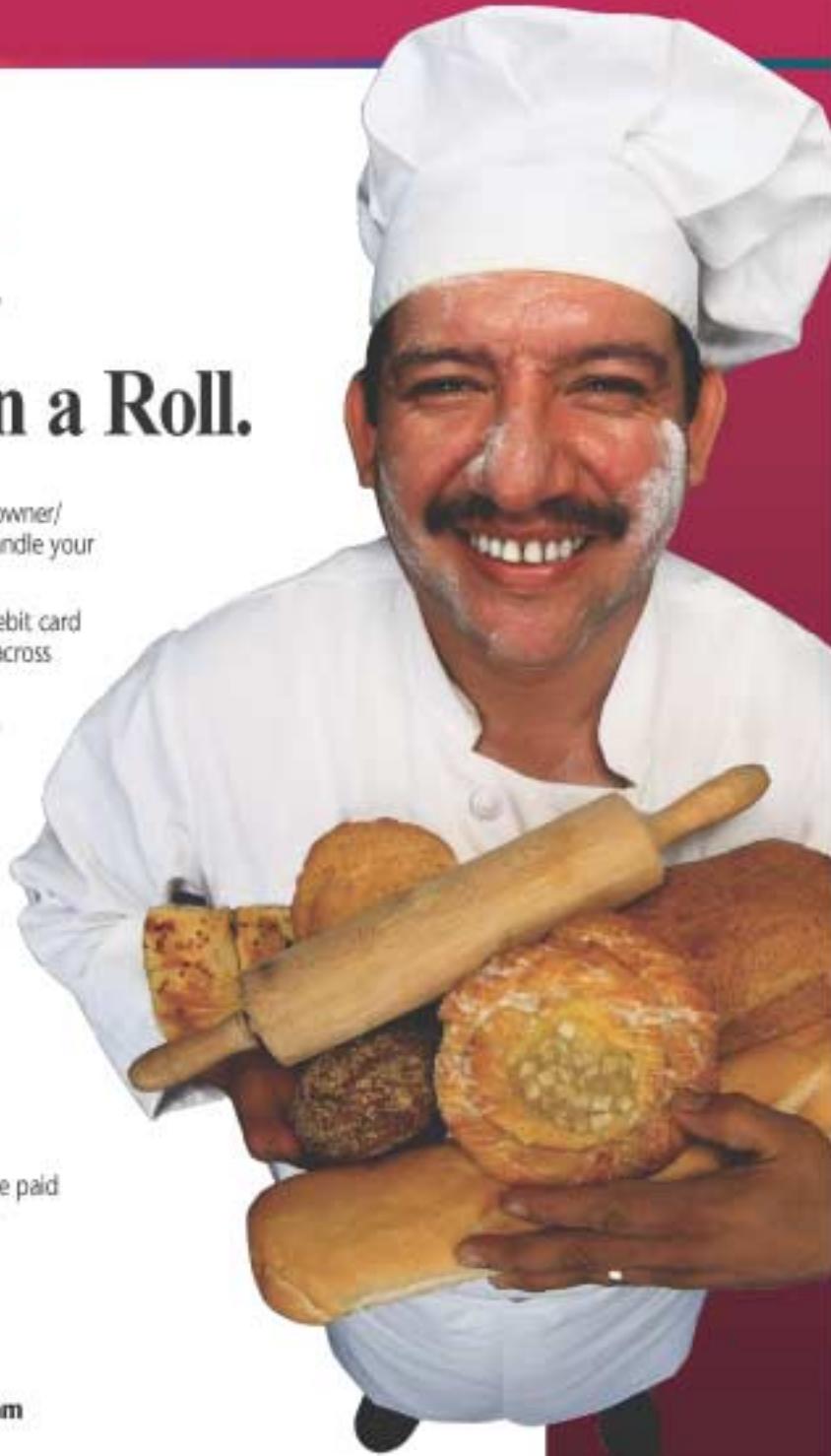
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The Issue is Food Safety: For Employees and Guests

By Jeff Owens

We take it for granted. We eat in restaurants all the time, and we don't expect to get sick as a result. This is America—even in these wary times, we are serene in the assurance that this nation has one of the safest food supplies in the world. But consider this: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta estimates that, each year, 76 million of us get sick, 300,000 of us are hospitalized, and 5,000 of us die because of foodborne illness.

That makes food safety a major public health issue and a top priority in the foodservice industry. Restaurants and hotels don't account for all those cases, of course, but they do account for some. Policies and programs abound in the United States for making sure food in restaurants and other foodservice institutions is safe, and the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's International Food Safety Council has designated September as National Food Safety Education Month. Here for review are some of the basics, for customers and employees alike.

"The number-one thing in food safety is keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold," says Gerald Johnson, vice president of purchasing and risk management for Taylors, S.C.-based Cafe Enterprises Inc., which runs the 20 Fatz Café restaurants in the Carolinas and Tennessee. "Also extremely important is working on cross-contamination issues—washing your hands; not mixing, for example, chicken and beef, or steak. I think all too often that people think latex gloves are the answer—that they're just like your hands—but that's not the case at all. Any time you've got a situation where you're dealing with the possibility of cross contamination, washing your hands can take care of a lot of it."

Temperature is key, and 40-140 is the rule. Guidelines published by the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture clearly explain that "Pathogenic microorganisms grow very slowly at temperatures below 40 F, multiply rapidly between 40 F and 140 F, and are destroyed at temperatures above 140 F. For safety, foods must be held at proper cold temperatures in refrigerators or freezers and they must be cooked thoroughly."

Simple enough. Make sure your refrigerators are set at no higher than 40 F, and cook above (or well above) 140 F. Use appliance thermometers and make sure your people know how to use them. "We keep thermometers in all food preparation areas, whether it's a walk in cooler or a cabinet," Johnson says.

Well before preparing it, make sure your food receiving is sound. "Food safety practices start long before you prepare or serve meals in your operation," reads the course book for ServSafe®, the National Restaurant Association-sponsored food-safety training program that is recognized in many federal, state and local health jurisdictions nationwide and has certified more than 1.5 million food service professionals.

"If food isn't safe when you receive it, it isn't going to be safe to prepare and serve, and you can't make it safe after you accept the shipment," says Neeley Carlson, workforce development director for the Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association. "And after accepting unsafe food, responsibility rests with the operator, not the supplier."

Carlson, who heads ServSafe® coordination in Kansas, says the program teaches

that person return and pass it on," says Carole Wagley, an Arizona food safety consultant. "They're supposed to come back and implement what they've learned, but they often don't. They've met the requirement, but they don't go back and review their procedures and so forth."

Carlson agrees, saying that "The whole philosophy behind ServSafe® is to train your managers, and then they would bring

who works in a restaurant needs to understand food safety. Just going and getting a food handler's permit doesn't teach you food safety."

Wagley reminds restaurant owners and operators to look at it from a dollars-and-sense perspective, saying that the cost of getting and then properly passing on ServSafe® training is minimal compared to the potentially devastating costs of fighting a food-

"If food isn't safe when you receive it, it isn't going to be safe to prepare and serve, and you can't make it safe after you accept the shipment."

—Neeley Carlson, Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association

how to recognize the quality and safety of food when it comes to your door; what signs to look for in terms of smell, color and general appearance.

A note about ServSafe® training, though: It's intended to be passed on to employees by the manager or whoever else is sent to become certified with it. Too often, it seems, this hasn't been happening.

"One thing that's often overlooked is the simple fact that when an owner or manager is sent out for training, very seldom does

that information back and pass it on through employee-level training. That doesn't happen as often as it should."

Wagley says the whole point of ServSafe® training is to learn not only the "what," but also the "why," which is equally important.

"You don't just tell them to wear gloves," she says. "You have to tell them why they have to wear gloves, and the proper procedure for wearing gloves. It doesn't matter whether they're making the minimum wage or \$15 an hour—everybody

borne illness and dealing with its aftermath. "What does it take to put on a presentation for five minutes once a month?" she asks.

Nonetheless, ServSafe® remains the nation's most popular food safety education program, even in areas where it isn't required.

"One of the things we pay very close attention to is the education of our people," Johnson says. "We require every one of our management people to be ServSafe® certified, even though it isn't mandatory in South Carolina like it is in other states." ★

Experience the Versatility of CHEF PAUL PRUDHOMME'S *Magic Seasoning Blends*

Magic Seasoning Blends are all natural and versatile. Use them in place of salt and pepper or other herbs and spices in any recipe. Here are a couple of Chef Paul's recipes, one featuring Salmon Magic, his newest blend:

CHICKEN DIANE

6 oz. dry pasta
6 oz. (1/2 sticks) unsalted butter
or margarine
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon Chef
Paul Prudhomme's Poultry Magic
12 oz. boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into strips
Cook pasta according to package directions and set aside.
In a large skillet over high heat, melt 2 oz. of the butter or margarine. Add the Poultry Magic and stir, then add the chicken pieces and brown about 2 minutes on the first side and about 1 minute on the other. Add marinara and cook 2 more minutes or until the sauce is at a rolling boil. Add remaining butter or margarine (cut into pats), stirring and shaking pan to incorporate. Cook for 3 minutes and add cooked pasta. Stir and shake pan to mix well. Serve immediately. Copyright 1994 by Paul Prudhomme

MAGIC SUMMER SALMON

1 salmon fillet (about 4 oz.)
2 teaspoons Chef Paul Prudhomme's Salmon Magic™
Preheat oven to 450°. Lightly brush the top and sides of salmon fillet with melted butter. Season the top and sides of salmon fillet with *Salmon Magic*. (If fillet is thick, use a little more *Salmon Magic*.) Press seasoning in gently. Place the fillet on sheet pan and bake until top is golden brown and fillet is just cooked through, about 4-6 minutes. Serve immediately. Copyright 2003 by Paul Prudhomme

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Government **BRIEF**

Governor Signs New State Budget, Restaurants to Feel Bite

On top of the minimum wage increase (effective Jan. 1, 2004), restaurateurs and most Illinois businesses will see additional costs as a result of the new state budget signed into law recently by the governor. The \$54 billion state budget includes many new taxes and fees for businesses in an effort to close the \$5 billion budget gap.

Specifically, an increase in the state liquor license from \$175 to \$500 (effective July 1, 2003), a new-use tax on natural gas purchased out of state, an increase in workers' compensation costs to fund a state agency and additional costs for the unemployment insurance are all examples of new taxes and fees passed by the General Assembly and signed by the governor. The Illinois Restaurant Association opposed all of these mandates, as they would have a detrimental effect on the foodservice industry, and was successful in reducing and softening these measures from their original proposed versions.

The General Assembly and the governor had proposed the pre-payment of liquor sales taxes, an immediate increase in the state's minimum wage without the tip credit and several pieces of legislation to ban smoking in restaurants. The IRA was able to defeat the liquor sales tax and smoking ban legislation, and restored the tip credit and phase-in of the minimum wages. Also, a measure to weaken Cook County property taxpayer rights was defeated. After IRA lobbying, the governor's budget did include the restoration of \$4.3 million in funding for international tourism.

The governor also signed legislation supported by the IRA that would prohibit the use of pyrotechnics and mace or pepper spray in establishments with on-premise consump-

tion licenses. This bill was introduced in response to the recent nightclub tragedies in Chicago and Rhode Island.

Tax Amnesty

The governor signed Senate Bill 969, which creates a limited "tax amnesty" program to allow delinquent taxpayers to pay back taxes due between June 30, 1983 and July 1, 2002, without penalties or fees. The program begins Oct. 1 and lasts through Nov. 15, 2003. Rules are being promulgated by the Illinois Department of Revenue. The IRA will keep you posted on this issue.

Local Smoking Bans

The IRA continues the fight against smoking bans. The Village of Wilmette recently proposed what would be the most restrictive smoking ban in the state. The IRA testified to a committee of the village board that the proposed additional regulations would cause economic hardship to hardworking employees and restaurant owners who are already feeling great economic pressure. As a result of the IRA testimony and that of numerous restaurant owners, operators and customers, the village has agreed to rethink its proposal. The Village of Skokie did pass a revised smoking ordinance that exempts stand-alone bars and gives restaurateurs one year to construct a barrier or install a specialized HVAC system. The IRA expressed its disappointment with the village's action, and plans to work with the village as it implements the rules for this misguided action. Several towns are considering following suit: Anti-tobacco groups have targeted Evanston, Arlington Heights and Oak Park. Please contact the IRA immediately with information on any proposed smoking bans in your area.

Tidbits

Kudos to Chicago alderman Pat O'Connor (40th Ward) and IRA board member and alderman Tom Tunney (44th Ward) for co-sponsoring an ordinance to allow employing hosts and hostesses under age 21 at food establishments with incidental licenses. Current city codes require hosts and hostesses to be over age 21.

The \$54 billion state budget includes many new taxes and fees for businesses in an effort to close the \$5 billion budget gap.

SEPT 2003

National Food Safety Month

15

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1 p.m.

15-17

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OCT 2003

2

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Committee Meeting
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21

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NOV 2003

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17

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Java Connection, Oak Forest
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La Petite Folie, Chicago
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Lalo's Mexican Restaurant, Cicero
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Mac's American Food & Drink, Chicago
March 17, Libertyville
Mario's, Carol Stream
McBrody's Bar & Grill, Joliet
Mezza Grilled Wraps & Pitas, Chicago
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Monical's Pizza, Bradley
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As great paintings are complimented by their frames, furnishings create the ambience that compliments a great restaurant.

This is, however, only the first step in the creation of a successful restaurant. The management must not only know what the often fickle public wants, but also must make every effort to adjust, to modify and to meet public demands to ensure continued success for years to come.

As great paintings are complimented by their frames, furnishings create the ambience that complements a great restaurant. The only way to ensure that the original ambience is maintained is to use periodic preventative maintenance, a practice in which a coordinated program of scheduled maintenance enables an ongoing high level of appearance. In the long run, it's fiscally responsible and it reduces unnecessary capital expenditures.

Floors, carpets, upholstery and draperies must be cleaned and maintained regularly. If it's obvious to everyone that maintenance is needed, it's already too late.

Wood floors offer a good example of the folly of lack of regular maintenance. If wood isn't regularly cleaned and coated (every six months, typically), restaurateurs

might find themselves plagued with repairs and sanding that in themselves shorten the life of the floor. This example applies in other areas of floor covering and other appointments.

Periodic preventative maintenance is an investment that always returns solid dividends.



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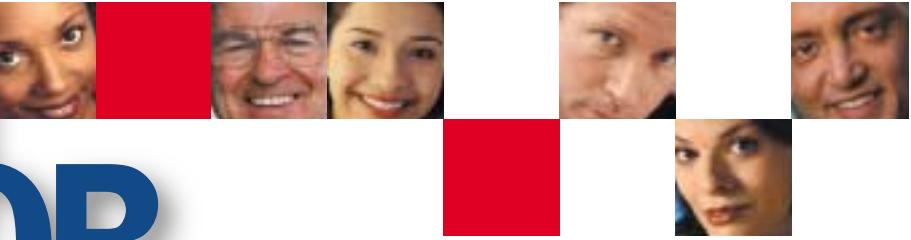


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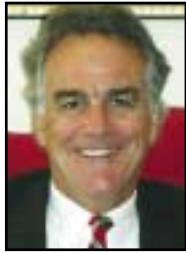
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ON THE JOB



Preventing Workplace Violence



**By Edward F. "Bud" O'Donnell Jr., Esq.
Siegel, O'Connor, Zangari, O'Donnell
& Beck, P.C.**

Workplace violence is an issue that has become more prevalent over the past decade. An estimated 2 million workplace violence incidents occur each year involving one in four employees, and employers have had to increase preventative measures in order to decrease the potential for such violence. Moreover, work-related homicide is the second-largest cause of job-related fatalities, and surveys show that hotels, motels, and eating and drinking establishments have high rates of occupational homicide.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health defines workplace violence as "any physical assault, threatening behavior or verbal abuse occurring in the work setting." It includes but is not limited to "beatings, stabbings, suicides, shootings, rapes, near-suicides" and also "psychological traumas such as threats, obscene phone calls, an intimidating presence, and harassment of any nature such as being followed, sworn at, or shouted at."

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's General Duty Clause requires employers to provide a safe and healthful workplace for all workers and to take reasonable steps to prevent or stop a recognized violence hazard in the workplace.

Workplace violence has negative effects including anxiety, depression, poor morale, poor performance, absenteeism, resignations, litigation, physical injury and death. One of the first steps in preventing it is to recognize the warning signs of a potentially violent employee. Indicators of increased risk of violent behavior include:

- History of violent behavior
- Threats, intimidation, bullying or other inappropriate behavior directed at others
- Preoccupation with violence, weapons, police, the military or survivalism
- Tendency to push the limits of normal behavior
- Inability to take criticism well
- Grudge holding, continual making of excuses or laying blame
- Unstable family background
- Personal or financial problems
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Frequent job changing
- Increases in workload or pressure, performance criticism or conflicts with co-workers
- Feelings of helpless and desperation about work conditions
- Few outlets for anger
- Extreme or uncharacteristic changes in behavior or displays of emotion

**The Occupational Safety and
Health Administration's General Duty
Clause requires employers to provide a
safe and healthful workplace**

Restaurateurs can take many measures to prevent workplace violence.

Implement a written zero tolerance policy that specifies unacceptable behaviors. The policy should, for example, prohibit weapons, spell out reporting procedures and identify people to whom incidents can be reported.

Restaurateurs should provide safety training not only to reiterate what unacceptable conduct is, but also to train employees in how to protect themselves when subjected to workplace violence. Further preventive measures include securing the workplace with lighting and alarm systems.

Restaurateurs should try to reduce job stress by ensuring that workloads are in harmony with worker capabilities and resources—by clearly defining worker responsibilities, giving employees opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their jobs, providing social interaction among employees, and establishing realistic work schedules that are compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job.

Employers are responsible for providing safe workplaces, no matter where violence originates. A hotel-casino was recently found

2 percent liable in a wrongful death suit brought by the family of a deceased employee. The employee was shot to death by her fiancé in the hotel's parking lot, located a quarter-mile away. The suit alleged that the hotel didn't provide adequate security or lighting and failed to warn parking lot users of potential danger.

A common error made by employers is to ignore or neglect threatening behavior. If you have any questions or concerns about implementing a zero tolerance policy or any other employment law questions, please contact your labor and employment attorney. ★

This material is intended to provide information on a noteworthy legal development and is not a substitute for legal advice concerning any specification in your workplace. Siegel, O'Connor has a long-term involvement in the field and has represented clients on a full range of legal issues surrounding the employment relationship. For additional information, please contact Edward F. "Bud" O'Donnell Jr., Esq., labor and employment law counsel, 860-727-8900, or visit www.siegleoconnor.com.

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Apple's and Orange's: A Tale Of Two Restaurants

It doesn't take much to simply get with the program—a program of giving guests a good experience. And that in itself often doesn't take all that much—good service, a smile, a little snippet about the restaurant or the food, prompt delivery of the bill and a sincere “thank you for joining us” all work just fine.

Here's a look at two restaurants I recently visited and the approach, or lack thereof, of each one. One is part of a chain (I'll call it “Apple's”); the other is an independent (I'll call it “Orange's”). Learn what you will from these examples, listed by category.

The Greeting

Apple's: How is one really capable of greeting guests with real enthusiasm when one is talking to the hostess through headphones?

The sign in lobby says “Welcome to our neighborhood ... we will do all we can to get you to return again and again and again.” That's a great welcome message; unfortunately it may never be noticed because it's posted high above eye level.

Orange's: Thoroughly pleasant, with a definite “Welcome-home-we're-glad-you're-here” feeling.

The Table Service

Apple's: Prompt yet robotic. Special product recommendations came from a separate “Special Steak” menu instead of from a living, breathing human being.

Orange's: Genuinely friendly, with a personal pick on the best pizza by the

server, who was clearly having fun and enjoying her work.

When the Order is Late

Apple's: First comment on asking the server to check on the order was, “We're backed up in the kitchen; it will be up soon.” Second comment five minutes later was, “We're backed up in the kitchen; it will be up soon.” I asked for a definition of the word “soon.”

Orange's: The server knew before we did that one of the orders was going to be late and brought over complimentary appetizers. A very nice surprise.

Where's The Manager?

Apple's: On requesting to see her, the manager finally came out of the kitchen and apologized profusely, saying, “I'm sorry, I'm sorry.” To make matters worse, when the delayed order did



How is one really capable of greeting guests with real enthusiasm when one is talking to the hostess through headphones?

arrive, it was wrong. Again, "sorry" was the buzzword. A free dessert was offered only when prompted.

Orange's: The manager knew before we did that the order was running late, and automatically came over to apologize. She said they'd comp the delayed pizza. Again, a nice and unexpected surprise.

The Philosophy

Apple's: Apparently, the solution to a guest's less-than-exemplary dining experience at this restaurant is to repeat the word "sorry" over and over again. Add to that, "I hope you come back again."

Orange's: I asked the manager why she comped the pizza without our party even complaining about the delay. She said that she and her servers keep track of time, and that when something is running late, they know that the guest knows too and reacts negatively. She said they want to curtail that feeling and that it's easier to comp a pizza than to have a guest be angry. That makes guests happy and means that they come back again. For the cost of the giveaway, she said, it's a great investment that brings huge returns.

The Exit

Apple's: The door is held open for you and you are asked if everything was okay. I replied, "It was just fair." The response I received was—surprise—"Oh, I'm sorry."



Orange's: The guest has a good feeling on exiting. It just goes to show that some exits are final and some aren't.

Two Critical Questions

One: Which restaurant is most like yours? And two: At which restaurant would you personally prefer to dine? The answers will tell you whether

you're running an Apple's or an Orange's. The latter, hopefully. ★

Joel Cohen is the owner of The Cohen Restaurant Marketing Group and publisher of The Journal of Restaurant Marketing. More information about him can be found at www.restaurantmarketing.com.



IRA Across the State

2003 IRA Golf Outing

The Illinois Restaurant Association's Annual Golf Outing was held Aug. 5 at historic Cog Hill Golf Course in Lemont, Ill. The home of the Western Open Course hosted more than 300 golfers who teed up on courses one and two.

Restaurant owners, industry suppliers and elected officials met on a beautiful sunny day to hit the links. Incredible golf and networking ensued among restaurant owners and those closely related to the restaurant industry commercially and politically.

Following the 18-hole best ball tournament, a silent auction and mini-Taste of Chicago was held in which more than \$8,000 was raised for the association. Mini-Taste participants included **Billy Goat Tavern & Grill**, **Eli's Cheesecake**, **Los Dos Lerados**, **Original Rainbow Cone**, **Phil Stefani's Signature Restaurants**, **Stevie B's** and **Turano Baking**.

Special thanks to our golf outing sponsors:

Gold Sponsors: Anheuser Busch, Diageo, Cosmopolitan Linen, American Airlines

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(from left) IRA President Colleen McShane, Illinois State Rep. Kevin Joyce and WMAQ sports reporter Peggy Kusinski get ready to hit the links at Cog Hill.

Jim Woulfe of Discover Card bids at the silent auction. More than 30 prizes were auctioned, including trips to Hawaii and Europe.



(from left) The Ecolab foursome, Tim Carey, Greg Peelman, Larry Baiza and Jon Tunney, take a break from their game on course one at Cog Hill.



IRA Chairman Steve Palmer, of Palmer Place in LaGrange, tests his skills in the "Putting for Dough" competition sponsored by Home Run Inn Pizza and Turano Bakery, which raised nearly \$300 for the IRA.



(from left) The Marsh foursome, Rich Michaels, Jay Leonard, Mark Miller and Mark Noffke, enjoy the beautiful weather on course two at Cog Hill



IRA raffle prize winners pose for a celebratory snapshot.



Steve Hartenstein, chairman of the IRA Golf Committee (Phil Stefani Restaurants) announces the raffle winners at the 2003 Golf Outing.



IRA board member and former chairwoman Mary Blankenbaker (Benjamin's, Galena) and Ron DiNella, IRA second-vice chairman (Morton's of Chicago), relax after a grueling round of best ball during the reception at Cog Hill.



Golfers regain their strength during the Taste of Illinois dinner buffet. Eight restaurants participated during this year's event.

Illinois Membership Benefits

Regardless of the size of your restaurant business, your membership in the Illinois Restaurant Association includes a wide variety of cost saving benefits such as:

- Dual Membership with the National Restaurant Association
- Credit Card Processing
- Payroll Processing & HR Services
- Workers Compensation and Property & Casualty Insurance
- Health Insurance
- Mini-healthcare Discount Program
- Background Checks, Credit Checks, Drug Testing and Other Investigative Inquiries
- Job Bank
- Music Licensing Discount
- Yellow Pages Advertising Discount or Upgrade
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- Automobile Rental
- Discounted Certification Courses
- Discounted Training Products
- Marketing Opportunities
- Information Resources
- Industry Representation

For questions and more information about membership and benefits, call Moira O'Brien, IRA membership director

1-800-572-1086



Illinois Restaurant Association



www.illinoisrestaurants.org

Membership Application for Foodservice Operators

Please complete this form and return with your Annual Membership Dues.

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Restaurant Name _____

Corporate Name _____

Contact: Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____ Title _____

Business Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Country _____

Phone () _____ Fax () _____ Email _____

If you have a Website, would you like to link to ours? Yes No

Cuisine _____ Attire _____

Credit Cards Accepted: Visa Mastercard AmEx Discover Diner's Club Other

Dues Schedule

Dues Category—Restaurant & Foodservice Operators

| Annual Sales | Dues | Per Day |
|-----------------------|---------|---|
| Under \$500,000 | \$275 | .75 |
| \$500,000-999,999 | \$395 | 1.08 |
| \$1,000,000-2,499,999 | \$595 | 2.74 |
| \$2,500,000-4,999,999 | \$1,000 | 4.11 plus |
| \$5,000,000 and up | \$1,500 | plus \$250 for each \$1 million over \$10 million; maximum \$5,000 dues |

Annual dues investment is based on your annual sales volume for all Illinois units. If you own or operate more than one Illinois unit, your dues are based on the combined volume of all Illinois units.

Mailings refer to the number of individuals who can be included in the IRA/NRA membership mailing list at each dues level. Attach additional mailings to the back of the application.

Dues include automatic membership in the National Restaurant Association and all NRA mailings at no additional cost.

Mailings

| |
|--|
| 2 |
| 4 |
| 6 |
| 8 |
| 10 plus one for each add'l \$250 in dues |

Method of Payment

A portion of your Membership dues to the Illinois Restaurant Association is not tax deductible. Please check with the Membership Office for details.

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Terms

Your dues investment in the Illinois Restaurant Association must accompany this application. Annual dues are payable in advance.

Signature _____ Date _____



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At Your Service



**Colleen McShane,
IRA President**

The Obesity Battle

The restaurant industry has long been a source of comfort and familiarity. Diners look forward to eating out with family and friends, and often return to the same tried-and-true establishments. Holidays, birthdays and anniversaries are celebrated by dining out, and many happy memories have undoubtedly been forged in U.S. restaurants.

The industry is now facing an assault on the same values of reliability and comfort that set the restaurant business apart from other trades. I'm sure you've seen the recent onslaught of media coverage on frivolous obesity lawsuits, and an increased awareness of obesity and health issues overall. This is an important issue, and the restaurant industry is prepared to confront it head-on.

The truth is that while the growth of the obesity problem can't be ignored, the restaurant industry isn't responsible.

It's important to separate the facts from the propaganda and misinformation that are often broadcast; specifically the notion that restaurateurs (quickservice establishments, most notably) are responsible for the growing obesity problem. Critics say portion sizes, sugar products and fast food are the causes of the nation's

obesity problem. In the search for a scapegoat, some have singled out the restaurant industry.

The truth is that while the growth of the obesity problem can't be ignored, the restaurant industry isn't responsible. U.S. Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Mark McClellan has said that the total number of calories consumed daily by the average American has remained steady over the past 10 years. In other words, customers may be dining out more than they did in the past, but dining out isn't making people become overweight.

What has changed in the last ten years, in fact, is that modern society has become much more convenient, leading people to have much more inactive lifestyles. Taking the elevator instead of the stairs, driving to destinations that are within walking distance, and leading a lifestyle that often doesn't include much physical exercise are conveniences to which we've grown accustomed, and that have led to the obesity problem.

Nonetheless, the Illinois Restaurant Association, in conjunction with the National Restaurant Association, is aware of the epidemic and is committed to educating consumers about obesity. Through a proactive communication campaign, the IRA hopes to prevent needless lawsuits against eating establishments before they have opportunities to develop.

In this issue's In the News column (page 6), there is information on the National Restaurant Association "Three Steps to a Healthy Lifestyle" brochure. The IRA is engaged in a public campaign to distribute the brochure to Illinois elected officials and to encourage them to oppose unnecessary lawsuits against the restaurant industry.

Obesity is an issue that will continue to gain momentum in the coming years. By knowing the facts and proactively addressing the claims that have been leveled at the restaurant industry, I'm confident that the industry and the IRA can fight this battle effectively at the state and federal levels. ★

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