

Welcome winter!

January, takes its name from Janus, the Roman god of opposites -- entrances and exits, endings and beginnings.

Looking to the past for guidance in forging a new direction, the Janus profile fits perfectly with our soon-to-merge associations.

Our streamlined organization hinges on dynamic, newly formed committees to navigate the transformation. Success depends on you. Find out more about these groups, the building blocks of MeIA and MeRA 2.0, below.

On another front, MeRA is taking a solid step in workforce development. Featured in this issue is a new work training programing we are launching to help Maine's incarcerated develop a career path in hospitality upon release.

To banish cabin fever, join us at our ProStart Invitational in February. In a frenzied competition watch eager, fledging chefs strut their stuff!
See the events section below for more ways to get out this winter.

Knock back an espresso and enjoy our January newsletter.

Kathleen Pierce
Director of Member Experience

Member Spotlight: Oaks and Maple Cafe

Tell us about the soon-to-open Oaks and Maple Cafe?

We are taking what is actually good bones here at the New Beet Market and turning it into



David Barter purchased New Beet Market at Brunswick Landing.

full-service dining in March.

The interior is going to be very industrial. A lot of black iron, raw steel, reclaimed wood. We've got a roll-up aircraft hangar door that will fold to create a little alcove that sticks out onto the patio so

people can dine alfresco.

Are you bringing Cook's Corner Back?

What I want is character. I want the place to have character, the food to be part of the character. I want people working here part of the character and I really want the people that come in here to be part of the character.

It's not seafood based. It's a good bar and good restaurant with menu items that revolve around baked beans and hotdogs, brown bread and Anadama bread. We are adding a very interesting full liquor bar.

What's your background?

I grew up in Woolwich, went to school in Bath. I traveled the world as a consultant. I build teams, that is what I am trying to do here.

This is a Bucket List item?

I've dreamed about running my own place for 10 years. I was going to buy a bar in St. Thomas, as part of a retirement plan. But there is not much left of St. Thomas any more. Then this came up.

Why did you join the Maine Restaurant Association?

I am impressed with the ProStart program, which starts people early in the field. It's about being part of that workforce development, running a business and adding jobs to the economy. Why not do something to make everyone happy: Serve good food and make them fat!

Award Alert!



Steve Hewins accepts an award from Solomon Keene Jr., ISHAE board chair and President of the Hotel Association of Washington DC..

Down south last month, our CEO Steve Hewins accepted an award of Excellence from the International Society of Hotel Association Executives. There were more nominations than ever this year but MeIA stood out for our "breakthrough use of social media" to energize and educate employees to effectively advocate for Maine's Tip Credit Restoration. Thanks to all our members for packing the sessions.

"I'm pleased to be able to accept this award, not only for the Maine Innkeeper Association, but for our partners and employees in the hospitality industry across the state who joined with us on this incredible effort," said Hewins.

New year, new committees, new organization

The boards of the Innkeepers and Restaurant Associations approved the merger plans last fall that are underway now. This winter we are setting the priorities and strategies for our new organization through committees comprised of board members and interested members of both associations.

If you would like to help build our new organization, there are opportunities to serve on three core committees:

- **Government Affairs** establishes our local, statewide and

federal advocacy strategy and goals. Chair: Jean Ginn Marvin

- Education and Workforce Development expands our support of hospitality education and training programs to encourage careers and meet employment needs of our industry. Chair: Tina Hewett Gordon
- Membership, Marketing and Events will set our growth and retention plan, social media and website redevelopment, and assess of our events, seminars and other member programs. Chair: Michelle Corry

Time commitment? Roughly three committee meetings with results by the end of March. If interested please contact Steve Hewins, steve@mainerestaurant.com, as soon as possible.

Innovative state prison program to ease labor shortage

The Maine Restaurant Association is partnering with the Department of Corrections and Department of Labor to train offenders in state correctional facilities for careers in hospitality. Set in motion in the first quarter of 2018, the new initiative will supply Maine's restaurants and hotels with a motivated, well-trained workforce.

Gov. Paul [Lepage is encouraging these agencies to activate](#) the untapped potential of incarcerated men and women for careers in hospitality. In addition to ServSafe and high school equivalency prep, offenders will take workshops lead by our members and complete a 60-hour course teaching soft skills needed to transition into the workforce.

"Offenders entering this program are eager to show their communities they've changed," said Maine's Department of Corrections Commissioner Joseph Fitzpatrick. "They are looking forward to entering this field because of its rich tradition in Maine."

To make this happen, we need a handful of members to lead workshops this winter and spring in Warren, Charleston and Windham correctional facilities. Time commitment is a few hours a week.

Broad range of topics will include customer service, hospitality management, inventory control and marketing.

"This program bridges the distance between employers and their future workforce," said Department of Labor Commissioner John Butera. "Offenders are learning skills directly from leaders in the field. This partnership is good for businesses, good for families, good for the state."

The Department of Corrections collaborates with Maine businesses on work release programs, but "we've never been able to make a direct connection to supporting labor shortages before," said Fitzpatrick

Ideally up to 40 offenders will be released this spring with a certificate from MRA and DOL to help with the summer season.

"Beyond readying people to take on vacant jobs, this partnership is about believing in the power of positive change," said Maine Restaurant Association CEO Steve Hewins. "

To get involved contact Kathleen@MaineRestaurant.com

Legislative Lowdown



This month Greg Dugal, on the governmental affairs desk, launched a bi-weekly e-report. Have you seen it?

With a new session upon us it's a timely primer.

The first edition includes a breakdown on state minimum wage and federal tip pooling.

Read: [Maine Hospitality Legislative Report](#)

MediaWatch

* The Holy Donut graces the [cover of Yankee Magazine](#) (Jan. and Feb.) as one of the top comfort foods in New England!

* And in other doughnut news, Congdon's Doughnuts makes [Taste of Home's Best Doughnut Shop in every state list](#).

* [Bon Appetit visited six new Portland restaurants](#) and gave The Shop props for its tinned octopus and \$1.50 oysters in a relaxed setting.

Industry Trends

* What happened to hotel luxury? Turndown service and traditional concierges may be losing importance: [The latest from Skift](#)

° Beef is back in a big way this year. [Bloomberg reports](#) that meat consumption will reach record levels in 2018.

* McDonalds unites old school promos with new school media. [Ad Age has the scoop](#) under the Golden Arches.

ServSafe Classes

Tuesday, January 16, 2018 - Westbrook

Tuesday, January 23, 2018 - Augusta

Wednesday, March 28, 2018 - Westbrook

Thursday, March 29, 2018 - Augusta

Membership Meter ... See who joined us in the last month!



Cerina Leeman and Taylor Corson of The Harbor Room in New Harbor.

Please Welcome

O' Maine Studios	Cushnoc Brewing Co.
On Focus Solutions	O-Cha
Thayer Corp.	The Harbor Room
The Front Porch	Walkers Maine
Downtown Diner	Central Maine Community College
Tru by Hilton	

Upcoming events

Tourism Alliance Legislative Reception

February 6, Senator Inn, Augusta, 5 to 7 p.m.

Members of the MeRA, MeIA, the Retail Association of Maine, Ski Maine, Maine Campground Association and Maine Tourism Association host a meet and greet for all state legislators. Heavy hors d'oeuvres and cash bar. All members welcome!

Sexual harassment seminar

February 13, Harraseeket Inn, Freeport. 10a to 3 p.m., \$69.

Learn to create a non-harassment policy as part of your employee handbook or training materials. Speakers from KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC and Pierce Atwood lead the discussion. Lunch will be served. For more info contact Jennifer@maineinns.com

Maine ProStart Invitational

February 17, Holiday Inn By the Bay, 88 Spring St., Portland. 8 a.m., Free. Come cheer on high school teams from Maine as they demonstrate their culinary chops and management skills in this fast-paced competition.

The winning team is sent, expenses paid by MeRA, to the National ProStart Invitational (April, 27 - 29 in Providence R.I.) to compete against the best teams across the state. Go Maine!

Restaurant Association Annual Awards Banquet

What: Our celebration of the industry

When: Tuesday, March 27, 2018

Where: Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland

Check out our [Facebook page](#) for winners announced this month!

Maine Restaurant & Lodging Expo 2018

What: The biggest statewide hospitality trade show

When: Wednesday, March 28, 2018, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Where: Cross Insurance Arena, Portland

Save the dates!



February 1-3

This year MeRA teams up with this culinary colloquium in Portland and mountainside tasting at Sunday River. A cadre of local and international food influencers gather for the gustatory Davos once again. Check out this year's top-tier lineup ChefSummitSundayRiver.com

Special rates apply for our members. Use the code "MRA" when you [register](#)

[here](#). Sign up by Jan. 20 to get this deal.

The logo for Maine Restaurant Week features the text "Maine Restaurant Week" in white on a dark red background. The word "Maine" is in a serif font, and "Restaurant Week" is in a bold sans-serif font. To the right of "Maine" is a white icon of a fork, a wine glass, and a spoon.

March 1-12

The 10th annual dine out supports Maine's statewide restaurant scene.

- * Create your own prix fixe menu priced from \$25 to \$55
- * Attract new customers in the slow season
- * Help out a local charity
- * Have a positive impact on Maine's economy
- * Energize staff and crew

First time MRW participants save \$100 when registering. Sign up at www.MaineRestaurantWeek.com or call (207) 450-1385

Use discount code "FirstTimeMRA" in the shopping cart.

See you there!



| send feedback, tips, and suggestions to kathleen@mainerestaurant.com |

STAY CONNECTED:



Maine Restaurant Association is on Instagram, follow us here



