

2013 Convention Review

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NICRA 2013 Convention Review

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New Officers and Board of Directors Elected

The National Ice Cream Retailers Association elected new Officers and Board Members at its 80th Annual Convention held November 5-7, 2013 at the Hilton St. Louis Frontenac Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri.

Elected as president of the association was Nanette Frey, Frey's Tasty Treat, East Amherst, New York. Carl Chaney, Chaney's Dairy Barn, Bowling Green, Kentucky, was elected as president elect. Jim Oden, Debbie's Soft Serve, Smithsburg, Maryland, was elected vice president. David Zimmermann, Royal Scoop Homemade Ice Cream, Bonita Springs, Florida, becomes immediate past president.

Elected to the board of directors for three-year terms were: James Brown, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania; Mary Leopold, Leopold's Ice Cream, Inc., Savannah, Georgia; Jim Marmion, Advanced Gourmet Equipment & Design, Greensboro, North Carolina; and Neil McWilliams, Spring Dipper, Mammoth Spring, Arkansas. Terms will expire with the November 2016 Annual Meeting.

New Supplier Officers Elected

The National Ice Cream Retailers Suppliers Association elected new Officers at its 80th Annual Meeting held November 5-7 2013 at the Hilton St. Louis Frontenac Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri.

Elected as president of the association was Andrew Jones, Lloyd's of Pennsylvania, Exton, Pennsylvania. Hank Sweeney, Classic Mix Partners, Neenah, Wisconsin, was elected as vice president and elected as secretary/treasurer was Lisa Gallagher, ConAgra Foods, Naperville, Illinois. Mary Kircher, Dingman's Dairy, Paterson, New Jersey, becomes chairman.

Ice Cream Clinic Review

Each year, members of The National Ice Cream Retailers Association, who make their own ice cream, submit samples of their ice cream to a professor of dairy science, prior to the Annual Convention, to be analyzed and compared to ice cream standards. This year Dr. Tonya Schoenfuss, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota, analyzed samples of vanilla and strawberry ice cream submitted by members of the association. A total of 24 vanilla samples and 14 strawberry samples were submitted.

The ice cream is scored, according to color, texture, taste, bacterial count, and many other factors. Blue Ribbons are awarded to those scoring the highest marks, then Red Ribbons, and White Ribbons.

The following winners received their certificates at the Association's 80th Annual Convention, held November 5-7, 2013 at the Hilton St. Louis Frontenac Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri.

Vanilla Ice Cream: Blue Ribbons

Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream Co., Madison, WI (Old Fashioned Vanilla)

Vanilla Ice Cream: Red Ribbons

Blue Ridge Ice Cream/Dewey's Bakery, Winston Salem, NC

Cliff's Ice Cream, Ledgewood, NJ

Custard's Last Stand, Lee's Summit, MO (CLS Vanilla Frozen Custard)

Double Dip, Lebanon, OH

Henry's Homemade Ice Cream, Plano, TX

The Ice Cream Club, Boynton Beach, FL (Vanilla, Vanilla Bean, Vanilla Frozen Yogurt)

Karen's Creamery, Avondale, AZ

King Cone, Plover, WI (Simply Vanilla)

Queen City Creamery, Cumberland, MD (Vanilla Frozen Custard)

Royal Scoop Homemade Ice Cream, Bonita Springs, FL

Scoop DeVille, Hartford, WI

Sno Top, Ltd., Manlius, NY (Vanilla Ice Cream 10% Special)

Sweet Temptations, Grand Haven, MI (Vanilla & Vanilla Bean)

Vanilla Ice Cream: White Ribbons

Aglamesis, Cincinnati, OH (French Vanilla)

Anderson's Frozen Custard, Williamsville, NY

Chaney's Dairy Barn, Bowling Green, KY

Strawberry Ice Cream: Blue Ribbons

Cliff's Ice Cream, Ledgewood, NJ

Strawberry Ice Cream: Red Ribbons

Chaney's Dairy Barn, Bowling Green, KY

Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream, Madison, WI

Henry's Homemade Ice Cream, Plano, TX

The Ice Cream Club, Boynton Beach, FL

King Cone, Plover, WI (Strawberry)

Royal Scoop Homemade Ice Cream, Bonita Springs, FL

Sweet Temptations, Grand Haven, MI

Strawberry Ice Cream: White Ribbons

Anderson's Frozen Custard, Williamsville, NY

Karen's Creamery, Avondale, AZ

Next year the Ice Cream Clinic Review will examine vanilla, chocolate and dark chocolate ice cream.

“This S&@! Just Got Serious” Ice Cream Named Your Best New Flavor

“This S&@! Just Got Serious” Ice Cream was named your best new flavor at the National Ice Cream Retailers Association Annual Meeting recently held at the Hilton St. Louis Frontenac Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri November 5-7, 2013. Your Best New Flavor contest is held each year in conjunction with the Ice Cream Clinic Review at the annual meeting.

The ice cream is formulated and produced by Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream, Madison, Wisconsin. The company won the coveted First Place for its new flavor. A total of 22 new flavors were submitted by NICRA member companies. Each flavor is sampled by convention attendees and a vote is taken by ballot at the meeting. The winner was announced during the annual banquet at the end of the meeting. King Cone, Plover, Wisconsin, took second place with Lemon Pie Ice Cream. Third place went to The Ice Cream Club, Boynton Beach, Florida, for Salty Caramel Peanut Ice Cream. Honorable Mentions were given to Clear River Pecan Company, Fredericksburg, Texas, for Peanut Butter Knuckle Sandwich Ice Cream; Henry's Homemade Ice Cream, Plano, Texas, for Ginger Ice Cream; and Royal Scoop Homemade Ice Cream, Bonita Springs, Florida, for Cupid's Love Potion Ice Cream.

“Caramel Apple Sucker” Ice Cream Named Best Candy Flavor

“Caramel Apple Sucker” Ice Cream was named the best candy flavor at the National Ice Cream Retailers Association Annual Meeting recently held at the Hilton St. Louis Frontenac Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri, November 5-7, 2013. The Best Flavor contest is held each year in conjunction with the Ice Cream Clinic Review at the annual meeting.

The ice cream is formulated and produced by King Cone, Plover, Wisconsin. The company won the coveted First Place for its flavor. A total of 16 new candy flavors were submitted by NICRA members. Each flavor is sampled by convention attendees and a vote is taken by ballot at the meeting. The winner was announced during the annual banquet at the end of the meeting.

Caramel Toffee Crunch Ice Cream produced by Karen's Creamery, Avondale, AZ, took second place. Third place was given to Sweet Temptations, Grand Haven, MI, for Brickle Chip Ice Cream. Honorable Mentions were also given to Clear River Pecan Co., Fredericksburg, TX, for Oh Joy Ice Cream; Henry's Homemade Ice Cream, Plano, TX, for Black Licorice Ice Cream; and Cliff's Ice Cream, Ledgewood, NJ for Mounds Ice Cream.

Ten Students Win Bryce Thomson Scholarship Awards

During the NICRA Annual Meeting recently held at the Hilton St. Louis Frontenac Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, it was announced that ten employees of member stores will each be receiving a scholarship award. The winners and amounts of the award are:

- \$3,500 Brian Virgile, Bassetts Ice Cream, Philadelphia, PA
- \$2,500 Alicia Speaight, Spring Dipper, Mammoth Spring, AR
- \$2,500 Theresa Corgan, Skoops Ice Cream, Spring Lake, MI
- \$2,000 Brooke Scheider, Page Dairy Mart, Pittsburgh, PA
- \$1,500 Marie Michels, Temptations Ice Cream Shop, Spring Lake, MI
- \$1,000 Tiffany Weems, Shasta's, Houston, TX
- \$1,000 Candice Chantalou, BG's Frosty Fare, LLC, Bowling Green, OH
- \$1,000 Lora Sheridan, Anderson's Frozen Custard, Williamsville, NY
- \$1,000 LeAnn Smith, Sno Top, Ltd, Manlius, NY
- \$1,000 Khailey Joiner, The Front Porch, Spring Lake, MI

This year, during the silent and live auctions at the Hilton St. Louis Frontenac Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, \$18,396.50 was raised for the Bryce Thomson Scholarship Fund. The suppliers also agreed to contribute \$4,000 and the Board of Directors of NICRA approved another \$4,000 contribution, for a total of \$26,396.50. Kelle Messer, Eskamoe's Frozen Custard, Monroe,

Louisiana, who coordinated both the silent and live auctions, did an outstanding job and the association is grateful to her. The association would also like to thank the team of volunteers who helped coordinate everything, as well as Vince Giordano who was the auctioneer. Thanks also to everyone who donated an article for the auctions and also everyone who attended the convention and were so generous with their donations.

The ice cream cone hat was a collaborative effort again this year. A team of attendees made a bid of \$3,000. The team included Ben Klosinski, King Cone, Plover, WI; Mary Leopold, Leopold's Ice Cream, Savannah, GA; Chuck Page, Page Dairy Mart, Pittsburgh, PA; Lynda Utterback, *The National Dipper*, Elk Grove Village, IL; and David Zimmermann, Royal Scoop Homemade Ice Cream, Bonita Springs, FL.

The Bryce Thomson Scholarship was established in 1995 to honor Bryce Thomson, a long time member and past president of the association and author of the monthly association publication, "The Sundae School Newsletter." He worked for Miller Dairy in Eaton Rapids, Michigan for 40 years and eventually became president of the company. He is the originator of the "Ice Cream Sundae Poll," and the "Education Through Ice Cream" program which assisted a number of secondary schools with a teaching and learning concept in which students served up frozen treats during the noon hour in an actual in-school ice cream parlor. The first, called the "Cold Tongue Ice Cream Parlor," was set up in Eaton Rapids, Michigan High School in 1973.

Shain's of Maine Ice Cream Wins Promotion of the Year Award

The 25th Annual Promotion of the Year Award was presented to Jeff Shain, Shain's of Maine Ice Cream, Sanford, Maine at the 80th Annual NICRA Meeting and Convention at the Hilton St. Louis Frontenac Hotel, on November 5-7, 2013.

This year promotions were submitted by Carl and Debra Chaney, Chaney's Dairy Barn, Bowling Green, Kentucky; Henry Gentry, Henry's Homemade Ice Cream, Plano, Texas; Lisa and David Cunningham, The Ice Cream Bar & Rootbeer Stand, Orrville, Ohio; Jeffrey Shain, Shain's of Maine Ice Cream, Sanford, Maine; Kelly Larson, Skoops Ice Cream, Spring Lake, Michigan; and Valerie Hoffman, Yummies, Warsaw, New York.

Here is the winning promotion:

Shain's of Maine Ice Cream

We all sit around during the off time and think what can we do to increase sales? We come up with crazy ideas, rational ideas, and geez will that work ideas. I am no different. Having been in the ice cream business for thirty years I too look for ways. Increase in competition over the years, along with factors that are beyond our control, weather, construction, etc. have lead me to flat sales. Sometimes the only increase is when you go up in pricing. As you know there is a limit to that philosophy. I decided to take a different approach.

I felt that if I could increase traffic into the store I could increase ice cream sales because the customer was already there.

I didn't have the equipment nor the room to launch a full scale food menu. Having owned several restaurants in the past I knew what it would take to do such a task, what with equipment and labor to staff it. I had acquired a hot dog steamer from a wholesale account that couldn't pay. Admittedly trading a steamer for \$1,000 in past due invoices probably wasn't the smartest business move but something is better than nothing. The steamer sat in my office for a few months as I contemplated the next move.

Cheap Eats Event

I didn't have a true food menu in mind when I began this promotion so I decided to use Cheap Eats Events to test the waters. It was March and it was a beautiful Wednesday. Fifty-cent burgers, 50-cent hot dogs and 99-cent grilled cheese sandwiches. I figured if we were lucky we would get 50 maybe 100 extra people. Our advertising consisted of a reader board sign rented from a rental store and a posting on our Facebook page. We would offer the specials from 4 till 8pm.

We were ready or so I thought. I was out front on the grill cooking up hamburgers, inside our borrowed grill (from home) was grilling up grilled cheese sandwiches. The famous hot dog steamer was full of hot dogs. At 3:45 the onslaught began. We have parking for 85 cars in our lot so hey it's March and although snow occupied some spots we would be safe. I'll have 20 burgers, I'll have 10 hot dogs and three grilled cheese. 15 hot dogs.....Ahhhh we need more rolls run to the store and get more.....It didn't stop for three hours until I finally said, "hey folks we are out of food". Four hundred fifty hamburgers, hot dogs, and grilled cheese.

It worked; same store sales comparing to 2012 for ice cream were up 45%. OK, time to get better organized. Three weeks later we had another Cheap Eats Event. Same form of advertising the reader board and Facebook. I wasn't going to run out of rolls this time. Hamburgers 50-cents, cheeseburger 75-cents (didn't charge extra for cheese the first time), hot dogs 50-cents and the bean-a-palozza sandwich (two hot dogs, grilled onions all topped with baked beans) \$3.00. It didn't seem as busy but I was wrong 450 plus and it went smooth. Ice cream sales up 65%.

Now I was offering the hot dogs every day trying to get people to come in during lunch and dinner. \$1.00 for a hot dog or two for \$1.75. Well people love hot dogs.....great hot dog at a great price. I spent some money on signs from my local sign guy. Steamed hot dogs \$1.00, read one sign. Two steamed hot dogs \$1.75, read another. Everyday special, read another. April sales up 39%. When you pull out food sales ice cream up 22%. Hmm not too bad. Using a product that is priced cheap to draw people in and they will eat more ice cream because they are there.

The Homerun, Cheap Eats #3....hot dogs 75-cents, hamburgers 75-cents, cheeseburgers \$1.00 and the biggie.....Lobster rolls \$5.00. Crept up the prices a bit and offered a lobster roll at such an attractive price that it would be hard to resist. The standard price of a lobster roll of comparable size to ours is between \$9.99 to \$13.99 in Maine. 400 hamburgers and hot dogs and over 100 lobster rolls!!!! People couldn't believe the prices—what a deal they said. And hey they ate more ice cream, 45% increase same store sales for that day.

Give a great deal on a product, make sure there is value. You can always get someone in to try you once with a cheap price but the key is for the return sale because what you are selling them is a great product at a great value. Sales for May up 74%!!!! Pull out the food sales and ice cream for the month was up 32%. So I make a smaller percentage on the food sales but I sell more ice cream which is what we wanted to do.

Now I know the Lobster Roll will sell we offer it everyday for \$5.99. So our daily menu is \$1.00 hot dogs or two for \$1.75 and the lobster roll. Continuously posting on Facebook and have the reader board outside. A side note I was contemplating offering grilled rolls. Do people really care? I turned to Facebook to find out. Here is the exact posting I made on Facebook:

A deep personal question for you.....Please be honest the weight of the world rests upon your answer.....Let me set the scene.....It's lunch time, you want a steam hot dog or a lobster roll....Your standing at the Shain's of Maine counter ordering.....WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR BUN GRILLED???????? Soooooo grilled or not grilled for that is the question.....and your answer is.....

Here are the stats on this post

12,051 saw post

5,137 liked the post

355 comments

I'd say that was a success!!! FYI 98% wanted their buns grilled. June sales up 129%. Take out the food sales and ice cream is up 46%. Keep in mind we did not discount ice cream. We became the talk of the town and surrounding towns as well. What I learned also was there are people that are skeptics. What kind of hot dog? How much lobster meat or is it really lobster? Give people a great value and exceed their expectation on what they will receive and you will have customers talking about you and coming in all the time. It has worked well. July sales up 174%. Take out the food sales and ice cream is up 58%. August sales up 202% take out the food sales and ice cream is up 65%.

The Cheap Eats Promotions that we held in the beginning of the year helped us to establish a menu that would motivate customers to come in. This promotion isn't about hot dogs and lobster rolls. It is about traffic in your store. My theory was if I could get people to my place with a great offer than I stand a better chance of selling them an ice cream.

Think about your local market area. Are there food items that you can offer at a price that will draw people in. You create traffic and increase ice cream sales.

Winter will soon be upon us, we know what will happen if we do nothing....I on the other hand am wondering hey SHAIN'S OF MAINE ICE CREAM MAN can you sell hot dogs and lobster rolls in the winter months? I'll keep you posted on that question.

NICRA Holds First Iron Scoop Contest

The National Ice Cream Retailers Association held its first ever Iron Scoop Contest during its 80th Annual Meeting & Trade Show held at the Hilton St. Louis Frontenac Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, November 5-7, 2013.

Two teams of five members were randomly chosen to participate in the contest; each team consisted of two veteran ice cream makers and three first time attendees who may or may not have ever made ice cream.

The red team had veteran members Pete Freund, Cliff's Ice Cream, Ledgewood, NJ, and Neil McWilliams, Spring Dipper, Mammoth Spring, AR. Rounding out the team were new members Bill Lodde, Igloo Frozen Custard, Lafayette, IN; Ben Bally, Uncle Bob's Homemade Ice Cream, Eureka, IL; and Mark Robinson, Robinson's Really Good, Oak Park, IL.

Veteran members of the blue team were Ben Klosinski, King Cone, Plover, WI, and Ray Murray, Sweet Temptations, Spring Lake, MI. First time members included John Crandell, Scoops from the Past, Panguitch, UT; Amy Leis, Zozo's Ice Cream, Marlton, NJ; and Don Lambert, The Colonel's Creamery, Foster, KY.

Teams were given the rules by master of ceremony, Henry Gentry, Henry's Homemade Ice Cream, Plano, TX.

Iron Scoop Contest rules:

- Proper sanitation must be adhered to.
- Making noise and having fun is permitted and encouraged!
- Must name your entry!
- Each team must anoint a "captain" to be the spokesperson for that team.

- Ice cream will be judged on creativity, taste and perceived “sellability.” Maximum value of 5 points for each of these areas to be awarded per flavor. Bonus points will be awarded to most creative use of secret ingredient and will be used as the tie breaker if necessary.
- A minimum of 3 ingredients (including flavors) must be used plus the secret ingredient.
- The secret ingredient must be used in the ice cream!
- Decision of the judges will be final and announced at the Awards Dinner.
- Both entries will be available for tasting at the Ice Cream Clinic Vanilla and Strawberry tasting tables.
- Winning team members and the flavor name will be inscribed on the Iron Scoop Trophy, memorialized forever in NICRA history.

Teams then decided on what ingredients they wanted to use and Henry announced the secret ingredient that must be used in the ice cream – waffle cone pieces. Teams huddled together to formulate their flavor and then began pouring ingredients into the batch freezers, one from Emery Thompson Machine in Brooksville, FL and one from Advanced Gourmet Equipment & Design in Greensboro, NC. After the required time in the batch freezers teams began to extrude their ice cream, adding mix-ins and ribbons, including the waffle cone pieces.

Teams also had to name their flavors. The red team flavor was Dulce de NICRA and the blue team flavor was Lunch Ladies’ Special. Jeff Myers, Double Dip, Lebanon, OH, and Mark Leichtman, chairman of the Ice Cream Clinic Committee, were the judges. The winner, the blue team, with Lunch Ladies’ Special was announced at the awards banquet and the flavor name and team members will have their names inscribed on the Iron Scoop Trophy.