

2015 Convention Review

Nov 08, 2015

New Officers and Board of Directors Elected

The National Ice Cream Retailers Association elected new Officers and Board Members at its 82nd Annual Convention held November 3-5, 2015 at the Hilton Bayfront Hotel in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Elected as president of the association was Jim Oden, Debbie's Soft Serve, Smithsburg, Maryland. Neil McWilliams, Spring Dipper, Mammoth Spring, Arkansas was elected as president elect. Jill Curran, Kimball Farm, Westford, Massachusetts, was elected vice president. David Deadman, Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream was elected Secretary/Treasurer and Carl Chaney, Chaney's Dairy Barn, Bowling Green, Kentucky becomes immediate past president.

Elected to the board of directors for three-year terms were: Cliff Freund, Cliff's Dairy Maid, Blairstown, New Jersey; Vince Giordano, Sno Top, Ltd, Manlius, New York; Bob Hearn, Hearn's Ice Cream, St. Marys, Ontario, Canada; and Juergen Kloo, Joy Cone Co., Hermitage, Pennsylvania. Terms will expire with the November 2018 Annual Meeting.

The National Ice Cream Retailers Association is a trade organization whose members are in the retail ice cream; soft serve; frozen custard, gelato; frozen yogurt and water ice businesses. The members of NICRA are located all across the United States, Canada and several other countries. They operate hundreds of stores and have estimated annual sales in the millions. They employ thousands of full- and part-time employees. Since 1933, NICRA has helped hundreds of ice cream and frozen dessert entrepreneurs get started and prosper.

Supplier Officers Elected

The National Ice Cream Retailers Suppliers Association elected new Officers at its 82nd Annual Meeting held November 3-5, 2015 at the Hilton Bayfront Hotel in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Elected as president of the association was Lisa Gallagher, ConAgra Foods, Naperville, Illinois. George Dunlap, C. Nelson Mfg. Co., Inc. Oak Harbor, Ohio was elected as vice president and elected as secretary/treasurer was Cherish Mathews, Forbes Chocolate, Broadview Heights, Ohio. Hank Sweeney, Classic Mix Partners, Neenah, Wisconsin 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 35 vanilla samples, 26 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 82nd Annual Convention, held November 3-5, 2015 at the Hilton Bayfront Hotel in St. Petersburg, Florida.

VANILLA ICE CREAM

Blue Ribbons:

Chaney's Dairy Barn, Bowling Green, KY

Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream Co., Madison, WI

(Vanilla Bean)

The Ice Cream Club, Inc. Boynton Beach, FL

(Vanilla Bean & French Vanilla)

Karen's Creamery, Avondale, AZ

Scooptacular, Laveen, AZ

Shain's of Maine, Sanford, ME

VANILLA ICE CREAM

Red Ribbons:

The Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream Co., Inc., Madison, WI

(Old Fashioned Vanilla)

Cliff's Ice Cream, Ledgewood, NJ

The Colonel's Creamery, Florence, KY

(Natural Vanilla)

Daddy O's Irish Ice Cream Pub, Duluth, GA

(Madagascar Vanilla)

Debbies's Soft Serve, Smithsburg, MD

Homestead Creamery, Wirtz, VA

The Ice Cream Club, Boynton Beach, FL

(Vanilla, No Sugar Added Reduced Fat, Vanilla Hard Pack Yogurt, Vanilla Fat Free Hard Pack Yogurt)

Mercurio's, Pittsburgh, PA

(Vanilla Gelato)

Pizzi Farm Ice Cream, Waltham, MA

Sebastian Joe's Ice Cream, Minneapolis, MN

Sno Top, Ltd., Manlius, NY

(Vanilla – 10% Special)

Sweet Temptations, Grand Haven, MI

(Vanilla & Vanilla Bean)

Woodside Farm Creamery, Hockessin, DE

YoYo Donuts * Coffee * Ice Cream, Minnetonka, MN

VANILLA ICE CREAM

White Ribbons:

Henry's Ice Cream, Plano, TX

(Homemade Vanilla)

Loblolly Creamery, LLC, Little Rock, AR

(Double Vanilla)

STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM

Blue Ribbons:

Daddy O's Irish Ice Cream Pub, Duluth, GA

(Strawberries & Cream)

Debbies's Soft Serve, Smithsburg, MD

(Strawberry Soft Serve)

The Ice Cream Club, Boynton Beach, FL

(Strawberry Hard Pack Yogurt)

Over The Top, Pleasant Hill, IA

Scooptacular, Laveen, AZ

Sebastian Joe's Ice Cream, Minneapolis, MN

Shain's of Maine, Sanford, ME

YoYo Donuts * Coffee * Ice Cream, Minnetonka, MN

(Strawberries-N-Cream)

STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM

Red Ribbons:

Chaney's Dairy Barn, Bowling Green, KY

Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream, Madison, WI

Cliff's Ice Cream, Ledgewood, NJ

The Colonel's Creamery, Florence, KY

(Fresh Kentucky Strawberry)

The Ice Cream Club, Inc., Boynton Beach, FL

(Strawberry & No Sugar Added Reduced Fat)

Karen's Kreamery, Avondale, AZ

Loblolly Creamery, LLC, Little Rock, AR

(Arkansas Strawberry Sherbet)

Mercurio's, Pittsburg, PA

(Strawberry Gelato)

Sweet Firefly Gourmet Ice Cream, Richardson, TX

Woodside Farm Creamery, Hockessin, DE

STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM

White Ribbons:

Homestead Creamery, Wirtz, VA

Sweet Temptations, Grand Haven, MI

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

“Lemon Raspberry Shandy” Ice Cream Named Your Best New Flavor

“Lemon Raspberry Shandy” Ice Cream was named your best new flavor at the National Ice Cream Retailers Association Annual Meeting recently held at the Hilton Bayfront Hotel in St. Petersburg, Florida, November 3-5, 2015. 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 Cliff’s Ice Cream, Ledgewood, New Jersey. The company won the coveted First Place for its new flavor. A total of 57 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. Cliff’s Ice Cream, Ledgewood, New Jersey also took second place with Huckleberry Buckle Ice Cream. Third place went to Daddy O’s Irish Ice Cream, Duluth, Georgia for Irish Pistachio Ice Cream. Honorable Mentions were given to Homestead Creamery, Wirtz, Virginia for Crunchy Lemon Blast Ice Cream; Daddy O’s Irish Ice Cream, Duluth, Georgia for T.A.C.O (Tamarind Apricot Coconut Orgy Ice Cream; and The Colonel’s Creamery, Florence, Kentucky for Camel Ride – Turkish Coffee Toffee Ice Cream.

Grand Master Ice Cream Maker Award Presented

The second Grand Master Ice Cream Maker Award was presented to The Ice Cream Club, Boynton Beach, Florida at the 82nd Annual National Ice Cream Retailers Association Meeting held at the Hilton Bayfront Hotel in St. Petersburg, Florida, November 3-5, 2015.

In order to qualify for the award the company had to achieve three Blue Ribbons for their ice cream within a five-year period. The Ice Cream Club did it in four years.

To achieve a Blue Ribbon, the company’s ice cream must be judged by a dairy professor for sensory (flavor, body and texture, melting quality, color) and bacteriology and pass strict standards set by the Association.

In 2012 the company won Blue Ribbons for Vanilla Bean and French Vanilla. In 2014 they won another Blue Ribbon for Vanilla Bean and French Vanilla. This year they won a Blue Ribbon for Vanilla Bean, French Vanilla and Strawberry Hard Pack Yogurt.

Third Annual Iron Scoop Contest

The National Ice Cream Retailers Association held its third Annual Iron Scoop Contest during its 82ND Annual Meeting & Trade Show held at the Hilton Bayfront Hotel in St. Petersburg, Florida, November 3-5, 2015.

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

The blue team had veteran member Rosi Men, YoYo Donuts Coffee & Ice Cream, Minnetonka, Minnesota. Rounding out the team were new members Laura Frankenstein, Loblolly Creamery, Little Rock, Arkansas, Karl Holmes, Pugnuts, Surry, Maine; and Jeff Brooks, Mystic Dessert Bar, Sugarland, Texas.

The veteran member of the red team was Cindy Perry, Pleasant View, Tennessee. First time members included Jonathan Grisetti, Homestead Creamery, Wirtz, Virginia; Charlie Wilcox, Marianne’s Ice Cream, Santa Cruz, California; Antonio Bautista, Yogurt My Way, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

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

Iron Scoop Contest rules:

1. Proper sanitation must be adhered to.
2. Making noise and having fun is permitted and encouraged!
3. Must name your entry!
4. Each team must anoint a “captain” to be the spokesperson for that team.
5. 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.
6. A minimum of 3 ingredients (including flavors) must be used **plus** the secret ingredient.
7. The secret ingredient must be used **in** the ice cream!
8. Decision of the judges will be final and announced at the Awards Dinner.
9. Both entries will be available for tasting at the Ice Cream Clinic Vanilla and Chocolate tasting tables.
10. 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 – Sea Salt. Teams huddled together to formulate their flavor and then began pouring ingredients into the batch freezers, one from Emery Thompson, Brooksville, Florida and one from Advanced Gourmet Equipment & Design, Greensboro, NC. After the required time in the batch freezers, teams began to extrude their ice cream, adding mix-ins and ribbons.

Teams also had to name their flavors. The red team flavor was St. Pete’s Sweet Treat and the blue team flavor was Blue Sky Mai Tai. Members of the Ice Cream Clinic Committee were the judges. The winner, the blue team, with Blue Sky Mai Tai was announced at the awards banquet and the flavor name and team members will have their names inscribed on the Iron Scoop Trophy. The score is now Blue Team 2 – Red Team 1.

Ten Students Win Bryce Thomson Scholarship Awards

During the NICRA Annual Meeting recently held at the Hilton Bayfront Hotel in St. Petersburg, Florida, 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	LaToya Irvin, The Franklin Fountain, Philadelphia, PA
\$2,500	Sarah Corgan, Sweet Temptations, Spring Lake, MI
\$2,500	Louis Marcho, Mill City Dairy, Dalton, PA
\$2,000	Sarah Davenport, Royal Scoop, Bonita Springs, FL
\$1,500	Matthew Milligan, Royal Scoop, Bonita Springs, FL
\$1,000	Laura Park, Sweet Temptations, Spring Lake, MI
\$1,000	Victoria Gonzalez, Beth Marie’s Old Fashioned, Denton, TX
\$1,000	Adriane Ullery, Ullery’s Homemade, Richmond, IN
\$1,000	Jesenia Eberly, Fox Meadows, Ephrata, PA
\$1,000	Sara Dutra, Twisters Ice Cream, Livonia, NY

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.

Three Companies Win The Promotion of the Year Award

The 27th Annual National Ice Cream Retailers Association Promotion of the Year Award was presented by Lynda Utterback, publisher of *The National Dipper* magazine at the Association's 82nd Annual Convention and Trade Show, November 5, 2015 the Hilton Bayfront Hotel in St. Petersburg, Florida. All three companies that submitted a promotion won the award.

This year promotions were submitted by Jason Mandler, Carmen's Italian Ice, Rockville, Maryland; Henry Gentry, Henry's Homemade Ice Cream, Plano, Texas and Jeff Shain, Shain's of Maine, Sanford, Maine.

Carmen's Italian Ice

Our promotion of the year for 2015 was the 12th Annual Pay the Price of the Weather Promo. We initially chose the last week in January for this promotion, as it is typically one of the coldest weeks of the year. It ran January 29-31.

Over the years it has become extremely popular, and a way for us to reward our diehard fans, who come in year round. It also happens to be close to Super Bowl Sunday, which is a busy day for large to-go orders. While the Pay the Price Promotion is going on, we remind customers to place their orders for the big game and even encourage them to order their wings and chili from our next door neighbor, Hard Times Café.

The deal is, a small Italian ice costs the temperature it is outside. Make it a gelati and add \$1. Make it a Fall gelati and add \$2.

We keep a thermometer outside for "old school" customers, and have our phones for the hipsters that want to challenge us to the minute and to the degree.

It's a fun 3 days and unlike any deals you may see elsewhere. It definitely gets customers talking about us, when most people aren't thinking Italian ices and custard, just how cold it is.

Just getting customers in the door this time of year is the goal. The kids often get the ices, and the parents pick up coffee or tea. It's a good time for customers to see other menu options in the colder months, as well, especially our new hot chocolate bar.

Some people come more than once over the 3 days, and many bring friends and family.

We begin promoting this event during our Small Business Saturday and throughout December when we sell a large number of our Crave Cards for the holidays. The staff really enjoys this because traffic increases and there is a buzz and energy in the store. And, the customers really appreciate it. Spring is less than 3 months away.

Henry's Homemade Ice Cream

I started the year by planning to invite more schools, scouts, and church groups to Henry's Homemade Ice Cream. I have learned over the years that it costs a lot of advertising dollars to actually get a customer to travel to the retail store.

So I thought, once I get the customer to the store, how do I get them to come back? I focused on a "Bounce Back" coupon.

I teach children how to make ice cream in an informal classroom setting. It is called Sundae School. I charge \$4.00 per child with a 15-child minimum. The teacher is free; other adults pay. The class includes: the history of ice cream, making ice cream, and ice cream scoop (bowl) for each person with a topping; and a diploma for attending.

My goal was to increase customer counts and grow sales.

What I did in my promotion was to develop a detachable coupon, which was part of the diploma, which could easily be detached and used on a return trip. I presented the children with diplomas at the end of the class and I was the valedictorian! I surprised them with a detachable coupon — telling them that they were the best class ever.

The children now had to return to the store with their parents. The coupon was a Buy One — Get One Free coupon. It was valid for any menu item (shakes, banana splits, etc).

How it worked: It worked great and cost nothing to perform. I had a captive audience – children who were excited to return with the family. Usually the child brought 2 parents, so I actually received an extra sale.

I met my goals as more customers came in. Sales increased. The program was difficult to track though. Other than counting the coupons, there was not much detail for me to examine — as the children tended to visit at night. I start work at 4:00 AM.

Occasionally I would hear a success story, which pleased me. At the same time, I inherited some of Blue Bell's Ice Cream accounts which drove my sales increase. Also, I had a successful social media program running. Overall, the program felt great. Sales were up.

This program can be adapted within the ice cream store; and it can be used by other ice cream stores.

In summary, if you want a customer to come back again; give them a reason:

- 1) Great product
- 2) Great service
- 3) Clean store
- 4) And give them a Bounce Back coupon

Shain's of Maine

What better way to increase sales than by having a celebration? Every goal that we set to achieve more sales depends on one particular crucial act, getting customers to come to you. Simple isn't it? Well, of course it is. Let's be honest, not really. It's kind of hard sometimes.

You may recall the year 2013 the weekly Wednesday event at Shain's of Maine Ice Cream, "Cheap Eats". It still continues to bring them in every Wednesday.

So what's Christmas in July have to do with cheap eats? Think of cheap eats on steroids. Burgers, 75¢, fries, hot dogs, tater tots, all 75¢. And a key piece that drives them to our store is our famous lobster roll at a celebration price of \$5.55, normally \$6.99.

Getting them to our store so we can sell them more ice cream, simple. The set up – two weeks before the event we borrowed five inflatable Christmas scenes, placed them in the ice cream parlor and outside on the deck so when customers came to the store they would stare in bewilderment as to what we are up to.

Contrary to popular belief, it does get warm in Maine. For the first week the company line was, "I don't know what Jeff is up to now." The second week, the company line was, "It's Christmas in July on Monday, July 13th, be sure to join us."

Get them curious, tell them what you're up to and then keep on reminding them.

I went live on our local radio station the day of the event to self promote. We do quite a bit of advertising with this station so the live air time was free.

On the day of the event, we were ready, stocked and ready to scoop. Remember we use the cheap eats food prices to lure them in and in the process sold 47% more ice cream than on the same day in 2014.

Some side notes, Santa was there in Hawaiian shorts. Did you know that you can get Santa to work really cheap in the summer?

We sold 869 lobster rolls, 432 hot dogs and a lot of fries. We also increased our goal of ice cream sales. Be creative, your goal is to sell ice cream and the only way to do this is to get people to your store.

Bob Turner, Dairy Corner, Urbana, Ohio Named Forrest Mock Person of the Year

The first Forrest Mock Person of the Year Award went to Forrest Mock, for whom the award was named in 1983. For those of you who don't know, Forrest was the 28th President of NICRA. He served on the Board of Directors for many years prior to being elected as President. In 1963, Forrest Mock became Executive Director of NICRA. He served in that role until 1980 when he retired. From all accounts he was a great Executive Director.

So let's talk about this year's recipient of the Forrest Mock Award. On a personal note, I worked with this person on the Board of Directors and as he became an officer of this association. He was and is one of the most fair-minded people I know. He was always honest, thoughtful and always had NICRA in mind in every decision he made. I truly admired his dedication to the association.

Well, you think you know someone, and then you call his wife. In all seriousness, he was born in Gallipolis, Ohio, the first of two sons. His father was a Korean War vet, turned Methodist Minister and his mother was a homemaker. After about ten years of serving different parishes, the family settled in the town of Terre Haute for 12 years. During this time he graduated from Graham High School and held a job as a short order cook for a family style restaurant in Urbana, Ohio. It was here he met his wife who started working at the restaurant as a waitress. He also graduated from technical school and became a truck and auto mechanic.

In 1980 he and his wife moved to Houston, Texas so he could work as a mechanic with his favorite uncle. Their first son, Christopher was born during their three-year stay in Houston. That was the primary reason for their return to Ohio in 1983.

When they returned to Ohio, a close friend of his wife's family who owned a Dairy Queen in Xenia asked them if they were interested in purchasing it. After much soul searching, they decided it was not in their budget to do so at this time.

The friend did sell the Dairy Queen and purchased the Dairy Isle in Urbana, a franchised soft serve store selling hot and cold sandwiches and fried food. Shortly thereafter this friend needed to sell the store because of his wife's health. He offered to help them buy the business this time. The offer was too good to pass up. So in 1987 he gave up his job as a mechanic to run the store. During the school year, when the store was closed he drove a school bus for Urbana city schools.

In August of 1985, son number two, Matthew was born and the couple continued to learn by doing. But there were few in the area who were willing to share tips or information about the ice cream business.

Ten years after buying the Dairy Isle they became independent operators and changed the name of the store to Dairy Corner. That same year they received a call from the director of NICRA inviting them to attend the Williamsburg convention. They found a warm and friendly welcome, learning new things every year they attended the convention.

In the Fall of 2000 the landlord for the property sold it, forcing them to relocate or give up the ice cream business. A space opened up in a strip mall and the following Spring the move prompted them to drop the fried food line and emphasize the ice cream, branching out to catering as well.

His wife said that he has always kept the books for the business and done the lion's share of hiring and firing. He cleans, maintains and often repairs the machines.

He has a very strong work ethic and she is so very proud of him.

As I mentioned earlier, he served on the Board of Directors for many years and became the 77th president of this association in 2010. After a year or so of not being on the Board of Directors, he missed it and came back on the Board for a few more years. Congratulations Bob.