

# 2016 Convention Review

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Nov 19, 2016

## **New Officers and Board of Directors Elected**

The National Ice Cream Retailers Association elected new Officers and Board Members at its 83rd Annual Convention held November 8-10, 2016 at the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino in Reno, Nevada.

Elected as president of the association was Neil McWilliams, Spring Dipper, Mammoth Spring, Arkansas. Jill Curran, Kimball Farm, Westford, Massachusetts, was elected as president elect. David Deadman, Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream, Madison, Wisconsin was elected vice president. George Xouris, The Freezing Pointe, Morrisville, North Carolina was elected Secretary/Treasurer and Jim Oden, Debbie's Soft Serve, Smithsburg, Maryland becomes immediate past president.

Elected to the board of directors for three-year terms were: Mary Leopold, Leopold's Ice Cream, Savannah, GA; Jim Marmion, Advanced Gourmet, Greensboro, NC; Patti Otte, Sweet Firefly Ice Cream & Candied Treats, Richardson, TX; Jeff Shain, Shain's of Maine, Sandford, ME; and Dirk White, The Alaskan Creamery, Sitka, AK. Terms will end with the November 2019 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 83rd Annual Meeting held November 8-10, 2016 at the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino in Reno, Nevada.

George Dunlap, C. Nelson Mfg. Co., Inc. Oak Harbor, Ohio. was elected president; Cherish Mathews, Forbes Chocolate, Broadview Heights, Ohio, was elected vice president and elected as secretary/treasurer was Kyle Cameron, Joy Cone Company. Lisa Gallagher, ConAgra Foods, Chicago, Illinois 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, chocolate and dark chocolate ice cream submitted by members of the association. A total of 20 vanilla samples, 15 chocolate samples and 5 dark chocolate 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 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention, held November 8-10, 2016 at the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino in Reno, Nevada.

## **VANILLA ICE CREAM**

**Blue Ribbons:**

Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream Co., Madison, WI

(Old Fashioned Vanilla)

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

(Madagascar Vanilla)

The Ice Cream Club, Inc. Boynton Beach, FL

Karen's Creamery, Avondale, AZ

Sno Top, Ltd., Manlius, NY

(Vanilla 10% Special)

**VANILLA ICE CREAM****Red Ribbons:**

Chaney's Dairy Barn, Bowling Green, KY

Cliff's Ice Cream, Ledgewood, NJ

The Colonel's Creamery, Foster, KY

(Signature Vanilla & True Vanilla)

Debbies's Soft Serve, Smithsburg, MD

(Vanilla Soft Serve)

Half Pint Creamery, Hanover, PA

The Ice Cream Club, Boynton Beach, FL

(Vanilla Bean)

Over The Top, Des Moines, IA

Queen City Creamery, Cumberland, MD

(Vanilla Frozen Custard)

Shain's of Main, Sanford, ME

Spring Dipper, Mammoth Spring, AR

YoYo Donuts \* Coffee \* Ice Cream, Minnetonka, MN

(Classic Vanilla Bean)

**CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM****Blue Ribbons:**

Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream, Madison, WI

Cliff's Ice Cream, Ledgewood, NJ)

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

(Chocolate OMG)

Homestead Creamery, Wirtz, VA

The Ice Cream Club, Boynton Beach, FL

(Captain's Chocolate)

Izzy's Ice Cream, Minneapolis, MN

Karen's Creamery, Avondale, AZ

Mercurio's, Pittsburgh, PA

(European Chocolate Gelato)

Shain's of Maine, Sanford, ME

Sno Top, Ltd. Manlius, NY

(Chocolate 10% Special)

YoYo Donuts \* Coffee \* Ice Cream, Minnetonka, MN

### **CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM**

#### **Red Ribbons:**

Chaney's Dairy Barn, Bowling Green, KY

The Colonel's Creamery, Florence, KY

(Winner's Circle Dutch Chocolate)

Debbie's Soft Serve, Smithsburg, MD

(Chocolate Soft Serve)

Half Pint Creamery, Hanover, PA

(Chocolate Heartbreak)

### **DARK CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM**

#### **Blue Ribbons:**

Chocolate Shoppa Ice Cream, Madison, WI

(Zanzibar Chocolate)

Shain's of Maine, Sanford, ME

### **DARK CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM**

#### **Red Ribbons:**

Izzy's Ice Cream, Minneapolis, MN

(Dark Chocolate Zin)

Homestead Creamery, Wirtz, VA

(Double Dark Chocolate)

Yo Yo Donuts Coffee Ice Cream, Minnetonka, MN

(Double Dark Chocolate)

Next year the Ice Cream Clinic Review will examine vanilla and strawberry ice cream.

### **My Ice Cream Is Perfect**

This year any company that received a perfect score in the ice cream clinic was given a lapel pin that said, "My Ice Cream is Perfect". Only one sample of the 40 samples that were submitted received a perfect score.

The pin was awarded at the opening banquet at the 83rd Annual Meeting and Trade Show, November 8-10, 2016 in Reno, Nevada.

Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream, Madison, WI received the perfect score for Old Fashioned Vanilla Ice Cream.

In addition to the My Ice Cream is Perfect Pin, the company received a Blue Ribbon for their ice cream.

### **"Butter Beer" Ice Cream Named Your Best New Flavor**

"Butter Beer" Ice Cream was named your best new flavor at the National Ice Cream Retailers Association Annual Meeting recently held at the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino in Reno, Nevada, November 8-10, 2016. 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 Daddy O's Irish Ice Cream in Duluth, Georgia. The company won the coveted First Place for its new flavor. A total of 31 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. Half Pint Creamery, Hanover, Pennsylvania took second place with Chocolate Eclair Ice Cream. Third place went to Karen's Kreamery, Avondale, Arizona for Pistachio Cherry Ice Cream. Honorable Mentions were given to Izzy's Ice Cream Minneapolis, Minnesota for Dessa's Existential Crunch Ice Cream; The Ice Cream Club, Boynton Beach, Florida for Lemon Meringue Pie Ice Cream and Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream for Taffy Apple Italian Ice.

#### **“Molten Lava Cake Gelato” Named Best Flavor – Baked Goods**

“Molten Lava Cake Gelato” was named the best flavor – baked goods at the National Ice Cream Retailers Association Annual Meeting recently held at the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino in Reno, Nevada, November 8-10, 2016. 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 Mercurio's, Kittanning, Pennsylvania. The company won the coveted First Place for its flavor. A total of 13 new baked goods 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.

Mercurio's also took second place with Cookie Butter Gelato. Third place was given to Over The Top, Pleasant Hill, Iowa for Apple Cinnamon Streusel Ice Cream. Honorable Mentions were also given to Karen's Kreamery, Avondale, Arizona for Honey Baklava Ice Cream; Cliff's Ice Cream, Ledgewood, New Jersey for Crooked Cookie Ice Cream; and Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream for Banana Cream Pie Ice Cream.

#### **Grand Master Ice Cream Maker Award Presented**

The Grand Master Ice Cream Maker Award was presented to Karen's Kreamery, Avondale, Arizona; Shain's of Maine, Sanford, Maine; and Yo Yo Donuts Coffee Ice Cream, Minnetonka, Minnesota at the 83rd Annual National Ice Cream Retailers Association Meeting held at the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino in Reno, Nevada, November 8-10, 2016.

In order to qualify for the award the company had to achieve three Blue Ribbons for their ice cream within a five-year period.

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.

#### **Ten Students Win Bryce Thomson Scholarship Awards**

During the NICRA Annual Meeting recently held at the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino in Reno, Nevada, 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 – Mireya Colin, Freeze Maid Dairy Bar

\$2,500 – Caitlin Haggart, Sno Top

\$2,500 – Amy Rautio, Key Largo Chocolates

\$2,000 – Kevin Groves, L & R Soda Shop

\$1,500 – Kieran McDonald, Jon's Ice Cream

\$1,000 – Sarah Corgan, Sweet Temptations

\$1,000 – Emma Rudziensky, Custard Corner

\$1,000 – Katie Lee, Scoop Du Jour

\$1,000 – Morgan Allen, Almost Heaven

\$1,000 – Victoria Gonzales, Beth Marie's

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.

### **Promotion of the Year Award**

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual National Ice Cream Retailers Association Promotion of the Year Award was presented to Over The Top, Pleasant Hill, Iowa at the association's Annual Meeting, November 10<sup>th</sup> at the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino in Reno, Nevada. This year promotions were submitted by Jason Mandler, Carmen's Italian Ice, Rockville, Maryland; Carla Brubaker, Homestead Creamery, Wirtz, Virginia; and Christine D'Amico, Over The Top, Pleasant Hill, Iowa. Following are summaries of all three promotions.

### **Carmen's Italian Ice**

This year, our selection for Promotion of the Year revolves around kids and Valentine's Day. It is similar to an idea that my son's karate studio did, offering vouchers for one free karate class as a Valentine's Day gift to give to his friends in his goodie bags. It is smart business to see what else is going on in the community and look for different marketing techniques and promotions to get the customers in your store. I decided several years ago to put the coupons for a one free small Italian ice in Jayden's (my son) goodie bags for his classmates to enjoy. The next year, we decided to offer a pack of up to 25 free for any customers that asked. So, good for one free Italian ice and it expires in 30 days. We would take them later, if someone came in, but the expiration date ensures no one takes advantage of a great promotion.

Here are a few logistics:

- We start promoting the deal at the beginning of February
- Vouchers must be picked up in store (get them in the door any way you can, occasionally someone picks them up and buys nothing, but most of the time, they buy at least one thing, if not several (moms love the idea and truly appreciate our generosity)
- We promote it on Facebook and Twitter and even customers without children love the idea and are impressed with our creativity
- Occasionally, someone asks for more than 25, and we make the judgment call on a case by case basis (sometimes we charge \$1 for the additional vouchers)
- 25 vouchers per child, so if you have three children, you can get up to 75 vouchers
- There are a few times we have sold packs to an office for a discounted rate, which is another opportunity to get new customers in the store

Here are the benefits:

- A first grader gets a voucher for himself and he will need to come with an adult. They get the free small ice and usually the adult and maybe a sibling or two will get additional items
- Our staff will ask the child what school they attend, and they write it on the back of the voucher. Last year we had redemption from over 50 different schools totaling over 300 vouchers.
- With knowing what schools are redeeming, it also can give us new leads for outreach for future events in the area
- It gives new customers a chance to try Carmen's. For the past five years of promoting the event, we have never had anyone abuse it and come in repeatedly with the voucher. It has been a win/win for everyone

Sure, we handed out thousands of vouchers, but the redemption is not that high. Do not be discouraged about handing out too many. It is manageable and you want as many customers in the store that you can get, especially during this time. Spring is right

around the corner. Show them what is new and get them excited that warmer weather is not that far away! Customers do not need to know that the redemption rate is low. They think the perceived value is approximately \$75 and they are very appreciative of your generosity. They share the great experience with their friends and family. They all feel it is great for the neighborhood and for the community, so you are continuing to build on your customer base.

Have fun with your promotions! Be sure to make them different and unique. Try new and different ones, some will work, and some, not so much. Often some take more effort than others and sometimes it takes a little bit longer to gain popularity. Always try to have something to talk about to your customers. A promo, new menu items, new and exciting flavors, limited editions, something...if it doesn't work, change it up, try something different, be resilient!

### **Homestead Creamery**

Our promotion of the year for 2016 came from one of our high school Farm Market Associates. All associates were given a challenge of coming up with a promotion or idea to get more customers in our store and increase our sales. We were presented with many ideas but decided on the idea of a Sundae Monday and ran with it.

We planned it for the first day of Spring break for our local public schools, from 11:00 AM – 8:00 PM. We posted our event of Sundae Monday on Facebook, something we had not done until now, about a week out and immediately started getting comments and interest in coming. We also printed out flyers to post at the entrances into the store and handed out flyers to customers throughout the week leading up to the exciting Monday.

On Monday morning we blew up black and white balloons to attach to our outside sign, made way for a topping table in our storefront, and started to make it look like an adventure was about to happen at Homestead Creamery. The Front of the store was displayed with balloons on either side of a table draped with a cow-print table cloth, red handkerchiefs as a table runner, galvanized buckets with each topping filled to the brim and topped off with milk bottles filled with an array of sprinkles.

Glass mason jars and waffle bowls were lined up next to our dipping cabinet waiting for the first customer. We had a small size (one scoop) available for \$3.99 and a large (2 scoops) for \$5.49. Customers, greeted by our cow (one of our girls was wearing a cow suit), started flooding in, asking about our sundaes. They were to pick their bowl, size and ice cream of their choice and then were free to go heap on toppings. The topping table was replenished many times throughout the day and an impromptu trek for more jars and waffle bowls had to be constructed. Customers flowed throughout the store constantly all day. Comments about how amazing their sundaes were were posted immediately on Facebook and the question, "When are you going to do this again?" came up frequently. After purchasing their sundaes, each customer was given a coupon for their next visit, as a way to get them back into the store.

We sold:

Souvenir Glass Jar – Small: 119 – Large 197

Waffle Bowl – Small 85 – Large 33

Normal Sundaes – 2

Total 436

Our sales for Sundae Monday were 231% more than on the same day in 2015 and 257% more than the previous Monday in 2016.

Generally we would have five staff on hand working different shifts throughout the day; however, because of the increase in business and all the build up we observed from Facebook, we ended up having an extra two staff working all day.

We were so excited that our Sundae Monday was such a big hit and that our customers were looking forward to doing this again, that we planned a Banana Split Wednesday the next month, which was also a tremendous hit.

Come Spring Break 2017, you can expect to see Homestead Creamery host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Sundae Monday!

### **Over The Top**

Over the Top is a seasonal ice cream shop located in the heart of the Midwest. Our season opens every year on March 1<sup>st</sup> and ends November 30<sup>th</sup>. We manufacture 36 super-premium flavors in-store.

In order to help our “regulars” survive the lonely winter season, Over the Top began a “Winter Quart Stock-Up Sale in the Fall of 2015. Our guests pre-purchase their ice cream quarts from October 10<sup>th</sup> through November 10<sup>th</sup> by completing a pre-printed order form. Over the Top offers a 10% discount incentive for those who participate, and payment is due when the order is placed.

The objectives of this promotion were to increase quart sales by 15% in the first year. Secondary objectives related to guest service. Our goal was to appease our regulars who wanted us to remain open year-round, and find a way to keep customers loyal to the Over the Top brand through the winter months.

Beginning November 11<sup>th</sup> our ice cream production team begins manufacturing the ice cream batches necessary to fulfill the Winter Quart Stock-Up Sale orders. Each order is packaged with the order form, double-checked for accuracy and ready for pick-up. Orders are picked up beginning the day after Thanksgiving, through the final day of the season on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Reminder calls are made as necessary during the final two days of operation.

Over the Top’s Winter Stock-Up Sale is promoted through a series of posts on our Facebook pages. An advertisement was also placed in our local “Valpak,” which reaches every household in our area during the months of September and October.

In addition to the promotional materials distributed to the public, we also offered an employee incentive. We held a contest among our “super scoopers” to see who could sell the highest number of quarts. We offered a \$50 gift card to the top seller and a few runner-up prizes as well. The competitive nature of our team took over, which helped maintain the focus on this four-week long promotion.

From October 10<sup>th</sup> through November 10, 2015, Over the Top’s ice cream quart sales increased 47.7% from the previous year. Total in-store sales increased 17.7% over 2014. Our goal of increasing quart sales by 15% was exceeded by a little more than three times the original goal. Guest responses were 100% positive as well. This promotion will become an annual tradition at Over the Top. As we prepare to enter the last couple months of our 2016 ice cream season, our regular guests are already asking about pre-ordering their quarts again this year.