

## **2017 CONVENTION REPORT**

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

The National Ice Cream Retailers Association elected new Officers and Board Members at its 84th Annual Convention held November 7-9 2017 at the Founders Inn & Spa in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Elected as president of the association was Jill Curran, Kimball Farm, Westford, Massachusetts. David Deadman, Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream, Madison, Wisconsin, was elected as president elect. George Xouris, Andia's Homemade Ice Cream, Morrisville, North Carolina was elected vice president. Jeff Shain, Shain's of Maine, Sanford, Maine was elected Secretary/Treasurer and Neil McWilliams, Spring Dipper, Mammoth Spring, Arkansas becomes immediate past president.

Elected to the board of directors for three-year terms were: Valerie Hoffman, Yummies, Warsaw, NY; Sue Kloter, Kloter's Ice Cream Barn, Ellington, CT; Donnie Montgomery, Homestead Creamery, Wirtz, VA; Stan Sitton, Green Mountain Flavors, Oswego, IL; and Charlie Wilcox, Marianne's Ice Cream, Santa Cruz, CA. Terms will end with the November 2020 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 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting held November 7-9, 2017 at the Founders Inn & Spa, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Cherish Mathews, Forbes Chocolate, Broadview Heights, Ohio. was elected president; Kyle Cameron, Joy Cone Company, Hermitage, Pennsylvania was elected vice president and elected as secretary/treasurer was Stephanie Grow, ConAgra, Chicago, Illinois. George Dunlap, C. Nelson Mfg. Co., Inc. Oak Harbor, Ohio 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 22 vanilla samples and 17 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 84th Annual Convention, held November 7-9, 2017 at the Founders Inn & Spa in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

### **VANILLA ICE CREAM**

**Blue Ribbons:**

Over The Top, Des Moines, IA

Spring Dipper, Mammoth Spring, AR

**VANILLA ICE CREAM**

**Red Ribbons:**

Andia' Homemade Ice Cream, Morrisville, NC

Chaney's Dairy Barn, Bowling Green, KY

Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream, Madison, WI

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

The Ice Cream Club, Boynton Beach, FL

(Vanilla Bean)

Igloo Frozen Custard, Lafayette, IN

Karen's Creamery, Avondale, AZ

Moomers Homemade Ice Cream, Traverse City, MI

Sno Top, Ltd., Manlius, NY

Over The Top, Des Moines, IA

**VANILLA ICE CREAM**

**White Ribbons:**

Homestead Creamery, Wirtz, VA

Stensland Family Farm, Sioux Falls, SD

Sweet Temptations, Spring Lake, MI

Sweet Temptations, Spring Lake, MI

(Vanilla Bean)

**STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM**

**Blue Ribbons:**

Over The Top, Des Moines, IA

**STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM**

**Red Ribbons:**

Chaney's Dairy Barn, Bowling Green, KY

Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream, Madison, WI

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

Homestead Creamery, Wirtz, VA

The Ice Cream Club, Boynton Beach, FL

Mercurio's Creamery, Pittsburgh, PA

(Strawberry Gelato)

Spring Dipper, Mammoth Spring, AR

**STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM**

**White Ribbons:**

Karen's Kreamery, Avondale, AZ

Over The Top, Des Moines, IA

Serendipity Homemade Ice Cream, St. Louis, MO

Stensland Family Farms, Sioux Falls, SD

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

### **“Lemon Poppyseed” Ice Cream Named Your Best New Flavor**

“Lemon Poppyseed” Ice Cream was named your best new flavor at the National Ice Cream Retailers Association Annual Meeting recently held at the Founders Inn & Spa in Virginia Beach, Virginia, November 7-9, 2017. 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 in Madison, Wisconsin. The company won the coveted First Place for its new flavor. A total of 40 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.

Yummies, Warsaw, New York took second place with Max Black PB Attack Ice Cream. Third place went to The Ice Cream Club, Boynton Beach, Florida for Mackinac Turtle Fudge Ice Cream. Honorable Mentions were given to Queen City Creamery, Cumberland, Maryland for Brown Sugar Bourbon Frozen Custard; Moomer’s Homemade Ice Cream, Traverse City, Michigan for Honey Cornbread Ice Cream; and Homestead Creamery, Wirtz, Virginia for Grandma’s Cookie Jar Ice Cream.

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

During the NICRA Annual Meeting recently held at the Founders Inn & Spa in Virginia Beach, Virginia, 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	Joshua England, Eskamoe’s Frozen Custard & More
\$2,500	Abrielle Minnich, Fox Meadows Creamery
\$2,500	Sarah Corgan, Sweet Temptations
\$2,000	Kristen Hutson, Eskamoe’s Frozen Custard & More
\$1,500	Carolyn Peterson, The Pearl Ice Cream Parlor
\$1,000	Emily Isidro, Freeze Maid Dairy Bar
\$1,000	Brooke Wilson, Bomboy’s Home Made Candy and Ice Cream
\$1,000	Caroline Moser, Village Scoop
\$1,000	Alyssa Menko, Pepe’s Famous Italian Ice
\$1,000	Kathryn Schadt, The Pink Cow Ice Cream

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.

### **2017 Promotion of the Year**

The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual National Ice Cream Retailers Association Promotion of the Year Award was presented to Queen City Creamery, Cumberland, Maryland. at the Association’s Annual Meeting, November 9<sup>th</sup> at the Founders Inn & Spa in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

This year promotions were submitted by Bob and Robin Turner, Dairy Corner, Urbana, Ohio; Henry Gentry, Henry’s Homemade Ice Cream, Plano, Texas; Carla Brubaker, Homestead Creamery, Wirtz, Virginia; and Rhiannon Morgret, Queen City Creamery, Cumberland, Maryland.

### **Queen City Creamery**

This past year we really have been working on promotions to boost sales during our slower months. We started doing cake decorating nights in February and continued doing them through the month of May. We will begin them again in October. The cake decorating nights included: a premade small cake, decorating supplies to use, and a glass of wine. Each participant paid \$25 to participate. Each month had a different theme: February, Valentine’s Day; March, St. Patrick’s Day; April, Easter; and May, Mother’s Day. The participants were given a pre-baked cake and were guided through a decorating lesson the instructor (myself), showed them some basic piping lessons that allowed them to use their creativity and decorate their cake as they wished. When finished, the participants were able to take the cake home to share with their families or eat it themselves.

We originally set a limit of 16 participants, but increased it to 30 participants because of the great response. We posted the classes on Facebook and within 24 hours the classes were full. By March, we added an additional night to try to meet the demand.

Our sales compared to the same night last year drastically increased. On average, the cake decorating nights saw a 38% increase in sales as compared to the same nights of 2016. In addition to the profit that was made from the class itself, many of the participants would come early before the class to have dinner in our restaurant before the class began. Some would also purchase additional glasses of wine while participating in the class.

Although we do have the capabilities to make traditional cakes in our restaurant, I understand that most of the NICRA businesses do not. This promotion could be easily modified to use ice cream cakes only. We have had such a great response to this promotion, and people are ready for the classes to begin in the fall

### **Dairy Corner**

Our promotion actually started 34 years ago when we bought our ice cream business. Through the years we have made many friends and great customers. This proved to be very helpful this year when the city started a major road construction project on the street in front of our store.

We knew that this was going to happen, but had no idea how major of a project it would become. Imagine coming to work on April 10<sup>th</sup>, (the start of our busy season) and seeing ROAD CLOSED and DETOUR signs. We knew the construction would be restricting traffic, but this was the first we knew the road would be closed. We had an indication of how this project might go when we saw the first Road Closed sign, and it was misspelled, ROAD CLSOED.

We went to the city engineer to find out how bad it was going to be. He told us that the road was to be closed to through traffic for 90 days, but traffic would be able to get to us and all of the other businesses on our street. They told us that there would be

brief periods that traffic would be stopped, but for the most part local traffic would be able to get through. They finally changed some of the signs from “Road Closed” to “Road Closed to Thru Traffic”.

The original project was for curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street lights, a tree lawn between the sidewalk and curbs and repaving the street. This was originally to be done three years ago. The project then grew to also include storm sewers and drains. Our understanding was the storm sewer was going to be along the side of the street. We were wrong. I went under the eastbound lane of traffic, so that lane was closed during this time. Every so many yards, this drain had to cross the entire road to connect with the drains they installed on the other side of the street. During this time, the road was closed to all traffic for short periods. We also have a rear entrance to our business that comes off of a side street. It is a dead end street that runs between the street with construction and the local YMCA. In the middle of the construction out front, the city awarded a contract to replace some of the curbs and repave that street also.

We also had the excitement of seeing the Police Department, Fire Department and utility companies at times shutting the street down as the construction company hit underground utilities. Just within the sight of our store, this included 3 gas lines, 2 water lines and an electric line. The electric line caused a very temporary loss of power. Luckily it only lasted a couple minutes and we had no problems because of it. This also brought customers in on those evenings to find out what all the excitement was about.

Our street runs parallel to the street behind the businesses adjacent to us, both streets being state highways. At first, many of our customers crossed the parking lots of these businesses to get to us. Then all of a sudden the contractors started tearing up the driveway entrances to every one of the businesses on that side of the street due to the fact those businesses had an entrance from the other street. They did leave a small portion of the driveway directly across from ours open. Many of our customers would use that drive to get to us to avoid the construction on our street.

Our city has some very restrictive sign ordinances. It limits how long and often businesses are allowed to use portable signs or any form of advertising. With the help of our city councilman, we were able to get them to allow businesses to use portable signs for the duration of the construction. We set our sign out and began putting sayings on it related to the construction and to ice cream. By changing the sign every few days we created a buzz around town that people thought was funny. We could not go anywhere in town that people didn't make comments about our sign. Customers were telling us that they come in every few days just to see what we had put on the sign. They would come through the construction area to see the sign and buy ice cream.

Some of our most popular sayings were:

Don't Let Your Ice Cream Be Detoured

Cone Wars, Traffic or Ice Cream?

Dairy Corner Ice Cream Relieves Stress

When Will This Be Done?

We Will Get Thru This Mess

We Need Our Driveway Back!

Ice Cream Fixes Everything (Except Roads)

To keep the interest up, we looked for anything we could use to draw attention to our store. We had talked about making a dirt sundae for several years but never followed through with it. What a perfect time to introduce a road construction special, Dirt Sundae. The hotel next door to us had a crop spraying company stay a couple nights while working in the area. Their sprayer

happened to be a helicopter that they landed in an area behind the hotel. Pictures of the helicopter went out saying, “they may tear up our street, but our customers will find a way to get here”.

In 2016 we had a record year, up slightly from 2015. When we found out how much this construction project was going to disrupt the area, we set a goal of trying to match what we did in 2015. In talking to other businesses, I heard that sales have dropped 5% to 40% from 2016. We have been able to keep our sales at our 2015 level. It has been fairly easy to keep our sign changed with fresh ideas. But as stated at the start, our success really started 34 years ago. We feel that if you treat customers with friendly service, serve a great product, and earn their respect, they will stay loyal to you, even with the challenge of getting to you.

As of the submission date, we still only have half of our driveway, dirt and gravel, open. It is finally starting to look like they are finishing parts of the project. They have until the end of October to finish all of the construction. We will be closed for the season before the whole project is done.

As of this date, we have been able to exceed our sales goal. We feel this promotion was success in keeping sales up during all of the “mess” and a cooler than usual summer.

### **Henry’s Homemade Ice Cream**

My objective is to bring awareness to the employees, our wholesale restaurant accounts, the store, and the community, by being thankful.

Verbal thank you – giving positive feedback often – management by walking around.

The art of writing a thank you note to restaurants and catering.

Post positive news, complements – let all employees know when you see something positive

Thankful to our community – run ad; social media; programs like Sundae School, Girl Scouts, support softball.

This program achieved its goal, we are thankful. We just need to realize that we need to slow down, stop, and analyze all business that you do. The final analysis of a project is not finished until you thank someone who helped you achieve your goal.

This program is easily adaptable by any store. We also notice employees are happier, your restaurant loves you and it is contagious.

### **Homestead Creamery**

Webster’s definition of promotion: the act of furthering the growth or development of something; especially the furtherance of the acceptance and sale of merchandise through advertising, publicity or discounting.

How do you create promotions? Which promotions work? What drives customers to come into my shop? Is it a bargain or the experience? These are all questions that we, as ice cream shop owners and managers ask. If you are a year-round shop, there is a slow time that becomes known as the fall and winter slump. To keep business going, you must get creative and constantly be in your customers thoughts. One of the main reason’s customers come into an ice cream shop is to celebrate or to reward themselves for something special. Why not just have a promotion where your customer gets to experience an exclusive item that they can only find at your shop for a limited time only! It makes them keep coming back for more!

What other way to celebrate National Milkshake Month in September than to have an abundance of unique shakes to “shake” your customers up? Shake-Tember was created to pull in customers as our fall slump was beginning. In addition, we wanted to get all our store employees involved in not only making the shakes for the month but creating them as well. We wanted them to feel as if they had ownership and to take pride in our promotion.

We started it off by explaining the competition 3-4 weeks before September. We gave our employees instructions to come up with a shake combination and submit it for approval about a week before the contest started. All employees were to consider time of making the shake and cost of ingredients. This allowed them to think about how everything they use is a cost. We encouraged them to think about how variety is a necessity as well. Each individual shake was keyed into the POS system by their unique names for tracking purposes.

As September started, we had 12 unique shakes ready to sell. We had posted it on Facebook as well as having a Shake-Temper vinyl sign made that we hung up outside for the whole month.

At least five of each shake had to be sold before the contest started. This allowed the employees to work together to try to sell each other's shakes. A competitive vibe flowed in the ice cream shop as well as a renewed excitement. First place was to receive a \$100 gift card and second place was a \$25 gift card.

We continued the competition throughout the month of September. At the end of the competition we sold 307 of the Shake-Temper shakes in addition to the 875 normal shakes. In Shake-Temper shakes alone we sold 44% more shakes in September 2016 than in September 2015. Total ice cream sales in September were up 26% from 2015 to 2016. In addition to our increase in ice cream sales, we felt that the foot traffic and sales of other products were also remarkably increased.

Two of the shakes were so close in sales that we ended up giving two first place prizes and one second place prize. Several of our employees really got into the competition and it brought something fun, exciting and different into their work. It motivated them and certainly was a daily topic of conversation. They learned a little about marketing as they collaborated to promote each other's shakes.

Throughout the year we had several customers come in and ask for specific Shake-Temper shakes as well as our employees asking if we were going to do it again.

Our sales from our milkshakes exceeded our expectations and we are now in the middle of our second annual Shake-Temper which is already off to a great start.

### **Mark Leichtman 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 28<sup>th</sup> 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 is one of the most honest and detail-oriented people I know. When he said he was going to do something for the Association, I knew it would be done and done well.

He has been in the food service industry from more years than I care to reveal. He began his career at Sbarro as an area director. After that he worked for Boston Market as director of operations, opening 11 stores in two years and set national sales records for new store openings. At Boston Market he was a certified trainer for management as well as hourly personnel. He has trained over 2,000 hourly employees.

After leaving Boston Markets in 1996, he was one of the co-founders of an international franchise company, MaggieMoo's International where he held the positions of director of research and development, director of new store development and

director of company store operations where he was instrumental in coordinating all marketing and operations projects relating to store operations for all locations.

After leaving MaggieMoo's he worked for Berzaci and Aromitalia USA as account manager and new product manager. He currently works for Wegmans Food Market as a team leader, managing and directing employees in the bread and breakfast area.

He joined NICRA in 1997 and went to his first convention in Chicago. Henry Gentry said, I never will forget it. I was at the airport waiting for transportation to the hotel and he drove up in a limo, rolled down the window and asked me if I was going to the NICRA meeting. Henry said yes, and he said jump in. They bonded immediately. They were both single at the time, and they both shared a love of fine women and fine wine.

In 2002 he was elected to the Board of Directors of NICRA. During his second term on the Board he joined the Ice Cream Clinic Committee, eventually becoming chairman of that committee in 2010. Among his accomplishments on the Ice Cream Clinic Committee, he was instrumental in helping develop standards for chocolate, dark chocolate and strawberry ice cream, which the Association currently uses to judge our ice cream clinic samples. He helped streamline the entry forms for all of the ice cream contests and helped develop guidelines for shipping the ice cream samples. And he developed the Iron Scoop Contest where one of the rules is making noise and having fun is permitted and encouraged.

In 2004 he was elected Secretary/Treasurer of the association and became president in 2008.