

RESTAURATEUR

Official Publication of the Western New York Chapter of the New York State Restaurant Association

SERVING • ALLEGANY, CATTARAUGUS, CHAUTAUQUA, ERIE, GENESEE, NIAGARA, ORLEANS AND WYOMING COUNTIES

Volume 11 - Number 4

April 2011

Record Number of Restaurants Participate in Restaurant Week

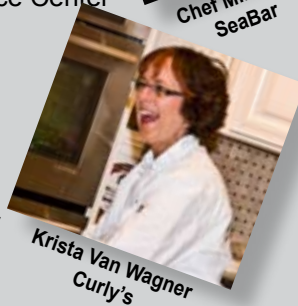
March 28th - April 3rd

It just keeps getting better and better. Our WNY Chapter of the NYSRA is proud to say that approximately 25% of the participating restaurants in *Restaurant Week* are members of our chapter. Here they are:

Amaretto Italian Bistro
Arriba Tortilla
Bing's Restaurant & Catering
Black & Blue Steak and Crab of Buffalo
Buffalo Brewpub
Byrnclyff Resort and Conference Center
Cammarata's Restaurant
Charlie the Butcher
Chef's Restaurant
City Grill Restaurant
Coyote Cafe
Creekview Restaurant
Curly's Grill & Banquet Center
DiGuilio & Company
French Pub
Frog Hair Restaurant
Gabriel's Gate Restaurant
Garlock's Restaurant
Gate House Grill
Glen Park Tavern
Ilio DiPaolo's Restaurant
jojo Bistro & Wine Bar Buffalo
Kennedy's Cove
Kentucky Gregs' Hickory Pit - Orchard Park
Kentucky Gregs' Hickory Pit - Depew
La Hacienda Brighton
La Scala Ristorante
Le Metro Bistro
Marotto's Restaurant
Mulberry Italian Restaurant
O'Briens Pub & Steakhouse
Oliver's Restaurant
Parings Wine Bar
Pettibones Grille
Pizza Plant Italian Pub (Premier Place)



Chef Mike "A"
SeaBar



Krista Van Wagner
Curly's

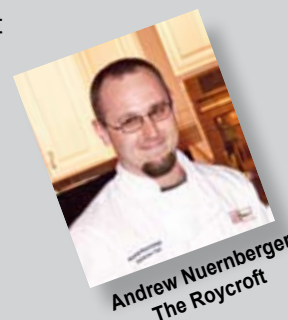


Tom Lombardo
Ristorante Lombardo



Charlie Roesch
Charlie the Butcher

Ristorante Lombardo
Root Five Waterfront Restaurant
Salvatore's Italian Gardens
Schwabl's
SeaBar
Sean Patrick's
Shango Bistro & Wine Bar
Siena Restaurant
Tandoori's Royal Indian Cuisine
The Grapevine Restaurant
The Roycroft Inn Restaurant
Tina's Italian Kitchen



Andrew Nuernberger
The Roycroft

NYSRA Rebrands to Better Reflect the Profession Today



"We are thrilled to unveil a new brand identity that has been designed to emphasize our role as a 'networked exchange' for a broad cross-section of the profession, a place where diverse culinary cultures and roles can connect through a single shared passion: serving others," said NYSRA Chairman, Jason Wallace from the floor of the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center where the new logo has been unveiled as part of the Association's 2011 International Restaurant and Foodservice Show of New York. "It also speaks to the prevailing mindset of our members: contemporary, creative and open to new ideas."

"Within our membership resides an invaluable resource of expertise, information and ideas, and it is our intention to create a forum where this information can be easily requested and shared by all our members," explained Jeff Dodge, Chair of the Membership Committee who has led the rebranding effort.

The new brand identity's fresh color palette, radiating form and modern typeface all speak to a membership who values new ideas, a respect for sustainable practices and a definition of service that extends out to the local community.



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GEORGE SCHAEFFER

EDITOR

SCHAEFFERGEORGE69@GMAIL.COM

716.839.6078

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Spring is here! FINALLY! Maybe, hopefully.....
Heck, the season of spring here in WNY is not so much a date on the calendar as it is a state of mind. It's the knowledge that we might experience snow flurries in March, but we can rest assured of the fact that our summers are second to none! That's part of the charm of living here.



Robert Free
President

In that regard, it is what makes for such a vibrant diversity of restaurants in Western New York. It also allows us, as restaurateurs, the ability to tailor menus, labor, and hours of operation depending on the season - be it Winter, Spring, Summer, or road Construction. Seasonally, the WNY Chapter partners with LocalFoodService.com to promote Local Restaurant Week twice a year to showcase all the fantastic offerings of our regional restaurants.

This is just one of the ways that the WNY Chapter helps to promote local restaurants. Another great way to showcase your restaurant as well as its upcoming events is on the 'Chapter Member Events' page on our micro site of LocalFoodService.com. To see what this is all about go to LocalFoodService.com and click the WNY Chapter NYSRA link on the right hand side. You can read about the many cost saving programs that membership offers as well as chapter news. But what I think is most exciting about this new site is the aforementioned Member Events section. I want to start advertising this area as a 'go to' place that local diners are able to visit to see what local events, specials, and promotions are upcoming in our member restaurants. To do this I want to populate this calendar with any and everything you would like to offer the diners of WNY. That said, please feel free to send me any flyers, notes, etc you have regarding your upcoming promotions. If you don't have anything made up, you can send me the information and we will create something for your event and put it up. The more things we can post in this area, the more visits it will receive, and ultimately, the more customers you will see in your establishment.

Continuing with the weather analogies, the dark clouds of rising food costs are making for a stormy and uncertain season. Many food distributors have programs available to help you with your menu dynamics, so that you are better able to monitor your in-house food costs on a weekly basis. Your vendor reps will be more than happy to help you in these testing times - keeping your business healthy and strong is their business, too!

As always, feel free to contact me at rfree@bisons.com or 716.846.2100

Fill those seats!

Rob Free

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Melissa A. Fleischut - Director of Government Affairs - New York State Restaurant Association



STRAIGHT AHEAD

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Food Service—An Industry in Transition - Part One

Transition—Webster's New World Dictionary defines it as follows: "shift, passage, flux, passing, development, transformation, turn and realignment."

It is my sense that any and all of these definitions could be used in describing the activity taking place in America's food service industry today. If you were to list some of the forces shaping this transition, I think it might look something like this: the economy, followed by the consumer and then the government. The following is how I see each of these categories impacting the industry and the changes they are bringing about.

First the economy and sales. We lead the world in restaurant spending. About 44% of food dollars are spent outside the home, a figure that started rising sharply in the 1970s as more women joined the work force. Full-service restaurant revenue rose 5% to 7% a year in the decade leading up to the Great Recession, which halted growth. Over the next decade, according to the NPD Group, visits to restaurants are forecast to increase 1% a year, a far cry from the 5% to 7% mentioned above.

This change seemed to play itself out this past December from coast to coast. December is usually a strong month for restaurants, but many operators say it was disappointing, although retailers were reporting their strongest holiday sales since 2007. Restaurants were fighting to fill booths, according to Ellen Gibson writing for the Associated Press.

In its annual report compiled by the Nielsen Company for Restaurant Business, data showed a decline of 4628 restaurant units since last year. Total restaurant sales for the U.S. are down significantly for the second year in a row, off nearly \$10 billion from a year ago. And nationally, sales have fallen on a per-unit basis by almost \$10,000—from \$686,723 to \$676,807.

Controlling costs is and will continue to be a problem. Take commodities. The rate at which they are rising makes it almost impossible to reflect these increases in menu prices without alienating your patrons, which simply means that you will have to absorb them, but for how long? The continuing rise in oil prices, while contributing to the above-mentioned commodities costs, will assuredly reduce consumer discretionary spending and that means fewer meals away from home.

Then there is the unemployment problem. Many experts are saying that the "new normal" for unemployment in the U.S. will be between 8 and 8½%. That then raises the question of how long the new normal will last.

continued page 4

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Happy Anniversary to these March Members

Buffalo Hotel Supply Company	March 4, 1974
Irish Carbonic Company/Red Diamond	March 15, 1976
Ellicottville Kitchen Equip.	March 28, 1991
Coyote Cafe	March 21, 1994
Vine City Restaurant, Inc.	March 27, 1995
Webb's Candies, Inc.	March 13, 1996
Fieldstone Country Inn	March 29, 1996
Auricchio Insurance Agency, Inc.	March 18, 1997
Curly's Bar & Grill	March 16, 1998
Nellie's Restaurant	March 31, 2000
Sandi's Family Restaurant	March 5, 2001
Daniel's Restaurant	March 12, 2002
Augie's Sunrise Diner	March 15, 2005
Gate House Grill	March 10, 2008
Lock City Pizza	March 11, 2008
Bella Roma Pizzeria, Inc.	March 31, 2009
Lou's Restaurant	March 19, 2009
Grapevine	March 29, 2010



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Sampson Continued...

The above just confirms something you already knew, but economics alone are not the only reason consumers are not eating out as much. There is the retail or supermarket segment that is stepping up its competition with foodservice. The first time I ever heard the term "microwave café," it was uttered by Ted Balestrei, co-owner of the Sardine Factory in Carmel, California. It was about twenty years ago, he was addressing a restaurant group and he identified micro-meals prepared for the home as a potential competitor. If you haven't visited a super market recently, I suggest you do so, and check out their prepared meal section. There you will find a variety of healthful, convenient and competitively priced products. It seems Ted's prophecy was correct.

To further re-enforce this problem for restaurants, Technomic, one of the industry's foremost consulting firms, recently issued a report entitled "Retailers Stepping it up against Restaurants." It makes for interesting reading.

There is no question that competition is intensifying not only for the independents but for the chains as well. Be it pizza, hamburgers, chicken, chicken wings or subs, there are many new franchising opportunities. There are also numerous opportunities in the full-service field as well.

Speaking of chains, one of the more interesting aspects of that segment is how many hedge funds and syndicates are buying quick-service operations. Then there are those established multi-unit companies which are buying existing operations that appeal to a diversified market.

In Part Two I will discuss more on competition and how today's consumer is influencing the industry regarding menus, sanitation, nutrition, service and pricing.



Fred G. Sampson served the New York State Restaurant Association for more than 35 years before retiring as executive vice president to form Sampson Consulting. Comments can be sent to fredgsampson@juno.com

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Happy Anniversary to these April Members

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Asa Ransom House	April 1, 1975
Salvatore's Italian Gardens	April 7, 1975
The Buffalo News	April 10, 1981
Joseph's Catering	April 21, 1982
BW's Barbecue	April 26, 1995
Red's Pizza Express	April 7, 1997
Page's Whistle Pig, Inc.	April 9, 1999
The Beach House Restaurant	April 9, 1999
Buffalo Brew Pub	April 22, 2002
Takeout Taxi of WNY	April 5, 2005
Village Café	April 6, 2005
Beautiful River Restaurants, LLC	April 4, 2006
Unilever Foodsolutions	April 10, 2006
Ball Toilet & Septic Services	April 17, 2007
Hunt Commercial Real Estate	April 27, 2007
Terry Hills Restaurant	April 28, 2007

NOSTAGLIA - A WISTFUL OR EXCESSIVELY SENTIMENTAL YEARNING FOR RETURN TO OR OF SOME PAST PERIOD OR IRRECOVERABLE CONDITION- **MIRIAM - WEBSTER**



George Schaeffer

Management Training 101

As my years with Durkee Food Service progressed and I moved up the ladder to be a District Manager, my responsibilities shifted dramatically. My initial area included Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Binghamton and Scranton PA. I had Territory Managers in Buffalo, Syracuse, Albany and Scranton. There were sales specialists in Buffalo and Albany. Durkee was big on titles, but for many years not so big on training. We all ultimately worked for Syd Propper, who maintained the title of Regional Manager in New York City.

Well, the Durkee Company was bought and sold several times. The big shots in the National office were fired or moved into different positions. New management began an expensive training regimen. Some of the training was done at the National office in Cleveland, some was done at National Sales Meetings and some by training consultants in various cities, Boston being one of them. Training courses and modules were mostly fun, but had some tedious periods in between. We had some homework at night and you were graded, so you couldn't completely blow it off. You got to meet some of your peers from the South, Midwest and West Coast. *Sales Coaching for Self Improvement, Managing for Motivation and Profit, Managing through Change, Managing Upward and Downward*, Yada, Yada, Yada. These were some of the titles. Most of the modules had some sort of game attached that made them fun and at the same time informational about your "inner self." Getting your diploma at the end with a team picture was followed by a nice cocktail hour and dinner -- then a fast run the next morning for the plane.

Syd Propper had to send at least one of his District Managers to each of these week-long sessions. I guess he thought I was the least likely to hurt his quest for record sales, having the smallest district in his region, so he always picked me. After several years of attending these sessions, they did start to become pretty routine: different faces, similar stuff and more diplomas. Syd calls me and here we go again. I said, "Syd, why don't you send Bob, Joe or Steve?" Absolutely not is his answer. You have to go! OK, boss, where and when? Boston in Back Bay is his answer. My heart literally jumped as I enthusiastically said OK!!!!

I had already taken the course two years ago. I knew the material inside and out. I still had my two-year old notes. What I did not have were the shekles to visit three of my four sons who were living in Boston, two were in college and one doing volunteer work making next to nothing. Hallelujah. So off I go, on the company tab, and proceed to train my sons in the art of eating oysters at the Union Oyster House, and lobster at Durgin Park, steaks at the No Name. It was the best training session I had in years.



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Jon DiBernardo: "You take cash to the bank, not margins."

The Delaware Restaurant at 3410 Delaware Avenue in Kenmore is the newest venture of Jon DiBernardo, owner of the *Water Street Landing* in Lewiston.

Two regular customers, Gary Franko and Doreen Celotto of a neighboring business, *Attilio's Salon*, eat there 3 to 4 times a week. Gary said: "One of the most expensive items on the menu is a 'hanger steak' that is absolutely delicious, and it's only fourteen bucks!" "There isn't a place around here like *The Delaware*" said Gary. "It's got everything you want: (A) terrific service (B) high quality food (C) full bar and (D) affordable prices."

Intrigued by such an endorsement, I decided to stop in and say hello. After spending the better part of an hour with Jon, I began to understand why *The Delaware* is a huge success. DiBernardo's philosophy is relevant not only in the building and its understated decor, the quirkiness of the menu, the high quality of ingredients (DiBernardo: "I probably have the highest food cost of any restaurant around but I am also proud of it.") but also his commitment to terrific service. As Jon spoke, his pace quickened when he began to talk about his wait staff. He related how he advised one young server, who seemed intimidated by some high powered lawyers and doctors. I said to him, "Do you think they are better than you? They are not! It's up to you to be the very best server that they will ever see." He went on to tell how that changed this young man's attitude, not only on the job scene, but perhaps in life. He further related how a 60ish man and his 83 year-old mother had dinner at *The Delaware* and that was the last time they dined together. The server who waited on that table had the privilege of being a part of a final scenario. That is how Jon approaches "service" issues. And he understands what hospitality is and imparts that understanding to his wait-staff.

While listening to this restaurateur, it was hard not to think about the Danny Meyer book, *Setting the Table*. Jon pointed out that while good food is important, terrific service and hospitality will keep customers coming back.

His energy and drive will make *The Delaware* a vibrant addition to Kenmore and surrounding areas for years to come.

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