

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

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CFSA Awards Dinner

February 15th @ Niagara Falls Country Club



WNY Chapter NYSRA honored Krista Van Wagner of Curly's with the Silver Medal. Krista is also an undefeated Nickel City Chef.



Tony Mauro a friend of the WNY Chapter was awarded the very prestigious Gold Medal. He is the 11th recipient in 32 years.

A wonderful showing of food folks from all aspects of the hospitality industry gathered at Niagara Falls County Club for an evening of sumptuous foods and socializing.

Congratulations to the CFSA and in particular the Club Managers Association for a terrific evening.

New Labor Laws Explained



Labor Law Seminar
Presenter, Scott DeLuca of Schrader, Israely, DeLuca & Waters LLP
February 3, 2011 - Certo Brothers

Local Restaurant Week

March 28th - April 3rd



Peter Longo, Past President and WNY Chapter coordinator of Local Restaurant Week discusses plans for the event with Jennifer Lingenfelter, Community Support Manager, LFS

Jennifer Lingenfelter, Community Support Manager of LocalFoodService.com announced that Local Restaurant Week is nearing maximum participation, in WNY. "My phone has been ringing all day - every day!" "The support by the local restaurant community has been great."

Taste of Education Event

~ March 3rd @ Salvatore's Italian Gardens

Angola BOCES, Sanborn BOCES, Medina BOCES and the Emerson School of Hospitality put on quite a show along with the Iron Chef contest, backed up with Terry Buchwald doing his "Elvis" routine. All this coupled with the many basket raffles, and the fine foods, prepared by the students and their instructors made for a spectacular evening.

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ProStart Event Had Something for Everyone

Congratulations to the Taste of Education Committee for orchestrating another successful event. Their tireless work is applauded and a huge thank you to the multitude of sponsors that made this years raffle, one of the best ever.



Robert Free
President



Here are some scenes from the event.



Janice Okun wields her mighty pen
as a guest judge in the
Iron Chef contest



US Foods Corporate Chef
Scott Leggett interviews
winning chef **Chris Salvati** of
Ristorante Lombardo



Hearthstone Manor's chef
Todd Applegit explains his
creations



"All Shook Up" **Terry**
Buchwald dazzled the
crowd of 350 with his
Elvis music & gyrations

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Rob Free

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



STRAIGHT AHEAD
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The Service Dilemma

If I had to best describe the Internet, I would call it a daily Encyclopedia Britannica; not only can you find information on almost any subject, but it, unlike the encyclopedia, gives you daily updates on current events.

If I were to venture a guess, it would be that every daily newspaper in the USA has a web site as does almost every other form of the media, and all of this data is available on line. As I said in a recent column, it offers me a vast source of information which I in turn can write about and share with my readers, such as you.

Twenty-five years ago, food service received very little notice from the media; most of it began when we started to recognize the emerging culinary talent populating kitchens across America. This was followed by TV shows, celebrity chef restaurants, cook books and an explosion in culinary schools from coast to coast. Today almost every major newspaper, magazine and other media outlet reports on various aspects of the industry. What I find interesting is how many reporters like to survey restaurant patrons about their experiences when dining out. I have never seen such surveys on gas stations, department stores, drug stores, dry cleaners, hospitals or, for that matter, doctors.

Maybe it's because of the amount of time a patron normally spends dining out, which in turn means more time interacting with the server, and thus the potential for problems. I'm not sure what it is, but it's a topic that receives lots of press. Read on.

Leslie Brenner of the Dallas Morning News made the following observation: "Just as great service can turn a mediocre meal into a jolly good time, poor service can ruin an otherwise excellent dinner." The following question was put before the readers: "Which service mistakes bother you most?" Because of space limitations, I have listed just a few of the responses; I hope you will find them of interest.

The miscues readers mentioned most often involve servers who have problems with boundaries in one way or another "Servers interrupting my conversation, introducing themselves, chatting, constantly asking if we're okay," was the way one reader put it. "I actually prefer aloof to friendly" another said.

Next came the AWOL waiter—the waiter who does a disappearing act. Sometimes he fails to materialize. The host or hostess shows you to your seat and then—nothing. No one. If you're lucky, you already have a menu. But sometimes you're left stranded for five or ten minutes before being greeted. Diners search the room futilely for the AWOL waiter when they're ready to order, when the steak's overcooked, when wine glasses are empty and the bottle's been set out of reach,

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Sampson Continued...
when more bread is required.

Another peeve was waiting for the check. Dinner has gone swimmingly with great food and wonderful service. But now you can't get your check. Alex Susskind, associate professor of food and beverage management at Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration, has this advice: "There are two things that management and staff have direct control over that will always help the guest's experience—the beginning of the meal and the end of the meal. You can never get a guest seated too quickly, and you can never get a guest the check and get them closed out quickly enough." Just do it. The article went on to include handling mistakes, pacing of service, sweeping of floors while guests were dining, "do you need change" when taking the check from the guest and clearing the table while some guests were still eating.

I have reviewed at least 20 such surveys in the last two or three years, and the responses were all pretty much the same. What I haven't seen is a survey asking what do you LIKE about restaurant service and why?

I don't question the fact that the peeves listed above do happen. The current Zagat Guide reports that service is the top complaint of 60% of its respondents. Improving service is an on-going problem for the industry. Up until two years ago, one reason was its tremendous growth—more restaurant seats than staff to take care of them—but that is no longer true.

It is my humble opinion that, until we attack service as we did the development of culinary talent with a more formal type of training managed by service experts, it is not going to improve.

I will in a future column share with you some thoughts on how this might be accomplished.



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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George Schaeffer

Daisy Radican

I had been traveling to the Albany area for several years and usually would stay in the Saratoga Springs area, close to where our Territory Manager lived. Saratoga Springs is a great little town, with many fine restaurants, and a rich history. After a long day on the road, Joe and I would find one of these fine restaurants, have a bite to eat and then head over to another spot for a nightcap. The sign over the bar begins the story:



*O all the money I've spent
I spent it with good company,
And all the harm I've done,
Alas it was to none but me,
And all I've done for want of wit
To memory now I can't recall,
So fill your glass
The Parting Glass
Good Night and joy be with you all...*

I'm sure you get the idea. It's an Irish Pub called, *The Parting Glass* and was owned and operated by a Bob Cohen. Bob is an amiable character and like many Irishmen shares the gift of gab. As the saying goes: "If you ask an Irishman for the time, he'll show you how to build a watch!"

So Joe and I are enjoying a pint of Guinness and Bob joins us. Some small talk is made and Bob asks me what's new. With that I tell him how my wife and I are making plans and finally going to take a big trip in a few months – to Ireland. That is all I had to say. Bob asks, why Ireland? The weather is dreary – the food is so-so – we have better Guinness – why Ireland? Then, of course he answers his own question. The only reason to go to Ireland is for the people. Specifically, the people in the country and the people you will meet in the small country pubs.

So now, for my next few trips to Saratoga, I became "schooled" by Bob Cohen as to what to see, what to avoid and how to come back with a deeper appreciation of the Emerald Isle. Several weeks before our trip, I'm making my last stop at *The Parting Glass* and Bob asks me, what accommodations did we make. I said I was not sure and with that he says, I can tell you that one place you should stay is Daisy Radican's Bed & Breakfast in Ennis. She is the real deal, a true "Irishman." Also, it's about one half hour out of Shannon Airport and will put you in good position to start your road trip. I say fine, how do I make contact with Daisy Radican? With that, Bob picks up the phone and places an international call to Daisy Radican. Remember, this is back in the 80's prior to the electronic revolution. A few minutes later, he tells me you're all set, she'll be looking for you. Talk about hospitality!



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Corned Beef and Cabbage



"Corned beef and cabbage" was popularized by the character "Jiggs" in the comic strip "Bringing Up Father" by George McManus. The comic strip ran in the New York World and in other newspapers, from 1913. McManus died in 1954.

New York City's love affair with "corned beef and cabbage" has waned in recent years, but the dish has been served here since at least 1840.

http://www.nydailynews.com/city_life/food/story/66276p-61733c.html

All-American Irish classic

Corned beef & cabbage first paired up in N.Y.

By Rosemary Black

Daily News Food Editor



If you think of corned beef and cabbage as Ireland's unofficial national dish, you may be surprised to hear that many on the Emerald Isle have never tasted it. They eat their cabbage with bacon (actually, it's a kind of ham).

The classic corned beef and cabbage combo probably got its start here more than a century ago, when Irish immigrants shopped at Jewish butcher shops, says Brendan Keenan, chef/instructor at the Art Institute of New York City.

"Since they shopped at Jewish butchers on the lower East Side, they bought corned beef as a substitute for the cured pork, or bacon, that they were used to buying in Ireland," says Keenan. "Cabbage, of course, grows well in warm, hot or cold weather, and it's available for most of the year, so they could continue to eat this with the meat."

Corned beef also became popular in the U.S. in the late 19th century because many new immigrants lived in poor neighborhoods without modern ways to preserve food, says Margaret Johnson, author of "The New Irish Table" (Chronicle Books, \$24.95). "They used a brine made with kosher salt to preserve meat," she says. "Before long, they were making corned beef."

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O'Brien's offers an extensive menu from homemade soups, chicken wings, beef on weck, specialty salads, shephard's pie, chicken 'n biscuits to daily specials featuring prime rib, NY strip and BBQ ribs (just to name a few).

They also serve a beer battered fish fry on Friday nights and always have homemade deserts...made fresh daily.

The interior of the pub reminds you of an authentic Irish pub. They traveled to Ireland a couple of years ago and examined and sampled many pubs. "We took many photographs and studied lots of architectural books." The rich, mahogany wood tones and dark

tones of green and burgandy create a very "homey and welcoming" atmosphere. They have also spent many hours searching out the perfect staff for the pub and think that you will agree once you have had the pleasure of being served.

O'Brien's Pub opened its doors on July 12, 2006. Owners Yvette and Patrick O'Brien have already expanded the pub by opening their new 2nd floor banquet room on June 2, 2007.

The Pub offers 6 TV's to watch all of your favorite sporting events. Additionally, they are now available to do "Drop Off Catering"

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