

# 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 10 - Number 5

May 2010

## Annual Golf Outing, Tuesday June 15th at Diamond Hawk



Chairperson, Larry Pilarz addresses some of the details of our 2010 Golf Outing.

*Some of the festivities at Diamond Hawk and Joseph's in 2009*



Rich Joseph offers a "good slice" to Tom Lombardo



Chip Shot at Diamond Hawk



Pizza Plant shows their smiles and tee sponsorship plaque



George & John Zenger, from The Zenger Group printers and publishers. "A bad day of golf is better than a good day working"



Peter Longo has another "winnah" from the myriad of prizes.

### Fast Facts for 2010

- June 15th
- Diamond Hawk  
255 Sonwil Drive  
Cheektowaga
- Larry Pilarz - Chair
- 9:30 Registration
- Comp. Breakfast
- 10:30 Shotgun Start
- Joseph's Country Manor
- 4:30 Open Bar & Wine Station

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# RESTAURATEUR

SERVING \* ALLEGANY, CATTARAUGUS, CHAUTAUGUS, ERIE, GENESEE, NIAGARA, ORLEANS AND WYOMING COUNTIES

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[www.nysra.org/associations/2437/chapters.cfm](http://www.nysra.org/associations/2437/chapters.cfm)

## Rob's Ramblings

ow, much to cover in such a short space. So I will try to be succinct and keep you abreast of what the Chapter has to offer....

**INFORMATION:** On Monday, April 26<sup>th</sup> we had a great turnout for the Local Restaurant Week appreciation dinner at Sean Patrick's restaurant in Getzville. The really fantastic food spread was complimented by our guest speakers from the State Association: Rick



**Robert Free**

Sampson, CEO and President; Jason Wallace, Chairman of the Board; and Melissa Fleischut, Vice President, Director of Governmental Affairs all spoke on topics that are so very important to us as a hospitality community. From managing food and labor costs, to health department ratings posted on restaurant doors (a state bill is in the works!) to the on going tax audits, the speakers from Albany imparted a great deal of pertinent information to those in attendance.

**BENEFITS:** Also in attendance was our new membership representative for our chapter, Mr. Anthony Terrell. Anthony is a Batavia native returning to his roots after honing his business skills in NYC for the past several decades. Anthony offers a myriad of experience in the benefits of membership in all NYSRA programs. If you are a member that has not yet looked at the cost savings of our insurance/comp plans, I urge you to contact Anthony at 800-452-5212. On just this level, membership does pay!

**EMPOWERMENT:** Knowledge is power – and *YOUR* WNY Chapter wants to give you access to that! So, on Monday, May 24<sup>th</sup> we will be offering a follow up event regarding the Tax Audits that are of such a concern for many of our members. We will again have Brendan McCafferty, attorney and CPA; David Gross of Sales Tax Solutions and Consulting, as well as representatives of the Micros and Aloha point of sales systems. All of whom will be willing to speak with you one on one to answer questions that you might have regarding your establishment. More info on the event is forthcoming soon.

**EDUCATION:** Earlier this month members of the chapter board were proud to visit the Carrier Career Center at Lake Shore High School to present a donation of \$2250 to the students and teacher mentors that are attending the National ProStart Invitational in Kansas. It was great to see how excited the kids are about attending this prestigious event. They are the future of our industry and I'm sure they will represent us well.

Fill those seats! **Rob**

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## STRAIGHT AHEAD

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### What Surveys Can Tell Us

#### Part II

My last column, "What Surveys Can Tell Us," dealt with "hospitality helpers" and "leaving a bad taste," which discussed service, both good and bad. This month will deal with "craving a taste of home" and "curb appeal." This data is the result of a survey conducted by *Restaurants & Institutions* magazine entitled "2010 American Diner Study." It offered respondents an opportunity to write in their own answers. The responses offer great insight into diners' opinions.

First, "craving a taste of home." One question in the study gave diners a list of health- or preparation-related menu item descriptions (e.g., low cal, low fat, scratch-made, organic and vegetarian) and asked the respondents to select those that would make them more likely to order an item. "Scratch-made" beat out all the other responses (34% vs. 30% for low fat and 19% for low cal.) And, based on select writer responses, it seems that any item suggesting grandma's seal of approval can go a long way in boosting an item's appeal.

Some of the responses to the question, "what terms motivate you to order a menu item?" were "like your grandma's," "mother's recipe," "grandma's recipe," a dish that reminds me of my mother," "home-cooked, just like grandma's" and "baked on-site, Mom's home cooking." While I agree they all sound warm and fuzzy, you have to be careful when using these terms. The item being described should be something that Grandma or, for that matter, Mom, has or could prepare at home.

I will tell you that I have now read at least a dozen articles dealing with menu terms and the reaction of guests to them. I will in a future column discuss the findings.

The last question in this survey dealt with "curb appeal." Not all consumers decide their dining-out destination before they hit the road (or the sidewalk), and an appealing storefront can ensure that these diners' first impression of a restaurant is a good one.

The question was, "How do you usually choose a restaurant?" Responses were "drive around 'til one looks good," "drive-by-appeal," "outside physical appearance," "walk around," "window shopping," "what might seem interesting as we drive by." It's unfortunate that the responses did not go into greater detail. A number of years ago, I did a similar survey and it did. The list of turn-offs included unkempt shrubbery, bulbs missing from signs, dimly lit parking lots, windows not washed and entrances that needed painting or new carpeting. Additional turn-offs included soiled menus, frayed carpeting, chipped china, soiled silver and glassware and, believe it or not, shaky tables.

continued page 4

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**Sampson Continued...**

I believe that the real value of a survey such as this is for you, the operator, to review and determine how you, your staff and your operation measure up. Ask yourself, "How are we doing?"

As I Was Saying....

In a recent column, I discussed the problem that mandatory gratuities can create. Well, a legislator in the State of Maryland has introduced a bill whereby restaurateurs would face a fine of up to \$5000 for adding an automatic tip onto checks for parties of fewer than ten people. The bill's sponsor, Cherly Glenn, said she's not opposed to tipping for good service. But the Baltimore City Democrat decided to sponsor the bill after having eaten meals in which the service wasn't up to par and the restaurant tacked on a tip anyway. In some cases, the restaurant added a tip for groups well below ten people.

The story appeared in the March 17th issue of the *Baltimore Business Journal*. It pointed out that a restaurant would receive a warning for the first offense, a fine of up to \$500 for the second violation and a fine of up to \$5000 for the third or subsequent infractions.

Needless to say, the Restaurant Association of Maryland has come out strongly against Ms. Glenn's bill.

\* \* \*

A few months ago, I raised the question of "what happens when celebrity chefs, for whatever reason, leave one of their signature restaurants." I never expected an answer so soon. *Nation's Restaurant News* reported on March 26th the following: "In what some are calling the beginning of the end of celebrity chefs in Las Vegas, both Davis Burke and Charlie Trotter have stepped away from the restaurants that bear their names." Late last year, famed chef Daniel Boulud said he would be closing his Daniel Boulud Brasserie in Wynn Las Vegas Resort and Country Club when the lease is up in April.

I will be monitoring both of these topics and will keep you up to date.

Comments can be sent to [fredgsampson@juno.com](mailto:fredgsampson@juno.com)

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## Fridays at Hickman, Coward & Wattles

Fridays at Hickman back in 1968 were special. I started with the Durkee Foods Company in April of 1968. My sales training consisted of riding with a veteran Durkee rep. for a week. We went from Boston, Mass to Caribou, Maine calling on the distributors. Then I came back to Buffalo and met my supervisor Roy Alloway. Roy was clearly annoyed that this *whippersnapper* was going to be around and asking all sorts of questions. Roy had his own methods of working and did not want to have anybody question him about anything.

So I was told to stay in the northern section of the county, and yes Niagara Falls included, and he would handle the city and the southern section. But on Fridays he agreed to have me meet him at the Deco Restaurant across the street from Hickman, Coward and Wattles on Clinton Street. We would meet around 7:00 AM for coffee. My marching orders were to help him take inventory for Hickman buyers Harvey('Big Rabbit') Borchert and Frank O'Mara. Hickman was installing a computer system, but it could not be trusted. Everything had to be hand-counted and we had an enormous line of products: liquid shortenings, solid shortenings, bakery shortenings, canned salads, Durkee Famous Sauce, Fresh pack and processed pickles, relishes, olives, cherries, spices, sauces and gravy mixes and then of course came all the frozen Polarized-portion control meats, frozen entrees and Empire frozen chicken products, the frozen puff pastry dough, Danish pastry doughs along with Gretchen Grant hors' doeuvres. And yes, a few cases of burr gherkins. (Look it up.) There was a lot of counting to be done. Naturally, I got to count all the frozen items that were stacked in the 20-below freezer. Roy would handle the balance but we had to be done by noon. Noon? *Yes noon!*

Why? Because Roy, in his hot Olds '88 convertible would have to be across the Peace Bridge and catch the Friday daily double at the Fort Erie track, especially if Sandy Hawley was on the card. There were some Fridays I went with him and learned how to handicap a horse. It was a simple procedure. Always put your two bucks on a gray horse to place. That way you can follow the horse all the way around the track. Many times it worked.

At least it worked better than my food sales training.



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# State Association Officers Attend WNY Chapter 'Thank You' Meeting



Rick Sampson, President/CEO & Jason Wallace, State Board President



Anthony Terrell, Membership Sales & Don Benjamin Membership Director



Sean Lillis, owner of Sean Patrick's - NICE JOB!



Krista VanWagner, (Curly's) speaks her piece about ECDH



Melissa Fleischut, Vice President & Director of Government Affairs

May 26th - Sean Patrick's. 'Thank You' to LRW and LocalFoodservice turns into some heated discussions

Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) is sponsoring legislation to require restaurant inspections statewide to be converted into letter grades. Unlike efforts in New York City, the state bill (S.4589-B and A.8008-A) provides no details on the scoring system, when the letter grades would have to be posted, does not address due process or reinspections. The bill leaves all decisions up to the county health departments and could result in more than 55 different scoring systems.

The NYSRA met with Senator Klein and his staff on numerous occasions last year and this year & offered suggested amendments to the bill. Senator Klein has decided to make no changes.

We are opposed to this legislation!

Call your State Senator today at (518) 455-2800 and ask them to Oppose S.4589-B. Visit NYSRA's Legislative Action Center and send an email!

Affairs addressed the issues of letter grades and tax audits

## WNY Chapter Presents

The winning management team was the LakeShore/Carrier Career & Tech Center in Angola, NY. The team will attend the National ProStart Student Invitational in Overland, Kansas from April 30th - May 2nd.



# 6 of the Top 10

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# 100 Things Restaurant Staffers Should Never Do (Part 4)

By BRUCE BUSCHEL  
New York Times

58. Do not bring judgment with the ketchup. Or mustard. Or hot sauce. Or whatever condiment is requested.
59. Do not leave place settings that are not being used.
60. Bring all the appetizers at the same time, or do not bring the appetizers. Same with entrees and desserts.
61. Do not stand behind someone who is ordering. Make eye contact. Thank him or her.
62. Do not fill the water glass every two minutes, or after each sip. You'll make people nervous.
- 62(a). Do not let a glass sit empty for too long
63. Never blame the chef or the busboy or the hostess or the weather for anything that goes wrong. Just make it right.
64. Specials, spoken and printed, should always have prices.
65. Always remove used silverware and replace it with new.
66. Do not return to the guest anything that falls on the floor — be it napkin, spoon, menu or soy sauce.
67. Never stack the plates on the table. They make a racket. Shhhhhh.
68. Do not reach across one guest to serve another.
69. If a guest is having trouble making a decision, help out. If someone wants to know your life story, keep it short. If someone wants to meet the chef, make an effort.
70. Never deliver a hot plate without warning the guest. And never ask a guest to pass along that hot plate.
71. Do not race around the dining room as if there is a fire in the kitchen or a medical emergency. (Unless there is a fire in the kitchen or a medical emergency.)
72. Do not serve salad on a freezing cold plate; it usually advertises the fact that it has not been freshly prepared.

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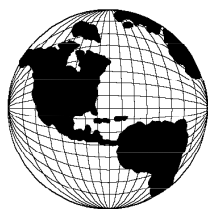


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↓ ↓ ↓

*Save the Date- Monday, May 24th - Pettibones - 6:00- 8:30 PM - Tax Audit Presentation II- Open Bar - HHD's - Systems Technology and Micros to answer questions - Brendan McCafferty, Special Counsel & Consultant David Gross - FREE to WNY Chapter Members - \$10. to Non Members*



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# **Tax Audit Seminar** *Part Two*

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Speakers will include Brendan McCafferty, attorney and CPA; David Gross of Sales Tax Solutions and Consulting; and representatives of the Aloha and Micros point of sale systems. After a brief presentation all will be available to answer your questions one on one.

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