

EVENTS CALENDAR

- APRIL 11** ORA Meeting - 3:30
@ V Mertz,
1022 Howard St
- Co-host Southern Glazer's
- April 30** Too Many Cooks in the
Kitchen - 5:00
@ Hilton, 1001 Cass St.
- MAY 9** ORA Meeting - 3:30,
@ La Casa
4432 Leavenworth
- Co-host RNDC
- JUNE** OFF
- JULY** OFF
- AUGUST 14** ORA Golf Tournament
Champions Run
10:00 check-in,
11:00 shotgun

*Any ORA member is welcome to share in any meeting at any time. If you would like to speak at a meeting, please call Jennie Warren at 402-493-4739 and schedule a time.

Omaha Restaurant Association Board of Directors

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*Spencer's
for Steaks & Chops*

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Stokes/Twisted Fork

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News & Views is published in March, June, September & December. Comments, facts and opinions expressed herein are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not express agreement of the members. If you would like to contribute information for up coming newsletters, please mail to the ORA - 4270 N. 139th Street, 68164, or CALL (402) 493-4739.

NEWS & VIEWS

Volume 30

Issue 1

March 2017

From Your President

Hello Everyone,

Nothing like hitting the ground running!! My first few months as president of the ORA has been very busy. In January we inducted a new board I am really excited to work with. I also was able to hang out in the back with five other member chefs who all prepared a course for the Annual Dinner Meeting at Anthony's Steakhouse. Awards were given to some pretty deserving peers. It was a great time!

We moved up our Industry Night Out since it is a Membership Drive and we had a great response. Dan Houlihan graciously hosted us Sullivans Bar in the Blackstone District. His staff was awesome and the atmosphere worked perfectly! We are working hard to put Too Many Cooks in the Kitchen together right now. That is my favorite event and I look forward to working with some new chefs this year. This event sells out VERY quickly. Get your tickets NOW!!

Until next time, Dine Out Often,
Your President, Glenn Wheeler

All pictures were graciously provided by Sheri Potter at Tendenza Food Photography and Design
EMAIL; SheriPotter@me.com • PHONE; 402-933-3848



- 712
- STIRNELLA
- TIGER TOM'S
- AVOLI OSTERIA
- DARIO'S BRASSERIE
- MERCURY
- HUHOT
- OPEN TABLE
- GLENN VALLEY FOODS
- 1912 BENSON
- LOCKWOOD DEVELOPMENT
- STOLI'S LOUNGE
- CHAMPION'S RUN
- QUIKSERVE
- NBE SOLUTIONS
- CORKSCREW WINE & CHEESE



ANTHONY'S STEAKHOUSE, AVOLI OSTERIA, DELLA COSTA, COCO, LE VOLTAIRE, LIBERTY TAVERN, PITCH PIZZERIA, RAILCAR MODERN AMERICAN KITCHEN, SAGE BISTRO, SODEXO, SPENCER'S FOR STEAKS AND CHOPS, STIRNELLA, STOKES, SYSCO LINCOLN, INC., TIMBER WOOD FIRE BISTRO, TWISTED FORK, US FOODS

TOO MANY COOKS IN THE KITCHEN

You are cordially invited to
Omaha Restaurant Association
TOO MANY COOKS IN THE KITCHEN

Sunday, April 30, 2017
Hilton Omaha • 1001 Cass Street
Under the Roof - 2nd Floor

5:00-6:00 PM Social Mixer with Selection of Restaurants
6:00-9:00 PM Gourmet Dinner

Participating Chefs from Restaurants and Caterers include:
Victor Cabriaes, Jim Locke, Oystein Solberg, Jennifer Coco,
Shawn Phifer, Cedric Fichepain, Kimbler Harrold,
Pitch Chef Team, Jared Clarke, Tim Galligher,
Glenn Wheeler, Matt Moser, Jimmy Masters, Brian Everman
& Lane Rosenberry, Aron Mackevicius, Michael Rhoades

Proceeds go to Feed the Hungry and Culinary Scholarships
For more information, call Jennie at
the Omaha Restaurant Association: 402.493.4739

FEEDBACK OMAHA PARTNERS WITH SAVING GRACE PERISHABLE FOOD RESCUE

By Dave Mainelli

FeedBack Omaha is a local program started by restaurants, run by restaurants. Partnering up with Saving Grace Perishable Food Rescue, FeedBack Omaha looks to grow into a city-wide food recovery and direct food provider for shelters.

Here's how it intends to work: Each week, local restaurants will opt in via email to donate food (unused samples, leftovers or over-prepped items, and other donated dishes) which will be picked up on Sunday afternoons/evenings by a volunteer army of drivers supplied by local delivery companies. The donated food will then be brought to a single place for storage.



The next morning, Saving Grace will pick-up the food and deliver it to the many shelters across the metro. (Eventually, we hope to have a partner with a large enough storage area to accommodate frozen, refrigerated, and dry goods.)

At first, the delivery schedule will not run weekly. However, we hope to have more pickups as we grow. As the program develops and takes shape, we will welcome your comments to make it better.

We are mindful that some restaurants will have more leftovers than others based on their menu and style of prep. Remember though, "edible" is different than

"restaurant worthy." For example, one local chef spoke of using extra meat cuts to make soups to donate. Whatever gets done is a positive for the program and our community.

If you would like to get involved with FeedBack Omaha or simply learn more about it, please call me at (402) 968-8747 or email me at dave.mainelli@julios.com. Also, if you know of any other restaurants or caterers that would be interested in partnering with FeedBack Omaha, please pass this message along to them. While this letter is directed primarily at local restaurants, caterers will also be a big part of our success as they often have large quantities of weekend leftovers. More information about FeedBack Omaha can be found at www.facebook.com/feedback-omaha.

This could be a powerful program for our city. The amount of people that could be fed weekly by local restaurants could be large and if successful, could be used as a model for other cities as well.

P.S. We have also created a piece of the program that brings "Dining with Dignity," which involves restaurants and their staff visiting the shelters and serving those in need directly. We have done this a few times, and the experience has been terrific. For more on this part of the program or to be involved, contact me at (402) 968-8747.

ORA ANNUAL DINNER 2017



Congratulations to the following hard working award recipients at this year's Annual Dinner Meeting;

2016 RESTAURATEUR OF THE YEAR, Chef Jenny Coco of J Coco. Jenny started in the business at age 15. After finishing college she eventually worked her way to the Flatiron Cafe. During her 14 years there she was nominated 3 times by the James Beard Association for Best Chef in the Midwest. Not only was she the first Nebraskan nominated but also the first woman from Nebraska.

2016 PURVEYOR OF THE YEAR, Loffredo Fresh Produce Company. Loffredo started in Omaha 25 years ago. The Loffredo team of buyers is committed to securing the freshest and safest produce from growing regions in the United States and all over the world.

2016 HAROLD NORMAN EXCELLENCE AWARD sponsored by Harold Norman, Brian Young, Chef de cuisine, Institute for the Culinary Arts (ICA). Brian has been part of the team at the Institute for the Culinary Arts since 2005 when he came as a student. Chef Young is tireless in his drive to get the task accomplished and sets an extraordinary example for those around him.

The following is the menu and chefs that prepared each course

Chef and President Glenn Wheeler from

Spencer's for Steaks & Chops prepared the Appetizer Course of Yellow Fin Tuna Al Pastor with charred pineapple, aguachile, micro cilantro, avocado, picked red onion, and crushed corn nuts.

Chef Victor Cabriaes from Anthony's Steakhouse's prepared the Salad Course: Harvest Salad; Chopped Kale, Candied Walnuts, Roasted Sweet Potatoes, Bleu Cheese Crumbles, Sweet Apple Vinaigrette

Chef Joel Mahr from Lot 2 prepared the Soup Course of Baked Potato Soup: Potato Skin and Cheddar Crumble, Braised Bacon and Chives.

Chef Jake Newton from V Mertz prepared the Fish Course: Petrale Sole Rojade Shrimp

Chef Jared Clarke from Railcar & Timber Wood Fire Bistro prepared the Meat Course: Bourbon Caramel Braised Spare Ribs

Prosecco was served and everyone was invited to go to the Ozone Lounge to listen to the band. An after dinner drink was provided by Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits and the dessert bar was provided by the Institute for the Culinary Arts at MCC.

Other generous sponsors of the evening include Heartland Payment Systems, Pepsi, Johnson Brothers of Nebraska, Republic National Distributing Company, Quality Brands of Omaha, Premier Midwest Beverage Company, Glenn Valley Foods, Reinhart Food Service, Rotella's Italian Bakery, Sysco Lincoln, Inc., and US Foods. We would like to thank these sponsors and Anthony's Steakhouse for hosting the meeting. (See event photos on insert)



INDUSTRY NIGHT OUT 2017

Good Times & Good Food At Sullivans Bar

The Omaha Restaurant Association's Industry Night Out was held Sunday, February 26 at Sullivan's Bar in the Blackstone District. The Industry Night Out is an annual event that serves as a membership drive and supports the ORA's mission to further culinary education and fight hunger in our own community.

The Mardi Gras themed event drew a full house at Sullivan's Bar. Attendees enjoyed fantastic New Orleans style dishes prepared by restaurant members: Herbe Sainte, Jazz - A Louisiana Kitchen, and Spencer's for Steaks & Chops. A new twist to this year's event involved local bartenders and chefs competing to serve up the best Mardi Gras cocktails to pair with each chef's dish. Purple, yellow and green beads represented each guest's vote for favorite food and cocktail. The vote was close and in the end Chef Glenn Wheeler from Spencer's Steaks & Chops and Bartender Granville Sharp from Le Bouillon were crowned this year's winners in the food and cocktail pairing competition.

A Mixology Competition served as the other main event of the evening. A New Orleans cocktail showdown featured three association member bartenders: Clark Ross (Mercury), Terrence Dougherty (Lot 2), and Luke Edson (Berry & Rye). Competitors were put through a daunting competition that included a "Shake Off" and multiple trivia questions and bartending obstacles. They were required to create a unique drink inspired by a classic New Orleans cocktail. The judges rated bartending technique and overall balance of each drink. In a close battle, a tie was declared between Clark Ross and Luke Edson. A sudden death shot competition was held requiring each bartender to create a unique 1.5 oz beverage utilizing only things remaining in their bartender station. After an exciting tie breaking round the winner and winning cocktail, "The Piggy Back Sazerac" by Luke Edson from Berry & Rye was crowned 2017 champion.

Thanks to the support of long time sponsor ConAgra Foods and supporting sponsors Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, Republic National

Distributing, Johnson Brothers and Heartland Payment Systems as well as all of the new members and current member attendees, this year's Industry Night Out was a successful event providing energy and momentum for an exciting 2017. (See event photos on insert)

THE PIGGY BACK SAZERAC

by Luke Edson from Berry & Rye

- 2 oz. Woodford Reserve Rye
- 1 oz. Muddled rosemary, mango, blueberry syrup
- .25 oz. Lucid Absinthe
- 4 dashes Peychaud's Bitters

DIRECTIONS: Stir all ingredients with ice and strain into an absinthe lined glass. Express a lemon over the cocktail and garnish with rosemary.



Board Member Bio

ELLEN OSBORNE

Director of Group Sales & Catering
RESTAURANTS INC.



Ellen was born & raised in Omaha and graduated from The University of Nebraska- Lincoln in 2005. She then moved to Chicago to begin her career with the University of Chicago's Graduate School of Business. While there she began to develop her skills in

sales and event planning and was privileged work with an amazing team in Wolfgang Puck Catering. She moved back to Omaha in 2009 and continued in sales & catering at the Embassy Suites as an Executive Meeting Manager & Sales Manager. Ellen joined the Restaurants Inc. team as the Director or Sales & Catering in March of 2012. She is responsible for overseeing the onsite and offsite events from both Stokes locations and the Twisted Fork. 2017 will prove to be a busy year as Stokes West is currently expanding and adding a new party room.

Ellen has been married to Adam Osborne since 2010 and they have 2 kids, Caddie who is 4, and Payne who is 20 months. In her free time she volunteers for the March of Dimes Signature Chefs event, is on the St. Vincent DePaul Parents of Young Children committee and loves to travel. As a new member of the Omaha Restaurant Association Board she plans to participate on the golf tournament and Industry Night Out committees as well as serve at the liaison to No More Empty Pots.

Heartland Are you losing with EIRFs?

By Larissa Codr

"I'm fine...I'm being taken care of"

My team and I hear this rebuttal as an excuse to blow us off on a daily basis. "I'm fine...I'm being taken care of". But how do you know? One thing that our industry is really good at is confusing merchants with their processing statements. I've been analyzing these documents for almost a decade and I still come across one each day that has a new twist on fees and hidden garbage. Unless you are expertly trained and keep up to date on the semi-annual and sometimes monthly updates to Interchange, it's nearly impossible to read and understand them. I have worked with high-level executives of all types who have no idea how to decipher their processing statements let alone the average entrepreneur who just wants to run his business and make great pizza! You are told one thing yet your processing statements show an entirely different story and they are so confusing that it makes you sick to think about dealing with it...so you don't. Why do I put myself through the torture of trying to decode a foreign language and crunching numbers against the current Interchange table on a daily basis? Because I want to help entrepreneurs understand what is going on in their business...even if it's just this small section of their world, we want to help.

Recently I was looking through a state-

ment for a high volume bar and grill and noticed a vast amount of transactions that were falling into a category called EIRF. It's also known as a "downgrade" but what is an EIRF? It's a key indicator to me that something isn't right and it's costing your business precious dollars every day. There are three reasons why a transaction would qualify as in the EIRF category and post at a higher rate. The card brands allow restaurants and salons a "grace" overage to cover the cost of a tip, but that if it exceeds 20% it will settle out as a downgraded transaction. In this particular incident, I identified that about a third of this merchant's transactions were falling into this category and cost him an extra \$238 on that particular month...ouch! After some investigation, we found that these transactions were only happening on Thursday and Saturday nights. Using real-time data, we were able to narrow this down by shift and sure enough, we tracked these to one particular employee. Well you might think this bartender was a rock-star and just had big tippers. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case. After reviewing cameras, the business owner found that this employee wasn't ringing in all their sales in trade for larger tips. That is theft. Not only was she stealing from the business, it was causing higher fees when they settled...a double whammy.

When we audit a statement I look for efficiency, and ways to improve the bottom line by making sure the transactions are CLEARING how they are supposed to when they are sent to the Federal Reserve. If you have a catering order, does your terminal or POS identify that the order is being paid for by a card over the phone? Does it ask you address verification questions to make sure you are getting the best discounts possible when processing those sales and sending those transactions to your processor? Do you have a card reader that's not working properly causing your staff to key in transactions? Who is monitoring these things for you and how do you really know you are being "taken care

of"? Here are a few key things to look for on your statements:

EIRF – any line item with this acronym

- Batch/header fees
- Visa (VS) Standard
- PCI Compliance
- Bill-Backs (DECBB, JANBB)
- Non-Compliance
- CNP
- Key Entry/keyed
- Excessive Authorizations
- Surcharges

There are many more red flags we review for when analyzing a statement, but these are some common ones that can be fixed or reduced to help you improve your bottom line. Myself and my team take our careers extremely seriously and are looking out for YOUR best interest and bottom line. So the next time you think you are fine, ask yourself when was the last time you had a TRUE expert analyze things for you? We do this for free every day and we love what we do.



Larissa Codr is the Division Manager for the Nebraska Sales team for Heartland. She resides in Omaha with her husband Josh and her two boys, Gavin 7 and Jensyn 3.

To reach Larissa by phone her number is 402-540-3185, or email Larissa.Codr@e-hps.com.

NRA Executive Director testifies at LB-165 Hearing

Senator Ebke and members of the committee, my name is Jim Partington, (P-A-R-T-I-N-G-T-O-N). I appreciate the opportunity to represent the Nebraska Restaurant Association and testify in opposition to LB-165.

The Federal Government already has a mandatory employment eligibility verification system monitored, enforced and audited by the Department of Homeland Security. Employers must require all employees to complete an I-9 form and provide identification as prescribed by the form within three days of accepting employment.

Compliance is aggressively enforced and audited by United States Citizenship and Immigration Service.

USCIS audits verify that employees are authorized to work but they also focus on the administrative process, including grammar and spelling in the I-9 form. It's not unusual for a small business with less than 150 employees to undergo an audit that finds all employees are legal but imposes large fines for administrative errors.

LB-165 proposes an additional government program that will clearly add to the regulatory burden on small business. It also goes beyond that and demands that employers obtain a new Nebraska tax identification form that will need to be renewed annually, creating additional costs.

Small business and agriculture do their own hiring and many locations may not have access to high speed internet connections to support the web based communications necessary for using E-Verify. They are also less likely to have human resources or legal staff to administer this very detailed program.

This is one of the reasons why participation in E-verify is voluntary under federal law. Lawmakers recognize that making it mandatory could over burden sectors of the economy responsible for most job creation.

The combination of I-9 plus E-verify as required by LB-165 will impose an undue and unfair administrative and financial burden on our Nebraska entrepreneurs.

The National and Nebraska Restaurant Associations do anticipate that E-verify will be made mandatory as part of federal comprehensive immigration reform legislation. We also expect that one component of this reform will include combining I-9 and E-Verify into a single program eliminating the duplication that would be imposed by LB-165.

Our Association believes that designing an employment authorization verification system is a federal role and actions by 50 different states in passing employment verification laws create an untenable situation for employers and their prospective employees.

The Nebraska Restaurant Association will support an orderly and phased Implementation of E-verify by the Federal Government as part of comprehensive immigration reform. This concludes my testimony and I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.



Contact:
Brandy Nielson
Membership & Marketing Coordinator
bnielson@windstream.net
402-488-3999 ext. 2

NEBRASKA RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION RECOGNIZES RESTAURANTS THAT GIVE BACK 2017 RESTAURANT NEIGHBOR AWARD STATE WINNERS TO COMPETE FOR THE NATIONAL PRIZE OF \$10,000 LINCOLN, NE JANUARY 17, 2017

The Nebraska Restaurant Association announced today its 2017 Restaurant Neighbor Award state winners. These individuals and restaurant groups have demonstrated a dedicated commitment to serving their communities through outstanding charitable service and philanthropy and will advance to the national level to compete for the grand prize of \$10,000 to support their favorite charity or non-profit. The Omaha, NE winners are:

SALT 88 (OMAHA, NE): Salt owner, John Horvatinovich knows that it takes a community to staff his restaurant, and a community to dine at his restaurant. Salt focuses on giving back to the everyday needs of the community and being involved in as many projects as possible including: The Autism Center of Nebraska, local schools, March of Dimes, Susan G. Komen and many others.

LACASA PIZZARIA (OMAHA, NE): Since 2007, LaCasa has provided about \$3,500.00 in gift certificates to local high schools for their fundraising activities. Additionally, another \$4,000.00 has been contributed to local churches. They are proud to be able to contribute to other local, state and national nonprofit organizations including United Way of the Midlands and Nebraska Aids Project. LaCasa also continues to support Omaha's Food Bank for the Heartland.

From all state winners, three national Restaurant Neighbor Award winners are chosen by a panel of industry professionals and receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. in March 2017 where they are honored at a gala awards dinner during the National Restaurant Association's Public Affair Conference. Each national winner receives \$10,000 to support their charitable giving efforts. Developed 18 years ago, the program is sponsored by American Express. Find more information and stories from all winning applicants at www.ChooseRestaurants.org/Awards.



SUNDAY, APRIL 9TH

THE CORNHUSKER MARRIOTT - LINCOLN, NE

RECEPTION 5:30 PM

DINNER AND AWARDS
7:00 - 9:00 PM

Tickets: \$75.00 per person
Table of 10: \$700.00

RSVP TODAY!
BNIELSON@WINDSTREAM.NET
402-488-3999 EXT. 2

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
Dr. Tom Osborne



EVENING MENU

MERLOT POACHED PEAR SALAD
WALNUTS AND GORGONZOLA
BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE
PIEDMONTESE CERTIFIED FILET MIGNON
RED WINE REDUCTION
GRILLED CHICKEN
WHOLE GRAIN DIJON MUSTARD SAUCE
ROASTED FINGERLING POTATOES
CHEF'S FRESH ASPARAGUS
SWEET PICKLED AND SAUTÉED BABY CARROTS

73rd Annual Dinner Meeting

Monday, January 16th, 2017
 5:30 Cocktails
 6:30 Dinner, Awards and Inductions
 Anthony's Steakhouse 7220 F Street
 2016 Restaurateur of the Year • 2016 Purveyor of the Year
 2016 Harold Norman Excellence Award
 2016 Ozone Lounge for Big Band Music
 Join us in the Ozone Lounge for Big Band Music
 and a complimentary cocktail
 Business Casual
 \$76.75 per person (tax included)
 or visit www.dineomaha.com



11th Annual Membership Drive

Omaha Restaurant Association & Conagra Foods invite you to

A Service Industry Night Out

Good Food • Good Company

Sunday, Feb. 26, 2017
 6 - 8:30 p.m.
 Sullivan's Bar
 40th and Farnam Streets
 Celebration

