Neither Time nor SHFM Stand Still

Whoever coined the phrase “time flies” knew what he or she was talking about! This last quarter has raced by, especially when I consider all of the amazing SHFM events that have taken place. In case you’ve forgotten or didn’t get to participate in all of them, let me provide a summary:

The SHFM Foundation held their annual golf tournament in late May with more golfers than in recent years. It was a beautiful day and a course full of networking; yet another great example of how SHFM keeps its members connected at every opportunity. Also, the late June Schmooze Cruise was well attended with a new feature – a champagne tasting! It was the perfect time to make new contacts and reconnect with old friends. Take a look at pictures for both events on our Facebook page to see what I mean.

The season for SHFM Locals is in full swing! I am thrilled to say that the Charlotte and Washington, DC events have received rave reviews from attendees and both broke attendance and sponsorship records. A huge thank you to our many generous sponsors for supporting these great events! Watch for our upcoming Locals, including Chicago, California and Texas. Check out the SHFM website frequently to see what’s happening in your area; our Locals are a great way to connect with our current and prospective members.

Our marquee event, the National Conference will celebrate our 35th anniversary! 35 years of this wonderful Society and we are so fortunate to have not one, but two of the very best joining us. Danny Meyer, CEO of Union Square Hospitality Group and a best-selling author, will focus on the “H” – our new inclusion of corporate hospitality. Celebrity Chef Marcus Samuelsson will show us a completely different side of things by highlighting the culinary skills that have made him a multiple James Beard Foundation award winner, highlighting his soon to be released new cookbook focused on recipes at home. And of course the rest of the conference will be filled with inspiring and insightful presentations from industry professionals you can’t miss. You have to be there!

I also want to use this opportunity to remind you that being involved with the association is an ideal way to seize its benefits. Involvement will bring you rewards that will last your entire professional career; it certainly has for me. Join a committee or get involved in a task force. You can help shape the future of our society. Be on the lookout for the Call for Volunteers which will be coming out prior to the conference!

Please enjoy the rest of this issue! I hope to see each one of you in Connecticut for the National Conference, November 4 – 6th.

Best regards,

Sabrina Capannola | President
How has your marketing approach evolved within the last five years?

Social media and technology has changed our views as well as our clients’ views on strong marketing programs. We utilize the Internet more and offer programs to target younger professionals, such as Twitter and Facebook. The advancement of digital menu boards and online ordering has also given us new areas to market our business.

What do you think creates the greatest challenge to corporate foodservice?

The competition is fierce. We struggle to keep employees on-site, especially in Manhattan. Not only are we competing with fast casual restaurants, but food trucks can be found on every corner. Both have been good at offering quality food at reasonable prices. Therefore, we need to bring those ideas and concepts into our cafés to offer the variety expected by our clients.

Where do you see the most opportunity to grow the industry?

Staying innovative in product offerings and service while offering value to our clients.

What is the most valuable part of doing business with RMA for your customers?

RMA is a unique management company. Our size allows us to be more personable and develop one-on-one relationships with clients. Everyone from the CEO to the line cooks care about delivering quality products and services.

Please share a good story about your early foodservice career that still serves you well today.

Early in my foodservice career as an Instructor at the Culinary Arts Institute at Hudson County Community College in New Jersey I had a great mentor, Ernest Staltare. He wrote and developed a successful Culinary Arts Program and was the Dean at Johnson and Wales University. I remember he preached to the students the following characteristics to be successful in our industry: You must work hard, be dependable, and have integrity and a positive attitude. Above all you must have a passion for foodservice.

Tony Kaszuba | President | RMA – Hospitality Management
What are your goals as the (relatively) new Executive Director for NACUFS?

When I started, NACUFS was about to enter a new phase of strategic planning. We’re using this opportunity to review our governance model and ensure that NACUFS is a remarkable association by industry standards. NACUFS has a strong history of excellence and our finances are strong. However, just as dining services programs have changed, so have associations. Association boards of directors are becoming more strategic in how they govern. Volunteers have less time and professional staff members play a different role in leadership and facilitation.

To build to the next level, increase membership and elevate dining services, NACUFS must strengthen systems and commit to being one organization that respects the value of what we provide nationally and through our six regions. I am personally committed to building one organization that respects all the component parts. It’s my goal to implement volunteer recommendations to strengthen education, member engagement, the regions and fund development while enhancing the voice and the value of dining services on college and university campuses.

Has the association introduced new benefits or features lately?

No, and that’s by choice. Dedicated volunteers and staff have built a strong array of programs and services. But excellent associations today are aligning products and services with mission and making data-driven decisions about what they offer to meet customer needs. It’s time for us to assess our product mix to ensure that we’re meeting member needs. We may choose to invest more in essential programs, refine products or eliminate products and services before we add new benefits and services. Our mission is “to support and promote excellence in collegiate dining services.” Everything we do should align with our mission.

What is a common challenge within college & university foodservice?

Part of my background is with the chamber of commerce community and specifically with the auto manufacturing and supply world. So it was a huge shock to me to realize how fast our members have to adapt to changing demands in the marketplace. Students lead the way in food trends. As a result, colleges and universities have to react immediately to issues such as allergens, celiac disease and culinary innovation. The international student populations on campuses are also driving food trends. I am extremely impressed with our members’ ability to respond quickly, particularly when faced with tight budgets.

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What is one key take-away you hope to have from your position with NACUFS?

I am very fortunate to be able to build on success. However, I believe that associations in general need to do a better job of defining and measuring success. As an example, one of our goals is to grow membership. But to do so, I believe we must revisit our value proposition to both institutional and industry members and develop and defend a clear return on investment. Associations are mission driven, not profit driven, but we should, and will, do a better job of articulating member value.

What is the best meal you've ever eaten?

For me, the joy of eating is about the food, the wine, the people and the experience. One of the best meals I've ever eaten was at my niece's wedding in France. The wedding took place in Villefranche-sur-Saone region, about 20 miles north of Lyon. The menu was excellent and included:

- Belle Alliance de St Jacques et Gambas a l’ Huile de Vanille et son Caviar d’Aubergine
- Caille Farcie au Foie Gras Fondant, Jus aux Cepes avec son accompagnement
- 1/2 St Marcellin affine sur Pain au Noix
- Millefeuille de Macaron aux Framboises et sa Cuillere de Ganache Chocolat/Passion
- Cafe Pur Arabica et Mignardises

Gretchen Couraud, CAE, CFRE | Executive Director | National Association of College & University Food Services
Since you have perspective in a self-operator position as well as a supplier position from your business with Sweet Sally’s Bakeshop, what do you see as a significant challenge for connecting these two roles effectively?

It’s easier than it would seem to connect these two roles effectively because the skillsets needed to be successful in both are very similar. As an entrepreneur and small business owner, I need to be hands on. You will find me in the kitchen baking, packing boxes, procuring supplies, doing samplings and even hand writing the notes that get sent with every Sweet Sally’s gift. The self-op role I have at Jane Street Capital is also very hands on and I’m responsible for delivering hospitality services, disaster recovery and office administration. This is an active, “on your feet” role that requires a lot of physical labor as well.

The greatest challenge is balancing the workload of both businesses.

In what ways has the association grown/stayed consistent since your Presidency?

Consolidation and downsizing in the industry has changed the face of our core member. When I was President, most liaisons had foodservice as their main responsibility. Now, many of our members handle a variety of roles within their respective companies and food may not be a core competency.

How has your involvement with SHFM helped you professionally?

The people I’ve met through the association and have served with on the Board have become my closest colleagues and friends. Whatever role or job I’ve had, they’ve provided me with guidance, feedback, industry knowledge and lots of laughs. I could never have launched my own baking business without these incredibly loyal and devoted friends.

Since your 2006 – 2007 year of Presidency, how has your professional role evolved?

My career has changed a great deal. I went from managing foodservice for a multi-national company of 25,000 people to starting my own baking business to being a self-op at a financial trading firm. Honestly, I went from managing people who delivered service to delivering that service myself. I really enjoy the hands on approach which keeps me close to my customers.

What is your most fond memory from that year?

I have so many great memories from that year but one of the best was having Anthony Bourdain speak at our National Conference in Montreal. He was funny, engaging and incredibly candid.
UPCOMING EVENTS

**SHFM LOCAL – CALIFORNIA**
Wednesday, September 15
Sunnyvale, CA

**SHFM LOCAL – CHICAGO**
Tuesday, September 23
Chicago, IL

**SHFM LOCAL – TEXAS**
Thursday, October 9
Houston, TX

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE**
November 4-6
Mohegan Sun, CT