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In This Issue:

47th DDBC National Seminar
Valerie Jabbar, Vice President of Merchandising for Ralphs Grocery Co., and celebrated Chef Aarón Sánchez, star of “Chopped” on the Food Network, who is sponsored by Cacique, Inc., have joined Greg McNiff (Albertsons) as keynote speakers for the 47th National DDBC Seminar scheduled for Sept. 11-13 at the Laguna Marriott Resort and Spa in Dana Point, according to General Chairman Laura Taketomo (Food 4 Less). See more information on the Seminar on Pages 8-13.

A look back at DDBC March meeting
Kevin Coupe wowed the membership at the March meeting in Garden Grove with his look into the future. “Every business will change in the next five years,” he said. “The way we see things now are not the way we will see them soon.” Story and photos begin on Page 22.

The Big Cheese(s)
Luke Abbott (Monterrey) and Emily Aguilar are profiled as the May and June Big Cheese Award honorees. They will be presented their Awards at the July meeting. Find out more about both Big Cheeses beginning on on Page 16.

Calendar

May
5 – Cinco de Mayo.
20 – Food Industry Circle Meet Your Inspectors Forum, Embassy Suites Hotel, Downey. Information: info@fibr.info.
25 – Memorial Day.

June

July
4 – Independence Day.
7 – DDBC Membership meeting, Salute to City of Hope, Embassy Suites Hotel, Garden Grove. Information: 562-947-7016.

August
19-20 – Unified Grocers Expo, Long Beach Convention Center.

More calendar
Page 30

About the cover
Daisy, the No. 1 sour cream brand in the country, is poised to expand with a new production facility in Ohio on the drawing board, and a new way to deliver its product – a squeezable package.

The new look in packaging does not affect the product, which is 100 percent natural, the only ingredient being Grade A cream, no preservatives and no additives.
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Two more speakers added to program

Jabbar, VP of Ralphs, and Chef Sanchez will have keynote roles

Two additional keynote speakers have been announced for the 47th DDBC National Seminar according to General Chairman Laura Takeshima (Food 4 Less).

They are Valerie Jabbar, Vice President of Merchandising for Ralphs Grocery Co., and celebrated Chef Aarón Sánchez, star of “Chopped” on the Food Network, who is sponsored by CaciQue, Inc.

They join previously announced Greg McNiff, Senior Vice President, Merchandising & Marketing for Albertsons/Vons/Pavilions as keynote speakers.

The Seminar will be conducted Sept. 11-13 at the Laguna Hills Marriott in Dana Point.

“The Seminar Committee is keenly aware that having relevant speakers from the supermarket retail industry is what a majority of attendees want to see on the podium,” Takeshima said.

“We have taken that consideration to heart and have provided speakers from the two largest retail chains in Southern California to tell us exactly how they want us to do business with them,” she added.

“And then we are fortunate to have one of the most recognizable chefs in the country added to the roster,” she said. “Sánchez is a spokesman for longtime DDBC member and supporter CaciQue, Inc., and they were happy to make the arrangements to sponsor him.”

The Committee is not through yet. “We are awaiting confirmation of additional speakers and hope to be able to announce them soon,” Takeshima said.

The credentials of Jabbar and Sánchez are impressive.

Jabbar is the Vice President of Merchandising for Kroger Co.’s Ralphs Division. She is responsible for Merchandising for 218 Ralphs supermarkets located throughout Southern California and the Central Coast.

She began her career with Fry’s in 1987 as a clerk. Since then, she has held several leadership roles, including Assistant Store Director, Category Manager, Drug/GM Coordinator, General Office Seasonal Manager, Assistant Director of Drug/GM and Director of Drug/GM, as well as District Manager in the Fry’s division. She was promoted to Vice President of Merchandising for Kroger’s Mid-Atlantic Division in 2012, and to her current post in November 2013.

She graduated high school in Scottsdale, Arizona and attended the Colorado Institute of Art. She has also completed leadership seminars at Babson University and Darden University.

In 2012, Progressive Grocer recognized her with the Top Women in Grocery “Rising Star” Award.

She is a newly elected Board member of the Western Association of Food Chains (WAFC). She was actively involved with the Mid-Atlantic women’s EDGE group and has continued in that mentorship role with the Ralphs women’s EDGE group.

Sánchez is the chef/partner of Paloma in Stamford, Conn. and recently opened Johnny Sanchez, alongside friend and colleague Chef John Besh, with locations in Baltimore and New Orleans. He is the co-star of Food Network’s hit series “Chopped” as well as the star of Cooking Channel’s “Taco Trip,” FOX Life’s cooking series “3 Minutos con Aarón,” and the travel-food series “MOTOCHEFS.”

The son of celebrated Mexican cooking authority Zarela Martinez, his passion, commitment and skills have placed him among the country’s leading contemporary Latin chefs.

Celebrated by critics and contemporaries alike, he recently appeared at the White House as a guest chef and received the “National Award” at the Flavors of Passion Awards, honoring the nation’s best Latin chefs. He has also starred on multiple Food Network shows.

In addition to being a restaurateur, television personality, consultant and spokesperson, he is an author and entrepreneur.

Sánchez also designed a line of cookware products in collaboration with IMUSA and is a spokesperson for their “Global Kitchen” line. He is also a Chef Ambassador for “Why Hunger,” a leader in building the movement to end hunger and poverty.

Sánchez’s creativity extends far beyond the kitchen. He is a partner at Daredevil Tattoo in NYC and is an avid music lover; he enjoys cooking to the sounds of Alabama Shakes, Amos Lee, Sade, and The Cure. He lives in Brooklyn.
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Additional night stay – Available for $250.00 each night.
Two-night Seminar package includes hotel, taxes, resort fees, internet access, valet parking for one vehicle, all meals, entertainment and business sessions.

Children’s packages are available for $130.00 per child (Ages 5-12).

GOLF/SPA PACKAGES

GOLF: 7th Tisdell Cup – National DDBC Golf Scramble at Monarch Beach Golf Club
Friday, Sept. 11, 12:15 Tee Time - $250 Per Golfer or $950 Per Foursome

SPA: at Laguna Cliffs Marriott Spa, $250 Per Person

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Register early to save money. Rooms are limited. Cancel-lation policy: Payment of Seminar package will be refunded, less $100 administrative costs, if received prior to Aug. 1. After Aug. 1, payment fee is NOT refundable.

Make checks payable to: “DDBC of Southern California” and mail registration, along with payment, to: DDBC, P.O. Box 1872, Whittier, CA 90609.

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Seminar Payment $__________
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Golf $__________
Spa $__________
Children’s package $__________
Sponsorship/Hosting $__________

Total enclosed $__________

Name on Credit Card__________________________________ Signature_____________________
Credit Card number__________________________________ Expiration Date__________________

DDBC of Southern California, P.O. Box 1872, Whittier, CA 90609; 562-947-7016; FAX: 562-947-7872; office@ddbcsocal.org
**Quest makes encore appearance for DDBC**

Popular Southern California show and dance band Quest will be the entertainment and music for dancing at the 47th National DDBC Seminar Sept. 11-13 at the Laguna Cliffs Marriott in Dana Point.

Quest was the band that wowed members of the DDBC at the January Dinner/Dance and Installation of Officers at the Orange Hill Restaurant.

“Quest is one of the premier groups of its type and being able to book them for a busy Saturday night during the prime season is made possible by the underwriting of Monterrey,” said Seminar Co-Chairman Lisa Juarez (Cacique, Inc.). When Luke Abbott heard of our predicament, he did not hesitate to step up to the plate to help defray the cost associated with an act of this caliber. The Seminar Committee and the entire DDBC appreciates his continued support.”

In other news, General Chairman Laura Taketomo (Food 4 Less) announced a number of events that are under consideration and development to support the theme of “Teamwork.”

“We may have puzzles and contests for attendees to work together to solve,” she noted. “We are still putting together the final details.

“Also, because the opening date of this year’s Seminar happens to be 9-11, which coincides with the terrorist attacks of 2001, we want to have some sort of representation from the military, and we are close to announcing exactly what that will be,” she said.

**Seminar Sponsors**

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---

**2015 DDBC’s National Seminar Committee**

**General Chairman**
Laura Taketomo ............................................ Food 4 Less

**Co-Chairman**
Lisa Juarez ..................................................... Cacique Inc.

**Committees**
Ed Silva (AV) ............................................. Ralphs
Michael Rodrigues (AV) ............................... Ralphs

Connie Thatcher (Program) .......................... Advantage Sales
......................................................................... & Marketing

Sue Bargsten (Food) ....................................... DPI Specialty
......................................................................... Foods
Sarah Ramirez (Food) ..................................... DPI Specialty
......................................................................... Foods

Jann Beecher-Seidel (Festival Luncheon) .... LeGrand
......................................................................... Marketing
Sharon Fails (Festival Luncheon) ............... Nasser Co., Inc.
Patti Winsell (Festival Luncheon) ............... Bonert’s Pies
Gayle DeCaro (Festival Luncheon) .............. Gelson’s

Bob Dressler (Golf) ........................................ Advantage Action
Dave MacDonald (Golf) ............................... Stremick’s
......................................................................... Heritage Foods
Steve Nguyen (Golf) ....................................... Unified Grocers
Brian Svoboda (Golf) ................................. Carl Buddig

Jim Veregge (Sponsorship/Hosting) .......... Unified Grocers
Silvia Quiroz (Sponsorship/Hosting) ........... Cardenas
......................................................................... Markets
Melissa Griffin (Sponsorship/Hosting) ...... Stater Bros.
Liz Wilson (Sponsorship/Hosting) ............ Ralphs Grocery

Kristal Clark (Silent Auction/Advisor) ......... Advantage Sales
......................................................................... & Marketing
Della Frorenza (Silent Auction) ................. Nasser Co., Inc.
Stacy Gilbert (Silent Auction) ................. Smithfield/
......................................................................... Farmland

Larry Eiffert (Entertainment) ................. JTJ Sales
Cynthia Yarak (Entertainment)

Cheryl Van Den Hende (DDBC President) . Monterrey
Susan Steele (DDBC, Registration) .......... Exec. Director
Bill Mackie (Processor’s Marketing) ........... Treasurer
Dave Daniel (Pacific Rim Publishing) ........ DDBC News
47th DDBC’s National Seminar Sponsorship Form

Planning for the DDBC’s 47th National Seminar, which is scheduled to take place Sept. 11-13 at the Laguna Cliffs Marriott Hotel in Dana Point, is well underway. Each sponsorship aids in the development of quality programs and learning experiences.

We ask you to be a part of the seminar by donating to this fund. Your company’s name will be added to the list of sponsors and published each month in the DDBC News as well as recognition at the seminar. Sponsors of $1,500 or more will have their company logo on signage and in DDBC News.

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- Recognition in Program Brochure at Event
- Company Logo Displayed on Large Screens during All Business Sessions at Seminar
- Company Logo Displayed on Signage at Seminar
- Includes Golf Foursome at the DDBC Tisdell Cup Tournament, La Costa Course OR 2 Night Single Seminar Package including room, meals, Business Sessions & Entertainment at La Costa Resort and Spa

Platinum Sponsor ($10,000+)
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- Company Logo Displayed on Large Screens during All Business Sessions at Seminar
- Company Logo Displayed on Signage at Seminar
- Includes Golf Foursome at the DDBC Tisdell Cup Tournament, La Costa Course OR 2 Night Single Seminar Package including room, meals, Business Sessions & Entertainment at La Costa Resort and Spa
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47th National DDBC Seminar Sponsors

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Susan Steele elevated to Executive Director position

Longtime Dairy Deli Bakery Council (DDBC) of Southern California Business Manager Susan Steele has been elevated to Executive Director.

The decision was made by the Board of Directors at their February meeting.

“The Board of Directors felt it was time to give Susan the appropriate title to go along with all the work she does on behalf of the Council,” said 2015 President Cheryl Van Den Hende (Monterrey).

“It was a unanimous decision. She has fulfilled those duties since the late Bud Moorman retired in 2000. Her duties … and the way she has carried them out … outgrew her previous title of Business Manager. This was well-deserved and a long time in coming. We look forward to a long, continuing relationship with her.”

Steele is the only paid employee of the DDBC.

Steele started as a part-time bookkeeper in 1992 under Moorman, the Council’s first, and up until now, the only Executive Director.

“I started working part-time with Bud, then my hours increased as Bud came in less and less until he retired in 2000. Then, I went full-time,” she said.

Her title was Business Manager, but she was responsible for much more. She organized all the Board meetings and assisted in every Council event, concentrating on the National Seminar, the Resource Directory, golf tournaments, special events, awards, regular membership meetings, liaisons with hotels and other meeting spaces and vendors, while maintaining all historical files.

“I have worked with Susan since she came aboard,” said DDBC News Editor Dave Daniel, “and our relationship has been one of solid, steady professionalism from the beginning.

“She makes sure I have the correct information to include in each publication and continues to maintain our mailing list and collaboration with the printing company that produces the magazine,” he said.

“We cannot imagine working with anyone else and we at Pacific Rim Publishing are pleased the Council has taken the initiative to elevate her to this august position. It is well-deserved after her years of service in the past … and in the years to come. This is a great honor for her … and the DDBC.”

Upcoming Events

- **July 7** – DDBC Membership meeting honoring City of Hope, including a Silent Auction Fundraiser, Embassy Suites Hotel, Garden Grove. Information: 562-947-7016.
- **October 13** – DDBC membership meeting honoring Tom Keyes with Lifetime Achievement Award, Embassy Suites Hotel, Garden Grove. Information: 562-947-7016.
- **November 17** – DDBC membership meeting, Election Night, Embassy Suites Hotel, Garden Grove. Information: 562-947-7016.

Big Cheese honorees announced

The DDBC Board of Directors has released its line-up for the Big Cheese Award honors for 2015.

Luke Abbott (May) and Emily Aguilar (June) are featured in this issue of DDBC News.

The honorees for the remainder of the year will be featured in the appropriate issue of the magazine.

- **Jan.** — No award.
- **Feb.** – Ivan Smith of Alliance Managed Sales.
- **March** – Miriam Welch of Albertsons.
- **April** – No award.
- **May** – Luke Abbott of Monterey (to be presented in July).
- **June** – Emily Aguilar of Daisy Brand (to be presented in July).
- **July** – No award.
- **Aug.** – No award.
- **Sept.** – Robert Burke of Advantage Action (to be presented in October).
- **Oct.** – Damien Valdez of Super King Markets.
- **Nov.** – Connie Thatcher of Advantage Sales & Marketing.
- **Dec.** – Melissa Griffin of Stater Bros. (to be presented in November).
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Big Cheese Award May

Luke Abbott, Monterrey

By DAVE DANIEL
Editor, DDBC News

Luke Abbott is not one to live in the past ... he’s much too busy running Monterrey and guiding it into the future to dwell on the history of the 43-year-old San Diego-based company.

But if you do press his memory button, the pride in the company’s growth comes to the forefront.

That is one of the reasons he has been selected as the Big Cheese Award honoree for the month of May by the Dairy Deli Bakery Council (DDBC) of Southern California. He will receive his award at the July membership meeting.

When he joined the company (formerly Monterrey Provisions) founded by Dick Herrman, he was a 22-year-old college student majoring in accounting. He passed his CPA exam, but never applied for his license.

“They wouldn’t let me leave,” he said.

“My father had always advised me to work for a big company. When I started at Monterrey, I think there were 42 people. We serviced only San Diego, Riverside and Orange Counties. I started as an Accounts Payable Clerk. By my second week, I was put in charge of marketing and IT ... and in less than three years, I was put in charge of the entire company.

“That says a lot about the company ... putting a 25-year-old in charge of a $16 million business at the time,” he said.

He continues to practice the lessons he learned. “It goes to show that if one works hard and is committed to the cause by putting in extra hours and by doing what is needed to be done, a merit-based company is a good place to be. We are not a stuffy culture here and there are tremendous opportunities if you are willing to pour your heart into all that you do here. No one micro-manages. We are in a special place at a special time. Let’s have some fun creating something that has never existed before.”

The day-to-day business continues to grow. The company operates out of an 82,000-square foot facility in San Diego and recently opened a second 156,000-square foot warehouse in Oklahoma City. In the next 4-5 years, the company will open warehouses in Atlanta and Chicago.

“Our vision is to service the entire country with next-day service,” he said. The company grew by 49 percent last year and even more geographically. The reason, Abbott said, is because the customer is the most important thing.

“What happens inside the building is artificial,” he said, “The reality is our customer and we can never forget that. If we don’t have them, we don’t exist.”

Taking that mantra forward, he said, “We are customer-intimate. We understand the underlying needs of our customer. We don’t go in and tell them what we are going to do. We customize programs for each of our custo-


ers, whether they have 5 or 20 stores. We do a lot of work for our customers.”

Besides running the company, Abbott makes many sales calls.

“I am definitely involved in sales,” he said. “It is one of the main parts of my job. By focusing on the regional chains, such as Gelson’s, Bristol Farms and Sprouts, our corporate philosophy is to truly help our customers be successful.”

Abbott’s job requires extensive travel, both domestically and some internationally. That leaves the “love of my life” Susan to run the ship at home.

“I could not do what I do without her support,” he said. “She is the one who keeps everything running smoothly on the home front. We celebrated our 10th anniversary this year and I look forward to weekends at home with her and the family. We are an active family when we are together. We enjoy hiking in the area mountains, kayaking, bike riding, anything outdoors. We took a family vacation to Maui last summer and the kids can’t stop talking about it. They want to go back.”

Oldest son Tommy, 19, is studying pre-med at UC Santa Barbara; daughter Halle, 15, and youngest Andrew, 5, are at home. Susan volunteers at Andrew’s school.

Some of the business travel overseas has included Susan on separate trips to Italy and France. “We visited Parma and went into a Prosciutto-aging cave where they sliced it for us and paired it with wine. That may be my favorite place,” he said.

“We also went to Paris one year for SIAL, the international food show,” he added, “and we had a wonderful time there.”

Continued on Page 30
He was born in Wisconsin, where his cheesiness began. Then it was off to California where he grew from boy to man.

He stopped by a little company, it’s name was Monterrey. And was hired in an instant, but he never knew that day...

That after years of mastering each role with flair and zest, He’d become our President - the job that he does best.

He took us to great heights and we grew by leaps and bounds. From sea to shining sea, Monterrey trucks now make the rounds.

It’s because of who he is and his energetic style. That each of his employees stand beside him with a smile.

We’re proud of his accomplishment - of being named The Big Cheese. It isn’t easy being cheesy, but he does it with such ease!

Congratulations Luke!
- Team Monterrey
Big Cheese Award June

Emily Aguilar, Daisy Brand

By DAVE DANIEL
Editor, DDBC News

Like many in the food industry, Emily Aguilar is constantly on the move as Western Regional Sales Manager for Daisy Brand.

She makes work-related stops from Seattle to San Diego, partnering with customers to make Daisy Brand and their categories successful.

That’s one of the reasons she has been selected as the Big Cheese Award honoree for the June by the Dairy Deli Bakery Council (DDBC) of Southern California. She will be presented her award at the July meeting.

Aguilar has a magnetic personality. No, honest. She really does.

She is easy-going and easy to talk with and most people describe her using highly positive adjectives … and she collects magnets.

“When I first started with Daisy, I was on Daisy’s retail team that traveled all over the country – Oklahoma, New Jersey, New York … anywhere a retail project needed assistance,” she said. “I collected magnets from every state I visited. I probably have collected half of the states.”

Daisy Brand sour cream is the company’s signature product. Daisy was founded in Chicago in 1918 and it made a variety of products, including cheeses. It was decided to do one thing … sour cream … and do it the best. The company moved to Dallas, opened a plant in nearby Garland, and made only sour cream. It is 100 percent natural, the only ingredient being Grade A Cream, no preservatives and no additives.

The company added cottage cheese to its product list in 2006. Daisy opened a second plant in Casa Grande, Ariz. and has plans for a third facility in Wooster, Ohio, giving it better capability to handle all areas of the country.

“A new, innovative squeezable package coming soon, there is a lot of growth opportunity on the horizon,” she said.

Aguilar’s liberal arts degree led her to the field of teaching, but that career lost its luster to her when she spent time in some classrooms of fifth- and sixth-graders. “The preteens made it hard on the teachers,” she said, “so I decided to do something else.”

That something else was the food industry. While still in college she went to work for Trader Joe’s, first as a crew member and then in the management program. She spent 8 years there before her mother, Marie Uskali, who worked for Daisy, told her the company was hiring.

“After a series of interviews, I was offered a position the day before Thanksgiving 2005,” she said. “I had a lot to be thankful for that year.”

Aguilar joined Daisy 8 years ago. After her stint on the road, she was appointed to her current post in 2010.

Not bad for a self-described “Valley Girl” born in Thousand Oaks and living and working out of Sherman Oaks. (“I traded one Oak for another Oak,” she said.) She graduated from Cal State Northridge with a degree in Chicano Studies and Spanish.

“I am half-Mexican and I wanted to understand all the historical perspectives of my culture, from politics, government, art, history … everything,” she said. “I was an exchange student in Costa Rica so I could learn Spanish.”

Being bilingual helps her with the large number of Hispanic-owned and operated stores in California.

She began attending DDBC meetings when she became Regional Manager when her supervisor Chuck Forehand urged her to attend. “When I went to my first meeting, I did not know anyone,” she recalled. “John Nielsen (Acosta) invited me to sit with him and really made me feel welcome.”

She attends regularly and often is joined by her Advantage Sales & Marketing Business Manager Dan Devries.

“Every month I meet more and more people, lots of retailers, and I became more involved. I really look forward to the meetings and listening to the speakers. I have learned so much there on so many topics … and I really enjoy the genealogy productions from Jim Veregge.”

She is involved with animal rescue organizations, volunteering at the Best Friends Animal Society, which works at reducing the euthanasia of animals. She lives with her “pound puppy” Lucy, an adopted chihuahua mix. “I have a bumper sticker on my car that says ‘Who rescued who?’” she said. “Lucy is a devoted dog, to put it mildly.”

She also likes to travel. She returned to Costa Rica once (ask her about howler monkeys), went on a cruise through the Mediterranean with stops in Italy, Greece, Croatia, and Turkey) and has her sights set on other parts of Europe, including Spain.

“My boyfriend wants to run with the bulls,” she shutters. Next up is a trip to Alaska.

She also enjoys riding her bike at the beach with her boyfriend Frank and working on her golf game, hiking, going to the dog park, and grilling outside “I am inside a lot, so as soon as I can I head outside,” she said.

Please join the DDBC in saluting her as the Big Cheese Award honoree June.
We are proud to congratulate Emily Aguilar on being named DDBC Big Cheese June 2015.

We are so very proud to congratulate DDBC’s Big Cheese

Emily Aguilar!

What a great and deserving honor!
Longtime DDBC member Dan Devries (Advantage Sales & Marketing) is one of only three people awarded the 2014 Account Executive of the Year for Daisy Brands.

Devries was presented his award by Daisy management at a recent elegant dinner in his honor.

It was noted that “Dan’s solid relationships with Category Managers have proven invaluable to Daisy’s business and to ASM.”

Daisy management also noted Devries’ “tenacious follow-up” as a key strength in being successful with new items, promotional successes and many schematic wins.

“Dan’s ability to pivot promotional strategy on a dime,” is incredible to observe said one spokesman.

“Dan is the ‘best in class’”, said a spokesman for Advantage, “and the Daisy team of Chuck Foreman, National Sales Manager Trenton Potts, and Emily Aguilar continue year after year to sing his praises. His ASM team is also proud of his continued accomplishments,” the spokesman said.

Sartori Cheese Program

Sartori Company has announced the launch of a Certified Cut and Wrap Cheese Program, a key education piece that serves as a guide for in-store cutting and wrapping of artisanal cheese. Sartori invites cheese mongers and enthusiasts to visit www.sartoricheese.com/cut-and-wrap to watch seven short episodes and test their knowledge to become “Sartori Certified.”

“Over the past few years, we’ve seen a significant increase in the number of cut and wrap shops opening their doors in the United States. We recognized the opportunity for an improved consumer experience, seeing first-hand the numerous variations of how cheese mongers handle and care for artisan cheese,” said Chad Vincent, Sartori Chief Marketing Officer. “When executed well, cut and wrap can be a high margin destination that adds value to stores while being the best option to sell fresh, high quality cheese to the end consumer.”

The program consists of seven episodes highlighting insights and recommendations including topics such as cheese case set up, sanitation and safety, cutting and wrapping multiple varieties of cheese, and merchandising and maintaining a cheese case.

Following the videos, a short 35-question exam will be presented with the opportunity to become “Sartori Certified.”

“We spent more than a year interviewing and working with the best cheese mongers and retailers in the business to get a wide view of best practices. We are excited to share this information,” added Vincent.

The program is open to all participants including independent cheese shop owners, deli specialists, cheese mongers, and cheese enthusiasts. Once participants pass the exam, they will receive an exclusive gift from Sartori and become “Sartori Certified.”

FIBR Forum May 20

The bi-annual Southern California Meet Your Inspectors Forum, one of the regular programs of the Food Industry Business Roundtable (FIBR), is scheduled for May 20 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Downey. The forum is a project of the Regional Wholesale Food Processors Committee (RWFPC). Since 2005, the bi-annual event attracts food industry professionals from all around Southern California: food processors, grocers, food safety experts and others gather for this full day program which includes a networking lunch.

The forum provides a unique opportunity for food industry representatives to come and learn first-hand about the most recent and important regulatory laws or issues facing the industry, and to meet their inspectors in a friendly environment. Topics in the past have included Food Recalls, Country of Origin Regulations, Top 10 Violations for Food Processors, Emergency Preparedness for Food Facilities, Greening and Sustainability, Injury Prevention and more.

The program is presented by the agencies that make up the RWFPC, including regulatory representatives from the local environmental health departments (Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange and San Diego Counties and the City of Vernon) to the State and Federal level (California Department of Public Health, CalOSHA, USDA & FDA). Forum topics are a culmination of the best thinking from these agencies about the latest regulations or issues they see in industry and forum topic suggestions from FIBR members.

For more details and to register, visit: 6th Bi-Annual Southern California 2015 Meet Your Inspectors Forum.

Specialty Foods continue record growth

The specialty food industry is a bright spot in the U.S. economy. In 2014, sales of specialty food topped $100 billion for the first time, with retail and foodservice sales reaching a record $109 billion.

Retail sales of specialty food sales grew 19 percent from 2012 to 2014 versus a tepid 2 percent increase for all food. The industry, fueled by small businesses, now boasts 15 segments that exceed $1 billion in sales, including No. 1 cheese ($3.7 billion in sales; coffee; meat, poultry and seafood; chips, pretzels and snacks; candy; and yogurt.

These findings are from a report from the Specialty Food Association produced in conjunction with research firms Mintel International and SPINS/IRI. The report, The State of the Specialty Food Industry 2015, tracks U.S. sales of specialty food through supermarkets, natural food stores, specialty food retailers, and foodservice venues. Specialty foods are broadly defined for the report as products that have limited distribution and a reputation for high quality.

“The time is now for specialty food,” said Ron Tanner, vice president of philanthropy, government and industry relations for the Specialty Food Association. “Consumers are looking for new tastes, foods with fewer and cleaner ingredients, health attributes, and products that are made by companies with values they care about. All of these define specialty food.”
Questions and answers for sales people

By DAVE KAHLE

Q. I'm new to sales and to business in general. I don't want to make a "manners" or "etiquette" mistake that could cause problems. Are there any special rules for business etiquette that I should know about?

A. That's a question that I have rarely heard. But a good question, nonetheless. As new generations of sales people come into the profession, the culture changes somewhat, and some of the old rules pass on. Every now and then, it's a good idea to refresh some of the basic rules of business etiquette.

The fundamental rule is to think about the customer, and put yourself in his shoes. How would you want to be treated? Here are some specific applications:

1. If you don't have an appointment and you want to intrude on a customer or colleague's time, ask permission first. Say, "Is this a good time to talk?" or "May I have a moment of your time?"

2. If you walk into a customer's office during inclement weather, hang your coat up and put your boots in the designated place instead of wearing them in to the office.

3. Be careful about immediately using someone's first name. North America is the only culture where this is acceptable. If your customer has another ethnicity in his/his background, or is older or more established than you, or is more educated, he may view your use of his first name as an insult.

4. If you don't know how to pronounce a person's name, ask them to pronounce it for you. This shows respect for the other person.

5. When you enter another person's workspace, stand until he/she sits down. Never be the first person to sit down.

6. Ask permission to put your materials on the customer's desk or table. Don't just assume that you may do so.

7. If you are going to go over the allotted time, ask the customer's permission to continue. Estimate how much more time you expect to need, and ask for permission.

8. Be courteous to everyone, from the person washing the windows on the office entryway to the CEO.

9. If you are going to take the customers' time, be sure that you have something that you believe they will consider of value to discuss with them. Be mindful and respectful of the customer's time.

10. TURN OFF THE ********** CELL PHONE BEFORE YOU ENTER INTO ANY CONVERSATION WITH A CUSTOMER!

H.J. Heinz and Kraft Foods Group in merger

The H.J. Heinz Company and Kraft Foods Group have signed a Definitive Merger Agreement to form the Kraft Heinz Company.

The Merger will create the 3rd largest food and beverage company in North America and the 5th largest food and beverage company in the world.

The combined company is to be named The Kraft Heinz Company and to be co-headquartered in Pittsburgh and the Chicago area.

The new company will have revenues of approximately $28 billion with eight $1+ billion brands and five brands between $500 million-$1 billion.

It is a stock and cash transaction, with Kraft shareholders to receive a special cash dividend of $16.50 per share upon closing and stock in the combined company representing a 49% stake in the new company.

Berkshire Hathaway and 3G Capital will invest an additional $10 billion in The Kraft Heinz Company; existing Heinz shareholders will collectively own 51% of the new company.
The future is now for business successes

Kevin Coupe can see the future ... we are in the midst of it as we speak.

Coupe, the author of “Retail Rules! 52 Ways to Achieve Retail Success” and his website/blog [www.morningnewsbeat.com], stated simply, “Every business will change in the next five years.”

He continued, “The way we see things now are not the way we will see them soon.”

Coupe stressed that businesses must adapt to the changing landscape and be relevant to now and to the next generation, which are rapidly converting to becoming digital customers.

He offered several examples of companies that did not adapt to the changing times: Kodak, Radio Shack, Blockbuster, Barnes & Noble. They have been replaced by the likes of Amazon, HBO and Netflix, among others.

His remedy is simple. “Change.”

He said business “must embrace change and do it on your own terms, and not just on price.”

He pointed out television shows “Mad Men” which shows the way it was, and “Modern Family,” which shows things the way they are now.

“You cannot fight the last war,” he said. “You have to fight the next one.”

Coupe, who lives in Connecticut, started his blog more than 13 years ago, providing what he calls “business news in context, and analysis with attitude.” He has more than 30,000 subscribers. An independent survey recently ranked it as the “top industry news and information site.”

In other business at the meeting, Ivan Smith (Alliance Managed Sales) and Miriam Welch (Albertons/Vons/Pavilion) were presented with Big Cheese Awards by Dave MacDonald (Stremick’s Heritage Foods).

Smith was Big Cheese in February and Welch was the honoree in March.

Also, Laura Taketomo (Food 4 Less), General Chairman for the 47th National DDBC Seminar, and Lisa Juarez (Cacique, Inc.), Co-Chairman, made announcements about the September meeting.

Program chairman Jim Veregge (Unified Grocers) gave a rundown of the rest of the meetings scheduled for 2015.
March Meeting of DDBC

Ivan Smith (right) of Alliance Managed Sales receives the February Big Cheese Award plaque from Dave MacDonald (Stremick’s Heritage Foods).

Ivan Smith spoke eloquently during his brief speech upon receiving the Big Cheese Award for February.

Miriam Welch (Albertsons) receives the Big Cheese Award for March from Dave MacDonald.

Miriam Welch had fun with her speech after being introduced as the Big Cheese Award honoree for March.

Margie Diaz (Foster Farms) with Carlos Guerra (Director of Deli & Dairy for Superior Grocers).

Ricardo Cabrera (Smithfield), Becky Villasenor (Cacique, Inc.), Tom Jones (Smithfield), and Bill Gomez (Smithfield).
March Meeting of DDBC

Lisa Juarez (Cacique, Inc.) and Silvia Quiroz (Cardenas Markets).

Jason Orovillo (Ruiz), Riley Marshall (Bay Cities), and Joshua Linden (Bay Cities).

Mark Dixon (Acosta), Sue Bargsten (DPI Specialty Foods), and Laura Mastro (Mastro & Associates).

Nancy Tyler (Acosta) and Bob Dressler (Advantage Action).

Frank Hernandez and Victor Gastelum, both of Alta Dena.

Jack Miller (Premier Action Group) and Patrick Jacobo (V and V Supremo).
March Meeting of DDBC

Mark Berge and Joye Crosby, both of Super King Markets.

Dave MacDonald (Stremrck’s Heritage Foods) with Deborah Romero, recently retired from Superior Grocers.

Wendy Muller (Mission Foods) and Cynthia Yarak.

Matt Hebert and Candace Allen, both of Insight Food Sales.

Aimee Mizrahi and Dawn Dudley, both of Anderson International Foods.

Laura Taketomo (Food 4 Less) and Lisa Juarez (Cacique, Inc.) gave details of the 47th National Seminar, scheduled for Sept. 11-13 in Dana Point.
Natural Products Expo West

Attendance reaches 71,000 mark

Expo West, the 35th Natural Products Expo – the world’s largest event devoted to natural and specialty food and beverages, organics, and related products, established another attendance record at Anaheim Convention Center March 4-8.

Attendance reached a record of approximately 71,000, who checked out crowded trade show floors covering the main Convention Center, the adjoining Arena, the Hilton and Marriott Hotels, and the street plaza. More than 2,700 exhibitors were on hand, including 200 booths set up in the adjoining Hilton Hotel.

In 2014, Natural Products Expo West drew more than 63,000 industry members and 2,428 exhibitors.

Many keynote presentations were presented at the Marriott. In the past, upper level areas of the Convention Center were used for keynotes, but that space was utilized differently this year for show hosts, sponsors, demonstrations and meetings.

Bret Presley and John Brass, both of J. Brass Company, man the Cedarlane booth.

Miriam Welch (Albertsons) was scouting out possible new products to introduce to the new company.

Dean Sandello and Henry Rodriguez, both of Nasser Co., Inc.

Kevin Davis (right), CEO of Bristol Farms, chats with Lloyd Greif (Greif & Co.), one of Davis’ key financial advisors.

Vars Inijjian (Sierra Nevada Cheese) took a quick opportunity to get off his feet during the show.
Gluten Free Products continue to dominate the new products area.

Every aisle of every hall of the Anaheim Convention Center was packed from opening to closing.

New Products were featured in the Lobby of the Convention Center.

Attendees work their way through the street plaza before entering the Convention Center.

Walter Robb (CEO, Whole Foods), Dr. James Dukes (Liberation Christian Group), Robin Edmunds (Sow Much), Will Allen (Growing Power), and Oscar Gonzalez (Northgate).

Annette Uehara (DPI Specialty Foods) with Debbie Jones (J. Brass Company).
Caldecott assumes new posts at Bristol Farms

Adam Caldecott has been appointed president and COO of Bristol Farms, according to a recent announcement.

He succeeds Kevin Davis as president, though Davis will continue as CEO of the specialty chain. The company has not previously had a COO.

Caldecott has been EVP, retail, since March 2014 after holding a variety of store operations and marketing positions for the past 18 years. The Carson-based company said no successor will be named to his previous title at this time.

In his new role he will retain responsibility for marketing, merchandising and store operations, and add oversight of sales and advertising, communication, signage and visual merchandising, and product demonstrations.

“With the economy continuing to improve and people spending again, we’re well positioned to take Bristol Farms to new heights,” Caldecott said.

Bristol Farms operates 13 Bristol Farms stores and two units of Lazy Acres. It is a division of Good Food Holdings, whose majority shareholder is Endeavour Capital, Portland, Ore., and which also includes six units of Seattle-based Metropolitan Markets.

Haggen begins building on leadership team

Haggen has announced the first five members of its Pacific Southwest leadership team, based in Irvine.

According to Bill Shaner, CEO of the 100-store division, the five executives all have ties to other Southern California operations. They are:

• Wendy Oliver, SVP, operations. She was formerly VP of the Southern California division of Albertsons.

• Chris Linskey, SVP, marketing. A veteran of Vons, Linskey was most recently EVP, sales, with Intelligent Clearing Network after working for Valassis and Catalina Interactive.

• Rich Winters, VP, fresh foods, was formerly VP of sales and business development for Sun Pacific, Pasadena, and before that, VP of retail merchandising and marketing for the Northern California division of Safeway.

• Jaime Praeger, VP center store, was formerly director of Hispanic category management for Smart & Final, Los Angeles.

• Melina Ranii, VP, human resources, was formerly director of recruitment and development for Trader Joe’s Co., Monrovia.

Shaner said other hirings will be announced as the company builds the division offices to about 100 people.

The Pacific Southwest division of Bellingham, Wash.-based Haggen is in the process of converting 100 former Albertsons and Safeway stores in Southern California, Arizona and Nevada to its own brand.

Robert Piccinini, 73

Robert “Bob” Piccinini, Chairman of Save Mart Supermarkets headquartered in Modesto, died March 24, his family announced. He was 73.

In life, Piccinini was most passionate about two things – his family and his company. He purchased Save Mart from the Piccinini and Tocco families in 1985. Save Mart Supermarkets owns and operates more than 240 stores in Northern and Central California and Northern Nevada.
‘Want Fido fries with that?’

One out of every six U.S. households is buying fast food for a dog on at least some of their QSR drive thru or take-out window visits. These visits translate to a staggering number of trips (more than 1,000,000,000 ... with a “B” ... annually) where the dog is the one “lovin’ it.”

A recent study on dog ownership and fast food habits conducted by Relevation Research found just over one third of canine owners ever drive thru with Fido in tow and four-fifths of those actually claim to order something specifically for him. McDonald’s is visited most often for the dog followed by Burger King and Wendy’s. Starbucks is patronized less often for the dog than its No. 2 U.S. sales position warrants, despite offering Puppy Whip/ Puppuccino.

Relevation Research, a Barrington, Ill. based marketing research company, surveyed 1,499 nationally representative online consumers 18+ in March to learn that Millennials boast even more doggie trips than dog owners at large. No difference in the incidence of visiting for the dog was noted between males and females but males make more than twice as many doggie trips.

According to the 2013/14 APPA National Pet Owners Survey, dog ownership is expected to grow until 2018 with owners continuing the 20-year trend toward more and more pampering. The two population segments showing the most growth are Millennials and Baby Boomers.

“The need for a dog-friendly menu or take-out window is growing,” Nan Martin, principal at Relevation Research, said. “But the Baby Boomer also has an evolving focus on health. That means menu items specifically targeted for dogs or dog-friendly in terms of ingredients will resonate best. QSR and dog food/treat manufacturers should team up to design dog-safe offerings. Companies catering to the dog will win with owners who want to, guilt-free, feel like they’re spoiling the dog.”

Relevation Research, a management-owned, custom-marketing research firm, helps clients achieve greater competitive advantage through a better understanding of the relationships between products/services/brands and their markets. For more information on Relevation Research or this survey, visit www.RelevationResearch.com or call Nan Martin at 847-852-5078.

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Editor, DDBC News
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September
7 – Labor Day.
10 – Monterey Food Show, La Costa Resort and Spa, Carlsbad. Information: www.monprov.com
16 – Mexican Independence Day.
22-23 – Yom Kippur.

October

November
11 – Veterans Day.
26 – Thanksgiving.

December
6-14 – Hanukkah.
25 – Christmas.

Continued from Page 16

Big Cheese

Luke Abbott —

Abbott also is proud of Monterrey’s participation with the DDBC, especially that of 2015 President Cheryl Van Den Hende. “She was on the Board of Directors for a while before becoming President this year. We are so proud of her,” he said.

Abbott has been a supporter of the Council since the turn of the century. Monterrey stepped up for the 2015 Seminar in September by sponsoring the The Quest band for Saturday night’s entertainment.

“I am so proud of this Association. I attended my first Seminar when it was in San Diego on Mission Bay in 2000,” he said, “and I’ve been to many events since then. I really admire the way the DDBC honors the founding principles, especially that this business is built on relationships with other people.

“The heritage of the industry is celebrated, which gives us all more depth and meaning for what we do. We learn about the history and the people. We may all be competitors, but we get the chance to hang out together in a relaxed environment. This is not cut-throat … we all have the same causes and relationships,” he said.

He cites one example. “I attended a College of Knowledge in Commerce at the Smart & Final offices several years ago,” he recalled, “and I met and sat next to Maureen Parks of English Bay cookies. We had never met before, but now both of our companies do a lot of business together.”

Please join the DDBC in saluting Abbott as the Big Cheese Award honoree for May.

2016
January
18 – Martin Luther King Jr. birthday.

February
15 – President’s Day.

March
11-13 – Natural Products Expo West, Anaheim Convention Center. Information: www.refrigeratedfoods.org
27 – Easter.

April
9-13 – Western Association of Food Chains Convention, Honolulu.
22-30 – Passover.

May
5 – Cinco de Mayo.
30 – Memorial Day.

June
5-7 – IDDBA Dairy Deli Bake, Houston. Information: www.iddba.org

July
4 – Independence Day.

2017
January
16 – Martin Luther King Jr. birthday.

February
20 – President’s Day.

April
11-18 – Passover.
16 – Easter.

May
5 – Cinco de Mayo.
29 – Memorial Day.

September
5 – Labor Day.
16 – Mexican Independence Day.

October
2-4 – Rosh Hashanah.
11-12 – Yom Kippur.

November
11 – Veterans Day.
24 – Thanksgiving.

December
24-Jan. 1 – Hanukkah.
25 – Christmas Day.

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