

THE MANASK REPORT

FOODSERVICE & GIFT SHOP NEWS

FOR MUSEUMS, ZOOS, AQUARIUMS, BOTANICAL GARDENS & HISTORIC HOMES

A CUBAN IMMIGRANT, A RESTAURANT & A MUSEUM

THE TAMPA BAY HISTORY CENTER PARTNERS WITH YBOR CITY'S ICON, THE COLUMBIA RESTAURANT.

In 1905, a recently-arrived Cuban immigrant named Casimiro Hernandez opened a small café in Ybor City, Florida, a small thriving ethnic community located northeast of downtown Tampa. Founded in the late 1880s by a group of cigar factory owners hoping to relocate their manufacturing operations from Key West, Ybor City quickly became the epicenter of a booming cigar industry that would ultimately earn Tampa the nickname *Cigar City*. The cigar manufacturing business brought Italian, Sicilian, Spanish, Cuban and even German immigrants to-



Tampa Bay History Center

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gether to form a community. Their legacy can be seen in the rich culture and traditions that have become today's Ybor City. As a cultural landscape was formed, Mr. Hernandez's tiny café grew and flourished evolving from a restaurant catering to area workers and their families to a dining destination. Today, over a century after its founding, and operated by the fourth generation of Hernandez's family, the Columbia Restaurant wel-

comes thousands of guests each year. Customers savor local favorites such as café con leche, Cuban sandwiches, paellea, and of course the famous *1905 Salad*. Ybor City is uniquely Tampa and the Columbia Restaurant is uniquely Ybor City.

When the final plans were being developed to build the new 60,000 square foot Tampa Bay History Center, the choice for a food service partner was obvi-

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A Cuban Immigrant, a Restaurant & a Museum

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ous...the Columbia Restaurant, the oldest restaurant in Florida. Our team was very excited by the possibility of partnering with this area icon. We were drawn to the longevity of the operation, the owner's solid reputation in our community, and of course, the ability to add another level to our visitors' experience. As might be imagined, patrons to our galleries will, among many other historical topics, explore the history of Ybor

City and Tampa's rich cigar making heritage. Following their tours, these guests could make their visit even richer by tasting the culture of Ybor City—a perfect visitor experience!

Selling the idea to the Gonzmart family, current operators of the restaurant, proved fairly easy. Richard Gonzmart and his brother Casey, grandsons of Casimiro Hernandez, were intrigued with the idea from the beginning. One only has to walk through their restaurant and view

family photos and other historic memorabilia to realize that this family is proud of its heritage and the role they have played in this area's history. They immediately recognized the potential opportunity and began developing business models to determine the viability of expanding to this location.

In addition to the logical fit from a historical standpoint, the Gonzmarts also were drawn to the business potential of the location. The new center

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM FOOD SERVICE WITH A TWIST

Kim & Scott Holstein like to think of their first museum food service venture as a "twist of fate."

When Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago debuted its brand-new 46,700 sq. ft. facility in suburban Glenview, Illinois, it chose the couple's company, Kim & Scott's Gourmet Pretzels, Inc., to open and operate a self-service retail café to serve the museum's over 350,000 annual visitors.

Before selecting Kim & Scott's, the museum issued a "request for proposals" (RFP), with the goal that the café should be:

- Innovative
- Healthy
- Flexible
- Kid-Friendly
- Affordable

In their initial proposal, the Holsteins impressed the museum with their unique, easy handle and minimal preparation item, the stuffed pretzel that comes in a variety of delicious healthy fillings such as spinach and feta cheese, cheddar cheese, or mixed berry and apple cinnamon. In an environment where attendance can

fluctuate on the whim of the weather coupled with the fact that the museum had only planned a prep kitchen, the "cook from frozen" stuffed pretzel seemed ideal. The Holsteins had yet another impressive idea—their *Twist 'N Top* activity, a feature of the proposed café whereby children could shape, flavor and color their own pretzels. The interactive nature of the *Twist 'N Top* fit in well with the dynamic nature of the museum's programming.

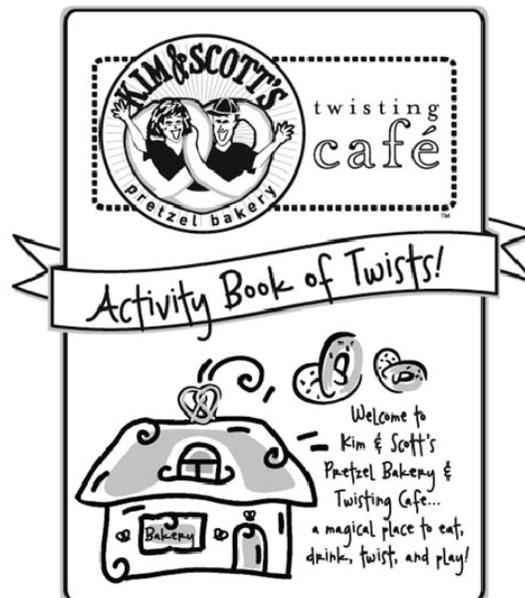
Pretzels seemed like a good fit for a museum that emphasizes healthy living; they are a healthy food option, and also one that children could greatly enjoy without the fuss of knives and forks. The new business was dubbed *Kim & Scott's Pretzel Twist-*

ing Café. "We truly love being an interactive café experience at the museum," says co-owner Kim Holstein.

The Holsteins share many of the ideological positions of the museum, including its environmental focus; the facility earned Silver-level LEED (Leaders in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.

As part of its overall planning and capital budget, the museum included the basic build out of the café, then after securing the contract with Kim and Scott's the museum worked with them to finalize the design. To help supplement what the museum had budgeted for the furniture, fixtures and equipment, Kim & Scott's provided \$12,500 worth of vendor-specific equipment such

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A Cuban Immigrant, a Restaurant & a Museum

will be located in downtown Tampa, within walking distance from the Tampa Convention Center, the St. Pete Times Forum (a major sports and performance venue), numerous large hotels and condominiums and cruise ship terminals. The building is sited in a 12 acre park, with spectacular views of the water and nearby Harbour Island and Tampa's Channelside District.

Any new business is a risky venture. While the History Center anticipates welcoming approximately 100,000 visitors annually and will host numerous catered special events during the year, the Columbia's initial investment would have to be substantial and made during a time of much economic uncertainty. Fortunately for the History Center, the Gonzmarts took the position that if the operation could just break even, it would be a project well worth undertaking. Years ago, before the passing of their father, Cesar, the Gonzmart sons were told by him to get involved in and support the new History Center, at that time in its early planning stages. Armed with this memory from their father and after careful review, the Gonzmarts decided to move forward.

The Tampa Bay History Center team is comprised of some very talented museum professionals who have been immersed in every aspect of the development of our new museum. We are not however, food service professionals. We recognized the challenges associated with structuring an agreement that would be fair to both parties when we perhaps did not even know what questions to ask.

Fortunately, we found a highly-capable partner in Rob Schwartz, Principal of Manask and Associates.

"We are not food service professionals. We recognized the challenges...Fortunately, we found a highly-capable partner in Manask & Associates"

Rob walked us through the many points to consider in framing an agreement, from facility maintenance issues to food quality control. He provided an overview of the industry and current trends that helped shape our expectations as we crafted the contract. From this point, there were several months of back and forth between the legal staffs of both the Columbia and the History Center before a final agreement was reached.

On October 9th, 2008 (16 months following the initial conversation with the Columbia) the agreement was signed establishing a formal partnership between the Columbia and the History Center. This agreement gave the Columbia exclusive rights to provide food service in the Tampa Bay History Center and established the Columbia Café within the Center. One hundred and four years after Casimiro Hernandez opened his small café in Ybor City, the latest chapter in the Columbia Restaurant's history will be written with the opening of the new Columbia Café at the Tampa Bay History Center.

The Gonzmarts anticipate investing over \$1 million in the build out of the kitchen and restaurant spaces of the building (the

History Center provided the building shell space only). These improvements will be amortized over a 60 month period and ownership will convert to the Center following this period. Sales are projected to range anywhere from \$2,000,000 to \$3,000,000 annually. The History Center will keep all room rental revenue and will receive a percentage of all gross food and beverage sales. The initial contract period is for three years and is renewable thereafter.

The enthusiasm within the community over this partnership has been tremendous. Numerous inquiries from individuals and groups wishing to hold a special event at the History Center began shortly after the announcement was made. For the Tampa Bay History Center and the Columbia Café the future looks bright. Our thanks to the team at Manask & Associates for helping us forge this great partnership. ■

*By: C.J. Roberts, President & CEO—
Tampa Bay Historical Center*



Mr. Hernandez's Café in Ybor City, Florida, 1936

Children's Museum Food Service With A Twist

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as a frozen yogurt machine, stew pots, soda machine, conveyor toaster ovens, décor, and signage.

"We did not look at the relationship as a contract," museum president Sheridan Turner says of the their selection of Kim & Scott's. "We felt we

had forged a new museum partnership." Also, because the Museum cannot lease the space or charge rent, it receives 4 percent of the café's gross sales each month. Kim & Scott's worked with architect/design firm CT Enterprises to create a distinctive retail visual style for the café.

Many of the other businesses who

responded to the museum's RFP wanted to manage both the café and all the museum's catering needs. The museum, however, wanted to keep the café independent of special events programming, as food preparation for an affordable family café is very different than the catering demands for a black-tie gala. However, Kim & Scott's are on the mu-

REDEEM YOUR COUPONS: 2 CASE STUDIES

AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC

The Aquarium of the Pacific and its food service operator, SAVOR Catering by SMG, have partnered for the past 10 years to make the members' experience at the Aquarium an exciting one with various activities throughout the year including specially priced menus and offers that are only available to members. Among those offers are the 10% off coupons that members get in their monthly publication called "Pacific Currents." This coupon promotion enables members to get 10% off their entire food/beverage purchase in two locations at the Aquarium. In some Aquarium publications such as the "10th Anniversary Special," the

members also get a 10% off coupon to use during the month of January for either hot chocolate or cappuccino drinks.

Members redeem an average of 70-80 coupons each month with the highest redemption in the month of August. In August 2008, 141 coupons were redeemed and the lowest month was October with only 30 coupons redeemed. About 32,000 coupons go out quarterly to all Aquarium members. They are a great tool that encourage new members to come in and try the food and service as well as for existing members to save some money during their regular visits. ■

JANUARY 10th Anniversary Special Offer

AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC MEMBERS-ONLY SPECIAL

Save 10% on a hot chocolate or cappuccino from the Coffee Cart.

Present this coupon at the Coffee Cart in the Great Hall, along with your membership card, to receive 10% off a hot chocolate or cappuccino.

This coupon is valid in January 2009. Valid as a one-time offer. Cannot be combined with any other offer. No cash value. Restrictions may apply.

SEATTLE AQUARIUM

Membership has its advantages at the Seattle Aquarium Café. Over 27,000 members received the spring addition of *Currents* magazine which included a 20% discount coupon redeemable at the Aquarium Café. The coupon offered members a discount on food and beverages during the month of May, excluding weekends. Members traditionally receive a 10% discount from the café on many offerings which include two local favorites, Café Appassionato coffee and Ivar's "legendary" clam chowder plus daily specials and kid friendly meals.

Sodexo Leisure Services, the Aquarium's Café operator, participated in a promotion that would acquaint or reacquaint Aquarium members with the new (opened June 2007) Aquarium Café. Rose Van Ommen, Sodexo's General Manager, calculated 112 coupons redeemed for a total member savings of \$375. Mem-

bership participation receiving the standard discounts increased 9% over the prior month with 7% increase occurring on weekends.

Rose noted the coupon may have had more adult appeal in the messaging "come savor the offerings of our classically trained chef" which may have accounted for the weekend increase in membership participation. In order to appeal to all potential Aquarium visitors, Rose suggested making the coupon geared towards the kid meals and toddler activities and a pace changer for parents with preschool children. ■

FOR AQUARIUM MEMBERS ONLY

Save 20%
on your next visit to the

AQUARIUM CAFÉ

Come savor the offerings of our classically trained chef: homemade soup and baked goods (both prepared fresh daily), made-to-order salads, kids' meals and daily specials and more. We're also proud to feature Café Appassionato coffee, Ivar's legendary clam chowder and local microbrews.

Members: bring in this coupon and save 20% on your total bill. Offer good one time only, Monday-Friday; expires May 31, 2008.

Children's Museum Food Service With A Twist

seum's preferred catering list, and serve as an attractive option for events such as family reunions and birthday parties.

The *Twisting Café* operates in the museum's "Free Zone," an area before museum admission is paid that includes the museum's educational toy store making it easily accessible and also a great meeting point for family and friends. "We were very particular about the location and environment that we created," says Kim Holstein. "We are passionate about having a place where we can be a part of a community and twist a difference, one pretzel at a time."

The dining area and seating numbers are based on museum research to estimate attendance on peak hours, percentage of patrons who were interested in dining onsite, and how much seating would accommodate the crowds. With the current attendance figures of 350,000 to 400,000 visitors annually, the museum estimated that seating for 75 at any given time would satisfy demand except during peak attendance days. Additional outdoor seating provides room for 36 additional diners and expands capacity even further during the busy summer months.

The café was not anticipated to be a large revenue stream for the museum; it was viewed instead as a much needed amenity to help complete the image of the museum as a family destination. Visitors who use the café space are not required to buy anything. Many bring food from home; only food from other vendors is disallowed at the café.

In terms of budgetary goals, Kim & Scott's targeted 30 percent food costs



for items prepared on-site such as their pretzel sandwiches and salads, and 50 percent food cost for pre-packaged items, such as bottled juices, string cheese, and frozen pretzels.

Though the *Twisting Café* was their first full-service self-service café, the Holsteins have been in business since 1995, operating a 27,000 sq. ft. bakery facility in western Chicago.

There, they produce 50,000 pretzels daily and distribute them nationwide to book stores, airport kiosks, movie theaters, coffee shops, and grocery stores.

Due to larger than estimated crowds, the first few months at the café were somewhat rocky. Attendance patterns followed large rushes during lunch and closing hours, with substantially fewer visitors in between.

The café introduced a cappuccino maker and specialty coffees to attract earlier guests, and these efforts have paid off with a steadier stream of customers throughout the day.

Kim & Scott's had to address other issues after opening the café. Price points were adjusted, as were serving sizes, to make them more appropriate for children. The café also introduced a "cocoaccino bar," where children could order and customize their own drinks from a child-sized bar top. Items such as macaroni and cheese, soups and "knot dogs" (small chicken dogs wrapped in pretzel dough) were their innovative response to requests for hot dogs.

Of the museum's 6,300 weekly visitors, an estimated 3,000, or 45 percent, visit the café; 1,250 orders/

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We Continue to Support and Exhibit at the 2009 Conferences

Hope To See You There!

EXHIBITING AT:

- ACM:** Assoc. of Children's Museums, Apr 27–30, **Booth # 72**
- AAM:** American Assoc. of Museums, Apr 30–May 4, **Booth # 1601**
- APGA:** American Public Garden Assoc., Jun 23–27, **Booth # 19**
- AZA:** Assoc. of Zoos & Aquariums, Sep 12–17, **Booth # TBD***
- AMM:** Assoc. of Midwest Museums, Sep 27–30, **Booth # TBD***
- ASTC:** Assoc. of Science & Technology Centers, Oct 31–Nov 3, **Booth # 404**
- NEMA:** New England Museum Assoc., Nov 11–13, **Booth # TBD***

ATTENDING:

- IAAPA:** International Assoc. of Amusement Parks & Attractions
 - Nov 16–20

*** For details please email us at ArtManask@manask.com.**



NEWSBRIEFS — Arts & Science

"The MFA Café" at the **Museum of Fine Arts** in St. Petersburg, FL has a 165 seat restaurant operated by *Olympia Catering & Events* and chef James Canter. The cuisine is modern Mediterranean. Specialties include roasted-beet and arugula salad with goat cheese and lavender honey-tarragon vinaigrette, house-made empanadas, bistro steak and croque madame—smoked Black Forest ham on wheat-berry bread with Gruyere fondue and fresh sunny-side-up egg. {*Nation's Restaurant News*, 6/16/08}

Union Square Hospitality Group, led by Danny Meyer, known in the museum world for its great restaurants at **MoMA** in New York City, formed a new division that will run several restaurants at Citi Field, where the *New York Mets* will play in 2009.

"The **Dallas Museum of Art** and *Sodexo, Inc.* announced the long-awaited launch of the Stephan Pyles-inspired menu at the museum's fine dining restaurant, *Seventeen Seventeen*. The new menu, the first of its kind from Dallas-based chef, debuted July 15, 2008 and is infused with influences from the art of Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas found in the DMA's permanent collection. Jason Ferraro, *Sodexo's* executive chef at the DMA, worked in close collaboration with Pyles, a pioneer of New American Cuisine, to develop this exclusive menu for *Seventeen Seventeen*. It features new items like Tamarind Cured Beef Tenderloin with Farmstead Cheeses, Micro Greens, Spiced Marcona Almonds and Macerated Summer Fruits and 'Virtually Smoked' Salmon Terrine with Watermelon, Cucumber and Saffron 'Caviar'." {*Sodexo Press Release*, 7/7/08}

"In June 2008, *Nation's Restaurant News* issue featured an article in conjunction with the **National Gallery of Art's** exhibiting hidden treasures from

the **National Museum** in Kabul, more than 200 extraordinary archaeological objects long assumed to have been stolen or destroyed before they were recovered from a vault underneath the Presidential Palace in 2004. In connection with the exhibit at the National Gallery, a number of Washington restaurants were invited to create special menus celebrating the culinary heritage of the Silk Road. Owner Ali Amin and chef Nasrullah Malang of Bamian, an Afghan restaurant in falls Church, VA, have been important organizers of the event. The chef served as an advisor to chef David Rogers of *Restaurant Associates*, which runs the restaurants in the National Gallery, in constructing a special Afghan menu for the Gallery's "Garden Café."

Since 1995, Director of the **Museum of Modern Art** (NY), Mr. Lowry has spent a good deal of time visiting museums around the world. He also happens to be a major food enthusiast. Drawing from various international institutions, his curated meal is: Bar Snack-Bowl of spiced nuts at the **Morgan Library & Museum**, New York; Aperitif-Glass of Mercuray 1^{er} Cru Clos Tonnerre, "Rex Whistler Restaurant" at **Tate Britain**, London; Starter-Roasted and smoke Iberian pork with Palo Cortado wine infusion and cauliflower meringue at the "Restaurante Guggenheim Bilbao;" Entrée-Wild salmon with horseradish crust, cabbage and Riesling at the "Modern Bar Room" at **MoMA**, New York; Dessert-Three Danish cheese with orange caramelized walnuts and bread at the **Louisiana Museum of Modern Art's** café, Humlebaek, Denmark. {*Departure's Magazine*, un-dated}

Indianapolis Museum of Art awarded *Sodexo* its foodservice contract to operate daily foodservice at the museum's café. *Sodexo* was also granted to pro-

vide non-exclusive catering services as one of the two approved caterers with *Kahn's Katering*, an Indiana Corporation, being the other caterer to win the contract.

San Francisco's new **California Academy of Sciences** that re-opened in September 2008, has rainforests, an eco-roof, and an albino alligator. Architect Renzo Piano had to find homes for the Academy's 20 million scientific specimens, 30 PhD scientists, and all manner of plants, animals, and marine life—and for exhibits ranging from a colony of African penguins to the world's deepest living coral-reef display as detailed in the October 2008 issue of *Sunset Magazine*. The Academy has two restaurants operated by popular local San Francisco restaurateurs *Charles Phan* and *Loretta Keller*. One restaurant is a very large self-service food court style with about 150 seats with a very creative and eclectic menu representing local San Francisco fare. Food/beverages is served on permanent ware (yes, no disposable ware) and no *Coca-Cola* or *Pepsi-Cola* to be found! Only healthy bottled beverages freshly made like lemonade among other beverages. Shade grown and certified organic coffee is *Thanksgiving* brand. There is also a casual café, cart-like in the Atrium with additional seating to accommodate the high visitor traffic. The table-service "The Moss Restaurant" is located below the main self-service restaurant and seats about 80 plus there is a trendy bar serving the dual purpose of dining. The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner with a separate entrance for the restaurant during museum closed hours. The March 2009 issue of *Town & Country* magazine details "the café as a perfect setting for a casual lunch. The subterranean Moss Room stays open late offering a more formal experi-

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NEWSBRIEFS — Zoos

Chicago's *Levy Restaurants Sports & Entertainment Group* opened "Café at Wild Things" at the city's **Lincoln**



Park Zoo in May 2008 based on October 1, 2008 article in *Restaurants & Institutions* magazine. "The concept is the first of its kind among zoos and in

the Levy portfolio for its environmentally conscious approach in all aspects of operation, from eco-friendly packaging to an organic, sustainable and locally grown menu developed by Levy Executive Chef Rodolfo

Mariano. Fare includes Panini and salads, sides such as cheese corn cakes and organic potato salad, and a kids' menu featuring turkey dogs, turkey sandwiches, macaroni and cheese, fresh fruit and cookies."

Zoo Knew? "When he's not planning the catering for a 400-person wedding reception or helping to tend one of his three organic herb gardens, Chicago-area chef Robert Ares finds time to conduct classes on such of-the-moment topics as sustainable seafood and pairing coffee with chocolate. Ares is executive chef of the **Chicago Zoological Society** at **Brookfield Zoo**." "People can see the chef going out to pick the herbs," Ares says. There's (a garden) by the children's zoo; we're helping teach the kids how to eat healthy." {RESTAURANTS & INSTITUTIONS, 4/1/08}

Local Farm Foods to be Showcased at The Wild Center—Fresh, flavorful and better quality are just some of the reasons Manager Ian O'Brien serves locally produced foods at the "Waterside Café" at **The Wild Center** in Tupper Lake, NY. Raising awareness of environmental issues and supporting local entrepreneurs are also reasons for his interest in regional meats, cheese, breads and seasonal produce.

Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, Washington awarded *Lancer Hospitality*, a Minnesota based company that also operates at the Minnesota and Como Zoos, the contract for operating the Zoo's foodservice concessions and catering services. The new contract started in January of 2009. ■

NEWSBRIEFS — Other

The **U.S. Capitol Visitor Center** in Washington, D.C. opened on December 2, 2008. The project took six years to complete the new 580,000 square-foot center underground. Besides two gift shops there is a 530-seat restaurant operated by *Restaurant Associates*. Manask & Associates did some consulting work on the foodservice part of the project several years ago for J.M. Zell consultants in Washington, DC. Visitor Center details can be viewed at www.aoc.gov.

"The **U.S. Senate** plans to turn over the management of its self-operated private dining room to an outside company. But senators have long fought the idea, despite the fact that the operation has lost millions of dollars during that same period. According to the Washington Post, the Senate restaurant has lost an esti-

mated \$2 million 2008, and needed a \$250,000 bailout from taxpayers to enable it to cover its July (2008) payroll. The Senate and House of Representatives both approved the measure, which waits President Bush's signature. Foodservice operations in the House have been managed by a foodservice contractor for more than 20 years—Restaurant Associates currently operates several cafeterias and coffee shops for the House." {FOODSERVICE DIRECTOR, August 15, 2008}

A New Home For News — "The history of news gathering (and all of its attendant issues, from muckraking to censorship, yellow journalism to libel) has finally been deemed worthy of a world-class museum, the just-opened (April 2008) **NEWSEUM** on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC. The six-story limestone building, de-

signed by Polshek Partnership, contains 250,000 square-feet of theatres and interactive exhibits created to help the general public learn more about the sometimes perilous and occasionally scurrilous business of reporting." {TOWN & COUNTRY, August 2008} Dining is a large part of the new NEWSEUM! There is a large, full-service, self-service food court for NEWSEUM visitors operated by *Wolfgang Puck Catering/Restaurant Associates* and a full-service destination restaurant called "The Source" operated by *Wolfgang Puck Fine Dining Group*.

Also in Washington, D.C., **Shakespeare Theatre Company** selected Maryland's based *Ridgewells, Inc.* in February as their patron foodservice concessionaire. For their approved caterers, Shakespeare Theatre Company selected and awarded the agree-

OPERATOR UPDATES

Contract foodservice provider **Aramark Corporation** has established a division to manage foodservice operations and facilities at museums, zoos, aquariums and science centers across the country. *Aramark Cultural Attractions* initially will handle about 20 accounts that previously were managed by the company's Sports & Entertainment division. {*Nation's Restaurant News*, 3/17/08}

The Restaurant at the **Getty**, operated by **Bon Appetit Management** had a wonderful write-up in the December 24, 2008 Los Angeles Times by famous restaurant critic Irene Virbila. Included in her review were the comments "...the Getty is hands down the best museum restaurant in Southern California." She goes on to say, "Nothing can beat the setting, that's for sure. Housed on a bluff, the restaurant features floor to ceiling win-

dows with a drop-dead view of the bluish Santa Monica mountains and, on a clear day, the deep turquoise of the Pacific (ocean) off in the distance."

Retail operator, **Event Network** has new partnerships including the **New England Aquarium**. In Q1 2009, they began partnerships with the **Washington National Cathedral** (Washington, DC), **Ford's Theatre** (also in Washington, DC) and **Connecticut Science Center** in Hartford.

Service System Associates Inc. (SSA) has been selected to manage the retail operations at the new Train Station / Visitor Center within **Hermann Park**—one of Houston's most historically significant public spaces. Hermann Park hosts the Houston Zoo, Miller Outdoor Theatre, and the Houston Museum of Natural Science. SSA has also been

selected to manage the retail operations at **Fort Wayne Children's Zoo**.

Sodexo was awarded contract for operating **Indianapolis Museum of Art's** café and catering as well as being awarded the café and catering contract at the **Chicago Botanic Gardens**. ■

CAN EATERIES GO

GREEN?

EARN GREEN?

Restaurants pushed to reduce carbon footprints

Ted Turner struts into one of his busiest restaurants at lunch hour and is ogled by startled customers. A diner tells Ted, "Love your food, Ted. What's next?" The short answer: green grub. Turner, the media mogul turned philanthropist, now wants to be known as something of a different color: a green restaurant owner. In other words, a guy whose restaurants leave a smaller carbon footprint on the environment. Which is why you will not find a plastic straw or cup in any of Ted's Montana Grills' 55 casual dining restaurants. The straws are made from biodegradable paper. The menus are printed on 100% recycled paper. Even the cups are cornstarch. Turner is helping to fund a "green" restaurant initiative that the powerful National Restaurant Association unveiled in May 2008 at its annual convention in Chicago. The purpose: to nudge owners of the nation's 945,000 restaurants to think about controlling energy use and waste creation." May 16, 2008, *USA TODAY*

NEWSBRIEFS — Other

(Continued from page 7)

ment to *Design Cuisine, Occasions Caterers and Ridgewells, Inc.*

The new **Children's Museum San Diego** opened in May 2008 and as part of their green and sustainable mission established a café operation managed by *Best Beverage Company* in San Diego with sandwiches, salads and menu items from *Organic To Go*. *Organic To Go* is a Certified Organic Retailer serving Seattle, WA, Los Angeles, Orange County and San Diego, California. ■



Editor's Note to Operators

We ask for, welcome and encourage news and articles about all operators to include in the "The Manask Report." If it appears we write more about some operators than others, this is true because some operators provide this information and some provided none or very little. If any operators serving cultural institutions would like their news and/or articles included in the future editions of "The Manask Report," please email us at Art@manask.com and we will make every effort to include newsworthy information.

A RETAIL STRATEGY FOR INCREASING REVENUE

*F*ocus on your Customer.

Successful niche retail merchandisers have looked at the mainstream world of retail and crafted businesses around an untapped product or customer need. Earned income professionals should think like a niche retailer, focusing on narrowly defined groups or sub groups of potential visitor/customers, understanding, prioritizing, and developing tailored retail strategies which are likely to satisfy the different preferences of each segment.

Understanding your customer has never been more important, and is the basic tool in developing retail

strategies and tactics for maintaining and increasing income in a recession. After absorbing your institutional reason for being and purpose, a non-profit merchandiser must thoroughly examine, prioritize and forecast sales potential from various customer segments, including their interests, age, gender, values, activities, buying patterns, and styles.

While your customers might appear to be the same year in and year out (i.e. middle income family groups interested in educational and entertaining experiences), there are subtle changes to these visitor's interests, which the savvy retailer keeps their eye on. Changes might include color preferences, home décor styles, particular subjects or authors, and par-

ticularly in a recession, lowered consumer confidence and eagerness for a good deal.

In addition to reviewing current institutional visitor surveys and marketing demographic studies, merchandisers can get out in the museum or venue and observe the visitors:

1. What are they wearing?
2. How are they moving through the Museum?
3. How do they approach or move through the store?
4. What are they drawn to?
5. What do they pass up?

Look at recent sales results:

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THE ECO-CONSCIOUS CONSULTANT

ONLINE SOURCES

Finding local suppliers takes legwork. Fortunately, a growing number of regional and national resources offer starting points.

NATIONAL SOURCES:

www.chefscollaborative.org: A professional network of chefs and food purveyors focused on fostering sustainable foodways.

www.farmerchefconnection.org: Affiliated with Ecotrust, Farmer-Chef Connection provides networking opportunities for food buyers and local farmers.

www.localharvest.org: A national directory of family farms and farmers' markets.

REGIONAL SOURCES:

www.caff.org: California's Community Alliance with Family Farmers

(CAFF) Web site has listings of local chapters. The University of California at Santa Cruz buys local produce through the help of a local CAFF chapter.

www.farmfresh.org: This local guide for Rhode Island connects Rhode Island chefs to local farmers and keeps track of what's in season.

www.farmtochefexpress.org: Started with the help of a New York State grant, Farm to Chef connects New York City chefs with New York farmers by facilitating ordering and organizing farm visits.

www.familyfarmed.org: A project of national nonprofit organizations Sustain, the site helps commercial buyers and the pub-



lic find Midwestern organic and sustainable farms. FamilyFarmed.org also hosts an annual expo at which Chicago-area chefs pair with local farmers for an open-to-the-public dinner.

www.cascadeharvest.org: The Cascade Harvest Coalition's Farm-to-Table program aims to develop connections between Western Washington farmers and foodservice buyers at farmer-buyer workshops held throughout the state. ■

March 15, 2008, RESTAURANTS & INSTITUTIONS

A Retail Strategy for Increasing Revenue

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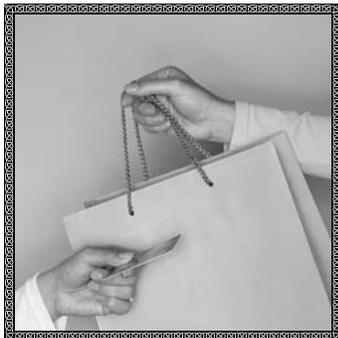
1. What are they buying?
2. What price points are the most successful?
3. What categories are still strong?

Prioritize your customer segments/product niches.

Begin sorting out how each customer segment affects your earned income in terms of sales margins, operational expense, audience volume, and growth potential.

For example:

1. Do school groups come in a separate entry requiring a standalone store to be opened?
2. Do these customers require special sales service with extra time and effort by a sales associate or do they prefer self-service?
3. Does this customer group expect low retail prices which narrow the profit margins or do they buy the most profitable category of merchandise?
4. How large is this customer base?
5. Are there barriers to gaining or losing sales from this group?
6. Is there a potential growth in this segment?
7. How does each segment make their buying decisions?



Use a matrix to get a simple view of how each customer segment sales potential falls in relation to the others. A prioritization can be made based upon which group has the highest probability to bring in the most income. This prioritized customer segment list should provide the merchandising team a clear picture of the groups upon which to focus attention and investment.

Make each prioritized customer segment real for your merchandising team.

Identify the principal customer niches and develop model profiles. Brainstorm each customer segment's mind set:

1. What would make them come in to your store?
 2. What would make them buy in your store?
 3. What movies or sporting events will they be watching?
 4. What will they care about?
 5. Ask yourself why would they buy something from you?
 6. What are their style in terms of fashion and home décor?
 7. What kinds of books would they read?
- Make a list of what you can do to provide the right products, displays, price points, promotions, special store events, and offers that will appeal to each customer segment.

Identify merchandising directions for each customer profile.

Rolling out a merchandising plan that is not made in a vacuum is critical in a recession. Dr. James A. Belasco, Ph.D. the author of [Teaching the Elephant to Dance](#), advocates an exercise which requires everyone on a team to survey periodicals, newspapers, cultural events, industry trade magazines and share the clippings with each other to encourage the collective "keeping an eye on" what is happening in the marketplace and to stimulate new ideas and fresh product development approaches. "We're voracious 'tearers' of newspapers, journals and

magazines, clipping articles that pertain to our professional and personal lives". Yvonne Miles the Director of Merchandising at the Zoological Society of San Diego uses this exercise with a retail twist. The retail buyers and store operators are assigned to bring in clipped "gems" sharing, in a brainstormed format, what is happening culturally, in the next year. Buyers share the movies, books, exhibitions, styles, colors, home décor, economic forecasts, and other subtle attitudes that might affect the next two years merchandising directions. These brainstormed ideas are distilled into no more than ten big ideas and retailing directions. The retail team, whether in buying, promoting, operating, or visual merchandising, will focus on these big ideas and directions as a basis for developing their operation and merchandising plans for the coming two years.

Following are five basic strategies for retailing in a recession.

Audience:

Understand your audience, update and reaffirm your niche merchandising directions. Prioritize your customer segment focus.

Products:

Spend extra time in the markets to search for new products and new promotional ideas. While the first instinct for administrators is to cut back on travel expense, getting out in the markets, searching for innovative products, discovering fresh ideas and trends is more important in a recession than at any other time. Your buying team is the creative engine that can keep the store exciting and relevant to what your visitors care about and respond to.

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Promotions:

The retail team should plan creative and fun monthly promotions, including: publicity in the institution's direct mail, placement on the website, high profile on site signage, major in store displays, and employee sales incentives. It is critical to include a plan for internal product communication so that employees can be up to speed on all the current promotions.

Assessment:

Measure your results quickly. Time is of the essence in watching and learning from customers' response. Look for the products, categories, price points, displays, or sales techniques that were working. The only way you can do this, is to put in place measurements. If you do not have software to automate this effort, set-up manual tracking systems such as daily sales journals, inventory counts, transaction counts, in

store customer counts, and customer questionnaires.

Team:

Work hard to have fun by planning inventive and economical employee rewards and celebrations for even the smallest successes. Employees take the biggest hit during a recession; they and their fellow employees are losing hours and they are being asked to do more with less. This gets old fast. Happy upbeat employees are a crucial ingredient to maintaining and increasing sales. Look for even positive behavior, events or initiatives and celebrate it. Figure out ahead of time different ways to have fun and make it a "must do" on your calendar. Keep it fresh and light-hearted. Thank your team over and over again. For ideas see The 1001 Rewards & Recognition Field book: The Complete Guide by Bob Nelson and Dean R. Spitzer. ■

By: Marjorie Sheldon, Principal—Manask & Associates

NEWSBRIEFS

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ence with sophisticated dishes like guinea fowl with almond curry and root vegetables, in the shadow of dramatic vertical moss garden." ■

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Famed restaurant critic, *S. Irene Virbila's* advises her *Los Angeles Times* readers... "Now that broad swaths of folks across the country are tightening their belts, negotiating a budget (sometimes for the first time) and

deciding where to cut expenses, dining out might be getting the ax. Why go out when we can cook just as well as most restaurants for less than half the price? Actually, there is a very good reason. If everyone suddenly gives up restaurant-going when times are tough, those favorite restaurants may no longer be around when times get better. Which means it's a good thing, every once in a while at least, to give in to that cabin fever and go out for dinner. I think you'll find that restaurateurs share your pain and have added some less-pricey items, or modestly *prix-fixe* meals.

There are lots of ways to eat well

without going crazy. Share an appetizer or a main course. Skip dessert. But do savor every bite. Tip generously and let the chef or restaurateur know how much you appreciate what they're doing. You cannot keep the entire restaurant scene alive by yourself, but you can support the restaurants that have meant something to you over the years. Show your face: Don't just disappear. It's better to come in more often for a bite at the bar than once in a blue moon for a big blowout dinner. Because, if we don't support our restaurants now, they may not be still serving when things turn around and we really have something to celebrate." ■

November 19, 2008, *Los Angeles Times*

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transactions are placed each week. Approximately 20 percent of those orders are placed by museum members, a number that has been steadily increasing—an indication that the café is becoming a regular part of the museum experience for many guests. Total sales at the café are about \$1.50 for every museum visitor, or about 20 percent additional spending per visit when added to the \$7.50 regular admission price.

The interactive *Twist 'N Top* has been a key element of the café's success. Nearly 3,000 *Twist 'N Tops* are done annually between walk-in traffic and birthday parties; they have been successful enough to warrant the installation of tables in the café dedi-

cated to them, as well as hiring a "twisting professor" to lead the children through the process.

In short, the partnership has been and continues to be a great success and of most importance a huge hit with the museum's visitors, young and old. "Certainly everything didn't work out exactly as we'd planned," admits Kim, "but we've been able to exceed the Museum's already high expectations. We're a pretzel company, so we should expect a few twists along the way." ■

**By: Steven Schuster, Grant Writer—
Kohl Children's Museum**

Editor's Note

We hope you enjoyed our newsletter's updated look. We're here to provide you with the most up-to-date foodservice and gift shop news, information and happenings.

You should also visit our updated website (www.manask.com).

KEEP IT GREEN!

In support of sustainable practices, send us your email address to ArtManask@manask.com and next year's issue will be sent to you electronically.

Catherine Lorrimer
Editor and Publisher

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