

MRA NEWS

Serving up news for the Massachusetts Restaurant Community

JANUARY 2020

Learn, Connect & Share at the 2020 New England Food Show!



March 22-24, 2020
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center
Boston, MA

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The MRA
Massachusetts Restaurant Association
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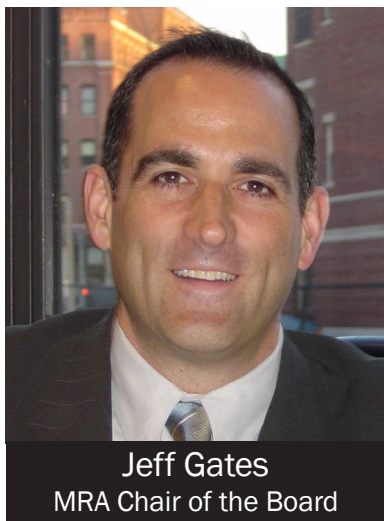
NATIONAL
RESTAURANT
ASSOCIATION



Registration is now open. [Register here!](#)

See page 7 for more NEFS details.

From our Chair



Dear Members,

Welcome to 2020, and doesn't that just sound odd? Seems like just yesterday we were flustered about the new millennium and the end of our computer programs, doesn't it?

Well, the weather gods gave us a late gift in December with a mild finish to the month, and hopefully it helped usher great sales into your restaurants during the shortened sales season this year. Of course, our beloved Patriots looked poised (okay, maybe we had our fingers crossed!) to make a good deep run in the play-offs and through the first week of February again, but I think we now annually bake that playoff run into our budgets. That really speaks to how spoiled we are in Pat's Nation. I hope and believe we can carry the sales momentum from December not only into January and February, but far beyond.

As we enter the new decade, we do so with some wins and some caution. The wins? Our guests continue to spend more of their food dollars AWAY from home, as opposed to AT home. In fact, the number is now slightly above 52

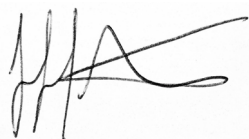
cents of every food dollar. That is now almost 4 years that the number has been above 50 cents, and it means tremendous continued opportunity for us.

Another win? Governor Charlie Baker and the legislature kept to their word that the EMAC surcharge, enacted two years ago after public subsidies for health care approached 42% of the entire state budget, did sunset on December 31, 2019. There is no question that the two year charge took its toll on our restaurants' bottom line, so that sunset was great news for all.

The caution? Sales remain flattish across existing restaurants, and our guests are becoming more price sensitive. Now more than ever it is critical that we provide great value on our offerings, and certainly exceed their expectations with superior service they don't get at home, in environments that are more than warm and welcoming.

All in all, I think we appreciate the wins, and will all heed the caution, as it is what we always do, and finally #togetherwewin. Happy New Year to all!

Sincerely,



Jeff Gates
MRA Chair

jgates@themassrest.org

New year...new look!

We're excited to share the first 2020 newsletter with a fresh new look!

In addition, here are some new features to expect in upcoming issues:

- Up and coming chef profiles
- Restaurant Openings
- Business Partner Profiles
- Sponsor stories
- New Food & Beverage Trends
- And more!

We'd love to hear from you - share your personal stories and news with us and we will begin to include member stories! Email Kerry Miller [here](#).

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Federal Issues/National Restaurant Association Update

A number of issues were included as part of a year-end spending bill authorized by Congress and signed by the President in December. Included in that legislation are certain issues that directly and indirectly impact our industry:



Repeal of Health Care Taxes

Full Repeal of Health

Insurance Tax: Permanently repeals, under the Affordable Care Act, the estimated \$15.5 billion annual fee imposed on health insurance providers.

Full Repeal of “Cadillac Tax”: Permanently repeals, under the Affordable Care Act, the tax intended to target high-cost health care plans, which is scheduled to take effect in 2022. The tax was originally set to take effect in 2018 and apply to employer-sponsored health plans that in that year cost more than \$10,200 for individuals and \$27,500 for families; the rate was set at 40% of coverage costs that exceeded those thresholds and adjusted annually for inflation.

Finding, Training, and Retaining Employees

One-Year Extension of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC): WOTC is a federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. The restaurant industry is the second largest beneficiary of this tax credit, which was worth \$3.6 billion, for all industries, in 2019.

H-2B Visas: Authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, after consultation with the Secretary of Labor, to increase the cap on the number of temporary foreign workers who can enter the U.S. through the H-2B visa program, after determination that the needs of American businesses cannot be satisfied in fiscal year 2020. While this doesn’t provide permanent cap relief, it does stick to the trend in how Congress has handled this issue in recent years. Last year, DHS allowed for 30,000 additional visas, though it remains to be seen how the administration will approach timing and numbers this year.

E-Verify: Extended to allow employers to verify the eligibility of prospective employees to work in the U.S.

Expansion of Apprenticeship Funds: Contains \$175 million, an increase of \$15 million, to expand opportunities through apprenticeships only registered under the National Apprenticeships Act (NPA). This provision and increase will benefit the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation’s Hospitality Apprenticeship Program, which is a registered program under the NPA.

Sustaining and Increasing Business through Travel and Tourism

- **Reauthorization of Brand USA:** Reauthorizes and funds the Brand USA program, which promotes international travel to the U.S. Brand USA was established as a public-private partnership and is funded through a combination of private-sector donations and matching funds collected from foreign travelers visiting the U.S. The agreement would extend, through fiscal 2027, the program’s authority to receive funds from the Visa Waiver Program.

No Action on QIP:

The Qualified Improvement Property tax glitch fix was not included even though lawmakers, on both sides of the aisle, agree it should be fixed. Until then, businesses, employees, customers and dependent industries will continue to pay the price. Fixing the QIP glitch remains a critical priority for our industry.



National Restaurant Association **Action Request**

As many are aware, the Administration recently placed tariffs of 25% on European wines, cheeses, olive oil and other products as a result of a trade ruling against the business practices of the EU regarding Airbus.

While restaurants are just beginning to feel the effects of these tariffs, the US Trade Representative (USTR) recently proposed to up the ante and increase these tariffs, in addition to adding a new one that could profoundly affect restaurants and could take effect as soon as January. If enacted, the newly proposed tariffs could have a significant impact on restaurants and the products imported from the EU, impacting our supply chains and operations.

- The first action is a newly proposed 100% tariff on all French sparkling wines and some cheeses, which comes as a response to the French Digital Services Tax dispute.
- The second and more impactful tariff is a review by USTR to increase the current tariffs on most products from the EU from 25% to up to 100%. This could include ALL European wines and spirits, olive oil, olives, cheeses, pork products, and other food items.

To take action and submit comments on both proposed tariffs simultaneously, click [here](#).

News You Can Use - December 2019



Take a look at our latest News You Can Use video that was published in December.

Our latest [News You Can Use video](#) comes to you from a wintry New England location with a couple important year end reminders. Also, be sure to share your struggles, recommendations and ideas with the newly formed Massachusetts Restaurant Promotion Commission by clicking [here](#).

The MRAEF Certified Apprentice Program



This past July, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Department of Apprenticeship Standards, MassHire and Quinsigamond Community College we rolled out the first tranche of the MRAEF Sponsored Certified Restaurant Professional Apprentice Program. We enrolled 12 apprentices from 7 different MRA member restaurant concepts.

As of January, all 12 candidates are still enrolled in and participating in the program and are working diligently to complete their college classwork and complete their 150 hours of required technical instruction. They will also be continuing to gain the required 2,000 hours of related on the job learning. **Upon completion of these requirements and a final examination, each candidate will have earned:**

- 10 College Credits towards advancing their Restaurant or Hospitality Education
- ServSafe Food Handler Certification
- ServSafe Alcohol Certification
- ServSafe Workplace Manager Certification
- Servsafe Manager Certification
- Understanding Unconscious Bias Manager Certification
- Choke Saver Certification
- Allergen Training Certification
- ServSuccess Certified Restaurant Professional Certification
- Certified as a Certified Restaurant Professional with the State of Massachusetts
- Certified with the National Restaurant Association as a Certified Restaurant Professional

Even more important than these great accomplishments and certifications is the growth that each of these apprentices have seen over the course of this program. Many of them have been promoted or assumed more accountability in their jobs. It has forced them outside their comfort zones and built their confidence. To the extent that one of our apprentices was invited to sit on a panel discussion at the National Apprenticeship Week meeting hosted by Labor Secretary Acosta and 150 plus government, education and industry professionals. In such prestigious company our apprentice nailed it, commenting at the end of the panel that if not for this apprenticeship program she probably would never have opportunities and experiences like this.

The first round has given us a lot of successes but also some critical learnings. One is we will up the ante on the educational aspects and move the apprenticeship education level from Certified Restaurant Professional to that of Certified Restaurant Supervisor. Supervisor is a better fit and best lift for the candidate and participating MRA member restaurant. It will also dovetail nicely into the ProStart Program and will be a viable alternative to those who want an accelerated career in restaurants without the assumption of college debt.

Expect that we will be hosting classes of the new Certified Restaurant Supervisor Apprenticeship Programs in the Early Spring at Bunker Hill Community College and Holyoke Community College in Early Spring and will head back to Quinsigamond for round two in July. Each of these classes will hold 12 apprentices.

If you have any interest in learning more about the MRAEF Certified Restaurant Supervisor Apprenticeship Program or have candidates that you would like to present for the upcoming classes, please reach out to either Jen Almeida, Director of Education at jalmeida@themassrest.org or Kerry Miller, VP of Operations at kmiller@themassrest.org.

Keynote Speakers

Sunday, March 22



Micheala Mendelsohn

Founder, Trans Can Work
and LGBTQ activist

Diversity Keynote

Monday, March 23



Richard Blais

Restaurateur, cookbook author and
winner of Bravo's Top Chef All-Stars

Culinary Keynote

Tuesday, March 24



Marian Leitner

CEO & Co-Founder, Archer Roose Collective

Beverage Keynote

[Full Program Schedule](#)

[NEFS 2020 Highlights](#)

[Register Today Here](#)

The Toast - NEFS Industry After Hours Party on March 22, 2020



Live performance by CARLY TEFFT
Carly's bio [here](#).

Celebrate in style at M.J.'s O'Connor's Westin Waterfront Irish Pub immediately following the closing of the New England Food Show on Sunday, March 22nd.

Carly Tefft will headline our evening of fun, camaraderie, heavy hors d'oeuvres and cash bar.

MJ O'CONNOR'S
irish pub

425 Summer Street
Boston, MA

Doors open at 5:00pm

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE
SOON.

Many Thanks to The Toast Event Sponsors:



We are the MRA - Member Profile



CASTLE
RESTAURANT

THE EPITOME OF FINE DINING



JAMES NICAS

Name: James Nicas

Chef: James Nicas, Patricia LaChance and Patrick Moran

Restaurant: Castle Restaurant

City: Leicester, Massachusetts

Year founded: 1949

Website: www.castlerestaurant.com

MRA Member since: 1950

What is your restaurant specialty?

Fine food, relaxed dining experience, great wine list.

Why is the MRA important to you & your business? The MRA keeps all members informed on the most important related subjects in our business. We are partners in an ever-changing business environment, and we're grateful for the service they provide.

Fun Facts about Castle Restaurant

1. Castle Restaurant has been owned and operated by the Nicas Family for 70 years.
2. Most of the physical building was built by the Nicas Family. The material used was recycled from local and regional structures that were once the pride of the area, including stones and lumber from the former Worcester Public Library, the Worcester YWCA, the Elks, Home of Worcester and Front Street.
3. The Castle boasts one of the most distinguished wine lists in the nation for some 50 years, winning 18 Awards of Excellence from Wine Spectator since the late 1980s.
4. The Jazz on the Patio summer music series, overlooking beautiful Lake Sargent, has been running every Sunday in July and August for over 30 years.
5. In 1981, The Castle won the coveted Ivy Award which secured it as one of the finest restaurants in America.
6. The Castle offers two distinctive dining rooms and menus: the Crusader Room, a casual dining room serving both lunch and dinner in a family style atmosphere, and the Camelot Room, a classical dining room offering more continental cuisine.
7. The Castle is a massive stone replica of a 16th century castle complete with turrets, towers, gargoyles and a moat.
8. We are known for our table-side theatre – Caesar salad, rack of lamb, chateaubriand, steak au poivre and specialty flaming coffees are prepared right in front of you!
9. Julia Child, Barbara Bush and Steven Tyler are among the notable happy customers of the Castle Restaurant, and we were fortunate to have served them.
10. Proud members of Les Amis D'Escoffier Society, Confrerie de la Chaine des Rotisseurs and the Honorable Order of the Golden Toque.

MRA Ed Foundation News

Please Help Support our 2020 MRAEF Capital Campaign

Building the Next Generation of Greatness



The MRAEF has embarked on a bold and necessary capital campaign focused on identifying and developing our next generation of leadership.

- In 2000, the MRA Hospitality Institute, a 401(c)(3), was formed, later named the Massachusetts Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (MRAEF). Ernie Tremblay, President of Sylvan Street Grille, was elected our first chairman and remains very active.
- In 2004, we launched our initial 10-year benefactor program initiated by Kathy Murphy, former MRA Executive Assistant, where companies pledged \$2,000 per year for a 10-year period. Our goal was to help fulfill the needs of every student applying for a scholarship.
- After feedback from prominent restaurateurs and supporters, in 2016 we began offering different commitment options and levels.
- The MRAEF has awarded \$1.3M to over 1,000 students studying Culinary Arts or Hospitality Management. Often the students who receive scholarships would have been unable to attend college due to financial hardships.
- At the end of 2000, we had 5 ProStart schools. Now, we're up to 40 schools reaching over 2,800 students!
- As we see tremendous growth in ProStart, it's more important than ever to be able to provide financial assistance to as many deserving students in need as possible, who dream of being in our industry.

We ask you to consider contributing any amount that works for you. We have also included the option to contribute to the MRAEF General Scholarship Fund that will go towards an annual scholarship.

Please complete the online [contribution form](#). We will send you an invoice annually based on your commitment. It's that simple! Thank you!



Make your commitment [here](#).

The MRAEF ProStart Student Invitational is March 10, 2020 - Get Involved!



Do you want to get more involved with the students who are the future of our industry?

Get involved - become a judge! **Click [here](#).**

Or, become a volunteer for the event. **Click [here](#).**

Servsafe Manager Training: Expanded Regional Offerings in Massachusetts



JANUARY 2019

- ▶ 02 - Andover, Courtyard by Marriott
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 04 - Springfield, Hilton Garden Inn
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 06 - Boston, Hampton Inn & Suites
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 06 - New Bedford, Fairfield Inn by Marriott
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 07 - Framingham, Residence Inn by Marriott
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 08 - Woburn, Courtyard by Marriott - Mishawum Road
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 11 - Worcester, Holiday Inn Express
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 13 - Hyannis, Holiday Inn
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 14 - Raynham, Hampton Inn
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 14 - Lynn, North Shore Latino Business Association
Class Times: 10am to 4pm
Spanish

- ▶ 22 - Amesbury, Hampton Inn & Suites
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 22 - Plymouth, Hampton Inn & Suites
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 27 - Springfield, Hilton Garden Inn
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 27 - Worcester, Holiday Inn Express
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

FEBRUARY 2020

- ▶ 01 - Springfield, Hilton Garden Inn
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 03 - Andover, Courtyard by Marriott
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 03 - Boston, Hampton Inn & Suites
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 04 - Framingham, Residence Inn by Marriott
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 04 - New Bedford, Fairfield Inn by Marriott
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 06 - Seekonk, Ramada Conference Center
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 08 - Worcester, Hilton Garden Inn
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 10 - Hyannis, Holiday Inn
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 10 - Danvers, McNeilly EMS Educators
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 11 - Lynn, North Shore Latino Business Association
Class Times: 10am to 4pm
Spanish

- ▶ 11 - Raynham, Hampton Inn
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 19 - Plymouth, Hampton Inn & Suites
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 24 - Worcester, Hilton Garden Inn
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

- ▶ 25 - Springfield, Hilton Garden Inn
Class Times: 8am to 2pm

[CLICK HERE](#) to view all ServSafe Classes offered on our event calendar!



CLICK [HERE](#) for **SERVSAFE ALCOHOL** classes.

If you would like to schedule a SERVSAFE ALCOHOL CLASS at your location, please call Tracy Zibell directly at (508) 573-4180 or email her at tzibell@themassrest.org



Choke Saving Courses Available at the MRA

CLICK [HERE](#) and select MRA under location to view the list of classes available.



Your Future Employees Our Future Leaders

Q&A with
MRAEF
Scholarship
Recipient
Jake Emerson

Student: **Jake Emerson**
Culinary School: **Johnson & Wales University**
Major: **Culinary Arts**
Year: **Freshman**

What experiences led you to pursue a career in the hospitality industry?

My aunt Carol inspired me to pursue cooking because anytime I cooked with her I was always having fun and having a good time. Anytime someone would say the food we made together was good it would always put a big smile on my face. It makes me happy to make someone else happy.

What is your ultimate goal within the hospitality industry?

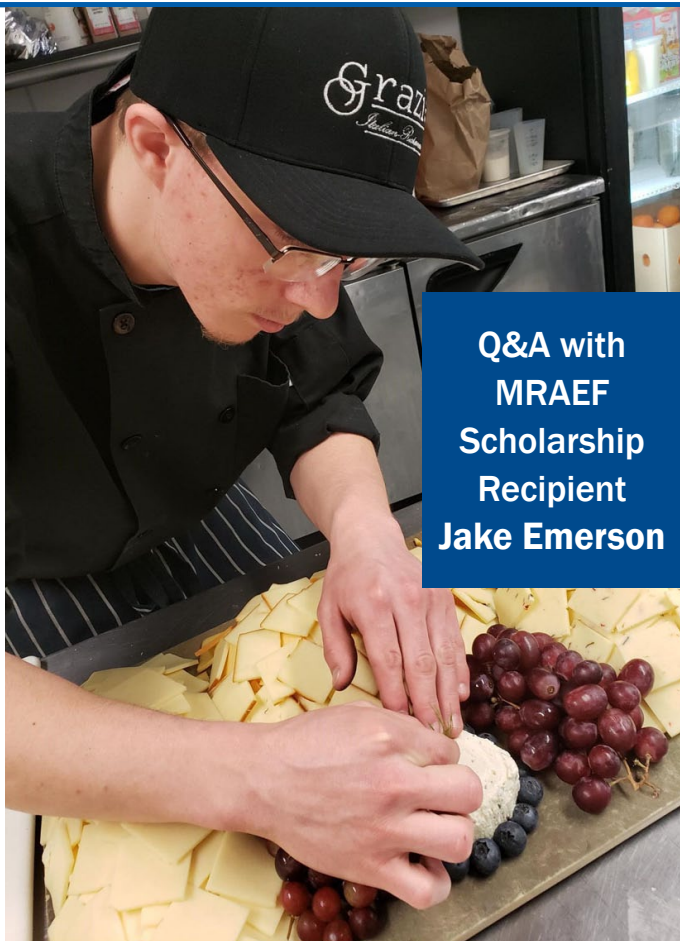
My ultimate goal in the food industry would be to become an executive chef at a fine dining restaurant, and throughout the knowledge I gain, from school and the work force, earn myself three Michelin stars.

From your experience in hospitality so far, what is the most important thing you have learned?

The most important thing I have learned is how to control one's own emotions, and how to get through stressful situations. Sometimes life is going to happen, but in order to get through it you need to keep your head up and just keep driving, eventually you'll get through it.

If you could offer advice to those considering pursuing a career in the hospitality industry, what would it be?

I would say to anyone thinking about joining this industry that they work in a restaurant for at least a year before they decide to pursue it. It's a very challenging industry. It is the most physically and mentally straining one I've ever been in, but I love it. If you're up for a challenge join the hospitality/food-service industry.



Welcome to MRA's Newest Members

Food & Beverage Operators

Freeplay Bar Arcade
401 316 4288
25 Union St.
Worcester, MA 01608

Heritage of Sherborn
33 North Main St.
Sherborn, MA 01770
(508) 655-9521
Jen Ziskin

Howling Wolf Taqueria
76 Lafayette St.
Salem, MA 01970
(978) 744-9653
Jeremy Jones

Joker's Lounge
135 Stewart St.
Dracut, MA 01826
(978) 957-7711
Edward Morgan

The Lighthouse
108 Sewall St.
Ludlow, MA 01056
(413) 583-6782
Kelly Dias

North Shore Bistro/
Backstage Bistro
62 Dunham Rd.
Beverly, MA 01915
(978) 697-3866
Karen Nascembeni

Rally Cap Pub
95 Pleasant St.
Dracut, MA 01826
(978) 957-7711

Servia LLC
126 State St.
Boston, MA 02109
(617) 936-3396
Patrizia Chambers

Business Partners

Beer Saver USA
16 Sylvan Circle
Kennebunk, ME 04043
(781) 526-6313
Gerard Kiley

Beverage Dispensing Equipment/Systems

Recycleworks
530 West St.
Braintree, MA 02184
(781) 844-0682
Daniel Buonagurio

Trash Removal/Waste & Recycling Services

Bay State Sewage Disposal Inc.
105 Kingman St.
Lakeville, MA 02347
(508) 951-0878
Margaret Chaves

Sewer/Drain Cleaning Service

Thanks to our 2020 Annual Sponsors



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Check out the MRA LinkedIn Group