I recently attended a conference for association executives and came back excited to share some insight we can all use. My favorite speaker was Sarah Slaydek, President of XYZ University, who presented the topic “The Future of Membership: Building the Must Have Association of the Next Century.”

She challenged all of us to answer these questions – When it comes to the future of your association, what are you most excited about? Also, what are you most concerned about?

Although she was challenging the audience to think about the future of our associations, these are great questions for all of us to contemplate in our own staff meetings. It forced us to think about the relevance of our association and how we are serving our members, both today and in the future. The bottom line is that we must adapt in order to remain relevant to our members, and to continue to serve their needs.

Slaydek is very well known for her extensive research on the topic of the changing workforce and what the different generations are looking for in future careers. She points out that everyone has something to teach and something to learn. I was intrigued when I listened to the comments from the attendees.

Speaking of learning, I am so excited about the changes the Education Foundation trustees made to this year’s scholarship program. Awarding scholastic achievement is very important, but the trustees wanted to include industry experience as a factor when choosing our winners. This was particularly true when choosing winners for our prestigious Career Path Scholarships.

Applicants submitted essays explaining why they wanted to make the supermarket industry their choice as a career. The essays showed the vast potential of our industry. Their career paths included store managers, pharmacists, human resources managers and buyers. The essays demonstrated that these future leaders want a career where they can make a difference.

This year’s first place Career Path Scholarship winner, Paolo Prestigiacoma, Publix Super Markets, is no exception. Our impressive future leader is choosing Supply Chain Management and Logistics as his career path and hopes to be “an influential part of the corporate purchasing team”.

(Read more about our winners on page 14)

To conclude, I challenge all of you with these questions:

What is it that you can teach?

What is it that you can learn?

Are you paying attention to your young employees who are so anxious to learn? Your part time cashier may well be a future leader in our industry! If you know of any who are interested in learning about government affairs, tell them to give me a call!
New Curbside Grocery Pickup Regulations Ease Restrictions for Georgia’s Alcohol Purchases

Thank you to our new Commissioner of Revenue, David Curry, for responding to the concerns of retailers wishing to offer beer and wine to their customers using an online grocery pickup (OGP) program. Penalties and procedures now mimic purchases made in the store.

To assist businesses throughout the state with their efforts to better meet customer demands, the Georgia Department of Revenue has repealed and replaced the curbside alcohol pickup regulations. Under the prior regulations, violations carried more severe penalties than other alcohol violations. The new regulations align the penalties for violations for curbside pickup with the penalties of other alcohol violations.

In addition, businesses now have more flexibility in where they stage their pickup area in their parking lots to better meet their business needs. The updated regulations also allow package stores to provide their customers with curbside pickup services.

Under the previous version of the regulation, the person who placed the order also had to pick it up. The updated regulations now allow other people who are twenty-one and older to pick up on behalf of the person who places the order.

“This is one of the steps the Department of Revenue is taking to assist businesses with their customer service efforts throughout the state,” said Revenue Commissioner David Curry. “We want to ensure that we are working with businesses to help them accomplish their goals and better serve their customers.”

BACKGROUND

After the GFIA attended a series of meetings with the Georgia Department of Revenue and interested stakeholders over the last few years, the Department granted our request to allow curbside pick-up; however, complicated rules and very harsh penalties for violations prevented retailers from offering the service. The newest regulations will allow our retailers who offer a curbside program to better service their customers.

The Department made it very clear that the new regulations do not include the delivery of alcoholic beverages. Also, the regulations say that a retailer may not knowingly transfer alcoholic beverages as part of an “online curbside pickup” service to an individual or business providing delivery for hire services.

HIGHLIGHTS & MAJOR CHANGES

• Any employee delivering alcoholic beverages to a vehicle for “online curbside pickup” must confirm that the individual receiving the alcoholic beverages is at least 21 years of age. This allows an employee to handle an online curbside pickup transaction using the same procedure as a transaction inside the store.

The former regulation required that the name of the purchaser registered on the account match the name on the driver’s license or other proper identification of the individual accepting delivery. The former regulation also required an employee to electronically record the age of the person accepting delivery.
• The new regulations align the penalties of violations of curbside pickup with the penalties of other alcohol violations.

The former regulation called for the first violation of the grocery pick-up regulation to result in a license suspension for a period of one month. A second violation of the grocery pick-up regulation within one year from the date of citation for a previous violation would have resulted in a license suspension for a period of one year. The new regulations take out these onerous penalties.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NEW REGULATIONS

• Except when prohibited by local ordinance, retailers may offer online “curbside pickup” of alcoholic beverages. Purchased goods must be delivered to the customer’s vehicle, which must be located within a clearly designated pickup area located within a paved parking area adjacent to the Place of Business.

• Alcoholic beverages sold as part of “curbside pickup” must be pulled from the inventory located at the licensed location of the Retailer providing the “online curbside pickup” and may not be pulled from the inventory of another Retailer or licensed location.

• Purchasers of Malt Beverage and Wine pursuant to this regulation must be registered with the Retailer prior to ordering alcoholic beverages online for “curbside pickup.”

Download a copy of the full regulations from our website at www.GFIA.org/curbside-alcohol-delivery.html

We are available to answer any questions - contact GFIA President Kathy Kuzava at (770) 438-7744 or kkuzava@gfia.org.
Meet Our Chairman - Jamey Leseueur

GFIA's new leader calls himself “competitive, a control freak and a back of the room, quiet kind of guy.”
Learn more about Jamey Leseueur, Executive Vice President for Food Depot, who was recently inducted as Chairman of the Georgia Food Industry Association.

How did you start in the industry?
I started in the grocery business 38 years ago when I took a summer job at Food Depot before going to college, working frozen food and dairy. I worked for the company while I went to school and fell in love with this industry very quickly - partly due to its competitive nature, which for me was a wonderful fit. The grocery industry challenges me on a daily basis, which drives me to be better.

Current role and responsibilities? What do you enjoy most about your job?
In my role as Executive Vice President, I am responsible for all grocery, frozen, dairy and GM/HBA buying, working with DSD vendors, all forms of advertising and marketing, overseeing remodels and new store openings, operations and even depositions for court cases which require a corporate representative.

I enjoy the people the most. I truly love this company as well as the people I work with. I We have the greatest group of people, a true team, and honestly, they are my family. I start every day wanting to do what is best for the company, best for our team, and to not let them down.

Tell us about Food Depot. How did it start? Where is the company now?
Food Depot began as All American Quality Foods in 1975. We were a conventional operator until things got tough in the mid 1980's. We tried a new concept in 1988, a cost plus 10%, under the new name of Food Depot. We now operate 40 locations ranging from 18,000 square feet to 50,000 square feet. For the most part, we provide the customary departments of a traditional grocery store, but we do concentrate on providing the people in our communities with the variety and service they desire. Food Depot is a 100% employee owned company, a fact that we all take a lot of pride in. Recently, we have been remodeling and upgrading our locations, all the while looking for new opportunities to expand into new areas.

Biggest challenges for the future? What keeps you up at night?
The challenges are more numerous and varied than ever before. There are plenty of brick and mortar competitors that do a great job, but what keeps me up at night are the changing habits of our customers and trying to compete in the quickly evolving world of e-commerce.

Why is GFIA important for a retailer? supplier?
We all like the thought of someone we trust having our backs. That is what the GFIA does for us all, both as retailers and suppliers, so we can concentrate on running our business. Our team is at the capitol every day during session, watching out for any legislation that might affect our industry. When she is not at the capitol, Kathy is working with various regulatory agencies, helping us with challenges like Georgia WIC.

The truth is, this association is working hard every day to protect us all. There is absolutely no reason for anyone involved in our industry as a retailer, supplier, or manufacturer, to not join us and support this association. It does not matter if you have one store or multiple stores, small supplier or large, this association brings us all together so we can speak with one voice.

What have you enjoyed most about being involved with the association?
The people. The GFIA not only watches out for us at the capitol, but it provides us with many opportunities to come together away from our businesses. The networking opportunities are priceless. Retailers can discuss the challenges of today and share things that

Jamey told Santa that his Christmas wish is for all members to get more involved in this great association!
they have tried in their own stores in order to help others. Suppliers, retailers, manufacturers, and service providers can come together to discuss and show new products and services. Gathering together at all these events, retreats, convention, independent council luncheons, Christmas party, and golf outings allows us the opportunity to gain knowledge to be better at what we do every day.

Anything surprising?
Definitely! When I was first asked to become involved, I guess my competitive nature began to work in my mind. I was wondering why I would spend time with people that run companies that I compete with every day, not to mention the fact that I am not the most socially outgoing person you will meet. The truth is, these are some of the best and most genuine people you will ever meet. Business relationships and friendships are formed, and you begin to realize we are all there for one purpose - to make our industry better and stronger, which is good for us all.

Tell us about your family
I am truly blessed to work for Food Depot, but my greatest blessing is my family. My wife, Cindy, is the heart of our family. Anyone that has known or worked with me before I met her can attest that she has not only made me a better man but a better person. We have two children, our son Jason and our daughter Stephanie. Jason is married and has given us three wonderful grandchildren, Jack, Evie, and Rhys. Stephanie is also married and has given us our wonderful grandson Eli and is now expecting with our fifth grandchild.

What does your down time look like?
When it comes to down time some believe me to be rather odd, but I prefer to think I appreciate the simple pleasures. I do construction work and remodeling, we love to sit outside in the evening, whether it is on our patio or at a restaurant, and I truly enjoy cutting grass. When I get on my mower, there is nobody asking me questions (at least not that I can hear), there is no cell phone, and I am simply alone with my thoughts. We also love to travel this beautiful country and see places and do things we have never experienced before, and sometimes we just spend time relaxing in the mountains.

If you weren’t a grocer, what would your fantasy career be?
I feel I have lived a real-life fantasy, but if I had to do something else, I have three options. If I were younger, I would enjoy working on a ranch in Wyoming or Montana. Another option would be to host a travel show that would allow me more time to experience this beautiful country. My final option would be to buy, renovate, and sell homes which would include restoring older homes to their former glory.

What advice would you give to someone interested in joining a GFIA committee or board?
It is simple, jump in with both feet and get involved as much as you can! The truth is our involvement allows us the opportunity to have input on setting the agenda and allows us the opportunity to share in the benefits that the association has to offer. Sitting on the sidelines and hoping good things will come to you is generally not a good strategy and you might be disappointed with the results. Take it from me, a back of the room, quiet type of guy, the benefits you and your company can experience through this wonderful association are well worth getting out of your comfort zone and getting involved.

What do you have to teach? What do you have to learn?
The question on learning is easy, I enjoy learning new things and do learn every day. With consumer habits changing so fast on both what they eat and how they shop and with the constant changes in technology, I still have another lifetime worth of things to learn. In my opinion, if I or anyone ever feels they do not have anything to learn, then they need to retire and get out of the way.

The question on teaching is not as easy, at least for me. One thing that I truly do enjoy is developing young talent. In my thirty-eight years of working with Food Depot, I feel like I have accumulated a lot of experiences and knowledge and I enjoy taking that to a young, eager, and energetic person with a brain like a sponge and sharing my experiences and knowledge to watch them become the best they can be. One day, when I learn to not be a control freak, I will allow them to do even more and take this company farther into the future.
The CBD Craze —

Grocers Ask FDA for Clarity in the Wild West of CBD Sales

“CBD is everywhere. How will the government handle it?” “CBD goes Mainstream.” “Hemp’s Path to Retail”

These are titles of articles from Progressive Grocer, Time Magazine and Consumer Reports. Winsight Grocery Business calls CBD “arguably the hottest and most ambiguous retail topic of 2019.” A recent Consumer Reports survey found that more than a quarter of Americans say they’ve tried CBD, while one out of seven of those people said they use it every day. Given the significant consumer interest, more and more companies are taking steps towards entering this space.

A Progressive Grocer article reported that “The hemp-derived CBD category is predicted to grow to $22 billion dollars by 2022. As a result, a wide range of retailers — especially grocers — are exploring how CBD can bring in new shoppers, grow foot traffic, and help expand the health and beauty category. In addition to incremental growth opportunities, CBD products offer attractive profit margins.”

What is CBD oil?

CBD is one of many naturally occurring compounds, known as cannabinoids, in the cannabis (marijuana) plant. CBD oils are oils that contain concentrations of CBD. Marijuana contains both THC and CBD, but these compounds have different effects. THC creates the “high” when people smoke or ingest it. CBD does not produce these psychoactive effects. Unlike THC, research has shown that CBD has many beneficial effects when dealing with seizures, anxiety, and more. CBD can be extracted from large quantities of hemp. Hemp-derived CBD comes in many product forms, from oil tinctures to topical creams. When CBD is ingested or applied to the skin, it is believed to interact with the body’s endocannabinoid system, which regulates functions such as mood, appetite and sleep.

Georgia consumers are currently purchasing CBD oil online, in vape shops, and some health food stores and convenience stores. A google search of “where to buy CBD in Georgia” will show you the many options, including CBD stores, which are popping up all over the Atlanta area. Nuts and Berries, a “healthy market” in Brookhaven had an event in August where they invited guests for free CBD clinics and the opportunity to “sample CBD from the largest selection of hemp derived CBD products in the Southeast”. Along with topicals and oils, their website includes CBD products ranging from gummies, honey, coffee, tea, mints and dog treats.

The Farm Bill Changed the Landscape

Questions on the legalities of CBD and CBD food products come into the GFIA office on a regular basis. The passage of the 2018 Federal Farm Bill removed hemp from the definition of “marijuana” and excluded THC in hemp from scheduling under the Controlled Substances Act. It also allowed states to develop their own programs for licensing and regulating hemp (See Georgia’s Hemp Farming Act) and required USDA to develop a federal program. The bill did not alter the FDA’s authority over the use of hemp or hemp-derivatives in FDA-regulated products.

Many companies believe that this industry is far too large to remain unregulated and that the lack of FDA regulations is creating confusion in the marketplace. The FDA and Georgia’s Commissioner of Agriculture, Gary Black, are very clear that hemp-derived CBD cannot be legally marketed as an ingredient in food, beverages or dietary supplements. The FDA says CBD is listed as “an active ingredient in a drug product,” called Epidiolex—an FDA-approved treatment for epilepsy, owned by GW Pharmaceuticals. For this reason, the FDA considers all food, beverages or dietary supplements containing CBD to be “adulterated” or “misbranded,” according to Hemp Industry Daily’s recent Farm Bill report.
Despite FDA’s current position, the number of foods, beverages, and dietary supplements that contain CBD continue to grow. Retailers and manufacturers are searching for direction through the maze of federal, state and local laws and regulations. Some retailers are deciding to carry only topical CBD products, others are carrying a full line of products; while more cautious companies are waiting for FDA’s approval. Even traditional grocers and drug stores are getting into the business.

The FDA is reviewing its position, which may result in proposed regulations; however, if or when that change will occur is still unclear. At the same time, some states have enacted legislation that permits the production, sale and use of CBD in various forms.

The Food and Drug Administration recently held its first public hearing for information about cannabis-derived product. Over 120 people spoke to a standing-room crowd, the majority talking about the benefits of CBD products. (Over 400 people applied to testify at the nine hour meeting, but a lottery determined the 120 who spoke)

Confusion in the Marketplace
FMI President, Leslie Sarasin, understands that the patchwork of state laws regulating cannabis and cannabis-derived products, coupled with the lack of federal standards for the use of hemp-derived CBD in manufactured products, has created mass confusion for the public, suppliers and retailers, and also state regulators. As consumer interest in these products continues to grow for both human and animal use, the need for FDA regulations are necessary.

In a letter submitted to the FDA, Sarasin says that “FMI respectfully urges FDA to move swiftly to provide guidance on a lawful pathway to market for hemp-derived CBD products in order to ensure such products meet applicable quality and labeling standards, as deemed appropriate by FDA. Furthermore, in addition to uniform quality and labeling standards, we also request consistency in enforcement across distribution channels.

CBD products are indeed becoming mainstream and are in high demand. Our grocers are eager to deliver quality CBD products to their customers, who look to their local supermarket to provide products they can trust to be accurately labeled and manufactured with integrity.

Go to www.GFIA.org for more articles and information on the topic of CBD and medical marijuana.

Georgia’s Hemp Farming Act
This year, Georgia legislators passed HB 213, the Georgia Hemp Farming Act, which allows farmers to obtain licenses to grow and process hemp. The definition of “hemp” includes any part of the cannabis sativa L. plant and all derivatives, with no more than a 0.3% concentration of THC. Under the federal 2014 Farm Bill, higher education institutions and state agricultural departments were authorized to develop pilot programs and cultivate industrial hemp for research purposes.

The federal 2018 Farm Bill removed hemp from the definition of “marijuana” and excluded THC in hemp from scheduling under the Controlled Substances Act. It also allowed states to develop their own programs for licensing and regulating hemp and required USDA to develop a federal program.

Under GA’s hemp licensing program, the state Department of Agriculture will issue hemp grower licenses and hemp processor annual permits. Grower’s permits will range between $50-$5,000. Processors will pay an initial fee of $25,000, which is reduced to $10,000 for each subsequent year, along with a surety bond of $10,000. (More details at GFIA’s website.)
Each year, the GFIA honors an individual leader who makes a measurable difference in his or her community, the food industry and the GFIA. The Legacy Award is GFIA’s highest honor, and this year we are proud to recognize Jim Warren, Retail Counselor with Associated Grocers of the South!

Jim was born and raised in Valdosta, Georgia. After finishing Valdosta State University, he was hired to manage the local Big Star in Moultrie, GA. The store was not known for great service, and Jim set out to change that. It was 1980, and a customer was so impressed by the new manager’s hard work, she ended up accepting a date from him, and the rest is history. (Ask Margaret to tell you the whole story!)

Jim and Margaret married in July of 1981 and became a family of four. Kim and Michael became his children from day one and he has been a great father - instilling love, respect, honesty and integrity.

Following Big Star, Jim went to work for an independent retailer, then began his career as a grocery wholesaler. Over the years, he has worked for Ira Higdon, Fleming, Spartan Nash and Associated Grocers of the South. After many moves, of what the Warrens affectionately call the “Grocery Gypsy Life,” Margaret asked him one day, “Will you ever want to do something else?” Jim’s response was simple. “I don’t know anything else. I love this business.” Even though Margaret teases him that the stress of the grocery business has made Jim lose his hair, she does agree that he found his true calling.

Jim was totally surprised by the honor. His children and several grandchildren were on hand to witness the award presentation. Jim’s customers and friends were thrilled when they heard he was chosen for this prestigious award.

GFIA members describe Jim Warren as:
Associated Grocers President Stan Alexander - “very loyal, hard-working and a dedicated employee and family man.”

Jim’s direct boss, Billy Leverett - “a fighter who cares about his customers and their success. I can call Jim Warren anytime, on any day for anything and I know he will take care of me.”

Fellow GFIA board member Greg Crook - “a strong advocate for GFIA and understands the value the association has for his customers.”

Longtime friend and grocer Kenny Casey - “a man who loves God and Country. He is someone who doesn’t give up, no matter what.”

Fellow GFIA board member Verlin Reece – “faces life with grit and faith. He is both wise and determined yet carries a gentle spirit. It is a great testimony to how he deals with people, whether or not you are his customer. He is always a first-class gentleman with a great sense of humor.”

Grocers Karen and Jimmy Freeman - “a wealth of information where anything related to grocery is concerned, always eager and willing to help.”

Fellow GFIA Board member Darrell Wiley - “has single handedly brought in more members than any other individual.”

GFIA President Kathy Kuzava – “so passionate about what we do! His enthusiasm and excitement are contagious.”
Greg Ferrara Takes Over as President and CEO of NGA

After an extensive national search, Greg Ferrara will succeed Peter Larkin as the National Grocer’s Association President and CEO, effective September 1, 2019. Ferrara is a familiar face to the GFIA members, especially those who attend the industry’s Day in Washington. He said he is “honored to have the opportunity to lead an organization and an industry that I care so passionately about.”

Before his promotion, Ferrara served as Executive Vice President, responsible for overseeing NGA’s advocacy and lobbying efforts, public relations, industry relations and retail and wholesale membership. He first joined NGA in November 2005 after his family’s century-old supermarket he managed in New Orleans was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

GFIA President Kathy Kuzava says, “Greg’s background and experience make him the perfect choice for the position. As NGA’s chief lobbyist, he is highly respected before members of congress and federal regulatory agencies.”

Greg holds a BA in Political Science from Loyola University New Orleans and is a fellow of the prestigious Institute of Politics at Loyola University. He is a graduate of the NGA Executive Leadership Program at Cornell University.

The GFIA thanks Peter Larkin for his years of leadership. Larkin will remain an advisor to NGA through the end of the year.

Three of our dedicated and experienced Foundation Trustees received unexpected “promotions” that were announced at this year’s convention. When Foundation Chairman Jamie Leggiero moved to Orlando, a strong bench of leaders jumped in to fill open roles. Danny Dunbar, Campbell’s Snacks, moved into the role of Chairman a year ahead of schedule. The executive board made a unanimous decision to name Warren Brown, Quality Foods, as Vice Chairman and Melanie LeBlanc, Anheuser-Busch, as Treasurer. (Jimmy Tryon, Empire Distributors, will continue as Past Chairman and Lynn Micale, Mondelez International, will continue her role as Secretary, rounding out this strong Executive Committee.)

Foundation Chairman Danny Dunbar
Zone Sales Manager, Campbell Snacks

The start of Danny’s food industry career was bagging groceries at 16 years old at Kroger 219 in Riverdale GA. He continued working with the company while studying marketing at Clayton State. After graduating, he stayed in the food industry, working for Atlanta Beverage Company, and Matador Distributing. He has worked with Campbell Snacks for the last eight years.

Danny’s wife Sherri and daughters Cassidy and Jaycie have grown up attending GFIA events. In fact, when the girls were younger, they volunteered for several events, including the not-so-easy job of running the money machine at the convention.

When Danny isn’t working, he enjoys fishing, hunting and spending time with his family, including his new son-in-law! And we can’t forget spending time at Disney Parks - the Dunbar family is “slightly” obsessed with all things Disney. The whole family has been to the parks six times together, but Sherri and the girls have more than 18 times!

Danny has been involved with GFIA and the Education Foundation since 1999, so this year makes his 20th year…and his 2nd time around as GFIEF Chairman. “I am rewarded by a sense of accomplishment after each fundraising event …and there have been a lot over the last 20 years … combined with the knowledge that the funds we raise provide so much opportunity for others, either thru scholarships or additional training opportunities for many already in our industry.”

Danny says the most rewarding part of serving as a trustee is meeting and working with other industry leaders for a great cause. “The strong personal relationships and respect for my peers and the GFIA staff continues to grow year after year.” We are fortunate to have him as our Foundation Chairman!

Foundation Vice Chairman Warren Brown
Vice President of Operations, Quality Foods

Warren began his grocery career in 1976 when he was hired as a bagger for Winn Dixie. He spent 23 years with the company, holding a variety of positions including store manager, floral buyer, produce trainer, HBC specialist, seafood merchandiser and district manager. For the next 15 years, he worked for MDI, serving independent retailers as the southern regional sales manager. He has been with Quality Foods as Vice President of Operations for the last six years.

Warren has been involved with GFIA for 21 years and has served as a trustee for the last five years. He has co-chaired the Foundation’s golf tournament. “It is rewarding to me that we are able to help so many industry related children fulfill their goal of attending college. I am also very pleased that we have made some changes to the program recently to include items other than judging solely on academics. This will help some children who work, volunteer in the community, and give back in other ways to have a better chance to receive scholarship funds.”

Warren and his wife Lou have been married for 38 years. They have two adult children, six grandchildren and another due in March! Warren enjoys playing golf when he has free time.

Foundation Treasurer Melanie LeBlanc
Category Manager, Anheuser-Busch

Melanie LeBlanc has been in the food industry for 19 years, first hired as a Category Analyst with Coca-Cola. After seven years, she went to work for Anheuser-Busch as a Category Manager. She has also held the role of Key Account Manager. Melanie has been involved with the GFIA for more than 12 years. She has volunteered in almost every capacity and has co-chaired the Foundation’s golf tournament. An example of her creativity would be the idea of the wine pull, a new fundraiser at the convention that will be an annual tradition. Melanie also plays a huge role in the GFIA’s holiday party.

Melanie and Matt have been together for 9 years and have a five year old son, Alex, who keeps them on their toes. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, cooking, running, watching football, live music and going to the beach as often as she can.

What does Melanie like best about serving as a trustee? “It’s so rewarding when you’re able to come together with a great group of people who you truly enjoy being around while working towards the betterment of our entire industry.”
How Can Joshen Decrease Your Supply Costs?

Our business is supply products, and to assist our customers in directly improving their bottom-line and to operate more profitably. Our overall objective is to drive down your costs of your indirect-spend supply products, and to be able to provide your business with all the supplies that you need to operate at the lowest cost possible. We are able to accomplish this through our procurement and distribution solutions.

www.joshen.com
1-800-206-4742

Meet GFIA’s Newest Trustees

Beth Governale, Chain Account Manager – National Distributing Company
Beth began her National Distributing career as a Sales Representative in 2006. She has held several management positions in the retail chain division. She took on her current role as Chain Account Manager in 2015. Beth enjoys working with her retail customers, while supporting the National Distributing sales team.

She and her husband AJ have their hands full with two busy kids, Benjamin (4) and Kate (2), as well as stepdaughters Mia (19) and Ashlyn (15). Beth enjoys spending time with friends and family. She loves to laugh and share life experiences with others.

Joe Hartman, Key Account Manager- Pepsi Beverages Company
Joe started with Pepsi over 36 years ago. He was hired in 1983 as a route salesman, worked his way up to District Manager, and has been a Key Account Manager for the past 25 years. Married to his high school sweetheart Susan for 39 years, Joe and Susan stay busy raising their 11 year old grandson Brodee. In Joe’s spare time, he enjoys coaching Brodee’s baseball and soccer teams, doing projects around the house and spending time with his family, including their first granddaughter who lives in Columbus with their son and wife.

Lindsay Koch, President – Koch & Associates Food Brokerage
Lindsay officially began her career as a bagging clerk at Albertson’s in Texas in 2001, but has been assisting her father at trade shows since she was a child. After attending college in Texas, Lindsay moved back to Atlanta to work with her dad at Koch & Associates. She held every position at the company until she was eventually named President in 2016. She received her MBA from Georgia Tech in December 2018 and was named both a Progressive Grocer GenNext award winner and a Top Woman in Grocery.

Lindsay, along with her partner Tristan and her dad Tom have a “mild” football obsession and can be found at all Georgia Tech and Falcons home football games.
Education Foundation’s Convention Fundraisers Are a Success!

Our Education Foundation trustees ushered in an “ocean of money” at this year’s GFIA convention fundraisers. With the generous support of our members and convention attendees, they raised over $118,000 for scholarships and industry education!

We had some fabulous items to offer this year. Retailer trips and dinners, vacation getaways, sports event tickets, and valuable advertising space in The Shelby Report. There was a lot of excitement on Saturday evening as our $3,000 raffle winner donated the funds back to the Foundation! We know everyone is already looking forward to seeing what we will have available next year at our auctions!

We appreciate all of the members who donated their vacation properties, silent auction items, shopper money and their time to our fundraisers – and also the members who purchased the items, as well as those who purchased raffle tickets! Your generous support helps us to provide scholarships to deserving students and industry education to our members.

Back by popular demand –
Everyone loved our Wine Pull fundraiser – we sold over 150 bottles of wine for a great cause!

We are also grateful to Walmart for their $5,000 contribution to the fundraisers!

Thank you to all of the companies and individuals who participated in our Live Auctions

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We love Scott Lombardi of Warsteiner! He won the $3,000 cash raffle drawing on Saturday night...and generously donated it back to his new favorite charity...the Education Foundation!
THE GFIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION AWARDED 93 SCHOLARSHIPS WORTH OVER $120,000!
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING GFIA MEMBER COMPANIES WHOSE
EMPLOYEES WERE AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2019-2020

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Each year, scholarships are awarded to deserving Georgia students employed in our industry or whose parents are employed by GFIA members (retailer, wholesaler or supplier). Funding for these awards is made possible each year through the generous donations of participating member companies and annual fundraisers such as the live and silent auctions, raffle ticket sales and the spring golf tournament.

The GFIA Scholarship Program will accept applications for the 2020-21 year beginning in early January 2020. Your employees and their children are eligible to apply! If you would like to fund an award exclusively for your company employees, please contact the GFIA office at (770) 438-7744 for details. The Foundation will administer the entire program FREE of cost to you!

Thank you to all of the companies and individuals who participated in our retailer trips & live auction

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<td>Shelby Report Southeast</td>
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2019 Career Path Scholarship Winners:

Annually, the Education Foundation funds three Career Path Scholarships. These are our most valuable awards at $4,000, $3,000 and $2,000. Your participation in fundraisers throughout the year help fund these awards. In addition to standard judging criteria, these awards require an essay submission explaining what industry job the student holds and why and what career the student wants to pursue in the food industry. These awards require that the applicant be employed by a GFIA member (retailer, wholesaler or supplier).

This year, 25 eligible essays were judged on a variety of criteria. Congratulations to the following outstanding winners:

$4,000 Career Path Winner: Paolo Prestigiacoma, Publix Super Markets, Inc.
$3,000 Career Path Winner: Sarah Hubbard, The Kroger Company
$2,000 Career Path Winner: Kerstin Sanders, Coca Cola Bottling Company UNITED

$4,000 Career Path Award
Paolo Prestigiacoma, Publix Super Markets, Inc.

“One of the biggest challenges facing food retailers and food organizations in the future is procurement of products and ensuring the food supply chain continues to readily flow to meet and exceed the growing demands of the population. The career path that I have chosen, Supply Chain Management and Logistics, is one piece of a complex supply chain process that starts at farms and manufacturing facilities and ends at the kitchen table of the American consumer. My aspirations are to stay with my current organization (Publix Supermarkets) and become an influential part of their corporate purchasing team.”

“The food industry will never cease to exist. The technology will change and force retailers to adapt and think differently, but there will always be a need to procure products and move them through the supply chain. The food industry is exciting, with constant changes to product lines, new and innovative products, and shifts in consumer preferences as natural and organics continue to grow. I feel that I can be very relevant in the food industry… I want to stay in the food industry because I can make a difference!”

Congratulations to all 93 of this year’s scholarship award winners! Your participation in our scholarship fundraising efforts make a difference in the lives of so many students. Below are just a few excerpts from the thank you notes we received.

Dayanaro Moncilla, J & J Foods
Winner of the Johnnie Wiley Memorial Scholarship
I am so grateful to have been awarded this scholarship! This will help tremendously and aid in me achieving my goals and being a first-generation college graduate. I can’t wait for this upcoming year! When I first found out I sobbed in the chip aisle of the grocery store I work at for a good minute. I am beyond grateful and I really want to thank you and God for being such big blessings! This scholarship is a tremendous weight off my back!

Daniela Villa-Roel, The Kroger Company
Winner of a Kroger Company Scholarship
Thank you so much for allowing me to pursue my educational dreams. Going to college was always the path for me. No matter the cost nor the challenges, my dad was determined to get me there. Alleviating some of the financial pressure allows me to put my full focus into being the best architect I can be.

Molly Bradford, Grocery Outlet
Winner of a GFIA Scholarship
Thank you so much for this scholarship. This scholarship really helps me to be more independent of my parents financially and ease the financial strain especially after Hurricane Michael.

James Hollis, Wayfield Foods
Winner of a Wayfield Foods Scholarship
I want to thank the committee for awarding me this scholarship. Without this scholarship I would not have been able to attend school for my last semester. This scholarship helped me get that much closer to having my dreams become reality. Thank you so much.

Ruben Rivadeneira, All American Quality Foods
Winner of a Pepsi Beverages Sponsored Scholarship
Thank you for your generosity in awarding me this scholarship. The financial burden that I am put under each semester is being eased by people like yourselves. It means so much to all of us and brings happiness to be helped in such a tremendous way.

Natalie Miller, MillerCoors
Winner of the Mal Bailey Memorial Scholarship
I am extremely honored to be chosen as a recipient for this award. I hope to one day become a member of the Doctors Without Borders team and pay it forward. Thank you so much, you have no idea how much this means to me.
NEW GFIA MEMBERS

ASSOCIATE LEVEL
Absolute Sunblock
Alliance Retail Group
Ambactus Group
ATM Central
CBT, Inc.
Crook and Marker LLC
Fever Tree USA
Forbo Flooring Systems
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The Lagunitas Brewing Co.
Movista
MyGroove Consulting
Palm Bay International
Precept Wine
Roger Wood Foods
Tosca
Verde Valle Foods

RETAILERS
Pinetucky Country Meats

AWARD WINNING GFIA MEMBERS

This summer, GFIA member Proper Pepper won a national award, placing third place in its category at the American Cheese Society annual cheese competition. The competition was judged against 257 companies and 1,742 different products. Owner Deana Bibb also took top category honors at the 2015 Flavor of Georgia contest. Bibb, a true southerner and Georgia native says, “My Georgia roots are deep. Pimentos have Georgia roots too. So, isn’t it only proper that Georgia, the heart of the southern culinary universe, have an award-winning pimento cheese she can call her own?” Proper Pepper is based in Sandersville, Georgia. Its products are sold in grocery stores and small food markets throughout Georgia, as well as in 80 ABC Fine Wine & Spirit stores in Florida and a few Central Market stores in Texas. Visit their website at www.properpepper.com to read more about their story. Congratulations, Deana!

The Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce recently named Rene Diaz, CEO of Diaz Foods, as one of its 50 Most Influential Latinos in Georgia for 2019. Diaz was also inducted into the Chamber’s inaugural Hall of Fame, alongside three other Hispanic leaders.

The efforts of Diaz Foods have been recognized over the years in numerous publications and media outlets. Hispanic Business Magazine consistently heralds Diaz Foods as one of America’s “Top 500 Hispanic Owned Businesses,” (ranked in the top 50 in the United States). INC. Magazine placed Diaz Foods on the list of America’s Inner City 100 Fastest-growing privately held inner-city companies. The company has also been featured in CNN’s Pinnacle and Business Unusual features.

We are proud to see Rene Diaz recognized for his work in the grocery industry, and within his community.
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TRADE SHOW BOOTH CONTEST WINNERS

Trade show exhibitors were judged based on theme, crowd interaction and how well they showcased their product. Vice chairman Jamey Leseueur presented our winners with their awards at Saturday night’s dinner.

Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED won best overall multiple booth
Kraft Heinz Company took top honors for best single booth

THANK YOU

Transporting all of the convention boxes, sponsor equipment, and auction items to the convention venue requires a whole lot of volunteer labor, but the most important part of the equation is the TRUCK. For many years, General Produce has graciously donated one of their refrigerated trucks to transport auction items and supplies to and from conventions. Many thanks to Vernon Kelly and General Produce for their support of our association! And, of course, the many volunteers who load and unload in the July heat! The Monday Night Brew Crew were on hand this year to help unload after convention.

The spirit of connection that makes the GFIA convention so unique begins at the registration desk. Our volunteers have “oceans of fun” greeting attendees, selling wine and handing out everyone’s favorite convention item - the snack shack band! If you have not volunteered at one of our events, any GFIA staff member can get you started - it is a great way to network with fellow members.

We are grateful to Laura Ritcey of Quality Foods and Jared Fulks of Relevant Business Solutions for their dedication and long hours at the registration desk this year. Their commitment ensured that everything ran smoothly, and we appreciate their help!
Grocers Give – Oceans of Goodwill to Hungry Children

Working with Sandestin Foundation for Kids, more than 200 GFIA convention attendees gathered together to assemble 3,000 bags of food for hungry children.

GFIA board member Bob McTeir and Education Foundation trustee Dave Logue hosted Grocers Give again this year and were instrumental in securing the donation of over $20,000 worth of food products from Merchants Distributors, Inc. and its suppliers. Many thanks to them, and everyone who made this event possible.

GFIA Members Cheer on Contestants in Annual Best Bagger Competition!

Can you imagine bagging groceries as fast as you can in front of a screaming audience of hundreds of people? After months of practice, these four courageous bagger contestants entertained the audience at our convention with their outstanding bagging speed and technique.

This year’s contestants were Samuel Arias, The Kroger Company; Giovanni Cammarota (Gio), Publix Super Markets; Lawrence Buchanan, Quality Foods and Duncan Bailey, Food City

The Publix Super Markets team was all smiles as Gio won the top honor. In February, he will head to the NGA Show in San Diego to represent Georgia at the national contest and compete for $10,000! Good luck Gio!

Gio Cammarota, Publix Super Markets pulled out the big win!
## DIAMOND SPONSORS

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OCEANS OF OPPORTUNITIES

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Glen Wilkins, Walmart; Bobby Britton, The Leavitt Group; Nicole Wilkins, Walmart
Tai Lynch & Steve Beard, Ole Mexican Foods
The Nam Dae Mun Farmers Market group is all smiles as they head into dinner
Tracy Mihas, Kellogg’s; Representative Tom McCall (R-Elberton); Terry Adams, Adams Food Center
Joan Berk & Ira Bernhard, Sun City Produce
Jerry McCann, Piggly Wiggly AL Distr. Co. (PWADC): Brenda Gentry, RBG Foods; Jeff Brown, PWADC; Randy Gentry & Holly Green, RBG Foods; Steve Weathington, PWADC
Greg Morris, Blake Legrand & Kristin Nation, Constellation Brands
Kevin Dougherty, Lee & Teri Streetman, Sparkling Ice; Margaret & Greg Elliott, General Wholesale Beer Co.
Wayde & Judy Anderson, Kraft Heinz Company
Danny Dunbar, Suzan & Wesley Heine, Campbell Snacks
Brenda & Preston Brinson, SpartanNash Company; Karen and Jimmy Freeman, Freeman Foods
Michael Iulianello & Lynn Micale, Mondelez International
Lois Colburn, Donna & Jim Cetrulo, Don Francisco’s Coffee
Michael Gay, Foodfresh; Tom & Jill Coogle, Reynolds Foodliner; Mike Coggins, Sherwood Foods
Bettina Hall, The Kroger Company; Mark Corey, Heineken USA
Tony & Cheryl McNair, UNFI; Cindy & Jamey Leseueur, Food Depot
Mark & Ashly Lord, Flowers Foods; Greg Thaxton, Sherwood Foods; Lou Brown, Quality Foods; Abbie Thaxton, Sherwood Foods; Warren Brown, Quality Foods
Dave Black, Northeast Sales; Mary Jenkins & Chris Ritchie, MillerCoors; Wendell Keeling, Northeast Sales

“The Voice of the Food Industry in Georgia”
Tristan Connelly & Lindsay Koch, Koch & Associates; Cindy & Jamey Leseueur, Food Depot

Lee Bowers, MDI; Clark Stephens, Quality Foods

Clayton Enlow, The Kroger Company; Beth Governale, National Distributing Company; Melissa Enlow, The Kroger Company

Drew Hilgenberg, DJ Hanlin & Mark Love, Federated Insurance

Matt Harness, Jim Wright, Rolanda Holman, Jeanne Fuda, & David Smith, Bimbo Bakeries USA

Rick & Mary Margaret Hardesty, Lisa & Dwight Witherow, Lewis Bakeries

Dave & Charlotte Alvarez, Milo’s Tea Company

Keith & Trudy Shirah, UTZ Quality Foods

Morgan Tuggle, Jason Tuggle and Jonathan Warren, Keurig Dr Pepper (Pepsi Aligned)

Marcela Hicks & Shivan Daniels, King’s Hawaiian

Kris Helms, Daniel Buchanan, Josh Joshson and Jimmy Tryon, Empire Distributors, Inc.

Kimberly Wise, Bo Wise & Karen Foreman, Global Data Solutions

Rob Smithson & Bill Walker, Planet H2O; Dave Fricke, Savannah Distributing Company; Jim Bruner, Planet H2O

Jim Adams, Southern Eagle Distr.; Robb & Mary Elizabeth Finkey, Eagle Rock Distributing; Leslie Peoples, Icelandic Glacial Water

Margaret and Jim Warren, Associated Grocers of the South; Teross & Renee Young, Food Lion LLC

Mark Deno, Atlanta Hard Cider; Stephanie Farrell, Capriccio Sangria; Ashley Hunter & Liz Deno, Atlanta Hard Cider

Paula & Spencer Nix, Reformation Brewery, Greg Owens, Monday Night Brewing

GA House Majority Leader Jon Burns, wife Dayle Burns, and Kevin Perry, Georgia Beverage Association

Chad Ledbetter, Beatbox Beverages; Hinh Nguyen, Tom Althouse, Rob Harris & Angela Magnuson, mike’s hard lemonade
Thank you to the Blue Bell Creameries team for serving their delicious ice cream for Thursday’s Opening Night party.

The PepsiCo Team is all smiles before the Opening Night party starts.

Kevin Perry, Georgia Beverage Association; GA Senate Pro Tempore Butch Miller; Sheila Humberstone, Stonebridge Consulting Group; Senator Tyler Harper (R Ocilla)

Sandy Oneil, Heineken USA; Kristine Day, Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.; Dan Kelly, Georgia Crown Distributing Co.

Tori Bodenhamer, Kahiki Foods; Scott Lombardi, Ed & Barbara Dellapiana, Warsteiner

Jeff Downing, Foothills IGA; Orian Southall & Skip Vaughan, Pepsi Beverages Company

Dania & Bob Pendleton, Publix Super Markets, Inc.
Tosca created the first reusable plastic container (RPC) specifically designed to overcome the challenges of shipping poultry.

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